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

Number 201, November 2017

(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.

Contents List

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Did you see …?

Information Professional

The November issue includes:

- "Engaging with users on health and wellbeing", about the successful applicants to the "Engaging Libraries" initiative[1] [p5]

The Bookseller **[online]**

On 15 Jan, *The Bookseller* published a blogpost[2] by Ayub Khan (CILIP's new president), in which he focused "on some of the key challenges for public libraries – through the lens of opportunity."

This includes (of interest to us):

> "Libraries need to redefine their role in the digital age. They can become both cultural and community hubs and centres of digital excellence and opportunity – and support the digitally disadvantaged in an increasingly online world. And, in an era of fake news and alternative facts, libraries have an important role to play as trusted professionals who can help people find reliable sources of information from mountains of online material.

> Many non-users don't realise just how much libraries have changed or what they now offer. So marketing – via multiple channels – will be key to attracting new customers. Social media, for example, offers opportunities to engage with young people and other hard-to-reach groups in new ways.

> We need to attract new, tech-savvy users without alienating existing customers. I see no conflict between tradition and technology – which enhances both physical and online services and makes behind-the-scenes processes more cost-effective and efficient. This creates opportunities to release staff for more face-to-face interaction with customers. And providing quiet areas when modernising libraries means more traditional service users can still feel at home."

Museums Journal

Apologies that this is from such a long while ago (July/August 2017), but, just in case you haven't seen the articles/news items:

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[1] The list of successful projects is at:
https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/project/engaging-libraries/.
[2] Ayub Khan. "CILIP's new president on his key challenges", *The Bookseller*, 15 Jan 2018, https://www.thebookseller.com/blogs/cilips-new-president-his-key-challenges-710021.

- Rob Sharp "'Highlight the social outcomes'", which reported comments by Ken Skates, the Cabinet Secretary for Economy and Infrastructure in the National Assembly for Wales, including: "The need to link cultural projects to social outcomes, including tackling poverty, is more pressing than ever." [p9]
- Nicola Sullivan "Dealing with controversial subjects is a sensitive issue" [pp12-13]
- Rob Sharp "Home and away", which looks at the role museums are playing in telling stories of migration. It includes information about the Migration Museum Project [see final item in this Newsletter]; the Runnymede Trust's "Our Migration Story"[3]; Cardiff Story Museum[4]; the Ben Uri Gallery and Museum[5]; the "Destination Tyneside" gallery at the Newcastle Discovery Museum[6] [pp20-25]

Open Shelf

Open Shelf is the magazine of the Ontario Library Association[7]. In 2017, John Vincent was invited to participate in short series of 'conversations' with Canadian librarian, Amanda Wilk, on "LGBTQ+: international perspectives", and the result of the first of these, "Welcoming LGBTQ+ people"[8] was published in Dec 2017.

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

Equality, diversity and the Creative Case: a data report 2016-2017

ACE published this latest progress report[9] in Jan 2018.

This is taken from the Executive Summary:

> "The last year saw an encouraging increase in diversity among Grants for the Arts recipients, with a significant rise in the number and value of awards to Black and minority ethnic, disabled and female applicants.
>
> While the success rate among these groups improved, there was also a reduction in the percentage of applications from disabled and female

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[3] See: https://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/.

[4] See: http://www.cardiffmuseum.com/.

[5] See: http://benuri.org.uk/.

[6] See: https://discoverymuseum.org.uk/whats-on/destination-tyneside.

[7] See: http://open-shelf.ca/about-ola/.

[8] Amanda Wilk <u>and</u> John Vincent. "Welcoming LGBTQ+ people", *Open Shelf*, Dec 2017, http://open-shelf.ca/171204-lgbtq-international-perspectives/.

[9] *Equality, diversity and the Creative Case: a data report 2016-2017.* ACE, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (2740 kb) from: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/sites/default/files/download-file/Diversity_report_1617_FINAL_web.pdf.

applicants that were found ineligible at the first stage of assessment (15% and 11% respectively).

Arts and cultural organisations are making progress with integrating diversity across all areas of their programme. Almost half of our National Portfolio Organisations (NPOs) were given the highest Creative Case for Diversity rating this year, compared to a third of organisations given this rating last year […]" [p4]

However, there are also areas for improvement, which include:

"Equality action plans are not yet delivering the key structural changes and appointments that will address the under-representation of certain groups in the sector's workforce, leadership and audiences.

There remains significant underrepresentation of people from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds, disabled people and – in some roles – women […]

We also face a major challenge with representation of disabled people; 20% of the working age population identify as disabled, compared to only 4% of staff at NPOs and MPMs and 6% of staff at the Arts Council.

Under-representation is even more acute in those key leadership roles that we would expect to be influential in promoting diversity. Among NPOs and MPMs, only 8% of Chief Executives, 10% of Artistic Directors and 10% of Chairs come from Black and minority ethnic backgrounds. At the highest level, women are also under-represented – they make up just 35% of Artistic Directors and Chairs, despite being 46% of the total workforce." [pp4-5]

The report also considers barriers to progress, which include:

- The need to collect more data
- The need for better reporting: "For example, we still have no disability data for half of the NPO and MPM workforce and no ethnicity data for a third of the workforce." [p6]
- "[…] deep structural challenges that extend beyond the arts and culture sector", such as the lack of social mobility [p6]

Looking to the future, ACE hopes that the new funding period for NPOs will make a significant impact:

"This refreshed and expanded portfolio now includes museums and libraries, and offers the opportunity to better integrate good practice across the whole of the arts and cultural sector.

The portfolio is launched with a significantly increased commitment to diversity, both in terms of composition, and the quality of the individual proposals and ratings for the Creative Case for diversity." [p47]

As well a pursuing the improved collection of data:

"Hand in hand with understanding our sector better, is the need to understand its relationship with wider society, especially around socio-economic impact. Social mobility is shaping up to be one of the critical issues of our time, and we as much as any other area of society, are being affected. However, the arts and culture sector has had a trail-blazing role in demonstrating how barriers can be removed. Through public influence, it can provide role models and exemplary structures. It can do more to share opportunities for young people to progress, no matter where they begin in life.

We welcome the challenge and are beginning to look at this in detail, beginning with collecting data. This work reminds us how diversity has social, moral and economic dimensions for us all. We need to make use of all talent that is available to society; failure to remove barriers will weaken us all socially and economically." [p47]

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

Rethinking heritage …

This new guidance[10] was launched in November 2017:

"The guide, championed by the Alzheimer's Society and the Heritage Lottery Fund, is the result of a collaboration between a group of heritage organisations, including Historic Royal Palaces, and English Heritage"[11]

It:

"[…] aims to be a 'call to action' for the heritage sector and to inspire more organisations to work towards becoming dementia-friendly by making the sites and programming content more accessible for people living with dementia and their carers. It is aimed at individuals working or volunteering at heritage sites who are in a position to implement dementia-friendly changes in both policy and practice in their organisation.

This guide aims to:

- Promote awareness and understanding of dementia

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[10] Kim Klug, Stephen Page, Joanne Connell, Daisy Robson <u>and</u> Emma Bould. *Rethinking heritage: a guide to help make your site more dementia-friendly*. Alzheimer's Society, 2017. Available to download as a pdf (13910 kb) from: https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/3734/rethinking_heritage_a_gui de_to_help_make_your_site_more_dementia-friendly.pdf.
[11] Taken from the press release, see: https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/news/article/275/dementia-friendly_heritage_guide_launches_at_hampton_court_palace.

- Explore the impact of dementia on the heritage sector
- Outline a business case for dementia-friendly heritage
- Offer practical guidance for making a heritage site dementia-friendly" [p13]

The practical guidance is really useful, eg:

"It is important to consider the language, style, length and format for written information so that it is easily understood by people living with dementia. When writing for people living with dementia use large fonts, highlight key information (outlined above) and list a phone number that goes to a 'live person' (not an automated system) to encourage people to get in touch to find out more.

Avoid written information that is:

- Too long
- Jargon, buzzwords, professional or clinical language
- Crowded layout or formatting
- Irrelevant content" [p26]

It includes an example of a dementia-friendly site audit, and 'top tips'.

There are tips too on establishing successful partnerships, including examples, such as National Museums Liverpool's training for "House of Memories".

There is a useful section on programming activities, including the importance of outreach. Again there are tips, eg:

- "Look at what you already offer visitors. Consider how you can make existing offers dementia friendly.
- Provide information about the programme in dementia-friendly formats: session outlines with timings and photos, specific access information for each activity, general information (map, suggested attire, contact details)." [p47]

Section 7 looks at overcoming obstacles, drawing on advice from heritage sector contacts.

Finally, there is an action-plan, and a list of useful resources and organisations.

Recommended.

There are two other titles in this series:

- An arts guide[12] (which has been revamped and was originally assessed back in 2015)

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[12] Penny Allen *et al. Dementia-friendly arts guide: a practical guide to becoming a dementia-friendly arts venue.* Alzheimer's Society, 2015. Available to download as a pdf (2600 kb) from:

- A guide to dementia-friendly cinema screenings[13].

NB They all require you to register on-site before you can download the guides.[14]

Migration issues – Other Agencies

Museums and migration, 2009-2017 …

This report[15] from the Migration Museums Project explores the case for a national migration museum, and a migration museums network.

It follows on from the initial report[16] by Mary Stevens, which argued the case for a migration museum:

> "This report seeks to provide a short update of developments in UK museums and galleries since Stevens' [sic] analysis. It looks at the visibility of migration stories in today's heritage institutions, many of which have seen significant change since 2009. It also discusses the museum sector's coverage of national history and the seeming reluctance to engage fully with big-picture national stories about our past, including migration […]" [p3]

This new report draws together examples of developments in different types of museum:

- Local, regional and city museums, including capital projects; and exhibitions and projects: "[…] much museum work around migration and migrant communities since 2009 has centred on temporary exhibitions or community engagement projects working directly with local people […]" [p5]

- Specialist museums: "The last eight years have seen significant capital developments for independent museums documenting particular

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https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/3720/dementia-friendly_arts_guide.pdf.

[13] *Dementia friendly screenings: a guide for cinemas.* Alzheimer's Society, 2017. Available to download as a pdf (2700 kb) from: https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/download/downloads/id/3699/dementia_friendly_screenings_a_guide_for_cinemas.pdf.

[14] Source: email from Nicky Boyd to gem@jiscmail.ac.uk, 11 Jan 2018.

[15] Cathy Ross and Emma Shapiro. *Museums and migration, 2009-2017*: *a report exploring the case for a national migration museum, and a migration museums network.* Migration Museum Project, 2017. Available to download as a pdf (302.30 kb) from: http://www.migrationmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Museums-and-Migration-2009-17-final.pdf.

[16] Mary Stevens. *Stories old and new: migration and identity in the UK heritage sector – a report for the Migration Museum Working Group.* IPPR, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (214.25 kb) from: http://baringfoundation.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Stories.pdf.

communities." [p8] These include the Jewish Museums in London and Manchester; the new Huguenot Museum in Kent; and Black Cultural Archives.

- National museums: "In terms of national history, activity around migration is thinner and arguably less impressive. Since 2009, museums with a national scope have not been conspicuously active participants in public conversations about Britain's past and present character. There are of course exceptions but these have tended to be one-off exhibitions (for example, Tate Britain's 2012 exhibition *Migrations: Journeys into British Art* or the V&A's *Black British Style* exhibition in 2014). Generally, England's larger 'national' museums have looked outwards in their programming, exploring subjects of global or international reach in block-buster exhibitions designed for international touring.

  Exhibitions about matters closer to home (the England–Scotland relationship, for example) have not been that visible." [p9]

- Museum practice: "Since 2009, the UK museum sector has seen a noticeable shift in professional values and methodologies. Ethics and social justice have now moved to the centre of professional concerns […]

  Hallmarks of this new approach are a focus on social impact, active public participation, seeing audiences as creators as well as consumers of knowledge; engagement with contemporary issues sometimes with an explicitly campaigning agenda; respect for diversity and positive efforts to make museums as inclusive as possible in all parts of their work.

  This new climate has proved fertile soil for museum activities around migration and cultural diversity. A sense of professional and personal mission has undoubtedly fuelled some of the work carried out in local and regional museums. The MMN survey found that many respondents expressed a strong personal commitment to working with migrant communities, and this was particularly apparent when staff spoke about projects with refugees […]" [pp11-12]

- The wider heritage sector: "Since 2009, other parts of the heritage sector (libraries and archives as opposed to museums) have demonstrated a growing interest in 'telling the nation's story' in ways that highlight the presence of ethnic, cultural and religious diversity." [p12]

  This includes examples from the British Library, The National Archives, and London Metropolitan Archives; work funded via HLF; and broadcasting (but not public libraries).

- Universities and schools: "Since 2009, academic interest in migration has generated a growing body of academic literature about museums and migration." [p14]

This includes mentions of the EU-funded programme 'European Museums in an age of Migration'[17]; the launch of new GCSE modules; and *Our Migration Story: The Making of Britain*, the Arts and Humanities Research Council-funded collaboration between the Runnymede Trust and academics based at the universities of Cambridge and Manchester[18].

The report then goes on to look at whether there is a role for a national museum of migration. The report concludes that:

"The extent of regional work is undeniably impressive but also underlines the fact that the national picture remains as fragmented as it was in 2009 when Dr Mary Stevens lamented not just the 'piecemeal and patchy way in which migration is represented' […] but also the loss of complexity when the story of migration is reduced to an accumulation of separate stories. Even now, no institution 'pulls it all together'.

What does seem clear is that, if a museum exploring migration at the national level was to emerge, it would have to define its remit carefully. Any such new museum would have to deliver its 'offer' in a way that worked in partnership with local and regional museums, many of whom will be larger, better resourced and with more solid expertise to draw on than any new institution starting from scratch. The model for a new museum might be more of a sector-supporting institution or one that added value to, or extended the life of, existing projects. The scope for reinventing inter-museums relationships is immense." [p16]

Finally, the report summarises the findings of a survey designed to find out whether or not a new specialist network would be useful. It concluded:

"[…] a migration specialist network would indeed be welcomed by museum professionals, as evidenced by responses to the MMN survey. The survey underlined that many individuals feel a strong personal commitment to working alongside migrant groups, and many are fuelled by their own beliefs about museums and social good. A migration network would foster and strengthen this already invaluable resource of energy and effort […]" [p19]

A full report[19] of this survey's findings is also available.

This is an important step forward in raising the profile of work on migration in museums, recommended.[20]

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[17] See: http://www.mela-project.polimi.it/.

[18] See: http://www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/about.html.

[19] *Report on the Migration Museums Network survey results 2017*. Migration Museum Project, 2017. Available to download as a pdf (1180 kb) from: http://www.migrationmuseum.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/11/Report-on-the-MMN-survey-results-final-PDF.pdf.

[20] Source: Migration Museum Project *Newsletter*, Winter 2017 – which can be read online at: http://mailchi.mp/migrationmuseum/whats-on-in-june-1490845?e=2b474489a2.

Abbreviations and acronyms

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
HLF = Heritage Lottery Fund
MMN = Migration Museums Network
MPM = Major Partner Museums
NPOs = National Portfolio Organisations

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