

The Network Newsletter – Ebulletin 406, 25 October 2024

Events

Events have been added to the Courses & Events pages on The Network website – see: <https://seapn.org.uk/events/>.

Black Lives Matter/Anti-racism

Contested desires: constructive dialogues: background research report

Available to download from: <https://le.ac.uk/rcmg/research-archive/contested-desires-constructive-dialogues>

(Source: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) *Newsletter* #009, Oct 2024)

“Contested Desires: Constructive Dialogues (CDCD) is a three-year arts and heritage programme, co-funded by the EU Creative Europe, engaging artists to examine European colonialism’s legacy in museums and heritage sites [...]

As part of the programme, RCMG was commissioned to provide background research of direct use to the CDCD consortium. The final RCMG report provides background research on:

- key terminology and the conceptual framings of ‘decolonising’ and ‘decoloniality’ in European museums;
- the role of art and artists in generating meaningful dialogue amongst visitors and stakeholders related to contested collections, histories and identities;
- wide-ranging examples of arts-led and arts-centred decolonising practices focused on collections and from a range of lineages of socially engaged art;
- RCMG’s work on ethical frameworks and how this method could support CDCD collaborations;
- RCMG’s work on evaluation and the ways that an emphasis on decoloniality and collaboration will impact what is evaluated and why.”
[Taken from website]

This is a very useful piece of background work which also makes some important points, eg:

“There is abundant evidence that decolonising practices and initiatives in museums, while critical and well-meaning, can be unethical and contribute to harm. Invoking ‘decolonisation’ in museums and heritage sites without developing an ethical set of relations, risks obscuring the colonial logics of institutions and co-opting the radical possibilities of anti-coloniality [...].” [pp3-4]

Cost of living crisis/poverty – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Tackling child poverty: developing our strategy

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/671a59cf7c956b7d065a494/Child_Poverty_Strategy_Launch_Publication.pdf

(Source: Children & Young People Now *Update*, 24 Oct 2024)

The Government has introduced its broad strategy – this will be discussed and refined over the next period.

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

Going Places – community engagement toolkit

https://bibli.artfund.org/m/a4c124fb3c881ff/original/ArtFund_GoingPlaces_CommunityEngagement.pdf

(Source: Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG) *Newsletter* #009, Oct 2024)

“The Going Places Community Engagement toolkit is designed to support you to plan, deliver, and evaluate community engagement work in museums.

The toolkit is aimed at anyone who is working, or would like to embark, on a community engagement project, including people with lots of experience and none, and those working in a wide range of museums, galleries and cultural organisations.” [p3]

The Toolkit is also accompanied by a series of videos, see:

<https://www.artfund.org/professional/news-and-insights/going-places-community-engagement-toolkit>.

“Making libraries more inclusive and accessible with virtual tours”

https://www.librariesunlimited.org.uk/news/making-libraries-more-inclusive-and-accessible-with-virtual-tours/?utm_source=socials&utm_medium=post&utm_campaign=Virtual+Tours

(Source: LinkedIn)

New from Libraries Unlimited:

“Virtual tours are just one of the many innovative ways Libraries Unlimited is making libraries feel more welcoming and accessible for the entire local community. Whether it’s parents wanting to explore their local library’s children’s area or those with mobility issues, a virtual tour provides an easy way to assess the environment and plan their visit.

Being able to see and explore a place before visiting in person can offer those with neurodivergence an extra level of comfort. Easing any anxieties to further reduce barriers to access is incredibly important to Libraries Unlimited.”

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

“HR must revisit language referring to older workers”

<https://www.hrmagazine.co.uk/content/comment/hr-must-revisit-language-referring-to-older-workers>

(Source: *Later Life AGEnda*, 15 Oct 2024)

Article that raises important points about the use of language (and the obsession with age, he said with feeling!)

“Young people’s rough sleeping census report”

Web news release: <https://www.depaul.org.uk/young-peoples-rough-sleeping-census-pilot-report/>

Full report: <https://www.depaul.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Pan-London-Youth-Census-Pilot-Report.pdf>

(Source: *Public Sector News*, 16 Oct 2024)

“Our new pilot study has revealed striking insights into the young people who sleep rough in London. Conducted with support from London Councils, across Camden, Lambeth, and Bromley, the Young People’s Rough Sleeping Census report provides valuable insights into the experiences of 40 young Londoners aged 18-25 who answered a survey about sleeping rough in the previous three months.”

Findings include:

- ‘More young people could be sleeping rough than official statistics suggest – as more than a quarter of those surveyed (28%) had slept rough in London but were not recorded in official data.
- Nearly half (44 per cent) of young people across the three boroughs reported they had slept rough for more than 30 nights during the three months of this year (between April – July 2024).
- 80% of respondents identified as non-White, with Black African being the most common ethnicity represented.
- Six young people disclosed that they had been younger than 18 when they first experienced rough sleeping.
- The most common type of housing young people had left before becoming homeless was asylum accommodation.’ [Taken from website]

Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Press release: “Office for Equality and Opportunity to break down barriers to opportunity”

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/office-for-equality-and-opportunity-to-break-down-barriers-to-opportunity?utm_source=Equally+Ours+Newsletter+2024&utm_campaign=ae3ab52e79-Newsletter+March+2+2024_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_93cf2d2bcb-ae3ab52e79-120687778

(Source: *Equally Ours Newsletter*, 25 Oct 2024)

‘Headlines’ include:

- “Equality Hub replaced by Office for Equality and Opportunity
- Equality and opportunity to run through the government’s missions and work
- The Women and Equalities ministerial team to sit across key areas of equality

People of all backgrounds will benefit from the government’s commitments to breaking down barriers, boosting opportunity and ensuring that equality is at the heart of every mission.

The Office for Equality and Opportunity will cover the overall framework of equality legislation in the UK, including disability policy, ethnic disparities, gender equality and LGBT+ rights.

Although there is still progress to be made, the government is determined to dismantle any ceiling on people’s ambitions - ensuring women’s equality becomes a reality, tackling pay discrimination at work, and more.”

Equality, Equity, Diversity & Inclusion – Other Agencies

Minorities report: the attitudes of Britain’s ethnic minority population

Report: <https://media.ukandeu.ac.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/UKICE-FOCALDATA-MINORITIES-REPORT-081024-FINAL.pdf>

Website: https://ukandeu.ac.uk/reports/minorities-report-the-attitudes-of-britains-ethnic-minority-population/?mc_cid=5945160b11&mc_eid=e91604b40f

(Source: *Left Foot Forward*, 19 Oct 2024)

New from UK in a Changing Europe, this important report looks in more depth at the results of the 2024 Election:

“Research suggests that ethnic minority voters often have political and social views at variance with those held by the population as a whole, and indeed by other ethnic groups. Yet we often lack the data to examine these attitudes and how they differ.

This report aims to set that right. Here, we attempt to look at the diversity of political opinion, social values and economic preferences not just between Britain’s white and non-white population, but between different ethnic and religious groups. We look not just at voting and elections, but more broadly at questions of identity, tolerance, and experiences of race and discrimination.” [Report p2]

The website also highlights the 10 key takeaways:

1. “We are at an inflection point in terms of how ethnic minorities vote.
2. We should not overstate how poorly the right performs, and how well the left does, amongst ethnic minority Britons.
3. The demography of right and left is vastly different between white and non-white voters.

4. There is a large degree of disagreement between ethnic minorities- to some degree larger than that between the white and non-white population- on the role of the state.
5. There are a clutch of issues – immigration and multiculturalism – where ethnic minorities are much more positive than the rest of Britain.
6. At future elections, Labour cannot rely on ethnic minority voters as a ‘bloc’ of support.
7. There is evidence of some prejudice among certain ethnic minority voters toward other minority groups.
8. The degree of importance placed amongst minority respondents on their personal religion is out of step with the growing secularism of white Britain.
9. There is a wide difference between minority groups on their experience of racism and of representation.
10. Ethnic minority and white Britons share common diagnoses about what is politically important, what they want out of a government, which cultural institutions are important, what British culture is, and what it means to be British.”

Health & Wellbeing issues – Libraries, Museums, Archives and Cultural and Heritage Organisations

Understanding creative health in London: the scale, character and maturity of the sector

<https://www.london.gov.uk/programmes-strategies/arts-and-culture/creative-health-and-wellbeing/londons-creative-health-sector>

(Source: email from Praveen Manghani, 18 Oct 2024)

This important new report from the GLA summarises the background to and current state of provision, and found that:

- “Creative health activities can be found in health and care settings from hospitals to museums, libraries, theatres, community centres and parks
- The creative health sector is making a significant contribution to the capital’s health, wellbeing and supporting the reduction in health inequalities
- The creative health sector in London has deep roots but the lack of sustainable funding limits access for all Londoners
- There are around 30,000 freelance arts practitioners delivering work across London. The average annual wage is below the London living wage
- Diversification of the sector’s workforce and leadership is an urgent challenge
- Workforce development is a priority, with clear demand expressed by practitioners for practical training, mentoring, networking and peer support
- Cuts to health and local authority budgets are having a devastating effect, with community organisations expected to ameliorate the effects of austerity
- Evaluation and research in this field needs to be rigorous and shared more widely” [Taken from website]

It recommends that the sector should:

1. “Advocate for continued support from commissioners and funders to foreground their contribution to building a sustainable creative health sector
2. Bridge the gap between health and the arts – more opportunities for training which bring health and arts practitioners together, continue to embed creative health into the 5 NHS regions for London (NB GLA has supported one role in NHS South East London and the Arts Council England has supported another in NHS North East London as pilots).
3. Help support efforts to diversify the sector – spotlight the work of London Arts and Health’s Diversity in Leadership in Creative Health and the Anti-Racist Action Group in Arts & Wellbeing and encourage more paid training opportunities for global majority artists.
4. Provide more support to practitioners – work with the Creative Health and Wellbeing Alliance’s Quality Framework.” [Report, p6]

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

“New accessible audio guide launches at the Oriental Museum”

<https://www.durham.ac.uk/news-events/latest-news/2024/10/om-visually-impaired-exhibition/>

(Source: LinkedIn)

“The Oriental Museum is making its collections more accessible to visitors with visual impairments, by launching a new accessible audio guide.

The new free guide was created in collaboration with local charity, ‘Blind Life in Durham’, that supports blind and partially sighted people across the county. Visitors using the audio guide will be able to hear audio descriptions of 19 objects from the across the museum’s collections including an Ancient Egyptian stone carving of a queen, a magnificent model of a camel created in China over 1000 years ago and an intricately carved jade wine cup that may date to the time of Genghis Khan.”

Migration issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

“Council to buy homes for refugees fleeing conflict”

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/articles/c9dy492w390o?mc_cid=d6ae2a4d1b&mc_eid=7d8713d645

(Source: *Free Movement Weekly Newsletter*, 14 Oct 2024)

Some positive news:

“Northumberland County Council is spending £1.2m to buy and refurbish seven properties, mostly located in the south east of the county.

The homes will house Ukrainians seeking safety from the Russian invasion and Afghans who supported the UK in the war against the Taliban.”

Migration issues – Other Agencies

“Scabies, sexual harassment & racism: inside the UK’s asylum hotels”

https://www.opendemocracy.net/en/asylum-hotels-sexual-harassment-racism/?utm_source=Newsletter%3A%20oD%20daily&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=Scabies%2C%20harassment%20%26%20racism&_kx=1_8D1xQSf81SrwgQ7oVGBK2bIBk82Fazlk5OMY7463l.YjCYwm

(Source: openDemocracy *Daily Newsletter*, 14 Oct 2024)

New from openDemocracy:

“People living in the UK’s ‘asylum hotels’ endured sexist and racist harassment and scabies outbreaks as accommodation providers raked in millions in profits, openDemocracy can reveal.

As of June 2024, just under 30,000 asylum-seeking people – many of them incredibly vulnerable – were living in hotels run by the government or its contractors. While much of the coverage of the hotels has thus far focused on the associated costs of the accommodation, our investigation has provided a rare glimpse into their daily reality, revealing the extent of the poor living conditions and disrespectful treatment they suffer – often for months at a time.”

“What now for international HE amid the great anglophone visa crunch?”

https://www.timeshighereducation.com/depth/what-now-international-he-amid-great-anglophone-visa-crunch?utm_source=newsletter&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=editorial-weekly&spMailingID=30044454&spUserID=MTAxNzcxMzc5Nzk1MQS2&spJobID=2571640750&spReportId=MjU3MTY0MDC1MAS2

(Source: email from Times Higher Education, 24 Oct 2024)

Very interesting article (and you can register online to gain free access to it) which explores a current conundrum:

“New crackdowns on overseas students have recently been introduced by Australia, Canada and the UK in response to concerns about immigration levels, housing costs and visa abuse. But will they work? Will they last? And where do they leave universities struggling to stay afloat?”

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

“Cultural leaders feel ‘under siege and overwhelmed’, research finds”

<https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/news/2024/10/cultural-leaders-feel-under-siege-and-overwhelmed-research-finds/#msdyntrid=iF-PZX3rNTvjqXuif6Dylse1lrxD1pCOMSFINdrV1ts>

(Source: Museums Association email updates, 22 Oct 2024)

“More than a dozen organisations, including the Museums Association, have backed a rallying cry for change in the sector after research showed the cultural workforce is under increasing pressure.

Research by Clore Leadership, the support organisation for cultural leaders, found that 87% of cultural leaders felt demands on them had become worse, and many are feeling ‘increasingly stretched, under siege and overwhelmed’.”

Broader issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Press release: “Government partners with civil society to transform lives across the UK”

https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-partners-with-civil-society-to-transform-lives-across-the-uk--2?utm_source=Equally+Ours+Newsletter+2024&utm_campaign=ae3ab52e79-Newsletter+March+2+2024_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_93cf2d2bcb-ae3ab52e79-120687778

(Source: *Equally Ours Newsletter*, 25 Oct 2024)

The Government has just launched the new Civil Society Covenant:

“Four key principles will form the basis of the Covenant Framework: transparency, recognition, participation and partnership. They will act as a starting point for wider engagement across Government, the public sector and civil society.

The initiative aims to improve Government and civil society’s ability to tackle complex social and economic challenges by uniting the unique capabilities of the two to facilitate better outcomes for communities which would otherwise be impossible to achieve in isolation.”

This begins a period of consultation and discussion, culminating in the publication of a final co-created Covenant next year.

There is more about the consultation process here:

https://www.ncvo.org.uk/get-involved/civil-society-covenant/?utm_source=Equally+Ours+Newsletter+2024&utm_campaign=ae3ab52e79-Newsletter+March+2+2024_COPY_01&utm_medium=email&utm_term=0_93cf2d2bcb-ae3ab52e79-120687778, as well as ways of submitting your views on the draft.