

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

Number 208, June 2018

(Formerly published as *Public Libraries & Social Exclusion Action Planning Network Newsletter*, issue 1, May 1999 – issue 29, September 2001)

The Network's Website is at www.seapn.org.uk and includes information on courses, good practice, specific socially excluded groups, as well as the newsletter archive.

Contents List

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

- “Open Up Museums” – page 2

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

- “Education Secretary sets vision for boosting social mobility” – page 5

Diversity in books and other materials for children & young people

- *Reflecting Realities ...* – page 10

Abbreviations and acronyms – page 12

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

“Open Up Museums”

“Open Up can help you think about how to make your museum relevant to people who don’t currently visit and take action that will increase your visitor numbers, improve your resilience and better fulfil your organisation’s purpose.”¹

Open Up Museums:

[...] is produced and funded by the Museums Association (MA), the Association of Independent Museums, Arts Council England, the Museum Libraries and Archives Division of the Welsh Government, Museums Galleries Scotland, National Museums Northern Ireland, and the Heritage Lottery Fund.

The initiative has produced a guide featuring advice and case studies from 20 museums from across the UK, capturing stories of change and examining the success factors that have led to museums significantly diversifying their visitors.”²

For me, the best starting point was the “Guidebook”³.

“This guide is designed to support museums through the process of successfully turning words and ideas about diversity into action. It’s the first part of the journey.” [p2]

The contents ‘map’ on p5 outline well what the guidance includes. It is laid out in five steps:

1. Define your vision for diversity
2. Empathise and build understanding
3. Imagine and sketch out your ideas for change
4. Take action/Try the ideas
5. Review, learn and adapt.

Each step then includes:

- Success factors⁴

¹ Taken from: <http://www.openupmuseums.com/>.

² Taken from: Geraldine Kendall Adams “Resource launched to help museums diversify their audiences”, MA News, 8 Jun 2018, https://www.museumsassociation.org/news/08062018-open-up-launch?dm_i=2VBX,Q8UV,27LU0M,2OEO9,1.

³ Julie Aldridge, Mel Larsen and Pam Jarvis. *A practical guide to support museums to increase the diversity of their visitors*. AIM: Association of Independent Museums, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: <http://www.openupmuseums.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Open-Up-%E2%80%94-Guidebook.pdf>.

- Tools to use
- Case studies.

To give some examples:

‘Step 1: Define your vision for diversity’ has as success factors:

- Lead from the top with an inspiring, shared vision
- Ensure 360° commitment
- Create an open and responsive culture

‘Step 2: Empathise and build understanding’ has as tools to use:

- Empathy mapping (which looks at whom we may want to reach, and explores barriers to take-up of our provision)
- Who do you want to reach? (This looks at the data we may have about our community.)
- Generating deeper understanding (includes any specific – especially equality-related – information we have gathered)
- Drafting an Equality, Diversity, Inclusion (EDI) action plan.

Each step is also illustrated with brief case studies, eg Derby Museums; Glasgow Women’s Library; Cardiff Story Museum; V&A; National Museums Northern Ireland. (There is also a separately-published collection of longer versions of these case studies.⁵)

Immediately after the contents ‘map’, and before the steps begin, there is a round-up of resources and tools; these include:

- A reminder of the “Five core resources” which are used throughout the guide (“The story of change”; The steps; The success factors; The tools; The case studies)
- The model used for developing this guidance is via the ‘Story of Change’, and the “Getting started” section runs through how you might work collaboratively to develop your Story of Change
- “Understanding the factors for success”:

“This project started with in-depth interviews with 12 museums across the UK [...]

⁴ “To spark discussion about how best to develop greater visitor diversity in your museum”, AIM have also published: *Factors for success checklist*. AIM: Association of Independent Museums, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: <http://www.openupmuseums.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Open-Up-%E2%80%94-Checklist.pdf>.

⁵ Julie Aldridge, Mel Larsen and Pam Jarvis. *Case studies to support museums to increase the diversity of their visitors*. AIM: Association of Independent Museums, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: <http://www.openupmuseums.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Open-Up-%E2%80%94-Case-studies.pdf>.

These pioneering museums are leading the way in opening up their museums and developing relationships with a diverse range of visitors. Read their stories in case studies throughout this guide.

These interviews led us to define eight factors for success which ran through all of their stories in different ways:

1. Lead from the top with an inspiring, shared vision [...]
 2. Ensure 360° commitment [...]
 3. Create an open, responsive culture [...]
 4. Develop an audience-first focus [...]
 5. Create and retain relevant programme [...]
 6. Make compelling offers and invitations [...]
 7. Nurture ongoing relationships with networks and community representatives [...]
 8. Measure and share results and use them to inform further improvement [...]" [p8]
- "Create your Story of Change", which maps out what this might include, and what it does:

"A Story of Change illustrates how and why a desired change is needed and how it will be achieved.

You start with your **vision**. Think about what success will look like for you. Why is diversity important? What does it mean in the context of your museum? What impact are you seeking and who for? This will vary for each organisation. Think about your whole organisation, not just one particular project.

The left-hand side of the Story of Change helps you map out what your organisation needs to **do** (the activities, the work, and the insights you need to gather) to achieve your vision for diversity.

The right-hand side helps you map out what your organisation needs to **have** and **be** (the team, the way of working, the partnerships, the resources and the budget) to achieve where you want to get to." [p11, emphases theirs]

On p14, there is a 'worked example' of a Story of Change, taken from Derby Museums.

The resources are also summarised in the Introduction document⁶.

⁶ Julie Aldridge, Mel Larsen and Pam Jarvis. *An introduction to the Open Up guide and project*. AIM: Association of Independent Museums, 2018. Available to download as a pdf from: <http://www.openupmuseums.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/06/Open-Up-%E2%80%94-Introduction-1.pdf>.

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

“Education Secretary sets vision for boosting social mobility”

On 31 July, the Secretary of State for Education, Damian Hinds, gave a speech at the Resolution Foundation, and the transcript⁷ has been published.

In the speech, he argues that social mobility

“[...] is a moral imperative. It’s fundamental to our ideas of fairness and social justice because progress for our society should be progress for all, but especially for the most disadvantaged, the ones who start with the odds most stacked against them.

Now, social mobility is also fundamental for a strong, highly skilled, productive economy, which successfully deploys and maximises its human resources - which, of course, can sound quite dry and inhuman.

But it’s productivity growth that underpins economic growth, and in turn it’s that which allows people to be paid a little more each year, and for us to be able afford the public services on which we all depend.

So, the case for social mobility, I think, is self-evident.”

He begins by listing some recent progress (although, to be fair, does also describe these as “[...] building blocks in place now for greater social mobility in the future.”)

He then outlines some of the challenges, especially the one that has been picked up by the media:

“Right now 28% of children finish their reception year without the early communication and reading skills that they need to thrive.”

This figure comes from the recently-revised stats⁸ from the DfE.

He stresses that these early learning gaps stay with people throughout their lives, and, to support this argument, draws on new research⁹ from the DfE,

⁷ See: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/education-secretary-sets-vision-for-boosting-social-mobility>.

⁸ *Early years foundation stage profile results in England, 2017*. DfE (SFR 60/2017), 2017. Available to download as a pdf (640 kb) from: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/652602/SFR60_2017_Text.pdf.

The figures were updated July 2018 – for all downloads, see: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/early-years-foundation-stage-profile-results-2016-to-2017>.

⁹ *Outcomes for pupils eligible for free school meals and identified with special educational needs – ad-hoc statistics*. DfE, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (355 kb) from:

which is also well worth looking at. Examples from the research which back up his argument include:

- FSM-eligible pupils were 23% less likely to be in sustained employment aged 27 when compared to their peers who were not eligible for FSM [...]
- pupils with SEN were 25% less likely to be in sustained employment aged 27 when compared to their peers who were not identified with SEN.
- pupils who were eligible for FSM in year 11 were 3.0 times more likely to be on out-of-work benefits aged 27 when compared to their peers who were not eligible for FSM.
- pupils who were identified with SEN in year 11 were 3.7 times more likely to be on out-of-work benefits aged 27 when compared to their peers who were not identified with SEN. [taken from p3]

As he rightly says:

“Stark facts like these call for an ambitious policy response.”

Firstly, he turns to the varying definitions of social mobility, and focuses on the “Seven Key Truths about Social Mobility” agreed by the APPG on social mobility¹⁰:

- The point of greatest leverage for social mobility is what happens between ages 0 and 3, primarily in the home
- You can also break the cycle through education ...
- ...the most important controllable factor being the quality of your teaching
- But it’s also about what happens after the school bell
- University is the top determinant of later opportunities – so pre-18 attainment is key
- But later pathways to mobility are possible, given the will and support
- Personal resilience and emotional wellbeing are the missing link in the chain. [taken from p10]

He then briefly revisits some of these ‘truths’: in terms of Early Years, despite financial input:

“Most pressingly, it is a persistent scandal that we have children starting school and struggling to communicate, to speak in full sentences.

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/730977/FSM_and_SEND_outcomes-statistics.pdf.

¹⁰ See: *7 key truths about social mobility: the interim report of the all-party parliamentary group on social mobility*. APPG, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (893 kb) from: <https://www.raeng.org.uk/publications/other/7-key-truths-about-social-mobility>.

That we have children who have hardly yet opened a book, or had the chance to discover all the worlds books introduce you to.”

Therefore, Damian Hinds set out “an ambition”:

“As I said earlier, more than a quarter - 28% - of children finish their reception year still without the early communication and reading skills they need to thrive. It’s not acceptable and tackling it must be our shared priority. My ambition is to cut that number in half over the next ten years.”

To achieve this will include:

- Continuing to prioritise making sure there is high quality pre-school education available where those from disadvantaged backgrounds can access it
- Launching “[...] a capital bidding round of £30 million to invite leading schools to come forward with projects to create new high-quality nursery places, demonstrating innovative approaches to closing the gap for disadvantaged children.”
- “[...] investing £20 million to train and develop early years professionals, focusing in some of the most disadvantaged areas of the country. So they have the expertise to support very young children’s early language and literacy skills.”

In addition:

“Successful public health initiatives like the 5-a-day campaign have become part of the national consciousness. I want to find similar simple solutions for busy parents to help their children’s language and literacy.”

In order to achieve this, he wants to draw together a coalition of “businesses, broadcasters and a broad range of other organisations” who will “attend a summit this autumn to explore innovative ways to boost early language development and reading in the home.”

According to the speech, NLT, Public Health England, W H Smith, British Land, KPMG, the BBC and ITV are already signed up ...

Finally, in terms of Early Years:

“There are applications out there with helpful tips and imaginative ideas for helping with children’s early development, but not all of these are widely known, and parents won’t know which are the best.

That is why the department will be launching a competition to identify high quality apps, with the aim of making these free and easily accessible, making sure that disadvantaged families don’t miss out.”

The speech then goes on to look at 18-year-olds:

“Now, on the social mobility front, we can point to record numbers of 18 year olds from disadvantaged backgrounds going on to attend university.

But, we should be honest about digging into these figures a little deeper and acknowledging the 18 year old applicants from the most advantaged areas in the country are still nearly five and a half times more likely to enter the most selective universities than their disadvantaged peers. And that, ladies and gentleman, is not acceptable.”

Solutions include:

- Improving technical education so it becomes a viable alternative to university
- Creating “[...] much better choices when [young people] start thinking about their post 16 and their post 18 destinations.”
- Challenging universities to widen access¹¹
- Greater investment in schools “[...] targeting support towards children struggling with core skills like maths, reading and writing, investing in teachers’ professional development as well, again, especially in the places where this can make the biggest difference.”
- Carrying out “[...] a thorough review of all the non-GCSE qualifications currently taken by 14 to 16-year-olds to make sure the only options available are high-quality ones that employers can recognise and trust.”

Damian Hinds also launched new research by the Social Mobility Commission:

“[...] on how extracurricular activities, networks and the development of so-called soft skills can influence social mobility, looking at the gaps between disadvantaged young people and their peers - and how these vary by factors such as region, ethnicity, gender, special educational needs, as well as some of the solutions for tackling this.”

and a mapping project:

“Our project will look at young people today, from across the country, and where they end up over the next five or six years.”

He ended with a call for urgent action to create:

“[...] a country that works for everyone – because, as I said at the start, what is progress for our society, if we’re not doing more for the people who start out with the biggest disadvantages? A strong society, a strong economy, does not leave people behind.”

There has been considerable media coverage of this key speech.

¹¹ See, for example: Nadia Khomami *et al* “Education secretary: elite universities must improve access”, *The Guardian*, 31 July 2018, <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2018/jul/31/education-secretary-damian-hinds-elite-universities-access-disadvantaged>.

For example, the BBC News website¹² reported the speech, and also linked it to the report published in March 2018 by I CAN¹³ and the RCSLT¹⁴, *Bercow : ten years on*¹⁵.

“A lot has changed in the 10 years since The Bercow Review of Services for Children and Young People with Speech, Language and Communication Needs in 2008.

Some of this change has been for the better, but sadly far from all of it. Without a shift in approach, children and young people will continue to leave school without basic language and literacy skills. We will continue having disproportionate numbers of young people with SLCN who are not in education, employment or training, who need mental health support or who are in contact within the youth justice system. Children and young people with lifelong communication needs will not get the support and adjustments they require. As a result, children and young people with the potential to do well will struggle to make an active contribution to society as adults.” [p4]

The *New Statesman* published a critical article¹⁶ (which has also, in turn, been picked up by the library media) which includes:

“Focusing on what goes on in the home, or the ‘home learning environment’, is an easy way to dodge improving anything outside the home – ie. public services.

Since 2010, 478 libraries have been closed throughout the UK. In the same period, more than 500 Sure Start centres – which provide early years support for families – have closed.

According to a survey last year [17], 82 per cent of parents say the public library helps children get ready for school, and 85 per cent say it helps children with speaking and listening skills.

Campaigners warn that the decline of libraries is creating a social mobility time-bomb [18]. Indeed, 9.4 per cent of children aged 8-18 [19] in the UK do not have a single book of their own.”

¹² Hannah Richardson “Pupils unable to read is 'a scandal', says minister”, *BBC News*, 31 July 2018, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-45009467>.

¹³ “I CAN's mission is that no child should be left out or left behind because of a difficulty speaking or understanding.” <https://www.ican.org.uk/about-us/>.

¹⁴ The Royal College of Speech & Language Therapists, <https://www.rcslt.org/>.

¹⁵ *Bercow: ten years on – an independent review of provision for children and young people with speech, language and communication needs in England*. I CAN/RCSLT, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (2627 kb) from: <https://www.bercow10yearson.com/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/337644-ICAN-Bercow-Report-WEB.pdf>.

¹⁶ Anoosh Chakelian “The Education Secretary calls the literacy gap a ‘scandal’ – so why are libraries closing?”, *New Statesman*, 31 July 2018, <https://www.newstatesman.com/politics/welfare/2018/07/education-secretary-calls-literacy-gap-scandal-so-why-are-libraries-closing>.

¹⁷ Sarah Mears “Young People’s Library Survey”, *Libraries Taskforce* blogpost, 14 Feb 2018, <https://librariestaskforce.blog.gov.uk/2018/02/14/young-peoples-library-survey/>.

Diversity in books and other materials for children & young people

Reflecting Realities ...

In Feb 2018, the Centre for Literacy in Primary Education [CLPE] launched the “Reflecting Realities” initiative, and has just published the results²⁰.

CLPE invited all UK publishers of children’s books to submit “[...] any titles published in 2017 that featured Black or minority ethnic characters.” [p4]

These submissions were:

“[...] analysed using a specifically designed framework to determine the extent and quality of representation within and across all titles. It was important to capture both components because if we want books to truly reflect the realities of their readership, it is crucial to determine the quality of representation and give this as much weight as the extent of representation.” [p4]

The stark facts, taken from the Executive Summary, are:

- “There were 9115 children’s books published in the UK in 2017. Of these only 391 featured BAME characters.
- Only 4% of the children’s books published in 2017 featured BAME characters.
- Only 1% of the children’s books published in the UK in 2017 had a BAME main character.
- Over half the fiction books with BAME characters were defined as ‘contemporary realism’.
- 10% of books with BAME characters contained ‘social justice’ issues.
- Only one book featuring a BAME character was defined as ‘comedy’.
- 26% of the non-fiction submissions were aimed at an ‘Early Years’ audience.” [p5]

The report contains further analysis of all this – one point that really has an impact is:

“The demographic make-up of the UK did not align with the presence of BAME characters in books published in 2017. Each ethnic minority category was significantly under-represented. The Department for

¹⁸ Heloise Wood “One in eight disadvantaged children ‘do not own a book’”, *The Bookseller*, 6 Dec 2017, <https://www.thebookseller.com/news/cowell-laments-social-mobility-time-bomb-school-library-closures-685776>.

¹⁹ Adi Bloom “More than 770,000 UK children ‘don’t have any books of their own’”, *TES*, 6 Dec 2017, <https://www.tes.com/news/more-770000-uk-children-dont-have-any-books-their-own>.

²⁰ *Reflecting Realities: survey of ethnic representation within UK children’s literature 2017*. CLPE, 2018. Available to download as a pdf (1200 kb) from: <https://clpe.org.uk/library-and-resources/research/reflecting-realities-survey-ethnic-representation-within-uk-children>.

Education reported in 2017 that 32.1% of pupils of compulsory school age were of minority ethnic origins. In stark contrast, only 1% of children's books had a BAME main character and a quarter of the books submitted only featured BAME presence in the form of background characters." [p5]

As well as the facts and figures, the report also analyses the agency of the characters – for example:

"The number of books submitted featuring a multicultural cast of characters with shared agency amounted to 40 titles, which represents 10% of submissions. It is interesting to note that in every ethnic minority category, BAME characters were more likely to feature as part of a multicultural cast member as opposed to a lead main character." [p8]

The report concludes that:

"Our review has been profoundly eye opening and provided clear insights into how the publishing industry might better serve the needs and interests of their readership. Every child is entitled to feel safe and valued. In the current socio-political and economic climate the risk of marginalisation of minority groups is heightened. If in their formative years, children do not see their realities reflected in the world around them or only see problematic representations mirrored back at them, the impact can be tremendously damaging. To redress imbalances in representation is not an act of charity but an act of necessity that benefits and enriches all of our realities. Energies must be invested into normalising and making mainstream the breadth and range of realities that exist within our classrooms and society in order for all children to feel valued and entitled to occupy the literary space. There is an appetite and demand for better, more broadly representative books, which makes the investment in such books an ethical, moral and commercial imperative.

The publishing industry has recognised an imbalance in representation and as a result has started to invest time and money towards redressing this. At CLPE, we want to help build on this and move the conversation on. The publication of this survey marks a beginning, not an end and we hope that by devising this framework we have produced a tool that will support all stakeholders to continue to review and analyse books through a critically reflective lens so that we can all move forward in this journey. This publication provides a blueprint for an annual survey that helps inform and guide ongoing investment in broadening representation in children's literature. It is a means of capturing industry trends that can lead to a more nuanced conversation about the value and impact of reflecting realities. In time we hope that the findings and supporting analysis will inform how best to meet the needs and interests of all readers." [p9]

The report makes ten recommendations, covering:

- Content, eg "BAME characters need to be well developed and authentically portrayed." [p10]

- Text types and genres, eg “BAME characters should exist across a range of genres and within both fiction and non-fiction, allowing readers to experience the full spectrum of emotions when enjoying these representations.” [p10]
- Authorship, eg “The industry should invest in both established and new authors from a range of backgrounds who are able to paint characters and worlds with the integrity that the subject matter deserves.” [p10]

Finally, there is a set of appendices covering: methodology; submissions profile; proportion of ethnic minority representation in books according to text type; extent of ethnic minority representation (as well as a list of Steering Committee members, and acknowledgements).

This is a highly significant report – recommended.

In parallel, BookTrust is working with University College London on a research project into the number of children’s titles created by authors and illustrators of colour in the UK – their report is due in September. Also due this autumn is the final report from the CILIP Carnegie Kate Greenaway Independent Review – we’ll return to this topic later in the year.

Abbreviations and acronyms

AIM = Association of Independent Museums
 APPG = All Party Parliamentary Group
 BAME = Black, Asian and minority ethnic
 CLPE = Centre for Literacy in Primary Education
 DfE = Department for Education
 FSM = Free School Meals
 MA = Museums Association
 NLT = National Literacy Trust
 SEN = Special Educational Needs

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

June 2018