



### A little bit of professional history

#### Jo Broad, Director, KindleCo

I originally trained as a **Musician**, back in the 80s, and have spent many years directly coaching **children, young people** (and some adult learners too) in schools, colleges, in extended services settings and privately, building their capacity & capability for public performance.

They say the best learning experiences are 'modelled' and to this day, I'm both grateful and hugely appreciative of the commitment **Essex County Council** showed during the 1980s (and still do today, despite funding constraints) to the development of its **Young People**, in and of Schools. I count my blessings every day to have been a beneficiary of the vibrant Essex County Music Service who funded me on Scholarships through the Conservatoire System to the Junior Guildhall, J\_RAM, for a gap year and beyond for the best part of 6 years.

The illustrious **Essex Youth Orchestra movement**, which celebrated its **60th Birthday** in 2017, shaped me for life and probably a few of their staff with it.... apologies in retrospect to any Youth Service staff, who are still with us, and may still remember a certain trip to Poland when I was 16...

You learn an awful lot about **hard work, self- discipline, collaboration, community** and the nature of **Leadership** in the Music world, especially in **Orchestras**. I eventually furthered my passion for all of these things, with a BMus. Hons in Conducting (yep - the type waving a baton except, I never used one of those routinely).

**Conducting** can seem an odd qualification for a later career in '**partnership & organisational development**'. But hang on in there....

**Those disciplines are very closely aligned.**

Effectiveness in both, pivots on the ability to think & plan ahead, to know the **background, middleground and foreground** of the picture (sonic or otherwise), to understand your available resources, get the best out of people - and have them illicit the best out of you – to find that collective ‘extra gear’ .

Most importantly, both disciplines ask you to create something collaboratively which is mutually enriching and **bigger than the sum of its individual parts.**

***Phew!*** Sounds exhausting ? Well probably, but it’s also exhilarating....

**I first worked for the Public Sector back in the ice age of 1987** on gap year number 1, repaying some of the debt of gratitude to Essex CC by becoming a peripatetic music teacher with the Local Authority.

**One of my first schools** was in a particularly challenging ward in south Essex, very close to my then family home. My interview at the School consisted of being ‘barked at’ sharply by the Head Teacher, who reprimanded me in advance of speaking just to ward off any potential I might take an elitist approach to selecting his Pupils for Music lessons. Without drawing breath (his or mine) he promptly apologised, seeing my startled face, and then burst into tears. He had just got off the phone with Social Services.

The child at the centre of that discussion, became my first official Pupil. The boy had a badly disfigured arm and a thumb, permanently at right angles to his hand. It had previously been broken but, lacking the medical attention it had needed some years before in a timely fashion, had healed in this way, so I was told.

I learned the meaning of ‘Creativity’ that day, and in every lesson this child turned up to with me for a year afterwards: that it is a mode of thought and an approach, not something tied exclusively to Artistic endeavour.

In about 1988, I entered the realms of working alongside the **Public Sector in a strategic capacity.** I took on the joint tasks of both artistic programming and business development of a **community-led Heritage venture** in West London working alongside a Consortium of Cultural & Tourism providers in a collaborative context.

I led the development of the Venue’s first **Outreach** Programme for Arts & Community Education. We also let in a few **Film Crews** to keep the tills rolling so occasionally got to hob nob with a few famous people: I recall Joseph Fiennes, Kate Blanchett (who was then not at all famous) and Eric Cantona..... in his post-football phase.... all pitching up to shoot ***“Elizabeth”*** the Working Title feature that was KB’s breakthrough moment.

That job was my first real taste of the tricky but rewarding '*creative tension*' which so often needs to be pulled off in organisations: to balance the needs of the '**enterprise**' with those of the '**core task**' (*artistic – therapeutic – educational* – etc etc)

Bitten by the **multi-agency** working bug, and a commitment to using the Arts for **social change**, a move to a **Local Authority on Merseyside** in 1998 beckoned and took me properly into the realms of Government, strategy and local authority stakeholders.

I don't ever recall the term **Co Production** being around then, but Co Produce they did up there and with a great deal of innovation.

Spurred on by that organisation's incredible (and enduring) commitment to **Learning as a tool for Social Inclusion, Regeneration & Mobility**, I established the town's first ever cross agency Cultural Partnership and with it, a first Creative Industries **business incubation programme for Young People**.

There followed a new **Youth Theatre, Disability Arts** Programme and **successful bids** to the Government's Standards Fund, Arts Council (in its previous incarnation) and a first dive into ERDF, all helping to light the way with resources.

A fulfilling stint at **Arts Council England** (as one of their Regional Officers for **Lifelong Learning & Skills**) in the early 2000s gave me a taste for **large-scale strategic programmes** as interventions would could impact at **Sector level**.

Tasked with leading the construction of their new three-year regional **Learning & Skills strategy** under a new CEO, and the regional roll out of two of our national programmes, which placed me alongside sizeable **consortia** of local authorities, public agencies, schools, private sector organisations, employers and artistic **stakeholders**.

The thrill of **multi-agency working** was pretty much cemented for me during those years, along with a love of **situational Leadership**, as an agent for change.

I was fortunate enough to have worked under a particularly driven CEO, with high expectations of her staff, a robust **commitment to in-house CPD and ambitions** for the Region, on behalf of her stakeholders. She enabled us to forge a first corporate cross-sector partnership between ACE, BAA and the then- LSC, producing a mainstream **Workforce Development** programme with Local Authorities and FE Providers, using the Arts as a delivery mechanism with **NEETs**. I had some amazing colleagues.

In life, I believe you must **grow where you are planted**. I was planted in **Oxfordshire** through family circumstance in 2004 and **KindleCo was born**.

Two gorgeous children have followed and what a time this has been! '**Co Production**' is now a personal & professional watchword. It fit rather nicely with '**Collaboration**' – one of my four professional values - which given the Orchestral starting point, brings me full circle.

The others are to work with **Compassion, Courage & Creativity**.

I work hard to keep developing my knowledge, empathy and skill set to support our **Public Sector, Social Enterprise** and **Charity workforce** communities. They are full of folk who strive every day, to enhance the lifechances of our Children & Young People, particularly those who are vulnerable.

I try to do a spot of **Social Responsibility** work each year, tiny though I am in enterprise terms, as and when resources allow. I have contributed in the past to the efforts of **Young Minds** and am currently supporting some of the **NCB**'s national work in Co-Production.

**In the last 5 years**, I have been fortunate to make new professional relationships, as my own journey through motherhood, the English Schools & Health systems, and increasing amounts of work focussed on **Organisational Development** bring me an ever-growing perspective.

More recently I have returned to **Coaching individuals** professionals working in Education and elsewhere in the Public Sector. Not Executive coaching so much as a blend of helpful **IAG mixed with Coaching** approach - prep for **Interviews, professional transitions, editorial** assistance prepublication of articles, have all featured.

I aim to bring a unique blend of skills to what I do, along with a sense of humour.

***Life is nothing if you can't laugh.***

**[www.kindleco.co.uk](http://www.kindleco.co.uk)**

***Jo Broad 11.07.18.***