

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

Number 38, November 2004

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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.

For a general overview of work to tackle social exclusion, see the CILIP Community Services Group site at <http://www.cilip.org.uk/groups/csg/si/index.html>.

Did you see ...?

Update

The latest issue of CILIP's *Update* has a number of articles of interest:

- In the "News" section, there is a short piece¹ about Islington Library Service's "New Horizons" scheme which has obtained £80,000 from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to develop mini-libraries in convenient places; and Merton Library Service's success in temporarily relocating a library to a station waiting room
- Again in the "News" section, there is a piece² about Stockport Library Service's new, simplified joining procedures
- The "Letter of the month"³ takes a critical look at tackling social exclusion
- Grace McElwee, Croydon's Children's Services Manager, outlines Croydon's early years service⁴ and highlights how it fits into the broader early years agenda
- John Pateman and Charles Newby look at the inclusive library services provided in Cuba and the Nordic states⁵.

Public Library Journal

¹ *Update* 3 (11) November 2004, p8.

² *Update* 3 (11) November 2004, p15.

³ *Update* 3 (11) November 2004, p18.

⁴ Grace McElwee "It's never too early", *Update* 3 (11) November 2004, pp23-25.

⁵ John Pateman and Charles Newby "The essence of inclusion: Cuba and the Nordic states", *Update* 3 (11) November 2004, pp30-33.

The latest issue of *PLJ* also includes some valuable articles, including:

- an introduction⁶ to the new CABE report, *21st century libraries*⁷, looking at library design and purpose
- an excellent article⁸ by Felicity Heyworth from the Information Centre about Asylum and Refugees in the UK [ICAR] about integration (with a long list of useful references)
- an introduction to the Quality Leaders Project – Youth Strand⁹
- an outline of the work of the London Libraries Development Agency¹⁰.

***The Independent* “Diversity” supplement**

⁶ Ken Worpole and Tom Bolton “Changing forms, changing futures” *Public Library Journal* Autumn 2004, pp2-4.

⁷ Ken Worpole and Tom Bolton *21st century libraries: changing forms, changing futures*. CABE, 2004. Available at: www.buildingfutures.org.uk, or from CABE (email Tom Bolton at tbolton@cabe.org.uk).

⁸ Felicity Heyworth “Get involved in integration”, *Public Library Journal* Autumn 2004, pp12-16.

⁹ Shiraz Durrani and Dean Bartlett “Young people in control”, *Public Library Journal* Autumn 2004, pp22-25.

¹⁰ Fiona O’Brien “Capital gains”, *Public Library Journal* Autumn 2004, pp26-28.

The latest "Diversity" supplement has a very useful outline¹¹ of reasons why the public sector is actively seeking multilingual recruits (with a couple of useful short case studies, one of a Tamil-speaking Metropolitan Police officer, and one of a Punjabi-speaking member of the Positive Action Team at the London Fire Brigade).

New directions for the Social Exclusion Unit

From September 2004, the SEU has been asked to focus on the following key groups:

- Disadvantaged adults including people from some disadvantaged ethnic minority groups, people who have poor basic skills, and those who have health problems or physical and mental disabilities;
- Young adults, aged 16-25, with troubled lives, who may need support to make an effective transition to adulthood;
- Excluded older people;
- People and communities affected by frequently moving home (which includes those leaving the armed services, families who have broken up or suffered domestic violence, those leaving long-term social or hospital care, Gypsies, Travellers and seasonal workers).

As part of this new direction, the SEU is currently consulting on how to improve service delivery for disadvantaged adults who move frequently. Recent research (mentioned in the ODPM Press Release) shows that:

- Homeless people and asylum seekers are less likely to access primary care services to get the treatment and support they need;
- Children living in some form of temporary accommodation are twice as likely to be admitted to hospital;
- 38 per cent of prisoners will become homeless on release from prison;
- Up to 20 per cent of care leavers experience some form of homelessness within two years of leaving care; and
- 22 per cent of Roma Gypsy pupils obtained no GCSE passes, compared to 6 per cent of the population as a whole.

Responses to this consultation are to be submitted by 14 February 2005. The consultation document is available at:

<http://consultations.socialexclusion.gov.uk/consult/disadvantagedadults/consultationHome>.

In addition, the SEU will conduct a 12-month programme to promote inclusion through innovation in new technology, "Inclusion through innovation: tackling social exclusion through new technologies".

The project, announced on 12 November by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, is not intended to duplicate existing activities by England councils, it said, but instead take "a more focused look" at the specific needs of groups identified by recent Social Exclusion Unit reports.

¹¹ Kate Hilpern "Speaking your language", *The Independent* "Diversity", 28 October 2004, p2-3.

The ODPM suggests this might include the use of text messaging or telecare systems.

The Unit's planned research, coming after similar work recently by the Digital Inclusion Panel (see: <http://www.egovmonitor.com/go?149k>), will include:

- Identifying how trends in ICT provision can be influences to prevent further growth of the 'digital divide'
- Investigating the need for new and innovative models of service delivery for excluded groups, and how ICT could support these
- Exploring how cultural and legal issues (data protection) should be taken forward in this area
- Investigating future ICT trends and seeking innovations to address social exclusion, and
- Addressing ethical concerns arising from some technologies solutions (such as telecare) and the risks that ICT could deepen exclusion.

The SEU is inviting views from the public, private and voluntary sectors by 31 January 2005. More details here: <http://www.egovmonitor.com/go?149>¹²

Routes out of poverty

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has just published a research review¹³ which looked at the effects of poverty and possible ways out, as they affect different groups (such as young people, older people, etc).

¹² Thanks to Fiona O'Brien at the LLDA for alerting me to this.

¹³ Peter Kemp *et al.* *Routes out of poverty: a research review*. JRF, 2004 £13.95 (ISBN: 1-85935-230-8). Further information from the JRF Website at: www.jrf.org.uk.

Buried in the footnotes

The Phase 1 report of this research project, which looked at the representation of disabled people in museums and galleries, has just been published¹⁴.

The report concludes that there is a wealth of material available (and yet to be identified), but that “the material is, in general poorly understood and interpreted and is acutely vulnerable to loss, or change of meaning” [p23].

There are strong indicators for future research, particularly around interpretation and investigating the impact that material has on disabled and non-disabled people.¹⁵

The Africa Collection – “Welcome to Your Library” – London Borough of Enfield

“Welcome to Your Library” was a one-year pilot project running across 5 London boroughs from June 2003 to June 2004, led by the LLDA and funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation. The aim of the project was to include refugees and asylum-seekers in the work of the Library and for the Library to respond to their needs. I worked as the Project Officer for the London Borough of Enfield, and this is the story of one of the projects I was involved in.

I attended the Council’s Refugee Forum shortly after I arrived and made contact with as many refugee community organisations as I could. I soon realised that one of the newer communities to have arrived in the borough, as yet unremarked by the Library Service, were the Congolese. They comprised people mainly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, but also included people from Congo-Brazzaville. The community was well organised with one long-established organisation and two newer groups, one representing youth and the other with a brief covering all Central African refugees. The people that I met spoke several languages but all had French in common.

I made myself available to attend evening community events and attended a couple of large gatherings where I was able to speak about the Library Service, bring items of interest (eg information in French about the Homework Clubs), but, more importantly, where I was able to listen to people and find out what they wanted. I thought I had done my homework by bringing information about the sizeable collection of French fiction the Library held, but it was made clear to me that what was required by the adults present was not Balzac and Camus, but the literature of Francophone Africa – the literature of Ousmane, Beti, Laye and countless others, in other words, the literature of home. And I was not to forget romantic fiction either – I was told that Barbara Cartland, translated into French, was most popular. See www.amazon.fr for a large selection of titles.

¹⁴ *Buried in the footnotes: the representation of disabled people in museum and gallery collections – Phase 1 report*. RCMG, 2004. The report is available as a pdf (1013kb) from: http://www.le.ac.uk/ms/bookshop/rcmg_publications.

¹⁵ Thanks to Jocelyn Dodd at RCMG for alerting me to this.

Students and other people who wanted to keep up-to-date with African politics were very keen that the Library subscribe to the weekly magazine *Jeune Afrique l'Intelligent* <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/> (Eventually the difficulties in finding a supplier were overcome and WH Smith has been able to deliver).

Both adults and children at the various meetings I attended were clear that one of the most inclusive moves the Library could make was to buy a sizeable collection of African music. I learned that Congolese music was popular throughout Africa and the African diaspora – from the elder statesman of the Congolese Rumba, Franco, to Papa Wemba and number one hit, Koffi Olomide. I hoped that, as the music transcended both language and national boundaries, it would act as a magnet for the Library Service.

Having received such clear directions, it was then up to me to ensure that I obtained sufficient funds from the annual stock consultation process to start a modest Francophone book and music collection which, if it proved as popular as was claimed, could then be expanded in subsequent years. Obtaining the money was only the start of a long journey in making the Library's stock more reflective of the community we served. Numerous questions remained – which titles, what suppliers, how to choose and how to publicise?

The communities themselves were particularly helpful when it came to the question of music – there was widespread agreement about what to buy and where to buy it. So far as North London was concerned, the best place to go was Eden Music Records, 60 West Green Road, London N15, see also www.edenmusicrecords.co.uk This was not a large outfit and not an outlet the Library had ever heard of, but it supplied a good variety of Congolese and other African music.

The question of Francophone literature was more problematic. Individuals from the various community groups helped by compiling lists, but the choices were so enormous that this was not an efficient way to start a collection. Fortunately, the French Institute came to my rescue, www.institut-francais.org.uk, and in particular Mme. Anissa Racheff. She supplied a massive bibliography plus suppliers in Paris, l'Harmattan www.editions-harmattan.fr/index.asp

Armed with a bibliography, it was much easier for people in the community organisations to tell me what they thought would be popular. There were difficulties in ordering in bulk from France, not least because the Council was unused to paying for goods in Euros, so everything took much longer than anticipated.

The question of how to publicise the new acquisitions coincided with Black History Month so this was an opportunity not to be missed. Working with all the Congolese Refugee Community Organisations it was agreed they would help to promote an event at the library closest to where the majority of Congolese lived. They suggested traditional Congolese singers and grass skirt dancers, Suku dia Kongo, sukudiakongo@hotmail.com, and agreed to provide food as well as an MC for the evening. They also requested that the Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of the Congo be invited and suggested other speakers. Working with library staff, I was to invite the Ambassador, supply the publicity and provide refreshments. The Library Service also paid the communities to provide a bilingual English-French and French-English interpreter. This was important in order to encourage the attendance of those most recently arrived, who did not already speak English. Central to the event would

be the showcasing of the new literature and music. Library staff would help people join the library on the night as well as assist people to borrow the new items. In this way The Africa Collection was launched.

The event turned out to be a great success with over 60 people attending. The Ambassador, delayed by other duties, nevertheless made his way to the outer reaches of North London, to congratulate everyone involved in this effort towards cultural inclusion. The books and music went like hot cakes. I hope this will be just one of many collaborations with the Congolese communities in Enfield.

Hilary Plews
November 2004

The Improvement Network

The Improvement Network has been developed by the Audit Commission, CIPFA, the Employers' Organisation and IdeA, and has just launched its Website at www.improvementnetwork.gov.uk.

The Network will focus on five themes:

- Leadership and governance
- Customer focus and community engagement
- Organisation and people
- Resources and performance management
- Partnerships.

At the moment, the Website is still at an early stage, but this could well develop into a very useful resource.

Think parent ...

The National Family and Parenting Institute has just published a new report¹⁶, looking at the needs of disabled adults as parents.

The report has a lot of valuable background information which we can apply to our service provision; in terms of good practice, it identifies the following:

- Focus on rights and entitlements.
- Focus on how barriers to fulfilment of the parenting role can be tackled (inappropriate services can be compound barriers).
- Be needs-led.
- Promote parental choice and control.
- Involve working in partnership across teams and agencies, and with parents themselves.

¹⁶ Richard Olsen and Helen Tyers. *Think parent: supporting disabled adults as parents*. National Family and Parenting Institute, 2004. £15.00 plus p&p (ISBN: 1-903615-35-6). Further information from: tel: 01787 249287; www.nfpi.org.

- Work from a sound knowledge base of practice, policy, legislation and research.
- Involve management commitment and strategic direction.
- Underpin rather than undermine parents in fulfilling their parenting role.
- Be non-discriminatory to disabled people as parents.

A summary of the research and key findings is also available on the Joseph Rowntree Foundation Website¹⁷.

New from the CRE

The duty to promote racial equality

The CRE have just published a brief guide¹⁸ for public authorities and partnerships, which is a useful summary of the new legislative requirements.

Impact assessment

In September, the CRE launched a step-by-step guide¹⁹ to carrying out a Race Equality impact assessment – available on the Web, this is an invaluable tool.

Racial equality in football

Finally, they have also published the results of their timely survey²⁰ (and the resulting action plan) of racial equality in football – the results make surprising and shocking reading.

Disability Portfolio

Just in case you missed this, the final set of Portfolio documents has been published.

These are:

Accessible environments

Outreach and partnerships

Consulting disabled people

Employment at every level

The whole set is now available to download from the MLA Website (www.mla.gov.uk/action/learnacc/00access_03.asp) and is also available free from

¹⁷ <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/socialcare/n34.asp>.

¹⁸ *Public authorities and partnerships: a guide to the duty to promote race equality*. CRE, 2004 (ISBN: 1-85442-552-8). Further information from: www.cre.gov.uk.

¹⁹ *Race Equality impact assessment: a step-by-step guide*. CRE, 2004. Available at: www.cre.gov.uk/duty/reia/index.html.

²⁰ *Racial equality in football*. CRE, 2004. Available as pdfs from the CRE Website (www.cre.gov.uk) Survey 364kb; Summary of research findings and action plan 216kb.

mo@centralbooks.com for museums, archives and libraries and disabled people working in the sector, in print (12 point clear print) ; large print (15 point); audio cassette and braille (both with brief descriptions). The cost is £25 for other organisations and individuals.

Year of the Volunteer, 2005

Community Service Volunteers (CSV) and Volunteering England have both been appointed by the Home Office to run the campaign to promote and support Year of the Volunteer 2005.

The Home Office has committed support to CSV to develop the campaign in England in partnership with a new network of agencies involving volunteers including Barnardo's, MENCAP, BTCV and the RSPCA. CSV will be working with these organisations to establish a year of twelve themed months, as well as creating a programme of activities to generate more opportunities for volunteers.

Themes will include:

- Youth and Children
- Justice
- Sport
- Disability
- Citizenship
- Environment
- Animals.²¹

Gender Recognition Act 2004

The Department of Constitutional Affairs has just produced some updated information about the new Act – and it is also the Government's key source of information for transsexuals.

This is at: www.dca.gov.uk/constitution/transsex/index.htm.

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: 0845 128 4897
E-mail: john@nadder.org.uk

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²¹ Thanks to *Cultural Volunteer* 11, November 2004 for alerting me to this. Information about this useful e-newsletter can be found at: www.lynnblackadder.com.