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

Number 98, June 2009

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

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

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Network news – bookshop now on website!

There is now a bookshop on The Network website – as more titles are identified, they will be added. By buying books from the site, you can add to our income!

Please see: http://www.seapn.org.uk/shop.asp?page_id=79.

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Did you see …?

ARC Magazine

The latest *ARC* has an interview[1] with Karen Garvey, Gallery Lead (Living Bristol) for the development of the new city history museum, in which she stresses the importance of outreach, inclusion and learning, including:

"As well as generating new collections that reflect the diversity of modern society, outreach, inclusion and learning work plays an important role in meeting wider agendas around community cohesion, lifelong learning, well-being and empowerment. This not only directly benefits our users but helps to raise our profile with funders and policy-makers, and highlights the archive sector's contribution to a thriving, forward-looking, inclusive society." [p29]

Library + Information Gazette

The *Gazette* for 5-18 June includes a brief interview[2] with Andrew Motion (who will be presenting this year's Libraries Change Lives Award. In it, he says:

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[1] Heather Romaine "In conversation with … Karen Garvey". *ARC Magazine* 238, June 2009, pp28-29. Further information about *ARC Magazine* from the Society of Archivists' website:
http://www.archives.org.uk/publications/arcthesocietysmonthlymagazine.html.

[2] "'A priming-place that lifts you off to speculate'". *Library + Information Gazette*, 5-18 June 2009, p5. The *Gazette* is now available online – see, for example:
http://edition.pagesuite-professional.co.uk/Launch.aspx?referral=other&pnum=&refresh=6Wy0Ys12m18K&EID=7925c76c-9b6c-495a-b76e-1e5f8de51366&skip=true.

> "… So let's make proper connections between what a library is traditionally able to offer and what other aspects of a community's work might be – whether it's literacy projects or job-seeking or whatever – partly because the synergies between these things can be very productive, and partly because it's a way of getting people to come into libraries who might not otherwise go over the threshold in the first place."

Library Review

The April 2009 issue has a case study of library services for a Polish community[3].

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

Equality Bulletin 1 – Accessible Information and Communication

This first Equality Bulletin from CyMAL[4] focuses on accessible information and communication.[5]

It includes:

- A feature on Louis Braille and Braille in Wales today
- Accessible information/communication, including writing accessibly for all; accessible layout and design; accessible electronic content; communication support
- Resources for libraries
- Success stories from MLAs
- CyMAL resources.

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[3] Anna Listwon <u>and</u> Barbara Sen "Public library services and the Polish community in England: case study", *Library Review* 58 (4) April 2009, pp290-300. Thanks to Barbara Sen for alerting me to this – I haven't seen the article, as it is available to subscribers (or by payment) only.

[4] *Equality Bulletin 1: accessible information and communication*, June 2009. Available to download as a pdf (549.93 kb) in English from: http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/090612equalitybulletin1english.pdf; and in Welsh (574.25 kb) from: http://wales.gov.uk/docs/drah/publications/090612equalitybulletin1welsh.pdf.

[5] CyMAL are pulling together their equality resources into one place – see: http://wales.gov.uk/topics/cultureandsport/museumsarchiveslibraries/cymal/accessequalitydiversity/;jsessionid=jRXjK48M9lhTMJ9V24zPX9yQ5ySNCLQr4gmx7ytTKpgWR53Fwx2P!2085885828?lang=en.

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Evaluation of the Cultural Pathfinder Programme in Scotland

> "The Cultural Pathfinder Programme in Scotland was developed by the then Scottish Executive (now Scottish Government) as a way of supporting local authorities and their partners to explore ways of widening access to, and participation in, cultural activities across diverse communities. The Programme supported 13 projects across Scotland and was intended to generate useful learning that could be shared across the local authority, Community Planning Partnership and cultural sectors to inform future planning and delivery." [p v]

The evaluation report[6] has just been published.

It shows that the work (which included projects that involved museums and libraries) did allow contact with communities that, previously, had not engaged with cultural activities. The key learning includes:

> "The case studies highlighted a number of lessons with regards to encouraging participation by under-represented groups and/or excluded communities, as follows:
> - informality and a non-judgemental approach allows participants to find their own cultural interests and helps sustain participation;
> - allowing communities to inform and shape cultural provision, albeit within defined boundaries and frameworks, builds ownership and commitment;
> - the means of creative engagement are important, and tailoring provision to the needs of different groups requires flexibility;
> - place is important, and taking culture out of traditional venues and into local community settings was effective in encouraging participation in many projects;
> - embedding cultural activity in the community helps build familiarity and trust and can overcome some of the known barriers to participation;
> - the skills and personal qualities of those involved in the delivery of cultural activities is crucial – both creative practitioners and project managers played pivotal roles in this respect;
> - working with existing groups, partners and representatives within communities facilitates access and helps build trust and participation; and

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[6] EKOS. *Evaluation of the Cultural Pathfinder Programme in Scotland*. Scottish Government Social Research, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (1765 kb) from: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/276164/0082903.pdf.

- targeting directly specific barriers to cultural participation (eg transport, cost) can be a useful way of engaging people in new activities." [pp vii-viii]

This thorough evaluation gives us a lot of valuable pointers about community engagement and involvement – recommended.

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Growing up in social housing in Britain …

This new research[7] from the Tenant Services Authority[8]

> "… draws on four British birth cohort studies to examine the role of social housing for four generations of families since the second world war. It describes how housing for families changed over time, and explores the relationship between social housing, family circumstances, and experiences for the children when they reached adulthood." [Summary, p1]

Key findings from the research include:

- "Four generations ago, families in social housing included almost the full social range. Council and housing association homes offered high quality. However, from the 1960s, home ownership took over from social housing as the main type of housing for families. Over time, the more advantaged families moved out. Increasingly, encouraged by policy, social housing has acted as a 'safety net'. It has also lost out in term of relative desirability
- Society is also now more unequal than it was. The result is that the gap between the socioeconomic circumstances of children in social housing and other tenures is wider than for any previous generation
- On average, those who lived in social housing as children were worse off as adults in terms of health, well-being, education and employment than their peers
- Most of this pattern, especially for people born in 1946, can be explained by differences in family background. However, for people

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[7] *Growing up in social housing in Britain: a profile of four generations, 1946 to the present day.* Tenant Services Authority, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (3002 kb) from:
http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/upload/pdf/Growing_up_in_social_housing.pdf
Summary also available to download as a pdf (512.41 kb) from:
http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/upload/pdf/Growing_up_in_social_housing_summary.pdf.
[8] The TSA are "the new regulator for affordable housing. We launched on 1 December 2008, having taken over the regulatory powers of the Housing Corporation." (Taken from:
http://www.tenantservicesauthority.org/server/show/nav.13700).

born in 1958 and more so in 1970, living in social housing as a child was still associated with some worse adult outcomes, even after accounting for family background

- These patterns are stronger for women than men. They do not vary substantially by social class, region, housing quality or neighbourhood characteristics. They suggest that as the social housing sector has become smaller and more focused on the most disadvantaged, it has become less likely to deliver positive benefits in other aspects of people's lives." [Summary, p1]

These findings are examined in more depth – and emphasise inequalities even more clearly – in the main report, eg:

"Thus, over successive generations, children growing up in social housing experienced several cumulative processes of disadvantage:
- as individuals, they were more likely to come from disadvantaged families
- given the increasing disadvantage of social renting households generally, they were more likely to be surrounded by disadvantaged neighbours
- on the measures we have used, their homes were more likely to fall short in quality and desirability in absolute terms and relative to other tenures

These changes have resulted in a much bigger tenure divide among today's children than any other post-war generation." [Main report, pp5-6]

Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Wales 2009

This report[9] is the second update of the original, published in 2005. It draws together key facts about the extent of poverty and social exclusion, and concludes that:

"From the evidence presented here, the most significant aspect of the current recession is the high level of unemployment among young adults. If this situation persists, the risk may be of a new generation lacking the experience, qualifications and self-belief to provide for themselves and their families."[10]

Religion and sexual orientation: how to manage relations in the workplace

"In August 2008, researchers interviewed 30 equality and diversity specialists from a range of sectors about their experiences of sexual

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[9] Peter Kenway, Guy Palmer and Tom MacInnes. *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Wales 2009*. JRF, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (210 kb) from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/2009-wales-poverty-exclusion-summary.pdf.
[10] Taken from: http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/monitoring-poverty-wales-2009.

orientation and religion and belief in the workplace. In October 2007, researchers also conducted six focus groups with people who are Christian, Muslim, Jewish and Hindu about their attitudes to lesbian, gay and bisexual people.

This report presents the findings of that research, and is split into four sections.

- Not a new issue
- Where to draw the line
- Case studies – responding to issues
- How to prevent and respond to incidents."[11]

The guidance[12] includes "Top Ten Tips", and these are a useful introduction to the contents:

1. Acknowledge that it might be a problem
2. Develop clear strategies
3. Decide where the line is, and be robust about it
4. Get buy-in from the top
5. Communicate strategies and explain them
6. Check job descriptions
7. Bring groups together
8. Treat all parties with dignity and respect
9. The importance of mediation
10. Using formal processes [taken from pp32-33].

This is an important and very useful guide for dealing with areas of potential conflict at work.

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

Culture for all …

This new booklet[13], produced by the TDA, MLA and Arts Council:

"… provides an overview of how children's services and cultural organisations can work together, not just as partners but as joint providers. It is intended for everyone involved in providing,

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[11] Taken from: http://www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace/3442.asp.

[12] Ruth Hunt. *Religion and sexual orientation: how to manage relations in the workplace*. Stonewall, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (370 kb) from: http://www.stonewall.org.uk/workplace/3442.asp.

[13] *Culture for all: integrating cultural opportunities into extended services and services for young people*. Training and Development Agency for Schools, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (kb) from: http://www.tda.gov.uk/upload/resources/pdf/c/culture_for_all_tda0649.pdf.

commissioning or coordinating cultural services for children and young people, including:

- children's trust partners and local authority children's services
- local authority arts and culture teams
- local authority neighbourhood or community services
- extended services teams in schools and local authorities, and
- cultural organisations, including museums, libraries and archives and those involved in the performing and visual arts." [p4]

In addition,

"We want to see a broad offer spanning the visual and performing arts, new media, museums, libraries and archives. The objectives are sustained engagement, clearer pathways for progression and greater reach to include those who are currently missing out." [p5]

The booklet includes:

- The overall policy context
- Practical ideas for 'making it happen', including brief case studies
- A brief section on evaluation
- A list of weblinks for further information.

This is a very useful brief reminder of how we could develop cross-sectoral approaches to our work.

Abbreviations and acronyms

MLA = Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
TDA = Training and Development Agency for Schools

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