

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

Number 50, November 2005

(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.

Two newsletters this month!

There is so much to report this month that the Newsletter will be split into two, with issue number 50 published now, and number 51 later in the month.

Did you see ...?

"Where now for black & minority ethnic heritage?"

I'm sure that most of us have seen media coverage of David Lammy's speech at the event hosted by the Heritage Lottery Fund at the British Museum. His key challenge – for us all – is:

“So I pose a bold challenge to my government, and to all of us in this room: if you are a young person growing up today, black or white, in Tottenham or in Torquay, I think you cannot call yourself a rounded citizen, ready to participate in and contribute to society, if you do not know the recent history of this country and the recent history of the countries of the people who live here.”

David Lammy also spoke very enthusiastically about the Birmingham “Connecting Histories” project¹ which is building a community archive drawing on Birmingham people's own stories.

The full text of David Lammy's speech is available at:
[www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005/lammy_speech_24_o
ct.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/press_notices/archive_2005/lammy_speech_24_oct.htm).

¹ www.connectinghistories.OriginationinSite.com/.

Renaissance News

The latest issue has just been published by MLA² and includes a range of updates, including information about the work being carried out by Bristol City Museum and the Russell-Cotes Art Gallery & Museum to develop Creative Literacy initiatives, where they have been working with local education authorities to produce material that helps younger pupils' speaking and listening skills.

The Creative Economy Programme

You may have seen that DCMS have just launched the Creative Economy Programme³ which will join together cultural institutions, policy-makers and funding organisations to support the growth and productivity of the creative industries. The Programme will focus on the following key areas:

- Skills and education – better to foster creative thinking in our schools
- Competition and Intellectual Property (IP) – establish a world-class competitive business environment
- Technology – seizing the opportunities created by the internet and digitalisation
- Business support and access to finance – helping to nurture new businesses and then help them to thrive
- Diversity – minimise barriers for innovative creators
- Infrastructure – nurture and harness the unique make up of the creative industries
- Evidence – establish the importance of the creative industries to the economy.

“Welcome to Your Library” project partners

You have probably seen by now that the five partners for phase 2 have been announced. They are:

- London Borough of Hillingdon
- Leicester City Council
- Liverpool City Council
- London Borough of Southwark
- Tyne & Wear (consortium of five public library services led by Newcastle City Council, with Gateshead, North Tyneside and South Tyneside Metropolitan Borough Councils and Sunderland City Council).

Further information from Helen Carpenter – helen.carpenter@lida.org.uk.

² *Renaissance News: Museums for changing lives*. Autumn 2005. Available at: www.mla.gov.uk/documents/rennews07.pdf.

³ Further information at: www.gnn.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=176453&NewsAreaID=2.

Museums & Galleries Month 2006 (29 April – 4 June)

Just in case you haven't seen this yet, the Museums & Galleries Month [MGM] theme for next year will be "Making Connections: past, present and future".

MGM have just published the first issue of a newsletter⁴, and there is also further information on their website at: www.mgm.org.uk and/or from the Campaign for Museums: www.campaignformuseums.org.uk.

Heritage Lottery Fund

HLF have just produced a leaflet, *Public Libraries*, outlining the kinds of work they fund, with some examples of inspiring projects (eg Walsall Asian Library User Group's oral history project; Rotherham Libraries' work with Victim Support South Yorkshire).

The leaflet is available as a pdf (680 Kb) from:
www.hlf.org.uk/NR/rdonlyres/4A9BB4D0-CA7D-4372-92FE-38C85ED1EB20/2307/October05publiclibraryleaflet.pdf

or in hard copy from:
www.hlf.org.uk/English/PublicationsAndInfo/AccessingPublications/RequestAPublication.htm.⁵

Share the Vision

David Owen has just sent me StV's Annual Report for 2004-5⁶ – amongst issues it raises is that current funding for Revealweb runs out at the end of next March, and that the future is uncertain at this time.

Revealweb has certainly made its mark: it won a National Information Forum "Getting the Message Across" award in October for being a large information resource that is free to the user.

Gateway

Building on Revealweb, Gateway is a partnership between public libraries and a range of voluntary agencies to ensure that people with serious sight problems have access to all the different formats and services that are on offer, whoever provides them.

⁴ *MGM 2006 News*, October 2005.

⁵ Thanks to Karen Brookfield for alerting me to this.

⁶ If you would like to receive a copy of StV's Annual Report 2004-5, contact Maureen Bates: maureen.bates@nlbuk.org.

Gateway's aims are:

- To provide public library staff, visually impaired people and other staff who support them, with a single contact point for enquiries regarding reading materials and library services for visually impaired people
- To inform and support public library staff in addressing the library and information needs of visually impaired people
- To establish simplified joint membership procedures for access to partner services.

To achieve those aims, a single contact point has now been established, the Gateway Helpdesk:

Tel: 0845 075 0089 (local rate) or e-mail: info@gateway-uk.org.

The Helpdesk is available for anyone to contact with any enquiry about reading materials and library services for visually impaired people.

The next stage will be the development of a website which will pull together generic material on organisations and formats and provide signposting for specific areas – for example, assistive technology, copyright, tactile maps and transcription.

Gateway is an initiative of the Society of Chief Librarians and Share the Vision with funding from the Ulverscroft Foundation. For further information contact: Jane Burslem, Gateway Customer Services Officer
Tel: 0845 075 0089
E-mail: info@gateway-uk.org

“African Writing & Publishing”

The British Library organised and hosted a major international conference on 17 October – some notes are attached, thanks to Hilary Plews.

Engaging archives with “Inspiring Learning for All” ...

The Research Centre for Museums and Galleries has just produced a report⁷ for MLA North West, looking at the issues around archives' engagement with *Inspiring Learning* (and other major agenda).

⁷ Jocelyn Dodd *et al.* *Engaging archives with “Inspiring Learning for All”: a report prepared for MLA North West*. Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, University of Leicester, 2005.

www.mlanorthwest.org.uk/assets/documents/10000169Finalversionarchivesreport.pdf.

The findings of the report are:

- “There is very little knowledge or understanding of *Inspiring Learning for All* in the archive domain. In the main it is viewed negatively as something which will increase workloads. The opportunities of engaging with it are not recognised or understood.
- The domain does not consider the facilitation of accessible learning as defined by MLA to be a central function of archives.
- The domain does not operate and define itself on the basis of modern public policy objectives such as social inclusion, cultural diversity, and life long learning, which are the responsibilities of all organisations with a public remit.
- The domain’s failure to modernise organisationally, attitudinally, or culturally means that it is very difficult for it to understand or know how to integrate a modern policy agenda such as *Inspiring Learning for All*.
- There is very little research on broad-based learning outcomes in archives; therefore there is no evidence on which to develop strategic initiatives which would educate archive staff and others (including potential partners) about the different kinds of learning they already enable.
- There is no domain wide clearly articulated contemporary vision which informs archive management and development.”

The recommendations of the report are:

- “Our central finding is that in order for the archive domain to engage with contemporary learning agendas fundamental change will be required.
- We have provided a three step way of drawing archives into a change process which is built around contemporary learning agendas and *Inspiring Learning for All* in particular.
 1. **Purpose of archives:** A contemporary vision for archives must be developed. A vision that is modern in that it is focused on providing access to archives to a diversity of users, making the facilitation of accessible learning a central function of archives will enable this change.
 2. **Drivers for change:** external drivers must be identified and used to enable a process of modernisation to occur in the archive domain.
 3. **Strategies for organisational change:** a set of strategies must be identified and used as a motivator for change in archives in the North West.”

[pp7-8]

Opportunity for all ...

The DWP have just published their latest set of figures⁸ to show progress in hitting their targets for children and young people.

Pupil grouping

The DfES has just published the results of a literature review⁹ carried out by the University of Brighton – key evidence from this shows that boys and children from some ethnic minority groups are over-represented in lower sets.

Countryside Agency

Diversity Review

The Countryside Agency is carrying out a Diversity Review¹⁰ to see what can be done to support the participation in outdoor recreation of disabled people, black and minority ethnic people, people who live in inner city areas, and young people.

Rural disadvantage

The Commission for Rural Communities, a division of the Countryside Agency, has published a progress report¹¹ on their work on rural disadvantage.

At the next stages, they intend to:

- Publish a baseline report summarising what is known about rural disadvantage, to include an exploration of two further themes: access to opportunity (eg employment, housing, services, etc); and attitudes of rural communities
- Pay particular attention to the experience of different groups of individuals and households rather than of whole communities, geographical areas, businesses or organisations

⁸ *Opportunity for all: monitoring our strategy for children and young people*. DWP, 2005 (ISBN: 1-84388-467-4). Available as pdf (7.74 Mb) at: www.dwp.gov.uk/ofa/reports/2005/OFA-Summary.pdf.

⁹ Peter Kutnick *et al.* *The effects of pupil grouping: literature review*. DfES (Research Review 688), 2005 (ISBN: 1-84478-587-4). Available at: www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RR688.pdf.

¹⁰ Further information available at: www.countryside.gov.uk/LAR/Recreation/DR/index.asp.

¹¹ *Taking forward our study on rural disadvantage*. Commission for Rural Communities, 2005. Available as a pdf from: www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/data/uploads/CRC11.pdf.

- Produce policy recommendations for the Government, highlighting policy priorities and setting out a strategic action plan to assist in tackling rural disadvantage.
- As a second phase to the study, later in 2006, to look in particular at the priority groups which respondents highlighted: younger people, older people, and minority groups such as Black and minority ethnic groups, migrant workers and gypsies and Travellers, and people experiencing physical or mental health issues.¹²

The role of parish and town councils

The Countryside Agency has also just published “good practice pointers” for involving parish and town councils¹³.

The “pointers” state that:

Parish and town councils are actively helping to implement policies, programmes and services that improve the quality of life for their communities. In doing so they are helping to deliver the strategic objectives of many organisations, including principal authorities and government departments. To maximise these opportunities, this note presents recommendations for policy makers, support agencies and service deliverers. These are:

- To foster the capacity of parish and town councils;
- To build effective partnerships with parish and town councils;
- To involve parish and town councils in neighbourhood development;
- To build the confidence and skills of individuals within communities;
- To manage grant funding schemes effectively;
- To guarantee consistency and joined-up policy making;
- To give parish and town councils the power to promote local wellbeing.”

[p1]

Issues in deprived neighbourhoods

Environmental issues (1)

The Joseph Rowntree Foundation has just published a report¹⁴ which compared problems and service provision in deprived and less deprived neighbourhoods.

¹² Thanks to the Cabinet Office “Policy Hub Bulletin” for alerting me to this item.

¹³ *Community engagement and local leadership: the role for parish and town councils – good practice pointers*. Countryside Agency, 2005. Available as a pdf at: www.ruralcommunities.gov.uk/data/uploads/NALC%20Policy%20Lflt.pdf.

¹⁴ Annette Hastings *et al.* *Cleaning up neighbourhoods: environmental problems and service provision in deprived neighbourhoods*. The Policy Press, 2005 £12.95 (ISBN:

The research found that:

- There was a significant gap between the environmental amenity of deprived and less deprived neighbourhoods. Some deprived neighbourhoods face environmental challenges that are noticeably more severe, especially with litter, fly-tipping and poorly maintained public spaces
- Deprived neighbourhoods tend to have characteristics which make them prone to environmental problems (for example physical features, such as high-rise buildings and undefended open space, which make them hard to look after)
- Gaps in amenity may also reflect variations in service standards and unintentional bias against deprived neighbourhoods in resource allocation.

Environmental issues (2)

The Sustainable Development Research Network has also just produced a briefing¹⁵ which looks at environmental inequalities in the UK.

“Researchers and policymakers in the UK are increasingly recognising that poor local environmental quality and differential access to environmental goods and services have a detrimental effect on the quality of life experienced by deprived communities, vulnerable individuals (the very young, very old and those experiencing chronic ill health) and socially excluded groups.

Environmental inequality refers to the unequal social distribution of environmental risks and hazards and access to environmental goods and services, and is closely related to the concept of environmental justice.

There is no definitive definition of environmental justice. It means different things to different people. The term originally came to prominence in the USA, where it was used to embrace notions of discrimination, equity, denial of benefits, and adverse effects, initially to people of colour and other minority populations, but more recently to low-income populations.” [p2]

Crime

And the Crime and Society Foundation have just published a report¹⁶ which finds that people living in the poorest neighbourhoods are nearly six times

1-86134-806-1). Available to download as a free pdf (387 Kb) from: www.jrf.org.uk/bookshop/eBooks/1861348169.pdf.

¹⁵ *Environment and social justice*. Sustainable Development Research Network (SDRN Briefing 2), 2005. Available to download as a pdf from: www.sd-research.org.uk/documents/SDRNbriefingTwo_Final.pdf.

more likely to be murdered than those living in the richest areas. The report argues that this inequality in life chances is related to the social and economic policies of successive governments over the past twenty years, which have seen the gap between rich and poor increase.¹⁷

“Mapping the UK”

ICAR, the information centre about asylum and refugees in the UK, is starting to provide Web-based information¹⁸ about asylum and refugee issues as they relate to specific cities and towns in the UK.

The information includes:

- A history of refugee resettlement in the area
- Information about the asylum and refugee population locally resident today
- A summary of key local service provision and integration issues
- Real life stories of refugees and asylum-seekers living locally and those working and living with them
- Best available statistics
- Resources relating to asylum-seekers, refugees and service provision in the area
- Information on local projects
- Contacts for key local individuals and organisations.

This is still at the pilot stage, and, so far, information is available on the following locations:

- Bicester
- Cardiff
- Glasgow
- Lambeth
- Leicester
- Sheffield
- Southampton

The “Toward Zero Exclusion” project

In September, the Institute for Public Policy Research [ippr] published the final report¹⁹ of the “Toward Zero Exclusion” project (plus a summary²⁰).

¹⁶ *Criminal obsessions: why harm matters more than crime*. Crime and Society Foundation, 2005 (ISBN: 0-9548903-1-0). Available to download as a free pdf from: www.crimeandsociety.org.uk/pdfs/monograph1_17Oct05.pdf.

¹⁷ Thanks to the Cabinet Office “Policy Hub Bulletin” for alerting me to these last two items.

¹⁸ See: www.icar.org.uk/?lid=1320.

This project “aims to renew the drive to reduce school exclusion. It is meant for policy makers, teachers and educationalists who are committed to meeting the social and emotional wellbeing and learning needs of those with challenging behaviour, without compromising the needs and entitlements of the wider school community.”²¹

The report makes recommendations around four key areas:

- Create the conditions for better behaviour early on (a strong focus on early years work)
- Build secondary schools’ capacity on behaviour management
- Reduce the burden of schools with greatest need
- Strengthen the alternative offer.

The report is backed up by the publication of the full primary research report²² and a separate set of appendices (and case studies)²³

An organisational development resource ...

The ODPM have just published a resource document²⁴ which looks at using Organisational Development [OD] as a means of improving performance.

They define OD as: “The practice of planned intervention to bring about significant improvements in organisational effectiveness”, and the document includes background to using OD, and then looks at its role in supporting work around six themes:

¹⁹ Jodie Reed. *Toward zero exclusion: an action plan for schools and policy makers*. ippr, 2005 £5.95. Further details at:

www.ippr.org.uk/publicationsandreports/publication.asp?id=310.

²⁰ Available at:

www.ippr.org.uk/uploadedFiles/research/projects/Education/Exclusions%20Summary.doc.

²¹ Taken from: www.ippr.org.uk/research/teams/project.asp?id=889&tID=89&pID.

This webpage also gives access to articles, press releases, a progress statement by DfES, and other material produced to support the report.

²² Jodie Reed. *Classroom lessons for policy makers: toward zero exclusion project, primary evidence report*. ippr/Centre for British Teachers, 2005. Available as a pdf at: www.ippr.org.uk/uploadedFiles/research/projects/Education/classroom%20lessons%20for%20policy%20makers%20report.pdf.

²³ Jodie Reed and Laura Edwards. *Classroom lessons for policy makers: appendices – toward zero exclusion project, primary evidence report*. ippr/Centre for British Teachers, 2005. Available as a pdf at:

www.ippr.org.uk/uploadedFiles/research/projects/Education/classroom%20lessons%20for%20policy%20makers%20appendices.pdf.

²⁴ *An organisational development resource document for local government*. ODPM, 2005 £20.00 (ISBN: 1-851127-97-6). Available as a pdf (1,580 Kb) to download free at: www.odpm.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?id=1161293. There is also a brief Executive Summary (228 Kb) which can be downloaded from: www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1161291.

- Improving community engagement
- Improving organisational performance
- Improving leadership in an inter-dependent world
- Building better partnerships
- An OD approach to cultural change
- Improving service performance.

Finally, there's a section on the role of people management.

The "Improving community engagement" theme has some valuable practical tips, rooted in OD methods, and would be useful background for services exploring ways of taking community engagement forward.

Employment Equality Regulations

The new Employment Equality (Sex Discrimination) Regulations 2005 came into force on 1 October 2005.

These updated Regulations now cover one-off incidents, as well as repeated occurrences of harassment, and apply to the harassment of both women and men.

Further information (and also about other developments in sex discrimination legislation) can be found on the Women and Equality Unit website^{25,26}.

Teenage parenting experiences

A new report²⁷ looks at the teenage parenting experiences of Black and ethnic minority young people.

Amongst its recommendations are:

- Engage teenagers and young parents from ethnic minority communities in development of policy initiatives
- Improved provision of information to teenage parents about processes of labour, childbirth and parenting
- Support and encourage teenage parents to take up educational opportunities such as the 'Care to Learn' scheme

²⁵ www.womenandequalityunit.gov.uk/legislation/index.htm.

²⁶ Information taken from The Cooperative Bank's *Advantage* magazine (Autumn 2005).

²⁷ Gina Higginbottom *et al.* *An exploration of the teenage parenting experiences of Black and minority ethnic young people in England: final report*. University of Sheffield, 2005 (ISBN: 1-902411-41-2). Available at: www.dfes.gov.uk/research/data/uploadfiles/RW41.pdf.

- Encourage teenage fathers to engage in current services and emphasise their important role in child care and development
-

Anti-social behaviour

The children's charity, NCH, have just published a report²⁸ which looks at whether the ways we are tackling anti-social behaviour have got it right.

The report includes sections on:

- What is meant by anti-social behaviour?
 - Children, young people and anti-social behaviour
 - Anti-social behaviour in disadvantaged areas
 - Who is most likely to engage in anti-social behaviour?
 - What is the law and policy on anti-social behaviour?
 - How the law and policies on anti-social behaviour are being applied
 - How NCH is working to prevent and tackle anti-social behaviour
 - The way forward
-

“Get into Reading” [GIR]

GIR is a one-year pilot project, funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation, which aims to “build community through reading”. It is being delivered by The Reader and Liverpool University, in partnership with Wirral Libraries, Birkenhead & Wallasey PCT, and Job Centre Plus, and they have recently launched a website²⁹.

Working via reading groups, GIR helps boost readers' confidence, as well as supporting parents/carers reading to and with their own children, and using reading as a means of encouraging health and wellbeing³⁰.

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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²⁸ *Tackling anti-social behaviour: have we got it right?* NCH, 2005. Available as a pdf (409 Kb) at: www.nch.org.uk/stories/index.php?i=296.

²⁹ www.getintoreading.org/index.html.

³⁰ Thanks to Helen Carpenter for alerting me to this.

African Writing & Publishing

Report on a one-day Conference at the British Library

17 October 2005

Opening Plenary

Walter Bgoya, managing director, Mkuki na Nyota Publishers, Dar es Salaam, and chairman of the African Books Collective, opened proceedings with his thoughts on 'Recurring questions on African publishing'.

There were three:

- a) Which language to use?
- b) The role of the multi-nationals in Africa
- c) Is publishing developing in Africa?

Mr. Bgoya's main thesis was that publishing (with the exception of textbook publishing), cannot flourish in Africa when most of sub-Saharan Africa is in economic meltdown. For example, in 1995, Norway, with a population of only 4.5 million, published 7,625 titles; South Africa, on the other hand, with a population far exceeding Norway's, only published 5,418 titles.

There are few African publishing houses because the multi-nationals control publishing throughout Africa, and they are only interested in textbooks which are guaranteed to make a profit. In South Africa, the publishing multi-nationals even receive tax exemptions on their huge profits.

The language question was summarised thus: whilst it's a human right to read in one's own language, maybe only 10% of the literate population of an African country read in that particular language. Publishing for 10% of the population, and then dividing that 10% into fiction, nonfiction and children's literature means that such a small number of titles would be published as hardly to be worth doing, economically.

Jane Katjavivi, former New Namibia Books publisher, who also ran a bookshop in Windhoek and is now an expert in African publishing at Brussels, spoke on the theme, 'Women, Publishing and Africa'.

Jane said that African children encounter literature through their mothers' stories, but far more women are illiterate than men. Too many times women's voices are silenced when they want to speak/write out. Despite this, however, there is now an increasing flow of women writers from Africa, which is very dynamic.

Despite all the problems of publishing in Africa, there are some new women publishers developing good fiction, nonfiction and children's lists, especially in Ghana, Zimbabwe and Swaziland. Whether such initiatives are sustainable in the long-term is difficult to say because small African publishing houses

cannot compete with the multi-nationals in salary terms and therefore are constantly losing good staff to them.

In South Africa, Zimbabwe and Uganda there are women's writers associations which promote women's writing from women of all class and educational backgrounds.

The African Books Collective is important to the success of African women writers because of its interest in gender issues. Also, the African Publishers Network is crucial for the success of all independent African publishers because of the training it provides.

Femi Osofisan, writer and professor of Theatre Arts, University of Ibadan, Nigeria, spoke about 'Writers and the publishing situation in Nigeria today'.

Whilst there are plenty of massive book launches in Nigeria, financed by rich men (mostly they are men), after the launch the book sinks without trace. So writers of fiction have a very difficult time.

Nevertheless, there is a lot of determined and talented young writers in Nigeria today. Often the only way they get their work published is by gaining publicity through winning one of the many Nigerian literary prizes. The other method of getting work published is through serialisation in a newspaper or magazine. Internet publishing is not popular in Nigeria because the electricity corporations mainly supply darkness!

Chimamanda Adichie, author of the Orange shortlisted *Purple Hibiscus*, was the last speaker. She addressed the difficulties she had encountered in getting her novel published in Nigeria. It was important for her to get her US-published novel published in her country of origin, and she wanted it also to be affordable. She found a friendly Nigerian banker who was passionate about literature, and, between them, they begged and borrowed money in order to buy the West African rights.

Distribution in Nigeria is a nightmare, even having managed to get the book published. The book is now doing very well and has sold 11,000 copies in Nigeria despite only an initial problem-strewn print-run of 2,000.

Morning Panel: UK Libraries and Africa

The defining speaker here was **Sarah Henderson**, Project Officer, Welcome to Your Library, London Borough of Newham. WTYL started as a pilot project in 5 London boroughs to discover and meet the library needs of local refugees and asylum-seekers and it was funded for one year initially by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation.

Sarah gave a lively and dynamic presentation on how Newham libraries are attempting to meet the needs of one of the most diverse areas in England. 110 languages are spoken in local schools; 17% of primary school pupils and 13% of secondary school pupils are from refugee or asylum-seeking

backgrounds. One of the largest refugee groups living in the borough are the Somalis (about 8,000 people). WTYL has also, however, built good links with the Congolese, Albanian and Polish Roma communities living in the area, and has consulted with 25 groups in total as to the barriers to library access.

The Library Service, through NRF funding, was then able to invest £25,000 in foreign language stock, with the communities themselves getting to choose the titles.

Sarah explained that she was able to locate a specialist Somali publisher, Scansom Publishers, in Sweden and Canada, and that they provided her with a wide selection of traditional Somali poetry, folk tales and children's stories written by Somalis from the Diaspora. The books took 6 weeks to be delivered after ordering and were all located in one library to test their popularity. They were launched through a well-publicised evening event with many refugee community organisations present, as well as the publisher of Scansom himself – Mohammed Hassan. The big draw, apart from the books, was the Somali singer, Sara Ahmed and decent Somali food! Over 110 people attended the launch. Over 50 people joined the library that night and over 110 issues of books were made. After the launch, many Somalis who had attended agreed that libraries were very relevant to their community.

There were two other speakers: **John McIlwaine**, Professor of the Bibliography of Asia and Africa from UCL, who spoke about 'UK academic libraries and SCOLMA – the Standing Conference on Library Materials on Africa – 40 years on'.

Tony Olden, senior lecturer at Thames Valley University, also spoke on 'Reading Africa: an initiative of the Southern African Book Development Education Trust'. SABDET had taken a number of books from the publication 'Africa's 100 Best Books' and targeted them at public libraries and reading groups throughout the UK. He was very concerned that many public libraries are not spending any money at all on new books, let alone African books.

Afternoon Panel: African Publishers and Writers in the British and International markets

Nichola Beukes, Bookshop Manager, Africa Book Centre, spoke on the topic, 'Selling African Books in Britain'. ABC has been in existence for 20 years in the Africa Centre in Covent Garden. They started with just one shelf and now have 40,000 titles. It's difficult to get other bookshops to buy African titles because bookshops are dominated by chains whose buyers know next to nothing about African literature (eg Amazon do not do African fiction). When a British publisher is brave enough to take on a new African author, the British reading public tends to like the experience!

Alexandra Pringle, Editor-in-Chief, Bloomsbury Publishing. She spoke about 'Publishing non-Western writers into a general market'. She was at pains to point out that Bloomsbury are not part of a conglomerate or chain and that they have recently published 3 African authors in one season, which is

virtually unheard of. She also illustrated some of the issues about the way that publishing is structured – for example, that most have a handful of lead titles each season, which receive all the publicity and promotion, and the rest of the new titles get very little promotion at all.

Kelvin Smith of Oxford Brookes University spoke on ‘African Publishing: A View from the Outside’. He pointed out that UK publishers sell more books to Spain than to the whole of sub-Saharan Africa. He asked the interesting question ‘who decides what you get when you do an internet search for African Literature?’ In his view, the searcher is unlikely to turn up much that is actually from Africa itself – as he said, “Which Africa? And which books?”. He also indicated that many books need to have “long-tail” marketing, as they sell over a very long period – and many are available via the Internet, that are not available in bookshops.

James Currey, James Currey Publishers, spoke on the theme, ‘An African scholarly network press’. He talked about the new technologies and the development of print-on-demand for academic work.

The discussion that followed these brief presentations focused on:

- Should African publishers market more via search engines to ensure that they are found more often (eg via Google)?
- There should be more marketing of publishing via the Internet anyway
- Issues around trying to fit work produced in Africa into the Western knowledge system (an effect of globalisation): the study of Africa often excludes African thought
- The role of the Library of Congress (in buying books cheaply to sell on to US libraries, and thereby undercutting African publishers).

Closing Plenary: Prizes and Awards: Good or Bad for African Writing and Publishing?

This was a discussion with the Noma Award Jury for 2005. The Noma Jury awards prizes for scholarship, literature and children’s literature written by an African author and published by an African publisher in an African country. The general consensus was that prizes were extremely useful tools in getting African writers more widely known and appreciated.

Hilary Plews
October 2005

(with some additional notes on the afternoon Panel Session by John Vincent)