

The Network Newsletter: tackling social exclusion in libraries, museums, archives and galleries

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The Network's Website is at www.seapn.org.uk and includes information on courses, good practice, specific socially excluded groups, as well as the newsletter archive.

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CILIP Libraries Change Lives Award shortlist

CILIP have just announced¹ the shortlist for this year's Award.

The three shortlisted pieces of work are:

“Enterprise Hubs – Northamptonshire Library and Information Service and the Northamptonshire Local Enterprise Partnership

Northamptonshire Library and Information Service and the Northampton Enterprise Partnership (NEP) work together to provide a new business information and marketing service for people in the region who have skills or ideas they would like to turn into self-employment or business start-ups, including many would-be job-seekers who cannot find opportunities in the local job market. Together the library and NEP encourage users to use their skills to turn themselves into self-employed entrepreneurs.

They are supported with free and low cost business expertise via drop-in sessions, one-on-one consultations, workshops and valuable insight into local markets and opportunities, as well as access to low-cost office and meeting space.

Since launching in April 2012 the service has helped over 750 people, 75 of whom are known to be trading in areas ranging from cleaning services to boat-building and from creative arts to veterinary lab services – this accounts for about 10% of all the county's start-ups in that period. At least 12 of these new businesses have become employers of staff or apprentices.

[Short film available on YouTube²]

KidsHub Library Sessions - Hertfordshire Library Service in partnership with the charity KidsHub

This project runs closed library sessions and special tailored activity sessions for children aged 0-19 and their families, who have additional needs such as autism, cerebral palsy and profound and multiple learning difficulties, recognising that this community was not typically part of their visitor profile.

Working with KidsHub, Hertfordshire Libraries learned that many parents of children with special needs worry that their children would be disruptive of other visitors in the library space, and that the children themselves are often unsettled by new environments and experiences. The tailored closed sessions allow these members of the community to use the library without feeling anxious or uncomfortable.

¹ See: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/news/transforming-lives-personal-local-and-economic-level-cilip-libraries-change-lives-award-0>.

² See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xqTYktW5d-Y&feature=youtu.be>.

This has opened the library up as a welcome place for the projects' families to visit during regular opening hours and many of the children and their families now have enriched lives with access to books, reading & the library's electronic resources and a welcome place to visit, socialise and integrate with other members of the community.

[Short film available on YouTube³]

Studio 12: Writing Leeds – *A partnership between Leeds Library & Information Service and specialist local film production company Left Eye Blind*

The library encourages visitors to come into their dedicated audio visual studio where library staff encourage them to express verbally their thoughts about their place in their environment, then work with them to turn these into pieces of creative writing. Left Eye Blind then work with selected participants to turn these pieces of writing into short films giving the writers the experience of co-producing a piece of cinema to industry standard.

Most of the users come from Leeds BME communities; many were excluded from school, experienced poor formal education and many have been long-term unemployed. The project has had a direct impact on their self-confidence and feeling of social inclusion giving them visible personal development.

Users have achieved an accredited qualification for the project and have gone on to pursue further training or study, or secured employment in the creative industries.

[Short film available on YouTube⁴]

Did you see ...?

CILIP Update

The July 2014 issue has an interesting article⁵, "Arts Awards – engaging young people", by Margitta Green and Gaby Koenig, which looks at how Slough Libraries are using the Arts Awards scheme, both to help develop local partnerships (eg with Slough Museum and with local artists) and to offer young people opportunities to take part in creative activities.⁶

³ See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bm0D2JFDyww&feature=youtu.be>.

⁴ See: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EdPEI4WGo20&feature=youtu.be>.

⁵ CILIP Update, July 2014, pp40-41. Further information at: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/membership/membership-benefits/monthly-magazine-journals-and-ebulletins/cilip-update-magazine>.

⁶ "Our mission is to support young people who want to deepen their engagement with the arts, build creative and leadership skills, and to achieve a national qualification. Through Arts Award at our five levels, children and young people aged up to 25 can explore any art forms including performing arts, visual arts, literature, media and

The August 2014⁷ has a number of interesting pieces, including:

- “Westminster’s Six Book Challenge wins gold”, which features a library user originally from Iraq [p6]
- “Highland autism library opens up access to e-books”, a brief look at the work of The Pines, the largest library on autism in the Highlands (which is run by Highlands Council⁸) [p8]
- “Tri-borough scheme faces new scrutiny as political landscape changes”, interview by Rob Mackinlay with Mike Clarke, the Tri-borough head of service [pp32-34]
- Martyn Evans “Carnegie Library Lab: innovate, collaborate and overcome”, an outline of the Carnegie UK Trust’s new programme [pp38-39]
- Philip Wark “Success at the heart of Midlothian”, where Philip sets out what led Midlothian to being selected as the *Bookseller* Industry Award’s Library of the Year (and including a number of key tips on professional involvement, etc) [pp43-45]

The Guardian

In the last Newsletter⁹, there was a piece on the *Books for Keeps* editorial which called for greater diversity in the children’s books world.

The urgent need for this has been highlighted by the response to Malorie Blackman’s interview on “Sky News” (reported in *The Guardian*¹⁰) which not only seems to have put words into her mouth, but also generated a stream of racist comments.

It’s good to see other authors coming to her support, and also widening out the discussion of diversity.

Museums Journal

The September 2014 issue includes important articles on:

multimedia. The award builds confidence, helps young people to enjoy cultural activities, and prepares them for further education or employment. Arts Award is managed by [Trinity College London](http://www.trinitycollege.ac.uk) in association with [Arts Council England](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk) working with 10 regional [Bridge organisations](http://www.artscouncil.org.uk). Since its launch in 2005, the award has grown quickly and is now flourishing in arts centres, colleges and schools, community projects, libraries, galleries, local authorities, theatres, youth clubs and youth justice settings.” Taken from: <http://www.artsaward.org.uk/site/?id=1977>.

⁷ CILIP *Update*, Aug 2014. Further information at: <http://www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/membership/membership-benefits/monthly-magazine-journals-and-ebulletins/cilip-update-magazine>.

⁸ See: http://www.highland.gov.uk/info/1361/childcare_and_family_care/432/the_pines_autism_support_centre.

⁹ *The Network Newsletter*, 159, July 2014, pp2-3.

¹⁰ “Malorie Blackman faces racist abuse after call to diversify children’s books”, *The Guardian*, 26 Aug 2014, <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2014/aug/26/malorie-blackman-racist-abuse-diversity-childrens-books>.

- Gareth Harris “Labour sets out culture plan”, which briefly outlines key points from the Labour Party’s consultation document¹¹ [p11]
- Rebecca Atkinson “Museums and older audiences”, which looks briefly at the work of Age Collective^{12, 13} [p59]

Management Today

The July/August issue¹⁴ includes a lengthy interview¹⁵ with Peter Bazalgette on his role as Chair of the Arts Council (although it makes relatively little of his role vis-à-vis public libraries and local authority museum). [pp28-29, 31-32]

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

Reducing poverty in the UK: a collection of evidence reviews

JRF have just published this important new report¹⁶, based on thirty-three reviews of existing policy and research on a wide range of social issues that are related to poverty.

The report is divided into five broad sections:

- The bigger picture
- Welfare and work
- Money and the cost of living
- Education, family and community
- Complex needs.

(At the moment, the pdf seems to be in a particularly unwelcoming format, in that it doesn’t allow copying, and the links from the individual section titles on their summary page¹⁷ are not working. However, it is well worth persevering with the report as it contains important background information for our work.)

¹¹ Although the consultation has now closed, the consultation paper is still available: *Young people and the arts: a consultation*. Labour Party, 2014, http://www.yourbritain.org.uk/uploads/editor/files/Young_People_and_the_Arts_-_call_for_evidence_PDF.pdf.

¹² More articles and info are available at: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice/older-audiences>.

¹³ An outline of Age Collective’s work is available at: http://www.britishmuseum.org/about_us/community_collaborations/partnerships/age_collective.aspx. Resources and other info available at: <http://www.ageofcreativity.co.uk/resources>.

¹⁴ *Management Today*, July/August 2014.

¹⁵ See: <http://www.managementtoday.co.uk/news/1301151/arts-council-chair-sir-peter-bazalgette-arts-culture-growing-twice-fast-economy/>.

¹⁶ *Reducing poverty in the UK: a collection of evidence reviews*. JRF, 2014. Available to download as a pdf (1300 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/Reducing-poverty-reviews-FULL.pdf>.

¹⁷ See: http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/reducing-poverty-in-the-uk-evidence-reviews?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Weekly+publications+and+blogs+wb+11t

Broader issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

Towards Plan A: a new political economy for arts and culture

The Arts Council, together with the RSA, launched this report¹⁸ at the beginning of November 2013. They also launched a new model for making the “holistic case” for the value of arts and culture¹⁹.

Towards Plan A ... is based on the outcomes from a series of seminars run by ACE and the RSA, “giving a public platform for key thinkers from business, education, government and arts organisations to explore ideas that will shape a new direction for our arts and cultural sector.” [p3]

“The over-arching aim was to develop a connected set of insights and ideas that can help the arts and cultural sector play the fullest possible role in economic and social growth, strengthening its investment pitch to a wide variety of partners and public and private investors.

Aligned with these aims Arts Council England is developing a narrative about the ‘holistic’ case for investment, emphasising social, cultural and economic impacts that support and reinforce each other. These seminars have implicitly fleshed out that ‘holistic case’ suggesting that the ‘intrinsic’ cultural, social and economic cases are made in terms of national and local economic/social/ place goals as well as cultural ones. This should not of course mean collapsing cultural aims into these wider aims. Instead the arts and cultural sector should be seeking to make these different investment ‘logics’ distinct and transparent developing specific goals and mutually reinforcing measures for each of these particular forms of investment and activity.” [p7]

The seminar series was informed by four ‘reflection essays’:

- Martin Smith “Yes, *Britain’s got talent*, but is that enough? An essay on art, commerce and the creative economy”
- Sue Horner “A new grand partnership between schools and the cultural sector – realities and possibilities”
- Alexandra Jones “City arts strategies in a cold climate”
- Mandy Barnett and Daniel Fujiwara “Return on cultural investment: developing the wider impact of the cultural sector”.

[h+August+to+25th+August+2014&utm_content=Weekly+publications+and+blogs+wb+11th+August+to+25th+August+2014+Version+B+CID_1417e00fdd07e121744c073a13456afe&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Publication%20Recurring%20poverty%20in%20the%20UK%20a%20collection%20of%20evidence%20reviews](http://www.artsandculture.gov/learning/2014/08/25/arts-council-england-launches-towards-plan-a-a-new-political-economy-for-arts-and-culture).

¹⁸ *Towards Plan A: a new political economy for arts and culture*. Arts Council England, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (618.55 kb) from: http://www.thersa.org/_data/assets/pdf_file/0004/1534567/RSA-Arts-Towards-Plan-A.pdf.

¹⁹ See:

http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/media/uploads/pdf/Holistic_case_for_culture_graphic.pdf.

Reflecting on these papers and the discussions at the seminar series, ACE and the RSA have pulled together three overarching themes and also a number of recommendations.

The three key overarching themes to emerge are:

1. The need to re-invent our grand partnerships – and forge new ones:
“...arts and culture has the greatest impact when arts and cultural organisations, business, local authorities, higher education and other key partners work together ... All of the discussions have confirmed that the sector needs to re-invent its key partnerships.” [pp7-8]

2. Case making and the burden of proof:

“Some key headlines were:

- the sector needs to get smarter at making a more relevant case. The seminars have ... highlighted that the sector’s measurement and evaluation work will have a much greater impact if it is clearer about the value case that is being made, and talks the language of professional peers and partners in other sectors.
- the seminars have also confirmed that the sector needs to be more nuanced and sophisticated about the burden of proof required for different audiences. So for example, in terms of Treasury and spending departments, the Arts Council must lead the way in working with partners to identify where we need the most rigorous cases, and sponsoring cross sector studies that deliver those hard facts and stories.
- the Arts Council should develop tools for the sector to use in their evaluation activity – bringing more rigour to how we measure success, and ensuring that our funding organisations find it easier to capture their impact and value.” [p8]

3. A coalition for action:

“The seminars suggest there is an opportunity to be more ambitious as long as the sector is willing to question its ways of working. Participants recognised that the arts and cultural sector can get better at building shared ambition and explaining why the arts and cultural sector should have a bigger role in social and economic strategy. The ‘What Next?’ initiative is an example of collaborative leadership emerging largely spontaneously and from the ground up.

Insights, ideas and tools are necessary but not sufficient. To build a truly powerful partnership will also require a willingness to change and collective self belief that the case for arts and culture can move from the margins to the centre of national and local debate.” [pp8-9]

The recommendations in the report are grouped around the four ‘reflection essays’, and include:

- Investing in our Creative Assets

- Working towards a more sophisticated Gross Value Added model for the cultural sector
- Review the focus and composition of the Creative Industries Council
- Ensuring that cultural education is strongly represented in the new schools curriculum
- Setting up a 'Creating Resilient Places' Commission
- Developing tools to support creative cluster development
- Place based cultural commissioning – “the Arts Council along with partners such as the Local Government Association or the Core Cities Group should explore the scope for place based commissioning in which arts and cultural organisations are co-commissioned to generate activities which go the heart of the need for modern cities to work more collaboratively across agencies, to engage the public more deeply and to foster more and better social innovation.” [p16]
- To identify and signpost shared learning and resource tools for everyday evaluation
- Education for the sector on “how to access and use wider sources of non-grant finance, from social impact bonds to other forms of financing.” [p17]
- ACE to commission “at least one ‘high burden of proof’ study – involving if appropriate randomised controlled trials – which would explore the impact of particular arts interventions in a key impact area (for instance health and well-being, education or community cohesion).” [p17]

Finally, the report notes that:

“... the sector has not been good at longer-term strategic thinking and analysis. In contrast, contributors regularly noted the greater sophistication of other parts of the third sector in framing and evaluating key challenges and priorities ...

The sector remains too reactive to these established trends, and needs to become more proactive in establishing the facts on the ground, and then providing imaginative investment based pitches to key public sector partners to ensure they remain vital partners shaping the future of their communities.” [p18]

Broader issues – Other Agencies

The new barn-raising ...

This important new toolkit²⁰ from GMF²¹:

²⁰ Gareth Potts. *The new barn-raising: a toolkit for citizens, politicians, and businesses looking to sustain community and civic assets*. GMF, 2014. Available to download as a pdf (4350 kb) from: http://www.gmfus.org/wp-content/blogs.dir/1/files/mf/1400515942Potts_NewBarnRaising_May14_final.pdf.

²¹ “The German Marshall Fund of the United States (GMF) strengthens transatlantic cooperation on regional, national, and global challenges and opportunities in the spirit of the Marshall Plan. GMF does this by supporting individuals and institutions working

“... focuses on community and civic assets that have long received a great deal of financial support from government. This primarily includes parks, libraries, recreation centers, senior centers, theaters, art galleries, and museums.

These are the places and spaces in a neighborhood or city that are a central aspect of our lives. They are the places to watch kids first play sports; jog; walk the dog; go on dates; acquire a love of reading; get online if we have no internet at home; hang out with friends; first see art up-close; understand a city’s history; or see a first music concert. Although depth of pocket can sometimes be an excluding factor, such assets are characterized by being popular and easy for anyone to get into irrespective of race, religion, ethnicity, class, physical ability, sexuality, or other defining characteristics.

In many countries, particularly post-industrial countries, funding for such assets is under threat from:

- government cuts aimed at bringing spending in line with the tax take (cutting the budget deficit) and at helping to repay bondholders who financed past public deficits (cutting the public debt);
- private spending constraints — reductions in business’s ability to spend on community activities and reductions in charitable foundations’ endowments;
- outmigration and/or falling property values that lower local tax revenues (notably income and property taxes) and the number of potential volunteers; and ideological challenges to certain things being funded by the public sector even when public finances are healthy.

The use of assets more generally are also under threat from changes in lifestyle such as reduced exercise, increased private socializing, and greater use of internet and social media.

The toolkit is intended for use by:

- central government policymakers of all political parties, for whom it offers a “big picture” framework;
- local government, for whom it offers a menu of policy options around raising funds and utilizing volunteers;
- non-profit bodies (from civic-scale asset support groups through to neighborhood and resident-driven organizations), for whom it offers a range of tips around promotion, fundraising, and volunteer management;
- charitable foundations, for whom it offers a range of insights into how to support assets;

in the transatlantic sphere, by convening leaders and members of the policy and business communities, by contributing research and analysis on transatlantic topics, and by providing exchange opportunities to foster renewed commitment to the transatlantic relationship.” [p ii]

- individuals with an interest in defending public assets or giving more generally, for whom it offers a range of ways to get involved and the encouragement that many have already trodden the same path;
- businesses eager to make a community contribution, for whom it suggests ways in which they can best engage;
- trade unions, for whom defense of assets, and with them public sector jobs, pay, and work conditions, are paramount; and
- urban and public services researchers, for whom it offers many findings and suggestions for further research.” [pp5-6]

The toolkit is obviously US-focused (although quite a lot of research was also carried out in the UK), and some of the topics and recommendations may not fit here too well, but its key messages are nevertheless useful:

- “on awareness, asset support groups can best make the case for assets continuously and collectively rather than simply pursuing 11th hour protests against cuts. The asset offer should also be marketed to the public;
- on funding, there are many mechanisms available to U.S. local government/voters to support assets, and there are benefits for assets and wider society of support also coming from communities, business, and charitable foundations; and
- on help, there is the potential, as yet not fully explored, for volunteers to improve the quality and attractiveness of assets (and, again, deliver benefits for wider society). There are some possibilities to fill jobs that have had their funding cut but there are various limits on what volunteers can do.” [p8]

The analysis of the four main funding models is also helpful:

- Privatism: “The privatist model is the most radical of the four models, in the sense of being the greatest departure from the present situation in most post-industrial countries. In this model, government does nothing in terms of ownership or funding of services, and whatever provision there is comes from some combination of foundations, philanthropists, social enterprise, volunteers, and for-profits.” [p28]
- Residualism: “In residualism, local governments own an asset but leave much else to non-profits or the market. This ‘much else’ may include large parts of the maintenance and management of the upkeep (for example, mowing parks and painting senior centers) and/or programming (for example, continuing education classes in museums and running of sports leagues). Local government is not necessarily ideologically opposed to such assets being publicly funded, but they often lack the funds to fully support any repairs or operation.” [p29]
- Partnerships” “...government provides support to an asset (sometimes by sub-contracting the management and programming of assets to non-

profit social enterprises), but any support is supplemented, or ‘topped up,’ by money and volunteering from civil society.” [p30]

- Municipalism: “...in which the city government does everything through its own finances and through its own paid staff.” Tellingly, Gareth Potts says “I did not find full-blown municipalism in effect, but it is included here as the natural book-end to privatism.” [p30]

The toolkit has ten key themes:

- Sustainable assets require a sustained case to be made for them
- Market your assets
- There are many local tax-related mechanisms that can support assets
- Local government can help assets by making the most of taxpayer funds
- City-owned assets may also attract more resource if run by non-profits
- Public fundraising can also raise awareness and social capital
- Charitable foundations add a valuable dimension to the asset landscape
- Enlightened businesses sees a connection between their success and asset quality
- Business can best support assets by using its own core skills, goods, and services
- The ideal scenario is volunteers that add to the asset’s appeal
- Volunteering with assets requires a support infrastructure
- “Additionality” needs to remain a central concern for asset supporters.

It’s realistic, but also hopeful:

“In the short term, the toolkit offers a range of tactics that can be used to raise awareness, money, and help but certainly no quick-fix solutions – especially for more disadvantaged neighborhoods and cities. However, over the longer term, the toolkit plots out what needs to happen for a future in which more people use and enjoy community and civic assets. The toolkit offers novel ideas on awareness-raising, notably around the marketing of assets. It outlines a wealth of governmental and non-governmental means to fund these assets, and it provides strategic thinking around how volunteers can help. Above all else, the involvement of so many different stakeholders should augur well for the effective governance of the assets and, as a welcome by-product, strengthen peoples’ connections, pride, and engagement with their communities and cities.” [p1]

Well worth looking at for some ideas – and some challenges to our thinking!

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACE = Arts Council England

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

GMF = German Marshall Fund of the US

JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation

RSA = Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce

This Newsletter was compiled by John Vincent, and all items are written by him, unless otherwise stated. Please send any comments or items for the next issue to:

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