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

Number 223, September 2019

(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 September 2019 issue includes:

- "Finding the cutting edge of digital inclusion", which looks at the work being developed in Leeds Library Service, taking a different approach to digital inclusion. As Amy Hearn (Digital Inclusion Coordinator) says:

    "What we are doing is complementing core library provision – such as free access to computers, the internet and Get on Line Sessions – by supporting and building a network among organisations that already work with those who are most at risk of being disadvantaged by lack of digital skills." [p10]

- Heather Rodenhurst "Sharing Memories in Shropshire", which looks at the development of Shared Memory Bags as a resource to support people living with memory loss[1] [pp22-24]

- Alan Smith "Films inside", which outlines how Alan (a prison librarian) worked with the British Board of Film Classification to set up a film club for prisoners in three Staffordshire prisons[2] [pp42-44]

Museums Journal

The October 2019 issue includes:

- Lauren Ephithite "Stressed out", which looks at how ell museums are looking after the mental health and wellbeing of their staff [pp28-31 – pp29 & 31 are illustrations]

- Rob Sharp "Troubled history", which explores how cultural institutions are tackling the topic of slavery [pp32-35, 37, 39]

- Eleanor Mills interview with Errol Francis, "Bright ideas", which looks at the career of Errol Francis, the Artistic Director and CEO of Culture&[3]:

    "Culture& is an independent arts and education charity set up in 1988 in London.

    Formerly known as Cultural Co-operation, the charity works with arts and heritage institutions and artists to develop programmes that promote diversity in the workforce and expand audiences.

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[1] See: https://www.shropshire.gov.uk/libraries/groups-and-support/health-and-wellbeing/shared-memory-bags/.

[2] The full report and links to other resources are available on the Lemos & Crane website at: https://lemosandcrane.co.uk/home/index.php?id=241495 (you will need to register on the site to gain access).

[3] See: https://www.cultureand.org/about-us/what-we-do/.

Culture&'s flagship programme is the New Museum School, which is in its second year."[4] [p42]

- Catherine Kennedy "Art and Environment", which looks at museums' contemporary collecting of material reflecting the climate crisis [p49]

- Emma MacNicol reviews *Diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion in museums*[5] [p70]

- Thembi Mutch "Decolonisation – making the case for it" ["In Practice" column], which looks at recent developments, including the work of Museum Detox[6] [pp74-75]

- Subhadra Das "Case study: Grant Museum of Zoology University College London", ["In Practice" column], which looks at "Tackling the colonial context of natural history collections" [p77]

- Sandra Shakespeare "Getting ready for decolonisation", ["In Practice" column], which briefly looks at actions that museums can take [p77]

The School Librarian

The latest issue[7] of the journal of the School Library Association[8] focuses on diversity and inclusion.[9] Articles include:

- Matthew Courtney "Diverse literature in school libraries: reflected realities", which begins with a reminder of the CLPE report, *Reflecting realities*[10], and then looks at library staff's professional responsibilities; books representing society; stereotyping; 'authentic texts' which focuses on the need for texts by authors who write about their own experiences, drawing on the #OwnVoices[11] movement; and cultural pluralism. There is a useful list of references [pp133-135]

- Karys McEwen "We go together: how library staff can support LGBTIQ students in the school library", written from an Australian perspective with some UK weblinks and resources added [pp136-139]

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[4] See, for example: https://www.cultureand.org/join-new-museum-school/.
[5] Johnnetta Betsch Cole and Laura Lott (eds). *Diversity, equity, accessibility and inclusion in museums*. Rowman & Littlefield, 2019.
[6] "Museum Detox – a networking group for BAME professionals in museums and heritage", https://museumdetox.wordpress.com/.
[7] *The School Librarian* 67 (3) Autumn 2019.
[8] See: www.sla.org.uk.
[9] Thanks to Anne Harding for sending me this issue of the journal.
[10] *Reflecting Realities: survey of ethnic representation within UK children's literature 2017*. CLPE, 2018. Available to download from: https://clpe.org.uk/library-and-resources/research/reflecting-realities-survey-ethnic-representation-within-uk-children. Assessed in *The Network Newsletter*, 208, Jun 2018, pp10-12.
[11] See: https://twitter.com/hashtag/ownvoices?ref_src=twsrc%5Egoogle%7Ctwcamp%5Eserp%7Ctwgr%5Ehashtag.

- Barbara Band "Just like us: Reading Roadshows", which reports on the Roadshows organised by Just Like Us[12] "[…] an LGBT+ charity whose mission is to 'empower young people to be role models championing LGBT+ equality at school and work'." [p140] The article includes short reports from Roadshows at two school [pp140-141]

- Interview with Lynmara Hingston, Director of Equality and Diversity at Whitefield School – and also the school librarian [pp142-143]

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

Black archives in the UK report: opportunities, challenges and moving forward

This new report[13] from the Race, Culture and Equality Working Group Report at the Royal Geographical Society intends to:

> "[…] provide an indicative mapping of Black focused archives in the UK. It attempts to provide snapshots of the diverse Black archives existing across the UK, as well as the opportunities and challenges Black archives currently experience in the UK." [p2]

In addition:

> "The second objective of this report is to stimulate a broader and deeper research agenda into Black archives. This report has been produced from a research project commissioned by the Race, Culture and Equality Working Group of the Royal Geographical Society. Thus, the report hopes to be a catalyst for further research into these topics and to engender much needed discussion about the future of Black archives in the UK." [p2]

The first section of the report looks at a number of Black archives, primarily the Black Cultural Archives[14] in London; also the George Padmore Institute, London[15]; Nottingham Black Archive[16]; the Vanley Burke Archive, currently

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[12] "Just Like Us was founded for a simple reason: growing up LGBT+ is still one of the most challenging experiences young people can face.

We believe the best way to support LGBT+ young people is to make sure they hear powerful positive messages about being LGBT+ from other LGBT+ young people, just a little older and little wiser." See: https://www.justlikeus.org/about.

[13] Natalie Hyacinth. *Black archives in the UK report: opportunities, challenges and moving forward*. Royal Geographical Society (Race, Culture and Equality Working Group Report), 2019. Available to download as a pdf from: https://raceingeographydotorg.files.wordpress.com/2019/08/race-group-report-july-2019-proofread.pdf.

[14] See: https://blackculturalarchives.org/.

[15] See: https://www.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/.

housed at the Library of Birmingham[17]; NOMAD/Somali Archives, London[18]; the Ahmed Iqbal Ullah Education Trust (known as the Race Archive) in Manchester[19].

For each, the report briefly summarises the background to the collection, and then looks at 'moving forward', starting to make an assessment of the strengths and vulnerabilities of each collection.

This is then followed by the three key findings. I have taken the liberty of reproducing these in their entirety, as they make some important points:

> "**In/Security**
> The above snapshots of Black archives across the UK have demonstrated the continuum between the precarity of Black archives with the precarity of Black lives. All the archives presented in this report show various degrees of precariousness, an experience seemingly embedded in the existence of Black archives. Black archives exist within various modes of survival in order to say afloat, dealing with constant rupture and renewal. These ruptures however also provide opportunities to renew and to instigate movements and initiatives that will make the archives more secure.
>
> **In/Dependence**
> The tension between the desire to be independent and the need to access funding pools was a key concern for the archives. The archives all expressed a desire to be independently run, with the local community at the helm. However, the archives recognised and highlighted the funding constraints that were often placed on the archives' objectives, attempting to steer the archive towards the funders' various agendas. This means that several of the archives work towards an independent strategy, where they can maintain relative control of the archive and its outputs.
>
> **Local Networks**
> Each archive demonstrated a particular and unbreakable link to their locale. The concept of a 'community archive' was key to each archive's attempt to engage with and promote the archive as a core part of the local community. This often meant organising workshops on local history, oral history projects and outreach programmes that connected with local concerns. The archives frequently connected with local heritage and cultural networks, initiating fruitful partnerships and supporting community engagement. Black archives' close links to their locales also highlighted the BCA's role as a national institution situated within London and its relationships to smaller, local archives. The at times uneven dichotomy between a national institution and local community

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[16] See: http://nottinghamblackarchive.org/.
[17] See: https://www.birmingham.gov.uk/info/50134/archives_and_collections/1553/about_our_collections/2.
[18] See: https://nomad-project.co.uk/.
[19] See: http://www.racearchive.manchester.ac.uk/.

organisations demonstrates the need for greater dialogue and investment." [pp24-25]

The report concludes with three important points:

"[…] a more comprehensive report of issues regarding Black archives is needed. This report however can be viewed as the first step into highlighting the importance of Black archives and the need for further, ongoing research. The report has also sought to de-centre London as the centre of Black experience in the UK." [p25]

and, finally, that:

"As the Black archives have themselves echoed above, Black history is British history." [p25]

This is a really interesting and important report, recommended.[20]

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"Museums Change Lives Award"

The MA has recently announced the winners of its second Museums Change Lives Award[21].

- The Jewish Museum London won the overall Museums Change Lives Award 2019 for "Jews, Money, Myth", an exhibition "[…] exploring the complex relationship between Jews and money over 2,000 years – confronting deeply held stereotypes that have persisted over centuries."[22]

- Kirkleatham Museum in Redcar, Yorkshire won the Best Small Museum Award for its co-curated project "Steel Stories", celebrating local iron and steel heritage[23]

- Shortlisted alongside the winner were Totnes Elizabethan House Museum for "Totnes' Women's Voices 1918-2018"[24] and the Museum of Cardiff for its Memory Boxes initiative[25]

- "Victoria Rogers, manager of the Museum of Cardiff, received the Radical Changemaker Award for putting social impact at the core of everything she does. She has taken steps to make the museum a dementia-friendly service, changed the museum's visitor profile by

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[20] Source: *Black & Asian Heritage Mix Newsletter*, Oct 2019.
[21] See: https://www.museumsassociation.org/news/jewish-museum-london-wins-museums-change-lives-award?utm_campaign=1589354_04102019&utm_medium=email&utm_source=Museums%20Association&dm_i=2VBX,Y2CQ,27LU0M,3KINR,1.
[22] Although the exhibition is now closed, there is still some info about it at: https://jewishmuseum.org.uk/exhibitions/jews-money-myth/.
[23] See: https://redcarcleveland.co.uk/enjoy/steel-stories-2/.
[24] See: https://www.totnesmuseum.org/latest-news/#, and scroll down.
[25] See: https://cardiffmuseum.com/memory-boxes/.

engaging more diverse audiences, and worked with people in the local area to explore challenging aspects of the city's history."

- "The Judges' Award for Environmental Sustainability was awarded to Leeds Museums and Galleries for Beavers to Weavers, an exhibition about the way in which animals use only what they need from their environment. The exhibition took a similarly sustainable approach, using recycled materials in the exhibition design, sourcing materials that would otherwise have been wasted, and explaining these decisions to visitors."[26]

- The Horniman Museum and Gardens' "Beat Plastic Pollution" campaign[27] and Manchester Museum's "Harlequin Frog Conservation Project" were also shortlisted for taking an innovative approach to raising awareness of environmental issues through their museum displays[28].

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge

This research[29] by Oxford Consultants for Social Inclusion (OCSI)[30] has recently been published by Local Trust[31].

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[26] Although the exhibition is now closed, there is still some info about it at: https://www.leedsinspired.co.uk/events/beavers-weavers-wonderful-world-animal-makers.
[27] Although the exhibition is also now closed, there is still some info about it at: https://www.horniman.ac.uk/get_involved/news/beat-plastic-pollution-display-inspires-young-visitors.
[28] See: https://www.museum.manchester.ac.uk/about/supportus/sponsorafrog/.
[29] *Left behind? Understanding communities on the edge*. Local Trust, 2019. Available to download as a pdf from: https://localtrust.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/local_trust_ocsi_left_behind_research_august_2019.pdf.
[30] "High quality research, data and analysis for public and community sector organisations, helping you make better decisions – decisions that contribute to the public good." Taken from: https://ocsi.uk/.
[31] "Local Trust is a national charity focused on supporting residents in communities to develop their own solutions to local issues and problems. In each of 150 neighbourhoods across England we have committed funding of more than £1.1m, putting it directly in the hands of groups of local residents, giving them a unique opportunity to spend money and take the decisions needed to make their communities better places to live.

This radical and innovative funding programme – Big Local – is developing a body of evidence as to the potential that can be released when local people are trusted with funds and provided with the support they need to come together, build partnerships and tackle issues that have previously seemed intractable.

Big Local was founded in 2012 by a £217m endowment from the National Lottery Community Fund. When the NLCF identified the neighbourhoods that would benefit from the programme, these were, typically, places that – despite suffering from higher

The report begins by acknowledging the controversy around the term 'left behind':

> "The term 'left behind' is controversial and contentious. It has been argued that it is patronising because, for example, it suggests that the residents of left-behind areas are trapped in rosy nostalgia for past glories […] Some suggest that a better term would be 'held back' because the policy neglect of these areas has been blatant […]
>
> We do not use it to imply that the areas so described lack people with skills and commitment or a rich heritage. We know from our experience of the Big Local programme that the reverse is generally the case. However, they have tended not to receive a fair share of the investment available and therefore lack the services and facilities that many of us take for granted. It is these services and facilities that help to connect people in a community and bind them together.
>
> Some research suggests that 'left behind' may actually be a term that at least some of the people living in the areas commonly described as such identify with […] It is also a term that people seem to instinctively understand, which has political, social and cultural resonance. This is why, despite its difficulties, and in the absence of better, we decided to use it for the research described in this report. We intend, as we develop work on this theme, to consult people living in the areas we are concerned about on the language they would like used to describe their areas." [p7]

Having set this context, the report then further defines 'left behind'; sets out how it mapped the 'left behind' wards in England; and then begins to develop a response.

The research explores the hypothesis that there are particular features in communities that feel 'left behind'; these features have been used to shape three 'domains' against which areas were assessed. These domains are:

- Civic assets: "Does the area offer access or provide close proximity to key community, civic, educational and cultural assets, including pubs, libraries, green space, community centres, swimming pools etc – facilities that provide things to do often, at no or little cost, which are important to how positive a community feels about its area?" [p9]

- Connectedness: "Do residents have access to key services, such as health services, within a reasonable travel distance? Are public transport and digital infrastructure good? And how strong is the local job market?" [p9]

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than average levels of deprivation – had missed out in the past from both lottery and statutory funding." [p1]

Further info about Local Trust at: https://localtrust.org.uk/.

- An engaged community: "Are charities active in the area, and do people appear to be engaged in the broader civic life of their community?" [p9]

From this, OCSI created a new community-needs index and used this to carry out further analysis:

"Having created a community-needs index, we were particularly interested in exploring the interaction between deprivation and community need. We therefore sought to explore the characteristics of areas that were ranked in the worst ten per cent in both the community needs index and the [Index of Multiple Deprivation]." [p11]

They looked at demographics; employment, education and skills; living standards; and health. The research summarises this as:

"What this research suggests is that civic assets, community engagement and connectivity, make a significant difference to social and economic outcomes for people and communities. Neighbourhoods which lack these features face a range of complex and related socio-economic challenges, and there is some evidence to suggest that they are falling further behind other deprived areas.

This deterioration is doubtless related to austerity and the cuts in public services and welfare benefits it ushered in. Both the spending allocation for local government and the welfare budget have reduced significantly. This is bound to have had an impact." [p13]

Following the mapping exercise, the researchers concluded that:

"The mapping shows that there is a concentration of left- behind areas in post-industrial areas in northern England and in coastal areas in southern England. This was to be expected. What is notable is the extent to which this is also a phenomenon of post-war social housing estates on the peripheries of cities and towns.

The research shows that most people in left-behind areas live in urban locations – 47% in major conurbations and 43% in minor conurbations. However, predictably perhaps, London and inland areas of southern England encompass very few such areas." [p17]

In terms of 'developing a response', the research "[…] has significant implications for government at a national and local level" [p18]. These include:

"First, we have to ensure that left-behind areas have the basic assets and conditions needed to promote their health and vitality. These include good public transport and broadband connectivity, but also vital civic assets such as libraries, pubs and community centres. Places to meet are important; so too is small scale funding to support the activities that bring people together and provide social glue, including walking clubs, knitting circles and befriending groups. For a small number of brave people, attending a community activity or event is the first step to

community leadership – a leadership that can enable communities to address decades of under- investment." [p18]

This will require significant funding.

> "Second, specific funding and capacity building are needed for left-behind areas to support them in developing and implementing community economic development plans. Such projects might include, as mentioned above, community housing or renewable-energy schemes or innovation hubs or co-working spaces." [p19]

Finally:

> "Third, the patterns revealed here should inform future policy across government departments and local government in order to level up areas that are left behind.
>
> We recommend that as a first step, the government works with civil society to set up a task force to pursue this agenda. One early collaborative project might be to build on this report by working to improve data on, and analysis of, areas that tend to be characterised and characterise themselves as 'left behind'." [pp19-20]

The report concludes with two annexes, one listing the data sources used to establish community need; and the second listing the 'left behind' wards.

This is a useful analysis of what creates 'left behind' areas and what can be done to support these – useful background reading.[32]

LGBTQ issues – Other Agencies

The hate crime report 2019: attitudes to LGBT+ people in the UK

This is the result[33] of a survey by GALOP (the UK's LGBT+ anti-violence charity) in which:

> "[…] a representative sample of 1,617 people from across the UK answered questions on their beliefs about LGBT+ people." [p3]

The research looked at Beliefs about LGBT+ people (including freedom for LGBT+ people to live as they wish; being LGBT+ is 'immoral or against my beliefs'; LGBT+ people are 'dangerous' to other people; LGBT+ people can be

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[32] Source: email from Shelagh Levett, Director SWRLS, 2 Oct 2019.
[33] Melanie Stray. *The hate crime report 2019: attitudes to LGBT+ people in the UK.* GALOP, 2019. Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.galop.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/Hate-Crime-Report-2019.pdf.

'cured'); Social distance from LGBT+ people (comfort with LGBT+ neighbours; trans people and public toilets); and Beliefs about hate crime.

There were also some international comparisons, for example:

> "Ireland was the most accepting of LGBT+ people living as they wish, with the UK in second place. Lithuania and Bulgaria had the most negative views, with 1 in 4 people surveyed saying that LGBT+ people should not be able to live as they wish." [p6]

The overall findings are significant:

> "The results of this study show that anti-LGBT+ prejudice is still widespread in the United Kingdom. Most striking is the apparent gap between the freedom that people theoretically think LGBT+ people should have, and their actual beliefs and feelings about LGBT+ people in practice. Only 1 in 20 people said that LGBT+ people should not be free to live as they wish, but 1 in 5 would be uncomfortable with an LGB+ neighbour, 1 in 4 with a trans neighbour, 1 in 5 said that being LGBT+ was against their morals or beliefs, 1 in 10 that being LGBT+ could be cured, and 1 in 10 thought that LGBT+ people were dangerous. Potentially, some people holding these negative views do not recognise them as homophobic, biphobic or transphobic and contrary to LGBT+ rights.
>
> The views of young people were more divided that their older counterparts. 18-24 year olds were less likely to give answers in the middle ground (e.g. neither agree nor disagree) on the majority of questions. These opposing viewpoints were most notable for the statement, "Being gay, lesbian, bisexual or transgender is immoral or against my beliefs": 60% disagreed or strongly disagreed, but 27% agreed or strongly agreed, higher than any other age group.
>
> This contrasts with high levels of agreement among the 18-24 year old respondents that different LGBT+ groups should be able to live as they wish; 91% agreed re gay men and lesbians, 94% re bisexual people, and 87% re trans people, higher than for all other age groups.
>
> It appears that a subsection of young people have negative internal views about LGBT+ people, but are less likely to think that their views should warrant intervention in the lives of LGBT+ people than older age groups. This perhaps reflects a combination of the influence of the rise of anti-LGBT+ rhetoric globally, combined with the influence of neoliberal ideology, which promotes individualism. It may also be connected to the influence of a growing number of siloed online communities of hate, which exist with different social norms to mainstream society, running counter to inclusion and tolerance." [p18]

The report concludes with a series of important recommendations:

1. "Support research into the reasons for anti-LGBT+ attitudes among young people.

2. Improve public attitudes to LGBT+ people through education and campaigning.
3. Work with social media companies to address toxic cultures of hate online.
4. Improve public knowledge about the damaging impacts of anti-LGBT+ hate.
5. Build preventive educational programmes for perpetrators of hate crime.
6. Build the capacity of anti-hate crime services to support victims.
7. Support work promoting solidarity between minority communities facing hate crime." [p21]

Through the work that we do, we can have a positive influence on public opinion – and can also provide information and signpost people to other resources. Recommended.[34]

Abbreviations and acronyms

CLPE = Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
MA = Museums Association

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This Newsletter was compiled by John Vincent, and all items are written by him, unless otherwise stated. Please send any comments or items for the next issue to:

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[34] Source: Peter Tatchell Foundation *Weekly*, #67, 24 Oct 2019.