CS Lab #5, Keynote #1: Leadership in times of Crisis

This is the transcript of the live **Keynote #1 Leadership in times of crisis** session that took place on June 3, 2020 as part of CS Lab # 5, co-organised by XTRAX and Circostrada.

Speaker: **Hilary Carty**, Director of the Clore Leadership Programme

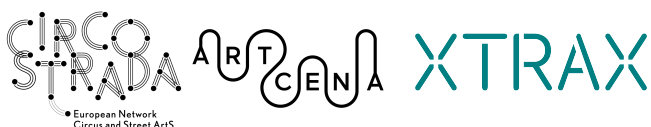Chaired by **Vicki Amedume**, Artistic Director of Upswing.

Transcript:

STÉPHANE: Hi everyone! Welcome to the 5th edition of CS Lab. My name is Stéphane Segreto-Aguilar, I am the Co-ordinator of Circus and Street Arts as well as the head of Circostrada Network.

I am happy and excited to open the webinar and share with you our first digital experience. After La Grainerie (Balma) Mirabilia (Fossano), CIAM (Aix-en-Provence) Riga (Latvia), we were supposed to go to Manchester in April but a pandemic, I am talking about the coronavirus pandemic, not the racism pandemic we are living in, forced us to readjust our plans.

Together with XTRAX, who is a member of the Circostrada network and the co-ordinator of the event we decided to postpone the CS Lab to reframe it, and to adapt it to the current situation, hence the following thread: Of leadership in times of crisis. I want to take the community and to express my deep gratitude to Hilary and Vicki for being so understanding and receptive. In the process of adapting we decided to achieve the same objectives: To encourage self-critical assessment, to propose a forward-thinking approach as well as tools,

techniques and strategies to become change makers, to reconnect with our own creativity, to build an inspiring vision for the future, to question what is stopping us from being a fully representative sector and now we can ensure that everybody is included and to advocate effectively for our work and to build support.

Before I give the microphone to Anaïs from XTRAX I wanted to take a few seconds to refresh your memory or get you up to speed on Circostrada. Circostrada is the European network for Circus and Street Arts, created in 2003, it is supported by the creative Europe programme of the European Commission and the French Ministry of Culture. It is coordinated by the French national centre for circus arts, street arts and theatre. It is made out of more than 120 members across 35 countries in Europe and beyond.

The main goals of the network are to build a sustainable future for circus and street arts, to capacitate professionals, to create new connections internationally, and to spur novelty ideas and projects within the two communities. If you are interested in knowing more about who we are, what we do, please don't hesitate to check out the website and to follow us on social media, to write or call us, since we cannot hang out after this. I wish you all a fantastic and inspiring session. I give the floor to Anaïs from XTRAX. Thank you.

ANAÏS: Hello everyone, thank you Stéphane. Thank you for joining us in this online CS Lab on leadership in times of crisis. I am Anaïs, the Creative

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Development and Partnerships Manager at XTRAX. To give context, XTRAX is a Manchester-based development for organisation of outdoor arts. Our work covers 3 areas. Firstly, we are the founding members and managers of the widest outdoor arts consortium in the UK, called Without Walls. We work together with 36 partners and festivals across the country to support the raising of the profile of the UK outdoor sector and supporting the development of new outdoor work. The second focus is on international relations we do this through Platform UK. This is a strategic project designed to support the international promotion and exports of UK outdoors artists.

We also offer a consultancy service in festival and events programming as well as delivering a range of training opportunities for artists and festivals. We are also the producers of the large-scale show by wired artillery theatre. So I would like to take the opportunity to acknowledge the crucial support we receive from Arts Council, without whom much of the activity would not be possible. So coming back to the CS Lab. This was developed together between XTRAX and Circostrada. It is a way of addressing some of the critical topics that we hope will' Lou the sector to develop a more positive and a meaningful way promoting equality and ensuring that we have a strong place in the wider cultural ecology.

This CS Lab is three main keynote sessions open to you all, followed by a practical session aimed at Circostrada members. We are pleased to say that we have more than 200 people from across 20 countries joining us online. Before introducing to our brilliant speakers I would like to run through a few

practicalities to make the most of the session. Firstly, the session is to run for 1 hour. Feel free to use the chat to say hello, who you are, and where you are from. You can add your country in there. For access purposes and acknowledging that English is not a first language for a lot of our listeners today we have enabled captions during the keynotes.

To obtain captions click on the bottom captions next to the Q&A button at the bottom of your screen. If you would like to ask questions to the panellists you are welcome to account the Q&A button. You can use the chat to speak with other participants but for all questions we ask you use the Q&A button. We are recording all of these keynote sessions, they will be made available following the lab. Feel free to comment, post and tweet using the #CSLAB5 and follow Circostrada and XTRAX on social media as we are sharing some resources and publications following the events.

So without further ado and before I disappear, I would like to introduce the topic for today's keynote session which is: Leadership in times of crisis and how to best manage teams and organisations in these challenging times. To address this topic we are joined by Hilary Carty, the Director of the Cultural Leadership Programme and Vicki Amedume, Director and founder of the contemporary circus company Upswing, who are mod rating the session. A warm welcome to both. Thank you for taking part in the CS Lab. We are delighted to have you both. I will hand over to Vicki to start the keynote session. I hope that you find the session fruitful! Thank you.

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VICKI: Thank you, Anaïs and Stéphane. Welcome everybody, I am Vicki Amedume, moderating the session. I have the extreme pleasure of welcoming Hilary Carty to give this morning's keynote. Hilary Carty is the Director of the Clore Leadership programme, it is a programme aimed at developing and strengthening the leadership potential across the cultural and creative sectors. Hilary took the role in autumn, 2017, and this was after six years of work as a consultant facilitator and coach specialising in leadership development, management and change organisation.

Before that, Hilary was the Director of the cultural leadership programme and has previously had positions with the Arts Council the UK's major funding body as a Director and as a senior policy maker. So, Hilary, I am really pleased you are here today. I will hand over to you, as I think you have prepared thoughts you would like to share with us.

HILARY: Thank you, thank you very much. It is brilliant to be speaking to such an international group and brilliant to be speaking to a group which is responsible for creating so many of the fantastic experiences that we have as culture across the world. It is great to be joining this conversation. I thought that I would speak for about 10 minutes to put ideas into the mix then we can make it more interactive and responding to any questions or thoughts that you might have. Firstly, may I say thank you to Circostrada and to XTRAX for inviting me to come to join in the event. It is an event that encourages us to explore

issues, to exchange opinions and such spaces are really valuable for gathering information, for gathering perspectives, testing what we think and what we know and using that to develop strategies.

All of those things are really essential when we are looking at leading in a time of crisis.

So, our current crisis is COVID-19. It is all-consuming. We did not ask for it but we can learn from it. Learning, for me, is one of the most essential leadership skills. To be able to reflect, to extract the learnings and then to put them into practice. So by learning from what is good, as well as what is bad, we can build our resilience and that too is essential to have in our kit bag of leadership practice. As I am experiencing it, I see COVID-19 having 3 distinct phase z, the lockdown phrase, the learn phase, and the lead phase. So lockdown was not just our governments telling us to stay in our homes, for us, lockdown was a lockdown of culture and cultural expression.

We locked down businesses, our assets and our resources to protect our organisations as much as possible for the future. For the many independent and freelance workers in our sector, lockdown meant cancellations ... contracts that had been months in the making fell apart in days, opportunities that were previously open-ended, shut in an instant. We have seen our livelihoods and the things that nourish us squashed on to screens and reduced to fit inside two dimensions. But our art is multidimensional and multi-sensational.

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So we have been challenged to our core, that has not been easy. We moved from lockdown into the learning phase ... where we have learned and we are still learning, as I think that phase is still ongoing, that actually, we can act differently. We can learn new ways. All those times we struggle with dates for meetings that we could get together for planning for project managing, now everything is taking place online, and we are learning at speed that actually, we can do things differently. We are learning to do things digital Italy, I for one hope that some of the practices that we have adopted we will retain.

Something about the expediency of the moment demanded that we became inventive and image native in our response. Well, invention and imagination is, that is our raw material. It is what we use as cultural activists. So, even despite the challenge I think it has been useful to learn that we can innovate and we can create at pace. We have learned to create new joys from our living rooms. And from our kitchens. We have sung, danced, we have created brilliant and really funny new art! It is not a substitute for the live experience that brings most of us real joy, it does not hold the same options for collaboration and connection with other creative people, and it does not give us that rewarding moment of applause that confirms the success but culture has not stood still and some of those adaptations, made out of a crisis can genuinely stimulate and entertain us in the new time ahead.

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The third phase of COVID, one which we are transitioning to now, I think it has perhaps some of the most treacherous pitfalls ... now we have to make those medium and long-term decisions.

We are no longer simply responding and reacting in a crisis, the challenge that shifts to leading our sector, our organisations, and our self-s out of the crisis and into what I term "a new normal" that is quite scary. The decisions that we make now will stay with us for the time ahead. Each individual organisation and sector will need to juggle their own list of priorities and determine what factors are critical for their sector and situation. I am not attempting to offer a guide book or a rule, rather to share some of the issues that I know arise to the top for cultural leaders at this time. I will lay out 3 themes that I think it is important that we should consider. The first theme is about leading with purpose. As we move gradually out of this period of severity we must learn how to engage with a new contract, audiences and communities. COVID has changed audiences' expectations and experiences of culture. Some now know what they have missed and others will not see a rational for culture when life is so hard and their resources are so reduced.

So as cultural providers, we need to face up to that truly tough question: Are we still needed? What is our mission or our purpose now? How, after the experience of COVID-19, can that mission or purpose best be achieved? These are fundamental questions. They take us right to the core of why we exist as cultural providers organisations and individuals. The road ahead will be truly

hard. We cannot expect that the rich and the nuanced blends of creativity and entertainment that we were a part of 3 months ago will return immediately. The economics tell us that things need to be different. We will not be just resuming from where we left off. A hard review of our mission or purpose is really important so that we can prepare for the challenging road to recovery.

My second theme is diversity and inclusion. Let me say straight away, Black Lives Matter ... as leaders, we have to live through our values as individuals and as organisations. I'm going to head up my issue on inclusion with that at the same time. Of course, all lives matter. That is also true. However one does not negate the other. So let us not be afraid to be clear about these essential challenges facing discreet groups of people at this time. Let us not become confused or reticent because we don't want to get things wrong or to cause offence ... rather than saying nothing, I think our role as leaders is to learn, to educate ourselves so that we can be thoughtful considerate and clear. So for me inclusion matters, it is a leadership issue, one where we need to act urgently and differently to get a different result. Few of us are satisfied with the many inequalities structured into the culture infrastructure before the pandemic.

So why build something, why rebuild something that we did not like? Which is why you may also support hashtag We Shall Not Be Removed, led by disabled leaders and there to prevent deaf and disabled readers from being ignored as we rebuild from COVID, there are many campaigns that need our support. The challenge with diversity and inclusion comes down to power. Few of us want to

give up the reins of power that we have had to work so hard to secure. Everyone knows that the jobs that we do are not easy, they are not well-paid. It is tough to get to a position of management or leadership. So we hold tight to what we have. We recruit in our image and step back from promoting accessible points of entry or opening wide the routes to career progression. I am not trying to be verbal here - it is my experience. We have an opportunity based on values coming out of the crisis, rather than simply rebuilding what we had before. So the challenge is to seize the moment and not to be satisfied with good intentions, leading the precious outcomes to fickle chance. We can act now to actively promote diversity and inclusion in recruitment, in progression, in management, through leadership. We can, whilst in lockdown, take the time to create momentum for a positive change for the future.

My third theme asks us to get comfortable with uncertainty. No-one really knows what lies ahead. We don't know the rules of engagement, the timings, the constraints, yet we need to plan, to prepare for a future that has a place for us. We will have to find our own right ways through ... that will be different for even of us, whether as individuals or as organisations. As leaders we will have to become more comfortable with questions that have no simple answers, to conjure and skilfully navigate dense data using them all as tools to support decision-making in the new era. We are finding in this time of uncertainty and ambiguity, it is fraught with danger but I suggest 3 watch-words that may help us through ... optimism, to be able to look ahead and to see what might just be possible. Even the smallest lamp can illuminate a path, so use any chink of light

to start buildings options and imagining the future. The second watch-word is courage ... to add, despite not having all of the facts and figures clearly laid out and transparent.

The third is collaboration ... we are each part of a bigger picture and partnerships and co-working will be priced more than ever as we go forward. So I am sharing those 3 themes as some priorities for leading in a time of crisis. Leading with purpose, prioritising diversity and inclusion, and getting comfortable with uncertainty. They are not the only themes on my mind but I thought I would offer those to get us started and then we can explore others through your questions and comments. Thank you very much.

VICKI: Thank you, Hilary. That was fantastic. A really good provocation for us to consider. I was really particularly struck by your last point, it is a point of conversation that has surfaced a lot in the preparation for the session and in the conversations that I have had with friends and colleagues outside that idea of the challenge of dealing with uncertainty and day-to-day it feels like our reality is shifting, that we need to adapt fluidly. I wondered if you had any thoughts, any further thoughts or words of advice about how to manage ourselves and our teams through these uncertain times?

HILARY: I think that is really important. Managing ourselves is really critical. I am always thoughtful of that at the same time on the, when you get on a plane and they say to fix the safety belt first before others, as actually, we have, as

leaders, to take care of ourselves, to be strong enough to be able to take care of others. So the issue of looking after ourselves is completely important. When you think about the time that we are in, it is really important that we mix well our professional, our personal lives and mental health and physical health and ensuring we have time to put that in place and to give it all some time.   It is really hard.

I remember the first 4-5 weeks of the crisis just being head down, trying to think, what on Earth? What? How? Why? What? Who? To grab something to say how on Earth do we get through this. Can we get through this, will we, who do I, what? So it really was head down. I, you can sometimes get caught up in that. I think it is important that even when we are grappling with this, and COVID is one of the biggest challenges we have had to deal with collectively, it is really important even then to take a moment when you can to step back so that you can see further forward.

Seeing further forward allows you to take in more people. It allows you to take in wider opinions and that in itself, allows you to have a better interaction with the people that you are working with. Looking after your teams means asking how are they doing, what is happening? And giving air time for the issues that are just on the side of the agenda and not just the agenda itself. I think it is a spark, it speaks to some of the new ways of working that we will need to adapt as we are going forward.

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VICKI: That space, I recognise with my team that we are having deeper and more involved conversations now than ever before. I thought that we were quite a well-connected team. But that care that we are showing for each other is so important and so valuable. You talked a little about the different roles that exist in the sector, Circus and Street Arts is a landscape made of many diverse parts. We have a large portion of independent and freelance artists and small companies as well as some big organisations and Government bodies that are all operating together within ecology and have very different business models and working practices. What do you think that culturally leadership means in that really complicated space?

HILARY: I think that cultural leadership is eclectic. It is diverse. I don't see it as a uniform entity. We all lead in different ways. It is really important to recognise that. I think it is important for us to look at leadership as being about status. So always about hierarchy. I consider leadership to be about behaviours. In a sector that is so diverse, it is important for us to understand how we are leading as individuals and how we connect in with the infrastructure and the organisations. To try not to obey one power balance or one power dynamic in that, so that it is always one way.

That is when we can use our leadership more effectively when we can understand actually, this is my moment of influence and I am influencing an organisation, a or as an organisation, I am influencing what can happen for individuals. So the interrelationship, the dialogue between the organisations

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and individuals which this sector encompasses as the power lies everywhere, that is something we really need to understand and to get comfortable with using the dynamics so that we appreciate more when it is the creative that is within us, who should be taking the lead and when it is the executive that should be taking the back seat and simply listening, absorbing and following.

We have to be flexible with when we are leading and when we are following and to understand that we can do both of those things. That notion, for me, of leadership starting from where you are, is really important.   It is empowering and we have to use it much more flexibly. We have to hold our leadership more lightly so that we can bring more people into the leadership space. If we don't do that, they will come in anyway! You know, we are at the time when individuals and groups are beginning to understand more that they need to take a stand, they need to enter a space and you cannot always do that with permission. Sometimes if you are not loose enough or open enough, you will find that someone will just kick that door down. So the door is open anyway. It is far easier if you are sensible and you just open it up.

VICKI: So, leading from where you are is something that resonates with me. I was lucky enough to do the Clore Fellowship a few years ago. It is a at the same time that appears regularly in the discourse around Clore. You are the Director of the Clore leadership now, how are you responding to the current situation?

HILARY: At Clore Leadership, as with everybody, in the beginning we were responding with shock, really. Trying to understand what this meant for

ourselves as an organisation, also our alumni and the wider sector. The first thing we had to do was to sort out what was the immediate and the medium and you know the long-term, we are talking months, in COVID time, as it were. Everything is truncated.

So what could we do straight away, in the medium-term and what were we looking to build a few months ahead? We had our fellowship programme, it was absolutely up and running so we had our Fellows, different parts of the world, completely in the middle of the programmes, we had to grip that and my team, I have to say, they've been fantastic. I really want to pay tribute to how the Clore Leadership team responded during the crisis in a really inventive and a creative way. So we had to pull the programmes together, develop new mechanisms for making those possible.

We started to create access avenues for our alumni. That was a great two-way exercise. Not only were we able to share, we were also able to listen and to pick up on the discourse and the issues that were being phased. I remember one of our board meeting, early on, one said, that the thing on their mind was furloughing, to grapple with that, so why not to do a webinar on it as everyone is talking about the issue of furloughing in the UK and who understands what this is? So we pulled it together in 3.5 days and went live with it, it was brilliant. That was a real moment for us to say "this is what we should be doing" rather than planning 6 months ahead, we can dos that as well but to do the things we felt people needed now. So we can do those.

We had 4 webinars, one on building resilience, learning from colleagues in different parts of the world dealing with crisis and challenge over and over again. To learn from those experiences. We did one last week on digital culture, what will it mean going forward? Yes, we have put everything online but what are the options for sustainability in all of that. And we also did one that asked: What is the role of the Board in maintaining that future facing objective once we are all in the middle of a crisis?

So those issues that we were picking up that people were grappling with. We have also put some short videos online called Leading from a Distance, where we asked people we work with on our courses and programmes to download their thoughts. To share what you are thinking, what are the responses. So we really tried to act in the moment. Underneath it all, we are now planning for the long-term. So we are planning about when can we come back, will the programmes come back? As with many organisations, our challenge is to take some of that really wonderful momentous, spontaneous, rather, planning and delivery and capture it as how we go forward.

I don't think we can just resume the programming, as fantastic and as valuable as it was, we need to mix it. That is what I think I see as, when I talked about looking at our purpose ... for us as a sector as a whole, we need to look at what are the ways that we should be delivering our purpose going forward, rather than just returning to what we did before? So, I have been really excited and

cheered by the response to some of the innovations that we have introduced quite recently and I see that keeping some of those is going to be really valuable for us in helping us to just flex our leadership muscles and maintaining that issue of being relevant going forward.

VICKI: Yeah, it is really interesting how this kind of crisis, this destabilisation and the inability to continue business as usual has created a space for experimentation. I have seen the different videos coming up on the Clore website. I love the mix of practical and the inspirational moments with some radical hope. It has been a real pleasure.

Just to let everybody who is watching know, that the, we are opening up to questions. If you have questions please put them in the Q&A feature. We will come around to them as we converse. Briefly, reflecting on what you were talking about with values-based leadership ... what kind of processes and advice can you offer people about how to really embed that within their organisation?

HILARY: I think values is a complex one to embed within organisations. It requires authenticity. I think that many organisations now do a values-based exercise at quite a superficial level and then promote it. These are the 3, these are the 4, et cetera, we are all good. But to really embed it within your organisation, it takes quite a long time. And it evolves ... so it is important to work slowly to develop values and to really understand what our values are for us as individuals and for us as an organisation. Sometimes they're not the same

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thing. An organisation will have a purpose and a value needs to be linked to that purpose. Sometimes as an individual, our values are not chiming with those of the organisation. That becomes a tense moment.

We have to work through those in order to really say that we are embedding our values into the work that we do. It is really important work. It is slow work. It is slow if we do it genuinely. It is work that has to be repeated and revisited and you have to question. You have to use your values to explore and determine the responses to things.   It is by doing that you really get to see, not just the headlines of values, the 3, 5, 7 but how they are delivered within the organisation. That is why I say it is a slow process to really work through that.

I think that you start by conversations about what is important to us. You start by conversations about how can we truly manifest what we say our values are? You dig up the examples when things reflect well your values and when things do not. You work through those. You have to create a space of permission, where people don't have to get it right the whole time. That is really important. It must be a place where people can question and don't have to be right or perfect the whole time. It evolves, it moves and language moves, so we have to allow ourselves the space to be real and work through to arrive at that shared consensus. That is why I say it is slow work! It takes time if you are to do it well.

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VICKI: That really resonates with a question that has come up in our Q&A section about transparency - how important it is to be transparent when leading teed teams especially in times of uncertainty, when you are uncertain yourself.

HILARY: Transparency is complex. I use that word a lot. As for me, few things are just black and white. I deal in grey, a heck of a lot! Everyone talks about transparency as if it is an easy thing to do. For me transparency is an aspiration. I will trying to always be transparent but I have also to juggle that with care ...

VICKI: Yes.

HILARY: Sometimes, if you try to juggle transparency and care you end up in that grey spot. How much do I share? So, sometimes in my position I will be seriously anxious about some issues that I can see ahead. I have to hold really carefully how much of that I am transparent about with those that I am working with, or our stakeholders, or audiences, what have you.

I think that transparency is something that we should always have above our heads so it is there and we are always dealing with it and always trying to conjure, what is the level of transparency that I can genuinely be at the moment in time? But I think that we also have to juggle that with care, with integrity and that's the values work, that is it really coming to the fore. Trance patterns why I for me is something that we always have to have as a watch-word. Then we have to juggle. I think if you work through with integrity that juggling is not easy but

you will find a way through. The thing is not to hold back, not be to secretive or act in corners, that does not help anyone in a time of crisis. But I would not pretend it is easy, either.

VICKI: Thank you. We have another question in the Q&A from Liz Pugh. I will trade: Safety has often been seen as a trump card over aesthetic and other considerations. This will surely get worse now, not easier. What tactics may we employ on a daily basis to bring together the need for empathy and care for our team and audiences with the need to blaze a trail and not to be risk adverse ourselves and demonstrating the courage that you mentioned?

HILARY: You are absolutely right. People use health and safety as a barrier when it should be an enabler. What health and safety is trying to get us to do is to really take care. Really pay attention and make sure that, not that we don't understand the risks but that we understand the risks really well and we respond to the risks. So what I would say is, make yourself THE expert on health and safety. Make yourself THE expert. If you do that, when someone says, "You can't do this because ... that is too dangerous." You can counter it by saying no, this is the risk, here is how we are to respond to the risk. Once you do that 2 or 3 times, then you develop a sense of authority and people allow you to take more risks as they get to understand that you are not just going to pop up and do X or Y, et cetera but that you take that into consideration.

I think it is going to be dangerous for us in the long-term if we lose our courage and if we lose our ability to take risks, as that is what we do as creative cultural individuals. But it does not mean that we should be stupid. It means that we should be really tell intelligent. if you innovate for the team, stakeholders, you must know what you are doing. So risk-taking develops a level of expertise, to look in the round, to take cognisance of the issues, to understand how you are to mitigate that risk. Then you can act with courage.

VICKI: Thank you. There is another question, often in the cultural sector we find an old leadership linked with organised lobbies and economic interests and sec material interests, from their resilience, they are difficult to replace or displace, can you give us clues on how to deal with the situations in a positive and a constructive sense!

HILARY: Yes, yeah, right! Give me the hard question, how to deal with the existing hierarchy! Thank you! It is challenging! It is really challenging. I think if we look at it in terms of not just sector interests but institutions or entities that have been there for a long while, they almost have that seat at the table, it is expected that they have the seat at the table. You can be in the kitchen, way back, looking in, saying, "How do I get in?" I think, first I want to admit this is a really difficult task. Because it is a difficult task, I don't want to underestimate the level of persistence and perseverance that is necessary to make change. If change were easy, we would have done it a long time ago. Now is not the first time we are hearing activists, campaigns, talking about change from different

levels. It is really interesting that, for me, that if you sit on the inside of some of those sectors or interests, it is not necessarily that you want to protect your interests but it is that you think actually, we are doing a good job, we are making a difference. Very few people, no matter where you are in the spectrum, think, "Oh, right, what I want to do today is to be average."

So everyone thinks that they are working well, they find a rational for the organisation to exist. So what we need to do, is to raise the questions. We need to raise the debate. We need to keep raising the debates. We need to infiltrate some of those interest groups that don't necessarily want us in there, and we need to step forward and say, "Hi, consider this." But the key is that it is not easy, it takes a long time. We must be persistent. One of the things that we need to do is to build allyship. That really means to look at who else thinks in the same way that we do, how can we join forces?

So, for me that issue of collaboration as a way of working, it is really critical. If we can connect with others who also see these issues as problematic or as holding us back, we can then find ways to join up and to be a little bit louder and to be stronger and to link arms and to move together. That, for me, is how you make change over the long-term. You find your allies, you push forward, and you don't, you have to expect that some of the doors will not open and you just have to keep going.

VICKI: So, persistence and a multi-fronted attack!

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HILARY: Yup! I think, Vicki there was a question that I saw at the beginning about the level of pain we are carrying. I don't, it has gone up the thread but I remember seeing it quickly. I don't want to ignore that. It is really traumatic right now for many people the issue that is in front of our face because of the incident with George Floyd, rest in peace. It is one about race. In talking about that no-one saying that it is the only issue, or trying to create a hierarchy of diversity needs but it is the one that is really on top of our agenda and reminding us about the difficulty of being creative within this moment in time.

I think it is very important that we own up to that. I think it is important that we look at how we are talking to individuals from different groups. How are we asking them to be at this moment in time? How are our questions going to land for them as opposed to for us? So we have a sense of need, we want to understand but is this really the time to ask someone to burden them with your issue or your concern? Is this the right moment? Can you allow them to breathe and to be? Can you allow discreet groups of interests to gather, selectively to discuss this issue and to respond and not feel threatened? Not feel vulnerable as you are not in there but to just understand that a discreet group might want to just meet together to cry, to shout, to scream, to celebrate, to do all of the things in order to regroup, take self-care and find a way through? I think that the issue of pain, if we don't acknowledge it, find an outlet for it, it will go internal, so it means it is hidden and it will make us ill. I, my response is that we need to acknowledge these things. We need to check ourselves to say is this

the right time for us to ask our questions, and how will it land with the other person. Sorry I wanted to make sure we did not lose that.

VICKI: It was definitely one to come back to. That was such a brilliant answer, thank you. We have a few more questions in the chat and we have probably another ten minutes together. If there is a burning thought to ask, please insert it into that space. I am jumping to a question from Andrew Loretto. This is pressing for the outdoor arts sector: The venue-based performance world is waking up to the accessibility of outdoor arts as a way forward. Have you thought about how the outdoor arts sector leaders can seize the momentum and make change to the centrality of the sector?

HILARY: Thinking out loud, rather than thoughts that I had earlier, I think partly the issue is to recognise collectively this moment. To recognise that those who are venue-based are listening perhaps a little more attentively than previously so. Now is a good time to mount campaigns, to link up so. Organisations like Circostrada and XTRAX have a window of opportunity with which to push forward but it comes from really connecting with the 3, 4, 5 issues that you can say will make a difference going forward so. It is about acknowledging and making strategic with the moment to say, let's do 3 things, let's use the space that we see now to make a difference collectively.

Something that will work for us as a sector as well as for working on an individual basis. I think that the strategic shifts happen when we work strategically, it is important when we see the windows to push through.

VICKI: Thank you. We have another question on the chat on uncertainty.   It is something that is playing on all of our minds.   It is a question asking: If you have more thoughts on how to deal with uncertainty in the long-term?

HILARY: Wow! So, this is where, please use the chat to share strategies! There is just not one way. Please use the chat, use this conference over the 3 days to share what you know, and the tools and the issues that you are facing as well as to listen in. Uncertainty just means we need, that the issue is about getting comfortable with it. So sometimes people think that to lead means to know everything. That there are some who really don't want to make a statement or to step forward until all of the facts are gathered and it is all lined up with a 3-point plan, et cetera. To be honest we cannot work that what I now, I can't see when we will be able to act with that much certainty again. We don't know the environment in 6 months' time. We don't know the rules, we don't know all of those things.

What we, what I find useful to do is to gather as many issues, perspectives as responsible. Talk. Join every conversation you think you can to listen in, to listen to other perspectives, what are they saying? How long will this go on for? Who think it is long, short, et cetera? One of the things that I find helpful, this is something that I am using, if you can listen into the conversations to be a part of the conversations, you can then find your own medium and say, "I'm not as pessimistic as that person but that person is too optimistic." It helps you to

judge where you are, where you want to be. So the issue is about gathering the perspectives and using the perspectives to find your own. Then you need to work to what is a novelty, what is a steady state and what is back ward or regressive right now? To lose what is regressive, to understand what is steady in state and to really make room for the things that are innovative. I am trying to hold at least 3 horizons in sight at all times.

The longer term, so next year, I am not focusing on it a big deal. I just don't know. But I have to have it in sight. I have 3 or 4 stakes in the ground that I think we should be doing this, and I hope to be able to do that, and if I get a chance, I would really like to do the other. So looking at that, so that you are keeping that vision in sight. Then working much more on the 6 months agenda. So what will we do in that time? Who will we be working with? You can see more of that. You still cannot determine all of it but you can see it much more. And then focusing on the stuff that is immediate.

So by maintaining the 3 horizons, it allows you to move forward. As you go through time, you will always be having the forward agenda in sight, keeping that medium-term focus on the things that you can do and completely dealing with the things that are now. That is a way that I am able to do the uncertainty but actually still do the planning and still do the leadership. I hope!

VICKI: Brilliant. It reminds me of something that I think you actually said to me that strategy is a process, not a fixed destination.

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HILARY: Yeah, that was a sensible thought!

VICKI: So, we are fast-approaching mid-day. I think it means that we are coming to the end of the session. Hilary, it has been fantastic talking and listening to you. I always feel a little wiser after being in your presence. I will invite Anaïs and Stéphane into the space.

STÉPHANE: Thank you so much, Hilary and Vicki for the inspiring thoughts, this clarity of thinking and your radical generosity! I only wish we could have lunch right now and hang out and keep talking but I am sure we will do that in the future even though it is uncertain, I am sure we can manage to do something together again. Thank you so much, Vicki for moderating the session. I know it is not easy to moderate between talking with a speaker, checking the questions, ensuring it is all flowing. You did a magnificent job. Thank you so much. Anaïs, you have something to share with us.

ANAÏS: I wanted to thank everyone for attending the webinar. To remind you can use the same link to attend the other keynote sessions that are tomorrow and on Friday. So they will start at 11am UK time and that is 12pm Central European Time. It will be slightly shorter, 45 minutes, to finalise the CS Lab we will have a wrap up session on Friday afternoon at 3pm on UK time and 4pm Central European Time for which you can use the same link. I would like to remind you that we have a few questions coming up as you exit the webinar.

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We kindly ask that you spend a few minutes to give us some feedback. This is always important to make the case for these sort of activities and to help us to ensure that we providing meaningful content. So, once again, thank you to our listeners, to the wonderful speakers we hope you are joining us from the coming sessions. Thank you.

HILARY: Thank you very much, it has been a pleasure. Thank you, Vicki. A brilliant job. Lovely working with you. Thank you.

STÉPHANE: Thank you.

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