

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 June issue's main feature article is by Deborah Hearn, "Pride and prejudice" [pp22-27], which looks at some museums' involvement in the commemoration of the 1967 Sexual Offences Act.¹

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

“‘Here to Support Anybody Who Needs to Come?’ An Investigation of the Provision for EAL Pupils in Secondary School Libraries in England”

This recently-published article (available as full-text)²:

“[...] presents the findings of a mixed methods investigation of the effectiveness of provision for EAL pupils by secondary school libraries in England. Data from a quantitative survey of secondary school librarians are triangulated with those of qualitative interviews with staff responsible for EAL provision. A picture emerges of a hybrid environment that addresses a number of the educational, cultural, and social needs of EAL learners, but in which a series of barriers to effective provision are also identified. Recommendations are made to key stakeholder groups for the short and long term improvement of EAL provision, and for further research.”

The report identifies a number of barriers, including a lack of budget and other resources (which it may be more difficult to overcome); and issues around awareness of the role of the school library by other school staff, and lack of training – which may be slightly easier to deal with.

¹ The article is available to MA members at:

<https://www.museumsassociation.org/museums-journal/features/01062017-pride-and-prejudice>.

² Anja Badock and Briony Birdi, “‘Here to Support Anybody Who Needs to Come?’ An Investigation of the Provision for EAL Pupils in Secondary School Libraries in England”, *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*, Volume 23, 2017 – Issue 1, <http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/13614541.2017.1280355?scroll=top&needAccess=true>.

The report has a set of straightforward recommendations (available as a pop-up table) for school librarians and other staff, school leaders, and LIS bodies.

This is a valuable insight into a sometimes 'hidden' area of library work – recommended.³

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Time for change: an assessment of Government policies on social mobility 1997-2017

This new report⁴ has had considerable media coverage⁵. It sets out its aims as:

“For two decades, successive governments have made the pursuit of higher levels of social mobility one of the holy grails of public policy ...]

After two decades of shared endeavour, it is worth asking how far those worthy political sentiments have been translated into positive social outcomes. That is what this report seeks to do. It examines the various policies pursued by different governments and assesses the impact they have had - for good or ill - on social mobility in Britain. By definition, changes in social mobility, precisely because they happen across generations, take time. Twenty years is long enough to make some judgements about what has worked well and less well - and to learn from both mistakes and successes.” [pp1-2]

³ Source: email from Briony Birdi, 3 Apr 2017.

⁴ *Time for change: an assessment of Government policies on social mobility 1997-2017*. Social Mobility Commission, 2017. Available to download as a pdf (2670.kb) from:

[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/622214/Time for Change report -
_An assessment of government policies on social mobility 1997-2017.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/622214/Time_for_Change_report_-_An_assessment_of_government_policies_on_social_mobility_1997-2017.pdf).

⁵ For example: Helen Barnard “Social Mobility report shows we need radical action in education, jobs and struggling places”, *JRF Blog*, 28 Jun 2017,

https://www.jrf.org.uk/blog/social-mobility-action-education-jobs?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=JRF%20weekly%20round-up%20wc%2025%20June%202017&utm_content=JRF%20weekly%20round-up%20wc%2025%20June%202017+CID_126e01fa8a30ccbe78c90fce2bfe84b3&utm_source=Email%20marketing%20software&utm_term=Read%20the%20blog.

Julia Belgutay, “Progress on social mobility too slow, commission report warns”, *TES*, 28 Jun 2017, <https://www.tes.com/news/further-education/breaking-news/progress-social-mobility-too-slow-commission-report-warns>.

Catherine Gaunt “Social mobility: call for radical reform on ‘divided’ Britain”, *Nursery World*, 28 Jun 2017, <http://www.nurseryworld.co.uk/nursery-world/news/1161598/social-mobility-call-for-radical-reform-on-divided-britain>.

Setting the reassessment in the new social and economic context, the Commission has looked critically at the development since the 1997 commitments. It looks at four main areas:

- Early years
- Schools
- Young people
- Working lives

And:

“[...] the report gives each arena of public policy a rating - red, amber or green - based on our assessment of how successful it has been across the two decades as a whole.” [p2]

The depressing conclusion is that:

“No life stage gets a green rating. Two are amber – Early Years and Schools. Two are red – Young People and Working Lives. Within each life stage there are individual policies we believe have been successful. The focus on widening participation at university and on creating jobs for example. But overall, only seven policies score a green while 14 score amber and 16 red.” [p2]

However, the picture isn't all poor: the report highlights some of the successes, eg:

“In 1997, the unemployment rate was 7.2 per cent. Today, it is 4.5 per cent. Employment today is at a record level. In 1997, 39 per cent of young people had the chance to go to university. Today, almost 50 per cent go and there are more working class youngsters in higher education than ever before. Today, relative rates of child poverty are three percentage points lower than in 1997 and there are fewer children in workless households than at any time in two decades. In 1997, very few young families received state help to give their children a good start in life. Today, early years services have become a new arm of the welfare state. In 1997, London schools were amongst the worst in the country. Today, they are the best and disadvantaged children in our capital city have benefitted most. Across the country, schools have improved and standards have risen. In 1997, many of our country's professions were deeply elitist. Today, most have begun to recognise the benefits of being open to a far wider pool of talent.” [pp2-3]

The report looks in-depth at each of the four 'policy areas' and identifies areas that still need to improve. These are just some key points:

Early years/Schools:

- “Child poverty, which was declared a national priority shortly after 1997, has been deprioritised in recent years.” [p3]
- “The attainment gap between poorer children and their wealthier counterparts at 16 is as large as it was twenty years ago.” [p3]

- “[...] geographical inequality amongst the poorest children in England has increased as attainment in London schools has improved far faster than in the rest of the country.” [p3]

Young people:

- “Youth unemployment fell from 14.6 to 12.5 per cent over the period – after peaking at over 22 per cent following the financial crisis.” [pp3-4]
- “The gap between youth and overall levels of unemployment is higher at the end of the period than at the start and the number of young people who are NEET – not in employment, education or training – has barely changed.” [p4]
- “Since 2008, young people’s wages have fallen 16 per cent, taking their pay to below 1997 levels.” [p4]
- “The number of young people receiving careers advice or work experience has also fallen and more new apprenticeships have gone to older workers than younger ones.” [p4]
- Despite universities’ success in opening their doors to more working class youngsters than ever before, retention rates and graduate outcomes for disadvantaged students have barely improved over the period. If progress continues at the current rate, it will take 120 years before disadvantaged young people become as likely as their better-off peers to achieve A levels or equivalent qualifications.” [p4]

Work:

There has been some good news, but ...

- “Long term unemployment has fallen and lone parent employment has risen. These efforts have delivered employment rates that are the highest on record.” [p4]
- “But the quality of jobs has not matched the quantity and governments have found themselves having to support large numbers of households that are in work but still struggling to make ends meet.” [p4]
- Skill levels have improved overall but there remain large skill gaps and shortages.” [p4]

However, what the report really highlights is how divided the UK has become. It identifies a number of particular divides:

- Spatial divide:

[...] London and some of our country’s other great cities are moving ahead while other parts of England are falling behind. Output per person in London is £43,629 compared to less than £19,000 per person in the North East of England. In London, almost two thirds of the population are graduates, compared to about one third in the North East. The UK now has greater regional disparities in economic performance than any other

European country. Limited education and employment opportunities in many urban and rural communities - not just those in the North - are forcing aspirational youngsters to move out in order to get on. These 'left behind' parts of Britain are becoming socially hollowed out." [p4]

- Income and wealth divide, for example:

"Between 1997 and 2017 the bottom fifth of households saw their incomes increase by just over £10 per week compared to just over £300 for the top fifth. Furthermore, by 2014 the wealthiest 10 per cent of households owned 45 per cent of all household wealth [...] Average real earnings which increased from £460 per week in 1997 to a peak of £570 in 2008 have subsequently fallen to levels last seen in 2003 (£539). During the period, the gap between the highest and the lowest paid increased dramatically. In 1998, on average the highest earners were paid 47 times that of the lowest. By 2015 the equivalent gap was 128 times more." [p5]

- Generational divide:

"Poverty among pensioners halved over the period and their income today on average exceeds the income of adults who are in work. Meanwhile young people's earnings have fallen. More fundamentally, the twentieth century expectation that each generation would do better than the last is no longer being met. Those born in the 1980s are the first post-war cohort not to start their working years with higher incomes than their immediate predecessors." [p5]

Why should twenty years of focus on social mobility not have achieved as much as it should have done? The report has five 'key lessons':

- Successive governments have failed to make social mobility the cornerstone of domestic policy.
- Long-term progress has often been sacrificed to short-term change. For example: "There has been a bewildering array of almost continual structural reforms to all parts of the education system. Few have been given the opportunity to bed down." [p5]
- "[...] the way policies have been designed has often been misaligned from the objective of securing higher levels of social mobility." [p6] For example: "Exam results have been prioritised over character development, careers advice and employment outcomes - and have been the yardstick against which all parts of the education system have been judged and inspected." [p6]
- Resources have not been "[...] properly lined up behind social mobility policies" [p6]

- Governments have overly limited the scope of what they have done. For example: “They have focussed on improving the education system but shied away from improving parenting. They have assumed that if more people could be moved from welfare to work, the labour market would then do the heavy lifting to move people from low pay to living pay. Governments have largely absented themselves from addressing progression in employment and elitism in the professions.” [p6]

The report then makes a series of recommendations. Given the importance of this, they are quoted here in full.

“Early Years

The Government should:

- Establish a new national ambition to ensure that within a decade every child, regardless of background, is school ready by the age of 5 and that the attainment gap between poorer 5-year-olds and their peers has been halved.
- Focus childcare policy on improving teaching for the poorest children by doubling the Early Years Pupil Premium to enable childcare providers to offer extra support for disadvantaged children.
- Support early years’ teachers by shifting regulatory emphasis and funding from teacher qualifications to continuing professional development.
- Restore funding for parenting programmes and experiment with online classes to achieve scale without undermining quality – using funding from both health and education budgets and shared objectives across both departments.

Schools

The Government should:

- Introduce a new ambition that, within a decade, the attainment gap between poorer children and their better off classmates should be closed at GCSE level.
- Align inspection regimes and redistribute resources behind the new drive to close the attainment gap.
- Abandon plans to extend grammar schools and instead focus on developing new collaborative approaches to turning around failing schools.
- Introduce effective incentives to attract and retain good quality teachers in the schools that need them most, including a new emphasis on continuing professional development.
- Develop a more balanced curriculum incorporating social and emotional learning, alongside careers advice, within the formal school timetable.

Young People

The Government should:

- Set a new aim to halve the attainment gap in Level 3 qualifications within the next decade through new policies including T levels, apprenticeships, and extra support and accountability reforms for further education colleges.
- Refocus apprenticeship policy on young people and on higher-quality apprenticeships.
- Ensure careers advice and support is available in all schools via greater emphasis on destinations measures plus increased training and time in the curriculum.
- Ensure that higher education is available via further education colleges in social mobility cold spots.
- Encourage universities to focus on helping students succeed in the labour market by measuring graduate outcomes and offering better careers advice and work experience opportunities.

Working Lives

The Government should:

- Introduce a new ambition to make the UK the country with the lowest level of low pay in the OECD by 2030.
- Increase the number of high-skilled jobs in the regions and particularly in social mobility cold spots, by encouraging and incentivising public sector bodies and private companies to base themselves in those areas.
- Devolve accountability and resources to enable the development of local skills strategies that bring employers to those areas.
- Forge a new concordant with employers behind a national drive to improve career progression underpinned by increased investment in skills policies - including high quality apprenticeships.
- Make socio-economic diversity in professional employment a priority by encouraging all large employers to make access and progression fairer, with the Civil Service leading the way as an exemplar employer.” [p9]

This is a major reassessment of areas where, it had been assumed, progress is being made. A review of the position shows that it is the combination of resources and political and policy commitment that could make a difference. However, at the same time, as some commentators have argued, without real equality (particularly class equality), change is almost impossible:

“Focusing narrowly on social mobility is like affixing a fraying rope ladder between the branches of a tree, when in reality the trunk is rotting from the inside and the whole thing needs chopping down.”⁶

⁶ Abi Wilkinson “Meritocracy hasn’t worked in Britain – it’s time for a radical rethink”, *The Guardian* “First Thoughts”, 28 Jun 2017, <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/jun/28/meritocracy-hasnt-worked-radical-rethink-social-mobility>.

Despite the pressure on resources in the cultural sector, there are areas here where we can make a huge impact, and this report helps (re)focus our attention. Recommended.

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

Homelessness and health for disadvantaged groups

Just published, this important new report⁷ from the National Housing Federation pulls together contributions that look at the needs of key disadvantaged groups:

“There are six sections in this briefing, each highlighting particular challenges individuals face in accessing appropriate housing and support:

Homelessness and mental health ...
Homelessness, health and Black and Minority Ethnic people ...
Homelessness, health and people in the criminal justice system ...
Homelessness, health and older people ...
Homelessness, health and LGB&T communities ...
Homelessness and health for women” [p2]

The contributions are from: the National Housing Federation; Association of Mental Health Providers; Race Equality Foundation; The National LGB&T Partnership; Women’s Health and Equality Consortium; and Clinks.

Each section identifies key issues (eg in terms of older people, these include: gaps in data; a strategic and policy focus on younger people and families; lack of understanding on routes into homelessness; and access to services).

These are then followed by a handful of practical recommendations: again in terms of older people, these include: development of more specialist services; giving older homeless people a voice; a better understanding of the scale and shape of the problem; more supported and sheltered housing.

The recommendations are broad, but some are clearly areas where the cultural sector could assist, eg in terms of providing information; breaking down ‘silos’ between different organisations; and promoting health and wellbeing.⁸

Migration issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

How culture and the arts can promote intercultural dialogue in the context of the migratory and refugee crisis

⁷ *Homelessness and health for disadvantaged groups*. National Housing Federation, 2017. Available to download as a pdf (187.28 kb) from: http://s3-eu-west-1.amazonaws.com/doc.housing.org.uk/News/Homelessness_and_health_for_disadvantaged_groups_report.pdf.

⁸ Source: Clinks *Offender Health Bulletin*, Jun 2017.

This important new report⁹:

“[...] from the working group of EU Member States’ experts on intercultural dialogue. It uses case studies and, in the context of the migratory and refugee crisis, explore the ways culture and the arts can help to bring individuals and peoples together, increase their participation in cultural and societal life as well as to promote intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity.”¹⁰

In terms of background:

“In October 2015, EU Heads of State agreed that tackling the migration and refugee crisis is a common obligation, which requires a comprehensive strategy and a determined effort over time in a spirit of solidarity and responsibility. In November 2015, Member States’ Culture Ministers debated the issue, and agreed that after providing for migrants’ and refugees’ immediate needs, the focus needs to turn to their social and economic integration. They agreed that culture and the arts have a role to play in the process of integrating refugees who will be granted asylum status, to help them to better understand their new environment and its interaction with their own socio-cultural background, thus contributing to building a more cohesive and open society.

EU Culture Ministers also agreed to create a new working group of Member State experts in the context of the migration and refugee crisis, to explore how culture and the arts can bring individuals and peoples together, and increase participation in cultural and societal life.” [p23]

The working group’s mandate was:

“In the context of the migratory and refugee crisis, explore the ways culture and the arts can help to bring individuals and peoples together, increase their participation in cultural and societal life as well as to promote intercultural dialogue and cultural diversity. Links will be established with other EU-level integration networks and databases [...]” [p24]

26 EU Member States took part in the working group – except the UK and Poland.

⁹ *How culture and the arts can promote intercultural dialogue in the context of the migratory and refugee crisis: report with case studies, by the Working Group of EU Member States’ Experts on Intercultural Dialogue in the context of the migratory and refugee crisis under the open method of coordination.* European Union, 2017. Available to download as a pdf (3480 kb) from: http://bookshop.europa.eu/en/how-culture-and-the-arts-can-promote-intercultural-dialogue-in-the-context-of-the-migratory-and-refugee-crisis-pbNC0117271/?pgid=GSPefJMEtXBSR0dT6jbGakZD0000zOmKnsQh;sid=6w_YwU4-yXDYwxcEliNGZiwb7NzeEuz9I18=?CatalogCategoryID=ANIKABstUgUAAAEjCJEY4e5L.

¹⁰ Taken from source, EoE AS&R/MW *Newsflash* May-Jun 2017.

The report begins, in its Introduction, by outlining the background to and scope of the current refugee crisis; defining terms (such as ‘refugee’); outlining Europe’s long history of migration; looking briefly at perceptions of migration; the role of the arts; intercultural dialogue¹¹; and the key themes of the report, Empowerment, Intersectoral, Evaluation. The Introduction also includes a section on “Hate speech and how to tackle it” [p13].

Section 3 looks at “Empowerment through intercultural dialogue and the arts”, and argues that empowerment offers refugees:

“1) Spaces for dialogue: Empowering arts and culture projects provide safe spaces for intercultural dialogue; they can make cultural institutions arenas for dialogue, where people with various background can come together, share concerns and become responsive to each other’s interest and perspectives.

2) A basis for voice-attaining: Empowering arts projects promote participatory practices that can involve refugees and migrants and enable them to attain a voice of their own. They can also make people more aware of how empowerment is represented in policies. The way migrants and refugees themselves experience and express empowerment is important and should inform how arts projects are designed.

3) A basis for self-organising: Empowering art projects enable migrants and refugees to organise themselves, work together and make themselves heard. A basic quality of these projects is identification of enabling and constraining factors in migrants’ and refugees’ ways to self-organising and enhancing or defying them accordingly.” [p31]

Section 4 looks at intersectionality which focuses particularly on work to:

- “analyse what type of artistic or cultural project could promote the integration of migrants and living together in Europe;
- determine what kind of link is recommended with other sectors of public action: employment, education, welfare, housing, justice.” [p37]

Section 5 highlights the importance of evaluating work, stressing the importance of proper evaluation:

“A first assessment of the arts and cultural projects identified by the group suggests that few were expected to evaluate their efforts, and that those being evaluated usually relied on quantitative indicators of success, like counting audiences reached or counting intercultural stakeholders included in the activity. Outcomes of dialogue activities have hardly been jotted down and seem to be little discussed, if at all. It

¹¹ Defined as: “An open and respectful exchange of views between individuals, groups with different ethnic, cultural, religious and linguistic backgrounds and heritage on the basis of mutual understanding and respect. It operates at all levels – within societies, between the societies of Europe and between Europe and the wider world.” Taken from the Council of Europe. *White Paper on intercultural dialogue*. Council of Europe, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (478.25 kb) from: http://www.coe.int/t/dg4/intercultural/source/white%20paper_final_revised_en.pdf.

became clear that, while there is an intuitive understanding of the value of intercultural dialogue for the tasks at hand, the tools to evaluate the impact of intercultural dialogue activities are rather scarce. Considering that policies which were in place for the 2008 European Year of Intercultural Dialogue largely seem to have been discontinued, one might conclude that in times of tightening budgets and given the lack of hard evidence, intercultural dialogue policies and activities are disadvantaged when competing for public funding.

The fact that policy-makers turn back to focusing on intercultural dialogue in times when we need to build cultural awareness, make sense of the unfamiliar, extend association to others and to facilitate shared meaning, underlines that the interest of policy-makers in dialogue is maintained, but also that the tool is not sufficiently understood. In order for evidence-based policies to be formulated and for their impacts to be measured and evaluated, more reliable information is needed. The OMC group argues that more effort needs to be made to develop and/or better communicate methodology to assess the impact of intercultural dialogue projects through culture and the arts.” [p47]

Section 6, “Conclusions and recommendations”, makes a number of important points.

“The three main conclusions are:

1. Migration and the right to shelter are fundamental human conditions and rights, but neglected dimensions of empowerment. Policies and activities that affirm human rights are critically important in empowering migrants and refugees.
2. Participatory arts practices are particularly conducive to integrating refugees and migrants. The arts and culture provide unique opportunities to bring together refugees, migrants and host populations.
3. Poorly managed migration, in both host and transit countries, can create challenges requiring rapid responses. To address these challenges and the root causes of migration, the EU and its Member States should adopt a more coordinated, systematic and structured approach, strengthening inter-linkages and consistency between different European policies.” [p59]

These are followed by recommendations for policy-makers and stakeholders.

Pages 68-113 contain case studies, including, for example:

- Refugee Week in Croatia
- “Past and Present Checkpoints” in Cyprus
- Estonia’s “Language café for supporting individuals’ Estonian language learning”
- The National Immigration History Museum in France

- Cultural diversity (Ireland): “Three local authorities in Ireland (Mayo, Donegal and South Dublin County Councils) have identified cultural diversity (with specific reference to new communities) as a key common area for strategic development within their arts services and the wider cultural provision at local level.” [p92]
- “Stories from Museum to Museum”, Italy
- Norway “The National Library and public libraries”: “Public libraries function as a driving force for the integration of minority groups in Norwegian society. Furthermore, libraries fulfil important functions as a learning arena and place of shared knowledge.” [p101]
- Portugal “Partis: Artistic Practices for Social Inclusion”
- Sweden “Literature as a tool for inclusion”.

This is an important report, and one – despite the non-involvement of the UK – that ought to be more widely known and used. Recommended.

LGBT+ issues – Other Agencies

School report ...

This important new report¹² highlights the improvements over the 10 years since Stonewall commenced these surveys (although, of course, there is much still to do):

“Lesbian, gay and bi pupils are less likely to experience homophobic and biphobic bullying at school. In 2017 45 per cent of LGBT pupils are bullied for being lesbian, gay, bi or trans in Britain’s secondary schools and colleges, down from 55 per cent of lesbian, gay and bi pupils who experienced homophobic bullying in 2012 and 65 per cent in 2007.

Homophobic language at school is still prevalent but decreasing. This year’s report found that 52 per cent of LGBT pupils hear homophobic remarks such as ‘faggot’ or ‘lezza’ ‘frequently’ or ‘often’ in school, down from 68 per cent in 2012 and 71 per cent in 2007.

Schools are much more likely to say that homophobic bullying is wrong. In 2017 68 per cent of LGBT pupils report that their school says that homophobic and biphobic bullying is wrong, up from 50 per cent in 2012 and 25 per cent in 2007.

Pupils are more likely to be taught about LGBT issues at school. In 2017 40 per cent of LGBT pupils have never been taught about LGBT issues in school, down from 53 per cent in 2012 and 70 per cent in 2007.

Experiences of poor mental health remain alarmingly high. This year’s report found that 61 per cent of lesbian, gay and bi pupils (who aren’t

¹² Josh Bradlow, Fay Bartram, April Guasp and Vasanti Jadv. *School report: the experiences of lesbian, gay, bi and trans young people in Britain’s schools in 2017*. Stonewall, 2017. Available to download as a pdf (3360 kb) from: http://www.stonewall.org.uk/sites/default/files/the_school_report_2017.pdf.

trans) have deliberately harmed themselves at some point, compared to 56 per cent in 2012. It found that 22 per cent had attempted to take their own lives, compared to 23 per cent in 2012.” [p8]

That said, the findings show, for example:

- “Nearly half of lesbian, gay, bi and trans pupils (45 per cent) – including 64 per cent of trans pupils – are bullied for being LGBT at school
- Half of LGBT pupils (52 per cent) hear homophobic language ‘frequently’ or ‘often’ at school, more than a third (36 per cent) hear biphobic language ‘frequently’ or ‘often’, and almost half (46 per cent) hear transphobic language ‘frequently’ or ‘often’ [...]
- Fewer than a third of bullied LGBT pupils (29 per cent) say that teachers intervened when they were present during the bullying
- Seven in ten LGBT pupils (68 per cent) report that teachers or school staff only ‘sometimes’ or ‘never’ challenge homophobic, biphobic and transphobic language when they hear it [...]
- Two in five LGBT pupils (40 per cent) are never taught anything about LGBT issues at school
- Just one in five LGBT pupils (20 per cent) have learnt about safe sex in relation to same-sex relationships
- Three in four LGBT pupils (76 per cent) have never learnt about bisexuality at school
- Three in four LGBT pupils (77 per cent) have never learnt about gender identity and what ‘trans’ means at school [...]

The report illustrates this with brief case studies, and looks in more detail at the form bullying takes.

Finally, the report has recommendations for schools and their supporting and regulatory organisations – these are all important, but of particular relevance is:

“Schools should provide information on LGBT topics and signposting to online resources and LGBT organisations, including local LGBT youth groups, to all pupils. They should stock resources and books including LGBT characters and issues in the library, and provide information and signposting to parents and carers of LGBT young people.” [p39]

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

The impact of libraries as creative spaces

“In 2015, the State Library of Queensland (SLQ) commissioned researchers at the Digital Media Research Centre at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) to explore the impact of libraries as creative spaces.

The objectives of the Libraries as Creative Spaces project were to:

- Investigate the community impact of creative spaces in public libraries
- Provide clear evidence of this impact
- Articulate the opportunities to further embed creative spaces in public libraries or community spaces.” [p iii]

This document¹³ reports the results of this research, including a “Creative Spaces Impact Framework” which helps assess pieces of work against nine criteria:

- Accessing resources
- Idea-building
- Civic engagement
- Community development
- Cultural participation
- Health and wellbeing
- Educational attainment
- Economic productivity.

“In summary, the framework can be used to:

- Identify and generate creative activity – The framework will help library staff think about and identify creative activity, consider what outcomes flow from creative activity and re-imagine existing activities.
- Identify objectives and outcomes for creative activity – Library staff will be able to use the Creative Spaces Impact Framework criteria and impact indicators to set and monitor objectives and outcomes for creative activity with greater consistency.
- Align creative activity with community needs – By connecting with broader data about the needs of the communities, public libraries can link these with creative activities (existing or new), and align support and service provision accordingly.
- Monitor trends and strategic planning – If used consistently over time, across a range of initiatives, the framework can provide longitudinal and comparative qualitative and quantitative data regarding the impact of libraries as creative spaces.
- Guide exit surveys – By using a common framework to guide exit surveys conducted with the participants of these activities, comparisons can be made over time and across library services, building an overall picture of the impact of libraries as creative spaces.” [p iv]

Each criterion includes a number of impact indicators. For example, Civic engagement includes as indicators:

¹³ *The impact of libraries as creative spaces*. Digital Media Research Centre, Queensland University of Technology, 2017. Available to download as a pdf (1150 kb) from: http://plconnect.slq.qld.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0003/339717/SLQ-Creative-Spaces-Low-Res.pdf.

- “Democracy - Providing safe and open access to knowledge and expression, allowing citizens to participate in civic affairs. Providing information and opportunity for intellectual freedom and social justice.
- Participation in citizenship - Enabling involvement or input in local governance activities and participation in civic discussion.
- Crime reduction/rehabilitation - Redirecting negative behaviour or reconnecting potential offenders with their community.
- Institutional trust in government due to perception of libraries - Developing a level of trust within the community for the library and (by extension) the level of government that provide the libraries.
- Development of capacity - Combining groups and sectors (e.g. library and art gallery or library and childcare centre) working together to strengthen each other.
- Societal discussion - Providing a place discuss social issues formally (e.g. through talks and presentations) and informally (e.g. through meetings and conversation).” [p14]

Community development includes:

- “Community ownership, strength and identity – Developing a sense of belonging, connection and involvement with community, social cohesion and collective ownership.
- Cultural diversity and inclusiveness – Facilitating active inclusion for all groups of the community.
- Social capital – Maximising value of who people know, and what can be achieved through these networks (ie when people are more inclined to do things for each other).
- Social interaction and socialising – Providing a place to meet with people (both known and unknown) and an alternative place to hang out and simply ‘be’ – somewhere that is not home, work or school – but another place.
- Localised service provision - Meeting specific needs of local community.
- Cooperation, coordination, collaboration, sharing and reciprocity – Working together and interacting, sharing resources, knowledge and time.
- Trust (in community) – Improving the individual’s trust of community.
- Self-organisation – Supporting an activity, group or event that requires minimal or no library staff input.
- Resilience – Developing the ability to cope and regenerate after a setback or change.” [p15]

Cultural participation includes:

- “Audience engagement – Measuring the number of attendees participating in a culturally-based event and their reaction to that event.
- Artist/performer/maker involvement – Assessing the involvement and opportunity of the artist, performer or maker to participate, the value and benefit they receive from the event.
- Sharing of public culture – Providing a means to share and highlight culture that is localised and public.

- Emotional connection and experience – Considering the emotional response or connection to events or activities being conducted.
- Play and leisure – Including a wide range of activities – how time is spent away from business, work, domestic chores and education.
- Celebration – Supporting positive and enjoyable experiences that celebrate local achievement, cultural events and festival.
- Creation and dissemination – Making or producing things and distributing them via a range of means.” [p16]

Drawn from the on-the-ground research is a range of case studies, demonstrating how the framework can be used – for example:

“Baby Rhyme Time contributed a community benefit by:

Accessing Resources

Providing parents/guardians with access to a range of songs and rhymes led by two experts in child development.

Idea Building

Learning songs and rhymes during the session; and receiving advice on how to engage and communicate with babies, toddlers and young children at home.

Civic Engagement

Supporting a sense of trust in the library and the local government.

Community Development

Allowing parents and guardians to come together, connect and support each other.

Cultural Participation

Engaging babies, toddlers, children and parents/guardians in a music-oriented activity.

Health and Wellbeing

Supporting the emotional wellbeing of parents/guardians to leave the house; improving motor skills for babies, toddlers and children; providing a fun activity.

Educational Attainment

Contributing to early literacy development.

Economic Productivity

Sharing information among adults about which products to buy (e.g. formula milk and nappies).” [p38]

There is clearly more work to be done to make the framework fully usable. As the report concludes:

“Further work is needed to communicate and maximise the potential impact and benefits to communities; and the Libraries as Creative Spaces research offers the following recommendations:

1. Refine performance indicators associated with the Library Statistical Bulletin to account for creative activity. The resulting data set will allow for longitudinal analysis that can demonstrate the impact of libraries as creative spaces.
2. Develop resource-friendly and sustainable mechanisms to collect and collate data regarding the impact of libraries as creative spaces.
3. Use the framework to explicitly link community needs with appropriate forms of creative activity that are formally and informally supported by libraries.
4. Investigate further, beyond the five cases in this study, how space is configured and used across libraries where creative activity is concerned.
5. Explore how existing data on publicly-accessible space in libraries, collected for the Library Statistical Bulletin, could be used as a creative activity performance indicator.
6. Develop training to give staff the skills and experiences that will help them to support creative activity and its evaluation.
7. Deploy a series of creative activity roadshows to showcase existing practice across the state.” [p iv]

Nevertheless, this document may well be an additional source of ideas for assessing the impact of our work, particularly in relation to ‘creative’ work. Recommended.¹⁴

Abbreviations and acronyms

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

EAL = English as an Additional Language

MA = Museums Association

OECD = Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

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:

John Vincent
Wisteria Cottage
Nadderwater
Exeter EX4 2JQ

Tel/fax: 01392 256045
E-mail: john@nadder.org.uk

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¹⁴ Source: Designing Libraries *New Library News*, 27 Jun 2017.