

Our Vision, Purpose and Positioning

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British Council Annual General Meeting, July 2008

Our new vision, purpose and positioning say something about the world we want – one where people of different cultures live together better.

The best future for the UK in this crowded, dangerous beautiful world will be built by people, all around the world, working together to build understanding, respect and trust.

A vision of the world we want to see – but that is beyond our immediate reach– is important for an organisation like ours. We need a big vision to challenge us to constantly improve and do more. Being clear on what we do – cultural relations – is important too.

Cultural relations is not unique to the British Council. Cultural relations is building engagement and trust between people of different cultures through the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

Others do it too in other countries and we should encourage, work with and support them when what they do fits our objectives. Everything we do should be to deliver more cultural relations impact in the world.

How do we think cultural relations works – we believe that:

- Promoting the exchange of knowledge and ideas
- generates opportunity and responds to aspirations,

- builds understanding and co-operation,
- enables people in the UK and around the world to have more secure and fulfilling lives
- and ultimately earns trust and influence for the UK

So we believe the world needs more cultural relations.

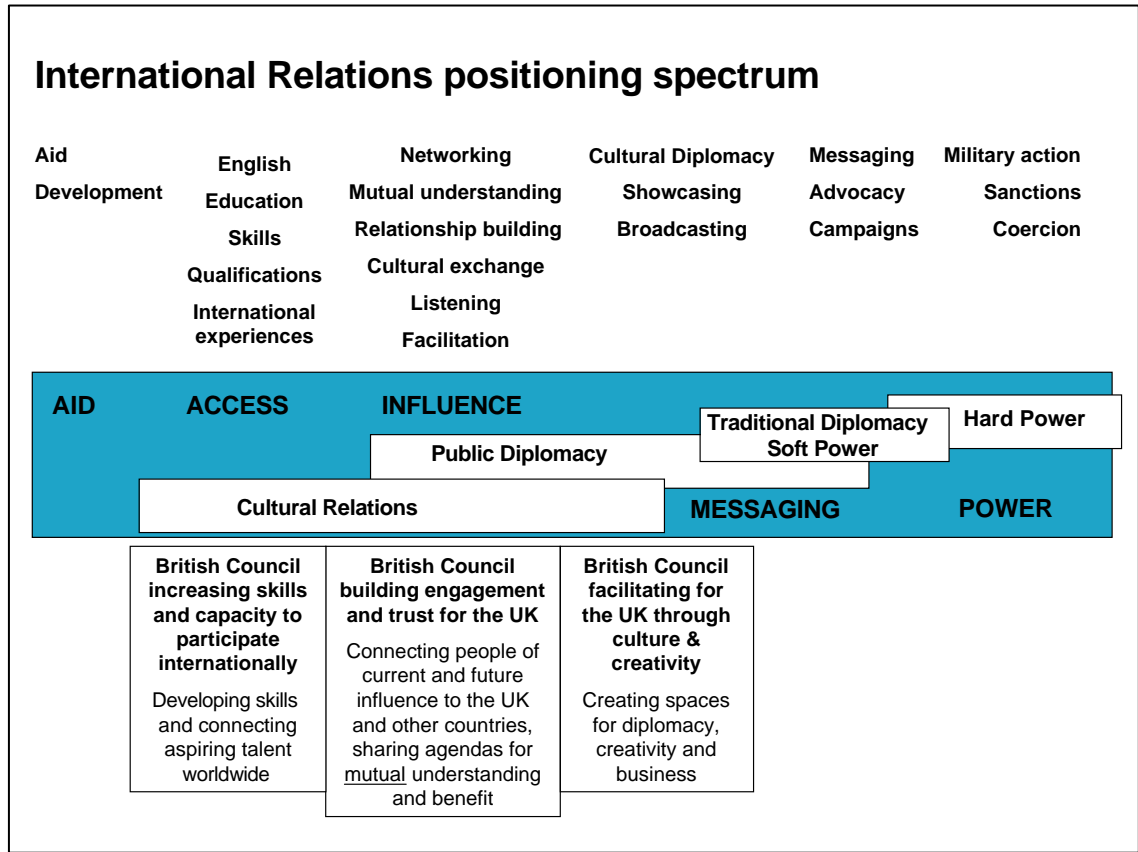
But what is unique to us – our purpose - is we do it for the UK and we do it on a global scale.

We have three programmes in intercultural dialogue, creative and knowledge economy and climate change which harness the power of UK expertise in education, English, the arts, sports, science and governance - for cultural relations impact - to build engagement and trust for the UK.

We also deliver contracts, run businesses and partner as well as having people, systems and processes which support what we do – but their sole purpose is to help us make more cultural relations impact and deliver engagement and trust for the UK.

Our new vision, purpose and values are an evolution, not a revolution. Many people from outside and all around the British Council and from outside have helped to shape them. And they belong to all of us.

Moving on to our positioning – this slide shows the spectrum of things a country can do in the world – the international relations spectrum.



On the right are the hardest things a country can – and sometimes has – to do, armed force and economic coercion. At the other end is the moral imperative of aid and development support. Both of these are at times essential but also expensive.

In between are the things the British Council does – which can help generate wealth and wellbeing very cost effectively. The two way sharing of knowledge, ideas, creativity, innovation, skills and expertise benefits both parties. As does growing the capacity of peoples to engage internationally through access to UK

education, English and skills. It benefits the UK and the world, as well the world economy.

The simple and pejorative version is:

giving helping sharing boasting shouting fighting

We do helping, sharing and through showcasing we boast a bit too, but with humility and a mutual interest in the arts, culture and achievements of those we work with.

Finally who do we work with? We recognise that these days influence in societies is more widely spread than ever, from blogging to citizen journalism the power to influence is in many more hands now.

So we engage leaders, but our primary audiences are those people who influence their leaders, their societies and the wider world and those pre and early career who aspire to.

We need to cast the net widely now, far beyond traditional elites and work with a broader and more diverse range of contacts and customers to deliver engagement and trust for the UK.

Some of our best work

- helps people grow at times of transition in their lives
- in societies which are rapidly changing

- and through programmes that bring together leaders, influencers and aspirants in their own countries - and connects them to ours.

So in summary our new vision, purpose and positioning - in conjunction with our three year Corporate Plan - will help to strongly align the organisation. They will support us in working towards a new scale of ambition for cultural relations impact in the UK and all around the world.

Finally - but you will be the judges of this - they will help us to explain what we do in a way that partners, stakeholders, our customers and audiences and the UK public, who help fund us, can understand.

But as I say you will be the judges of that.

Thank you