



ISSN 1475-8202

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

Number 116, December 2010

(formerly published as *Public Libraries & Social Exclusion Action Planning Network Newsletter*, issue 1, May 1999 – issue 29, September 2001)

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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Tackling social exclusion – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

CASE: the Culture and Sport Evidence programme

As noted in the August 2010 Newsletter¹, the first reports from the CASE programme were published in July (including a summary report²).

“CASE is a £1.8M, three-year joint programme of research lead by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in collaboration with:

- the Arts Council England
- English Heritage
- the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
- Sport England

It builds on the success of Taking Part³ – the national survey of participation in culture and sport, by using the data in a variety of ways to inform policy across culture and sport.”⁴

In December, DCMS published a follow-on report, *Measuring the value of culture*⁵. This makes the case for much greater use of economic valuation techniques:

“... in recent years there has been recognition, both within central government and in parts of the publically [sic] funded cultural sector, of the need to more clearly articulate the value of culture using methods which fit in with central government’s decision-making. Thus the cultural sector will need to use the tools and concepts of economics to fully state their benefits in the prevailing language of policy appraisal and evaluation ... “ [p4]

This may not relate too closely to our work on social justice, but the report does argue for some significant developments, including that:

“The aim should be to give clarity on *what* DCMS wants the cultural sector to measure and *how* it wants this measurement carried out. This will help to avoid the longstanding criticisms of data gathering and methodology that have occurred across the cultural sector ...” [p5]

More important for us is the **CASE database of research**⁶ which contains “reports of research studies (not theoretical or political pieces) drawn from research published in English since 1997”.

¹ *The Network Newsletter*, 112, August 2010, pp3-5 – see:

http://www.seapn.org.uk/content_files/files/newsletter_ns_112.pdf.

² *Understanding the drivers, impact and value of engagement in culture and sport: an over-arching summary of the research*. DCMS, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (575 kb) from: <http://culture.gov.uk/images/research/CASE-supersummaryFINAL-19-July2010.pdf>.

³ See: http://culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/research_and_statistics/4828.aspx.

⁴ Taken from: http://culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/research_and_statistics/5698.aspx.

⁵ Dave O’Brien. *Measuring the value of culture: a report to the Department of Culture Media and Sport*. DCMS, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (524 kb) from: <http://www.culture.gov.uk/images/publications/measuring-the-value-culture-report.pdf>.

Searches under 'social justice' and 'social exclusion' bring up a number of interesting pieces of research across the cultural sector.

They have also published **Regional and local insights**⁷ which include:

- Data tables (eg Tourism data, Education data), and
- The Regional Insights Reports drawn from these.

The Regional Insights Reports look at eight issues:

- CASE Economy: Gross value added, businesses, turnover, employment, volunteering, and business start-up.
- Non-capital Investment: Local authority, central government, lottery and private investment in the sector.
- Capital Investment: Sector specific capital investment, local authority land acquisition and construction.
- Tourism: Domestic overnight tourism, inbound tourism, visits to visitor attractions
- Education: Participation in Higher Education, Further Education GCSE level education and in non mainstream CASE related education programmes
- Physical Assets: Number and density of physical assets.
- Engagement: Participation in activities across CASE sectors and levels of satisfaction
- Community & Wellbeing: Feelings on community cohesion, belonging, community safety.

There are three more reports to be published in January/February 2011:

- *"Evidence of what works: evaluated projects to drive up engagement* is a short compendium of 30 or so of the best studies we've found which look at interventions to increase engagement in culture and sport. The short report is accompanied by an small database of the studies making the application of the research to policy easier ...
- *Updating the CASE database: analysis to inform future strategy* is a report by the EPPI Centre advising how best to keep the database up to date. We will be exploring the options for the long term strategy over the next months, while commissioning an initial update immediately ...
- *The impact of culture and sport investments: a feasibility study* is a project we commissioned TBR with Cities Institute to undertake. They looked at a range of studies assessing the impact of a culture or sport

⁶ See: <http://eppi.ioe.ac.uk/webdatabases/Intro.aspx?ID=19>.

⁷ See: http://www.culture.gov.uk/what_we_do/research_and_statistics/7276.aspx.

investment (e.g. a new art gallery) using mostly secondary analysis of available data. This report outlines what might be feasible in the UK ...”⁸

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

The equality strategy – building a fairer Britain

The Government has just published their equality strategy⁹.

It begins by emphasising that the UK has some of the strongest equalities legislation in Europe, but that this has still not meant that people are receiving equal treatment. It goes on to state:

“This strategy focuses on two principles of equality: equal treatment and equal opportunity.

It is not right or fair that people are discriminated against because of who they are or what they believe. So we need to stop that discrimination and change behaviour.

And it is not right or fair that the opportunities open to people are not based on their ambition, ability or hard work, but on who their parents are or where they live. So we need to break down the barriers that hold people back and give them the opportunities to succeed.” [p6]

It then identifies some of the key examples where “more than legislation is needed” [p6], eg:

- Equal pay
- Varying unemployment rates amongst different ethnic groups
- Bullying of children perceived as ‘different’
- Homicides as a result of hate crimes
- Discrimination against disabled people.

The strategy also recognises the problem of ‘pigeon-holing’ or labelling people:

“The gradual evolution of equality law led to a ‘strand-based’ approach to equality with different laws to protect different groups. Putting people into different categories simply because they ticked a box on a form ignores their needs as an individual. At the same time, some people have been made to feel as if equality is not for them.” [p7]

⁸ Taken from: *CASEnews*, January 2011.

⁹ *The equality strategy – building a fairer Britain*. Government Equalities Office, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (881.34 kb) from: <http://www.equalities.gov.uk/pdf/GEO%20Equality%20Strategy%20tagged%20version.pdf>.

The strategy states that “despite billions of pounds of government spending, many opportunities remain closed to the disadvantaged” [p7], and gives some examples, including:

- “The chances for children in lower income families of being socially mobile are lower in the UK than most international counterparts.” [p7]
- The difference in life-expectancy between people in higher and lower socio-economic groups
- “Persistent inequalities exist for some groups. For example, under 10 per cent of Gypsy and Traveller pupils attain five GCSEs or equivalent at A*-C grades including English and maths compared with over 50 per cent for the average population.” [p7]
- “Black Caribbean pupils are three times more likely to be permanently excluded than the school population as a whole.” [p7]

The strategy then stresses the importance of equality, both in economic terms (“the National Audit Office estimated that the overall cost to the economy from failure to fully use the talents of people from ethnic minorities could be around £8.6 billion annually” [p8]), and also because of the need for fairness:

“We want a fair society where every child has the opportunity to progress as far as their talents will take them, not one in which people’s chances are driven by where they come from, how others see them, or who their parents are. We need a labour market that draws on the talents of all, not one in which people are written off because of outdated perceptions.” [p8]

So, how is this all going to happen? The strategy then goes on to outline the principles for change, which include:

- “Creating equal opportunities for all: moving from looking at solutions geared to special treatment for ‘groups’ to developing frameworks that help create fairness and opportunities for everyone by, for example, extending the right to request flexible working to all, and not simply those with caring responsibilities. Equal treatment and equal opportunities for all does not mean uniformity – it means giving everyone an equal right to be treated fairly as an individual, recognising both their needs and their talents and giving them an equal opportunity to progress.” [p9]
- Devolving power to people – “Instead of top-down targets we will devolve power, free up businesses, public services, the voluntary sector, communities and citizens to develop solutions, and promote good practice.” [p9]
- Transparency: “The reshaped public sector Equality Duty will require public bodies to publish more information on equality than before, and demonstrate how they are delivering improvement, replacing bureaucratic accountability with democratic accountability.” [p9]
- Supporting social action: this will include supporting and promoting “programmes which work effectively across social divides. For example, the National Citizen Service will bring together 16-year-olds from different backgrounds and around the country to become community volunteers and join in outdoor pursuits.” [p9]
- Embedding equality in everything we do.

Having given the overall direction of travel, the strategy then looks in much more depth at:

- Early years, education and social mobility
- A fair and flexible labour market
- Opening up public services and empowering individuals and communities
- Changing culture and attitudes
- Making it happen.

The following are just examples from each theme, to give a flavour of the sorts of actions the Government is going to take.

Early years

- “promote the creation of new community-led public services, learning from organisations such as the National Childbirth Trust which works with single, teenage mothers to spread knowledge and good practice” [p11]
- “extend free early years education to all disadvantaged 2-year-olds from 2013;
- take Sure Start back to its original purpose of improving the life chances of disadvantaged children. Sure Start services will target early intervention on the most disadvantaged or at risk young families.” [p11]

Schools and young people

- “set up a new Ministerial Working Group to drive action across government to tackle the wide range of inequalities and poor social outcomes experienced by Gypsies and Travellers. Forty-eight local authorities are already offering targeted support to Gypsy, Roma and Traveller pupils;
- set out next steps for Special Education Needs (SEN) and Disabilities, including early identification and assessment, funding, family support and school choice, in a Green Paper to be published at the end of 2010; and
- support young people’s transitions to adulthood by raising the participation age in education to 18 by 2015 ...” [p12]

Poverty, work and social mobility

- “we will publish a social mobility strategy by February 2011.” [p13]

A fair and flexible labour market

- Working towards equal pay and progression¹⁰

¹⁰ Bearing in mind, though, that the Government has just “scrapped plans to force big businesses to disclose the difference in pay for men and women they employ ...” *The Independent*, 3 December, p45 – see:

- “improve careers advice for girls, women, ethnic minorities, disabled people and others who can be disadvantaged by occupational segregation, to help ensure that they are aware of the options open to them;
- from April 2011, allow employers, on a permissive basis, to apply voluntary positive action in recruitment and promotion processes when faced with two or more candidates of equal merit, to address under-representation in the workforce. This does not mean ‘quotas’ or giving someone a job just because they are a woman, disabled or from an ethnic minority – positive discrimination is not acceptable and is unlawful” [p15]
- More flexible working
- Phase out the Default Retirement Age
- New programmes and more emphasis on finding and staying in work.

Opening up public services and empowering individuals and communities

- Devolving power and control, including “open up delivery of public services to local community groups, charities, faith groups, and other civic organisations” [p18]
- Widen participation in public life, including:
 - “under the National Citizen Service programme, pilot a structured summer programme to give young people from all backgrounds and abilities an opportunity to develop the skills needed to be active and responsible citizens, mix with people from different backgrounds and start getting involved in their communities;
 - provide extra support to tackle the particular obstacles faced by disabled people who want to become MPs, councillors or other elected officials; and
 - consider ways to support LGB&T people to get more involved in their community – ranging from becoming a school governor to standing for Parliament – based on research due to be published later this year on the barriers that LGB&T people face when they want to participate in civil society.” [p19]

Changing culture and attitudes

- “... introduce the new Equality Duty, which will require all public bodies to have due regard to the need to foster good relations between different groups. We will issue clear guidance so that organisations know what they need to do on this;
- work with anti-bullying organisations with a proven track record of tackling prejudice-based bullying, to support schools in tackling all forms of bullying, including homophobic and transphobic bullying. We will reinforce this through our streamlined guidance on bullying

<http://www.independent.co.uk/news/business/news/government-scraps-labours-planned-rules-on-equal-pay-2149721.html>.

and have included action to tackle bullying in the Schools White paper;

- work with governing bodies of different sports to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport;
- publish research on how to prevent and respond to the bullying of disabled children and children with Special Education Needs (SEN)” [p20]
- Tackling violence and hate crime.

Making it happen.

- More accountable and transparent public services
- Putting equality at the heart of government

The strategy document concludes:

“Government will act as a leader, a catalyst and an advocate for change. We will continue to make targeted interventions where these will make a real difference, but on its own government can only ever make limited progress.

We will work with people, communities and businesses to empower them to enact change. Only if we do that; only if we work with the grain of human nature, not against it, will we achieve the fairer, more equal and more prosperous society that we all want to see.” [p24]

There is a huge amount here for us to work through – and also some indications of ‘next steps’ that the Government will take, or require us to take. This is going to be a key document ...

The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults ...

The report¹¹ of the Independent Review, chaired by Frank Field, has just been published.

The Review has had major coverage in the media, so this assessment just draws attention to key issues for our sector. Its aims were to:

- “generate a broader debate about the nature and extent of poverty in the UK;
- examine the case for reforms to poverty measures, in particular for the inclusion of non-financial elements;
- explore how a child’s home environment affects their chances of being ready to take full advantage of their schooling; and

¹¹ Frank Field. *The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults: the report of the Independent Review on Poverty and Life Chances*. Cabinet Office, 2010. Available to download as a pdf (kb) from: <http://povertyreview.independent.gov.uk/media/20254/poverty-report.pdf>.

- recommend potential action by government and other institutions to reduce poverty and enhance life chances for the least advantaged, consistent with the Government’s fiscal strategy.” [p5]

Key findings reinforce the work that many of us have been undertaking for a long time, ie:

“The Review has concluded that the UK needs to address the issue of child poverty in a fundamentally different way if it is to make a real change to children’s life chances as adults.

We have found overwhelming evidence that children’s life chances are most heavily predicated on their development in the first five years of life. It is family background, parental education, good parenting and the opportunities for learning and development in those crucial years that together matter more to children than money, in determining whether their potential is realised in adult life. The things that matter most are a healthy pregnancy; good maternal mental health; secure bonding with the child; love and responsiveness of parents along with clear boundaries, as well as opportunities for a child’s cognitive, language and social and emotional development. Good services matter too: health services, Children’s Centres and high quality childcare.” [p5]

The major over-arching recommendations have also been well-covered in the media:

- “To prevent poor children from becoming poor adults the Review proposes establishing a set of Life Chances Indicators that measure how successful we are as a country in making more equal life’s outcomes for all children ...
- To drive this policy the Review proposes establishing the ‘Foundation Years’ covering the period from the womb to five. The Foundation Years should become the first pillar of a new tripartite education system: the Foundation Years leading to school years leading to further, higher and continuing education.” [p6]

The aim should be “to establish the Foundation Years as of equal status and importance in the public mind to primary and secondary school years; and to ensure that child development and services during those years are as well understood.” [p6]

The Review emphasises the important role that all service-providers should play in supporting young children and their families in an integrated way.

In addition:

“The Review recommends a new suite of measures to run alongside the existing financial poverty measures. The new measures will inform and drive policy, as well as spending decisions aimed at narrowing the outcome gaps between children from low and higher income families. The Review’s primary measurement recommendation is that the Government adopts a new set of Life Chances Indicators. These

indicators will measure annual progress at a national level on a range of factors in young children which we know to be predictive of children's future outcomes, and will be created using national survey data." [p8]

The Review mentions the fundamental role of reading – to and by – young children, and also cites (from the Millennium Cohort Study¹²) the six activities that are important for creating a good home learning environment:

- “reading to their child;
- taking their child to the library;
- helping their child learn the alphabet;
- teaching their child numbers or counting;
- teaching their child songs, poems or nursery rhymes; and
- painting or drawing at home.” [p74]

it remains to be seen how far the recommendations are taken on board, but the Review argues a very strong case for work with the Foundation Years.

Abbreviations and acronyms

DCMS = Department for Culture, Media and Sport

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December 2010

¹² See: <http://www.esds.ac.uk/longitudinal/access/mcs/l33359.asp>. Also included in the Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) study, see, for example: <http://eppe.ioe.ac.uk/eppe/eppepdfs/TP10%20Research%20Brief.pdf>.