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

Number 66, December 2006

(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 …?

Renaissance News

The latest issue[1] has lots of items of interest, including:

- "Regional Round-up" [pp5-8], which includes a short piece about Wardown Park Museum which "has won first place for Luton Borough Council in the East of England Regional Equalities Award 2006, for promoting local community cohesion and equalities with its 'Travelling People' exhibition. The museum worked with adults from travelling communities and local school children for an exhibition this summer that explored the lifestyle and culture of travelers, showmen and circus people around Luton." [p5]
- "Open to new skills" [pp23-24], about the role that museums play to support people who volunteer.

MLA South East "In Brief" Guides

MLA South East have recently added to their very useful series of "In Brief" guidance notes, including *Safeguarding children in museums*[2]. The full list is available at:

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[1] *Renaissance News*, Autumn 2006, available to download as a pdf (1.48 Mb) from: http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//R/renaissance_news_autumn_2006_10390.pdf.

[2] *Safeguarding children in museums*. MLA South East, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (90 Kb) from: http://www.mlasoutheast.org.uk/assets/documents/100008B4IB27Safeguardingchildreninmuseums.pdf.

http://www.mlasoutheast.org.uk/aboutus/publications/briefingsheets/index.asp?startrow=1.[3]

"Tackling Homelessness"

DCLG have recently revamped their web-pages[4] on homelessness, including an updated overview, statistics, and links to key publications.

"How far do leaves fall?"

The Chinese Mental Health Association has received funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund to develop an oral history project called "How far do leaves fall?" which looks at British Chinese experiences. The project is inter-generational and records and documents a huge range of stories. The project is being made public through a DVD, interactive CDROM and booklet.

There is also a display to raise awareness of the project, available free of charge to libraries and community venues, and the project is looking for venues that could also screen the programme on DVD. To date, Lewisham and Westminster libraries have signed up, and the resources will also be on display at (London) City Hall, the National Portrait Gallery and the Manchester Chinese Arts Centre.

There is further information at: http://www.cmha.org.uk/e_services.asp?Subject=OralHistory and/or please contact the project worker, Ting Ting Xu (oralhistory@cmha.org.uk).[5]

NB Magazine

The December issue of the RNIB magazine[6] has two articles which may be of interest:

- Sue Barrell <u>and</u> Jill Shakespear "Reaching Out: a library-based resource centre", which describes joint work between Essex Blind Charity and Essex Libraries to promote information and reading for visually-impaired people
- David Mann "Where's my Book?" on the Right to Read Alliance's campaign to tackle the textbook deficit for visually-impaired children.[7]

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[3] Source: MLA South East e-bulletin, 13.
[4] See: http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1502899.
[5] Source: Mike Clarke (LLDA).
[6] *NB Magazine*, December 2006. Further information about content and subscriptions from:
http://www.rnib.org.uk/xpedio/groups/public/documents/publicwebsite/public_nbmagazine.hcsp#P4_274.
[7] Source: Anne Brimlow (Essex Libraries).

Community Engagement

MLA have just updated the Community Engagement information on their website[8], including links to a range of resources, a list of FAQs, and contact details for the two Community Libraries Programme Support Officers.

MLA have also added to their "Communities" web-pages[9], with the publication of a discussion paper[10] on the DCLG White Paper, and links to pages on:

- Improving the performance of museums, libraries and archives
- Delivering against the Shared Priorities of Local and Central Government
- Sustainable Communities
- Local Area Agreements
- The MLA Partnership and Local Government.

The role of museums and galleries

Just in case you haven't seen this, IDeA has recently published a web-page[11] outlining the role that museums and galleries play in helping raise standards in education and promoting community cohesion.

Tackling social exclusion – Libraries, Museums and Archives

MLA Disability Survey 2005

MLA have just published the results[12] of their latest Disability Survey.

According to the press release:

[8] See:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=73&Document/@id=24691&Section[@stateId_eq_left_hand_root]/@id=4332.

[9] See:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=73&Document/@id=26562&Section[@stateId_eq_left_hand_root]/@id=4302.

[10] *Museums, libraries and archives and the Local Government White Paper Strong and Prosperous Communities: a discussion paper*. MLA, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//S/strong_and_prosperous_communities_discussion_paper_10518.pdf.

[11] See: http://www.idea-knowledge.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=777724.

[12] Janet A Bell, Simon Matty and Marcus Weisen. *MLA Disability Survey 2005*. MLA, 2006 (ISBN (13): 978-1-905867-09-7). Available to download as a pdf (247 Kb) from:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//D/disability_survey_2005_fullreport_10446.pdf. There is also a summary (pdf – 56.2Kb) available from:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//D/disability_survey_2005_summary_10447.pdf, and Word versions available from:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=73&Document/@id=22997&Section[@stateId_eq_left_hand_root]/@id=4302.

"Replies were received by 116 respondents from museums, libraries and archives. The report illustrates a number of key findings such as:

- 89% of respondents believe disability access is about more than wheelchair access
- 82% think disability should be represented in collections
- 83% provide at least general disability awareness training for staff and about half extend training to all staff
- There has been an increase in the proportion of respondents carrying out formal disability access audits since 2001. About 1/3 of archive services and a smaller proportion of libraries and museums have not yet undertaken an audit.
- Few disabled people hold positions in management and at board level
- Less than half of respondents (43%) have an access plan for disabled people
- Consultation with disabled people tends to be informal and active consultation with disabled people still remains infrequent …"[13]

The report's recommendations are:

"Museums, libraries and archives should all actively:

- adopt a planned approach to improvements and work towards making disability access and equality integral to everything they do. This should include "mainstreaming" disability access provision within in core budgets and e.g. reviewing collections policies
- stay up-to-date with legal duties aimed at ending discrimination against disabled people and put in place plans to meet these duties
- use their leverage to affect change beyond their organisations, specifying the need for disability access and equality in all tender briefs and require that tenderers provide evidence of requisite skills." [p25]

How to work with your communities: a diversity toolkit

SEMLAC (as they then were) published this excellent toolkit[14] in 2004. It consists of a set of guidance sheets "to assist museums, libraries and archives in developing their work with culturally diverse audiences. They are targeted specifically at organisations that have not previously worked with culturally diverse communities or those who are just beginning to develop this field of their work."

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[13] Source: MLA press release, 22 November 2006 – see:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/webdav/harmonise?Page/@id=82&Document/@id=26574&Session/@id=D_t9denMgQ4i2Abh2KpPO8&Section%5b@stateId_eq_left_hand_root%5d/@id=4289.
[14] *How to work with your communities: a diversity toolkit.* SEMLAC, 2004. Available to download as a pdf (2.996 Mb) from:
http://www.mlasoutheast.org.uk/assets/documents/1000037Bdiversity_toolkit.pdf.

There are nine sheets, covering:

- Guidance Sheet 1: What is cultural diversity and why should museums, libraries and archives become involved in it?
- Guidance Sheet 2: How can I get started if I want to work with culturally diverse audiences?
- Guidance Sheet 3: How can I use collections to promote cultural diversity?
- Guidance Sheet 4: How do I identify culturally diverse communities in my area?
- Guidance Sheet 5: How do I approach culturally diverse audiences?
- Guidance Sheet 6: How can I plan and deliver a culturally diverse project?
- Guidance Sheet 7: How can we begin to integrate cultural diversity into our core services?
- Guidance Sheet 8: How can I evaluate and sustain culturally diverse projects?
- Guidance Sheet 9: Where can I find funding for culturally diverse projects?

plus lists of contacts and references, and case studies.

"Building Bridges: Making Connections" 2004-2006

Nottingham City Libraries have published online their report[15] of the "Building Bridges: Making Connections" project which was funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, and forged links between libraries and refugee and asylum-seeking communities. It includes practical information for any library service working with, or thinking of working with this audience, and an opportunity to learn from the challenges outlined.[16]

"The right 'man' for the job? The role of empathy in community librarianship" – Research project at the University of Sheffield

The Centre for the Public Library and Information in Society [CPLIS], part of the Libraries and Information Society research group based at the Department of Information Studies, University of Sheffield, is currently undertaking a national research project investigating the role of public libraries in meeting

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[15] Sena Zvonic, Roger Parish and Kam Bangar. *'Building Bridges: Making Connections' Project 2004-2006: reaching out to refugees and asylum seekers in Nottingham through libraries.* City of Nottingham, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://www.nottinghamcity.gov.uk/sitemap/leisure_and_culture/libraries/lcli_plans_and_policies.htm.
[16] Source: Roger Parish (Service Development Librarian Social Inclusion, Nottingham City Library and Information Services).

the social inclusion agenda in England. The research has been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council [AHRC], March 2006 – February 2008. The project is primarily concerned with public library staff attitudes towards social inclusion policy and objectives, and the role of empathy in delivering such services. Particular areas of investigation include:

- the relationships between staffs own ethnicity, social, cultural and professional background and their capacity to make an effective, empathic contribution to social inclusion objectives
- The relationship between inclusive organisations and the delivery of an inclusive service
- Interpretations of national policy at regional and local level
- Methods for delivering socially inclusive services

Case studies of current social inclusion practice and initiatives will be profiled in the research, with a particular emphasis upon innovative approaches to staff recruitment, selection, training and support. The research team see the project as an opportunity to highlight the real issues facing public library staff in meeting the social inclusion agenda, and are keen to include and express the opinions and concerns of a wide sample of employees from across organisational structures.

The first stage of the research involved a quantitative survey, which was distributed to a stratified sample of 90 Public Library Authorities, and will provide a statistical 'snapshot' of current thought and activity in this area. The next significant stage of the research will be qualitative fieldwork, including focus groups with a representative sample of public library staff and interviews with senior managers across the nine English regions, to be conducted in Spring 2007. A research workshop will be held in Autumn 2007, where key stakeholders, professional bodies and influential parties will be invited to comment on research findings 'so far' and add to the discussion.

If you would like any further information on the project, contact details for the research team are provided below. We would be particularly interested in hearing from members of public library staff who would like to participate in the research, or from those currently involved in innovative approaches to service provision for excluded groups.

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http://cplis.shef.ac.uk

Delivering tomorrow's libraries …

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland have recently published this document[17], a set of "firm guidelines and policy direction for the library service" (p3).

In October 2005, they issued a consultation paper, *Northern Ireland's libraries: a framework for change*, to which over 1000 people responded, and this document is the outcome.

After the introduction, it includes:

- Libraries' role and vision, which, amongst other things, sets out the "offer":

    "… [libraries] provide equality of opportunity and assist in combating social exclusion, with significant potential to address … what the Secretary of State … has called the 'poverty of aspiration'". [p8]

    "The unique combination of libraries' core activities … and the way they are delivered … provides an ability to contribute to:
    - lifelong learning, both formal and informal;
    - addressing social exclusion and inequality;
    - facilitating development of informed and responsible citizenship;
    - building communities and fostering good relations;
    - promoting creativity …" [p8]

- Achieving change, which looks at customer focus and the need for a "culture change" programme for staff [p11]; access; buildings; stock; targeted support [see below]; innovation and efficiencies (partnerships, regional activity, marketing and promotion)

- Performance monitoring, which includes standards and impact measurement

- Formula for the allocation of resources to public libraries (which includes a "skewing" on the basis of social need)

- Taking things forward, which will include a implementation plan

- An annex, setting out standards.

The section on "Targeted support" states that:

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[17] *Delivering tomorrow's libraries: principles and priorities for the development of public libraries in Northern Ireland*. DCAL, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (3 Mb) from:
http://www.dcalni.gov.uk/Contman/includes/upload/file.asp?ContentID=1291&file=c_ 24.

"Within a universal service, libraries are well placed to make a particularly effective contribution to those citizens who are, or are at risk of becoming, socially excluded. Because of their strong contribution to the lifelong learning agenda, libraries should be proactive in identifying opportunities to reach out to those who have least access to other services, or who are least likely to use a library. In many cases special measures to reach such people will be required, with the library taking its services beyond the designated library space. Increased awareness of best practice and innovative measures elsewhere which successfully bring the service to hard-to-reach groups are to be encouraged.

… Various policy initiatives address the pressing needs of educational inequalities, disaffected young people, the needs of rundown housing estates, disadvantaged communities and the particular needs of rural communities. The library service can provide an effective support to such measures, and can enable other government departments to deliver their services in a more cost effective way. Many libraries already make special provision for preschool literacy measures, primary school groups, and IT induction for older people. Such work should be built on, with sharing of best practice in particular to target the following groups:
- Young adults;
- Children who need school or homework support;
- Literacy support for those lacking basic skills;
- Non-English speakers, those for whom English is a second language, and other support for ethnic minorities." [pp15-16]

This is an set of guidelines and priorities, parallel in many ways to *Framework for the future*, but putting the tackling of social exclusion very much at its core.

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Improving opportunity, strengthening society …

DCLG have just published a brief summary[18] of progress to date in implementing the recommendations of this report[19].

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[18] *Improving opportunity, strengthening society: one year on – a progress summary*. DCLG, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (1.126 Mb) from: http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/832/ImprovingOpportunityStrengtheningSociety OneyearonAprogresssummary_id1504832.pdf.

[19] *Improving opportunity, strengthening society: the Government's strategy to increase race equality and community cohesion*. Home Office, 2005. Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.communities.gov.uk/pub/615/ImprovingOpportunityStrengtheningSocietyE

As much will hang on the outcome of the Commission on Integration and Cohesion, this summary is primarily useful as an indicator of the main areas where work is taking place (and as a quick guide to who does what!).

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in the UK 2006

JRF have just published the latest analysis by the New Policy Institute of poverty and social exclusion in the UK[20].

The 'headline' findings are:

- "*Poverty among children*. Government has turned the tide on child poverty but has fallen short of its target of taking one million children out of poverty. Half the children in poverty are in families already doing paid work; this means the key proposition behind the anti-poverty strategy - that 'work is the route out of poverty' - does not apply for many people. The underlying problem is low pay: a low-paid couple can only avoid poverty if both are working …
- *Poverty among adults*. The big fall in poverty among pensioners, especially single pensioners, has been a major success of the anti-poverty strategy. However, poverty among working-age adults has not been reduced and this is a major weakness ...
- *Inequalities in income and pay*. Three-quarters of the extra income created over the last decade has gone to richer households. While gender pay inequality has fallen somewhat, especially at the bottom, higher earnings have grown proportionately faster than the average ...
- *Health inequalities*. Health inequalities by social class are pervasive and seem to be more impervious to change than other forms of inequality ...
- *Minimum educational standards*. Progress in the numbers reaching 'headline' standards at age 11 and 16 diverts attention from the failure to improve outcomes for the quarter of 19-year-olds who fail to reach a minimum educational standard. Since these people face the highest risk of poverty in adult life, one of the major causes of future poverty is not being addressed ...
- *Exclusion by institutions*. In a number of areas, from bank accounts to central heating, exclusion has fallen substantially where Government has taken a stand. Yet there remain many others, perhaps above all in

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nglishversion_id1502615.pdf. Also available to download in Welsh from: http://www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1502614.
[20] Guy Palmer, Tom MacInnes and Peter Kenway. *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion 2006*. JRF, 2006 (ISBN 13: 9781859355350; ISBN 10: 1859355358). Available to download as a pdf (3.17 Mb) from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1815-poverty-UK-2006.pdf.

the workplace, where people at the bottom are the least likely to benefit from support and services that are on offer ...

- The researchers conclude that the overall picture is not so much a mixture of success and failure as one of success and neglect. Where Government has acted, change has happened. Where it has not, previous trends have continued."[21]

This is a really important piece of research, throwing up a number of issues (especially around exclusion by institutions) that could relate to MLAs.

As is …

Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Scotland 2006

Again, the 'headlines' of the analysis[22] of Scottish issues are:

- "*Poverty among children*. Child poverty in Scotland has fallen by around a quarter since 1998/99, in line with the UK Government's target for Great Britain as a whole. Two-fifths of all children in poverty are in families already doing paid work …
- *Poverty among pensioners*. Pensioner poverty in Scotland has fallen by around a third over the last decade and is now lower than that for the population as a whole …
- *Poverty among working-age adults.* Working-age poverty for those without children is higher than a decade ago, despite fewer people being in workless households. The risks of poverty for working-age adults in both working and workless households have increased over the last decade ...
- *Disabled people*. Two-thirds of working-age disabled people are not in paid work and half of those aged 25 to retirement who are not working are disabled …
- *Low pay* is most prevalent in Dumfries & Galloway, Clackmannanshire and Moray. This is very different from the picture for worklessness which is most prevalent in West Central Scotland (Glasgow, Inverclyde and West Dunbartonshire) …
- *Ill-health*. Although improving, rates of premature death in Scotland remain around a third higher than in England and Wales …
- *Minimum educational standards*. Whilst the average tariff score in S4 Standard Grades has continued to improve throughout the last decade, the average score for the bottom fifth has remained unchanged since 1999 …
- *Exclusion*. In a number of areas, from bank accounts to central heating, exclusion in Scotland has fallen substantially in recent years ...

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[21] Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/1979.asp.

[22] Guy Palmer, Tom MacInnes <u>and</u> Peter Kenway. *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Scotland 2006.* JRF, 2006 (ISBN 13: 9781859355565). Available to download as a pdf (2.21 Mb) from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/ebooks/1993-poverty-Scotland-2006.pdf.

- The researchers conclude that levels of poverty and social exclusion, trends over time, and the issues arising are largely similar in Scotland to most of the rest of Great Britain. Some are driven by the UK-wide tax and benefits system; others are clearly devolved responsibilities. The grey area, where Scotland-specific initiatives could potentially make a real difference, concerns work opportunities and low pay."[23]

And …

Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland 2006

This is the first Monitoring Poverty and Social Exclusion report[24] for Northern Ireland: official data on household income has only been collected for Northern Ireland since 2002/03. The main points are:

- "On many indicators, Northern Ireland compares unfavourably with any of the nine English regions, as well as with Scotland and Wales. These include: the high number of people receiving out-of-work benefits; the high numbers without paid work; the high number of disabled people, especially related to mental ill-health; and the extent of low pay among full-time employees …
- By contrast, income poverty in Northern Ireland, both overall and for particular groups, is only around the Great Britain average. This apparent paradox is accounted for by Northern Ireland's low housing costs, coupled with the fact that receipt of many social security benefits or credits does not necessarily mean that a household is in poverty …
- Positive trends over time include the fall over the last decade in the proportion of people without paid work and the growth in job numbers, both bigger than anywhere in Great Britain. Pay inequalities between men and women have also come down; they have widened, however, between the high and low paid …
- Adverse trends include the rising proportion of people receiving Disability Living Allowance for reasons of mental ill-health, and the rise in the numbers presenting as homeless. There has also been no reduction in the number of 16-year-olds failing to reach a basic minimum standard at GCSE …
- Many aspects of disadvantage are more prevalent in western districts, and sometimes Belfast, than elsewhere, although there are exceptions to this pattern …
- People living in low-income households face higher risks of many aspects of disadvantage, including poorer local environment, reduced

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[23] Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/1980.asp.
[24] Peter Kenway, Tom MacInnes, Aveen Kelly and Guy Palmer. *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Northern Ireland 2006.* JRF, 2006 (ISBN 13: 9781859355299; ISBN 10: 1859355293). Available to download as a pdf (4 Mb) from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1814-poverty-Northern-Ireland.pdf.

mobility, higher rates of premature mortality, poorer health and higher likelihood of unsatisfactory educational outcomes at 11 and 16 …"[25]

Navigating difference …

The Arts Council England published earlier this year this collection of writings[26] about cultural diversity.

> "Forty arts managers, policy makers, practising artists, academics, audience members and commentators have come together in this book to examine the relevance of cultural diversity and cultural identity to the arts. They set out to unpick the arguments for cultural diversity used by the organisations that fund, support and research the arts. They explore what, if any, shared understanding we have about cultural diversity and question whether the ideas behind it stand up to scrutiny. They propose new ways of thinking they believe will enable more policy makers and arts organisations to respond coherently, wholeheartedly and effectively to demands for equality of access to the arts. They explore practice in other sectors and ask how well the cultural sector measures up before looking back over the past 10 years and setting out the approaches proven to be effective in management, programming and audience development.
>
> They don't all agree, though. This book is a debate about wider issues that are at the heart of what it means to be British today. Their views certainly shouldn't be seen as a reflection of the current policy of Arts Council England, the book's publisher, but they are a contribution to the discussion that will help shape future policy and practice throughout the cultural sector.
>
> *Navigating difference* was commissioned by four audience development agencies, Arts About Manchester, Audiences Central, Audiences London and Audiences Yorkshire. Arts Council England's work on diversity made it an ideal partner in the project. None of the partners wanted to produce a simplistic guide to 'best practice' because their work over the past 10 years has shown them that there is no single blueprint that will be effective in every organisation. Different artists, organisations, communities and contexts will always need different solutions. And those solutions are never simple. Neither can they be left to marketing or education. Cultural diversity can only come from a commitment to changing values throughout an organisation ..." [pp8-9]

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[25] Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialpolicy/1968.asp.
[26] Heather Maitland (ed). *Navigating difference: cultural diversity and audience development.* Arts Council England, 2006 £15.00 (ISBN (9): 0-7287-1077-3). Further information (and links to download Word unillustrated version) from: http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/publications/publication_detail.php?rid=0&sid=&browse=recent&id=497.

The book is divided into fives sections (plus an epilogue):

- The case for more diversity
- The complexities of diversity
- How diverse are the UK's cultural organisations
- How other sectors engage with diversity
- Achieving diversity.

There are certainly some interesting and thought-provoking pieces in here, but it has something of the feel of a college textbook, presenting a range of (often contradictory) arguments – it could form the basis of a very useful discussion within a group, but may have little impact on (and, indeed, may confuse) the lone reader. There are people who still think that diversity is too complex to handle (and therefore ignore the issues), and, I'm afraid, this book may only support that view.

Some of the most potentially interesting chapters (eg Marie Gillespie and Anita Sharma "'Keeping it real?': visible minorities in mainstream broadcasting" [pp88-95; Kate Rodenhurst "Engaging refugees and asylum seekers" [pp194-198]) are actually too brief to do more than highlight a few issues; whilst others (Ziauddin Sardar "Transmodernity: art beyond modernity and multiculturalism" [pp37-45]) seem to belong to another book entirely!

Hidden lives …

Barnardo's have just published a report[27], highlighting the plight of unidentified young carers in the UK – according to official figures, there are currently some 175,000 young carers in the UK, but there is growing evidence of a much larger number.[28]

Sharing information with disabled children in the early years

Scope have just published this important new report[29] as part of their "In the Picture" programme[30].

"The main findings from the research were:

1. There is limited information available for parents and young disabled children.

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[27] *Hidden lives: unidentified young carers in the UK.* Barnardo's, 2006. Available to download as a pdf (1.8 Mb) from: http://www.barnardos.org.uk/hidden_lives_young_carer_report.pdf.

[28] Source: NFER *ontheweb*, November 2006.

[29] Penny Dickinson. *Sharing information with disabled children in the early years: a summary of research carried out by In The Picture project in 2006.* Scope, 2006. Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.scope.org.uk/downloads/publications/scope-itp-report06.pdf.

[30] See: http://www.childreninthepicture.org.uk/.

2. Parents and professionals were unaware of what materials were available and of how to access them.
3. Good practice is not shared across settings despite the fact that most methods are transferable.
4. Story books, toys and games are the most used resources to convey information to this age group and are also viewed as the most effective by parents and professionals.
5. Inclusive cultures within organisations can assist in the sharing of information with young disabled children.
6. It can be difficult for organisations and parents to recognise that the processes they use are in fact methods of sharing information." [p4]

The report then goes on to list recommendations:

"This report has shown that pockets of good practice in the provision and dissemination of information to disabled children in the early years do exist. Parents and professionals feel that more resources are necessary and that practice can be improved. As a result of this survey recommendations by In The Picture include:

1. Organisations identify how they give information to children in the widest possible sense, for example through role play, photo sequences etc.
2. Information giving methods are conveyed openly to families so that they are clear about the techniques being used, and that information has been shared with their child.
3. A culture of inclusion is fostered in all early years settings.
4. A toolkit be produced to showcase good practice in sharing information with children and that resource be shared across early years settings.
5. Systems for sharing existing resources be identified and established for both parents and professionals." [pp4-5]

There are gaps in provision identified here, that could well be filled by libraries, museums (and, in terms of any early years work, by archives).[31]

Beyond refuge …

The NSPCC have just published a summary[32] of their research into what's required to support young people who run away – it also gives very useful (if saddening) background.[33]

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[31] Source: Scope's *Early Years Roundabout* newsletter, 42, December 2006.
[32] Catherine Macaskill. *Beyond refuge: supporting young runaways – executive summary*. NSPCC (Policy Practice Research Series), 2006. Available to download as a pdf (296 Kb) from:
http://www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/publications/downloads/BeyondRefugeSummary_gf40805.pdf.
[33] Source: NFER *ontheweb*, November 2006.

Respect and renewal …

Between 1998 and 2004, JRF funded a research project to look at "the nature of social exclusion in deprived council estates and neighbourhoods and to explore the use of people-based 'soft' regeneration strategies to revitalise them."[34]

They have recently published a report[35] which analyses the outcomes from this work. The key findings include:

- "Professionals underestimated the importance of social issues and were more focused on physical regeneration. Residents perceived social factors – crime and fear of crime, poor life chances for their children, and the consequences of poverty – as the main ones affecting their quality of life, not physical degeneration …
- Some new ideas trialled on the estates were both popular and successful. Reassurance policing reduced the fear of crime; neighbourhood wardens brought anti-social behaviour under control; neighbourhood managers and one-stop centres improved service delivery; and architectural treatments eliminated 'dangerous places'. These measures inspired confidence that social problems could be tackled …
- 'Soft regeneration' projects succeeded within their own terms but none successfully transformed neighbourhoods. Individuals benefited, but some used their enhanced skills and employment prospects to enable them to move elsewhere …
- 'Youth' was a key group in each area. Young people who underachieved academically found the blue-collar jobs of their parents' time no longer available. On some estates, one quarter of young men aged 16 to 21 were neither in work nor education …
- Neighbourhoods with strong concentrations of worklessness in 1998 had the same problems in 2004. Although much had been done to tackle social exclusion in each place, the strong link with worklessness remained ...
- The estates and neighbourhoods were all areas of long-term worklessness but were not homogeneous. The research found communities within communities and discovered similar tensions in each area between longstanding residents – many with large extended families living nearby – and 'incomers'; and between those who were comfortable living on their estate and others who wanted the improved life chances offered elsewhere. This suggests a need for new ways of consulting and dealing with the different populations within each neighbourhood in a more sensitive way ...

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[34] Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/housing/1992.asp.
[35] David Page. *Respect and renewal: a study of neighbourhood social regeneration*. JRF, 2006. (ISBN-13: 978-1-85935-550-3; ISBN-10: 1-85935-550-1). Also available to download as a pdf (1.87 Mb) from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1988-neighbourhood-social-regeneration.pdf.

- The persistence of worklessness in the study areas reflected the national picture in deprived neighbourhoods. Although many more jobs have been created, they have not been taken by people furthest from the labour market. This suggests that creating work opportunities is not enough: workless people need more tailored support back into work."[36]

This research gives valuable background information for our work in engaging communities, as does …

Community participation: who benefits?

JRF have also just published the results[37] of a study by Demos, which looked at whether promoting community participation in governance helps build social capital.

The research found:

- "The key factor influencing levels of participation in governance was the existing pattern of 'linking' social capital: those already well-connected tend to get better connected …
- Community participation tends to be dominated by a small group of insiders who are disproportionately involved in a large number of governance activities …
- What social capital is created by opening up governance to community involvement tends to be concentrated in the hands of this small group. There is no guarantee that the wider community feels the benefit of this social capital, because formal governance structures are often not embedded in everyday community life …
- A number of forces create 'barriers to entry' for those not involved in governance, and increase the likelihood that those already involved will become more so. This suggests that the way governance arrangements work, rather than bad practice by particular institutions, makes this problem worse …
- Potential participants are often put off by the experience, or the perception, of feeling excluded by the way that community participation arrangements work …
- The researchers conclude that:
  - Pushing harder on the existing approach is unlikely to ensure stronger links between community participation in governance and social capital. An alternative is to try to make more effective connections between formal participation by a small group of insiders and the more informal, everyday social networks in which a much bigger group of citizens spends a significant part of their lives.

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[36] Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/housing/1992.asp.
[37] Paul Skidmore, Kirsten Bound and Hannah Lownsbrough. *Community participation – who benefits?* JRF, 2006 (ISBN-13: 978-1-85935-521-3; ISBN-10: 1-85935-521-8). Also available to down load as a pdf (508 Kb) from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1802-community-network-governance.pdf.

- o Rather than expect everyone to participate in formal governance equally, we should try to make more people's everyday civic engagement count, by designing the formal structures of governance in a way that taps into the informal, routine spaces of community life, such as the school gate, places of worship or local post office."[38]

Working in the UK: newcomer's handbook

The Centre for Economic and Social Inclusion has produced a new edition of their important handbook[39]. As the 'blurb' says:

"This book draws on the expertise of leading organisations engaged in the fields of work and of newcomers (which includes migrant workers, those joining families, foreign students, asylum seekers and refugees). Partners include the TUC, CRE, JCWI, Refugee Council, NIACE, London South Bank and London Metropolitan Universities, CARA, and the Employability Forum. It is aimed at advisers, representatives, advocates and other parties interested in ensuring that working age migrants are aware of their rights and of the help that is available in and out of work.

Since the first edition the content of the handbook has been significantly broadened to include sections on employment rights, welfare rights, and on race and gender discrimination. There are also new sections covering refugees and asylum seekers, employment tribunals, English language, the recognition of qualifications, renting, UK work culture and citizenship.

The book provides a comprehensive overview of support that is available for working age migrants in the UK."[40,41]

Broader issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

The Leitch Report

The Treasury has just published the final report[42] of the Leitch Review of Skills[43].

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[38] Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/government/1963.asp.
[39] *Working in the UK: newcomer's handbook.* 2nd edition. CESI, 2006 £19.95 + £2.00 p&p).
[40] Taken from: http://www.cesi.org.uk/docPool/nh2006_flyer.pdf.
[41] Source: thanks to Helen Carpenter for alerting me to this.
[42] HM Treasury. *Prosperity for all in the global economy - world class skills: final report* [Leitch Review of Skills]. TSO, 2006 (ISBN-10: 0-11-840486-5; ISBN-13: 978-0-11-840486-0). Available to download as a pdf (719 Kb) from: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/523/43/leitch_finalreport051206.pdf.

To summarise the key recommendations:

- Increase adult skills across all levels
- Route all public funding for adult vocational skills in England, apart from community learning, through Train to Gain and Learner Accounts by 2010
- Strengthen the employer's voice
- Increase employer engagement and investment in skills, including reforming, re-licensing and empowering Sector Skills Councils [SSC]. Deliver more economically valuable skills by only allowing public funding for vocational qualifications where the content has been approved by SSCs
- Launch a new 'Pledge' for employers to voluntarily commit to train all eligible employees up to Level 2 in the workplace.
- Increase employer investment in Level 3 and 4 qualifications in the workplace
- Increase people's aspirations and awareness of the value of skills to them and their families
- Create a new integrated employment and skills service, based upon existing structures, to increase sustainable employment and progression. Launch a new programme to improve basic skills for those out of work, embedding this support for disadvantaged people and repeat claimants. [taken from pp4-5].

Broader issues – Other Agencies

Capability and resilience: beating the odds

This booklet[44] has just been published by UCL on behalf of the ESRC Priority Network on Capability and Resilience. It "sets out the evidence we have at present on the best ways to promote 'capability and resilience', two words that are used to refer to the ability to react and adapt positively when things go wrong." [p3]

Drawing on the findings of six research projects, this brief summary looks at:

- Resilience: Expect to fail – encourage to strive
- Capability

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[43] For further information about the Review, see: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/independent_reviews/leitch_review/review_leitch_index.cfm.
[44] Mel Bartley (ed). *Capability and resilience: beating the odds.* UCL Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, 2006 (ISBN (9): 0-9527377-9-5; ISBN (13): 978-0-9527377-9-7). Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/capabilityandresilience/beatingtheoddsbook.pdf. There is further background information about the research at: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/capabilityandresilience/, as well as a link to a reading list on capability and resilience at: http://www.ucl.ac.uk/capabilityandresilience/C%20&%20R%20reference%20list.doc.

- Supporting children and adolescents: All you need is love?
- Increasing life chances through education
- Adult adjustment: live well, work well, love well
- Beating poverty
- Adult consequences of childhood adversity
- Area deprivation
- Social participation, social support and resilience in older people
- Designing services that enhance resilience and well-being.

It has some important messages about the provision of appropriate services:

"… what the research shows is that there are common factors that make resilience possible and increase people's capability. These mostly have to do with the quality of human relationships, and with the quality of public service responses to people with problems. These two factors, in turn, are closely related to each other. Good public services enable and encourage people to maintain social relationships, but badly provided ones can create social isolation. There are very great implications from this work, as we can also see from the evidence that it is social relationships that are most effective in maintaining resilience in the face of adversity." [p3][45]

Abbreviations and acronyms

DCAL = Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, Northern Ireland
DCLG = Department for Communities and Local Government
ESRC = Economic and Social Research Council
IDeA = Improvement and Development Agency
JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation
LLDA = London Libraries Development Agency
MLA = Museums, Libraries and Archives
NSPCC = National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children
RNIB = Royal National Institute of the Blind
SEMLAC = South East Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
UCL = University College London

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[45] Source: *The Edge* (the ESRC journal) 23, November 2006, p4.