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

Number 82, February 2008

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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 …?

Young Runaways

The Government has just launched new plans[1] to help prevent children and young people running away (the current estimate is that some 86,000 children and young people in England run away from home and care each year).

There is increasing emphasis on all agencies working together to prevent young people from reaching the crisis point where they run away and to keep those that do run away safe from harm.

Libraries and young people

The National Youth Libraries Board[2] has just launched a statement[3] of what young people should be able to expect to find on offer in public libraries.

IDeA Knowledge LAA e-bulletin

Just in case you haven't seen this, IDeA have started to produce a regular update[4]:

> "As all local partnerships work towards having their new LAAs agreed and in place by June 2008, here at the IDeA we recognise that this is a particularly busy time for all concerned. However, in the interests of sharing best practice and driving improvement throughout the public sector, this new LAA e-bulletin aims to bring you all the latest developments and discussions. We hope this will help you to forge your area's 'story of place' and to learn from the many examples of best practice happening in partnerships up and down the country."

RecordKeeping

The Autumn issue[5] of TNA's magazine includes a number of interesting articles about the 200th anniversary of the parliamentary abolition of the

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[1] See press release at: http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/pns/DisplayPN.cgi?pn_id=2008_0005.
[2] See:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//N/National_Youth_Libraries_Board_12584.pdf (pdf, 51 kb).
[3] *Libraries and young people.* National Youth Libraries Board, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (31 kb) from:
http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//L/Libraries_and_Young_People_12583.pdf.
[4] See: http://www.idea.gov.uk/idk/core/page.do?pageId=7864433.
[5] *RecordKeeping* 14, Autumn 2007. Available to download as a pdf (1030.255 kb) from: http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/documents/recordkeepingaut2007.pdf.

Transatlantic Slave Trade and the 2007 Archives Awareness campaign, "Freedom and Liberty". These include:

- Asif Khan "School Britannia: the role of archives in supporting education initiatives from slavery to citizenship" [pp10-11]
- Fiona Bolt "Amnesty International – the history of a human rights movement" [pp24-26].

Literacy Today

The December issue[6] includes some interesting articles, eg:

- Diane Hofkins "Is the National Literacy Strategy actually working?" [p7]
- Richard Whitehead "Dyslexia – socially misunderstood" [pp8-9]
- Janet Randall "A whole book world", demonstrating how Bristol's library service has had an impact on children's literacy and learning [p12]

Focus …

The latest issue of the journal from CILIP's International Library and Information Group has an interesting article[7] on dementia, which highlights good practice, and introduces the IFLA *Guidelines*[8] (which provide a good basic introduction to what dementia is and how libraries can improve their services).[9]

Museums Journal

The December 2007 issue of *MJ* has a number of interesting articles, as always, including:

- Simon Stephens "Building blocks", report on the background to Liverpool's year as a Capital of Culture [pp24-29 – nb pp24-25, 27 and 29 are illustrations]
- Corinna Lotz "Common touch", a comparison of the Victorian art for all movement and today's initiatives to broaden the range of visitors to museums and galleries [pp35, 37].

There is also a review of a new book, *The manual of museum learning*[10], which includes a quote from the editor, Barry Lord[11], which is very close to the aims of "Inspiring Learning for All":

> "Museum learning is a transformative, affective experience in which we develop new attitudes, interests, appreciations, beliefs, or values in an informal, voluntary context."

National Year of Reading

Update on library membership campaign

The campaign will be targeted primarily at people with children 0-14, and will run throughout April 2008, with the main media activity taking place towards the end of the month.

Aims

The campaign offers the opportunity for libraries to:

- Increase the customer base and establish increased demand for library membership and services
- Agree a minimum standard for the new reading offer
- Increase awareness of the benefits of library membership and the modern reading offer amongst lapsed and non-users
- Improvement in active membership, retention and levels of use through the provision of a quality experience for new and existing customers
- Raised awareness and understanding of the benefits of libraries and reading by major influencers and decision makers both at national and local level.

NYR wishes to:

- Restore and renew public understanding of the fundamental role and value of libraries through two key messages:
    - Public libraries are the most egalitarian reading resource we have

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[10] Barry Lord (editor). *The manual of museum learning*. AltaMira Press, 2007 £26.00 (paperback) (ISBN-13: 978-0-7591-0971-1).

[11] "Barry Lord … is co-founder and co-President of Lord Cultural Resources, the world's largest firm specializing in the planning of museums and related cultural institutions, dedicated to creating cultural capital worldwide … Before the foundation of the company in 1981 Barry was well known in Canada as a curator and art critic, and in 1970-72 served as the Head of Education Services for the National Gallery of Canada in Ottawa." (taken from: http://www.altamirapress.com/Catalog/Eur/Singlebook.shtml?command=Search&db=^DB/CATALOG.db&eqSKUdata=0759109702).

o Libraries are open to all
- Enforce positive messages about library usage to current users
- Use customer data to prioritise our target audiences and ensure that we match the right offer and messages to the right audience.

To deliver the campaign, SCL has nationally agreed:

- the adoption of a streamlined and standardised proof of identity requirement
- A consistent quality welcome experience for new members
- An ongoing relationship with local services and staff
- An agreed understanding of the modern reading service offer which will engage and delight both new and existing customers.[12]

Tackling social exclusion – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

British Social Attitudes

The latest report[13] from the National Centre for Social Research has just been published.

As the press release[14] indicates, our views on family life have become more liberal, there is widespread concern about the environment and inequality, but, for example, 36% of people think equal opportunities for black and Asian people have gone too far.

"Scottish Social Attitudes" Survey

The 2006 Survey results have just been published[15]. They show considerable progress, but also that particular groups facing continuing discrimination:

"For the most part only a minority uphold a discriminatory outlook. But discriminatory attitudes are more widespread in respect of some groups than others. They are particularly common in respect of Gypsies/Travellers and someone who has had a sex change operation (a description designed to refer to a transgender person). Otherwise, they seem most likely to be expressed in respect of gay men and

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[12] Source: Michele Jones, National Year of Reading Library Adviser.
[13] Alison Park *et al. British Social Attitudes: the 24th report*. Sage, 2008. Further information available at:
http://www.sagepub.co.uk/booksProdDesc.nav?prodId=Book231969.
[14] See:
http://www.natcen.ac.uk/natcen/pages/news_and_media_docs/BSA_24_report.pdf.
[15] Catherine Bromley, John Curtice and Lisa Given. *Attitudes to discrimination in Scotland: 2006 – 'Scottish Social Attitudes' Survey*. Scottish Government, 2007 (ISBN-13: 978-0-7559-6867-1). Available to download as a pdf (905.79 kb) from:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/Doc/205755/0054714.pdf.

lesbians. Thereafter they are most widespread when people are asked about Muslims or about black and Asian people as a group. On the other hand, discriminatory attitudes are relatively infrequent in respect of the roles of men and women, age and disability. Even so, significant minorities can not only still hold stereotypical views about the kinds of work that women do, but may in certain circumstances still express discriminatory attitudes about older or younger people, or about someone with a disability, perhaps because of concerns about their ability to 'cope' with the demands of a particular situation." [pp ix-x]

Tackling social exclusion – Other Agencies

Empowering Muslim women: case studies

This document[16] draws together case studies from across England, showing a range of ways in which Muslim women are getting involved in employment; education; civic participation; arts, culture and sports; and preventing violent extremism.

The arts, culture and sports examples are:

- Ulfah Arts in the West Midlands, which encourages greater engagement with the arts
- "Descendants of the World", a London-based photography project, targeted towards Bangladeshi Muslim women
- Muslim Women's Sport Foundation.

Talk To Your Baby – "Communication Consequences"

In November 2007, Talk To Your Baby organised a one-day conference, and the report[17] has just been published.

Amongst a range of interesting papers was one by Leslie Gutman (Research Director from the Centre for the Wider Benefits of Learning) about how parent-child communication can create the building blocks for social inclusion.[18]

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[16] *Empowering Muslim women: case studies*. DCLG, 2008. Available to download as a pdf (2642 kb) from:
http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/communities/pdf/669801.
[17] *Talk To Your Baby – Communication Consequences: conference report*. National Literacy Trust, 2008. Available to download as a pdf from:
http://www.literacytrust.org.uk/talktoyourbaby/Talk%20To%20Your%20Baby%20Conference%20Report%202007.pdf.
[18] Source: *Talk To Your Baby News*, February 2008.

Language and social exclusion

I CAN[19] are producing a series of papers looking at contemporary issues surrounding communication development and disability; the latest[20] is about language and social exclusion.

This paper considers speech, language and communication needs [SLCN] as:

> "… risk factors for social exclusion, the links between social disadvantage and SLCN, the possible reasons for these links and what we know about what works to increase communication skills and social inclusion." [p5]

The paper says that, whilst the Government has identified those at risk of social exclusion, there are many groups that may be being missed:

> "There is emerging evidence of a high incidence of SLCN, often unidentified, in young offenders … looked after children … and those who have conduct disorder … as well as other social, emotional and behavioural difficulties … We also know that children excluded from school are likely to have special educational needs, including a high incidence of SLCN …" [p5]

It then goes on to look at some of the links between SLCN and disadvantage, and begins to identify what works in terms of increasing communication skills in children with SLCN.

This is a very interesting widening of the definition of social exclusion, and fits absolutely with the themes of communication and literacy within the NYR.[21]

Health issues – Government, Government Agencies and Local Government

A dialogue of equals …

This new guidance[22] "offers a framework for effective community engagement" [p3].

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[19] I CAN is the children's communication charity. They work to foster the development of speech, language and communication skills in all children with a special focus on those who find this hard: children with a communication disability (taken from: http://www.ican.org.uk/home/About%20us.aspx).

[20] Melanie Cross. *Language and social exclusion.* I CAN ("I CAN TALK" series, issue 4), 2007. Available to download as a pdf from: http://www.ican.org.uk/upload/publications/language%20and%20social%20exclusion%20report.pdf.

[21] Source: *Talk To Your Baby News*, February 2008.

[22] *A dialogue of equals: the Pacesetters programme community engagement guide.* DH, 2007. Available to download as a pdf (850 kb) from:

> "The Pacesetters programme is a partnership between local communities who experience health inequalities arising from discrimination, the NHS and the Department of Health. Working with strategic health authorities (SHAs) and trusts, the programme's overall aim is to deliver equality and diversity improvements and innovations resulting in:
>   - patient and public involvement in the design and delivery of services;
>   - reduced health inequalities for patients and service users from communities who experience discrimination and disadvantage; and
>   - working environments that are fair and free of discrimination."
> [p3]

The guidance looks at what 'community' means and how community engagement works; gives practical advice about developing outreach, working with minority ethnic groups (with a sample case study based on working with Gypsies and Travellers); and signposts more resources.

It's a very useful, practical introduction to working with communities – recommended.[23]

Abbreviations and acronyms

CILIP = Chartered Institute of Library and Information professionals
IDeA = Improvement and Development Agency
LAA = Local Area Agreement
SCL = Society of Chief Librarians
TNA = The National Archives

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http://www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/DH_082382.
[23] Thanks to Geoff Smith for alerting me to this.