Established in 2012 by the Mayor of London, the World Cities Culture Forum (WCCF) is the leading network for cities providing global leadership on culture. Since its launch, the Forum has grown from 8 member cities to 38 from across the world.

We believe that culture is the driving force in defining and setting the conditions for shared prosperity, and can help address all the major city challenges we face today. No 21st century city can be successful without it.

Our members have a shared commitment to harnessing the power of culture to enhance urban policy, tell the story of their cities, shape economic prosperity and improve the quality of life of their citizens.

As world cities, we’re at the forefront of current global changes – from migration and population growth to climate change and inequality. To meet these challenges, it’s more vital than ever that we work together and learn from each other.

That is why our Leadership Exchange Programme is so important. Launched in 2018 with support from Bloomberg Philanthropies and Google Arts & Culture, the Programme was designed to grow cultural leadership in world cities, encourage collaboration, raise ambition, and enable cities to learn from one another. It was a chance to go deeper into a city challenge and find practical solutions working with senior peers across the globe.

The first Leadership Exchange Programme received ten applications involving 15 different cities. Four exchanges were chosen by an independent jury to take forward.

This report provides an overview of these exchanges, including the challenges, lessons learned and next steps. Thanks to the renewed support of Bloomberg Philanthropies, the Leadership Exchange Programme will continue in 2020.

We are delighted to share these exchange stories, and hope they spark ideas and inspire future collaborations.

**EXCHANGE 1: CULTURE AND RECONCILIATION**

*Sydney* and *Toronto* took part in a two-way exchange to share ideas for increasing the visible presence of Indigenous culture and communities in the public realm, including public art, to advance reconciliation efforts.

**EXCHANGE 2: CULTURE IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

*Buenos Aires* worked with *London* to explore the London Borough of Culture programme, which shines a spotlight on local culture and gets citizens involved with culture on their doorstep.

**EXCHANGE 3: PRESERVING AND GROWING AFFORDABLE ARTS SPACES**

Led by creative placemaking organisation Artscape, Toronto hosted *Austin, Amsterdam, London, New York, San Francisco, Sydney* and *Warsaw*. The aim was to share ideas to protect and increase affordable creative spaces.

**EXCHANGE 4: REPURPOSING WASTE CREATIVELY**

*London* came to *New York City* to explore the Materials for the Arts programme that sees waste materials from different sectors given a new lease of life by schools and cultural non-profit organisations.
Culture and Reconciliation

EXCHANGE TYPE
Two-way

PARTNER CITIES
Sydney & Toronto

EXCHANGE GOALS
Incorporating indigenous culture into urban policy
Engaging with different aboriginal groups
Increasing opportunities for Indigenous leadership and cultural exchange

SYDNEY DELEGATES (6)
David Beaumont, Community Engagement Coordinator
Edie Coe, Indigenous Leadership and Engagement
Emily McDaniel, Curator
Bridget Smyth, Urban Design
Glenn Wallace, Public Art
Judy Watson, Artist

TORONTO DELEGATES (5)
Aylan Couchie, Artist and Curator
Matthew Cutler, Parks Forestry and Recreation
Sally Han, Cultural Partnerships
Lisa Myers, Artist and Curator
Selina Young, Indigenous Affairs

SYDNEY EXCHANGE DATES
29 October - 2 November, 2018

TORONTO EXCHANGE DATES
23 - 27 September, 2019

EXCHANGE PROFILE
Indigenous peoples face exclusion, discrimination and insensitivity around the world. Sydney and Toronto visited each other to explore how cities can pursue reconciliation strategies that include elevation of indigenous voices in the public realm.

LOCAL CONTEXT
The Gadigal people of the Eora Nation were in the place now called Sydney 50,000 years before Europeans came to Australia. Today, as a city of almost over 4.2 million people and Australia’s biggest city, over 40% of its population were born elsewhere. By 2031, this is expected to grow by 20 per cent, with many arrivals coming from China and India. Migration and multiculturalism are key to Sydney’s identity.

In Toronto, Canada’s largest city, diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Metis peoples make up the Indigenous communities of approximately 70,000 residents. The complex and multilayered histories of Indigenous culture in the region are still largely absent in the public realm, but the city searches for ways to elevate expressions of contemporary Indigenous culture, and promote longstanding Indigenous values.

THE EXCHANGE
In the first visit of the exchange in October 2018, government officials and aboriginal arts and culture professionals from Toronto came to Sydney. There they met with aboriginal community elders, support organisations and local government to develop a full picture of policy around indigenous culture. The group toured places of historical significance, key arts institutions and public art sites to learn more.

Sydney visited Toronto in September 2019 to further their engagement.

LESSONS LEARNED
The exchange with both cities emphasized the need to have Indigenous leadership be at forefront of any initiatives and policies meant to serve those communities. Major public art and monuments recognizing the contributions of Indigenous peoples (and also the traumas inflicted upon them) require municipal leaders to bring the community along with them.

Both exchanges emphasized the need to listen first to the community and to develop trust, as Indigenous communities in both cities may, for excellent reasons, have very little trust of any government initiatives. For example, Toronto’s desire for public art to advance reconciliation efforts will not succeed without Indigenous staff embedded within the project teams.

Both cities witnessed how Indigenous artists and cultural leaders can inform conversations, produce spectacular art, and make profound connections for everyone who steps onto that land.
“In Sydney, we made many new friends and connections with our fantastically generous hosts. They highlighted many opportunities for Toronto to pursue reconciliation efforts through making indigenous history and culture visible in our urban spaces.”

Sally Han,
City of Toronto
Culture in Local Communities

EXCHANGE TYPE
One-way

VISITING CITY
Buenos Aires

HOST CITY
London

EXCHANGE GOALS
Place culture at the heart of local communities
Support and celebrate neighbourhood creativity and diversity
Develop best practices for supporting local cultural practice

DELEGATES (4)
Enrique Avogadro, Minister for Culture
Magdalena Ayerra, Project Lead
Demian Adler, Barrios Mentor
Hilda Pomeraniec, Journalist

DATES
10 - 14 July, 2018

EXCHANGE PROFILE
Recognizing that local policy can improve cultural access, Buenos Aires visited London to learn about the London Borough of Culture, a grant programme that supports culture in the heart of local communities.

LOCAL CONTEXT
In 2018, London Mayor Sadiq Khan launched the London Borough of Culture to help diversify the cultural offer across the city and support local arts and culture. Following an open competition, Waltham Forest and Brent, were awarded £1.35 million of funding to run a local celebratory programme of cultural activities. Six other boroughs were selected as Creative Impact Award winners to carry out smaller programmes.

Buenos Aires is a renowned cultural capital with a robust arts community, but much of its cultural activity is geographically centralised, leaving many residents with few cultural institutions or activities in their local area. Endeavoring to extend the cultural offer beyond the city centre, city leaders in Buenos Aires saw this exchange as an opportunity to gain insights from the London Borough of Culture as they approach delivery of two new programmes with similar goals, Barrios Creativos (Creative Neighbourhoods) and Arte en Barrios (Art in Neighbourhoods).

THE EXCHANGE
Delegates from Buenos Aires came to London for 5 days in July 2018 to focus on promoting local culture. During the exchange, the team met the London Borough of Culture delivery team, Deputy Mayor Justine Simons OBE, leaders of major cultural organisations, and the London Borough of Culture evaluation body. The delegates also spent time with the 2019 winning London Borough of Culture, Waltham Forest, and a number of Creative Impact Award winners.

LESSONS LEARNED
Following the exchange, Buenos Aires will incorporate some of the best practices and ideas from London in the second Barrios Creativos programme in 2020, exploring projects with a youth focus inspired by The Agency at Battersea Arts Centre in London.

There has also been wider interest in the programme after Buenos Aires presented the exchange at the World Cities Culture Summit in San Francisco. For example, representatives from Milan visited Waltham Forest in February 2019 to learn more about the programme.
“Culture is a definitive tool for inclusion and social transformation; it should be built in to each city’s diversity. This programme allows us to work together with other cities to make this happen.”

Enrique Avogadro,
City of Buenos Aires Minister for Culture
Preserving and Growing Affordable Arts Spaces

EXCHANGE TYPE
Multi-city

VISITING CITIES
Amsterdam
Austin
London
New York
San Francisco
Sydney
Warsaw

HOST CITY
Toronto
(in partnership with Artscape)

EXCHANGE GOALS
Increase the supply and preserving existing affordable creative spaces
Create systems for sharing information about available spaces
Expand cross-sector collaboration for solutions to the affordability crisis for the creative sector

DELEGATES (15)
Amsterdam: City of Amsterdam (2)
Austin: City of Austin (2)
London: Greater London Authority (1) & dRMM Architects (1)
New York: City of New York (3)
San Francisco: Community Arts Stabilization Trust (2)
Sydney: City of Sydney (2)
Warsaw: City of Warsaw (2)

DATES
4 - 8 June, 2018

EXCHANGE PROFILE
Affordability is at a crisis level in many world cities and is affecting the creative sector in unique ways. Given the common challenge, Toronto partnered with the creative placemaking organisation Artscape to host seven WCCF member cities for a study focused on the preservation and development of affordable creative space.

LOCAL CONTEXT
Each of the visiting cities is independently working on policy and programmes addressing affordability for the creative sector, ranging from cultural planning and development incentives for creative space, to the specific zones where cultural spaces are entitled to additional protections. Nonetheless, with affordability becoming out of reach for many creatives in cities, leaders and policymakers are looking for strategies that have proven effective, as well as opportunities for idea exchange that lead to the development of best practices.

THE EXCHANGE
A three-day study tour, followed by two days of in-depth workshops facilitated by leadership and programme staff of Artscape, offered visiting cities the chance to examine Toronto’s affordability challenges and the methods employed by Artscape in their development projects in an effort to respond. Among the highlights were: tours of neighborhoods facing rapid development and community change, in-depth discussions with artists, administrators, and local elected leaders, and visits to place-making projects. In addition, WCCF continues to work with Artscape on an evidence-based policy solutions that can be shared with other cities seeking to stem the problem.

LESSONS LEARNED
Since the exchange, several cities have begun to build cross-sector partnerships and have introduced policy interventions based on learnings from the study tour. For Warsaw, the trip highlighted their lack of NGOs as intermediaries between artists and real estate professionals, and presented case studies for their forthcoming creative sector workspace report.

Similarly, in London, the National Infrastructure Commission used examples from the visit to reinforce the importance of retaining a city’s urban fabric in large projects. For Sydney, the exchange highlighted the need to build local capacity in cultural infrastructure work, and Artscape has since been invited to Sydney, Melbourne and Perth to further support creative placemaking strategies and share best practices.

Post-exchange, San Francisco’s Community Arts Stabilization Trust (CAST) was invited by the City of Austin to share insights on its mission and approach. CAST and the San Francisco Arts Commission have also used insights from the visit to shape the launch of their Culture Compass, a map that details existing and potential spaces for non-profit arts and cultural activities in the city.
“One thing I didn’t realize was so important was all the participants’ willingness to share their work stories and experiences and actively listen to each other. It’s so rare to have a space where we can openly discuss issues we collectively grapple with and brainstorm together possible solutions.”

Derek Weng, City of New York
Repurposing Waste Creatively

EXCHANGE TYPE
One-way

VISITING CITY
London

HOST CITY
New York

EXCHANGE GOALS
Reduce waste
Improve sustainability
Promote cross-sector collaboration and public-private partnerships

DELEGATES (5)
Jackie McNerney, Culture and Creative Industries, Greater London Authority
Josie Todd, Education & Youth Team, Greater London Authority
Sian Alexander, Lyric Hammersmith
Elsie Grace, Veolia London
Andrew Thomas, Lewisham

DATES
20 - 23 May, 2018

EXCHANGE PROFILE
Delegates from London came to New York for three days to explore Materials for the Arts (MFTA), a programme of the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs that repurposes materials for use by schools and non-profit cultural organizations.

LOCAL CONTEXT
London recycles less than half of the seven million tonnes of waste it produces annually, costing the city £2 billion a year. Additionally, research shows that cultural organisations in London often throw materials away unnecessarily because it is cheaper to do so than pay for storage.

In the face of similar challenges with waste in New York, the city created Materials for the Arts, along with a non-profit fundraising entity Friends of Materials for the Arts. Launched in the 1970s, MFTA collects unwanted items and donates them to non-profit cultural organisations, government agencies, and public schools, diverting nearly 1,000 tonnes of material waste from landfills every year. Given New York’s creative approach to managing waste, London recognized an opportunity to explore whether a similar scheme could work with its own waste management system.

THE EXCHANGE
London’s five-person delegation included members of City Hall’s Culture and Education & Youth Teams, and representatives from key partners: Veolia London (a waste management organisation), Lewisham Council and the Lyric Hammersmith Theatre. The group met MFTA staff and Friends of MFTA board members, donors, funders, users, and representatives from the Cultural Affairs, Education and Sanitation departments. The delegation spent a full day at the MFTA warehouse interviewing artist and educator ‘shoppers’ to understand how the service benefits them. The hosts also ran a roundtable breakfast where the group could learn from organisations across New York’s reuse sector.

LESSONS LEARNED
Among the key findings of the exchange was the need to raise awareness and build on existing reuse activities in London. Since the exchange, London has rethought its initial approach and will develop a communication scheme to highlight reuse projects to the creative sector. This has led the city to join forces with the London Waste and Recycling Board on their Circular London reuse and circular economy initiative, which includes targeted guidance for the creative sector on their website. In addition, the city’s Housing and Land Team is now looking into how future developments can incorporate a creative reuse resource, or even a combined storage facility for the cultural sector that could also host a smaller-scale version of MFTA.
“It was refreshing to be part of something collaborative at the seed stage of development. Everyone came to the project with an open mind, and a willingness to learn and think outside their comfort zone.”

Elsie Grace, Veolia London