We built this city on rock and roll

Reflections on the British Council's 'Golden Thread' Programme

Lois Stonock
Charlie Tims

Music, galleries, raves, plays, museums and bad tattoos – beyond families and friends, here in Britain, it's culture and art that make life worth living. A rich cultural life is the best thing about being in a free society – so if Britain seeks to spread freedom in the world it follows that supporting art and culture should be a part of it. But how should this happen? Can artists solve problems development professionals can't? And besides, doesn't culture get lost in translation anyway?

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It's questions like this that British Council's Arts Team's wide ranging Golden Thread programme has been exploring over a year long project in 14 countries located in Official Development Assistance priority regions. In each location British Council's arts managers have set-up a project that they believe best makes a difference to their region. As independent thinkers and researchers, we have been asked to look over the programme, talk to arts managers and participants and identify stories and themes that resonate for us. This is our perspective.

Now, as the programme draws to a close, a pattern has emerged: some projects support artists and arts organisations because art is a way of thinking freely; others use art and culture as a way to help marginalised groups; while other projects directly borrow methods from the arts and use them to deliver outcomes the development industry has at times, struggled to achieve.

Through all this runs a conviction that art and culture make a difference to life in ways that other things can't. In Britain this has found expression in concerned Victorians who built museums and galleries; in New Labour's desire to use culture as a tool

to regenerate schools, hospitals and deindustrialised cities and in the countless artists, dramatists and writers who have instinctively searched for the overlooked, marginalised and unusual.

There's enough to suggest in the Golden Thread programme that culture and art can work where power-point presentations, leaflet drops and classrooms don't. As one project manager bluntly put it to us: 'people don't change because you tell them to'. This said, we don't invest in, pay for or take part in art and culture because we know exactly what will happen when we do – in fact, in many ways, that's the point. Supporting culture and development can, at times, be a precise art and, at others, an act of faith.

1. FREEDOM

'We see you like to move.' Ezzat's way into contemporary dance began when he was spotted rocking out by the stereo, on his own, at a friend's 18th birthday by some farming students. He joined their college dance group at the agricultural college in Cairo. With the help of a choreographer they copied moves borrowed from hip hop videos, and performed routines in the campus theatre.

> An architecture student by day, Ezzat's interest in choreography, latin, salsa, and the TV show 'So you think you can dance' grew outside his studies. But eventually it was the expressive possibilities of contemporary dance that won his heart. 'There's no structure or standards, there's nothing there to tell you what to do…'

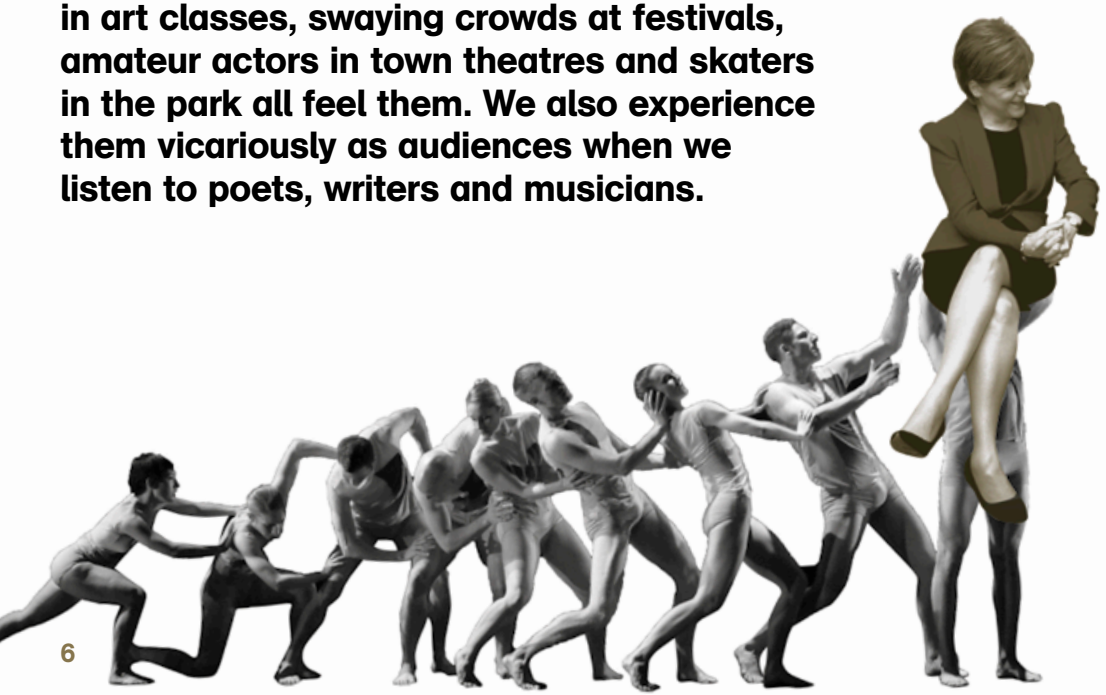
Ezzat finished his architecture course in 2008 and won a place on the Cairo Contemporary Dance Workshop Program – a course supported by Studio Emad Eddin Foundation and the European Commission. Towards the end of the course he started his own company **Ezzat Ezzat Dance Studio** and modified the roof of a residential building to rehearse in – although contemporary dance has few rules, it needs dedicated rehearsal space not commonly found in Egypt.

The first event he organised was called Contemporary Dance Night. The aim was to share as many approaches to contemporary dance as possible in an evening. It was both a showcase for Cairo's fledgling contemporary dance scene and a way to educate and grow audiences. Ezzat believes in its power to liberate;

> 'Contemporary dance speaks to the body directly. People get addicted to it – the body starts to need it, even if the brain doesn't completely accept it. Because there is no structure you can create, you become free'.

Let the children boogie

In Britain we may not all be contemporary dancers but we recognise these sensations – even if we take them for granted. Students in art classes, swaying crowds at festivals, amateur actors in town theatres and skaters in the park all feel them. We also experience them vicariously as audiences when we listen to poets, writers and musicians.



The recent death of David Bowie was marked with such sadness by those who grew up with him in the 1970s because in their imaginations – in their hairbrushes, mirrors and eye shadow – they had been him too. Nicola Sturgeon, First Minister in the Scottish Parliament, summed up her feelings;

'I felt deep sadness. David Bowie provided the soundtrack to my youth so the idea that he is no longer with us is incredibly sad… He had a profound impact on the society we live in, particularly for LGBT people in the 70s and the 80s – he gave them the confidence to know they were a valuable part of society. It's easy to forget how profound that was.' [1]

From nightclubs, to youth cults and spotify playlists – music, art and films are part and parcel of how we make friends and form attachments. Culture and arts aren't just about thinking freely, but also about the freedom to associate. Anyone who has bonded over a CD collection, gone on a date to an art gallery or been to the Whitby Goth Weekend knows this.

1. Daily Record (11/01/2016) Scottish stars who worked with brilliant and amazing pop icon pay tribute...

Four years ago Danny Boyle's opening ceremony of the London Olympics showed how central the arts and culture have become to our collective sense of ourselves and our national life. The New York Times saw;

> 'a wild jumble of the celebratory and the fanciful; the conventional and the eccentric... Britain presented itself to the world as something it has often struggled to express even to itself: a nation secure in its own post–empire identity, whatever that actually is.' [2]

A kaleidoscope of Shakespeare, Turner, Glastonbury and Grime music – it told not just a national story of a rebellious country, but also of the evolution of ideas and cultural forms as they are passed from one generation to the next. The overwhelming feeling was the sense that 'we' had built this, been there, felt it and made it together. It had come from us.

More than a performance

Cathy Costain, the British Council's arts manager in Egypt met Ezzat in 2011, when he gave a powerpoint presentation about Contemporary Dance Night at the European Commission in Cairo. Since then she has enthusiastically supported his work by sponsoring other editions of the event, helping to fund construction work on the Ezzat rooftop studio and exchanges with UK contemporary dancers. The Golden Thread programme has made it possible for Ezzat to bring a dancer from Wales, Zosia Jo, for a residency – which has lead to a performance accompanied by workshops. Beyond the money, Ezzat calls Cathy 'a bridge builder and a (brilliant) network person'.

Although Ezzat likes the international connections that the British Council has brought him, he wants to focus on making a contemporary dance scene in Cairo. This means educating existing dancers – Zosia Jo's residency has also developed a make-shift contemporary dance 'conversion course' workshop for dancers from other disciplines. It also means going beyond the art crowd – Ezzat makes a point of distributing flyers for Ezzat Ezzat Studio in nearby office receptions and social clubs. Each performance is a chance to support the growth of the scene. 'If you tell someone that you do contemporary dance in Egypt, they don't even know it exists – so we try to involve people in all processes of creation. It's more than a performance for an audience'.

2. New York Times (27/07/2012) A 5-Ring Opening Weirdly and Unabashedly British

The Gift

In his classic work The Gift (1983) the American essayist Lewis Hyde argued that art making is a kind of gift giving common to many societies. The argument is hard to paraphrase, but essentially art is a gift because it comes from the desire to say something, whether or not it has been asked for or anticipated – it is not created with a specific quantifiable reward in mind. Gift giving does not work in dogmatic education systems or illiberal, fearful societies that control what can be said, nor does it work where market values dominate everything – a gift is not a gift if we pay for it and less of gift if we ask for it. This is why artists and culture makers either require patrons, subscribers, cheap living conditions and willingness to 'work' without reward, (toiling away in the studio, working for free on the set or putting themselves in danger). Much of the Golden Thread programme, whether it is supporting artists displaced from Syria or supporting contemporary dance in Egypt, is trying to develop this kind of exchange, often when it has been crowded out.

The regime of Tunisian President Zine El Abidine Ben Ali – overthrown in the Tunisian Revolution of 2011 – was the kind in which gift giving is hard. In 2010 Tunisia was ranked 144th in the Economist's democracy league table of 165 countries: congregating on street corners in cities and open spaces was outlawed. This prevented the evolution of a colourful youth culture common to cities the world over. But, conversely, it also made the artistic appropriation of public spaces during the 2011 revolution a politically charged act as well as a cultural one. For Imed Belkhodja, an arts manager from British Council Tunisia, street art, photography and music of the revolution showed how art making could create a way for young people to become involved in creating the new Tunisia. 'We need to involve young people in the building of a better society,' he told us.

In North Africa the British Council has been supporting break dancers from Algeria, Tunisia and Morocco. In 2011, shortly after the revolution, the British Council organised a selection of breakdancers to travel to 'Battle of the Year 2012', an international breakdancing contest in Montpellier. As breakdancing was banned before the revolution, many applicants had never practiced outside their own homes, let alone outside their national borders. In the two–on–two category the Flavaz Army team from Tunisia finished second to the American pair.

Through the Golden Thread programme, the British Council is currently working on a project connecting breakdancers from across North Africa with a UK theatre company and with facilitators from Impact Dance, a British youth dance company. The project called Say It Through Breakdancing has used a series of workshops to get breakdancers, who are accustomed to 'battling' with each other, to create a performance together. It has toured to UK arts venues including Sadler's Wells and the Southbank Centre. Imed says that this kind of recognition helps. 'There is a tremendous positive energy from young people now. They believe they can do it!'

Supporting breakdancers in Tunisia is no longer just about supporting a new culture after an authoritarian government. Since 22 year old Seifeddine Rezgui shot 38 tourists on a Tunisian beach resort last summer, it has also been about supporting it in relation to new illiberal forces too.[3] The British Council has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Tunisian Ministry of Justice – which will make it easier to develop breakdancing projects in prisons, hospitals and schools. This could take the programme from just being concerned with supporting an art form to using an art form to educate and support a particular group (see p.15).

Ways of talking

During discussions at the end of Contemporary Dance Night, the questions are usually about where it comes from. 'People want to know if it's foreign' says Ezzat. Contemporary dance has its roots in the 1960s counter culture in Paris and New York, so in a sense it is. But for Ezzat contemporary dance is a way of thinking which combines with local styles – in Cairo, contemporary dance is mixed with the elements borrowed from the Egyptian dance styles Shaabi and Baladi.

3. BBC (29/05/2015) Tunisia attack: Profile of gunman Seifeddine Rezgui

2011 was a transformative year in Egypt, but Ezzat is reluctant to dress contemporary dance up as revolution by other means. Does art create freedom, or is it a consequence of it? Ezzat admits that they 'can get away with a lot of stuff because we don't speak it', but the real change is personal.

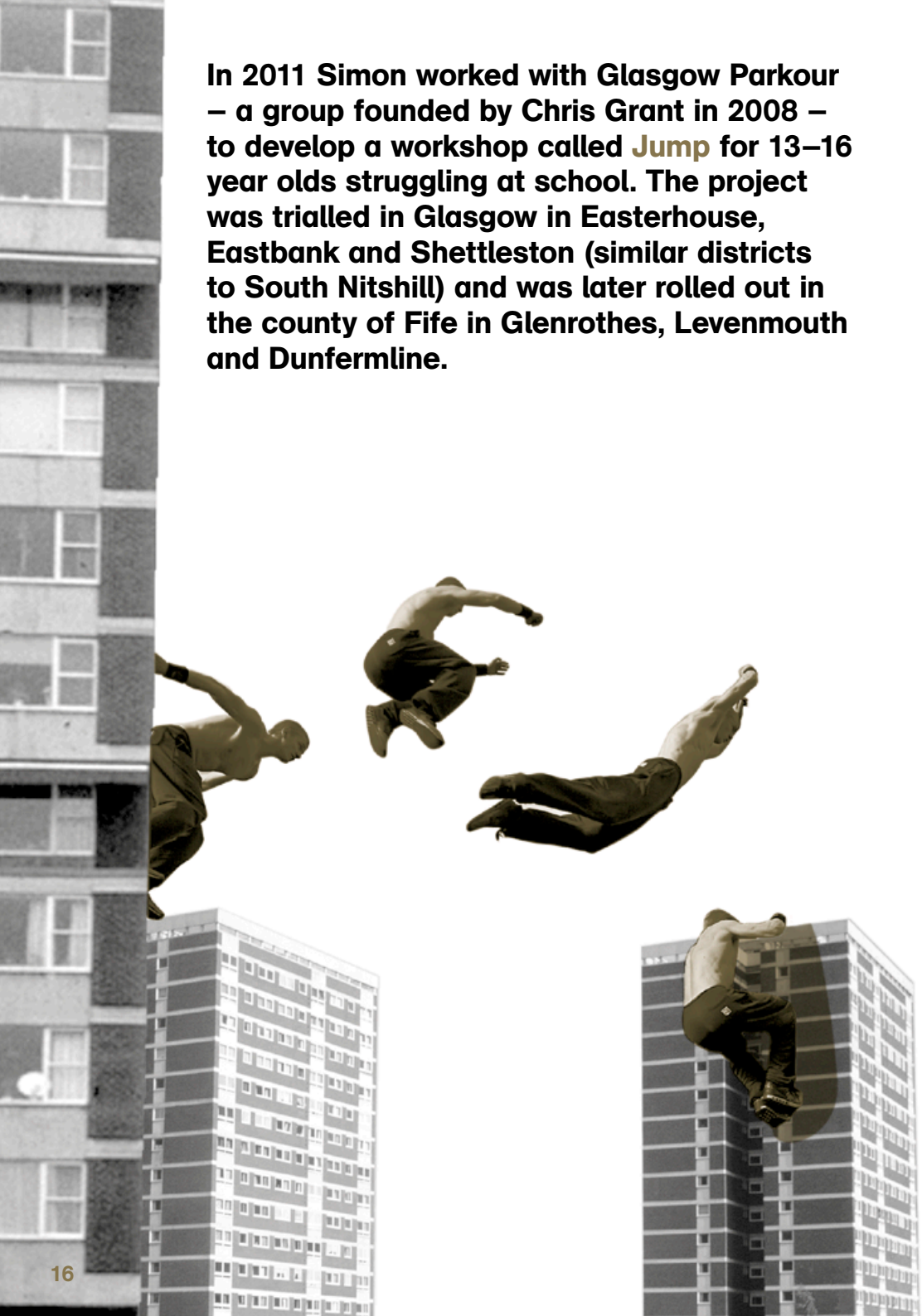
'Since I started contemporary dance I became aware I'm part of a community – it helped me to be more productive as a contemporary dancer, to push things forward. It's a different way of seeing. This is a time when something interesting can happen – once you change the body, everything changes.'

2. HELP

Simon grew up in the 1970s in South Nitshill, South East Glasgow situated on the edge of Pollok, one of Glasgow's four huge post-war housing schemes. He used to climb through a gap in a fence with his friends to run wild in an abandoned army training camp. They ran over broken walls, stairwells and abandoned tyres, running roof-to-roof. They called it 'the jumps'. 'There were loads of us, it kept us out of gangs', says Simon. 'Though eventually the gangs adopted it'

Many years later – after graduating from the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Simon was working in the learning department at National Theatre Scotland. It was around that time he heard about parkour – the french free-running craze which had been popularised by the filmmaker Luc Besson in the 1990s and a well-liked BBC advert featuring the free-runner David Belle, sliding across roofs and fire escapes to beat the rush hour traffic. Simon thought it could be a rare opportunity to make theatre and work with 'hard to reach' teenagers. 'It was a gift,' he says.

In 2011 Simon worked with Glasgow Parkour – a group founded by Chris Grant in 2008 – to develop a workshop called Jump for 13–16 year olds struggling at school. The project was trialled in Glasgow in Easterhouse, Eastbank and Shettleston (similar districts to South Nitshill) and was later rolled out in the county of Fife in Glenrothes, Levenmouth and Dunfermline.



Jump combined practical tuition in parkour with group discussions about growing up and making the transition between childhood and adulthood. During the 22-week programme, participants used the narrative structure in Joseph Campbell's 'A Hero's Journey' to create a performance on this theme – parkour providing a natural way of expressing overcoming the obstacles. Simon thinks it's a way for boys to explore themselves through dance, even if they aren't always aware of the fact. He remembers one in Glenrothes who twigged near the end. 'This is dance isn't it?' he said. He'd been working with a choreographer for six months.

There is some evidence that the project had some significant indirect results. Fife Community Safety Partnership – who supported the project – monitored petty crime and theft and noticed that in the year the workshops were staged vandalism, breach of the peace, petty crime and anti–social behaviour fell by around 40%.[4]

4. Fife Community Safety Partnership (2013) Annual Report.
It is easy to be dismissive of such suggestions, but given that a large proportion of this kind of crime is committed by a relatively small number of people, such results are achievable.

A social enterprise

From the Victorian civic museums to the community arts movement of the 70s and 80s and today's enthusiasm for what is called 'socially engaged practice' – Britain has a strong tradition of arts with a social purpose: art that reveals the underdog, museums that share rather than dictate and theatre to educate, inform and empower. All over Britain there are artists, writers and poets working in prisons, schools, hospitals and with children excluded from the education system.

> There are debates about the extent to which public policy should 'turn artists into social workers' but the sense that art should be for those who need it, is never far away in many arts organisations.

This October, National Theatre Scotland will stage a festival of international community arts called Home Away. Simon thinks that in Scotland the traditions of Ceilidh, Burns Night and hogmanay make it a natural convening point for forms of art that blur the line between artists and audiences. 'It's just in our bones' he says. The festival will gather companies from Rio, Delhi, Brisbane, Chicago, Kingston and across Scotland – suggesting that wherever there are arts organisations who are trying to work with social groups in need, there will always be collaborators and supporters from the United Kingdom.

Run Freedom

A version of The National Theatre's Jump programme called Run Free has been running in Kingston Jamaica since 2014. Morland Wilson, an arts manager from British Council had seen a DVD of a Jump performance and thought the process could work – albeit in a more extreme social context. Writing about one of the districts participants in the programme came from, Ian Thompson, a chronicler of modern day Jamaica, recently wrote;

'Parts of Tivoli Gardens, a sprawling housing project built in 1966 by the Jamaica Labour party, have become a state within a state, where the residents pay no rent or utility bills and the drug lords give themselves titles like "president", because they pretty well rule the place.'[5]

> Simon and his colleague Chris from Parkour Glasgow made two 10 day trips to Kingston in 2014 and another in 2015 to work with 50 young people aged 10 – 29. But even if, as Simon says, 'the stakes are higher' (some of the children don't even own shoes and two participants were shot dead during the programme) the method was similar to that used in Easterhouse and Glenrothes. Two of the boys who took part now have official parkour qualifications – a handful have moved on into education or work. But there's more to it.

5. The Guardian (25/05/2010) Despair and Mayhem in the slums of Kingston

As David Codling, the British Council's Regional Director of Arts in Americas says, Run Free belongs to and depends on its participants: their discipline and commitment to a rigorous schedule of training...has given shape to a powerful expression of self-belief, changing the way these young men see their own potential.

Several other projects in Golden Thread find ways to help social groups in need. In Cuba, The British Council has brokered a project between Cuba Film School and Into Film called Camera Chica which helps young people develop film–making and photography skills. In Jordan, Turkey, Palestine and Libya the British Council has helped Syrian artists work with displaced people in refugee camps, schools and transit centres.

I am Campbell

In the late 17th century Jamaica was used by the English crown as a dumping ground for Scottish prisoners of war from the battles of Dunbar and Worcester. Later Scottish merchants set up tobacco plantations farmed by slaves trafficked from West Africa. One little known result is that modern day Jamaica has more people per head with the surname Campbell than Scotland does.

Britain's colonial past is an unavoidable part of many Golden Thread projects. It may not necessarily be a barrier but, in projects that ask young people to honestly search for a truths in their own lives, it may need to be acknowledged.

Although the past is not an unremittingly bitter place. The Jamaican flag, based on the Scottish Saltire, was designed by William McGhie in 1963, a Presbyterian missionary who was a confidant of Prime Minister Alexander Bustamante, the first Prime Minister of Jamaica. A William McGhie who, as it happens, was born in Shettleston one of the districts of Glasgow where Run Free was first piloted.

Run Free does not specifically engage with colonial history – nor is it an attempt to raise or ameliorate the United Kingdom's colonial past, but for Simon, when working with art in a participatory way, establishing that 'both of your families have people called McClaren in them' can be a helpful way of establishing trust, and creating a way to find 'a shared sense of purpose'. But he's not getting carried away. 'We're not going to change the world... but we do believe in the power of people having a chance to tell their stories'.

Parkour Pedagogy

While remaining realistic about what a series of parkour workshops can achieve, Simon is optimistic about the future of the programme. Run Free is implemented by National Theatre Scotland but has also helped facilitators from Manifesto Jamaica, a youth arts organisation based in Kingston, to run the process themselves. Simon thinks that the programme, which at its heart is a way to combine parkour with a model for gathering and telling stories, could be reproduced like the Venezuelan out of school youth orchestra El Sistema (now independently organised in 7 countries around the world). He is currently in conversations in Venezuela, Haiti, Chicago, Serbia and Egypt about developing versions of Run Free. He hopes that the British Council will help him spread the model to other parts of central America. 'It's a structure that's totally replicable' he says.

3. METHOD

Every year the UK government spends £11bn on international development.[6] The debate about how development money should best be spent is an old one. In 1969 the Pearson Commission investigated the effectiveness of World Bank's post war development assistance and concluded 'technical assistance often develops a life of its own, little related in either donor or recipient countries to national or global development objectives'. The most recent expression of this is The Overseas Development Institute's **Doing Development Differently** – a manifesto with the signatures of over 400 development experts, which argues for a more long–term, in depth, collaborative approach to development. It complains;

> 'Schools are built but children do not learn. Clinics are built but sickness persists. Governments adopt reforms but too little changes for their citizens'.

The critique is one that director of Arts for Action Melissa Eveleigh succinctly expressed to us when explaining why her craft matters. 'People don't change through being told what to do.'

Melissa, a participatory theatre specialist, has assisted the British Council in Burma with the design and development of a programme which uses 'forum theatre', to help people across across the country understand justice issues. Forum theatre – developed by a Brazilian theatre director Augusto Boal in the 1950s – enables audience members – or 'spect–actors' – to intervene in a play and suggest different endings. Boal thought that progress was predicated on transgressing boundaries – so he created a form of theatre that encouraged the audience to do just that. This he believed, helped people 'discover that they could change the world.' This makes it a powerful way to have a discussion about an issue affecting a community – especially when it deals with entrenched, unchallenged social norms.

Spect—Actors

Since 2011 Myanmar has embarked on a series of reforms which have moved it from a military dictatorship to a quasi-democracy. There is a National Strategic Plan for the Advancement of Women 2013–2022, political prisoners have been freed and in November Aung San Suu Kyi's New National League Democracy won 80% of seats in the second elections to the new Parliament. But democratic societies need citizens to be able to exercise their rights – or at least to know what they are.

6. DfID (2015) Statistics on International Development

In Myanmar religious practices, poverty, illiteracy and poor communications infrastructure mean that public information campaigns and radio programmes struggle to make a difference to the everyday injustices of domestic violence, child labour, trafficking and forced marriage.

The forum theatre project was created by Human Drama – a participatory theatre company created by Pan Arts and the British Council in 2013 to 'tackle burning social issues'. The process works something like this. An intermediary in the local community gathers people in a hall, under a tree, in a tent or in an NGO's building, wherever they can. Four facilitators work with anything from 20 to 100 people. The facilitators work on physical warm–up exercises like saying your name and accompanying it with a gesture, so that people feel more comfortable talking about more personal issues. This also helps the facilitators identify pre–existing group dynamics between husbands and wives, friends etc. The group then move on to exercises that test social attitudes and norms – e.g. asking people to stand along a sliding scale according to how bad they think child labour is. This helps the facilitators to identify 'justice issues' in the group – which in this project turned out to be trafficking and domestic violence. These stories become the basis for a play which is developed by the facilitators and actors over a further 5 visits. When the play is performed the spectators are given a chance to suggest alternative ways for resolving the dispute or injustice.

Melissa calls this all a 'rehearsal for reality'. Over the course of the project, (August 2015 – March 2016), this process took place 43 times in townships, rural communities and refugee camps across Myanmar.

The medium is the method

So far we have looked at two different kinds of Golden Thread projects. First, the kind where art and culture are supported because they enable free-thinking. Second the kind where it is directed towards a specific social group in need. Projects like Burma Forum Theatre go further and direct art towards a specific, measurable outcome – in this case, 'awareness of justice issues'. As Melissa puts it 'broad (evaluation) doesn't help you when you're dealing with something as specific as a foreign theatre play. It's a very specific thing. You need to know what changes you want to make before you enter.'

An internal evaluation conducted by the British Council points to positive results – 90 per cent of participants said they found it useful and 80 per cent expressed a willingness to use resolution processes learnt with human drama in real life. But maybe the best measure of success is that participants, are choosing to come back. Where Human Drama have made repeat visits to the same community, more people have turned up to the sessions. In some towns there has been a six–fold increase over the five visits.[7]

7. British Council (2016) A report on the Human Drama programme

The report has also collected some impressive anecdotes about the impact of the project on domestic relationships. There is a story of the wife who realised that her husband was being trafficked during a workshop and rushed to the harbour to free him; another wife who subdued her violent husband with rights she had learnt in the workshop; a husband who – after attending a performance – asked his 39 year old wife for forgiveness for his unsympathetic attitudes in their marriage life; a trafficker who renounced trafficking and started a legitimate business; the refugee camp where aid workers say that reports of domestic violence have gone down dramatically since the workshop.

Either this is a complete fabrication, or more plausibly, the project is working in ways that leafletting, poster campaigns and radio programmes don't.

Learning by other means

Projects like Human Drama, which borrow methods from the arts to reach development objectives, show why art matters to development: because art is teaching and learning by other means, and development needs other ways of doing it. People who have been schooled in participatory theatre techniques or socially engaged arts practices are unlikely to believe the best way to work with people is – as one development expert put it – 'to drop in from outer space with a powerpoint'. Through the arts, they can incorporate their audiences' cultures and beliefs into their teaching methods. They know how to meet people where they are and take them somewhere else.

Golden Thread has supported projects in Nigeria that use techniques borrowed from theatre to explore conflict and social injustice and in Sri Lanka which aim to use dance as a way of bridging cultural divides.

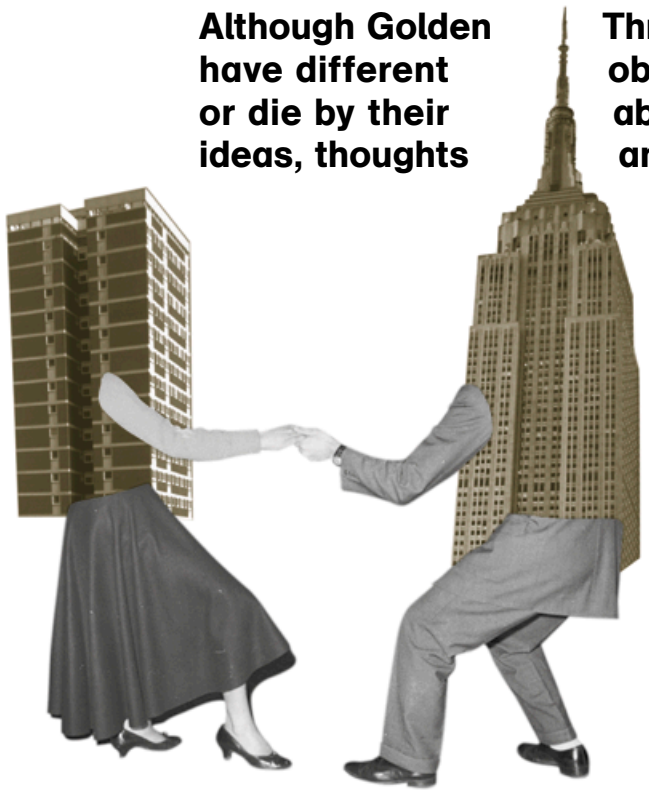
Projects like this are realistic about how much can be changed. Unlike televisions, computers and radio sets, theatres have a limited capacity. But maybe this fits with a modern day realism about how hard it is to change behaviour. Political activists, campaigners and marketeers all take different kinds of community organising more seriously than they once did. It's the kind of intensive process that Doing Development Differently calls for: (projects that work) 'focus on solving local problems that are debated, defined and refined by local people in an ongoing process.' or as Melissa says 'The best kind of forum theatre approach doesn't present one solution – it never ends.'

4. WE BUILT THIS CITY ON ROCK AND ROLL

Starship's 1985 hit **We built this city on rock and roll** tops lists of the worst songs ever written, but the Bernie Taupin penned sentiment is a winner – art and culture are a way for people to develop cities, a way for them to feel a part of 'progress'. This is what all cultural policy makers, funders and museum managers should want people in their communities to feel.
The question for cultural policymakers is how to create institutions, places and projects within which this becomes possible, both here and around the world. The We built this city on rock & roll 'theory of change' perhaps.

The Golden Thread projects suggest it begins with what technology writer Charlie Leadbeater calls 'the art of with'. For Golden Thread this 'with' works on several levels. It means using performers and artists from the UK to help their contemporaries around the world to do projects they otherwise wouldn't be able to, rather than simply showing them 'how it's done'.

It means accepting that a project may not always end where any one party – be they the audience, the artists, the participants, or the British Council – thinks it will. It also means working 'with' other artists as Simon is trying to with National Theatre Scotland – to establish rules, principles and formulas which can be taken and adapted. Although Golden Thread projects have different objectives, they live or die by their ability to pass on ideas, thoughts and techniques.



Golden Thread, though, has been a pragmatic response to an opportunity to work in a new way, and bring a new focus to work British Council has been doing for a while. Some projects were built on existing long term relationships between the British Council and artists, some aimed to translate the practice of the company to a new setting and others still were influenced by changing political circumstances or conflict. In Nigeria the British Council has tried to start a partnership between a UK theatre company it has not worked with before, and a group of local civil society organisations to use tactics from theatre to strengthen civil society organisations. It remains to be seen how easy it is to work on an equal footing when so much has to be created from scratch. Which brings us finally to the question of how we should measure the value of these projects.

Or did we?

When Cool Herc (real name Clive Campbell) wired two turntables together in the Bronx for the first time in 1972 and used them to loop the break section of a James Brown record, nobody knew that this would become the keystone of a global hip–hop culture. Or that when the Flavaz Army battled in Montpellier they were 2–stepping, head–spinning and toprocking to Kool Herc's music. This is another good expression of why Lewis Hyde thought art was a gift.

It also shows that artistic production simply does not fit easily into a log–frame that demands to know what will happen, before it happens.

There is an irreducible part of supporting art and culture – especially when supporting art as a carrier of free–thinking – that will always be an act of faith. We will never quite know what it does.

Here, we have also tried to show that many projects do have anticipatable goals and outcomes against which their value can be measured. Projects like Run Free Jamaica are partially an act of faith – in as far as any educational project is – but the project exists to educate, and help a specific group of people, and its value can be measured in the testimonies of these participants and in the extent to which the other educators are willing to try to adopt, replicate and spread the model.

Projects like Human Drama's in Burma, are the easiest projects of all to measure because they start with a measureable outcome – the level of knowledge about a specific issue. Yet this simply makes this project different rather than better. Just because we cannot always measure what we value, doesn't mean we should settle for valuing what we can measure. There are many ways to build this city on rock and roll.

GOLDEN THREAD PROJECTS

All projects took place 2015–2016.

Syria: Beyond Arts, Middle East

A grants programme for Syrian artists working outside Syria which enables them to continue to work and develop their practice. PARTNER **Prince Claus Fund**

Create Syria, Middle East

Workshops and training for artists who are keen to work on peace building initiatives. Artists are also given a small grant to work on a project that puts their new skills into practice. PARTNERS **International Alert & Ettijahat Independent Culture**

Active Citizens & HOLLA, Sub Saharan Africa & Middle East

Leadership programmes for young civil society leaders from the Middle East and the horn of Africa. Golden Thread supports the parts of the programme that show them how to use artistic techniques and methods to address social problems. UK PARTNER **The Change Collective**

Run Free Jamaica, Americas

A parkour education project for young people at risk in Kingston, Jamaica. Run Free helps young people develop parkour skills as well as opening a forum for discussing isFues that matter in their lives. PARTNER **National Theatre Scotland & Manifesto Jamaica**

Camara Chica, Americas

An educational programme for youth educators and community leaders across Cuba interested in developing visual storytelling and digital filmmaking techniques. UK PARTNER **Into Film**

Human Drama, South East Asia

A public information project in Myanmar using Forum Theatre as a method for discussing justice issues in communities across the country. PARTNER **Pan Intercultural, Arts for Action & FBX**

Say it through breakdance, Middle East & North Africa

A skills development programme for breakdancers in Tunisia leading to the creation of a shared performance UK PARTNER **Impact Dance**

Creative collaboration, Middle East & North Africa

A programme helping pioneering creatives in Egypt develop their practice in the UK either through exchange or collaborative projects. PARTNER **Various UK Organisations**

Turquoise Mountain Afghanistan, South Asia

An initiative rejuvenating and creating a market for traditional crafts in Kabul. PARTNER **Turquoise Mountain**

Dance for Reconciliation, South Asia

A community dance project creating new connections across Sri Lanka. It features training workshops and a festival bringing dance troupes together from across the country. UK PARTNER **Birdgang**

Acting Together, Sub Saharan Africa

A collaboration between Kabosh Theatre and several Nigerian civil society organisations, which will use theatre to raise pressing social issues in communities across Nigeria. UK PARTNER **Kabosh Theatre**

Hip Hop Shakespeare, Sub Saharan Africa

A development programme for civil society and arts organisations in Harare, Bulawayo and Mutare seeking to use theatre and hip–hop dance for peace–building and conflict management.
UK PARTNER **Akala, The Hip Hop Shakespeare Company**

Min Tala, Middle East & North Africa

Golden Thread has supported Min Tala, a pan-Arab dance network that works to build relationships between Arab countries and the wider world.

Action for Hope, Middle East & North Africa

A mobile summer music school supporting Syrian and Syrian–Palestinian children in Lebanon to develop their talents as musicians.

Choir of London, Palestine-UK

An immersive learning programme in London for Palestinian music students run by Choir of London – a charity who enable professional musicians to volunteer their time and skills. The programme featured visits to key London music institutions, festivals and schools and a series of performances alongside UK musicians.

World Voice, Global

A music education programme for teachers and pupils providing a range of approaches to making singing a key part of every day in schools around the world. VARIOUS PARTNERS

World Stages, Global

A residential education programme for directors and writers from across the world, which enables them to develop a new work during a residency in a UK theatre.
PARTNER **World Stages and various theatres across the UK**