

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

Number 76, September 2007

(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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Did you see ...?

CyMAL: Museums, Archives and Libraries Wales

The Summer issue¹ has a number of interesting articles, including:

- A reminder that the Disability Equality Duty and the Gender Equality Duty have come into force, and that CyMAL has produced sector briefing papers available in the “Resources” section of the CyMAL website [p4]
- Steph Mastoris, David Morris and Lesley-Anne Kerr “Everywhere in chains ...: Wales & Slavery”, an introduction to the touring abolition exhibition [pp10-13]
- Morigan Ellis “Making an impression: learning from social inclusion”, which outlines how Bodelwyddan Castle worked to develop stronger links with socially excluded young people [pp14-15]
- Lindsay Morris “Bienvenue à la bibliothèque”, an introduction to Rhondda Cynon Taf Library Service’s multilingual website² [pp16-19]
- Emma Lewis and Neil Stevenson “Medieval to Memories to Modern: community involvement without barriers”, a brief introduction to using a medieval ship project and oral history to reach new people [pp22-23].

“Freedom and Liberty”: Archive Awareness Campaign 2007

Just in case you missed this, the 2007 Archive Awareness Campaign³ has started, with the theme of “Freedom and Liberty”, looking at the struggle for rights in history, including the Chartists, the Suffragettes and the 200th anniversary of the Parliamentary abolition of the transatlantic slave trade. There will also be a travelling exhibition in archives telling the story of Britain’s history of gay rights activism, “1967 and all that”⁴.

¹ CyMAL 4, Summer 2007. CyMAL is published twice a year – further information from: www.cymal.wales.gov.uk.

² See: <http://library.rhondda-cynon-taf.gov.uk/pawb>.

³ See: <http://www.archiveawareness.com/>.

⁴ See: <http://www.archiveawareness.com/events/directory/811>.

Faith in the system

You've probably seen mention of this new report⁵ from DCSF, in which the "Government and the providers of publicly funded schools with a religious character have come together to set out ... our shared understanding of the contribution these schools (popularly known as faith schools) make to school-based education and to the wider school system and society in England." [p1]

Positive activities for young people

Just in case you missed this, the Government has launched pilot projects in nine local authorities around the country, which will encourage disadvantaged young people to take part in positive activities of their choice (including giving them pre paid debit cards and access to special websites).

The nine local authorities are: Tower Hamlets, Camden, Cambridgeshire, Durham, Liverpool, Nottingham, Sunderland, Bolton, and Lincolnshire.⁶

The Six Book Challenge™

Just in case you haven't seen this, the Six Book Challenge™ has just been launched by The Reading Agency (in conjunction with the Costa Book Awards); the Challenge is designed to run from January to May each year and will invite adult literacy learners to read six books whilst supporting them with incentives and creative reading activities. It will be delivered through libraries working in partnership with organisations such as colleges, community adult education, trade unions and prisons which work closely with emergent readers – adults who can read but who have yet to build reading stamina and experience⁷.

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

Changing lives and places

DCMS have just published their joint (with the LGA) summary report⁸ on the Cultural Pathfinders (twelve projects which explored ways in which culture can have an impact on the Shared Priorities).

⁵ *Faith in the system: the role of schools with a religious character in English education and society*. DCSF, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (460 Kb) from: <http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/publications/faithinthesystem/pdfs/FaithInTheSystem.pdf>.

⁶ Taken from: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2007_0163.

⁷ For further information, see:

<http://www.readingagency.org.uk/SixBookChallenge.html>.

⁸ *Changing lives and places: lessons from the Cultural Pathfinders*. DCMS, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (434 Kb) from:

The 12 case studies have also been published as a separate document⁹.

As the report concludes:

“Culture can contribute to a wide range of improvements and make a real difference to lives and places. Evidence for this is growing, but remains a challenge. We need to get much smarter at substantiating the case for culture ...” [p12]

“Venezuela's four-legged mobile libraries”

A fascinating glimpse of library outreach in Venezuela ...¹⁰, ¹¹.

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

A lot done, a lot to do

The final report¹² from the CRE has just been published. It summarises progress made in the 30 years since its setting up, and sets out the challenges ahead, under the following headings:

- Young people
- Education
- Employment
- Health and social care
- Criminal justice
- Migration
- Democracy
- Communities and local government
- Sport.

MLAs are not mentioned anywhere in the report.

<http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/2151CA6E-45D8-4AEB-8461-7B494BEB4D14/0/culturalpathfindersfullreport.pdf>.

⁹ *Lessons from the Cultural Pathfinders: the projects*. DCMS, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (1.5 Mb) from: <http://www.culture.gov.uk/NR/rdonlyres/82744E76-D0A9-4E22-AB66-C8EA92A3631A/0/culturalpathfinderscasestudies.pdf>.

¹⁰ See:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/programmes/from_our_own_correspondent/6929404.stm.

¹¹ Thanks to Kevin Harris for alerting me to this.

¹² *A lot done, a lot to do: our vision for an integrated Britain*. CRE, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (727.2 Kb) from:

http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/a_lot_done_a_lot_to_do.pdf. Welsh language version, *Llawer wedi'i wneud, llawer eto i'w wneud*, available to download as a pdf (242.9 Kb) from:

http://www.cre.gov.uk/downloads/a_lot_done_a_lot_to_do_welsh.pdf.

The report concludes by summarising the ten priorities that it believes the CEHR needs to focus on:

- “Focus on setting and meeting measurable targets which help to close the gaps in life chances between people from different ethnic groups
- Focus on improving community cohesion and integration, recognising the ways in which these concepts are closely intertwined with equality
- Develop and promote and good relations, providing the necessary financial resources to build stronger, healthier communities
- Develop an ambitious and academically credible research programme
- Target economic inequality and relative poverty
- Maintain pressure on government, police and the legal profession to eradicate institutional discrimination in our criminal justice system
- Develop strong partnerships with the voluntary sector, academia, policy makers and political parties to bring people from all areas of society together
- Work with the private sector to develop best practice, regardless of the current legislative requirements
- Be a rigorous, courageous and ambitious regulator of the public sector
- Lobby for enhanced legislation to make sure that the aims of our equality laws can be realised”. [pp59-60]

There has been considerable press coverage of this report, including an interesting analysis by Joan Smith¹³, which looks at the growth of mutual suspicion.

Progress of the Social Exclusion Task Force

The SETF has produced a brief update on its work-plan¹⁴, particularly its work with adults facing chronic exclusion, and families at risk.

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

New Leaf Books

This is a new publishing project¹⁵ (which continues the work started by Gatehouse Books) which publishes books produced by adult beginner readers themselves.

¹³ Joan Smith “We are withdrawing into our own tribes”, *The Independent*, 20 September 2007, p43 – available at: http://comment.independent.co.uk/columnists_m_z/joan_smith/article2979868.ece.

¹⁴ See: http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/progress/.

¹⁵ New Leaf Books, 5, Wardley Road, Walton, Warrington, Cheshire WA4 6JA. Tel: 07984 241 863; e-mail: amchester@btinternet.com; website: www.newleafbooks.org.uk.

“Our work is inclusive – learners are encouraged to take part in creative reading and writing activities; their stories are fascinating and often eloquently told. This is our starting point, real stories. We then provide the help needed to get it down on paper. Adult literacy learners know what interests them and what helps and hinders their learning. We recognise and utilise this expertise and put all our efforts into publishing short, high quality, professionally illustrated titles written **by** adult learners themselves.”

Their series include:

- Beginner Readers
- Lifelines, which use powerful stories written by prisoners drawing on their own experiences
- CoolBooks, stories which grew out of a collaboration with the Writers in Prison Network.

All the books are accompanied by an audio CD with both a listening and a slow read to support adults working on their reading skills or for those starting out on reading for pleasure.

Health issues – Other Agencies

“Well London”

“Well London” is a five-year project¹⁶ that will work with local people to transform their health and has been developed by an alliance that includes: the London Health Commission, Central YMCA, Groundwork London, London Sustainability Exchange, University of East London, Arts Council England, London, and the South London and Maudsley NHS Trust.

The “Well London” programme will invest in local community-led projects:

- Promoting mental health and well-being
- Improving healthy eating choices
- Promoting access to open spaces and increasing physical activity.

There are lots of opportunities for MLAs to get involved in this significant development.

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

Rethinking Disability Representation – Project Update 1

¹⁶ See: http://www.londonhealth.gov.uk/well_london.htm.

“*Rethinking Disability Representation* is a large scale, experimental project which is developing new approaches to the interpretation of disability and the representation of disabled people’s lives and experiences in museums and galleries in the UK. It aims to develop politically aware approaches to interpretation drawing on the social model of disability.”

This is the first of a series of project updates¹⁷ designed to share the outcomes and learning experiences of the project.

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

Cultural Champions Pilot Project

With support from DCLG, MLA South East and the other cultural agencies in the South East have been undertaking a project which addresses the place of culture in Local Strategic Partnerships and Sustainable Community Strategies (and thereby in Local Area Agreements).

As part of the work, a seminar was held 30 July, and presentations¹⁸ from that day are now available; they include, for example, a presentation from the Oldham Partnership¹⁹ about the impact that culture/the arts can have, eg in promoting community cohesion.²⁰

Enterprise Week 12-18 November 2007

The MLA Partnership and the national “Make Your Mark” campaign have joined forces to actively promote and instil the value of an enterprise culture in MLAs.

One easy way to get involved is by participating in this year’s Enterprise Week²¹, and MLA have produced a leaflet²² promoting this.

“Make Your Mark is the national campaign to create an enterprise culture among young people in the UK.

¹⁷ *Rethinking Disability Representation: Project Update 1*. Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (700 Kb) from: <http://www.le.ac.uk/ms/rdrupdate1.pdf>.

¹⁸ See: <http://www.progressthroughpartnership.org.uk/ptpprog/cultchamps.htm>.

¹⁹ See: http://www.progressthroughpartnership.org.uk/art_for_all_all_for_art_-_thames_valley_30july07.ppt.

²⁰ Source: MLA South-East e-bulletin 32.

²¹ See: <http://www.enterpriseweek.org/>.

²² *Enterprise Week 2007*. MLA, 2007. Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets/E/enterprise_week_11847.pdf.

We do this by giving people in their teens and twenties the inspiration and opportunity to turn their ideas into reality, whether through starting businesses or social enterprises or by making an idea happen at work.

Our headline target is to double (to 30 per cent) by the end of 2008, the proportion of people aged 14-30 who aspire to start their own venture.”²³

“Make Your Mark” runs a number of campaigns, including four local campaigns²⁴ in Coventry, Liverpool, Lowestoft and Wakefield.²⁵

Abbreviations and acronyms

CEHR = Commission on Equality and Human Rights

CRE = Commission on Racial Equality

DCLG = Department for Communities and Local Government

DCMS = Department for Culture, Media and Sport

DCSF = Department for Children, Schools and Families

LGA = Local Government Association

MLA = Museums, Libraries and Archives

MLAs = museums, libraries and archives

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September 2007

²³ Taken from: http://www.makeyourmark.org.uk/about_us.

²⁴ See: <http://www.makeyourmark.org.uk/campaigns>.

²⁵ Thanks to Jane Walton (Campaign Manager, Make Your Mark in Wakefield) for alerting me to this.