

To whom it may concern

I write to commend the Creative Mentorship project which is based here in Belgrade and to encourage you to engage with it. I have been involved for over two years now, have seen its impact, and am currently the Chair of its Advisory Board. It is the most impressive mentorship scheme I have been involved in during my 36 year career with the British Council.

The worlds of culture and education need people who not only understand thoroughly the professional responsibilities that they have, but who also have a much stronger appreciation of their audiences and how to develop them, plus a significantly more rigorous approach to efficiency and to monitoring and evaluation.

In the Western Balkans there is a widespread perception that many cultural and educational institutions are moribund and that their staff – existing and hopefully new - need to develop a range of skills which will help them adapt to and survive in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

The institutions also need to be perceived by their societies as relevant to the changing environment in which they operate – with fresh understanding of leadership, of communicating nationally and internationally, of being enterprising, of sustainability, and of how to engage with communities and with businesses.

One successful way of achieving these aims is to link professionals with experienced leaders from a range of cultural, educational and business backgrounds. And to structure opportunities for these experienced individuals to share their experience, wisdom and maturity in ways which younger, emerging professionals can respond to by learning from them and adapting their own thinking to new challenges.

I see a significant opportunity for cultural and educational foundations and supporters to make a real difference in this region, and to be really appreciated by influential people in government and society, by supporting the concept of mentorship and by demanding that projects and institutions report regularly on the impact achieved and the difference made in their societies.



Tony O'Brien  
Director Western Balkans