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

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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 ...?

Museums Journal

The February issue¹ has a number of interesting articles, including:

- Mark O'Neill "Scientists say: Get out and get a life" ("Comment" column), which argues from the research showing the impact that visits to museums has on wellbeing that there is a "key justification for public funding" [p14].

Museums Practice

The Winter 2009 issue² includes in the "Working Knowledge" section a series of articles about therapeutic museums, looking at, for example:

- "Positive thinking", therapeutic projects and techniques, including work at the Petrie Museum and the Lightbox [pp40-42]
- "Healing spaces", planning and partnerships for providing for people with health issues [pp43-44]
- Case Study: Museum of Life Stories, Switzerland – a museum within a residential care home [p45]
- "Positive outlook", the effects of engaging with art on people with mental health issues (including refugees and war veterans) [pp46-47]
- "Out of the dark", museums' role in improving the quality of life for people with age-related dementia [pp48-50]
- Case Study: Denmark's "Old Town" – an open-air museum using its historic houses to trigger emotions and awaken memories in people with dementia [p51]
- "Youth group", museums' work with children in hospital [pp52-55].

ARC Magazine

The March issue³ has community archives and heritage as its main theme, and has, as always, a range of interesting articles, including:

- David Mander "Community archives: the history" [pp13-14]
- Daphne Knott "Making memories", community archives in Hertfordshire and its New Towns [pp16-17]
- Ajamu X "Creating a rukus: Europe's first dedicated Black LGBTQ Archive" [p25].

¹ *Museums Journal*, February 2010. For more information, see: www.museumsassociation.org.

² *Museums Practice*, Winter 2009. For further information, see: <http://www.museumsassociation.org/museum-practice>.

³ *ARC Magazine*, 247, March 2010. Further information from: www.archives.org.uk.

Britain in 2010

The latest annual magazine⁴ from the ESRC gives a valuable snapshot of the UK today, including, for example:

- “Tackling poverty and inequality: a mixed picture under Labour” [p25]
- “Attitudes to fairness and opportunity: the gulf between British and German responses to social justice” [pp40-41]
- “The future of multicultural Britain: questions of discrimination, identity and belonging among Britain’s ethnic communities” [pp50-51]
- “The modern Muslim: how the role of Muslim women is evolving” [p56]
- Sarah Womack “In pursuit of happiness: the government is employing ‘happiness economics’ to boost contentment levels” [pp97-99]
- “Born to be poor” (“Millions of children in Britain and the United States are set on the road to inequality from the moment they are born ...”) [p103]
- “The rise of mixed-race Britain: how the country benefits from inter-ethnic partnerships and increased diversity” [pp104-105].

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

What works in neighbourhood-level regeneration?

This new report⁵ from CLG “examines the views of key stakeholders in eight New Deal for Communities (NDC) areas which have seen considerable positive change between 2002 and 2008.”⁶

The eight NDC areas are: Birmingham Aston; Islington; Lambeth; Manchester; Newcastle; Plymouth; Sheffield; and Walsall.

It looks at key areas, including:

- Planning 10 year strategic change – the report stresses the importance of planning (and of having a strategy!), and “the importance of the timely implementation of capital schemes, some of which act as beacon projects in the neighbourhood.” [p5]

⁴ *Britain in 2010: annual magazine of the Economic and Social Research Council*. ESRC, 2009. £4.95. Further information at: <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/esrcinfocentre/about/ci/cp/britaintoday/>.

⁵ Geoff Fordham *et al.* *What works in neighbourhood-level regeneration? The views of key stakeholders in the New Deal for Communities Programme*. CLG, 2010 (ISBN: 978-1-4098-2174-8). Available to download as a pdf (806 kb) from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1462971.pdf>.

⁶ Taken from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/communities/whatworksinneighbourhood>

- Issues around skills required for regeneration work – “Some observers point to the need for regeneration practitioners to have formal or technical skills. But a key message to emerge is the importance of personal attitudes and more informal skills: *‘having emotional intelligence’*. Successful NDC teams tend to be characterised by staff continuity and the tendency for many of the staff to live locally.” [p5 – emphasis theirs]. Stakeholders also stressed the importance of leadership and vision.
- The importance of partnerships – “NDC partnerships have been able to influence the scale and scope of regeneration by facilitating other organisations to invest in the area.” [p6]
- The importance of developing strong links with the local community – “... NDC areas do not always represent natural communities. There have been some intra-community tensions. Community expectations need managing, and there are divergent views with regard to the value of electing community representatives onto partnership boards. There can also be tensions between community attitudes and the views of regeneration professionals.” [p6]
- “...the importance of embedding issues of sustainability and succession into thinking from an early stage” [p7]

There are some useful lessons here for those of us starting to develop community-based activities and provision.

In addition, CLG have published a number of other Evaluation reports, including on:

- Health outcomes⁷
- Educational attainment^{8, 9}.

⁷ Sarah Pearson *et al.* *Improving health outcomes in deprived communities: evidence from the New Deal for Communities Programme*. CLG, 2010 (ISBN 978-1-4098-2188-5). Available to download as a pdf (1894 kb) from:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1462932.pdf>.

⁸ Kate Wilkinson *and* David McLennan. *Narrowing the gap? Analysing the impact of the New Deal for Communities Programme on educational attainment*. CLG, 2010 (ISBN 978-1-4098-2182-3). Available to download as a pdf (1263 kb) from:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1462860.pdf>.

⁹ Geoff Fordham *et al.* *Improving attainment? Interventions in education by the New Deal for Communities Programme*. CLG, 2010 (ISBN 978-1-4098-2175-5). Available to download as a pdf (964 kb) from:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1462891.pdf>.

Cohesion delivery framework 2010 – overview

CLG have just produced this important new guidance¹⁰.

Following a very brief history of community cohesion, the guidance sets out the revised definition:

“Community Cohesion is what must happen in all communities to enable different groups of people to get on well together. A key contributor to community cohesion is integration which is what must happen to enable new residents and existing residents to adjust to one another.

It also set out a vision of an integrated and cohesive community, based on three foundations:

- People from different backgrounds having similar life opportunities
- People knowing their rights and responsibilities
- People trusting one another and trusting local institutions to act fairly.

And three key ways of living together:

- A shared future vision and sense of belonging
- A focus on what new and existing communities have in common, alongside a recognition of the value of diversity
- Strong and positive relationships between people from different backgrounds.” [p8]

Having recognised the previous blurring of definitions – and a growing misperception that cohesion is the same as dealing with extremism – the guidance sets out the relationships:

“Race equality, community cohesion and preventing violent extremism are different, important and, if done effectively, will support one another.” [p9]

After reaffirming the Government’s commitment to cohesion, the guidance runs through the eight key principles on cohesion:

- “Cohesion is relevant to all parts of the country
- Building cohesion has wider benefits to individuals, groups and communities
- Solutions are local and one size does not fit all

¹⁰ *Cohesion delivery framework 2010 – overview*. CLG, 2010 (ISBN: 978-1-4098-2237-0). Available to download as a pdf (927 kb) from: <http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/1501439>.

- Cohesion is about all parts of the community, not just race and faith issues
- Improving cohesion is about multiple actions tackling a range of causal factors
- Improving cohesion is about both targeted actions and taking account of cohesion in the delivery of other services
- Good practice in one place may not be transferable to another – but it may inspire an action that will work in another place
- Delivery is about common sense solutions that will help people get along better, that is what will make the vision a reality.” [p5]

Part 2 of the guidance is about building a local understanding of cohesion. It reiterates the importance of starting with a mapping exercise which might be based on a number of methods, including the “cohesion family groups” (see below), a cohesion impact assessment¹¹, or more detailed mapping techniques. Annex B gives examples of the sorts of quantitative and qualitative data which local areas could gather to understand the influences in their local area.

In Part 3, it goes on to look at developing targeted actions, particularly if your area falls into one of the five types of area that the Commission on Integration and Cohesion identified:

- Changing less affluent rural areas
- Stable less affluent urban areas with manufacturing decline
- Stable less affluent urban areas (without manufacturing decline)
- Changing less affluent urban areas
- Areas with tensions arising from a single issue.

Under each of these headings in Annex C, there are lists of “What works well” and “Where things work less well”.

Also in Part 3 is an introduction to how to address the issues identified by the mapping exercise (and this is developed further in Annex D). Examples of the actions that might be taken are:

- “Hold a citizens’ day
- Run activities to promote local sense of belonging
- Run activities to promote trust and resilience
- Promote inter faith work
- Provide information packs for new migrants
- Promote ESOL classes
- Use translation guidance
- Promote citizenship ceremonies

¹¹ See:

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/communitycohesiontool.pdf>.

- Provide support for specific groups, eg gypsies and travellers or asylum seekers
- Use tension monitoring and contingency planning guidance
- Provide opportunities for people to air grievances, and aim to address these
- Use mentoring and buddying techniques
- Bring in conflict resolution and mediators if necessary
- Review how taking account of cohesion in housing, planning and regeneration policies might help
- Use recreation and culture to help build cohesion
- Work with local partners to identify ways of creating more community facilities
- Examine how support for vulnerable groups such as the elderly or young people can help build cohesion
- Work with schools, children and youth services and local colleges to promote cohesion
- Run activities to empower people in the local community
- Encourage volunteering
- Review how taking account of cohesion in funding policies might help
- Work with local media
- Work with local neighbourhood policing teams
- Engage with the local NHS and local businesses/employers to see if they can contribute.” [pp18-19]

Finally, Part 3 looks at “Gaps to address” and “Actions to avoid”.

In Annex E, the document lists other guidance that is available (with weblinks); and, in Annex F, “summarises the key lessons learnt on local planning in the community cohesion pathfinders.”

This is an important, practical tool. The checklist of actions that might be taken is a valuable reminder of the range of activities that we could consider offering or getting involved in. As the Foreword states:

“... our continued progress should not be taken for granted, today patterns of migration are changing greatly, with other demographic and social shifts affecting the way we live, work, and relate to each other.

This document is the starting point for anyone interested in what cohesion is and why it matters ...

Its value lies in getting more people from different backgrounds working side by side, learning about each other, taking practical steps to make their neighbourhood a better place to live.” [p4]

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

How to develop a Youth Forum in your museum: a toolkit of ideas

This very useful, practical toolkit¹² has been developed to help us “consider why museums should consult young people and then to act as a guide through the logistical questions about how to set up and run a Forum.” [p3]

Its four sections cover:

- Why develop consultations with young people
- How to develop consultations with young people
- Things to think about when setting up a Youth Forum
- Consultation activities.

It also includes case studies and examples of practical activities.

Recommended.

Abbreviations and acronyms

CLG = Department for Communities and Local Government
ESRC = Economic and Social Research Council
MLA = Museums, Libraries and Archives Council
NDC = New Deal for Communities

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¹² Claire Adler. *How to develop a Youth Forum in your museum: a toolkit of ideas*. MLA, 2009. Available to download as a pdf (1990 kb) from: <http://www.claireadler.co.uk/sitefiles/claireadler/105421/YouthForumToolkit1.pdf>.