



Group for Large Local Authority Museums

Museums and Social Inclusion

The GLLAM Report



Museums and Social Inclusion

The GLLAM Report

Museums and Social Inclusion The GLLAM Report

Group for Large Local Authority Museums,
October 2000

Research undertaken by the Research Centre for
Museums and Galleries (RCMG), Department of
Museum Studies, University of Leicester.

Research Team:

Professor Eilean Hooper-Greenhill
Richard Sandell
Dr Theano Moussouri
Helen O'Riain

Design by Alex Moseley, alex@crazydiamond.co.uk
Photography by Dark Side Photographic.

Contents

Foreword	5
Introduction	9
Section 1	11
The Scope of Museums' and Galleries' Work Towards Social Inclusion	
Section 2	23
The Social Impact of Museums and Galleries	
Section 3	45
Principles of Good Practice	
Section 4	49
The Unique Contribution of Museums and Galleries	
Preliminary Conclusions	53
Appendix A – Methodology	55
Appendix B - Evaluation	57

Foreword

Museums and galleries can, and have played a significant role in combating social exclusion. In partnership with other agencies, we have led the way for the whole cultural sector in pursuing inclusive agendas. It is ironic, then, that this role, despite its long pedigree, is not one which is widely known.

Part of the explanation is that museums have not been vociferous in promoting this aspect of our work. Our image remains, to many, one of studious assemblers and custodians of collections, and only latterly has an acceptance grown, even within the museum profession itself, that we can be much more than this.

Funding for social inclusion work has not been easy to access. Funders for too long have been preoccupied with acquisitions, conservation, or exhibitions. Historically, work with communities has rarely been valued to the same degree.

National museums have not been in the forefront of social inclusion work, for a variety of reasons. This too has tended to obscure, especially to Government, the scale, scope and importance of such work in regional museums, with their ready access to marginalised communities.

To these factors may be added those identified in the Preliminary Conclusions to this Report, notable among which is the lack of clarity in terminology. Nevertheless, there is no disputing the fact that museums are natural engines for social inclusion work as long as we choose to adopt this role. This applies just as much in rural communities as in our towns and cities, and inclusion work is not the sole prerogative of GLLAM

members — museums of all types of governance, large and small, have undertaken valuable work.

In so doing we have begun to redefine the traditional role of museums, and to demonstrate the social and educational value of museums more coherently than ever before. We have begun to make use of the cultural authority which ordinary people perceive us to have. So, we truly unlock the value invested in our collections, and thus we finally identify why they are worth having in the first place.

GLLAM and our partners offer up this important Report for scrutiny by all who may take an interest, but especially by Government. In part the Report can be viewed as a response to the DCMS Policy Guidance on social inclusion, *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All* (May 2000). The Report demonstrates that much work is already being done, and so validates the Policy Guidance. The question the Report begs is a big one: how do we finance these immensely valuable initiatives, and how do we sustain them so that we build consistently, rather than fall back to square one when project funding expires?

What we recommend is simple. Government must continue to urge and cajole our sector to get to grips with pursuing socially inclusive policies, but it must also help us by winning funding for us, so that we can implement long-term strategies. There is no alternative, if we are really to make a difference.

On behalf of GLLAM I would like to thank the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester for

undertaking the research on which this Report is based. I would also like to thank our funding partners, who are:

- Heritage Lottery Access Fund
- Resource (formerly the Museums & Galleries Commission)
- Museums Association

and the following Area Museum Councils:

- East Midlands Museums Service
- North East Museums
- North West Museums Service
- Scottish Museums Council
- West Midlands Regional Museums Council.

In addition, thanks are due to the Social Inclusion Report Steering Group, who were: Stuart Davies (Heritage Lottery Fund), Sue Wilkinson (Resource, formerly MGC), Virginia Tandy (Manchester City Art Galleries) and Jocelyn Dodd (Nottingham City Museums).

The members of GLLAM, all of whom contributed to the financing of the Report, are:

Aberdeen Art Gallery and Museums
Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery
Bradford Art Galleries and Museums
The Royal Pavilion Libraries and Museums,
Brighton & Hove
Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery
Coventry Museums Service
Derby City Museums and Art Gallery
Dundee City Council Arts & Heritage
Edinburgh City Museums and Art Galleries
Glasgow Museums and Galleries
Hull City Museums, Art Galleries and Archives
Leeds Museums and Galleries
Leicester City Museums Service
Manchester City Art Galleries
Nottingham City Museums
Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery
Sheffield Galleries & Museums Trust
Southampton Cultural Services
Potteries Museum and Art Gallery, Stoke-on-Trent
City & County of Swansea Museums Service
Tyne & Wear Museums
Wolverhampton Art Gallery and Museum.

GLLAM has 22 member museum services in England, Scotland and Wales. We are a network of local authority-funded museums which are based in the UK's largest centres of population.

Between us we manage over 120 museums and art galleries.

We attract over 12 million visits per year.

Our annual revenue spending power is c£70 million.

David Fleming,

GLLAM Convenor, on behalf of the
Social Inclusion Report Steering Group.



Introduction

In November 1999, the Group for Large Local Authority Museums (GLLAM) commissioned the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG), University of Leicester, to undertake research into museums, galleries and social inclusion.

In their response to the brief, RCMG developed their approach around the following key aims:

- to map the level of activity and commitment to social inclusion work across the GLLAM membership
- to identify the social impact of museums and galleries in relation to the disadvantage, inequality and discrimination that affect the lives of people at risk of exclusion and to give examples of projects
- to highlight the principles upon which effective social inclusion work is based within the museum context
- to identify the unique contribution of museums and galleries towards social inclusion agendas
- to consider the nature of evaluation used within museums to date and, drawing on trends in evaluation outside of the sector, to suggest appropriate ways forward

It is important to note that the findings can, in most cases, be applied across the full GLLAM membership though, as discussed with the project steering group, more detailed case studies are drawn from a selection of museum services due to resource constraints. The methodology is described in more detail in **Appendix A**.

Report structure

The structure of this report reflects these aims.

Section 1 (The scope of museums' and galleries' work towards social inclusion) paints a broad picture of the activity across the membership and the issues that have characterised their approach to social inclusion agendas. This mapping exercise begins to identify the reasons why museums' contribution to social inclusion has often gone unnoticed or unrecognised by those outside of the organisation.

Section 2 (The social impact of museums and galleries) looks in more detail at the outcomes of museum initiatives aimed at tackling exclusion. The research shows that museums can not only tackle the four widely recognised key indicators linked to exclusion (health, crime, unemployment and education) but can also play a wider, and even, unique role in tackling disadvantage, inequality and discrimination.

Section 3 highlights the principles on which best practice in social inclusion work is based whilst **Section 4** points towards the unique contribution of the sector towards issues of inclusion.

The report makes some **Preliminary Conclusions** and suggests the steps required to better position museums and galleries to become effective agents of social inclusion.

An assessment of the role of evaluation, a key issue that was identified in the project brief and confirmed as highly significant through the course of the research itself, is attached at **Appendix B**.

Section 1

The Scope of Museums' and Galleries' Work Towards Social Inclusion

Defining Social Inclusion

All the local authority museums and galleries that are part of the GLLAM group have some strategies for social inclusion, although the terminology and levels of explicit commitment varied. When GLLAM directors were asked "Are there any strategies in your authority relevant to social inclusion?" all said 'Yes' in one form or another. 14 said that there were relevant council strategies, 9 said there were policies on social inclusion, 10 on anti-poverty and a further 12 specified access, disability and equal opportunities policies. Although many museums have been working in this field for twenty years or more, 4 directors said that such policies were 'more words than deeds', hidden away in documents or patchy in nature, and a further 5 said that social inclusion policies had only been in place in the past year or so. It appears therefore that local authority policies on social inclusion range from the engaged and explicit through the 'lip-service only' to the almost non-existent.

Work towards social inclusion has evolved from earlier work that usually had a rather narrower focus and which used a different terminology. For example:

A working group in Edinburgh

".. began life as the

Equality Working Party

and then became the

Positive Action Group, then the

Equal Opportunities Group, then the

Social Exclusion Group and now the

Social Inclusion Group.

Access and anti-poverty also predate social inclusion but cover some of the same ground."

Edinburgh

This report discusses all relevant museum and gallery initiatives, whether or not they are explicitly referred to as work towards social inclusion. Other relevant terms museums used included: community capacity building; community involvement; interdepartmental community learning strategies; cultural strategies; life-long learning; local regeneration, and so on.

Definitions of social inclusion are problematic.

For the DCMS, social inclusion work should:

*"promote the involvement in culture and leisure activities of those at risk of social disadvantage or marginalisation, particularly by virtue of the area they live in; their disability, poverty, age, racial or ethnic origin."*¹

However, social inclusion has to be further defined in each local authority area according to local needs and circumstances and, within such frameworks, museum services devise policies and plan partnerships.

For example, the Dundee City Council corporate plan has 4 priorities, covering a 3-year period:

- To provide good and efficient services
- To encourage economic growth and population change
- To promote social inclusion
- To encourage active citizenship.

Social inclusion is here supported by priorities that encourage economic growth and population change, and active citizenship.

¹ *Arts and Sport; Policy Action Team 10; A report to the Social Exclusion Unit, DCMS 1999*

Its seven social inclusion aims are:

- To improve achievement in schools and promote lifelong learning
- To provide caring services for vulnerable groups
- To tackle crime and the fear of crime
- To implement the anti-poverty strategy
- To tackle the issue of fuel poverty
- To develop employment and training initiatives
- To implement the 'Healthy Dundee' strategy (Most of these are multi-agency)

Dundee

Tyne & Wear Museums' Statement of Purpose and Beliefs responds to local needs as follows:

"Our mission is:

To help people determine their place in the world, and understand their identities, so enhancing their self-respect and their respect for others.

We believe that:

We make a **positive difference to people's lives**.

We **inspire and challenge** people to explore their world and open up new horizons

We are a **powerful educational and learning resource** for all the community, regardless of age, need or background.

We act as an **agent of social and economic regeneration**.

We are fully accountable to the people of the North East."

Tyne & Wear

Such documents are in themselves powerful tools for change, provided there is a high level of ownership among staff.

The museum/gallery and the local authority

In some local authorities, museums are leading the way forward in social inclusion work.

"We were talking in these terms long before most other parts of the Council."

Southampton

In others, local authority colleagues are unaware that museums are involved in this kind of work.

"They are often surprised that we are already doing it."

Stoke-on-Trent

Some museums and galleries have already undergone enormous internal cultural change to rise to local authority challenges:

"The local authority wanted something done. The museum had been seen as elitist. The agenda was for the museum to become more relevant to audiences."

Nottingham

In fact drastic change, while difficult to live through, often seems to act as a catalyst to social inclusion work, given motivated leadership and staff.

Some local authorities have refocused their priorities to acknowledge the growing social importance of culture and this has proved helpful to museums and galleries. Thus, in Brighton, the 'Art, Recreation and Tourism' section is now 'Culture and Regeneration', acknowledging the wider significance of culture.

Some museums and galleries are in authorities where the social inclusion message is still filtering through while others are involved in SIPs (Social Inclusion Partnerships) directed to special areas of need or deprivation, targeting the most deprived 10% of the population.

Levels of museum commitment

Museum directors made many powerful statements which affirmed their commitment to social inclusion work:

“If not actually working to be inclusive you will inevitably be unintentionally excluding people. Everything you do has to be done with that awareness.”

Glasgow

“Social inclusion agendas have become increasingly important and we are responding accordingly.”

Manchester

“It’s more and more the language of how we work.”

Southampton

“It’s fundamental to our existence.”

Leicester

“Everything we do enables a broader access.”

Tyne & Wear

“Social inclusion provides input into regeneration. Improving the quality of life in an area has a knock-on effect.”

Stoke-on-Trent

“Museums can inspire people to self-development, can make life-changing differences for some.”

Hull

“It’s a key element in our service planning which informs everything we do in all areas (display, promotion, development etc.)”

Edinburgh

“Everybody needs to sign up to this more balanced programme and reflect the needs of the population.”

Bristol

However, in terms of implementing these ideas, museums and galleries in the GLLAM group are at varying stages along the spectrum between knowing social inclusion work must be addressed and actually addressing it, although all are convinced that this is the only way forward.

“There are very few other agendas.

This is where we are at.”

Wolverhampton

There is a general awareness of collections belonging to the public, of residents being entitled to something they are already paying for, of a need to serve the whole population, responding better to their needs and aspirations. There is a wish to serve users and non-users alike, to combat elitism, and to be of use to the city.

“We want to serve our city – all of it, not just the people who are ‘nice’.”

Coventry

There is a wish to be playing a key role in society, to be ‘at the heart of things’ rather than an ‘optional extra’, to be seen to be relevant to communities and to people’s lives and gain their support. There is also the need for political credibility, status and a higher profile within the local authority.



A valued service

“The service as a whole becomes more valued because it’s seen as something more than just the sum of its parts.”

Stoke-on-Trent

Attitudes of local authorities and other agencies towards museums can change when they see the museum doing a good job, see that museums can deliver the social inclusion agenda and stimulate interest in topics of contemporary concern. Councils can see that their priorities are being delivered by a museum service with its feet firmly in the real world. With this appreciation, more funding can become available, being granted as a vote of confidence by motivated funding bodies. It is obviously more difficult for museums to shine in local authority areas where councils themselves lack conviction about social inclusion, but several GLLAM members have proved they could do just that, and now central government is edging local authority attitudes into line.

Increasing self-esteem

There was a sense of excitement in most museums and galleries about projects achieved and battles won, and a wide range of gains from working inclusively to counter-balance the risks, discomfort and uncertainty. There is a perceived feel-good factor. An engaged museum staff becomes a hugely motivated one. The attitude becomes: ‘we can do it’. Staff see themselves as relevant and necessary.

“Socially inclusive work reflects back the realities of life in the community and makes us more connected.”

Aberdeen

It is possible to find new audiences, obtain support from new areas of the community, and make new friends beyond the traditional ‘Friends of the Museum’.

“By embracing the notion of diversity and engaging more people it becomes a more vibrant, meaningful place for everyone. It benefits everyone.”

Nottingham

There was little that was negative in responses from the museums, just the edges of anxieties, and some ‘should be’ and ‘must be’ phrases which are the precursors of further change. The 22 museums and galleries in the group are obviously at different points along the social inclusion road, but all appear to be going in the same direction, agreeing they are on the best possible road.

Consultation

Consultation is at the heart of the social inclusion process, being a steep learning curve, a potential stumbling block but also a source of enormous satisfaction about delivering what is needed. Without it the journey may become many times more difficult than it need be or lose its sense of direction. Some would like more support from the authority in consulting their communities, while some have this in place:

“There is a citizens’ panel which feeds back regularly to the city council – we learn what they would like to see. We have focus groups. We listened to non-users and used this in our development plan.”

Bristol

This enables different departments to gain information about citizens’ needs, wishes and expectations through the council itself.

Consultation within the local authority varies considerably across the authorities. Some museums consult easily with other departments and plan collaborative projects, with libraries, social services etc., while others find closed doors and territorial posturing getting in the way. Interdepartmental working results in initiatives such as joint marketing plans and publicity for the city’s museums, galleries and cultural departments, being more effective and more cost-efficient.

Partnerships

The overall feeling across the group was that partnerships are essential to the socially inclusive museum:

“The museum should be seen as one of many organisations/ spaces/ venues which are part of a process. We need to be integrated. We can be more effective when part of joined-up thinking. Partnership is crucial.”

Nottingham

“We’ve always tended to work in partnerships but more so in the past 5 years. And local cultural strategies involve more cross-disciplinary approaches.”

Bradford

“We are forging new partnerships all the time – this approach is vital.”

Swansea

Agencies mentioned by respondents have been listed (see the end of this section). Those mentioned more than once have been included in the chart headed ‘Agencies in Partnership’. The list is by no means complete as several museums importantly have lists that run off the scale:

“Q. How many partnerships do you have?

A. How long have you got?”

Dundee

“Hundreds, right across the spectrum. It’s the only way you can do it. Partnerships are far more successful.”

Tyne & Wear

“Over 200 organisations work with the Open Museum.”

Glasgow

The list therefore gives a flavour of the kind of partnerships currently in use rather than accurate statistics.

It is clear that relationships vary with agencies depending on the type of assistance given (introductory, as a catalyst, as equal partners in a project, as funders, as providers of advice and information etc.) Good work seen to be done with agencies makes future partnerships easier to forge. A good track record impresses local authority and outside agencies alike and leads to further opportunities.

Funding

A variety of funding strategies have emerged to achieve socially inclusive work and no one in the group perceived funding as adequate. Some have taken risks by making short-term cuts in order to move forwards, concentrating money available on becoming more responsive and flexible, or increasing outreach, education and marketing posts. A few have found that once the museum has become known for its inclusive work, it is easier to obtain funding from local agencies. Risk-taking has often been part of the process of establishing that socially inclusive reputation.

Some services have, through strategic reallocation of resource, secured additional funding to bring forward new developments with the social inclusion agenda built in to their development as in the case of Dundee Contemporary Arts. However, the effect of such new developments, both in this case and nationally, has been to deprive the more traditional part of the museum sector of resource and as a result these buildings are now in desperate need of investment.

Core changes

For a long time museums reflected a society largely white, middle class, male, imperialist, straight and dead. Reflecting current diversity was never going to be a matter of labels and décor. Changes in collecting policies, curatorial practices, displays, facilities, staff attitudes, training, activities, governing body attitudes, programmes and events, have required new skills, courage and risk-taking. A few museums have achieved the greater part of this list; most have changed some. It is far from easy.

“The museum had been seen as racist, imperialist etc. and had to be changed. This meant major change. Some displays had to be ripped out and re-done. Changes were made in physical access and in every aspect of what the museum does, down to the café. Different levels of success were achieved. This affected practice enormously and how people are engaged with it. There were still core elements not tackled, such as collecting policies and curatorial practices. But exhibition programming has been very influenced by it.”

Nottingham

“The challenge is to make the collections relevant. If they are not relevant, they will become ‘at risk’ themselves.”

Birmingham

“We will have to demonstrate how we meet the national and local agenda in order to survive. We will have to reflect local communities in what we collect and display.”

Derby

Conclusion

It is clear that many local authority museums have begun to forge a special relationship with their communities and to take up the challenge to become effective agents of social change. It takes time and there is still much to learn about new audiences, much listening to be done, new partnerships to forge and problems of resourcing and sustainability to solve. But what is clear is that so much is happening already, but it is not always noticed by anyone apart from those immediately involved.

The range of terminology used to refer to social inclusion poses problems. Because the work of museums in relation to social inclusion is not clearly defined, it is difficult to see and difficult to grasp as a whole. 'Social inclusion' itself is a fuzzy concept, defined and used variously by government and by different local authorities. This fuzziness is reflected in a lack of clarity in some museums and in some local authorities about what counted as social inclusion work. Those museums where all staff had a clear idea and a holistic vision about the scope and nature of their work towards social inclusion were rare.

In some services, a lack of expectation and support from local authorities combined with limited funding has forced museums and galleries to be opportunistic and to search for funds wherever possible. Generally this is short-term project funding, which poses problems of long-term planning and sustainability. While some museums have reoriented their priorities to focus on challenging social exclusion, in others this is left to those individuals who feel it is important. While many are making heroic efforts, in some situations, the context within which they are working is problematic, both within and without the museum. Lack of support, lack of funding, and lack of clear policies and direction combines with the fuzziness and ambiguity of the concept of social inclusion itself and has led to a situation where the good work being done is frequently invisible.

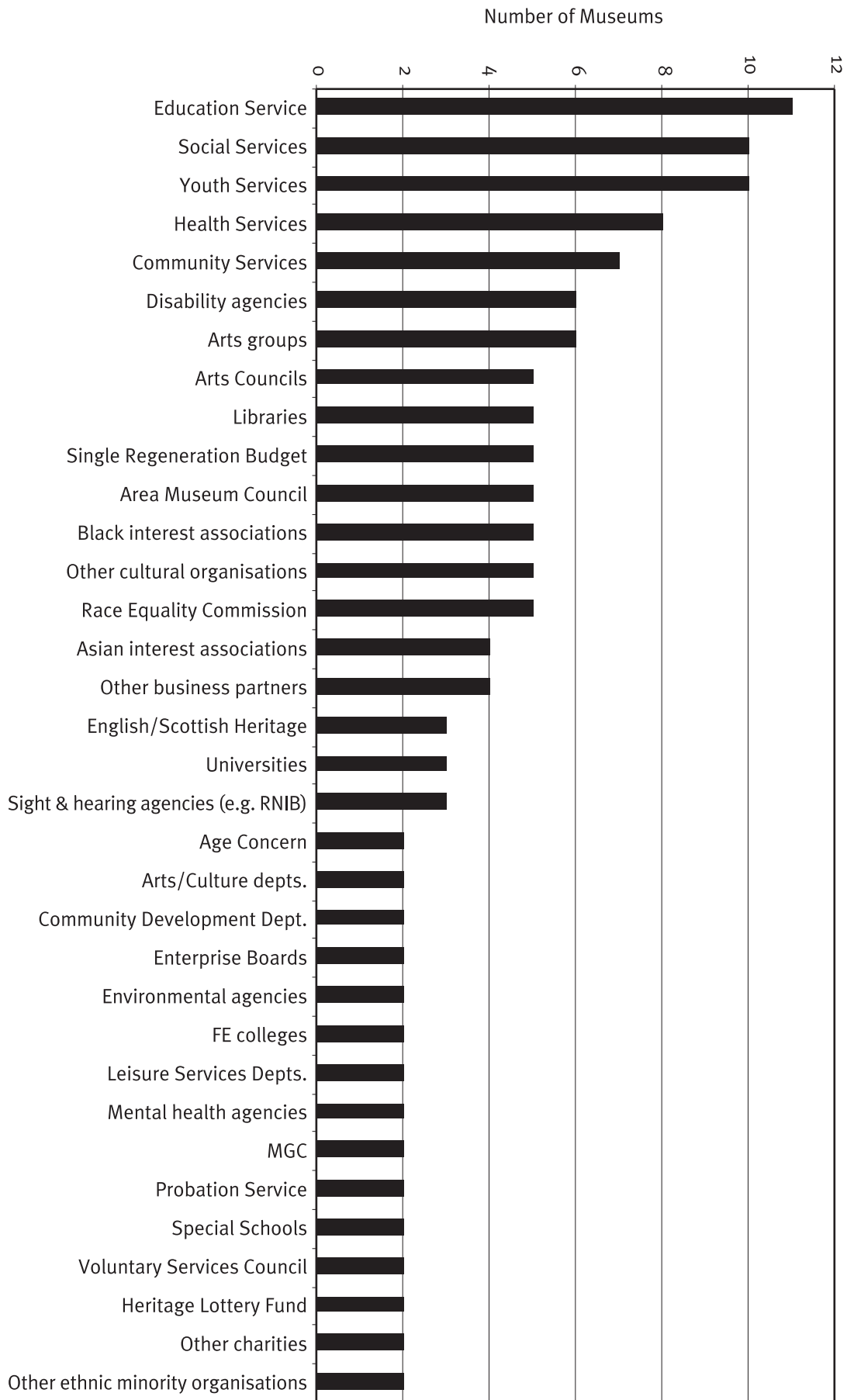
The potential of museums and galleries to become more socially inclusive is therefore difficult to understand, both within museums and within the local authority. However, the work that is being done is inspirational, creative, and in many cases has been demonstrably life-enhancing for all those involved, both museum users and staff alike. The next section of this report describes some of these projects and assesses their impact.

Education Service	11	MGC	2
Social Services	10	Probation Service	2
Youth Services	10	Special Schools	2
Health Services	8	Voluntary Services Council	2
Community Services	7	Heritage Lottery Fund	2
Disability agencies	6	Other charities	2
Arts groups	6	Other ethnic minority organisations	2
Arts Councils	5	Ad hoc interest groups	1
Libraries	5	COSLA Convention of	
Single Regeneration Budget	5	Scottish Local Authorities	1
Area Museum Council	5	Development Agencies	1
Black interest associations	5	EAZ executives	1
Other cultural organisations	5	Local Housing Associations	1
Race Equality Commission	5	NACRO (rehabilitation of offenders)	1
Asian interest associations	4	Play schemes (voluntary)	1
Other business partners	3	SCOPE	1
English/Scottish Heritage	3	Senior Citizens' Forum (local)	1
Universities	3	Sheltered housing projects	1
Sight & hearing agencies (e.g. RNIB)	3	The Scottish Executive	1
Age Concern	2	WEA	1
Arts/Culture depts.	2	Tourism & marketing organisations	1
Community Development Dept.	2	GLLAM	1
Enterprise Boards	2	TEC	1
Environmental agencies	2	NOF	1
FE colleges	2	Gay & lesbian associations	1
Leisure Services Depts.	2	Care co-operatives	1
Mental health agencies	2	Museum/gallery collaboration	1

Total: 159

Figure 1: Agencies in Partnership

Figure 2: Agencies in Partnership





Section 2

The Social Impact of Museums and Galleries

“Museums and galleries... can play a role in generating social change by engaging with and empowering people to determine their place in the world, educate themselves to achieve their own potential, play a full part in society and contribute to reforming it in the future¹.”

“Arts and sport, cultural and recreational activity, can contribute to neighbourhood renewal and make a real difference to health, crime, employment and education².”

In recent months, in response to developing political agendas based around the combatting of social exclusion, there has been considerable debate around the potential roles and responsibilities of the sector. For some, the museum's potential role is confined to a broadening of their audience profile - a 'museums for all' philosophy which acknowledges that efforts are required to identify and remove the many barriers (physical, intellectual, emotional, attitudinal, financial etc.) that exist to exclude many groups from museums. More recently there has been increasing support for the view that the development of new audiences is simply a stepping-stone towards the full potential of the museum as agent of social inclusion. There is now increasing recognition that the museum can act as a catalyst for positive social change³, that it can deliver a range of social outcomes, at both individual and community levels, aimed at tackling social inequality, discrimination and disadvantage - a view endorsed by this report.

¹ *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All; Policy Guidance for DCMS funded and local authority museums, galleries and archives in England*, May 2000.

² *Arts and Sport; Policy Action Team 10; A report to the Social Exclusion Unit*, DCMS 1999.

The impact of initiatives and projects to date

Building on this recognition, this report focuses on the social outcomes of museum initiatives that have engaged with people at risk of exclusion or have sought to address wider issues of inequality and disadvantage. These impacts are, perhaps unsurprisingly, difficult to categorise since the outcomes of museums' and galleries' initiatives are complex, interlinked and overlapping. For the purposes of this report seven key areas of impact have been highlighted.

The first three are based on the impact of museums at individual or personal, community and societal levels:

- 1. Personal growth and development**
(the impact that involvement with museums has had on the lives of individuals at risk of exclusion)
- 2. Community empowerment**
(the impact that museum initiatives have had in regenerating and empowering disadvantaged communities)
- 3. The representation of inclusive communities**
(the impact that museums have had, through representing diversity and celebrating plural identities, in challenging negative attitudes towards minority or marginalised communities and in providing a sense of place and enhanced community identity for groups at risk of exclusion)

³ See for example, R. Sandell, 'Museums as agents of social inclusion' in *Museum Management and Curatorship*, Vol. 17. No. 4, 1998.

The remaining four are based on the contribution that museums can make towards the combating of the 4 key indicators of exclusion (as identified in government definitions of social exclusion and reflected in documents such as *Arts and Sport; Policy Action Team 10; A report to the Social Exclusion Unit, DCMS 1999*):

4. Promoting healthier communities

5. Enhancing educational achievement and promoting lifelong learning

6. Tackling unemployment

7. Tackling crime

The impact of museum projects may be considered in several of these areas at the same time. For example, an exhibition with a health related theme may deliver health promotion messages to a wide audience, may challenge negative perceptions of groups represented in the display and associated outreach activities may impact positively on the lives of individuals with which the museum engages.

The following examples which, for the purposes of clarity, have been grouped under each of the seven main areas of impact, illustrate the highly significant, often overlooked and wide ranging impact of museums and galleries on the multiple disadvantage and inequality experienced by people at risk of exclusion. This chapter provides an opportunity to sample the wealth of imaginative projects, the advancements that have been made in access and audience development, the responsiveness that already exists to the needs of many communities and the contributions already being made to a more socially inclusive society. In some museums these impacts or outcomes have been happening for many years; in others the work is in the hands of fewer - but dedicated and enthusiastic – staff, who are working to change the mindset of their own organisations. Mainstreaming does not happen overnight but there is already a richness and depth in the work of so many museums that often goes unrecognised.

1. Personal growth and development

Research undertaken for this report identified a multitude of museum projects that, in a variety of ways, made significant differences to the lives of individuals at risk of exclusion. Outcomes include enhanced self-esteem, confidence and creativity, which in turn have helped people to develop more active, fulfilled and social lives.

Neighbourhood Wardens - Reminiscence work with elderly people

The Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery has worked closely with Plymouth City Council's sheltered housing unit doing reminiscence work with elderly people who are often isolated from social activities. A good example is Stonehouse where older members of the local community were involved in a series of thematic reminiscence sessions. This approach gives emphasis to the people and the skills and experiences they can contribute. Hence, people are brought together by theme not by social group, an approach that is considered by the service as more sensitive and socially inclusive. This ethos marks all the outreach work carried out with communities. The museum is dependent on people and what they can offer. Emphasis is given to projects that validate people's skills and experiences, making individuals feel valued and their stories and lives appreciated.

Plymouth

Project Ability: a developmental visual arts initiative combating the demoralising effects of mental ill health for people returning to the community from hospital

David left school hating it, his teachers, the world and himself. He was not given the chances he wanted to do something creative. Ceramics was only for final year pupils: teachers said there was not enough time, not enough clay, not enough money. 'My teachers didn't care if I was alive or dead.' He talked of damage he had done through self-destructive anger and frustration, which led

to violence. He ended up in hospital. When the project leader spoke to him there he agreed to visit the Trongate Studio, but with very low expectations.

He found that, at Project Ability, he could do what he wanted, creatively. He was given encouragement. He discovered that he could be imaginative and inventive and just took off, making amazing, brightly coloured papier maché objects. The most dramatic (using papier maché made of poll tax demands!) is a giant red boot with a built-in display case. You can look into the side of the boot and see examples of all the ways people are prevented or prevent themselves from achieving: drugs and alcohol as well as bureaucracy and negative school experiences. The David who was once trampled on by a giant boot has found success. His work is colourful, professionally finished and popular and the boot travels round Glasgow on display.

David has been attending for several years and is very clear that the studio changed his life. 'Good vibes' have replaced his aggression, and 'it just gets better'. He believes that anyone can flower, given a chance.

Rita is much more timid and hesitant. She had been feeling too 'agitated' to go to the drawing class – in fact she often felt that way and leaves pieces of work unfinished until she can cope with them again. She re-works her paintings a lot, finding it difficult at times to decide how to continue. Tentatively, she got out more of her work, communicating her anxiety to get each piece right. She attends 2½ days a week, and kept repeating her surprise that she had only been attending for a few months, and that the project had made so much difference to her.

Norrie's only complaint about the project was that he didn't get enough done, but was quick to admit that was his own fault. He has been attending for some years, producing sculpture, drawings and paintings. Up above his workspace hangs a painting of a dark spiral moving in to a central red dot. That was how he felt when he was 'in the gutter'

of depression some years ago. He was now learning that he produced his best work when he did it for himself and it flowed.

These are only three members out of seventy. It is difficult to measure such outcomes. How much might it have cost in hospital bills, 'detox' centres or long-term care without the studio? Work produced goes on display and is sold – adding to self-esteem and quality of life. And how to measure the social benefit to families, friends and community, alongside the creation of new interests in Glasgow's art collections?

Glasgow

Cameos: Life-changing experiences

One boy – deaf and with sight in only one eye – was given a work placement in the gallery. Seriously disadvantaged, he could not lip read and had a signer with him. On day one he did some gardening. On day two he worked on a nature trail. Then, at lunchtime, someone showed him how to use a program called 'Animator' on a museum computer, and he began to produce work that took everyone by surprise.

Wolverhampton

The visually impaired group – now just a group of friends – have real rapport with staff and feel at home in the building. One blind person told us she learned to handle public places through coming to the museum, which took her out of her shell. You only get that kind of feedback from the individuals themselves, as evidence from group leaders is always second-hand. I hope we are doing that for others too.

Coventry

Six women who had had strokes and were in hospital used objects and participated in reminiscence work. This led to artwork that in turn led to an exhibition - "Mirror on the Past". Through this work, many of the group members found increased confidence, felt more empowered and, contrary to their previous expectations, ready to leave the hospital.

Glasgow

Michael – a real tearaway, became involved in the production of a CD-ROM for the museum, and gained enormously in self-esteem. He even went and met Prince Charles! All this is very valuable but it has to be underpinned by the wider general approach. We need to go through care agencies to meet the Michaels. And there is nothing wrong with small projects – working with four children in care is good too.

Tyne & Wear

In an art workshop last year, an artist chatted to a man who'd been ill and housebound for two years. It was the prospect of the activity that got him out of the house for the first time. Museums can inspire people to self-development and can make life-changing differences for some.

Hull



2. Community empowerment

“New confidence and skills; new friendships and social opportunities; co-operation towards achievement; involvement in consultation and local democracy; affirmation and questioning of identity; strengthening commitment to place; intercultural links, positive risk-taking – these... are crucial means of fighting social exclusion. Participation in the arts does this partly by building individual and community competence, but more importantly by building belief in the possibility of positive change.

Participation in the arts... opens routes into the wider democratic process and encourages people to want to take part. Participation is habit-forming.⁴”

Museums can empower communities to increase their self-determination, they can stimulate interest and pride in a community's history, they can give communities the skills, experience and confidence to take control of their lives, often acting as a catalyst for developments which can become self-sustaining.

Keyham Project - From oral history participants to local community history experts

The Keyham Project came about as a result of the first three-month community history pilot project carried out by Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery in 1997. Soon after the completion of the pilot project Plymouth became a unitary authority. A new outreach post came out of that.

This is a very special case study as the idea for the project came from community groups funded by SRB projects. It became obvious that the pilot project had raised expectations but also showed what it was possible for the museum and the community to achieve together. After a series of consultations, the community members decided to set up a group (within the community itself) to research local history. SRB money funded a freelance community worker but the funding for the outreach work came from the local authority. Another interesting aspect of the

project is that the community group was very good at applying for funding. So, when the SRB money ran out they submitted a bid for lottery funding which was successful (the second time).

The Museum offered local history sessions and the group (museum Outreach Officer, freelance community worker and community members) meet weekly to do reminiscence sessions and share their research. Local history material generated from this work formed the basis for an exhibition that toured different local venues and for the production of a publication. Community group members have been invited to take the material to local schools and churches and to offer interpretations based on them. They are now seen as the local community historians and different community groups request their guidance. For example, a tenants group working with the Groundwork Trust called on the Keyham history group to help them with a project that focuses on the regeneration of their area in a historically sensitive way.

The project and all the positive feedback validated the experience of the community members and empowered them. It helped them view their experience of belonging to the area and encouraged them to use the museum as a resource for different projects. It has made them more adventurous. The group now has both lottery and SRB III funding, and there is no stopping them.

Plymouth

High Rise Project

The City Museum worked in partnership with tenants associations, councillors and other local organisations and individuals to set up a photographic exhibition documenting life in two blocks of flats in Sheffield: Park Hill and Regent Court. Both blocks of flats are examples of mass public housing in post-war Britain. They were designed on the 'streets in the sky' concept where wide continuous decks were seen 'as a way of recreating the community spirit of traditional streets'. At the time they were built, they were seen as

⁴ F. Matarasso, *Use or Ornament?: The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts*, Comedia, 1997

the most ambitious inner-city development and a social experiment and, as such, attracted a lot of attention - both positive and negative. Park Hill was the most frequently in the spotlight and was recently listed as a Grade II building of architectural and historical importance by DCMS. Park Hill tenants found it hard to cope with the attention this attracted. This was one element that affected the project directly as there were trust issues to be resolved.

The museum worked at engaging people from the local areas by involving and consulting with them from the early stages of the project development. The research and the photographs taken both by a professional photographer and by individuals living in the blocks of flats were included in an exhibition organised at the museum. The project was partly funded by ENGAGE, which provided support for workshops, transportation for participants and the fee of a part-time educator to work with schools. The museum is currently looking at ways of continuing the project after the exhibition has finished by working with people in their own area, setting up social history groups, running video projects and helping participants apply for grants. There are plans to evaluate the exhibition at the end of June 2000.

Sheffield

The Cowgate Women's Group

'Isolated mums must feel like it's like living a life behind bars, but it doesn't have to feel like this if they have joined us at the Cowgate Family Health and Community Project'

(publicity produced by the group)

There is a range of issues tackled by this group, beyond socialising and personal growth: unemployment, being a single parent, the generation gap, crime and violence to name a few. The women meet every week in term time and take charge of their own activities and agendas with support. This helps them gain new skills and access advice about possible courses or employment opportunities. They produced black and white photographs of the Cowgate area in collaboration with the People's

Gallery, a project they are developing further now they have gained more funding (thanks to a bid written by the museum). The women now want to extend to help others – to include the elderly, and the children and their own families in the community. This initiative, which started with a few black and white photographs, could prove to be a considerable agent for change in the Cowgate area, given time and support.

Tyne & Wear

Cameos

The Mackintosh Project.

The museum worked with women in Easterhouses that led to a fashion show, which in turn generated lots of community involvement including input from the community college. This, in turn, led to some of the women joining the college and taking a range of courses in photography, ballet etc.

Glasgow

Community capacity building: training in setting up exhibitions and displays

We run single day events on a shoestring, showing local groups how to display materials, how to mount photographs, produce layouts and labels etc. and how to use library resources. This work includes the conservation department. Above all we are saying – “of course you can do it”. We want them to leave saying, “We can do that”. There is much more capacity in the community to set up a football match than a museum or arts event. There is a role for museums to develop this capacity, to get people talking about their culture, background and environment”.

In addition, the museum provides the opportunities for communities to then develop their own exhibitions. Through the Open Museum, the service invites communities to become involved;

Our Glasgow

“Our exhibition will never tell the full story of Glasgow. ‘Our Glasgow’ is a space for you to add to the story. Different community groups and local organisations can put on their own displays, with professional help and advice from Glasgow Museum staff.

What is your experience of life in Glasgow? What are your visions for the city? What are your community's hopes and fears for Glasgow in the next century?”

Glasgow



3. The representation of inclusive communities

Museums and galleries, perhaps uniquely, have the potential to represent the diversity of communities and, in doing so, to challenge stereotypes and promote tolerance and social cohesion.

Confronting slavery and re-evaluating history

At consultation meetings during the 1996 Festival of Sea and the 1997 Community Festival it became apparent that members of Black community groups felt that the city of Bristol did not acknowledge its role in slavery. In 1998, Bristol Museums Service held an open meeting where different groups could talk about how they would like slavery to be presented and acknowledged. An action group was created - consisting of councillors, members of the black community, museum officers and academics – to look at how a story of Bristol in the slave trade could be told historically and accurately. The ongoing consultation meeting looked at three different projects:

- The Georgian House Museum:
The building and most of its contents were purchased with money earned through the trade of slave-produced commodities. The building was reinterpreted in the light of this information as well as some of the Museum's displays.
- The Slave Trade Trail: A booklet produced by Bristol Museums and Art Gallery with sponsorship from the Society of Merchant Venturers. Visitors can use the Trail booklet around central Bristol to see buildings and institutions created by the slave trade and slave-produced commodities.
- The Transatlantic Slave Trade exhibition: Initially a temporary exhibition was developed and exhibited at the Bristol City Museum and Art Gallery. Material from this exhibition was used to form a permanent exhibition at the Bristol Industrial Museum. Objects from the City Museum

and Art Gallery were reinterpreted from an African perspective. The exhibition aims to show the history of slavery and Bristol's involvement in it through a journey – that of the slaves. It also aims to show the affect it had on people's lives – both slaves and people in Bristol.

Community consultation helped produce a well-balanced exhibition where different perspectives are included. A section of the exhibition looks at the cultures in Africa before the slave trade, another represents black people's struggle and the Abolition movement while the last section shows visitors the legacies slavery has left today and asks for their own response. Another important aspect of the exhibition is the effort to humanise it by looking at the individual people involved.

Consultation meetings were also held with the front-of-house staff who expressed their concern about the exhibition. Two training sessions were held at the museum and led by a community activist and the director of Bristol Race Equality Council. The staff were involved in discussions, cultural awareness training and a gallery tour. The museum also decided to have interpreters in the gallery from the African community who would answer visitors' questions about the exhibition and also provide the African perspective to white visitors.

This project demonstrates courageous and responsive work confronting difficult issues with commitment and sensitivity.

Bristol

Defiance: Art Confronting Disability

This powerful exhibition of work by disabled artists has proved to be effective in challenging visitors' perceptions of disability and disabled people.

Comments from the visitors' book at Derby Museum and Art Gallery:

“(One artist's) work struck home what a friend of mine had been through. Upsetting and fantastic. Thank you.”

“Very powerful imagery.”

“Excellent combination of exhibits. Deffiantly (sic) coming again. If you had to pay I would. Thank you. Age 14”

“It is Art. It challenges people’s conceptions and says something about the painter. Art should show risqué things.”

“Told you I’d come again. Excellent once again. Age 14.”

Derby

Big Issue

The Community Exhibitions Officer of Brighton Museum and Art Gallery has set up and run a series of outreach projects aiming to allow different community groups to develop an exhibition. The groups have control over the content and can use the two-dimensional travelling displays developed by the museum.

One of these projects - funded by SRB projects – involves working with homeless people to create an exhibition out of their creative writing. Project participants attend creative writing sessions as well as film making sessions. During the sessions participants are encouraged to think about how they would like to exhibit the material and about the different audiences who are likely to visit the exhibition. This project inspired participants who are excluded from such activities to do things they wanted to do. This is an on-going project and evaluation is under way.

India 50

Brighton Museum and Art Gallery has worked in partnership with Brighton’s Indian community since 1997 to mark India’s 50th anniversary of independence. The aim was to explore past and present links with India and, from an SRB perspective, to involve Indian community members in developing the ‘India in Brighton’ exhibition and in organising a workshop programme ‘Brighton’s Indian Summer’. Also members of the Indian community helped the museum put together an Indian handling collection.

As a result of this exhibition and programmes, the museum has now incorporated into its calendar, workshops that explore different cultural traditions. Many Indian families attend these events and are on the museum’s mailing list. Local schools have also used the Indian handling collection. The museum is currently working with different Indian groups on a project to dress its Hindu shrine.

Brighton

Vision-Re Afrika project

This project built on the experience and links developed by the New Walk Museum as a result of the CRE ‘Roots of the Future’ exhibition which it held in 1997. The museum was approached by a community member, writer and lecturer on African culture and asked to work together on a project that would help African-Caribbean people to learn more about their culture and gain a pride in their identity. He worked with Leicester City Museum staff doing research into collections from a Pan-African perspective. The aim was to develop a small exhibition with workshops and performances to go with it. Local arts specialists then joined the partnership and many other local people were eventually involved.

The exhibition, which included African objects and natural history specimens, was launched with a ceremonial procession with music and dance, symbolising the journey of African people to Leicester, and the objects to the museum. Drama workshops with an elders group inspired ‘interactive guided tours’ for children, and the project culminated in three specially commissioned contemporary dance pieces, choreographed and performed by nationally acclaimed artists, all with local links.

In the weeks before the launch a problem with a key funding application by a local group emerged which made cancellation a real possibility. However the museum service felt that the project had to go ahead and last minute appeals for help saved the day. It was

eventually supported by East Midlands Arts, Leicester City Council Community Partnerships, the Friends of Leicester and Leicestershire Museums and Skillshare Africa.

Vision-Re Afrika brought together many people from the African-Caribbean community. Some of these were brought up in Leicester and returned to the city to participate in the project. There has been no formal evaluation, but feedback from local people has been good. It is hoped to work with Skillshare Africa on a smaller project, and also develop another initiative to celebrate the contribution of black people to the British armed forces.

Leicester

Making History / Objects of Desire

These are complementary projects in Tyne & Wear. In Making History people have been invited to donate an object to the museum and tell its story or write its label. The target is 200 people. Interviews with members of the public wishing to donate something that means a lot to them can be challenging work. It is very personal and can be quite emotional. A woman who became blind 16 years ago gave pictures of her guide dog and a muzzle, and told the story of the circumstances that caused her loss of sight. This project shows that everyday objects today are valued and that their owners are valued too.

Objects of Desire is a sister project, involving well over a thousand people so far and 500 have visited behind the scenes at the museum. Favourite objects are nominated through post boxes, with reasons for the choices. The programmes include a whole range of workshops, discussion groups and visits.

Both projects convey the feeling for members of the community that the museum collection belongs to them, that they are a valued part of a whole and have helped to tell their own area's story.

Tyne & Wear

The Community Culture Unit

Southampton City Council's museum service has been collecting oral testimonies from diverse community groups in an organised and proactive manner since 1983.

The oral history work carried out with different communities and the City Council's desire to work with excluded communities led to the formation of a specific Community Culture Unit in the early 1990's. The unit has continued to collect oral testimony and photographs from Southampton's communities (using two oral historians) alongside arts outreach and cultural diversity initiatives, for example, 'Community Choice' (where members of a local group curate their own exhibition in the art gallery), a carnival and community workshops. The Cultural Diversity Officer edits the southern regional newsletter SACAAN (the South's African, Caribbean and Asian Arts Newsletter) and supports community groups in a range of projects. In addition, the Community Culture Unit also delivers a community archaeology programme, working with local people on community excavations, recording buildings, children's workshops etc.

The Community Culture Unit is funded by the City Council and the annual expenditure is about £400,000. This funds the ongoing oral history and community history work and the arts outreach. In addition to this core funding, this year about £28,000 has been given by the Millennium Commission towards the carnival and about £21,000 given by the Single Regeneration Budget II towards the inner city community culture project. In total, six full-time members of staff carry out social inclusion projects and another member of the art gallery staff is also actively involved in inclusion projects.

Southampton



4. Promoting healthier communities.

“We go into a cancer clinic four times a year and do handling sessions with patients waiting in there for hours to undergo chemotherapy treatment.”

Coventry

There are many examples of partnerships made and projects achieved in this area. How do such projects begin? There are many possible ways. Nottingham’s work with mental health began when a nurse who was an arts graduate liaised with a museum staff member with experience of mental health work. This led gradually to the involvement of the hospital, which eventually drove the work itself. Networking is often the basis of effective social inclusion collaboration.

Sexwise

This project, in partnership with the Nottingham Health Authority, is aimed at awareness-raising among teenagers in a Health Action Zone with high rates of teenage pregnancy. The project took place over 6 weeks in a local secondary school, with the help of Drama and PSE teachers. Brainstorming resulted in the young people choosing to make a video of a quiz show and a debate, including role play. This led to a drama documentary set in the playground which focused on questions such as ‘What if I was pregnant? What would I say?’ The students also made and illustrated booklets. An outside evaluator attended every session. This work resulted in a series of projects with six schools.

The project was linked to the exhibition *Sexwise*, by Susie Freeman and Dr Liz Lee, in which the work of the original Year 10 pupils was displayed. Fliers of the distinctive black handbag decorated with contraceptives, together with national television coverage of Susie Freeman’s work, contributed to the high exposure for the exhibition. This highlighted the issues of teenage parenting, sexual health, choice and contraception in a new and vibrant way, to the benefit of the local community, the schools and the health

authority as well as the students, the artists and the general public.

Nottingham

The Prostitutes’ Collective

This project came about through a partnership with a health worker wanting to raise Aids awareness. The most difficult aspect was convincing the women that they were worth anything as self-esteem was extremely low. They needed to care about themselves enough to care about the spread of Aids, so work on valuing themselves – their bodies and their lives – had to come first. They had had little education; pimps were often violent; it took them away from their work and the very thought of an exhibition was frightening at first. The hardest part was establishing trust. We visited them in their homes, where they felt safest. They had the ideas. Two posters were produced, reading:

I AM NOT VALUED WHORE SLAG TRASH A PIECE OF MEAT INHUMAN A SCAPEGOAT	I AM A WOMAN STRONG A PERSON FEMININE A MOTHER CARING IN DANGER UNDER PRESSURE
---	---

They also produced a banner highlighting their sense of worthlessness. A small exhibition went ahead in the Civic Centre. Further work was done with a photographer – images the women chose as pertinent to their lives. Some were very distressing. They were shown here in the gallery along with the rest of the display. The women saw the gallery as sufficiently removed from the local council to be ‘safe’, whereas health workers were less ‘safe’. Four women went through with it, despite their fears, and they ‘disappeared’ as soon as the project was over, so further evaluation was not possible. Overcoming the obstacles was the greatest achievement. It is not known how many attitudes were

changed – to the prostitutes, to women in general, to Aids and of course to the gallery.

Wolverhampton

Asian Women's Textile Project

This project is also an example of socially inclusive work that has been running for some time (eight years) and which has achieved benefits to the community over and above the original expectations.

The project targeted Asian women who lived in isolation due to mental health problems. It started in 1992 and the impetus was a similar project run by the V&A linked to the Nehru Gallery there. Part of the V&A project involved groups of Asian women from across the UK; they produced embroidery that was assembled into a Mughal tent and exhibited in the garden of the V&A. The first group came together at Aston Hall, part of the main Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery, and consisted of approximately 20 women from the Muslim, Sikh and Hindu communities. The ceiling and wood panelling of Aston House was used as inspiration for the design of the embroidery. Since then, the Aston Group has taken on a life of its own. The women have been invited to community centres and schools to demonstrate their skills and have exhibited their work during the International Women's Festival. Currently there is a second group meeting at Soho House and there are plans to extend the project further.

The project has been run in collaboration with social services and is facilitated by an arts project worker. The museum provides the environment and the inspiration for the work while, from the point of view of social services, the project provides an opportunity for the women to get help and information about mental health problems and to develop their skills.

Not only does this project enable the women to improve their skills and self-confidence, but also it provides a safe place for mental health issues to be confronted and discussed. It conveys status on the women and their

communities and learning for those who see and appreciate their work and those who learn skills from them. Like the best socially inclusive work, it serves a local purpose, has achieved considerable independence and needs less and less input from the museum, which can then be looking for other initiatives.

Birmingham

Magda Segal exhibition: the effects of women's lifestyles on their pregnancies and children

The Magda Segal exhibition is a joint project between the Southampton Art Gallery and the Medical Research Council Environmental Epistemology Unit (MRCEEU) at the University of Southampton. The MRCEEU is currently carrying out an on-going survey into the health of women in the city of Southampton. The survey aims to show how women's life-style before pregnancy affects the life and health of their children and will take 500 years to complete in total. An art element was built into the survey by asking a photographer, Magda Segal, to follow the women during a day and take pictures. The art gallery was approached by the MRCEEU and asked to put together a photographic exhibition documenting the environment and life-style of these women. The exhibition was a good publicity event for the survey and also helped the art gallery to work with and develop new audiences. More importantly, it gave the art gallery the opportunity to work in partnership with a different organisation in the city and to establish a new link for future projects.

Southampton

The Journey: an Arts for Health project.

This project came about through a partnership between an NHS Healthcare Trust and Stoke-on-Trent's Cultural Services Department. The theme was chosen to reflect the issues of resettlement and the move from large institutions, for people with moderate to severe learning difficulties, to care in the community. Twenty-one residents and one

day client – together with one to one care staff – took part in three practical areas (textiles, photography and sculpture/ mixed media) run by artists. Visits to other art galleries also formed part of the project. The exhibition of work produced was entitled ‘The Journey’ to reflect the journey each of the 24 artists has made since leaving their hospitals. One item – the Magic Carpet – was a huge design made of travel tickets.

A local newspaper wrote:

“They have tried to capture their feelings as they made their way from a hospital ward to community living – emotions including excitement about the future, apprehension of new surroundings and fear of the unknown. For many, the changes have helped unlock artistic expression, dormant for decades.”

One carer wrote:

“At the start he had no self-esteem, believing that he was not capable of fulfilling what was asked of him. Through the course of the photography session he developed the necessary skills... how to focus, take and develop his own photographs with minimal help.”

A resident who hoped to go on to a photography class, and perhaps some bowling:

“I feel that I have gained a new sphere of life. I have (done) new activities which before I did not experience... I have gained reunions from lost friends and this has brought back happy memories of my past.”

Outcomes:

- Residents (more included and skilled with greater self-esteem in the community)
- Their carers (feeling more valued/ empowered/ skilled)
- The community – some understanding of the potential of their new members, and easier acceptance of them through recognition
- The NHS Trust and the museum: recognition that partnerships can work powerfully, enhancing the museum's status in the community and providing the encouragement to do other projects.
- Artists – improving skills in working in such projects, with opportunities to compare the benefits of the different media used.

Stoke-on-Trent



5. Enhancing educational achievement and promoting lifelong learning

“Learning can be a powerful agent in combating exclusion by giving people the abilities, skills and confidence to engage with society.”⁵

Formal education has traditionally been the area museums and galleries have been most at ease with. The fact that the enormous number of excellent programmes of work with schools and colleges do not feature here anything like as strongly as they deserve to is because the research sought examples of work going beyond that excellence in some way, to demonstrate a responsiveness to educational needs in their widest sense and initiatives aimed at people at risk of exclusion. Needless to say, there are some elements of learning involved in all the case studies presented in this report, but the following examples demonstrate specific aspects of museums' education work.

Tyne & Wear's Art Ambassadors was the largest scale project in this category, targeting disadvantaged young people aged 16-25 and aimed at breaking down barriers between them and the visual arts. (The Ambassadors worked with 1,506 young people over a 6-month period). It is not possible to do full justice to this far-reaching project in this report and seeking further information directly from Tyne & Wear Museums is recommended.

It should also be noted that after-school clubs and workshops are increasing in number, such as 'School Plus' in Plymouth for 13-16 year olds.

'My Place and Me' - an intergenerational project

This project (partly funded by SRB II) took place in the inner city areas of St. Mary's and St. Denys. The aim was to record these areas as they are today alongside the changes that have occurred over the last century, and to

enhance quality of life. The aims and objectives of the project were developed and validated through a series of community consultations from the early stages.

Teachers and their pupils, elderly people and a young person from the local areas participated in the project. The Community Culture Unit provided teachers with training in oral history techniques that they passed on to their pupils. The pupils then used the techniques to interview older adults about the history of their local environment and how it has changed through time. Another aim of the project was to provide a young adult from the local area with photographic training in order to document the intergenerational sessions. The project also fulfilled a range of National Curriculum requirements for the pupils by including cross-curricular themes such as history, literacy, geography, ICT, art and RE.

The benefits for the teachers, pupils and the young person involved were that the project provided them all with new skills. It also encouraged all participants to get behind 'the stereotypical view of old and young alike', to learn from each other and to establish links between different organisations and/or community groups. The hope is that these links will be further developed and sustained by participants themselves by setting up similar projects in the future. This could involve project participants capitalising on the archival material developed during the My Place and Me project. Plans are already under way for the Community Culture Unit to purchase two mobile display systems and display the archival material in a series of community exhibitions in different venues. Evaluation has been an important aspect of this project at all stages in accordance with SRB guidelines. Main techniques used were consultation sessions during the early stages as well as face-to-face interviews and questionnaires administered towards the close of the project. At the time of writing this report, the analysis of the data had not yet been completed.

Southampton

⁵ *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All; Policy Guidance for DCMS funded and local authority museums, galleries and archives in England, May 2000.*



Partnership with a 'failing' school

The museum approached the secondary school with the lowest results in Nottingham with proposals about partnership with its Inclusion Unit. Initially, there was considerable scepticism. An artist was brought in to work with 12-14 year olds. This is rarely easy; there can be clashes between approaches to formal and informal education and even issues about using first names or surnames for staff can be difficult. Working together takes time.

A social history and photography project was begun – for 6 weeks originally, but extended to 9 weeks. The students were allowed to look around the Nottingham Goose Fair before it opened, a plan that involved the School's Inclusion Officer dressing as a goose! The students went off in all directions taking photographs that are still on display in the museum. This success led to searches for further funding and projects: with a taxidermist, or at the City Farm with 'bread making' and 'trash rhythm' to come. As with many projects, one thing leads to another when the outcomes are as strong as these – above all self-esteem for children who considered themselves failures.

Nottingham

Many museums liaise with the schools most in need in their areas. In Aberdeen, the museum works with such schools and now has a Junior Board made up of pupils from upper primary and lower secondary who produce their own displays, write their own labels and so on.

Aberdeen

Leeds: the single regeneration bus project

This project involved taking collections out in a liveried bus to 17 schools that had not visited the museum and to 5 community centres. The children and their schools enjoyed the project, despite some discomfort working in the bus:

"I learned that a long time ago people used to shoot elephants and use their feet as stools. I also learned that friendship is important and so is collecting. We are all collectors of some kind."

10-year-old boy.

"I didn't enjoy the bottom as much as the top because it was crowded and you couldn't hear people with the noise of the bus. I would like to do a similar workshop (on) things what archaeologists have found from the war."

10-year-old girl.

The visits to community centres provided a steeper learning curve, as it was found that passing adults were preoccupied by other concerns and reluctant to be drawn in. The conclusion drawn was that prior dialogue and contacts set up with community groups was essential.

Leeds

Other museums use buses to bring visitors to them. Bradford Art Gallery and Museums gained a grant for a project called Art In, providing transport for disadvantaged schools to bring children into the museum.

Bradford

Fun for the under-fives

This slice of feedback from parents of under-fives who have participated in the wide range of activities available across the Tyne & Wear area gives a flavour of the valuable and diverse outcomes of these projects (though more detailed reports and evaluations are available from the museum service).

Parents wrote:

"It is an opportunity for my child to interact with other children and develop social skills prior to attending nursery. Also to get ideas for activities to do with my children at home."

"The children from Apna Ghar (Ethnic Women's Group) enjoy coming to Shipmates. It's a different environment for them to play in and also meet other children"

“Stimulated her interest. Got Shannon and the family interested in museums. Helps her with co-ordination and mixing skills”

“Sara has only been twice but already I see a difference with her mixing. I’m hoping it will help her speech along”

“The words ‘magic, treasure, excitement’ etc are never out of fashion ...”

“as a parent who works four days a week it has provided me with the opportunity to spend quality time with my son and form links with other mothers in the locality.”

... and from a nursery teacher:

“The school visits on a regular basis - outstanding experiences for children in a small rural school, adding range and depth to the curriculum.”

These comments reflect not only the traditional educational opportunities but also the socialising and mixing with other cultures, improving the quality of parent-child relationships and of the local quality of life, as well as an interest in museums.

Tyne & Wear

‘Ways of Seeing’ and the ‘Sensing Sculpture’ galleries

Wolverhampton’s innovative Ways of Seeing offers a way in to the arts, helping any visitor lacking in artistic confidence or not sure what to look for in a gallery. The aim was to produce a ‘nursery slope’ that would always be there, so that everyone could feel able to think about and talk about art. The frequently asked questions collected from tours were used to create the interactives. The result is an attractive, engaging and inclusive way in to art for all. Through research and evaluation, Wolverhampton addressed the needs of visually impaired visitors providing tactile maps and dramatic audio tapes with sound, words and music on the themes of the exhibitions.

Leading on from there, the Sensing Sculpture Gallery is being designed with visually impaired pupils in mind who are wanting to

take GCSE and GNVQ Art. Visually impaired students need resources in order to learn critical awareness and these are not generally available. By using their sense of touch they can learn what sculpture is and what it is about. There will be research and experimentation into the art practice of these students through artists in residence in pilot schools. Artists will work in pairs of one disabled and one non-disabled artist and the resulting information will develop the interactive sculpture gallery and education programme for traditional and new media in sculpture. The interactive area will not be exclusive and anyone willing to participate will be included.

Wolverhampton

The Family Literacy MEMO Project

The Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery was involved in a Family Literacy Project which was set up by the Local Education Authority in collaboration with a MEMO (Miss Education Miss Out) Parent Education Worker. A local school, known for its previous work with families, was selected for this project. The museum offered local history workshop sessions for young parents. This provided the impetus for a literacy project based on the local history in the area where the school is located. Having been involved in handling sessions, intergenerational interviewing and research, group members produced their own local history paper.

Again this demonstrates the value and significance of a natural progression of activities responding to local needs. In this case local history workshops led to a whole range of literacy projects because they were found to be of interest to that group of people.

Plymouth

6. Tackling unemployment

Museums can deliver positive outcomes in relation to employment in a wide variety of ways, from providing opportunities for people to acquire specific, employment-related skills to the gaining of the confidence and self-esteem needed to tackle even the interview for a new job.

Drawbridge: Access Advisers

Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery is not the easiest of buildings to tackle, perched up on a defensive mound above the city. The Drawbridge Group is composed of one disabled consultant and five other disabled members, and has met with museum staff regularly over the past 5 years. The group members were given training by the museum staff to familiarise themselves with the museum and its running; they trained each other in issues around their own disabilities and they travelled to other museums in search of examples of good practice.

They worked on awareness training for staff and on labelling, signposting, the introduction of tactile exhibits and audiotapes, the provision of appropriate seating and information leaflets publicising available facilities. They also had an input into building plans and the choice of showcases used. Individual staff would book time to consult them on their day at the museum, identify who was interested in working on a given project and then plan the work. The group members learned new skills and confidences. They now value themselves, know how to deal with consultancy and will be able to continue their work elsewhere. The museum has gained in improved awareness for all staff and improved access for all visitors. The area will continue to benefit from their expertise.

Nottingham

'Exposure' - a young people's documentary photography project

In accordance with the philosophy of the Outreach Service of the Plymouth City Museum and Art Gallery the Exposure Project targeted four different areas of the city. More than 30 young people and youth workers living in these very socially diverse areas of the city were offered photographic training over a five-month period. The project was run in partnership with four youth services one from each of those areas, two colleges of further education (each providing a photographer and its facilities), freelance photographers and community organisations. The project aims and objectives were developed in consultation with all the participants. The consultation meetings were more frequent at the beginning of the project but, then, the teams operated independently. The aims were:

- to offer young people new skills
- to get them to be actively involved in looking at their own environment including people in it
- to develop a local exhibition of their work which would enable other young people to look at their area and at what young people can do .

More than 1500 photographs were taken and were then exhibited in local community venues, the main museum and the youth enquiry centre. After the completion of the project, some of the participants decided to enrol in photography courses while another one got a dark room. Here is what some of them said about the project:

"It was a good move getting involved with the photo project and it kept us out of trouble."

"It was a good experience to be part of the photo project and good fun not only out on the streets, but working on the film."

"It was just good fun. Good to go out with my mates and learn a new skill of photography."

The participants also had the opportunity to write the labels to go with their pictures. The text formed both the interpretation and the

evaluation of the project. Moreover, the Outreach Officer talked to photographers about their perception of the project informally. The museum received requests from the Anti-Poverty Department to do similar work for them. Youth groups and young people's groups have also contacted the museum asking to use the cameras to take pictures for the Youth Week. An example of how one good thing can lead to another – this project demonstrates that once a reputation for good work is established then it becomes easier to get other projects off the ground.

Plymouth

Represent Project

This project is being organised and run by Birmingham Museums Service in partnership with the West Midlands Regional Museum Council. The project is funded by the DCMS Education Challenge, will last for a year and it is seen as a pilot project that other museums could follow. It targets young people and parents between the ages of 15 and 25 from diverse backgrounds, including young offenders and those at risk of offending. The project aims to encourage:

- participation in community activities
- the exploration of arts, history and cultural heritage (including museums)
- the view that museums are useful resources
- the improvement of basic skills and employment prospects
- the development of new audiences

It is hoped that the participants will act as ambassadors of the museum service and encourage their peers to use museums more often. The museum service is bidding for SRB funding to support both this and the Asian Women's Textile Project. The extra funding will allow the Represent Project to continue for a further two years. Evaluation is currently being carried out for the museum service by an external researcher.

Birmingham

Music Plus

This large scale, three year Dundee music initiative is special for many reasons, including:

- 'Soundbase' workshops are run in partnership with Neighbourhood Resource Centres and Dundee College guarantee an interview for a course in music for all eligible participants wishing one.
- Feedback from a Royal Scottish National Orchestra project showed that whilst participants said that they had been very apprehensive about taking part, all would participate again.

80% had learned new skills/ developed a new interest.

47% felt more confident and encouraged to try something else.

40% said they would investigate further training opportunities.

- A music programme for 12-18 year olds, a sector which is often neglected.

This project provides specific skills that can lead to the realisation of musical potential and hence to employment; it gives a wide range of people access to the self-confidence and sense of personal achievement essential to finding a good job. It also provides the city with a pool of talent which can be drawn on for furthering Dundee's music industry and improving quality of life in the community.

Dundee

Makers' Dozen

ERDF funding enabled the museum to convert a row of small shops they owned into artists' studios. Some were for young artists, wanting to make a start. Others were for more established artists, who could run their own business but also be mentors to the younger ones in return for a bursary. Young artists often fail because of a lack of business expertise; this scheme enabled some to have a real chance of success. Without it they would probably have left Wolverhampton or else given up or stayed at home, and their talents would have been lost.

Wolverhampton

7. Tackling crime

The tackling of crime is the area with the least specific coverage by museum projects, although effective, socially inclusive work in any deprived area is likely to contribute to a reduction in crime – especially among disaffected youth (e.g. 'Music Plus', see above).

From Vandals to Visitors

One of the buildings belonging to the Wolverhampton Museum Service was subject to vandalism by 9-12 year olds climbing on the roof, dislodging slates, breaking off the weather vane and so on. CCTV was installed without much effect. Youth services were contacted. Then a member of the museum staff recognised some of the vandals in the park and invited them to see the damage, and then to see what was happening in the building. They had been thrown out of their houses all day and had nothing else to do. As a result, one came as a visitor and then to a workshop and then others followed. This is an excellent example of a creative response to a local need.

Wolverhampton

Vandalism was also a problem at Birmingham's Aston Hall. This led to police involvement and through them to the youth service. Work was initiated with the young people and a football team established; football jerseys were provided for the 'Aston Hall football team'; increasing self-esteem among team members led to decreasing levels of vandalism at 'their' hall.

Birmingham

Spraycan Art Workshop

Fifteen disaffected 13-16 year olds attended this event, most of whom had 'made pieces' around the city. They had to learn to work safely with the aerosol fumes, to work as a team and to produce work on commission – to someone else's specifications. Once the rivalry and testing of boundaries had been confronted and the necessary rules

established, the group settled and were engrossed. They had an expert workshop leader whom they all respected which helped. They began to share advice and constructive criticism. Four of them turned up at the museum after the end of the project, bringing a friend and looking for other possibilities.

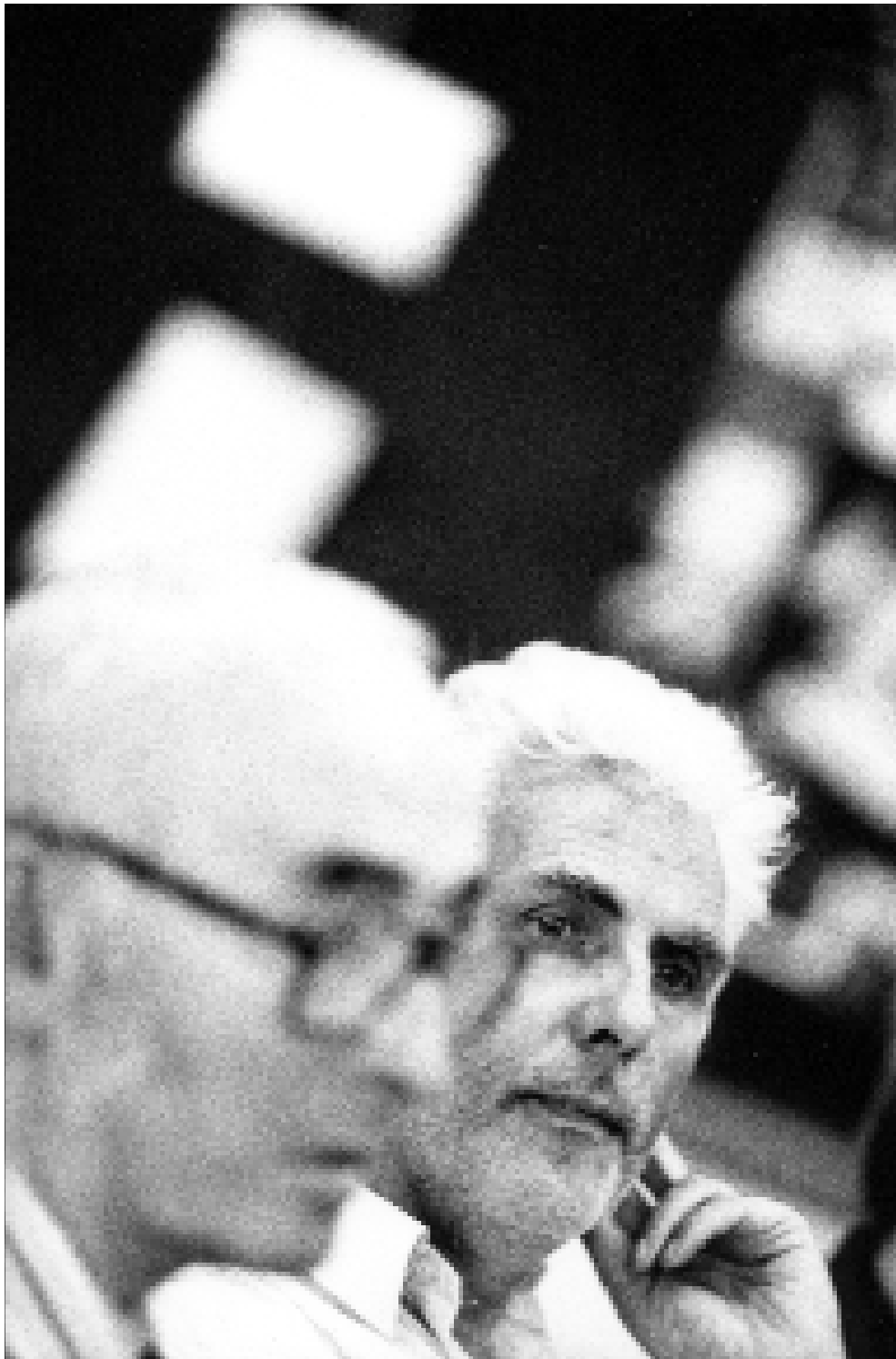
Tyne & Wear

In Your Dreams

This exhibition features a wealth of inclusive work including input from prisoners. Anyone could write their dreams and have them displayed; post boxes for dreams were placed in 14 public places and in schools; anyone can read the dreams of others in the book in the gallery; a wide range of people tell their dreams in a video, filmed out in the community (e.g. in a hairdressers). Art works were commissioned based on these collected dreams. There is an impressive wall of 'tiles' about dreams produced by school children with a wide range of abilities. Older members of the community with learning difficulties contributed flying models and a model head full of images.

A further wall displays paintings and drawings by men in prison, serving sentences of varying lengths. 'The Good Life' seen through a keyhole, giant sunflowers surrounded by barbed wire, the Earth seen from a distance – these were images that seem to spring naturally from imprisonment. Dreams were seen as of the day or night – one man painted himself waking up in horror in his bed with his nightmare around him; one escaped back to his primary school and drew his favourite places: the secret attics and the passages that ran beneath the school. A giant crossword includes the words 'incarcerated' and 'shame'. (The gallery works regularly with prisoners and young offenders, including using artists in residence, and has built up a relationship over time).

Wolverhampton



Section 3

Principles of Good Practice

The previous chapter illustrates the range and wealth of social inclusion projects initiated and run by GLLAM members. Based on the case studies already described, this chapter seeks to identify some principles of good practice. Where museums were most effective in their inclusion work, all of these principles were integrated and together underpinned and informed the attitudes and actions that define social inclusion work in museums.

A policy framework for inclusion

A changing policy framework at both central and local government levels has ensured that the social inclusion agenda has become a very significant driver for change. In many ways, this policy framework has brought into question the whole function and social purpose of the museum requiring a paradigmatic shift in thinking and practice.

All museums emphasised the importance of commitment from the local authority, both in terms of formal documents but also informal support. Having a policy document in place helps to define what social inclusion means for the organisation, its philosophy and working practices. A policy framework with associated strategies helps to embed inclusive values within the organisation making inclusive work integral, and not bolt-on, to the museum's way of working. Developing a terminology and appropriate language around inclusion is very important as it can change the way in which staff perceive their role and that of the museum as a whole. It can also help us create a common understanding of social inclusion and communicate it to others.

Policy documents and strategy plans should be revisited and assessed regularly to make certain that they meet the museums' aims and reflect the changing needs of their communities. As a result, many museums identified a number of short-, medium- and long-term aims that would help them tackle social exclusion. Supporting and acknowledging the achievement of museums is very important for museum staff especially in the cases where museums have started working towards being socially inclusive long before the local authority has.

Leadership

It is essential to have trained and committed leaders who think in terms of social inclusion, have a vision of museums' potential to promote inclusion and inspire and motivate all their staff to adopt these principles and approaches to their work.

Risk-taking

In many cases, museum services have pushed for change and led the way in terms of inclusive thinking within their local authority. This has often involved being prepared to take risks and make changes that are painful and hard to live through. Taking risks and demonstrating the benefits of inclusive approaches to museum projects has often helped to demonstrate the museum's potential to both the wider local authority and to staff within the service that operate with more traditional agendas. Taking risks and achieving success can also attract positive publicity and alternative funding sources. Risk-taking may now be more relevant within those museums that are

beginning to develop inclusive approaches to their work and becomes a less significant issue as these ways of thinking and working become mainstream within the service.

Networking and partnership

It is important to know what other city council units do and try to forge partnerships with them and with other museums in the service. Staff in different departments have different skills and expertise that, together with resources, can be shared to make projects work.

Similarly, external agencies and funding bodies must be fully involved as partners in projects. It is important to recognise that different funding bodies often have very different agendas and ways of working. Many social inclusion projects are at least part-funded by external organisations that are not necessarily familiar with museums and the kinds of benefit their involvement can bring. It is important to involve these agencies in the consultation process. Furthermore, inclusion projects aim to respond to the needs of the community and are shaped accordingly. Funding bodies need to be involved to appreciate that, in order for the project to successfully meet community needs, aims and outcomes need to be negotiated between the museum and the community, throughout the project's duration. As a result, the proposed aims and outcomes can change dramatically from those envisaged at the outset of the project.

Responsive and flexible approaches

Museums must be prepared to deal with and respond to the expectations that their work will raise within communities and to be open to alternative ways of working as resources are finite and sustaining a growing number of partnerships and projects is not always possible. This may involve facilitating rather than organising and running the projects, offering training to community groups or members of other organisations on how to set up projects, and acting as a resource.

Again planning and setting priorities is very important here.

Museums need to be flexible to accommodate the changes that social inclusion work will bring. For example, having a five-year exhibition and programmes plan that cannot accommodate changing needs in the community will constrain inclusion initiatives. (This relates back to the idea that social inclusion must become part of the ethos of the organisation. Inclusion work and partnerships with a range of communities will bring significant changes to the museum which needs to be prepared and able to plan for them).

Community consultation, involvement and empowerment

Social inclusion is a needs-driven approach. Regular consultation meetings help museums to identify what the needs are, to set common objectives and build trust between the museum and communities. This is a time-consuming process that involves being flexible and listening to what people's needs are. It may involve attending community group meetings, visiting people where they live and establishing personal contacts and, in doing so, demonstrating the museum's commitment to the project. Setting up consultation meetings also helps all partners to have clear expectations of what they hope to achieve, how they plan to do that and how they can assess it.

Social inclusion is not just another 'service' museums offer. It is about transforming traditional concepts of museum-community relationships; it is about involving communities and empowering them to transform the museum. This requires involving the community early on during the process and jointly establishing project expectations and objectives.

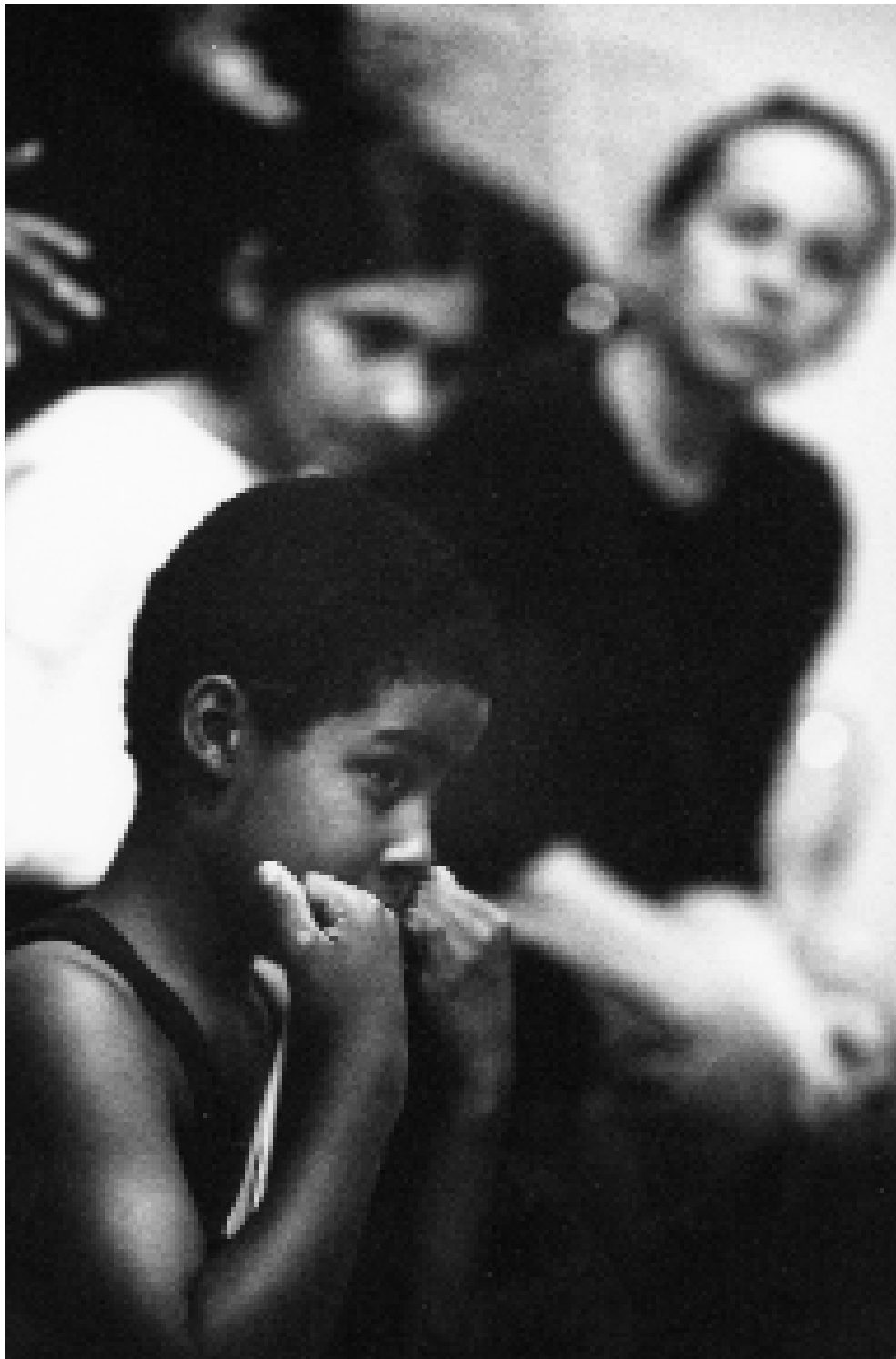
Evaluation and accountability

Museums should establish a framework for ongoing assessment of the progress of projects. Projects should be evaluated against the shared aims and objectives set up during

the planning stage and the consultation meetings. This will allow all participants to assess how the project is progressing and to adjust the objectives of the project based on the results of the evaluation. Participants should be given the opportunity and the skills they need to fully participate in the assessment process. Evaluation should be in keeping with the culture of the community. Hence, community meetings and other community events can be an important part of the evaluation process. It is important for community members to have time to make sense of their experience and reflect on the process. This is particularly important for those who traditionally have been excluded from museums and other cultural activities.

Advocacy

Though, as this report shows, museums have made important contributions to social inclusion, this has not always been recognised. It is important to not only deliver the outcomes but also to devote appropriate resources to sharing these within the museum and with individuals, groups and agencies outside. This advocacy can help to convince colleagues, policy-makers and other agencies about the value of the work museums do by demonstrating its impact on the lives of people at risk of exclusion.



Section 4

The Unique Contribution of Museums and Galleries

Throughout the UK, museums and galleries have set up a large number of high quality projects that intend to be socially inclusive. They are based on valued and deeply-rooted partnerships and sustainable collaborations. Partnership and collaboration is understood as the only way to meet the new educational and cultural challenges museums and galleries face today.

Sections 2 and 3 of this report have described the diversity and complexity of these partnerships and the resulting projects and their impact. While some of these activities aim to bring people into museums, there are also many examples of projects offered at places where people live, work or socialise. All of the work, at all levels, is driven by a strong agenda and a commitment to open up the museum and make it more relevant to different communities.

Many of the projects are strongly related to the collections of the museum or gallery. On the other hand, in some cases it is hard to see how the project relates to the collection and, in this blurring of boundaries, museums and galleries seem to be less preoccupied with their collection-based uniqueness and more willing to explore new ways of working by integrating and finding common ground with other organisations. Many different forms of liaison can be used in the development of partnerships.

Through collaborative projects, using their collections and other resources, museums offer unique opportunities to their partners and to project participants to:

- find their own ways to tell and reclaim their stories
- construct and use their own knowledge

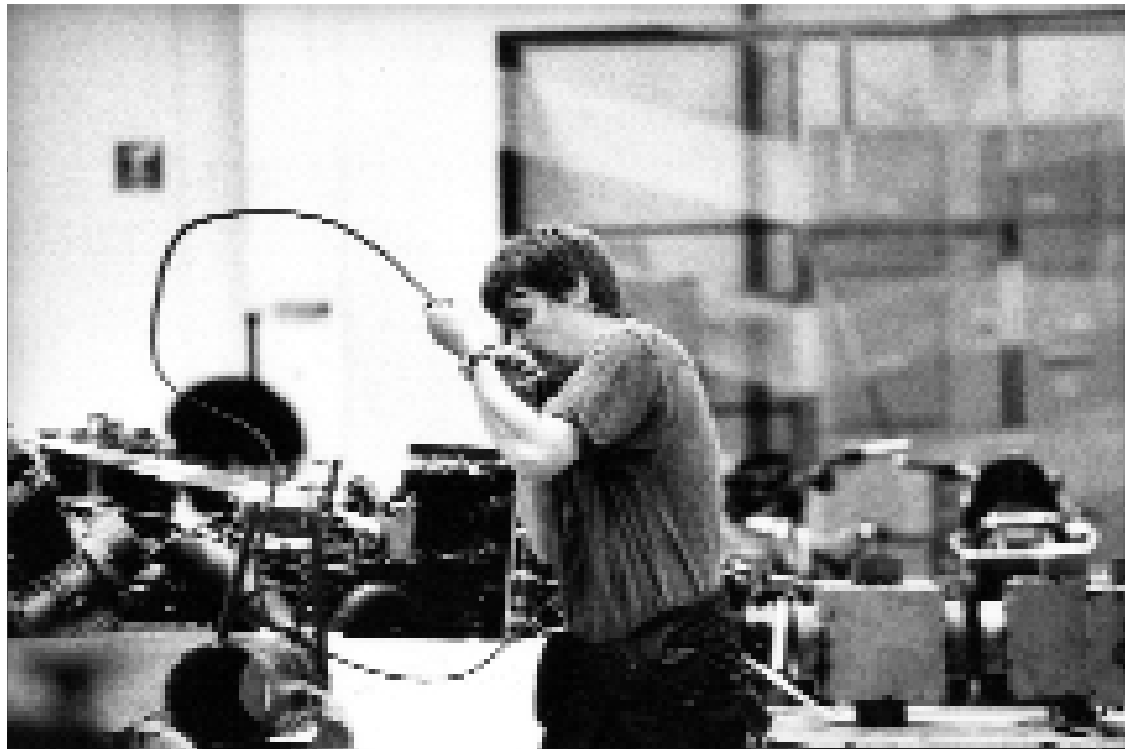
- work creatively and imaginatively
- gain self-confidence and self-awareness
- reflect on the present, connect with the past, and envisage and shape their future
- construct personal, social and cultural identities
- learn about and celebrate cultural difference

Museums and galleries can make significant contributions to collaborations and partnerships. They can:

- represent and express a vision of an inclusive society
- create environments for learning that offer opportunities for personal growth, self-assessment, and creativity
- offer safe, non-judgmental environments. They are not associated with sites of problems and failure as are some of the organisations with which they collaborate including social services, prisons and hospitals
- distract attention from problems at hand and help people view them in a new context
- offer the opportunity to become associated with a perceived cultural authority
- act as a cultural catalyst to instigate and motivate the formation of partnerships

The processes of participation usually start with a formal aim (such as adult literacy or skill development) but the outcome may be greater and deeper than that: personal growth and development, the empowerment of communities, the building of more

inclusive communities and the formation of a sense of community determination. Indeed, many community groups have taken control of museum-instigated projects and have continued to run them themselves using the museum or gallery as a resource. Museums and galleries, in turn, see themselves as a resource for their own local community or other communities that they can reach. Communities may even manage to secure the funding to run and sustain the projects. As these partnerships become more established they make their own contribution to the museums and galleries and also to other non-profit organisations. Staff with experience and confidence in working in this area move to other organisations to set up new partnerships and projects and to train their new colleagues. Thus ideas and ways of working which have been initiated by the museum or gallery can take on their own life and momentum elsewhere. The unique contribution of museums and galleries therefore lies in their power to act as cultural catalysts.



Preliminary Conclusions

The research undertaken has identified a wealth of evidence to demonstrate the highly significant social impact of museums and galleries and their contributions towards social inclusion. It is clear from this report that museums and galleries have the potential to become powerful agents of social change.

However, social inclusion work in museums is difficult to pin down and it is not always recognised because of:

- diversity of language used to discuss it
- range of names for committees, projects and initiatives
- lack of a wider policy framework in the local authority and in the museum

- lack of evaluation
- lack of recognition by local authority and central government
- lack of advocacy on the part of directors because of the absence of a conceptual framework, evidence and appropriate terminology around the potential of museums as centres for life-long learning and social inclusion.

All of the above have contributed towards a fuzziness around the concept of social inclusion and of museums' contribution to this. This is illustrated in Figure 1; a vicious circle that explains why the sector's contribution has often been overlooked.

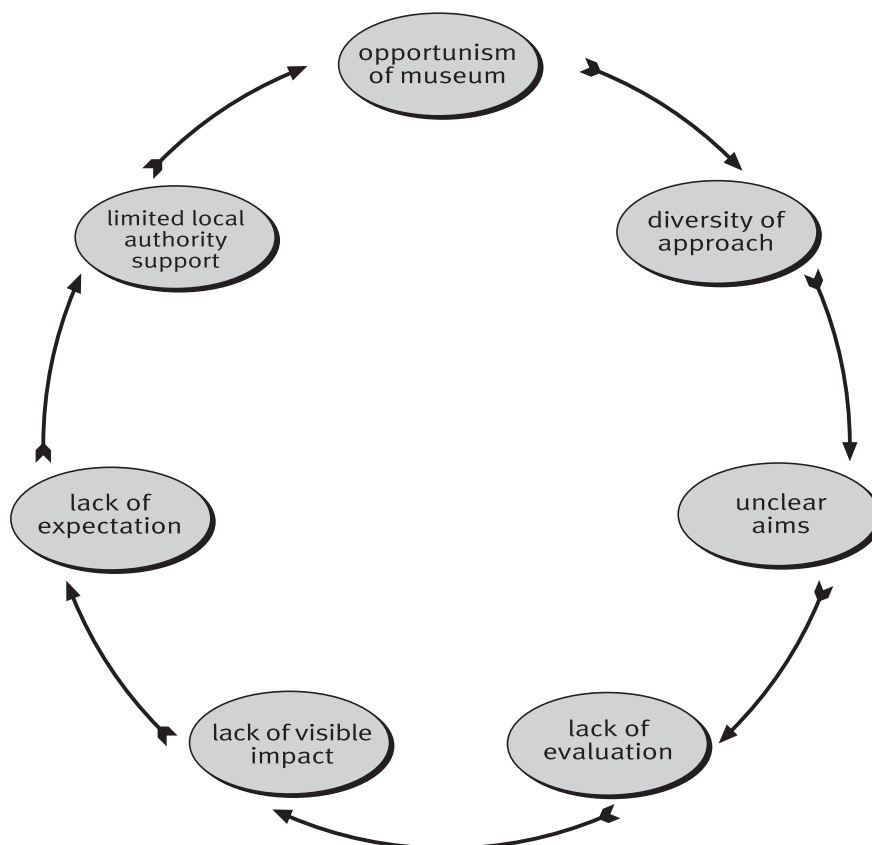


Figure 1: The vicious circle accounting for the invisibility of the museum's impact

The way forward

This vicious circle can be converted to a virtuous circle.

Museums need to:-

- retain their opportunism
- maximise and sustain the efforts which result.
- be more reflexive towards communities
- be able both to take a lead and;

- to step back when the partnerships which result, enable people to take responsibility
- evaluate and document their work to;
- create evidence of success and;
- demonstrate the impact;
- and value for money of funding
- see themselves as catalysts and resources
- be supported by local authority policies and set high but realistic expectations

This process is summarised in Figure 2.

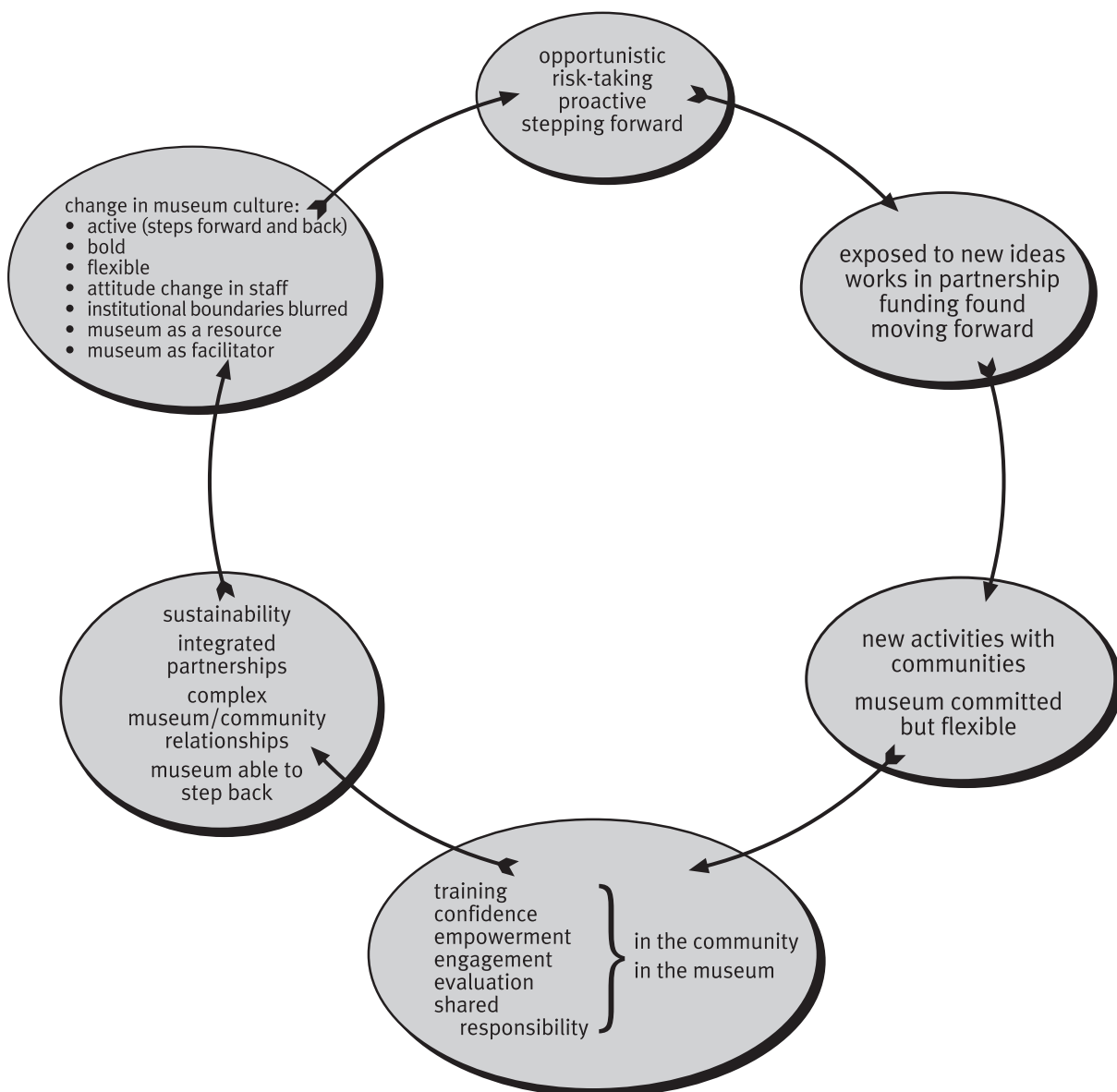


Figure 2: The virtuous circle – the museum as a process; the museum as a catalyst

Appendix A

Methodology

The research for this report was carried out by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries in the Department of Museum Studies at the University of Leicester. The Research Team consisted of Professor Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Richard Sandell, Dr. Theano Moussouri and Helen O'Riain.

The research was carried out from December 1999 to June 2000, and consisted of telephone interviews with all 22 GLLAM directors, telephone and face-to-face interviews with approximately 25 project leaders and co-ordinators, and site visits to 10 museums. Some project partners and participants were also interviewed. A large amount of documentation which included project funding bids, evaluations, project notes and other museum material was reviewed.

The research team took an open and interpretive approach to gathering information and building up a view of the nature, scope and depth of museums' and galleries' social inclusion work. Multiple methods were used to view the research field from a number of perspectives, including, although in a limited way, the perspective of museum and gallery users. The data gathered was discussed thoroughly by the research team, and the emergent themes and patterns that gave it shape were reviewed on several occasions by GLLAM members and the funders of the research, both individually and collectively.

The research participants in museums and galleries were, with only one exception, open and frank in their discussions of their aims, achievements and difficulties. The research team was given access to processes and partners, where feasible, and supplied with a wealth of written material. The resulting data was rich and thick.

The results are both unexpected, but familiar. The quantity, range and quality of work being carried out was greater than expected; the lack of policies and support was not. It is useful to be able to pinpoint those aspects of current practice that contribute to the invisibility of the work being done. Diverse terminology, lack of a policy framework within the museums and galleries themselves and at the Local Authority level, lack of evaluation, and lack of advocacy by museum leaders are all susceptible to change. Those museums who have become imbued with a philosophy of social inclusion offer clear examples of how this change might occur.

The need for further research, especially in relation to the development of appropriate approaches to the theory and practice of evaluation has become very clear, and it is hoped that this report will stimulate what is required.

Appendix B

Evaluation

Evaluation of museums' and galleries' work towards social inclusion conducted by GLLAM members

GLLAM members have used very diverse approaches to assess the need of community programmes, determine the audiences they would target and to assess the impact of their social inclusion programmes. Most museums and galleries carry out extensive preliminary research at the early stages when the idea for a project was conceived. This includes:

- literature reviews
- contacting other museums and learning from their experience
- post code surveys to determine which geographic areas barely or never used the museums
- visitor and non-visitor surveys to determine how current or possible audiences perceive the museums
- market research and demographic survey carried out by the local authority or the museum services
- focus groups
- visitor/user panels or advisory panels

This work is followed up at the next stage of development by actively seeking more feedback, to set objectives and to monitor and assess the process. In the vast majority of the cases, this is done informally through a series of consultations (including creative consultation or art workshops) with project partners and all participants. This method of assessing expectations and needs seemed to be particularly successful at making sure that all voices have been heard and all

perspectives have been taken into account in the development of the project. This approach ensures high rates of community participation. Time availability, commitment on the part of the local authority and the museum services (both on an individual and group level) and knowing the local scene were key factors determining the success of the consultation meetings and, consequently, of the project.

However, these methods were rarely seen as tools useful for the formal evaluation of the project. Hence, consultation sessions were either fed into the project development process or – in the case of local history sessions – used as an oral history technique. In the vast majority of the cases, museum staff did not seem to realise that they could use the same material for formal evaluation purposes. Some others expressed a concern about being the programme facilitators and evaluators at the same time.

A large number of museums were likely to try to evaluate the project when it was completed. Different methods were used to collect data. These were, according to frequency of use:

- questionnaires
- informal discussions both individually and in groups
- face to face interviews
- photographic evidence
- self-evaluation
- videos
- external assessment (by funding body or external evaluator commissioned by the museum)

- use of performance indicators for measuring different activities
- note diaries
- focus groups
- telephone interviews
- response postcards

However, the data was rarely analysed and the findings were not always summarised and presented in a report. Some reports consisted of examples of questionnaires or other field notes presented in a raw form. In other cases, it was not clear how the data was analysed and – especially with qualitative data – how reliability and validity issues were addressed. However, there were examples of reports where the authors made an effort to demonstrate - based on the evidence they had – how project aims and objectives were met.

Overall, evaluation processes are poorly understood and haphazardly carried out. Summative data is not related to base-line data and so change in knowledge, skills or attitude cannot be demonstrated. Evidence cannot be provided for social outcomes.

Although informal feedback is valuable to project leaders - especially with small-scale community projects of this kind where all participants get to know each other very well - it is not enough. Informal feedback makes it difficult to see what the overall picture is, to demonstrate the social impact or relevance of the project and to make informed decisions about future policy. Museum staff increasingly find themselves in situations where they need to convince their colleagues or their funding bodies about the value of the work they do. This is very hard to do without some evidence to support it. This seems to be particularly relevant for community projects funded by external bodies that expect to see what has been achieved through the project.

Another problem some museums faced was describing a non-conventional and complex process (such as a community project) using a conventional report. This has often created

communication problems between the museum and the funding body as each organisation provides a different service and has a different agenda. We should note that external funding bodies are not usually partners in the community projects and, hence, they do not take part in developing the project aims and objectives. With projects like these, the original aims and objectives or possible benefits stated in the project proposal may change dramatically after the community consultations.

During the telephone interviews and the visits to GLLAM members, museum staff expressed their intention to do more evaluation work. A lot of them felt that they have done some quantitative evaluation. They also felt that they should be doing more but that quantitative information cannot reflect the quality and complexity of the work they do with communities. Over half of the museums contacted identified qualitative evaluation as harder to do. There were different reasons for that:

- qualitative data is messy and harder to make sense of and analyse
- lack of experienced or trained staff to do it
- lack of in-house or external evaluators/researchers

Evaluation conducted by other groups or bodies

There are some examples of approaches to evaluation of cultural activities used by related groups or bodies that might offer some suggestions for future development.

The most comprehensive and extensive research carried out is that by COMEDIA¹ on The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts. The report produced offers evidence of the social impact of participation in the arts by presenting 90 projects run in different countries (including the UK). In total, over 1,500

¹ Matarasso, F., 1997, Use or Ornament? *The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts*, COMEDIA, UK.

people (both adults and children) participated in the research. The methodology used was a mixture of quantitative and qualitative research methods. Case study research was undertaken focusing on different projects and a questionnaire was used for project participants. The main report was supported by a series of working papers² which, although not directly related to the research, contribute to the debate. They are written by a number of people who have specialist knowledge or have done research into the social impact of the arts. The methodology employed varied including:

- questionnaires
- interviews
- formal and informal discussion groups
- participant observation
- observer groups
- agreed indicators

A decision was made to use more 'conventional' research methods as these are widely understood and accepted. For example, a participants' questionnaire was used extensively to collect quantitative data that could be compared with statistical data used by policy makers. This was combined with more qualitative methods of data collection in an effort to provide different perspectives and a more holistic understanding of the process.

Commenting on what makes participatory arts projects successful, the report concludes that there are seven core principles³:

1. Clear objectives
2. Equitable partnership
3. Good planning
4. Shared ethical principles
5. Excellence
6. Proportional expectations
7. Joint evaluation

The final point focuses on the need for participatory arts projects to be evaluated by all partners. Based on earlier work, Matarasso identified 6 principles of evaluation⁴:

1. Projects intended to produce social benefits should address stated needs or aspirations.
2. It is unethical to seek to produce change without the informed consent of those involved.
3. The needs and aspirations of individuals or communities are best identified by them, often in partnership with others, such as local authorities, public agencies and arts bodies.
4. Partnership requires the agreement of common objectives and commitments (though not all goals need be shared by all partners).
5. Those who have identified a goal are best placed to ascertain when it has been met.
6. An arts project may not be the most appropriate means of achieving a given goal.

The PAT 10 (1999) report is an effort to bring together examples of different sports, arts and neighbourhood renewal projects which aim to encourage social inclusion. It reconfirms the lack of formal evaluation – or 'hard' evidence, as they put it – carried out in the arts and sports sector. It goes on to recommend to 'all organisations responsible for arts/sport regeneration projects and programmes⁵:

- a. that whenever possible external evaluation, and the means to carry it out, should be integral to the project/programme
- b. that the criteria against which success is judged should be clearly established, and should derive directly from the expressed needs and aims of those benefiting.

Another recommendation made in the report was for DCMS to commission longitudinal research to assess the impact of such projects and programmes over a long period of time.

² See Phillips, L., 1997, 'In the Public Interest: Making Art that Makes a Difference in the USA'; and Williams, D., 1997, 'How the Arts Measure Up: Australian Research into Social Impact', *The Social Impact of Arts Programmes*, Working Paper 8, COMEDIA, UK.

³ Matarasso, 1997:ix.

⁴ Matarasso, F., 1996, 'Defining Values: Evaluating Arts Programmes', *The Social Impact of Arts Programmes*, Working Paper 1, COMEDIA, UK, 24.

⁵ *Arts and Sport; Policy Action Team 10; A report to the Social Exclusion Unit*, DCMS 1999, 37.

This commitment to evaluation is also evident in the DCMS policy document for museums, galleries and archives (Centres for Social Change, 2000).

The Heritage Lottery Fund has specific evaluation requirements. Two types of evaluation are carried out. Process evaluation looks at how the operational processes of the HLF are perceived by its applicant target groups. To do that, postal surveys and focus groups are used. Impact evaluation assesses the degree to which successful applicants have met the objectives they themselves had set, and also those of HLF and the government. Some projects are evaluated in depth focusing on audience development, and social, educational, access and economic benefits. Some specific programmes are evaluated to measure the overall impact of lottery funding in a particular heritage sector and that sector's impact upon the nation. Impact evaluation utilises a mixture of methods including postal surveys, interviews, focus groups and desk research.⁶

Conclusions

The lack of focused and thorough evaluation plays its part in rendering the good work being done by museums and galleries invisible to all but the immediate participants. A lack of data, or evidence of achievement, tends to mean that once a project is complete it is put to one side, with the experience not being used in a developmental way. This is exacerbated by short-term project funding, and lack of local authority awareness or support.

There is a pressing need for more thorough and well-developed approaches to research and evaluation. Museums and galleries need to be able to articulate their achievements and demonstrate the outcomes of work done on the basis of robust data. This data will include that collected through both

quantitative and qualitative studies, but the approaches used should be sensitive and relevant to the nature of social inclusion work.

Much more conceptual work needs to be done to:

- identify appropriate methodologies for evaluating work with socially disadvantaged (and sometimes vulnerable) individuals
- relate these methodologies to the type and range of data required by Best Value and DCMS
- make explicit the learning and interpretive theory that lies behind the approach to evaluation of museum users' experiences
- develop the understanding of the museum and gallery community, and especially its leaders, of the relationships between learning theory, evaluation, policy development and political advocacy.

⁶ Davies, S., personal communication, 30 May 2000.

Definition of Terms

Evaluation:

This can be seen as 'an approach to data collection with a specific purpose – to determine the degree to which an exhibit or program matches some criteria for success¹'. It is a systematic process of data collection and analysis, and the presentation of the findings in the form of a report. Evaluation can become and is, increasingly, becoming part of the process of developing an exhibition or programme. Hence, front-end evaluation or preliminary research is carried out at the planning stage, formative evaluation is conducted when the development is in progress, and summative evaluation is carried out at the stage of completion. Assessment is another term that may be used as synonymous with evaluation.

Critical Appraisal:

A critique of an exhibition or programme by a knowledgeable professional who assesses its strengths and weaknesses². Although this process does not involve consulting visitors or participants it could and should be followed by a visitor study to validate the findings of the critical appraisal.

Visitor study:

This is an umbrella term which can include a great range of different kinds of research and evaluation in relation to the experience and/or perceptions of museum and gallery visitors. It can also include studies of those who rarely visit museums or galleries. Studies based on either quantitative or qualitative data, or both, can be included. Museum visitor studies now comprises a new area of museum professionalism and of museum studies research.

Action Evaluation:

This is a very new and innovative approach to evaluation that has a strong connection to Action Research. Action Research has provided the theoretical basis for the connection between theory and practice, and the inclusion of all project participants as key members in the research process. This means that participants have a key role in setting the agendas, participating in data collection and analysis, and controlling the use of the outcomes. The methods used are very diverse and often derive from, and are sensitive to, the culture of the community. Hence, community meetings and other events are an important part of the process as well as other more 'conventional' methods of data collection (such as surveys). Action Evaluation has been adopted in conflict resolution, higher education, inner-city public education, and nonprofit organizations. It has been used in a wide range of programmes including crime prevention, HIV prevention, adolescent pregnancy prevention, welfare reform, adult probation, and work with individuals with disabilities.

¹ See the glossary of Visitor Studies produced by the Visitor Studies Association (*Visitor Behavior* 1993, vol. VIII, no. 4, 8-11).

² See Bitgood, S. and Benefield, A., 1995, 'Critical Appraisal of the Heart Exhibition at the Franklin Institute of Science', *Visitor Behavior*, Vol. X, No.3, Visitor Studies Association, 14-16.

Bibliography

- Bitgood, S. and Benefield, A., 1995, 'Critical Appraisal of the Heart Exhibition at the Franklin Institute of Science, *Visitor Behavior*, Vol. X, No.3, Visitor Studies Association, 14-16.
- Davies, S., personal communication, 30/5/2000.
- DCMS, 1999, *Policy Action Team 10, A Report to the Social Exclusion Unit - Arts and Sport*, UK.
- DCMS, 2000, *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All*, UK.
- Glossary of Visitor Studies, 1993, *Visitor Behavior*, vol. VIII, no. 4, 8-11.
- Matarasso, F., 1996, 'Defining Values: Evaluating Arts Programmes', *The Social Impact of Arts Programmes, Working Paper 1*, COMEDIA, UK.
- Matarasso, F., 1997, *Use or Ornament? The Social Impact of Participation in the Arts*, COMEDIA, UK.
- Phillips, L., 1997, 'In the Public Interest: Making Art that Makes a Difference in the USA', *The Social Impact of Arts Programmes, Working Paper 9*, COMEDIA, UK.
- Reason, P, 1994, 'Three Approaches to Participative Inquiry' in Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S. (eds.), *Handbook of Qualitative Research*, Sage.
- Williams, D., 1997, 'How the Arts Measure Up: Australian Research into Social Impact', *The Social Impact of Arts Programmes, Working Paper 8*, COMEDIA, UK.

Foreward



Foreward