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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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The Network – Innovation and Good Practice webpages

Earlier this year, we introduced this new section on the website¹ to showcase your work around social justice.

As you will see, there is a growing number of brief case studies, but it would be great to reflect activity across the UK and across all our members. Just email John Vincent (john@nadder.org.uk) with your examples!

Did you see ...?

Runnymede Bulletin

The Summer 2012 issue² includes a range of useful and interesting articles, eg:

- Kjartan Sveinsson “Migrant doctors in the UK”, which looks “at the discrimination and racism faced by migrant doctors in the UK and asks why they do not receive the recognition they deserve” [pp8-9]
- Joshua Oware “Portraits of youth unemployment”, which looks at the prospects for young BME people [p10]
- Tom Vickers and David Bates “Exiled from the Big Society”, which looks “at the impact of the cuts on third sector refugee organisations in North East England” [p13]
- Vicki Butler “Ethnic minority women and unemployment”, which reports on the All Party Parliamentary Group on Race and Community’s work [p16]
- Bill Boyle “The invisible workforce”, which reports on inequality and exclusion from employment for the Black community in Liverpool [p17]
- Nazek Ramadan “Telling the success story of migration”, the story of the newspaper, *Migrant Voice* [p20]

Museums Journal

The latest issue³ has a range of interesting articles, including:

- Gareth Harris “Culture boost for Scotland” – the 2011 Scottish Household Survey has shown an increase in the percentage of adults taking part in cultural activities and attending cultural venues [p11]
- Geraldine Kendall “Museum and gallery visitors ‘are happier’”, according to the latest results from the DCMS Taking Part survey [p11]
- Bernadette Lynch “Mess it up and start again”, a brief introduction to the action learning/research project, “I Object! Working through Conflict in Museums”⁴ [p19].

¹ See: http://www.seapn.org.uk/innovation.asp?page_id=90.

² *Runnymede Bulletin*, 370, Summer 2012. Available to download as a pdf (1460 kb) from: <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/uploads/bulletin/pdfs/370-BulletinSummer2012.pdf>.

³ *Museums Journal*, October 2012. Further information from: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal>.

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

Museums, equality and social justice

In 2010, the University of Leicester School of Museum Studies and the V&A organised a major international conference, “From the Margins to the Core? Exploring the shifting roles and increasing significance of diversity and equality in contemporary museum and heritage policy and practice”⁵ – the conference helped inspire and shape this book⁶ which has drawn on and added to the presentations from the conference.

The book is divided into three sections:

- “Margins to the core?” which “examine the challenges encountered in effecting long-term change in museum policies and practices across key areas such as governance, leadership, organisational values and structure, workforce, collections and programming” [p4]
- “Connecting/competing equalities” which explores the common ground and tensions between the specific equality strands
- “Museums and the good society” which looks at the roles that museums might play in promoting social justice and engendering support for human rights.

Part 1: “Margins to the core?”

This has a number of key chapters, including:

- Eithne Nightingale and Chandan Mahal “The heart of the matter: integrating equality and diversity into the policy and practice of museums and galleries”, which pulls together examples of good practice and urges museums to become “equitable, diverse and inclusive”
- Kimberley Keith “Moving beyond the mainstream”, which looks at the relationship between community-based heritage organisations and the museum, and how they can build a collaborative relationship to “progress social justice ...” [p45]
- Heather Smith, Barry Ginley and Hannah Goodwin “Beyond compliance? Museums, disability and the law”, which briefly summarises the current UK legal context and brings together some examples of good practice
- David Fleming “Museums for social justice: managing organisational change”

Part 2: Connecting/competing equalities

⁴ There is further information about the project at:

<http://objectsinconflict.wordpress.com/>.

⁵ See: <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/f/from-the-margins-to-the-core-2010-conference>.

⁶ Richard Sandell and Eithne Nightingale (eds). *Museums, equality and social justice*. Routledge (“Museum Meanings” series), 2012.

This includes the following significant chapters:

- Gary Younge “The margins and the mainstream”, which looks at how this relationship is “understood, misunderstood, assumed, accepted and all too often unacknowledged.” [p106]
- Andrew Dewdney, David Dibosa and Victoria Walsh “Cultural diversity: politics, policy and practices. The case of Tate Encounters”, which explores what was learned through the Tate Britain-based research project “examining the relationship between art museum practice and the formation of national identity.” [p114]
- John Reeve “A question of faith: the museum as a spiritual or secular space”
- Oliver Winchester “A book with its pages always open?” which looks at how LGBTQI people have been represented in museums, and argues that, often, the approach has been too simplistic
- Amy Levin “Unpacking gender: creating complex models for gender inclusivity in museums”
- Susan Davis Baldino “Museums and autism: creating an inclusive community for learning”, which follows the development of a Museum Learners Club

Part 3: Museums and the good society

This section includes:

- Richard Sandell “Museums and the Human Rights frame”, which looks at how museums could use the Human Rights moral framework as a way of framing its activities
- David Anderson “Creativity, learning and cultural rights”
- Marzia Varutti “Towards social inclusion in Taiwan: museums, equality and indigenous groups”
- Janice Cheddie “Embedding shared heritage: human rights discourse and the London Mayor’s Commission on African and Asian Heritage”
- Helen Mears and Wayne Modest “Museums, African collections and social justice”, which looks “how museums with African collections can utilise these to promote issues of social justice.” [p294]

This is a thought-provoking collection of writings which explore areas that are often hidden, and bring to the fore the vital role that museums should play in taking forward social justice.

I found the chapters by Eithne Nightingale and Chandan Mahal, Richard Sandell, and Oliver Winchester particularly valuable and challenging.

Highly recommended.

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Rethinking integration: briefing

This new ippr briefing paper⁷ looks at the two main models of integration across Europe, and argues that neither works successfully:

“For over a decade, the debate on the integration of minority communities into European societies has been characterised by a simple choice between, on the one hand, a multicultural group-rights approach popular in much of the academic community and, on the other hand, an increasingly assimilative approach focused on developing a stronger sense of shared citizenship and national identity, which is popular among much of the policy community.

It is our contention that both of these models are mistaken, being premised on two false assumptions:

- that the communities at the centre of the discussion are preset, determinate entities, instead of continually shifting and internally complex patterns of identification
- that the focus of concern should be immediately on the grand level of citizenship and national identity, rather than at the more prosaic but nonetheless crucial domain of everyday experience.

As such, we propose that future work on the best ways of integrating minority communities into broader society should focus on everyday sites where identities are constructed and reconstructed and where new possibilities of group allegiance are continually developed. We believe that this is especially important given changing patterns of migration. As increasingly diverse and often temporary groups move in and out of major European countries, people are constantly led to negotiate and renegotiate their own identities and their relationships with others. They do so, of course, largely within the everyday settings we have identified. If we are to have a stable social order in the face of such a ‘churn’ of migrant communities, we will need to have more and more everyday interactions where peaceable and mutually enriching identities can be crafted.” [p18]

The researchers suggest four areas for further exploration:

- Early-years childcare
- Shopping and consumption
- Leisure activities
- Supplementary education.

⁷ Myriam Cherti and Clare McNeil. *Rethinking integration: briefing*. Ippr, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (340.95 kb) from: http://www.ippr.org/images/media/files/publication/2012/10/rethinking-integration_Oct2012_9761.pdf.

In terms of leisure, Myriam Cherti and Clare McNeil found that some existing research showed that:

“A majority of the migrants – men and women alike – spent most of their time with people from their own country of origin and with migrants from other countries, but rarely spent much time with British people.” [p12]

although research by COMPAS⁸ found that:

“... recent non-Muslim migrants in the three areas (the London borough of Newham, Bradford and Birmingham) were almost as likely to interact with friends from other ethnic and religious backgrounds as with those from similar backgrounds. UK-born non-Muslims appeared to split their leisure time social contact between people from similar backgrounds and people from other backgrounds in all three areas. Given that a diversity of ethnicities and religions was represented among the UK-born non-Muslim sample, with nearly two-fifths defining themselves as belonging to an ethnic group other than ‘white British’, the authors suggest this meant that the kinds of people they interacted with were truly diverse.” [p12]

There does not appear to have been a great deal of research so far into the role that culture could play – perhaps this is an area we could press to have developed?

A wider lens

Demos have just published this new report⁹ which looks at developing “new data to help us understand the scale and nature of disadvantage affecting families in Scotland.” [p9]

The report:

“... look[s] at multiple disadvantage within local areas, and also according to sub-groups of the population (eg families with children, working age adults without children and older people).

The seven indicators of disadvantage identified in this study are:

- low income
- worklessness
- no educational qualifications
- overcrowding
- ill health
- mental health problems
- poor neighbourhood.” [p11]

⁸ Centre on Migration, Policy and Society [COMPAS]. *Immigration, faith and cohesion*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation, 2007. Available to download as a summary or full report from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/immigration-faith-and-cohesion>.

⁹ Louise Bazalgette, Matt Barnes and Chris Lord. *A wider lens*. Demos, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (633.25 kb) from: http://www.demos.co.uk/files/Wider_Lens_-_web.pdf?1350917252.

Major findings include:

- “4 per cent of families with children have four or more of the seven disadvantages identified in this study.
- 5 per cent of working-age households without children have four or more disadvantages.
- 8 per cent of pensioner households have three or more disadvantages.” [p12]

“In 2010 there were approximately 2.3 million households in Scotland. On the basis of these findings, we can make the following estimates:

- There are approximately 24,000 families with children in Scotland that are affected by four or more of the seven disadvantages identified in this study.
- There are approximately 55,000 working age households without children affected by four or more disadvantages.
- There are 52,000 pensioner households with four or more disadvantages ...

This was the prevalence of multiple disadvantage across all three population subgroups by local area:

- Glasgow had the highest proportion of households with four or more disadvantages.
- North Lanarkshire also had higher than average rates of multiple disadvantage.
- Edinburgh had the highest proportion of households *without any* disadvantages.
- Other areas with a high proportion of households *without any* disadvantages were Highlands, Grampian and Central.” [p13]

This research is being used to inform the next stage of Demos’s research project, which aims to “develop a detailed knowledge of the aspirations and challenges experienced by families suffering from multiple disadvantages” [p16], and which will be published in autumn 2013.¹⁰

Disadvantaged young people looking for work – a job in itself?

This is a new report¹¹ from JRF, which:

“... describes the task for jobseekers in the UK labour market in 2010–11. It focuses on young jobseekers with limited education and skills, and particularly on those from disadvantaged neighbourhoods.” [p1]

¹⁰ Source: *Children & Young People Now*, 22 Oct 2012.

¹¹ Rebecca Tunstall, Ruth Lupton, Anne Green, Simon Watmough and Katie Bates. *Disadvantaged young people looking for work – a job in itself?* JRF, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (1005 kb) from <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-disadvantage-jobseekers-full.pdf>. There is also a summary (227.45 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/young-people-disadvantage-jobseekers-summary.pdf>.

Key findings include:

- “Only 24 per cent of low-skilled vacancies found for the study offered full-time, daytime work. Over half of vacancies stating the pay offered minimum wage, and 78 per cent paid under £7 an hour, making it less likely that jobseekers could travel far for them.
- Employers also preferred local candidates for such jobs. So although jobseekers need to search beyond their immediate neighbourhood, policies demanding wider geographical searches will not necessarily get more people into work.
- Intense competition meant that some employers advertise vacancies online and close them as soon as they have sufficient applicants to select from. Not all jobseekers were aware how speedily they need to respond to vacancies, and those without internet access at home were at a disadvantage.
- Despite public perceptions that employers discriminate against residents from neighbourhoods with poor reputations, the study found no significant difference in positive response rates.”¹²

Amongst the conclusions reached are the following – which could point the way for us to develop our provision for this target group:

“Young people tend to be disproportionately disadvantaged during economic crisis, and the current context presents the most challenging labour market for them in recent decades ... Given anxiety about welfare dependency, governments emphasise more active job seeking: look harder and travel further. Jobseekers, however, may become discouraged and demotivated by lack of success.

Perceptions of 'postcode discrimination' are then likely, as jobseekers seek explanations for persistent rejection. However, postcode discrimination should not be a concern, at least for well-qualified applicants from neighbourhoods with poor reputations. Very active job search is highly important. Intense competition, the importance of rapid reaction to vacancies, and the value of tailored applications, mean that the most productive job seeking and applying constitutes 'a job in itself'. Those without home internet access face a marked disadvantage. However, scattergun activity (applying for ever wider types of jobs ever further away) is not always better. Any advice or policy which simply results in increased applications per vacancy may waste additional time for employers and jobseekers. Jobseekers need help to develop good intelligence about their local labour market and tailored strategies for individual areas and job types. Much of this assistance could be generated through the Department for Work and Pensions' websites and

¹² Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/disadvantaged-young-people-work?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Weekly%20blogs%20and%20publications%20wb%2015th%20October%202012&utm_content=Weekly%20blogs%20and%20publications%20wb%2015th%20October%202012+CID_3ed56829b7a57c523fb64dabcbfcddfb&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=The%20challenges%20for%20disadvantaged%20young%20people%20seeking%20work.

databases. Leading employers and intermediaries could be encouraged to improve information to employers and applicants.

Support from advisers and feedback from employers may reduce the discouraging effect of failed applications. Without a car, those from neighbourhoods with poor transport connections have fewer choices of jobs to apply to, facing both travel problems and reluctance from more distant employers. Those living in weak labour markets face markedly higher rates of application and rejection.”¹³

Disability issues – Other Agencies

Assessing the impact of reading for blind and partially sighted adults

This important new report¹⁴ by LISU and The Reading Agency, which had been commissioned by RNIB, has just been published.

RNIB had considerable qualitative evidence of the impact of reading on blind and partially sighted people, but less quantitative evidence, and this report was commissioned to investigate the question “What is the impact of reading for pleasure on the lives of blind and partially sighted adults?” [p iv]

“Following a review of the relevant literature, the primary means of data collection was a series of structured interviews with 108 blind and partially sighted readers, undertaken by phone and in person. To supplement the interviews, the majority of the questions asked were also formatted as an online questionnaire completed by 186 adults. A total of 294 blind and partially sighted readers participated in the research.

In addition, six case studies were prepared with volunteers from the interviews and survey. The case studies included longer interviews with the reader, exploring specific issues in depth.” [p iv]

Key findings of the research are:

- Reading frequency and impact:

“Ninety-five per cent of participants (270) read for pleasure more than once a week, with over half (163 – 55 per cent) reading more than 10 hours per week. This appears to be considerably higher than the general population although comparisons should be treated with caution.

¹³ Taken from website, as for footnote 11.

¹⁴ Clare Creaser, Rachel Spacey and Debbie Hicks. *Assessing the impact of reading for blind and partially sighted adults*. LISU, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (263.64 kb) from: <http://www.lboro.ac.uk/microsites/infosci/lisu/downloads/rnib-impact-of-reading-report.pdf>.

The research clearly indicates the value which blind and partially sighted readers attribute to reading for pleasure, with the majority of participants (236 - 82 per cent) stating that reading for pleasure was ‘very important’ in their lives.” [p iv]

In addition, reading helped blind and partially sighted people to cope with “life’s pressures”, such as bereavement; and had a significant impact on learning and skills development.

- The importance of reading groups
- Formats:

“In common with the wider population, most blind and partially sighted readers use multiple reading formats from a range of sources.” [p v]

- Source of materials: “The top five sources of reading materials in this study are the RNIB National Library Service, public libraries, Calibre Audio Library ... downloads and gifts.” [p vi]
- Lack of reading: “...comments from participants in the research suggest that for many blind and partially sighted readers, not being able to read would leave a destabilising void in their lives.” [p vi]

Abbreviations and acronyms

COMPAS = Centre on Migration, Policy and Society
DCMS = Department for Culture, Media and Sport
JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation
LGBT = lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered people
LISU = Library and Information Statistics Unit
RNIB = Royal National Institute of Blind People
V&A = Victoria & Albert Museum

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