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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 ...?

CILIP Update

The August issue¹ included some interesting articles:

- “Pull together and ignore the differences”, an interview with Brian Ashley (ACE Libraries Director) by Rob Green [pp22-24]
- John McMahon “Glasgow Life: welfare reform”, which describes Glasgow Libraries’ approach to supporting benefit claimants, for example via partnerships, including with the Macmillan Cancer and Information Support Service², and running IT courses³ [p48]

Also, the September issue⁴ included:

- Nicola Richards and Preeti Pathak “Making connections”, an introduction to work at Cardiff Central Library with the local Japanese community – and the article also emphasises the benefits of developing close community links (and not allowing lack of budget to stand in the way) [pp40-42].

Race Equality Teaching

The Spring 2013 issue⁵ includes a wide range of interesting articles, eg:

- Martin Spafford “Who are the people of Britain?”, which questions the proposed National Curriculum approach to history teaching [pp17-19]

¹ *CILIP Update*, August 2013. Available to CILIP members via the archive, <http://www.cilip.org.uk/publications/update-magazine/update-digital/pages/digital.aspx>.

² See: <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/macmillan-at-glasgow-libraries/Pages/default.aspx>.

³ See: <http://www.glasgowlife.org.uk/libraries/computers-learning/computer-courses/Pages/home.aspx>.

⁴ *CILIP Update*, September 2013. Available to CILIP members via the archive, <http://www.cilip.org.uk/publications/update-magazine/update-digital/pages/digital.aspx>.

⁵ *Race Equality Teaching*, 31 (2), Spring 2013. Further information from: http://www.trentham-books.co.uk/acatalog/Race_Equality_Teaching.html.

- Fiona Ranson “Holocaust education – the history curriculum and the antiracist curriculum” [pp20-24]
- Rosa Drown “Equal Access to Quality Education’ for Roma: how indirect and unintentional discrimination obstructs progress” [pp32-36].

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

An exploration of the essential elements of community engagement in public libraries

Some Network members (and John Vincent) were interviewed by Hui-Yun Sung for her thesis which has recently been published⁶.

“The aim of this study is to explore and identify essential elements of community engagement ... in the public sector, specifically public libraries.” [p1]

Using a mix of literature review, case studies and interviews, Hui-Yun Sung has explored the extent and types of community engagement [CE] in public libraries.

She makes some strong recommendations which can be summarised as:

1. Whilst some external funding sources include community engagement amongst their criteria “the condition under which CE projects obtain funding could be stricter, requiring funding applicants to implement wider and deeper CE ...” [p304]
2. The research identified that there is a range of CE involvement (from high to low engagement) – but these may also suit the local circumstances, and there is not a ‘one-size-fits-all’ solution.
3. The research showed that: “... CE was interpreted differently by different people, particularly library practitioners, which in turn brought about different outcomes of CE. In this respect, training in differentiating and understanding different forms/levels of CE and their implications are considered to be important. Also, misconceptions pertaining to CE, such as engaging with ‘community leaders’ as representation of the whole community context, need to be challenged.” [p305]
4. The research showed “... how CE was implemented differently in different projects, bringing about different outcomes. In this respect, a radical shift, for instance from service-led to community-driven and from a hierarchical structure to a flat structure, is required in order to conduct

⁶ Hui-Yun Sung. *An exploration of the essential elements of community engagement in public libraries: a Doctoral Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of Doctor of Philosophy of Loughborough University 16 January 2012*. Hui-Yun Sung, 2012. Available to download as a pdf (4580 kb) from: <http://drhuiyunsung.files.wordpress.com/2012/08/hui-yun-sung-thesis-2012.pdf>.

genuine CE. Therefore, training in relevant CE skills (e.g. interpersonal skills and entrepreneurial skills) for staff involved is considered to be an important area to go forward.” [p305]

5. The research found that projects were more likely to remain relevant and sustainable when the community was given “much greater responsibilities and opportunities to shape the service. This represents a huge shift in perspective, moving away from the traditional service rationale of providing services to or for the community. The challenge for services now is to learn how to genuinely facilitate community-based projects – allowing CE to become a truly transformational development tool.” [pp305-306]

The final summary puts it well:

“In summary, there is a need for staff to be trained in CE skills and attitude that necessitate good communication skills and a proactive ‘can do’ culture. In addition to the skills and attitudes of individuals there are also implications for the organisational culture in libraries and the way they are run which may impose barriers to genuine CE. For example a highly hierarchical and authoritarian approach to management is likely to hamper CE since it is likely to influence the relationship and attitude towards members of the community. Furthermore, senior staff will need to trust their employees to instigate initiatives that may be relatively unstructured, so that they can respond to the community’s day-to-day and evolving needs. They will also need to be comfortable with projects that are less well defined than may normally be the case. They will also need to be flexible in how they use their space and resources and not expect an immediate return on resources. They will also need to be open to collaboration with other organisations. Furthermore, library staff will have to develop a belief that the community has the capacity to understand their needs, although they may need help expressing these needs. They will also need to recognise engagement as stemming from the community or that the community have the capacity to autonomously run and sustain the engagement process.” [p306]

Cultural Commissioning Grant

Just a quick update on this ACE grant:

“Running from July 2013 to June 2016, the programme will offer a mix of activities to help both commissioners in the public services and the arts, museums and libraries sectors ...

Cultural commissioning will specifically support the arts and cultural sector to collaborate with public services and contribute to the health, wellbeing, social and economic outcomes and priorities of local communities, councils and health authorities.

This is a response to a changing public service landscape in which local councils are reducing the services they deliver directly and commissioning them from external providers.

We expect the activity undertaken through the Cultural commissioning programme to address the following objectives:

- enable organisations to diversify and increase their income streams by responding to public service strategic commissioning opportunities
- support an increase in audience or participant numbers for arts and culture
- lead to the creation of high quality artistic work in a public service context
- create a greater understanding amongst public service commissioners of the potential for arts and culture to deliver their outcomes
- support policy development relating to strategic commissioning so that it takes more account of arts and culture.”⁷

The Programme is being delivered by NCVO in partnership with New Philanthropy Capital⁸, nef (the New Economics Foundation)⁹, and Mission, Models, Money¹⁰; and NCVO have just published an update

“We aim to make this programme iterative, evolving support and resources as we learn more about where and how arts and cultural organisations are involved in public service delivery, and what support they need to flourish in this area. We are keen to have a dialogue with arts and cultural organisations interested in contributing their experiences of service delivery as well as those interested in finding out more about what public sector commissioning could mean for them.

During the first six months of the programme, our partner NPC is undertaking a scoping study to map the arts and cultural sector, the interests of commissioners in this area, and the existing sources of support available. This will identify areas where the interests of arts and cultural organisations match those of commissioners, and where there are opportunities to strengthen and broker relationships.”¹¹

⁷ Taken from: <http://www.artscouncil.org.uk/funding/our-investment/funding-programmes/cultural-commissioning-grant/>.

⁸ See: <http://www.thinknpc.org/>.

⁹ See: <http://www.neweconomics.org/>.

¹⁰ MMM is “a passionate network of thinkers and doers whose vision is to transform the way people working with arts and culture use their resources to create great experiences which have deep public value.” See: <http://www.missionmodelsmoney.org.uk/>.

¹¹ Taken from: http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/advice-support/public-service-delivery/cultural-commissioning-programme?utm_source=NCVO_VolunteeringNewsletter_Sept2013&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NCVO_VolunteeringNewsletter_Sept2013.

NCVO are inviting people to subscribe to their email updates¹², and to get in touch if you would like to get involved with this study¹³.

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

Social mobility: the next steps

The Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission has recently published this advice¹⁴ to ministers on “the three or four most impactful steps that the Government could reasonably take to improve social mobility.” [p3] It follows on some two years after the publication of the Government’s social mobility strategy¹⁵.

The Commission has decided to focus on the following:

“The Commission’s view is that the most impactful steps beyond those already being taken by the UK Government to improve social mobility would be:

- to strengthen its commitment to closing attainment gaps through its early years strategy, including by developing a long term plan with clear ambitions and milestones and new accountability arrangements
- to address the weaknesses in the system for young people not heading to higher education and strengthen non-academic routes
- to seek to give adults real chances to improve their position in life by unlocking in-work progression, especially on hourly wages, and tackling low pay.” [p3]

It then proposes more detailed recommendations for each of these areas [pp3-6], summarised below.

Early Years

- Developing a new, long-term plan for the early years, with timescales and milestones

¹² See: <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/surveys/register-cultural-commissioning-programme-emails>.

¹³ Email NCVO, stating your interest, at: culturalcommissioning@ncvo-vol.org.uk.

¹⁴ *Social mobility: the next steps*. Social Mobility and Child Poverty Commission, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (784.25 kb) from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/238789/Social_mobility_the_next_steps.pdf.

¹⁵ *Opening doors, breaking barriers: a strategy for social mobility*. Cabinet Office, 2011. Available to download as a pdf (2820 kb) from: https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/61964/opening-doors-breaking-barriers.pdf.

- Putting in place the information and resources to help reduce early years developmental gaps by stretching the Pupil Premium allocation into early years' education for 3 and 4 year olds.
- Giving parents that lack it targeted information on child development basics

Transitions for 16-19 year olds

- Bringing local partners together to stop young people falling through existing gaps in provision.
- Ensuring the right information, support and incentives are in place to get young people into good destinations
- Better engagement with employers
- Rising to the basic skills challenge for over-16s.

Progression into work

- Helping low earners move up the hourly pay ladder
- Raising the bottom rungs on the pay ladder by developing a proper low wage strategy
- Improving hours and keeping women in the labour market by employment proofing its childcare policies
- Paying the same attention to the lower end of the labour market as it has jobs in the professions.

These are useful pointers to developing areas which could involve the cultural sector.¹⁶

Tackling social and digital exclusion – Other Agencies

Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Wales 2013

JRF have just published their fourth update¹⁷ on poverty and social exclusion in Wales.

Key findings include:

- “Wales needs job creation to defeat poverty. The extent of inactivity, disability and in-work poverty in Wales reflects weak demand for labour.
- Over the three years to 2011/12, 690,000 people (23%) were living in low-income households in Wales. The proportion in working families has risen steadily.
- 29% of people in ‘part-working’ families had low household incomes, but only 7% of those in ‘full-working’ families. For some, working more hours is part of the answer to in-work poverty.

¹⁶ Source: NCB *Policy & Parliamentary Information Digest*, 13 Sept 2013.

¹⁷ New Policy Institute. *Monitoring poverty and social exclusion in Wales 2013*. JRF, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (577.40 kb) from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/poverty-exclusion-wales-summary.pdf>. Available to download in Welsh from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/sites/files/jrf/MPSE2013W.pdf>.

- Some 23% of employees earning less than the UK 'Living Wage' had low household incomes, but only 3% of those earning more. As well as working more hours, higher pay is part of the answer to in-work poverty.
- In Wales, 26.5% of the working-age population was economically inactive in 2012 – higher than the British average by almost 3.5 percentage points, an 'excess' of 65,000 people. Of this 'excess', around 45,000 was due to the below-average employment rate in Wales"¹⁸

Health & Wellbeing issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

Healthy attendance? The impact of cultural engagement and sports participation on health and satisfaction with life in Scotland

This new report¹⁹ analyses data from the Scottish Household Survey 2011, and draws out some significant findings, summarised as:

- “There is consistent evidence that people who participate in culture and sport or attend cultural places or events are more likely to report that their health is good ... and they are satisfied with their life than those who do not participate [sic].
- This finding remains true even when other factors such as age, economic status; income; area deprivation, education qualification, disability/or long standing illness and smoking are accounted for.
- In other words, after controlling for relevant factors, participation in culture and sport are independently and significantly associated with good health and high life satisfaction.
- Overall, those who attended a cultural place or event were almost 60% more likely to report good health compared to those who did not attend. The association between cultural attendance and good health was also found for individual cultural places. For example, those who visited a library were almost 20% more likely to report good health than those who had not visited a library in the previous 12 months. Those who visited a museum were also 20% more likely to report good health than those who did not ... Those who visited the theatre were almost 25% more likely to report good health than those who did not in the previous 12 months.
- Overall, those who participated in a creative or cultural activity were 38% more likely to report good health compared to those who did not participate in any cultural activity in the previous 12 months.
- For example, those who participated in dance were 62% more likely to report good health than those who did not participate in dance. Those who read for pleasure in the previous 12 months were 33% more likely to report good health than those who did not read for pleasure.

¹⁸ Taken from: <http://www.jrf.org.uk/publications/monitoring-poverty-wales-2013>.

¹⁹ Clare Leadbetter and Niamh O'Connor. *Healthy attendance? The impact of cultural engagement and sports participation on health and satisfaction with life in Scotland*. Scottish Government, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (783.20 kb) from: <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0043/00430649.pdf>.

- Those who participated in sport were nearly twice as likely to report good health than those who did not participate in sport in the previous 4 weeks.” [pp5-6]²⁰
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Disability issues – Other Agencies

Jodi Awards shortlist

The 2013 Jodi Awards shortlist has been announced; the Awards will be presented in association with the Museums Association at the Annual Conference on Monday 11 November 2013 in Liverpool. See the press release attached to this Newsletter.

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

Briefing paper for the All Party Parliamentary Library Group

The Library Campaign has just published the briefing paper²¹ they have prepared for the APPLG, which aims to:

“... highlight some of the issues that most concern library campaigners, library users and the volunteers who are increasingly being forced to run library services.” [p1]

The paper makes strong points about the funding and leadership of public libraries, and also identifies that:

“... there is also a failure by both local and central government to grasp the “joined-up government” agenda, insofar as there is little appreciation of libraries’ impact on the priorities of the public sector and of national policies. These include health, social welfare, business, digital access and education (a human right in law, encompassing both orthodox and digital literacy).

... Also ignored is extensive research demonstrating the economic and health benefits of comprehensive and efficient library services, available to all who wish to use them.” [p1]

However, it is very weak on the impact of library closures, looking instead at, for example, the processes that have been followed to achieve the closures, and the lack of real savings made by them; what it could have highlighted is the

²⁰ Source: *Arts Alliance News*, Sept 2013.

²¹ *Briefing paper for the All Party Parliamentary Library Group*. The Library Campaign, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (250.12 kb) from: <http://www.librarycampaign.com/librarycampaign/wp-content/uploads/2013/10/TLC-briefing-paper-APPLG.pdf>.

social justice impact of closures, especially on communities that have few if any other resources to fall back on.

This is an important paper, but limited in its coverage.

Broader issues – Other Agencies

The road ahead ...

NCVO has just issued this useful brief resource^{22, 23} to help its members plan for the years ahead.

It focuses on four key areas: political, economic, social and technological. What is of particular interest is the shift in public attitudes towards poverty and welfare [p16]; the changes in volunteering [p18]; and the implications of ever-changing technology, the “post-PC environment” [p22], and monetisation [p23].

Useful background.

Abbreviations and acronyms

ACE = Arts Council England

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals

JRF = Joseph Rowntree Foundation

NCVO = National Council for Voluntary Organisations

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:

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²² Véronique Jochum *et al.* *The road ahead: a review of the voluntary sector's operating environment for NCVO members, 2013.* NCVO, 2013. Available to download as a pdf (1710 kb) from: http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/sites/default/files/ncvo_-_the_road_ahead_2013_member_edition.pdf?utm_source=NCVO_MembersEmail_9Aug&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NCVO_MembersEmail_9Aug.

²³ The Network is a member of NCVO, so I am able to share this with you.

News Release (with focus on Announcement of Nominees)

Jodi Awards Nominees have been shortlisted

An impressive selection of museum and cultural providers have been shortlisted for a prestigious “Jodi” Award – an award programme in its tenth year, which highlights excellence in widening participation for disabled people in museums, galleries, exhibitions, libraries, archives and other heritage sites.

“The nominees this year have been very strong,” says Trustee Marcus Weisen, “We have shortlisted seven organisations for awards in four categories and we are looking forward to further exploration of each project.”

The categories reward excellence in digital heritage projects which actively involve disabled users; innovation in projects which have developed technical solutions for increasing access; and legacy and impact in projects which ensure on-going access for disabled people. A fourth International Award will be granted to the best website outside the UK.

Projects short-listed for the Accessible Planning and User Involvement Award include a historic trail in Duxford, explaining Duxford’s time as an RAF airfield from 1918-1961 through the stories of people who worked and lived on the site; an audio trail in London giving rich, vivid descriptions of 40 city landmarks; and a live Twitterfeed performance about UK benefits system changes and their impact on disabled people.

Projects short-listed for other categories include a multi-sensory Sound Canvas that enables audiences to access and experience art in an innovative way; a ground breaking web project exploring the relationship between disabled people and the historic environment; and, from France, a digital library that provides collections of accessible books to blind and partially sighted people for free, and a French sign language dictionary with interactive capabilities.

This year’s nominations featured an exciting mix of established organisations alongside newer names. “We are delighted by the levels of talent and innovation witnessed in this crop of nominees” says Marcus Weisen. “If these projects are reflective of the standard of excellence for disabled participation in the heritage sector today then the future is very bright indeed.”

The shortlisted projects will be subject to rigorous user testing by disabled people; each site-based project will be visited by a specialist assessor and Internet based projects will be put through manual and automated tests by teams at York University and AbilityNet. The final decisions will be made by a panel of judges drawn from the heritage sector.

The Awards will be presented in association with the Museums Association (MA), at the Annual Conference on Monday 11 November 2013 in Liverpool.

For more information about the Jodi Awards 2013 visit: www.jodiawards.org.uk

FURTHER NOTES

List of Nominees for each Award category

Accessibility and Planning & User Involvement

- Imperial War Museum - Historic Duxford
- Roaring Girl Productions – Bedding Out
- VocalEyes – London Beyond Sight

Innovation

- Imperial War Museum - Historic Duxford
- English Heritage – Disability in Time and Place
- Roaring Girl Productions – Bedding Out
- Sandwell Arts Trust – Sound Canvas

Legacy and Impact

- Imperial War Museum - Historic Duxford
- English Heritage – Disability in Time and Place
- Roaring Girl Productions – Bedding Out
- VocalEyes – London Beyond Sight

International (Best website)

- Association Valentin Haüy – Éole
- Signe de Sens – Elix

Information on short-listed projects

Imperial War Museum - Historic Duxford

(Accessibility and Planning & User Involvement; Innovation; Legacy and Impact)

Historic Duxford is a historic site trail and exhibition for families. It explains Duxford's time as an RAF airfield from 1918-1961, through the stories of people who worked and lived on the site.

The Historic Duxford trail consists of eight points which enable disabled and non-disabled people to engage with the site together, through archive photographs and through audio, powered by a wind-up device. This makes audio descriptions, veterans' reminiscences and soundscapes available in their relevant location.

Complementing the trail is the multisensory, hands-on Historic Duxford exhibition with a bespoke audio tour for visually impaired visitors, and BSL interpretation.

VocalEyes – London Beyond Sight

(Accessibility and Planning & User Involvement; Legacy and Impact)

London Beyond Sight provides rich vivid descriptions of 40 London landmarks, making them accessible to blind and partially sighted people. Chosen by

significant Londoners, VocalEyes describers worked with each person to create the evocative description which the Londoner brought to life with their narration. The recordings and the texts are freely available on all platforms on our bespoke website www.vocaley.com/londonbeyondsight. Information about the Londoner and the landmark, together with access notes, is included on each page. Written specifically for blind/partially sighted people, it is also accessible to people with hearing loss and deaf people, as it is available as text.

Roaring Girl Productions – Bedding Out

(Accessibility and Planning & User Involvement; Innovation; Legacy and Impact)

Bedding Out was a performance about UK benefits system changes and their impact on disabled people. In performing her ‘bed-life’ in a gallery for 48 hours, artist-activist Liz Crow showed what many people see as contradiction, or fraud, is the complexity of real life. At an earlier performance, several people were delighted the work made them visible but were too ill to attend in person, so the work was reinvented with social media at its core. A continuous high quality livestream and facilitated Twitterfeed enabled virtual participation on a huge and international scale (almost 10,000 participants in over 50 countries).

Sandwell Arts Trust – Sound canvas

(Innovation)

Sound Canvas is a multi-sensory installation that enables audiences to access and experience art in an innovative way – using sensors and digital technology. It’s made up of 4 wooden cabinets, each with 2 sensors and 2 light boxes, which are triggered by body movement. The cabinets light up and make sounds (currently people laughing) at various intervals – depending on how close the visitor is to the sensors. This movement-based interaction is particularly good at engaging disabled visitors. Sound Canvas is designed to change over time and new sounds – from visitors - will be added, to provide constantly new experiences.

<http://www.thepublic.com/exhibitions/sound-canvas>

English Heritage – Disability in Time and Place

(Innovation; Legacy and Impact)

The Disability in Time and Place is a ground breaking web project exploring the relationship between disabled people and the historic environment using research, buildings information, archive photography and testimony from disabled people. It is fully translated into BSL and aims to help disabled people and others interested in disability history learn how much historic buildings can tell us about disabled people’s daily lives and society’s attitudes to them.

www.english-heritage.org.uk/disabilityhistory

Éole is a digital library that provides collections of accessible books to print impaired people for free. Targeted audiences are visually impaired, physically and mentally handicapped people.

Éole was designed to be completely accessible and very user-friendly, so to include poorly computer-literate users.

Association Valentin Haüy – Éole

(International)

Éole is a consistent set of services operating around a website: accessible collections, cultural and book promoting contents, communication tools to propel contents, reference and help-desk, support services offering extended mentoring to novice users, and finally professional networking program to reach new audiences.

Since Éole launched 3 months ago, more than 1200 patrons downloaded 15000+ books.

Signe de Sens – Elix

(International)

Elix (www.elix-lsf.fr) is a free website designed by the French non-profit organization Signes de Sens. The main function of Elix is the French/French sign language (now FSL) dictionary.

As in any other sign language lexicon, you can find the sign corresponding to the written word but Elix also furnishes the written definition and even the definition translated in a French sign language video! It's more than a lexicon, it's a dictionary. Everyone can participate to the dictionary, by adding their sign videos. Elix is also available on a mobile application for iPhone and Android.