

## ***Leadership in times of crisis***

***Lizzy Moriarty***

When we think of crisis management, we tend to think “what should we be doing?” But it starts with something different, “how should we be thinking?” To answer this question, we need to understand what a crisis is and what it is not.

Crises come in different forms. What they all have in common is uncertainty. This points to the key difference between a crisis and an emergency. In the latter, the outcome is clear and the path to it is a case of following preordained well thought through procedures. In a crisis, the outcome is not clear, it has to be discerned and the route to it has to be created, iteratively responding to events as they unfold. This fundamental difference requires flexible leadership and dictates the nature of our response, shaping our thoughts and actions; it necessitates a different mindset and approach.

So, how to respond? The way out of a crisis emerges over time, so leaders must create the conditions for emergence. Leadership is key, but a style of leadership which is the antithesis of hierarchy. Innovation is the exit route and this necessitates relinquishing control, empowering others and experimentation. It represents a profound culture change for many institutions and therein lies the challenge.

### ***Biography***

*Lizzy spent twelve years developing the Natural History Museum’s international touring exhibitions portfolio, followed by four years with the British Museum managing the Museum’s international engagement activities. Now, as a freelance Museum Consultant, Lizzy is working with diverse organisations including: Cultural Innovations, a leading international, cultural and heritage consultancy dedicated to the visioning, planning and development of museum and cultural heritage experiences; Nottingham University in developing training programmes in museum management in China and two projects with Wellcome Trust where she was a Learning Partner for a major new public engagement initiative and carried out a strategic review of WellcomeCollection’s Touring Exhibitions programme. With regards to international cultural diplomacy, Lizzy has supported the Southbank Centre in the development of their international strategy to ensure that resources were matched to the Southbank Centre’s strategic objectives.*