

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.

Did you see ...?

Renaissance News

The latest issue of MLA's update¹ on the "Renaissance" work includes a wide range of interesting articles and updates, including Alec Coles "The many facets of identity" [pp11-12]:

"Museums play an important role in helping people develop and determine their identities and this is why the issue has come under the DCMS spotlight through the 'Understanding the Future' working group. Through this group, the key role that museums can play in battling social exclusion is being examined with the aim of ensuring better representation of all communities." [p11]

Read On

The latest issue² of this newsletter focuses on the Family Reading Campaign³, and includes articles on, for example:

- Julia Strong "Family Reading Campaign – get involved!" [p1]
- Carol Taylor "Grandparents and literacy" [p4]
- Liz Dubber "Got kids? Get reading!" (an update on The Reading Agency promotion) [p5]

¹ *Renaissance News* Summer 2006. Available to download as a pdf (973 Kb) from: [http://www.mla.gov.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=73&Document/@id=23049&Section\[@stateId_eq_left_hand_root\]/@id=4332](http://www.mla.gov.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=73&Document/@id=23049&Section[@stateId_eq_left_hand_root]/@id=4332).

² *Read On* Summer 2006. *Read On* is the magazine of the National Reading Campaign – see: www.readon.org.uk.

³ See: www.familyreading.org.uk.

- Jonathan Douglas “Families love libraries” (introducing the “Families Love Libraries” campaign⁴ and “Libraries Love Families Day” – 14 October 2006) [p7]
- Short articles on “Reading Connects”⁵ [p8] and “Reading Champions”⁶ [p9].

Adults Learning

The April 2006 issue⁷ also includes an interesting article on family learning:

- Maureen Banbury⁸ “Special relationships” [pp20-22].

Innovations in Innovation

The latest issue⁹ includes a wide range of interesting news items and articles, particularly the 4-page pull-out section, “Signposts to key services for disabled people, their carers and other disadvantaged people”.

State of the countryside 2006

The latest report¹⁰ from the Commission for Rural Communities, published on 19 July, has received considerable press coverage¹¹.

‘Headline’ issues include:

- “housing affordability;
- service provision;
- rural disadvantage;
- marginal rural economies;
- the land-based industries.” [p5]

The report also outlines some of the major problems facing rural communities:

⁴ See: www.lovelibraries.org.uk.

⁵ See: www.readingconnects.org.uk.

⁶ See: www.readingchampions.org.uk.

⁷ *Adults Learning* 17 (8) April 2006. *Adults Learning* is published by NIACE, see: www.niace.org.uk.

⁸ Maureen Banbury is also the author of a new book from NIACE, *Special relationships: how families learn together*. NIACE, 2005 £8.95 (ISBN: 1-86201-277-6).

⁹ *Innovations in Information* 12 (1) 2006. This is the journal of the National Information Forum, see: www.nif.org.uk.

¹⁰ *The state of the countryside 2006*. Commission for Rural Communities, 2006 £10.00. Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/data/uploads/SoTC06_Complete.pdf. There is also further information about the report (and access to it section by section) at: <http://www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/article.asp?aID=115&pID=1>.

¹¹ For example, Maxine Frith and Oliver Duff “Lure of the rural idyll: in search of the good life”, *The Independent* 20 July 2006, p11.

“Across rural England, housing is less affordable than is the case in urban areas. In the sparsely populated rural areas, house prices are now 10 to 15 times the level of local household incomes. Although the population of rural England is increasing, the availability of many services continues to decline, for example, there has been a 20% reduction in the number of petrol stations over the last six years. At the same time, the car remains a central part of most rural people’s lives. Rural communities, as a whole, remain relatively safe and show many signs of strength and cohesiveness.

When we assess the key aspects of the economic health of rural England, we see a complex picture. Average rural household incomes are greater than those in urban areas. However, there remain over 900,000 households in income poverty, 35,000 more than two years ago. In the sparsely populated areas, the proportion of low-income households has increased from 26% to 30% over the last two years.”
[p4]

“Ethnically mixed primary classes are the key to improved social cohesion”

You may also have seen a report¹² of this ESRC-funded research into diversity in education carried out by Irene Bruegel and Susie Weller of London South Bank University.

The crucial findings include:

- Primary school children had difficulty recognising different ethnicity and rarely referred to it.
- In primary classes where at least a third of the children were from minority backgrounds there was far greater evidence of mixed ethnicity friendships carrying over to secondary school friendships. Where eighty per cent of the children were white they were significantly less likely to make friends at secondary school across racial divides. Children from the less mixed primary schools were described as 'distinctly different'. None felt that Muslim or Asian children were 'picked on' in their local neighbourhood.

Increase in racism in Europe

You may have seen press coverage¹³ of the “Shadow Reports” from ENAR [the European Network Against Racism].

¹² See:

<http://www.esrcsocietytoday.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/PO/releases/2006/august/ethnic.aspx>.

¹³ For example, Stephen Castle “Muslims on front line as racism rises across EU”, *The Independent* 26 July 2006, p19.

“They are not a scientific study of the state of racism or discriminatory practices in EU Member States, but a compilation of information and data collected by its member organisations, a vast network of NGOs working on antiracism, the protection of human rights and the provision of legal and other support to those facing discrimination, unequal treatment and marginalisation in the European Union.”

[website]

The country reports are available online¹⁴, including one on the UK, compiled by the Runnymede Trust¹⁵.

Teenage Pregnancy website

Just in case you haven't seen this, DfES have just updated their web resources and strategies relating to teenage pregnancy¹⁶.

Low-tech

Finally, you may have seen press coverage¹⁷ of the new report¹⁸ from the Open University Business School and Lloyds TSB Business, which shows that ¼ of Britain's small firms say that they are finding it hard to keep up with technological change, and that 13% do not use email.

Tackling social exclusion – Libraries, Museums and Archives

Get London reading ...

This ALCL “Strategy for London's libraries”¹⁹ was published in association with the LLDA in March 2006, and aims to be a “strategy for celebrating literature rather than simply developing reading” [p1].

Beginning by setting the strategy within its local and national context, the paper then looks at the “Key issues underpinning the Get London Reading strategy” [p3], including the “need to develop new audiences and new readers for libraries” and “The need to demonstrate the wider impact of reading and writing on other policy agendas including social inclusion, diversity and learning ...” [p3].

There then follow six sections:

¹⁴ See: http://www.enar-eu.org/en/publication/shadow_reports/index.shtml.

¹⁵ Sarah Kyambi. *ENAR Shadow Report 2005: Racism in the United Kingdom*. ENAR, n.d. [2006?]. Available to download as a pdf (261 Kb) from: http://www.enar-eu.org/en/national/uk/UK_2005.pdf.

¹⁶ See: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/health/teenagepregnancy/>.

¹⁷ For example, “OU News in Brief”, *The Independent* “Open Eye” section, 1 August 2006, p45.

¹⁸ See: <http://www3.open.ac.uk/oubs/about/news.asp>.

¹⁹ *Get London reading: a strategy for London's Libraries*. ALCL, 2006. Copies available from the LLDA whilst stocks last – contact Fiona.obrien@llda.org.uk.

- Getting more people to read
- Increasing the enjoyment of reading
- Offering the opportunities for readers to share their reading experience
- Giving library staff confidence to support library readers
- Cementing the link between readers, writers and publishers
- Planning, monitoring and evaluation.

For each of these, the document gives a brief table, with statements under four headings:

- Where are we now?
- Where do we want to be?
- How to get there
- Resource implications.

These are then summarised into an Action Plan [p15] which indicates whose responsibility the actions are; the resources required; and the timescale.

There is also a loose-leaf sheet with two Appendices:

- Appendix 1: London Reader Development contacts (as at Autumn 2005)
- Appendix 2: London Libraries Recommend Steering Group (again as at Autumn 2005)²⁰.

To monitor progress, the strategy is being reviewed on behalf of ALCL by the “London Libraries Recommend” Steering Group.

Community Literature and Community Cohesion – Newham Word Festival

In March 2006, the London Borough of Newham hosted its first “Word Festival”, a one-day community literature event, funded by the Community Participation Unit and supported by the Library and Heritage Services. The final evaluation report has just been published²¹.

The programme aimed at engaging local hard-to-reach audiences through the written and spoken word, and was put together in less than three months by a multidisciplinary team comprising the Community Participation Unit (and their marketing officer), “Spread the Word”, The Campaign Company, a team from the library services, and the LLDA.

²⁰ For further information about “London Libraries Recommend”, see: <http://www.londonlibraries.org/servlets/llr>.

²¹ See: http://www.llda.org.uk/uploads/Evaluation_report_final_web.doc.

Over 1100 Newham residents and their families and friends attended the event.²²

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

The social exclusion of older people ...

DCLG have just released the Final Report²³ from this study which was carried out by the National Centre for Social Research and Professor Alan Walker from the University of Sheffield. It uses 2002-3 data from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing [ELSA] which is a large-scale survey of people aged 50 and over living in England.

“Social exclusion is multi-dimensional and, in this study, seven dimensions are constructed from the ELSA data:

- social relationships (contact with family and friends),
- cultural and leisure activities (for example going to cinema or theatre),
- civic activities (for example membership of a local interest group, voluntary work, voting),
- basic services (for example health services, shops),
- neighbourhood (for example safety and friendliness of local people),
- financial products (for example bank account, pension),
- material goods (for example consumer durables, central heating).

The concept of “multiple exclusion” was applied when people were excluded on three or more of these dimensions.” [p7]

The study found that:

“Around half of older people are *not* excluded on any of the dimensions but...

- 29% are excluded on one dimension,
- 13% on two dimensions, and
- 7% on three or more dimensions.” [p7]

The main conclusions are:

²² Thanks to Fiona O’Brien (LLDA) for sending this information.

²³ Matt Barnes *et al.* *The social exclusion of older people: evidence from the first wave of the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing (ELSA) – Final Report*. ODPM/Social Exclusion Unit, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/271/E21TheSocialExclusionofOlderPeopleSecondaryAnalysisoftheEnglishLongitudinalStudg_id1163271.pdf.

“The possible policy implications of our findings will be elaborated in a separate report that is due to be published in Autumn 2006, nevertheless there are some key issues to which we should draw attention. For example, the report identifies that 7 per cent of older people are currently experiencing multiple exclusion and this group seems sensibly to be the focus of policy action.” [p10]

The findings suggest six targets for policy action. These are:

- People with physical and mental health problems
- Problems of place (living alone and living in the social rented sector)
- Problems with transport
- The particular experiences of the oldest old
- Those living on lower incomes and
- Those over 50 but under pension age who are unemployed.

“It is suggested that local strategies, focussed explicitly on addressing the problems faced by the multiply excluded, should unite local government, NHS providers, the voluntary sector and private sector providers.” [p10]

This report is also accompanied by a “Think Piece” which looks at future trends and policies²⁴.

Moving on: reconnecting frequent movers

DCLG have also just published this brief report²⁵ as a follow-up to the broad issues raised in *Breaking the cycle*²⁶.

“This report aims to put frequent moving on the policy map, raising awareness of mobility as an important but previously unexplored driver of disadvantage.” [p4]

²⁴ Alan Walker *et al.* *New Horizons Research Programme: social exclusion of older people - future trends and policies: think piece*. DCLG, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (232 Kb) from: http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/129/TheSocialExclusionofOlderPeopleFutureTrendsandPoliciesThinkPiece_id1501129.pdf.

²⁵ *Moving on: reconnecting frequent movers*. DCLG, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (2.421 Mb) from: http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/771/MovingOnReconnectingFrequentMovers_id1501771.pdf.

²⁶ *Breaking the cycle: taking stock of progress and priorities for the future – a report by the Social Exclusion Unit*. ODPM, 2004, £15.00 (ISBN: 1-85112-724-0). Available to download as a pdf (1.803 Mb) from: <http://www.socialexclusion.gov.uk/downloaddoc.asp?id=262>. (See also the review in *The Network Newsletter* ... 36, September 2004)

The report recognises the impact that frequent moving has on both the movers and the communities they move into, and also identifies some gaps in current knowledge and background.

It then looks at the key drivers which cause frequent moving, including:

- Escaping – Many people move in order to leave problems behind.
- Being moved by authorities – Sometimes people are moved by authorities. Whilst these agencies have valid and important reasons for moving people and groups, forced movement can have an adverse impact on those affected, for example looked-after children
- Problems finding settled accommodation (eg a shortage of affordable housing)
- Employment or cultural reasons/an attempt to improve their lives.

[taken from pp11-12]

In conclusion, the report goes on to say:

“On the whole, population mobility is desirable and positive, but when people who are disadvantaged move frequently, this can compound their disadvantage. The primary purpose of this analysis is to put the concept of frequent moving as a driver of disadvantage on the policy map and to start a debate amongst service providers at national, regional and local levels about how best they can respond to the needs of those who are highly mobile.” [p20]

The suggestions for future action are very broad and general – this report really is intended just to get this issue onto the agenda!

Able authorities?

Finally, DCLG has also recently published a report on the Disability Discrimination Act and local authorities in England, *Able Authorities?*²⁷

This report sets out findings from research examining how well local authorities in England were performing in terms of addressing disability issues across the full spectrum of disabilities in relation to their core activities. It looks forward to the introduction of the disability equality duty, and offers learning points based on the case study work undertaken for the research, which local

²⁷ *Able authorities? The Disability Discrimination Act, disabled people and local authorities in England*. DCLG, 2006. The Executive Summary, full text of the report and list of key recommendations are all available in PDF format from the following website link:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1501795>

Alternative formats in Braille, large print and on audio cassette are available by sending an email to alternativeformats@communities.gsi.gov.uk, quoting the title, the report's product code (06 LGSRU 04027/b), and your address and telephone number.

authorities could consider as they develop strategies and policies to deliver on the challenges and changes required to meet the duty.

DCLG have also published a separate section of the report listing just the key findings and recommendations. In particular, the report calls for more effective consultation with disabled people – acknowledging that the new disability equality duty provides an opportunity to review and improve consultation approaches, employment practices and access to facilities.²⁸

Community Health Profiles

Just in case you haven't seen these²⁹, the:

“Local Authority Health Profiles are designed to show the health of people in local authorities across England. These cover all but two of the 388 local authorities, including county councils, district councils, unitary councils and London boroughs. City of London and Isles of Scilly are not covered due to data limitations. These are the first local authority Health Profiles covering the whole of England. They have been produced by Public Health Observatories and will be updated every year.

These Health Profiles can be used by local authorities and the health service to highlight the health issues for their local authority area and to compare them with other areas. The profiles are designed to show where there are important problems with health or health inequalities ...“

[taken from Community Health Profiles website]

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Sport and social exclusion

This book³⁰ was actually published in 2003, but has only recently appeared in the British Library.

It is an important examination of the potential role of sport in tackling exclusion:

“... sport can be a policy partner and a tool for combating social exclusion.” [p253]

The book covers:

²⁸ Thanks to Carol Dixon (MLA London) for alerting me to this.

²⁹ See: <http://www.communityhealthprofiles.info/>.

³⁰ Michael F Collins with Tess Gray. *Sport and social exclusion*. Routledge, 2003 £26.99 (ISBN: 0-415-25959-2) (pbk).

- The context – “From absolute poverty to social exclusion” – which looks at the changing policy and political background
- Constraints on and benefits of playing sport
- Poverty: the core of exclusion (which argues that, whilst it is vital that we recognise all aspects of exclusion, poverty is the major one in relation to access to sporting facilities for many people)
- Exclusion, education and young people’s sport
- Gender, sport and social exclusion
- Exclusion and older people in sport
- Social exclusion and sport in a multicultural society
- Sport and disability
- Sport and youth delinquency
- Rural and urban perspectives on exclusion and sport
- Policy implementation: stronger citizenship and communal social capital through sport?

Recommended as background reading for exploring how sport can be used to tackle social exclusion.³¹

Community cohesion

Similarly, Ted Cantle’s book³² published last year – which pulls together much of the information from the Cantle Report³³ and other documents of the time – has also recently appeared.

Contents include:

- Coming to terms with change
- The journey to community cohesion
- Changing conceptions of multiculturalism
- Prejudice, discrimination and the ‘Fear of Difference’
- Identity, values and citizenship
- Developing a programme for community cohesion.

This is useful background, although, to be honest, there is nothing very new here, except for his drawing on the work of Ashutosh Varshney³⁴ who, in his research into the effects of conflict between Hindus and Muslims in India³⁵, identifies two forms of cross-cultural contact, “associational” and “everyday”, where “associational” means people’s coming together in “organisational

³¹ Mike Collins researched at the Institute of Sport and Leisure Policy, Loughborough University, and was in contact with The Network back in 2001 (see Newsletter 3, December 2001, p5)

³² Ted Cantle. *Community cohesion*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2005 (ISBN: 1403941149).

³³ *Community cohesion: a report of the Independent Review Team chaired by Ted Cantle*. Home Office, 2001.

³⁴ See: <http://sitemaker.umich.edu/varshney>.

³⁵ Ashutosh Varshney. *Ethnic conflict and civic life: Hindus and Moslems in India*. Yale University Press, 2003 (ISBN: 0300100132).

settings as part of civic life”, as opposed to chance “everyday” meetings – a refinement of definition that has yet to be developed here.

Broader issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Making a difference through volunteering ...

This research³⁶ which has just been published by CSV

“... was carried out over the course of a year – between May 2005 and May 2006 – with the objective of identifying and highlighting the distinctive contribution of volunteers involved in providing support to people also receiving different health and social care support from statutory services – mainly within or connected to home and intermediate care services.” [p5]

The research has been analysed into 14 cross-cutting themes:

1. Impact on social isolation
2. Contributing to independence and wellbeing
3. Responding to diversity
4. Relationships between volunteers and service users
5. What volunteers really do
6. Flexibility and freedom as key motivators for volunteering
7. The thorny issue of personal care
8. The importance of time
9. Volunteer coordinators’ roles
10. Raising awareness and profile of volunteer services and schemes
11. Provision and delivery of volunteer services
12. Partnerships and partnership working
13. Sustainable commissioning practices
14. Measuring impact

Perhaps not surprisingly,

“Social isolation was found to be the biggest issue facing people supported by volunteers. The loneliness experienced by a large number of people was emphasised by many individuals, with different perspectives, involved in the research. Vitally, volunteers help to reduce isolation and loneliness for many of the people they support

³⁶ *Making a difference through volunteering: the impact of volunteers who support and care for people at home*. CSV, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from: <http://www.csv.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/7B94D859-9403-4B2E-9E96-07238F167034/42888/MakingADifferenceThroughVolunteeringOlderPeopleCar.pdf>.

through the human contact they provide and the social interaction that results – which is often otherwise very limited. Over two thirds of the volunteers who took part in the postal survey emphasised that the most important thing they provide is emotional or personal support, often described as a ‘listening ear’ or ‘social visits’.” [p6]³⁷

Abbreviations and acronyms

ALCL = Association of London Chief Librarians
CSV = Community Service Volunteers
DCLG = Department for Communities and Local Government
DCMS = Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DfES = Department for Education and Skills
ESRC = Economic and Social Research Council
LLDA = London Libraries Development Agency
MLA = Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
MLA London = Museums, Libraries and Archives – London
NIACE = National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (England & Wales)
ODPM = Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

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³⁷ Thanks to Simon Wallace (Southend Library Service) for alerting me to this.