SMALL MUSEUMS AND SOCIAL INCLUSION

Data and key findings of a research project funded by Resource, the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, and undertaken by RCMG, 2000-2001

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Introduction

The report presents findings and case studies from the small museums and social inclusion project commissioned by Resource. This project was developed to complement the findings of recent research into social inclusion work in large local authority museums but, in contrast, the final outcome was not intended as an advocacy document. This difference in research objectives prohibits a direct comparison between the findings of the GLLAM research and this project.

The research project concerned with large, local authority museums explored the contribution of all 22 member services of GLLAM and, as such, was more tightly defined than the research into small museums. This smaller project has involved a sampling process, given the vast range and number of small museums, but this sample was taken across the breadth of small museums, geographically and by type.

The data presented here is not intended, or appropriate for publication, but the findings have been influential in the development of the publication, *Including Museums*, (due for publication in June 2001) which also includes examples and case studies from this project.

Key findings and conclusions

1. There are a range of examples of projects and initiatives taking place in small museums which can be understood as contributing to social inclusion.

2. Understandings of social inclusion amongst those working in small museums are fluid, sometimes confused and lacking clarity. (This mirrors findings from the GLLAM research). We found examples of valuable social inclusion outcomes which were not always couched in those terms (nor intended as project outcomes). Some small museums are uncomfortable with using the language around social inclusion to describe their work or approach.

3. Small museums can deliver outcomes in relation to inclusion similar to their larger counterparts. They can impact on *individual*, *community* and *societal* levels. For the most part, it appears that their strength lies in terms of the impact they can have on *individuals* and to a lesser extent, whole communities. (e.g. in enhancing self-esteem, skills development, recuperative benefits, etc). This is based on their ability to forge more intimate relationships with individual community members. This is most evident in terms of the volunteer relationship where, in some small museums, the process of volunteering facilitates skills development with unemployed people, the creation of networks of friends and

other social contacts for elderly people etc. Their impact on *society*, in terms of changing attitudes, perceptions and values amongst marginalised groups and mainstream audiences is perhaps less strong. (They will generally have the capacity to reach fewer numbers of people, their profile will be lower and it may be that their perceived cultural authority is less than that of larger establishments).

4. However, in <u>most</u> small museums, social inclusion is largely understood in terms of access or audience development rather than in terms of museums' potential to deliver social benefits in relation to disadvantage and social inequality.

5. The research findings do not identify significant differences between urban and rural inclusion agendas and the role that small museums might play. However, this may be due to the small sample of AMCs interviewed since recent evaluation of the Education Challenge Fund identified marked differences between the rural and urban context. These have been analysed and discussed in more detail in a paper within *Including Museums*, also included in these research findings.

6. The research has identified specific characteristics of small museums which can enable them to make specific contributions towards inclusion. In comparison with larger institutions they can sometimes be:

- closer to their communities and perhaps less intimidating
- less constrained by bureaucratic procedures, enabling them to be more responsive and flexible
- more focused and more able more to develop a shared vision amongst staff
- in a position to develop relationships with community members and volunteers in particular, that deliver benefits to the individuals and also help the museum to make links with the community

However, by virtue of their size, small museums, in comparison with larger institutions, are inhibited in their social inclusion role in the following ways. They have:

- often very limited staff resources and are already overstretched in terms of the breadth of skills that can be required of them.
- relatively few staff which can mean little opportunity for specialisation in skills. Some small museums can find it difficult to attract the staff with the skills they need. As a result, social inclusion work can be daunting and perceived as an additional burden.
- limited and insecure funding which can dominate the agenda in many small museums who become concerned, first and foremost, with their survival. Additionally, they can be perceived by funding bodies as more of

a risk (because of a limited track record in this area or over reliance on a single member of staff) and therefore be less likely to attract funds.

7. In a very small number of small museums, exciting, very innovative, work is happening but this is not common across the small museum sector. In these examples, the work is embedded within the organisation, its philosophies and its strategies. However, in the majority of cases, even where inclusion work was happening, in many cases we found a lack of strategy, sophistication, and sustainability. Many small museums are not working towards inclusion and are not engaged with the agenda.

8. The greatest need identified relates to that for development, training and support, considered in its widest sense. There was, amongst some, a resistance to generic, formal training courses and preference for more informal courses, ongoing support and mentoring. In many instances, the need to have training, development and support tailored to the needs of the different kinds of small museums (military, local authority, volunteer run etc) was raised.

9. Other strategies for capacity building include enhanced advisory support from AMCs, mechanisms for sharing expertise and for developing support between museums (whatever their size) so that the most confident and able help those with a less developed approach through job shadowing, 'buddy' systems, networks etc. (with support from AMCs to maintain momentum).

Methodology

Telephone interviews were held with 6 AMCs in December 2000, using a questionnaire. One section of the questionnaire requested names of small museums to contact regarding their social inclusion work.

Phone calls were made to 15 museums in January 2001, using a second questionnaire.

Four museums/AMCs sent further information to extend material from the interview.

The projects or initiatives referred to in this report were chosen because they come from a range of different kinds of small museum (local authority, independent/ volunteer-run, military) in different parts of the country, from both rural and urban settings. Also the projects themselves included a range of different community members/audiences, used a variety of approaches and involved a range of links and partnerships. It is impossible in a study of this size to do more than give a flavour of this variety, given the hundreds of small museums up and down the country, and the search for examples of good practice means that the sample may not be representative of the whole.

Research Data

Understandings of Social Inclusion

Three of the six AMC members used the term 'social inclusion' without suggesting that its meaning is in any way unclear. Of the other three, one said that there was total backing for social inclusion work in the AMC but that among the museums themselves there is 'considerable confusion' about the meaning of the term and to what extent it is the same as 'audience development' or 'multicultural initiatives'.   The same respondent valued the government definition but:

> *"museums are coming to it with a much broader definition . The museum profession is still trying to define it for itself. In the beginning it looked like it would be the DCMS version but now we've broadened that out. The GLLAM report is a useful next step. It's now more flexible so museums can relate to it. There was a danger it would just be multi-cultural, disabled or whatever. Museums are becoming more comfortable with it".   (AMC4)*

The priority therefore is:

> *"to tackle the learning needs of people. This is central. It is key. It's not individual initiatives, it's how the individual museum interacts with its community. Promoting learning and social inclusion are difficult to separate". (AMC4)*

Another respondent felt there is still a lack of clarity about definitions in this area:

> *'…some e.g. disabled/ blind people, if asked, would say they did not feel excluded. So it could just mean 'groups not worked with before' rather than the DCMS definition. It's also transitional. People move from one area to another. People have e.g. mental breakdowns and then recover, or are unemployed and then become employed. It's a grey area. People are at some point along a 'poverty' (in its widest sense) scale in all areas of their lives, not just financial. It's a process… it can't happen fast.' (AMC5)*

And the final respondent showed a very clear understanding of museums' potential to work in this area:

> *"I have defined Social Inclusion as creating an inclusive society/ community. It's more wishy-washy than 'tackling Social Exclusion' which is stronger and very few museums have a cat in hell's chance of doing this. e.g. It's not the work experience kids we need to reach, it's the ones who've dropped out of sight. No one in our region is in a position to work with the really marginalised."   (AMC1)*

At the small museums themselves…

Most categorised their work as social inclusion, but one preferred 'Working with young people at risk' for her particular project.

"The problem with the term social inclusion is that it loses its meaning, can be interpreted in different ways. It can be patronising (e.g. you wouldn't use it when dealing with the (Youth) Centre)." (Orleans House)

One said they would only use the term for funding purposes; one saw social inclusion as a possible side-effect of their project and one asked disliked the term because it is used by managers, is obligatory for bids and grant applications and they believed they were doing it all anyway: *"If a job's worth doing, it's worth doing - whatever you call it."*

Levels of understanding and commitment

The AMCs were aware of a wide range of understandings and commitment levels across their areas. Amongst staff and governing bodies there seem to be four phases or categories: some resisting change, some nervously aware but uncertain how to proceed, some adding social inclusion work on, and some living it. Two AMCs pointed out that distinctions between attitudes in different kinds of museums may not be all that clear as they may vary across the range whatever the size or type of the institution, with a similar variety among governing bodies. Sometimes:

"There is often just one enthusiastic person who drives the agendas, so it depends what these agendas are. One person can make things happen."

And sometimes:

The 'old generation' museums are very object/collections based and less aware of public needs. (AMC5)

In small voluntary museums

"They tend not to ask for help or take it much when it is offered. They are at level one. A start is being made but they want to tick along and play safe." (AMC1)

"Some museums are volunteer run and this makes it more difficult to share understanding. Volunteer-run museums have to concentrate on what they're good at. There's no research done here but volunteer-run museums are possibly more nervous about assessing their provision in relation to social inclusion. New stuff is more risky for them. If money is invested they have to be really sure it will work and they are less confident because of that." (AMC4)

"A lot lower than in the local authority museums. But that's awareness, not willingness." (AMC6)

In other independent museums

Commitment is high in some of them but in others the focus is thought to be still on numbers through the door rather than the quality of visitor experience. AMC 3 thought there were fewer good examples from military museums but still some good ones.

In local authority small museums

"they are very aware and come for help and seminars. They need more time. They are testing the waters and need more confidence and plenty of management backing." (AMC1)

"(they) are very keen and aware of their role in the community and lifelong learning is seen to be part of the agenda."   (AMC5)

Governing Bodies

"Again there is awareness but they are not quite convinced yet and unsure of what they can do." (AMC1)

"The role for museums has yet to be recognised by governing bodies who don't yet realise the potential the museums have." (AMC2)

Staff in general

"Staff …are realising they have been working towards this for years." (AMC2)

"Staff need more shared understanding …of what social inclusion means but (they) are more aware than governing bodies of its importance – that social inclusion is a priority – and staff know better what it means." (AMC4)

Rural/urban differences

Three AMCs felt there were no significant rural urban differences; one said that transport in rural areas was an issue and that stronger area loyalties ('We don't go to Sunderland') could make a difference, and two AMCs did not comment.

"Smaller rural museums can feel marginalised: e.g. there are 3 museums in Hexham and lots of others around the area which feel that the Hexham ones get preferential treatment, that they are not cared about, just like some rural communities." (AMC5)
(Note: However, please see point 5 of key findings)

Characteristics of social inclusion in small museums

Enabling Factors

All the AMCs believed that small museums can deliver on social inclusion, although two said it could not happen overnight and one emphasised that they cannot do it alone.

Twelve of the small museums found advantages to their size in working with local communities and some of their enthusiasm can be seen in the quotations below.

It was felt that they are closer to their communities than larger museums can be:

> *"..smaller communities - small museums are closer to them."   (Stockton-on-Tees)*

> *"..there is a very strong connection between the collections and rural communities." (Hereford)*

> *"Yes, we're the grass roots. The local community will come back, it is through word of mouth. Small museums are seen in a less threatening light. They have access to the community (bigger museums don't always have it)". (Ragged School)*

There was also a feeling that the small museum can be an easier boat to manoeuvre:

> *"In terms of a full staff commitment it is easier at a small museum: you can have a clear vision - can stay on track". (Avoncroft)*

Although you have to stay alert at the tiller:

> *"...you need to be listening and aware of everything. You can take more risks and in fact you have to - you can't just sit there… local people simply wouldn't come without a reason." (Grantown)*

There was a strong awareness of the freedom some small museums have to 'hop on to whatever is possible' and that they were less caught up in 'red tape', less constrained by bureaucracy.

Quotes include:

Small museums are…

"integral to creating confident communities"
"a resource for the neighbourhood"
"often the only source of historical identity in the community"
"storehouses of community memories"
"non-threatening"
"more personal… on a personal scale"
"good for awareness-raising of …what communities can achieve/ have achieved"
"safe fora for debating local issues"
"less likely to suffer from departmentalism"
"more likely to have established relationships with individuals and groups"
"free to do their own thing; free to do what they want to do"
"more accessible, less alienating, less intimidating"
"perfect examples of active citizenship but have not seen themselves in those terms"
"unique"

Small Museums can…

"have a more focused perspective because they are the only ones"
"be more service-orientated and responsive"
"provide important opportunities for volunteers, providing local voices"
"be more at liberty to share power with local groups"
"do family projects/ educational partnerships, lifelong learning **and** play a role in community safety, crime reduction etc."
"combat rural isolation"
"play a prime role (in social inclusion work)"
"enable people to feel proud of their history."
"be more flexible and innovative… push the boundaries…. be spontaneous"
"have more of an impact"
"try out new things… take more risks"
"have total control.. feel quite free"

The aims of the projects, as stated by some small museums, give further insights into their attitudes to social inclusion work. Seven said they were aiming to serve or respond to their communities in some way; three others to showcase or reflect the work/ culture/ religion of community groups; one was aiming at the healing of community divisions; one to support/ involve local groups in setting up and running their own sites; one involved children in improving site access and aimed to maintain the relationships thus established; one to improve local understanding of their own history and the final one aimed to overcome rural transport barriers and make new links with schools including those in an

Education Action Zone. Only two included specific aims to increase visitor numbers. The military museum was breaking ranks by 'presenting the ethnic and cultural diversity of soldiers serving in the British Army.'

The following quotes illustrate the significant potential of inclusive work in small museums:

"It is about self-esteem, self-confidence, trust, new opportunities and making them (children excluded from mainstream education) feel valued… It is about active participation." (Orleans House)
"To offer a supportive, recuperative environment to support individuals in taking the first tentative steps back into mainstream society…We sincerely hope that we are investing in our community."   (Margrove)
"The Aim is to offer a hand of friendship. (We are saying) 'We know we have collections which are not relevant to you, but as part of working with you, we'd like you to teach us about your culture'"   (Nuneaton)
"We work with as many people as we can be of benefit to." (Ragged School)

Inhibiting factors

Despite the previous section, it would be misleading to infer that working in a small museum towards social inclusion is easy. There are small museums which would be unable to sustain their inclusion work without the hard work and enthusiasm of very small numbers of key people - sometimes only one, whose job description has to range from advocacy in public places to outreach and unblocking the sink. There is little room for specialisation. *("The problem is there's only me.")*

Rethinking working practices inclusively may sometimes seem too daunting.
At its most difficult, *"It has ended up being one more nightmare. It needs someone to pick it up and develop it. There is masses of potential." (Grantown)*

Funding is not easy either for small museums. Five of the AMCs worried about funding; only eleven of the small museums gave funding/resources priority in their responses, but almost all were facing difficulties or challenges with funding implications.

"They (small museums) are less likely to secure funding because they're perceived to be more of a risk. (If someone is ill, will the whole project be jeopardised?). Funding bodies look to minimise risk when granting funds. Small museums have to work much harder to secure funding." (AMC 4)

And what criteria are being used by the funders?

"The cost per user is high e.g. £200 per child. One of the problems is that the previous pressure was on numbers. If the council is wearing its social inclusion hat this sort of project is great, but if they're wearing their Best Value hat, they ask 'Is this value for money?' "   (Newport)

There is also a difficulty with finding funding to keep everything else going while projects are undertaken:

"The main difficulty has been funding – it is very insecure, there is no core funding. We need money to be able to keep moving forward." (Ragged School)

"…it is difficult to find revenue funding for other aspects of work, but there is lots of money available for projects.'" (Orleans House)

And there are difficulties *"sustaining social inclusion projects costs" (AMC 2).*

Social inclusion work is expensive both in time and money. So, much communication time is involved in order to listen to individuals, groups and communities and find out what is really needed; what their wishes are. Funding for this essential preparatory and liaison work may be difficult to find too as there are no visible results until later. But often more tangible benefits are needed to justify the staff time and resources. Without this work, there can be misunderstandings and lost opportunities:

"The problem with the committee (working group of community representatives) was that they were all there in a voluntary capacity, so it was difficult to get people to turn up. They often don't understand what's involved in an exhibition – your deadlines, etc'" (Skinningrove)

"…it was hard making them realise the limitations and constraints – the need to compromise." (Skinningrove)

Finding the right people to do the work is also enormously difficult, especially in situations where they have to be multi-talented. Comments about the need for skills and training were made by all the AMCs and most museums.

"It is difficult to find people with the right skills… It is about their approach, attitude and philosophy. There is a balance between giving support and structure, but being informal enough so that they feel comfortable." (Orleans House)

"Engaging with a whole range of community members is asking a huge skills range from one or two people." (AMC3)

One respondent found she did not have the skills to work with elderly people as she was not trained to deal with dementia which can be difficult and draining. And other groups are often far from straightforward:

"In terms of working with younger people, it is a challenge to find the groups in the first place, then to interest them. It is important to use the right language, and not to be too prescriptive – let them develop it how they like."
(Knowsley)

Many of the skills involved cannot be acquired quickly:

"Expertise much depends on the thinking and background of the staff. It takes time to evolve and be able to reach out to the excluded. We need to help museum staff gain the skills first so they can cope or else they risk damaging the community." (AMC5)

Sometimes there is formal training on offer but it can seem quite daunting:

"It's more difficult to get them (staff from smaller museums) to come on training days." (AMC1)

And from Northern Ireland:

"The level of training to do the work is lower than in the rest of the U.K. We need a more local accredited course. People currently have to go to e.g. Leicester. Training is needed in making contact with community groups, in sustaining work and in evaluating it. " (AMC2)

Without training, the danger is that the museum remains " too inward looking and nervous about taking risks." *(AMC1)* Smaller museums may be more cut off from other museums and the rest of the world and can be reluctant to take in new blood in the form of work placements, especially when volunteer-run.

"There is a lot of difference between voluntary museums (no professionals) and the others. There is a divide between the professional and non-professional. So we need to invest in training and work with them to evolve and gain skills. e.g. Durham Cathedral Visitor Centre deals with 90% tourists: now there could be a real impact on the locality but it's run by one retired professional and a team of volunteers and is open in summer only. (AMC5)

Isolated rural museums, as in Scotland, suffer from the lack of communication:

"Many small museums are not linked to their local authorities and have no web-sites or e-mail and may be closed in winter…They are not well informed about social inclusion, so awareness-raising is needed first. Local authority museums are better informed. This is one of the biggest challenges for small museums and the AMC. (AMC6)

Evaluation

Questions about evaluation, as with the GLLAM research, were not popular. Answers ranged from:

"No evaluation has been undertaken. No-one is in post at present. Also there is no funding". (Grantown)

To:

"There are feedback forms and informal interviews and we get reports from the artists we use and also photos of everything we do. Where possible we use pre-project focus groups and afterwards questionnaires. It's not formalised. We do more of it when there is a bid to make/ fulfil. The attendants record visitors' comments and feed them back to us". (Nuneaton)

Apart from that, two museums use a comments book, three use informal discussion or oral feedback (*Avoncroft* records children saying what they thought of the project) and three use forms or questionnaires. One was in the process of drawing up new evaluation procedures and it was too early in some projects for evaluation, but several avoided the issue. There was also the issue of qualitative versus quantitative approaches:

"The outcome might be one disabled person visiting who otherwise would not have done – meaningless in the context of the overall figures." (AMC2)

Note: Four of the 15 projects have been written up, one has been the subject of two seminars and two are due to be written up.

Outcomes

As with the GLLAM research, it was possible to identify social inclusion outcomes at three main levels: with individuals, communities and wider society. Some outcomes identified could be considered within more than one category. For further analysis of the multiple outcomes and their interlinked nature, please see *Including Museums*.

Some examples that illustrate specific outcomes in these areas are given below. Please see the case studies at the end of this document and also those within *Including Museums* for further details of the projects.

Individual

Chris, who was involved in residency work with a sculptor, made his own functional objects and helped put the exhibition together. He made a speech at the private view, he asked to video the exhibition and initiated the evaluation of it

- 'I never thought I could do this. I feel proud'. It changed his view of art galleries and the people who work there. The project was about challenging the pre-conceptions of these young people, helping them feel at home, feel they have a role to play." (Orleans House)

"We ran a Museum Club which had impact in a number of ways. 10 children (about 10 years old) came regularly over the summer holidays. We had activities in the museum, then visits to other museums (Geffrye, Weald & Downland, etc.). The aim was to increase language skills and confidence (they knew very little about the museum at first). At the end they did a presentation and an exhibition to schools. The children now regard themselves as experts, it has changed their status in the classroom; they have become more articulate and have become advocates for the museum (they bring their friends and families)." (Ragged School)

"'Last summer four girls (15-17 years) were trained to work in the shop and worked as guides. They were paid expenses. It enabled the museum to be open for longer hours. One girl was particularly good. They all got a lot out of the experience – working with the public, developing confidence and taking responsibility. (Skinningrove)

"The Margrove Café (see case study/ extract from NEMS publication) 'It had a great effect on all the individuals involved, it was part of the process of being assimilated back into the community (and was of great economic benefit to the Centre as they only had to pay for one member of staff).' 'Over the past five years 75 people have used the café for recuperative support and almost 50,000 customers have used its facilities'. 'We hope other museums may follow our example. It is worth remembering that the real value of the café is measured in the changes such a venture makes to people's lives, which is difficult to quantify. We know that many people have moved on from their café experience to gain full-time employment and that everyone feels they have benefited from the project." (Margrove Heritage Centre)

"Through the intergenerational project, working with excluded 15 year olds, one young woman ended up becoming a 'mentor' to 11/12 year olds with literacy problems – they were at risk of becoming disenfranchised. She passed on her enthusiasm to them". (Stockton-on-Tees)

Community

"Women going on a pilgrimage soon are going to bring us back a prayer mat and prayer beads. That is a sign of friendship. We're building community support." (Nuneaton)

One teacher in the economic regeneration area said it was a fantastic opportunity for the children (18 schools in S. Herefordshire are in an EAZ).(Hereford)

There was a sense here that some small museums can be too focused on their (narrow) museum agendas and sometimes struggle to respond to local community needs:

'They (small, rural, voluntary museums/sites) are often very focused in their interests and this can alienate the local community. This is also a problem for them when they then try to recruit extra volunteer support. It is difficult for young people to see it as being relevant to their lives. However, these groups are aware of the problem and are trying to address it.'   (Hexham)

Social

It is especially difficult to evaluate this area but the research suggests that this area is not a strength of small museums.

One project that might be considered here is the Education for Mutual Understanding projects in Northern Ireland but *"many schools do not take up the EMU programme or extra funding. Whether they continue any links with the schools they visited with is not known."*

"The project was an opportunity for people/communities to tell their own stories." (Jewish Museum)

"It is an ongoing project and has had an impact on how people think about these issues. A lot of the children came out of themselves because their opinions were being valued. They had an opportunity to express themselves and share ideas. Families and parents came in during the week to see what was happening and even to help out". (Avoncroft)

"800 people came that week-end. It felt fantastic when there were 300 people on site on the Sunday afternoon alone. We now have more Asian children wanting to join workshops/ visit etc. More teenage girls come and join in". (Nuneaton)

Strategies for Enhancing Quality & Capacity Building

The greatest need of all seems, from these responses, to be for development and training in the very widest sense of the word: awareness raising, formal and informal courses, ongoing support and 'hand-holding'. Training and development initiatives will need to be tailored to the needs of different kinds of small museum.

Training/ Courses

- The creation of non-intimidating, user-friendly courses which people can enjoy, can bring a volunteer friend to, don't have to write a lot at or "be shown up for spelling wrongly on the flip chart", which have tick-box evaluation sheets or the option to chat to someone on the telephone instead and a genuine chance to say what other courses/ training/ help they would like.

- Courses that are supportive but challenging. For the course itself not just to include advice and information but to be set up in an inclusive way which can in itself be examined and be a source of learning.

- Courses that include practical skills, advice and encouragement, such as how to build and maintain partnerships; to make links with communities; to gain cultural sensitivity – the skills to sustain work with different communities; to listen for individual, group and community needs; to use appropriate language; fundraising skills, evaluation and advocacy skills and skills to be able to engage in initiatives.

- Another area raised was assistance in looking at familiar collections as if through someone else's eyes.

"There are likely to be differences in the ways that small local authority and independents and military museums are seen. People might perceive military museums in a different way – are they there to promote a regiment? To boost recruitment? To celebrate achievements? – How relevant is any of this to the local communities?   Local authority museums might seem more relevant and less intimidating. How do people see the different kinds of museums in terms of relevance and accessibility and whether they are threatening or not?"   (AMC 4)

- ICT courses. (AMC 5 comments: 'There is still hostility to websites from small museums (and larger independents) because people might use them and then not visit. They don't realise its potential as a marketing tool.') But it is also useful for keeping informed about new policies and opportunities for funding and training or just sharing.

AMC 1 suggested a carrot and stick approach to training with some museums and used the example of an informal learning project. This will include 3 (mixed) small museums – the kind with fixed and static, old-fashioned, didactic displays and no interactives. A consultant will create resources and interactives at no charge to the museum, but in return they have to sign up to:

- Coming to a training day
- Learning about families
- Looking at families and displays
- Thinking about what they would like from the interactive (they are not otherwise responsible for it)
- Trialling the interactive(s) with families and interviewing them about them.

They will not be with museums who are hostile to the idea or not interested in families. Guidelines will be written at the end and learning shared with other museums.

Staffing and staff development

- AMCs identified the difficulty in supporting so many museums in their regions (AMC5 points out that it is difficult to capacity-build in 90 museums at once.) Additional advisory staffing is essential. One museum service did a survey last year of the kinds of support needed and the personal contact with AMC staff was at the top of the list.

"The personal advisor/ advocate is <u>very</u> important. Small museums need the confidence this kind of support brings. They worry that the AMC will start them off on something and then not support them later. This is crucial to them. Advisors need to be knowledgeable and responsive and we need such a post but we can't fund it."   (AMC 4)

"In some museums, the newest people have been there for 10 years – this is not healthy. Diversity is essential. New people are needed with new approaches to challenge the 'old' ones - people who are willing to work in different ways. Some people are ready to change, and they need the training. (AMC 3)

- Also identified as of value would be a shared Education Officer (or similar) between a cluster of small museums, or a placement system for staff of small museums to be placed for a while in larger museums to shadow/learn.

"To make a difference quickly, we need to formalise this sharing. Maybe the MA or Resource could offer more like the 'sharing skills' initiative – reaching the small museums." AMC5

"You need someone within 20-30 miles of your museum." (AMC 6)

When you can get staff on short-term contracts through externally funded projects, it still requires a lot of co-ordination and stretches the permanent staff. (Newport)

Sharing expertise and support

Partnerships are crucial and can provide funding, links, advice and support. But there also need to be ways of setting up mutually supportive systems that can partly run themselves, with the AMCs to ensure that momentum is maintained. In this way, the more confident museum (whatever its size) could mentor a less developed museum. More job shadowing could take place with the funding to enable this to happen, even in the smallest museums where indispensable individuals either do not dare take a day away from the site or have to cancel because of a last minute crisis. Funding could pay for someone to cover. 'Buddy' systems are useful, where two museums 'hold each other's hand' through initiatives to provide support, teach each other, learn from each other and have someone to share the excitement, anxiety, and problems. Obviously the people involved have to be on the same wavelength enough to want to communicate, but 'buddies' could be encouraged to find each other on courses.

Networks and information exchange

- People learn so much from each other, often casually, simply through a shared enthusiasm. If the buddy system does not fit (or even if it does) there is such a wealth of knowledge and experience out there which could be shared. (Sometimes it is not easy to share with the 'rival' museum down the road). (AMC 4)

"Notice-boards and sharing by Internet; local versions of the GEM list, where people look for storage and matting and argue about numeracy and point out new and exciting web-sites. The accessing of information e.g. about audiences and communities and helping small museum understand these. They may not have the information and statistics (e.g. about local literacy levels or unemployment etc) that local authority museums would have easy access to". (AMC 4)

- Group agreements to share (costly) market research (AMC 5)

- Open meetings and newsletters, which can give people 'something to tap in to when they are planning projects'.

Changes in the structure of funding

Sometimes, the expectation of a funder (in terms of project aims and objectives, rigid timetables etc) are in conflict with the development of inclusive practices. Greater awareness of the evolving and sometimes unpredictable nature of social inclusion work needs to be reflected in funding that allows for adequate lead-in time, changes in a project's direction, learning curves (not mistakes) and sustainability.   3 years is suggested as a reasonable time span.

Appendix 1 - Case Study Material

Avoncroft Museum of Buildings: Disability Project

This was an education project about access and museums, involving a disability consultant (Annie Delin), a special school and a secondary school. Two schools were involved: Chadsgrove Special School and North Bromsgrove High School – 15/20 pupils from each for an intensive week's programme (called the Avongrove Moot). They were split into three groups and given a different area to investigate: physical access (considering the existing condition of the site and legislation, recommendations for pathways and clearer signposting); sensory interpretation (considering intellectual and multi-sensory, recommendations included an aroma box, a sensory board, learning by doing, etc.); technology (considering alternative access solutions to inaccessible parts of site, e.g. virtual reality, audio tour, etc.).

The pupils did assessments, collated the information, had a 'mini-moot' at the end of each day and did a presentation of their findings and ideas at the end of the week. Annie wrote the final report. Most of the museum staff were involved: the Director, the Education and Events Officer, the Education Assistant (New Deal funded), and they had IT help (a placement). The governing body saw it as a unique project. They got financial support from Abbey National.
The aims and objectives were to gather information to inform access developments at the site, and to maintain relationships with the schools by working in partnership and giving them feedback re their recommendations. 'We knew the children would tell us what was and wasn't working'. Now they are looking for further funding to implement the suggestions. It is an ongoing project and has had an impact on how they think about these issues.

A lot of the children came out of themselves because their opinions were being valued. They had an opportunity to express themselves and share ideas.
The museum staff had had disability awareness training. The High School had done projects with special schools before. Families and parents came in during the week to see what was happening and even to help out.
Gemma Baker, Interpretation and Outreach Officer, Avoncroft Museum of Buildings

Grantown Museum and Heritage Centre - Job Centre Project

The link with the Local Enterprise Company (LEC) came about because of a desire to work closely with the local community. The new museum opened in 1999 and they didn't want it to be just a museum, they wanted to create additional reasons for the local community to come in, a focal point in the community. Their contact at the LEC was keen to develop community resource centres and had been visiting other parts of the country to see what was happening.

Part of the problem for Grantown is that it is a small, isolated Highland town. Youngsters have to travel to Inverness if they are looking for jobs. They often have no transport and there are poor public transport links. The museum developed a partnership with the Inverness Job Centre. However, the Job Centre in Inverness was not as developed in IT as the museum was so the museum too has to use the old-fashioned boards. Every morning they are sent a package of information, updating the job vacancies.

Local people are surprised to see that the museum is offering this service, but once they see it they come in and use it as required. Usually you see people using it for about a month, then you never see them again ("hopefully this means they have found work"). It is also a service which is used by local hotels advertising local/seasonal work. However, the arrangement has not really been working in the way they would like, for several reasons. Firstly, the Job centre in Inverness doesn't tell new job seekers that the museum has this resource. Also, the museum has had to make the decision to close for January and February as it is not cost-effective to remain open.

Originally the Community Resource Centre had a part-time Project Officer. She was trained and then able to offer training in computer skills to others. She also worked with volunteers. The Resource Centre provided access to other information and had the following equipment available for use: a printer, word processor, photocopier, guillotine and internet access. However, the Project Officer was so well-trained that she decided to leave to set up her own business across the road – this project had given her the skills and confidence to do so. Ironically she is being funded by the Local Enterprise Company to do this. When the centre was set up there was a need for it, but now most people have their own access to a computer. It was planned to be the answer to everything, but it was never really used as fully as it could have been. Molly initiated the project, but there was a lot of conflict on the Board, because of space demands, e.g. the temporary exhibitions team felt that it was a threat to the space available to them – this was never really resolved. They felt very much that it was a social service for the community – it was not just about audience development.

Why isn't it working? 'Because it's Grantown' where a handful of people get involved in everything (these people are often incomers), but the majority are not bothered; there is a sort of inertia. No evaluation has been undertaken. No-one is in post at present. Also there is limited funding.

Hereford Museum and Art Gallery

The project is based around outreach to rural schools – the development of history and science sessions to be delivered in schools. Each session includes a presentation, a carousel of three activities and then a plenary session. The background to the project is that Herefordshire split from Worcestershire in April 1998, and therefore lost the museum education provision which stayed in Worcestershire. They therefore had a remit to develop their own service. They began to develop some museum sessions, and then had the opportunity to bid for a DfEE Museums and Galleries Education Programme (MGEP) award (£11,000 over two years) which was successful. The plan was to take sessions out to schools because their greatest barrier was the cost of transport. The county has the second lowest pupil density in Britain. South Herefordshire was also designated as an Education Action Zone. This demonstrated that there was an issue and the MGEP project was able to hook into that. The local authority priorities included rural development and community development.

Who was involved? Basically Siriol Collins (and outside consultants to develop the sessions). Initially the profile was quite low, even within the local authority (for example, the Education dept was invited to put the bid together with her but she received no response). However, SC has ensured that everyone is kept informed and they are now launching Phase 1 of the project - the first three teaching sessions are now available for schools to book. Now there is an opportunity for publicity as there is a concrete product (with images).

Teachers have been involved at the research stage. History and Science Co-ordinators were invited to take part. They also piloted the sessions. Evaluation was in the form of verbal feedback. Some changes were made, e.g. regarding the timing of activities, use of vocabulary, time required in preparation and loading (and therefore payment) for the sessional workers who will deliver the sessions, etc. One teacher at a school in the economic regeneration area said 'It is a fantastic opportunity for the children – they are not usually involved in something like this'.

They have to charge for the sessions as they employ four casual staff to run them and there are obviously costs involved. The sessions are available to all schools in the county. They can't meet the demand without having to charge. However, rather than charge a flat rate to all schools they are charging per child, so that the cost for smaller schools/classes (likely to be in rural areas) is effectively being subsidised by the larger ones. Otherwise the charge would have conflicted with their purpose, which was to facilitate access to museum resources

for rural schools. They worked out an average overall cost, so there is also no additional travel charge for reaching the more rural schools. Their first concern is that they manage to meet the actual costs. The governing body (local authority) have been informed that they are piloting the charges for two terms and will then review them. It depends how things develop - they may decide for example to offer concessions to schools in Education Action Zone areas.

Siriol Collins, Education and Events Officer

Newport Museum and Art Gallery project

Newport has a large ethnic minority population and some groups are long-established. The visitors to the museum are not representative of the community as a whole.

The project was a community exhibition which spread beyond the confines of the gallery and affected other aspects of the museum service. It took place last year, with funding from CMW (AMC). It was linked to Museums and Galleries Month. The Interpretation Officer worked closely with local ethnic community groups, including Pakistani, Afro-Caribbean, Yemeni, Somali, etc. The purpose was to showcase the work and culture of these community groups. Gwent Education Multicultural Support Service helped them to make links to the communities. Once the exhibition was open the museum café provided food from the communities' countries of origin. They were given to customers free with their cup of tea or coffee. It was a 'taste' of a different culture, literally and metaphorically. The café, which is situated between the museum and the library, also provided information about the exhibition and related events. The initiative received a good reaction according to comments in the comments book. The Interpretation Officer has collated information about the project. They also produced an exhibition support pack in conjunction with the Multicultural Support Service.

There is a plan to develop a Heritage Access Scheme, loaning out material which reflects the diversity of the community. They want to involve community groups in building up the collections as these groups are under-represented in the collections, as well as in terms of the visitor profile.

Ron Inglis, Museums and Heritage Officer

Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery - Journeys Project

Asian Arts Project - 'Journeys' (any journeys we take: to work, through life…) We used this to share understanding between the Asian community and the museum. We had an artist for 12 weeks, two days a week. We produced an exhibition, then a celebratory weekend - we had an opening session to introduce councillors etc to the work; then we celebrated Muslim culture in the borough:

lots of fun, music and laughter. Also henna painting, drumming, food tasting, sari wearing etc. 800 people came that weekend. It felt fantastic when there were 300 people on site on the Sunday afternoon alone.

Impact: We now have more Asian children wanting to join workshops/ visit etc. More teenage girls come and join in. Next summer we're going to experiment with single sex groups. The Asian women will run a henna painting master-class; participants are encouraged to come in pairs - one older and younger woman/girl - as that is the tradition that a mother does it for her daughter. We are also going to pay for training in recording oral history so that people can do it out in their community. We will also pay for the equipment to record their stories, since they have been in this country (60 years - but there are no records of their lives here).

The women's group will get people involved, get them to record in Gujarati and Urdu their memories (we can only remember fully in the language we were using at the time). They will help with interviews and translations.
We also hope to draw in African-Caribbean community members and others to contribute to our archive collection in the same way. At the same time, we look at where they live and tell them about e.g. a famous person who lived in their house/ street long ago. So the local history is being shared - both sides are learning. The aim is to offer a hand of friendship – "We know we have collections which are not relevant to you, but as part of working with you, we'd like you to teach us about your culture".

We now have lists of people who can translate/ advise about content etc.
Marie Shaw, Nuneaton Museum & Art Gallery

Ghurkha Museum, Winchester,

The museum has information about Nepalese communities as well as traditional military material. They have never had an Education Officer, but have done lots of ad-hoc activities, but not much on the cultural side. This project is a partnership with SEMS and Hampshire Museums Service receiving Education Challenge Fund support. They are still very traditional military curators, not against the idea, but no idea how to. Isabel Hughes (IH) has amassed a range of people to work with them/support them, e.g. a South Asian arts worker. She and IH went through the collection and identified material which would be useful for educational purposes, e.g. links to citizenship. Obviously the items were never collected for this purpose. They sent the Brigadier to Nepal (he was going anyway) with a shopping list for a supplementary handling collection including themes such as domestic life, childhood, etc.

The museum also has local Nepalese communities as Ghurkha soldiers are based in the area for short periods of time, so there are some Nepalese children in the local schools. However, it is a transient community. The Bilingual Teaching Service has some Nepalese teachers who offer language support. They had

written an information booklet about Ghurkhas for schools, and translated some materials. One of them (a teaching assistant) is happy to lead sessions in the museum.

Another local consultant has been surveying local schools about their needs to address cultural diversity. The handling collection will be made available both in the museum and for loan to schools; photographic images will also be available; sessions in the museum will include trying on costume, comparing lifestyles, etc. There is also a plan to find schools in Winchester and Nepal to link (either via internet or letter). A teachers' meeting is being held at the end of February.

Interview with Chris Bullock, Curator, and Isabel Hughes, SEMS.

Extracted from NEMS publication, *Conversations…* : The Margrove Heritage Centre Café

The award-winning Margrove Heritage Centre Café is no ordinary café! *Please tell us about it.* In brief, the café is run by people who have experienced mental health problems. It offers a supportive, recuperative environment to support individuals in taking the first tentative steps back into mainstream society.

How did such an innovative idea begin?
The idea was instigated in 1995 by the library department of Cleveland County Council working in partnership with the Ashwood Centre. They were successful in securing a capital grant from the Heritage Lottery Fund to refurbish the Margrove Heritage Centre. The grant paid for a new reception area, gallery space and the complete rebuilding of the café . In 1996, Margrove Heritage Centre was taken over by the new unitary authority of Redcar and Cleveland who continue to fund the operational costs of the Centre.

You say the Margrove Heritage café is 'run' with the help of local people who have experienced a varying degree of difficulties in their lives. How does this work?
The group was originally supported by a specifically appointed training officer who was effectively their manager, preparing menus, cooking, selecting ingredients, serving the public and cleaning up at the end of the day. This officer's role was to ensure the clients had as much input into the operational running of the café as possible. In 1997 the café won an international Gulbenkian award demonstrating just how well the system was working. Since then the café has won numerous prestigious awards for healthy eating, given confidence and raised the esteem of people involved the project. This is something of which everybody is very proud.

There have been a number of recent changes in the operation of council services such as competitive tendering for catering provision. Has this affected the café at all?

Yes. We are concerned that the drive to offer 'best value' is only measured statistically and does not take into consideration social issues. The challenge is to ensure that the café keeps going and at the same time demonstrate that 'best value' can be measured in the quality of service to the community.

It must be especially difficult for you to quantify 'value' when you are investing in the quality of life. After all you are not producing a number of widgets that can be counted! Is the café now a commercial venture?
We did not particularly set out to be a commercial venture but because of competitive tendering the café could not be run as it had been in the past. However we are pleased to have managed to maintain core service value as a recuperative environment and we hope other museums may follow our example. It is worth remembering that the 'real value' of the café is measured in the changes such a venture makes to people's lives, which is difficult to quantify. We know many people have moved on from their café experience to gain full-time employment and everyone feels they have benefited from the project.

I understand that the Margrove Heritage Centre closes for the winter season. Does this affect the local community?
 The concept of the café has worked well providing an excellent service for the local community and tourists. However we have to close for six months over the winter season due to financial constraints.

Finally, looking back do you think the café project has been worthwhile?
When you are working with local people you can clearly see marked changes in their lives. Sometimes these changes are subtle, taking place over a long period of time. We support people making changes at their own pace and our role is to offer a safe and supportive environment for these changes to take place. We sincerely hope that we are investing in our community.   NEMS 2000

Researcher's additional comments. The project had a great effect on all the individuals involved, it was part of the process of being assimilated back into the community (and was of great economic benefit to the Centre as they only had to pay for one member of staff). However, the café is now operated by Catering DSO and there is pressure on it to make a profit. This commercial pressure does not sit well with the original objectives of the project.

Extracted from NEMS publication, *Conversations …*: 'Somebody to Love', Stockton-on-Tees

What was the inspiration behind the project 'Somebody to Love'?
It was an outreach drama project that explored the issue of eating disorders and linked with an exhibition about food and diet. It was one of a series of activities to raise young people's awareness.

How were the five young performers selected? Were they already members of an established Youth Theatre or were they new to acting?

The five performers were all members of ARC's Youth Theatre in Stockton. They were auditioned by the play's director although all of the Youth Theatre took part in the selection of the writer from a shortlist of six. The play also involved a professional actor who took the part of the mother of a girl with anorexia. Taking part in the play was the first paid professional work for the young actors, who were aged 14-16.

Did you have any expectations in regard to your intended audience?

We planned a project that would be both devised and created by young people, for young people. The performance toured schools and youth groups in the Teesside area. Over 2000 young people in 12 schools across Teesside were involved in the programme of activities. Interest in the project exceeded our expectations.

Were you able to find any partners within the Health Sector to support your project?

We established good working partnerships with Tees Health Authority and Tees & District Health Promotion Service. Both organisations decided to fund the project and advised the playwright on content and delivery of the play. Health Promotion sent an outreach worker to assist with the workshops and give advice to pupils and teachers. You were also funded by North East Museums and Stockton City Challenge as well as the health organisations already mentioned. Each of the organisations will have different reasons for supporting it.

How do the sponsors measure your 'success'?

For NEMS 'Somebody to Love' was successful because it was a high profile and innovative piece of museum-related outreach work that also assisted the promotion of a major exhibition. City Challenge measured the success of the project by the number of pupils and schools the play targeted in its area. One of your initial objectives was to promote greater awareness among young people as well as provide advice on eating disorders for both pupils and staff.

Do you think you succeeded in this objective?

The 'performance' eventually became part of a youth and drama festival in Middlesbrough and later toured East Durham. There was a high level of satisfaction about the project among sponsors and participatory schools. The play actually succeeded in raising awareness of eating disorders, particularly among teachers.

How did East Durham become involved in the touring programme?

East Durham Community Health Service bought in the project from ARC Youth Theatre because of its perceived value and success among health promotion staff in Teesside. It played to another seven schools and over 1000 pupils in the East Durham area.

Were you concerned at all that raising awareness could actually encourage some young people to develop an eating disorder, perhaps to gain attention?

This was a genuine concern in planning the project The writer liased closely with health promotion staff, including dieticians. The play was 'tested' before an audience of health staff at draft stage. Health promotion staff participated in the workshops which followed the play.

Now that you have built positive relationships with a number of partners, have you any plans to build on this, e.g. exploring smoking or drugs- related issues with young people?

At the moment we are not planning another health-related outreach project. For us the project was valuable because it addressed a sensitive issue in a direct and dynamic way. ARC Youth Theatre continues to work with health issues and is touring a play about alcohol problems among young people to schools in East Durham in November 2000.

Participants: 6 performers, 2,000 audience members. Project cost £10,000. Funding: Tees Health Authority, Tees & District Health Promotion Service, Stockton City Challenge, Stockton Community Fund, NEMS 2000.

Researcher's additional comment: This project happened a couple of years ago. They have no Education Officer now. The project was an exhibition about food, diet from a historical and contemporary perspective. There were also links to the outreach and activities programme. They used drama as an interpretative tool, employing Time Travellers to develop a piece on the Saxons with a food focus. The exhibition toured to three venues. They also addressed eating disorders as an issue, but not in a traditional museum way. They had worked with the Youth Theatre before and liased with health workers. They knew the Youth Theatre had developed work about teenage pregnancy. They worked on a piece about eating disorders. It was never actually performed in the museum. With hindsight Mark feels there was not a direct enough link made. Did they come to the museum? Regarding evaluation, they got teacher and pupil feedback and a health worker visited schools.

There were no mechanisms in place to measure impact. They plan to set up a Youth Panel (linked to Best Value). They have also done some intergenerational work with short-term funding, but the work continued after the money ran out. It was run by a community group – but didn't lead to increased visits. *Mark Rowland-Jones, Museums and Heritage Officer, Stockton-on-Tees Museum*

Orleans House Gallery - Interiors 21

A series of projects at Orleans House has engaged excluded, disempowered, disaffected and/or unemployed young people (in varying age groups from the 10 - 25 years band) over the past three years. These have given rich, quality experiences to small groups of young people who learned new skills and found renewed self-esteem. Some found new directions in life such as enrolling in fine art classes.

The most recent project - Interiors 21 - is ongoing (Exhibition: 26 April - 13 May 2001). Project participants are aged 16+, have few or no qualifications (some are refugees) and are being challenged to present their own 'Changing Rooms' to the public. The project aims to change the way they look at living and communal spaces by creating new interiors and to give them new skills as well as insights into interior design. Firstly they consider their own living spaces (many have left home) and place these in historical context. Then, through a series of workshops and visits the participants gain an understanding of how interior design has evolved, and work to change spaces for themselves. The end result will be an exhibition presenting the participants' ideas about the future with good quality photos of their work and a video and a catalogue to document the whole process from initial design to end product. Young interior designers work with the young people to assist them with creative and technical input. A professional photographer is also key to its success.

Evaluation from this project will inform two sister projects at Heaton House, Manchester and at the V & A.

Costing about £6,000, the project is funded by HLF Access fund and the London Museums Agency.

National Museums and Galleries of Wales (working in partnership with small museums in Wales).

The project is called *What makes Wales?* This explored ways in which visitors can become involved as participants in looking at modern and traditional views of Wales. Kenneth Brassil explained that cultural activity is very much focused on Cardiff which can cause resentment and mistrust from other parts of the country. The project was therefore designed to move away from focusing solely on Cardiff to encourage different viewpoints from other regions.

Small museums from regions outside of Cardiff were key partners and included:

- Bodelwyddan Castle, North Wales
- Powysland Museum, Welshpool
- Llanberis Welsh Slate Museum

Elements of the project included working with artists in residence in partnership with Regional Arts Boards, working on environmental art projects and video conferencing. Outcomes included permanent art installations.

Other projects have engaged different communities for example:

- The Welsh League of Youth in Denby, North Wales working on welsh language promotion in rural communities, an emotive political issue.
- Senior citizens in Denby
- Disaffected youth
- Unemployed people (developing ICT skills and the production of web pages)

These initiatives, driven largely by the National museums, relate to ideas of national and cultural identity, language and the need to engage communities from outside the capital.

Kenneth Brassil, Archaeology Educator.

Appendix 2 - Extract from *Including Museums – The Rural Context*

Is social inclusion relevant to all museums or just those located within urban areas that have most commonly been linked with disadvantage and deprivation. Large local authority museums have generally featured most prominently in debates around inclusion but here, the authors consider the implications for museums in rural areas.

Urban bias

The problems of social exclusion are understood largely as urban phenomena. In a recent article, Professor Anne Power (Deputy Director, Centre of Analysis of Social Exclusion, London School of Economics) states, "Social exclusion is about the inability of our society to keep all groups and individuals within the reach of what we expect as a society. It is about the tendency to push vulnerable and difficult individuals into the least popular places, furthest away from our common aspirations. It is almost entirely an urban problem, the 100 most deprived local authority areas in the country are all urban and the 20 most deprived are in major conurbations." (RSA Journal 2/4 2000)

There is little question that many of those affected by exclusion live in urban areas and perhaps this has done much to encourage and develop fertile partnerships and opportunities for museums in urban areas. *Museums and Social Inclusion: The GLLAM report*, illustrates the quality, quantity and breadth of work that has been going on in large local authority museum services. Does this mean that rural museums have no part to play?

In the early 1990s, when community outreach was developing at Nottingham Museums and Galleries, a colleague who worked in a mainly rural area,

commented that it was not possible for them to do that kind of work as the rural context was so different, the agencies and networks for partnerships simply didn't exist. Certainly, the context, the forms of exclusion and the patterns of distribution may differ but as the Countryside Agency, in their report, *Not seen, not heard?,* clearly demonstrates, exclusion is nevertheless a serious problem in rural areas. Low incomes, poor health, inadequate housing, lack of education and training, difficulties accessing basic services and little or no involvement in discussions which affect their futures are problems that face those living in both urban and rural areas.

The particularities of rural exclusion

However, there are some important differences which have served to conceal the problems of exclusion in rural areas and which necessitate different approaches to solutions. Socially excluded households in rural areas tend to be geographically scattered. Those most at risk of exclusion may live alongside extreme affluence which can serve to hide the existence of exclusion as well as to heighten the sense of social isolation. The manifestation and particular focus of problems may differ; for example, rural housing issues relate to the affordability of housing, rural job problems relate more to low pay and seasonality of employment than to unemployment *per se.* Distance, geographical isolation, poor access to jobs, services and other opportunities compound the problems for those in rural areas. The image of the rural idyll leads to misconceptions about the nature of living in the countryside with many people finding it difficult the believe that social exclusion exists in green and picturesque surroundings.

Furthermore, traditional attitudes about self-sufficiency and 'making do' can lead to exclusion going undeclared or unheard. Many of the commonly used indicators for identifying and measuring exclusion are more appropriate to the urban context. Party political allegiances further complicate matters as many rural areas, which are largely Conservative, are uncomfortable with the language of

social inclusion which has become linked to New Labour and embedded within their policy, (especially in view of criticisms of New Labour for failing to address issues facing rural constituencies).

All of these issues conspire to produce a much less favourable environment for rural museums to engage with inclusion agendas. This is compounded by the fact that many rural museums are small, often with a tiny staff and limited resources. A large percentage of the museums are independent, volunteer run and already facing problems of sustainability where survival may be the first priority. Some independent museums remain concerned with 'ploughing their own furrow' resistant to government agendas and influence. And yet, small museums are often much closer to their communities and may be well placed to understand and meet community needs.

Some museums have very successfully connected with rural inclusion agendas. Nuneaton, which is already familiar with responding to the urban environment, has adapted and extended its programme to the rural, north Warwickshire context. This has been achieved by connecting with community transport and rural mobile library services, being involved in advisory groups for village halls and community centres and shaping how these might be used. The museum has linked with networks in the voluntary sector, through friendship groups, with childminders, with charities like Age Concern and with the statutory sector, for example Social Services, by working with home help staff. The museum has also engaged with health agendas through Living Well initiatives and a Healthy Hearts project.

In Herefordshire, the museum service has worked strategically to focus on education, teaming up with an Education Action Zone, enabling small isolated rural schools (Herefordshire has the second lowest pupil density in England) to have access to museum resources to complement the curriculum and provide a breadth of stimulus to learning.

In Lincolnshire, many issues have been identified that create barriers to inclusion. Most excluded communities are concentrated in the east of this large county whereas most museum resources are located in the west, exposing a mismatch between resources and need. The service faces rural transport difficulties and the low expectations amongst communities. There are internal barriers too; some staff are reluctant to embrace change, limited financial resources and no staff with specialist community experience. Despite these difficulties, opportunities for inclusion work are being explored and piloted through lifelong leaning initiatives using ICT in a project funded through the SRB.

Social exclusion is an issue in many rural areas and whilst some have begun to address this, elsewhere many factors have served to limit the realisation of museum's potential roles and contributions. Many rural museums are hindered by a lack of strategic focus, stakeholders who are unsympathetic to inclusion agendas, a lack of skills and confidence and, perhaps most of all, a lack of understanding of the role museums can play. Ironically, a repositioning of some small, rural museums in relation to inclusion could help to make them more sustainable. As some have already shown, they can become a valued community resource and be connected with a much larger and more diverse audience than the often narrow segment who currently use them. The challenge is to develop the skills and capacity within these museums that often have such limited resources.

Appendix 3 - Project Plan

SMALL MUSEUMS AND SOCIAL INCLUSION – Aims and Objectives

Recent research into the role that museums and galleries can play in promoting social inclusion has focused on large local authority museums. (Museums and Social Inclusion: The GLLAM report). This project seeks to complement existing research by focusing on the role of small museums – the level of understanding, activity, outcomes and the specific characteristics of their work towards inclusion.

<u>Aims</u>

- To provide an overview of activity in small museums
- To gauge levels of understanding of the role of small museums in social inclusion
- To identify the characteristics of social inclusion work in small museums
- To identify the factors and circumstances that <u>enable</u> and <u>inhibit</u> social inclusion work
- To identify the outcomes of social inclusion work and to provide examples of projects that will complement the findings of the GLLAM research (using, as far as possible, the 7 categories of social impact identified in the GLLAM report)
- To identify some examples of best practice
- To suggest a way forward for enhancing both the <u>amount</u> and <u>quality</u> of social inclusion work in small museums
- To find out if, and how, social inclusion work is evaluated within small museums

The research questions outlined above will be explored from 2 perspectives:

- From the perspective of a sample of Area Museums Councils
- From the perspective of staff working in small museums

<u>Methodology</u>

1. Overview

In order to gain an overview we will conduct telephone interviews with a sample of area museums councils. A letter explaining the project's aims and an interview schedule will be sent in advance to enable interviewees to prepare. As well as seeking to identify examples of good practice, the interviews will also be used to draw on the knowledge and experience that AMCs have of small museums in their region and the particular difficulties they face as well as the opportunities they may have for contributing to inclusion.

2. Case studies

We will carry out further telephone interviews to generate case studies of a range of small museums.(6-8)

These will be as diverse as possible using the following criteria
- Urban
- Rural
- Local authority or district
- Independent with paid staff
- Volunteer run independent
- Military or regimental

Most will be selected as examples of good practice although in some instances it may be most appropriate to talk with museums that are keen to develop their social inclusion work but are encountering obstacles.

A final list will be agreed with Caroline Lang following the interviews with AMCs.

These will include examples of socials inclusion initiatives and also responses to broader questions about the role and potential of small museums to complement the perspective gained from AMCs.

Suitable case studies will be identified through the interviews with AMCs though possible candidates have already been identified through discussions with Resource and through the experience of the research team.

3. Further examples

A range of smaller examples of individual initiatives will be gathered by the research team through requests to museums to submit brief details of specific projects identified through the overview with AMCs. These will give a broader representation of the sector.

Outcomes

The key findings will be incorporated in the *Including Museums: perspectives on social inclusion* publication, co-authored by Richard Sandell and Jocelyn Dodd for publication in Spring 2001.

In addition, a report outlining the main findings will be submitted to resource by the end of February.

The research team

The research project is being managed by Jocelyn Dodd, Richard Sandell and Eilean Hooper-Greenhill.

Senior Research Assistants, Helen O'Riain and Alison James will be undertaking the telephone interviews and assisting with data analysis and interpretation.

Appendix 4 - Case studies - Paid/unpaid staff statistics

1 - Grantown

Paid staff	1
Unpaid staff	30

2 - Newport

Paid staff	35 +15 seasonal
Unpaid staff	70/80 volunteers

3 - Hereford

Paid staff	13 + 1 p/time
Unpaid staff	1 + work placements

4 - Winchester

Paid staff	9 (some p/time)
Unpaid staff	70+ volunteers

5 - Orleans House

Paid staff	2 + 2 p/time +3/4 freelance
Unpaid staff	work placements

6 - Ragged School

Paid staff	4+ 1p/t + 4 freelance
Unpaid staff	29 volunteers

7 - Hexham

Paid staff	2
Unpaid staff	9 volunteers

8 - Skinningrove

Paid staff	3
Unpaid staff	20 volunteers

9 - Margrove

Paid staff	12
Unpaid staff	project-basis

10 - Derry

Paid staff	6
Unpaid staff	

11 - Stockton

Paid staff	6/7
Unpaid staff	

12 - Knowsley

Paid staff	7 + 2 p/ time

Unpaid staff	

13 – Jewish Museum

Paid staff	3 + 2 p/time
Unpaid staff	50 p/time

14 - Avoncroft

Paid staff	4 + 2 temporary + 2 p/time
Unpaid staff	60 volunteers

15 - Nuneaton

Paid staff	2 + 1 vacancy + 4 attendants
Unpaid staff	Lots of volunteers

Appendix 5 - details of contacts

Main case studies

MUSEUM	CONTACT	TYPE
Orleans House Gallery	Rachel Tranter, Assistant Curator	Local authority South east
Hereford Museum & Art Gallery	Siriol Collins, Education and Events Officer	Local authority Midlands
Nuneaton Museum and Art Gallery	Marie Shaw	Local authority Midlands
Grantown Museum and Heritage Centre	Molly Duckett, Museum Manager	Independent Scotland
Avoncroft Museum of Buildings	Gemma Baker, Interpretation and Outreach Officer	Independent Midlands
The South Cleveland Heritage Centre, Margrove	Phil Philo, Curator	Local authority North east
Ghurkha Museum, Winchester	Gavin Edgerley-Harris, Assistant Curator (Also Isabel Hughes, SEMS)	Regimental South east
Stockton-on-Tees Museum Administration, Cleveland	Mark Rowland-Jones, Museums and Heritage Officer	Local authority North east
Newport Museum & Art Gallery	Ron Inglis, Museums and Heritage Officer	Local authority Wales

Supplementary case studies

Tom Leonard Mining Museum, Skinningrove, Cleveland	Kate Brennan Marketing Officer	Independent North east
Derry City Museum	Margaret Edwards	Partnership Northern Ireland
National Museums and Galleries of Wales	Kenneth Brassil	National with various partners
Manchester Jewish Museum,	Jim Garretts, Director, and Paula Simpson, Exhibition Co-ordinator	Independent North west
Ragged School Museum	Claire Seymour, Museum Manager	Independent South east
Tynedale Museums, Hexham	Janet Goodridge, Museums Officer	Local authority North east
Knowsley Museum Service, Prescot Museum	Susan Arnold, Education and Outreach Officer	Local authority / NMGM North west

Area Museum Councils:
London Museums Agency - *Frazer Swift   Tel: 020 7600 0219*
North West Museums Service– Paul Parry Tel: 01254 670211
Scottish Museums Council – Fran Hegyi   Tel: 0131 229 7465
West Midlands Regional Museums Council– Emma Hawthorne, Tel: 01527 872258
North East Museums Council – Ian Blackwell,   Tel: 0191 222 1661
Northern Ireland Museums Council– Eila McQueen, Tel: 028 9055 0215

Appendix 6 - Interview protocols

A – protocol for interviews with AMCs

The Research Centre for Museums and Galleries at the University of Leicester has been commissioned by Resource to undertake a piece of research into small museums and social inclusion. The research will provide Resource with information on current practice and priorities for future action.
The context for this interview was outlined in the letter you were sent. We will not be working to a strict definition of social inclusion, but as part of the research want to see how the term is interpreted. However, we will refer to the indicators of social exclusion as used by the government and those points identified in the GLLAM report which are……

The interview will be in three main sections.

1. Firstly I would like to ask you about your feelings and opinions on the role that museums can play in terms of social inclusion and the role of small museums in particular.

2. The second section of the interview concerns small museums in your area and specific examples of best practice etc.

3. Lastly I want to ask you about your views and ideas for strategies for capacity building in this area.

Interview details:
Date…………………………………..
Interviewer…………………………………………
Interviewee…………………………………………
Organisation…………………………………………

SECTION ONE

1.1   What is your view on the role that museums can play in promoting social inclusion and tackling social exclusion?

1.2 Small museums are, in many ways, very different from larger museums – do you think that there is anything about them that might make them especially well placed to contribute towards social inclusion – any special or unique role they might be able to play?

1.3 In your view are there any specific difficulties or challenges small museums might face in relation to undertaking social inclusion work?

And now if we can talk about the people involved in this area – those that work in small museums and those who are part of their governing bodies…

1.4   What do you feel are the levels of understanding and commitment amongst   a) the staff   b) the governing body of small museums, around the role that their museum can play in social inclusion?

Prompts - is there a notable difference in level of understanding and commitment between:-
- local authority
- independent/volunteer run
- military/ regimental,
- rural
- urban museums.

SECTION TWO

2.1   Can you give me any examples of social inclusion work in small museums in your region?

Probes
You may want to coax them by thinking of museums that do take audience/access focused approach then refer to the points from the GLLAM report:-
Poor health
Crime
Unemployment
Low educational achievement
Individual or personal growth and development (the way in which engagement with museums can result in enhanced self esteem, confidence or skills development of an individual etc)
Community empowerment (the museum acting as a catalyst to enhance community self determination, to develop community skills, to take greater control over their lives)
Representation of inclusive communities(the way in which museums can, through their collections, displays and programmes, represent the diversity of communities and in doing so, promote tolerance, inter-community respect and challenge stereotypes)

2.2   Do you know of any small museums or specific projects within them that might be used as examples in relation to the listed categories?

So far, we have focused on museums that are already working in this area
2.3   Are there any examples of small museums that are perhaps less advanced in terms of practice but are keen to develop in this area?

(Probe for examples of access/audience development approaches)

SECTION THREE

I would now like to ask your views on strategies for capacity building – for enhancing the quantity and quality of social inclusion work in small museums.

3.1   What capacity building do you think needs to happen to enable small museums to deliver on social inclusion agendas?

3.2   Are there any specific barriers or obstacles that small museums face in relation to this capacity building ?

3.3   What strategies, action or approaches could be taken to tackle these obstacles and to build capacity in small museums – to enable them to make more effective contributions to social inclusion?

Many thanks for your help.

B – protocol for interviews with case studies

Interview Guide

Name   _____
Museum   _____
Tel.no.   _____

I am doing some research for Resource, collecting case studies about social inclusion projects. _____ (name) at _____ (AMC) suggested I talk to you about your project/work with _____.
 (Check if now is a convenient time to speak, or make an appointment)

Can you tell me more about the project/work with _____

Description	
Who was involved? *(ask re: understanding & commitment of colleagues/governing body)*	
What trying to achieve?	
How trying to achieve it?	
Impact on those involved	

This is an interesting example of social inclusion work

Was it evaluated?	
Has it been written up anywhere?	

Can we use it as a brief case study?	

Are there any specific difficulties/challenges in doing this sort of work?

Do you think that small museums like yours have a special role to play in this sort of work? *(Advantages/disadvantages)*

What sort of additional support or resources do you feel are needed?
Prompts – staff, training, funding, networks, etc. (re: capacity building without using the term)

Is **social inclusion** a term that you use to describe the work you do? (If not, why not?)

If yes, what role do you think museums can play in promoting social inclusion?

Statistics e.g. re no. of paid/unpaid staff?

Paid staff	
Unpaid staff	

Thank you

Appendix 7 - Notes from additional case study interviews.

Interview with Claire Seymour, Museum Manager, Ragged School Museum

General ethos - The Ragged School Museum is basically a local community museum in one of the most deprived areas in the country. It has free entrance, activities on the first Sunday of every month are free and holiday activities are free. They receive DfEE funding to do after-school activities with local schools. The children have now become a forum to pilot new activities. Lots of projects are aimed at the local community, e.g. work with Asian children and mothers. Talks for adults are very low-cost (50p if unwaged). They keep the prices low in the café. They are responding to the needs of the community, e.g. where there is a charge for activities, there is a special rate for residents of Tower Hamlets. It is part of the whole ethos of the museum – all staff are committed – they have always done this sort of work, but now 'social inclusion' has become trendy. They translate information into local languages and work closely with community groups.

Volunteers come from as wide a range as possible, e.g. unemployed people can learn new skills; those with mental health problems develop confidence; the elderly combat loneliness. They offer a special needs programme where they develop tailor-made sessions. They work with as many people as they can be of benefit to.

Specific project example– Museum Club and its impact: 10 children (about 10 years old) came regularly over the summer holidays. Activities in the museum, then visits to other museums (Geffrye, Weald & Downland, etc.). The aim was to increase language skills and confidence (they knew very little about the museum at first). At the end they did a presentation and an exhibition to schools. The children now regard themselves as experts, it has changed their status in the classroom; they've become more articulate, are now advocates for the museum (they bring friends & families). The museum plans a follow-up – working with other groups in the same school and/or two other schools. Evaluation was through informal discussion with the children and the teachers. They are drawing up more formal ways to evaluate for the future. The Education Officer ran the project – she will be writing it up, e.g. for Museums Journal.

Challenges: The main difficulty has been funding – it is very insecure, there is no core funding. They need money to be able to keep moving forward.

Special role? Yes, we're the grass roots. the local community will come back, it is through word of mouth. Small museums are seen in a less threatening light. They have access to the community (bigger museums don't always have it).

Needs: It is useful to network with other museums doing similar work – dissemination and evaluation are important. Need a mechanism to facilitate this. It is useful to have an outside viewpoint, e.g. a general audit (from peers?). Also money, of course!

Can small museums play a part in social inclusion? Yes – for funding purposes. They don't refer to it as social inclusion because it is part of everything they are doing. They are not doing it because it's trendy, they've been doing it a long time.

Role in promoting social inclusion? By being accessible 'we're here for you' – not imposing. Museums should be in a process of dialogue (any museum can do this). They need to show they value the views and opinions of the community and will respond. Must be in consultation. People should feel welcome and comfortable. Try to create a friendly environment. It is about confidence-building, and broadening their outlook.

Staffing - 4 full time paid staff (2 short-term), 1 part-time, 29 volunteers and 4 freelancers.

Interview with Janet Goodridge, Museums Officer, Tynedale Museums, Hexham

Janet works with both individuals and voluntary-run heritage groups and museums in the area as well as running the sites in Hexham. She helped set up the initial site at the Bellingham Heritage Centre which does a lot of work with schools & local groups.

Challenges: Who represents the community? One of the problems is that the groups with a heritage interest are often very small, and not representative of their own community. For example, they are usually retired people. There can be conflicts with the local community. 'We're showing your history… but we don't need your help' attitude. They are often very focused in their interests and this can alienate the local community. This is also a problem for them when they then try to recruit extra volunteer support. It is difficult for young people to see it as being relevant to their lives. However, these groups are aware of the problem and are trying to address it.

Advantages are that they <u>are</u> the local people from the area.

Needs: A Project Officer, to involve local people more in the development of the new site and help with marketing. They have good access to training through NEMS. They are not really part of any network, but there is a lot of 'handholding' from Janet and NEMS.

Staffing: At Tynedale Museums itself there are 2 paid members of staff and 9 volunteers. All the voluntary museums in the area are working through JG.

Interview with Kate Brennan, Marketing Officer, Tom Leonard Mining Museum, Skinningrove, Cleveland

Staffing/ volunteers: The museum has always been run by volunteers (mostly ex-miners), including the Museum Manager and the front-of-house staff. KB has a short-term contract (March 2000 to Dec. 2001). She is the first paid member of staff and has a remit for marketing, publicity and development.
There is also a new post of 'Environmental Supervisor'. The focus is the museum environment with a remit to care for collections and carry out maintenance activities – managing and training a team of apprentices (young people from the local area) and starting a programme of conservation, working in the local community as well. George Thrower, who had been a long-term volunteer has just started in post. Funding came from the Tees Valley Social Exclusion and Economic Development Fund. There will also be an Assistant Supervisor.

Current total: 3 paid staff / 20 volunteers.

Focus of the project: the regeneration of the local area, involving local communities in the museum through a training programme. It is part of a longer term development strategy supported by ERDF and the local authority (Economic Development Group). Part of the funding is capital for facilities improvement. The revenue part covers Kate's post. She says 'It is not really a social inclusion project'.

The aims: It is an economically impoverished area with limited training and employment opportunities. The plan is to increase visitor spend in the area which will have a knock-on effect on other businesses.

Support of local community? Would like more volunteers from the local village. *From Governing body /other volunteers?* 'There is wide support for new projects.'

Advantages: They are free to do what they want to do.

Needs: No secure funding so they can only plan short-term – Impact on sustainability.

Training: There is a training programme for the volunteers. Most are retired, some long-term unemployed, some in part-time paid work. Training days are once a month and most volunteers attend. They are intended to be a social event too, but it is a different 'culture' from what the volunteers are used to; there was resistance to e.g. 'Welcome Host Training.'

Social inclusion role? The project is not designed to address social inclusion, but that may be one of the benefits.

Interview with Margaret Edwards, Education Officer, Derry City Museums

Margaret was suggested by Eila McQueen as a good contact for someone who was involved in EMU (Education for Mutual Understanding) projects. However, it became clear that her involvement was largely in terms of responding to school bookings.

EMU Process: All schools are allocated a partner school (Catholic with Protestant); they visit together and work in mixed groups. Apparently many of them don't make further use of the EMU programme, even though extra funding is available. The schools get the same experience - same guided tour - as other school groups get. The EMU dimension probably has more impact if they meet up again, but that depends on the schools involved, although the museum does provide relevant educational materials. EMU works best when the schools are in close proximity. Publicity: they make it known that they are available for EMU groups.
In addition to the EMU programme, different community groups come in, e.g. the Off the Streets group (a community initiative) incorporate a museum visit into their programme as part of general civic awareness.

Social Inclusion? Don't really use the term - difficult for them to gauge the social impact of what they do. She only knows if the visit 'works or not' if they come back again. Her understanding of social inclusion is 'making the museum accessible to anyone' e.g. women's groups. They only do informal evaluation. No idea what else may happen as a result of a visit… But museums have responsibility to be as inclusive as possible. They have tried to get disabled groups, etc. in, but it's all a bit ad-hoc.

Role for small museums? Yes, small museums operate within a social context – can have more of an impact. People come back – repeat visits. (No other records kept) Current focus is on increasing the schools network, improving accessibility for families and providing educational materials for schools.

Needs They are quite *short-staffed*…(3 attendants/guides, a receptionist and the EO who also has responsibility for the site.) The EO sees groups at the start and finish of a tour and goes out to schools, but the guides take the tours.
More money is needed and *more publicity. More staff* so they would be free to do more hands-on work with groups. Also, there is not a lot of *space* for workshops, etc.
Work with youth groups was dropped being too time-consuming.

Interview with Paula Simpson, Exhibition Project Co-ordinator and Jim Garretts, Director, Manchester Jewish Museum

Millennium Local History Project included 2 local history projects (Nov 2000 to July 2001): travelling exhibition of photos of the local community and a temporary local history exhibition at the Jewish Museum (Cheetham & Broughton.)
The travelling exhibition was 28 photos of local people living and working in the community in 2000, taken by a local photographer. It will tour e.g. libraries, Tescos, Manchester Cathedral, the Sikh Gurdwara, Muslim Community Halls…
The temporary exhibition is about the history of the area and its communities over the last 100 years. Communities contributed e.g. costume, video, music, artefacts.

Aim: to reach audiences who might not usually come to the museum.

Evaluation: questionnaires and a visitors' book. They also plan to write it up.

Challenge: The main problem: lack of understanding by the community of how the museum operates, e.g. decisions and deadlines were difficult, stuff kept coming in at the last minute. [*Whose fault was this?]*

Advantages: small museums are more accessible, less alienating.

Social Inclusion? – yes, building on the interests of the local community.
8. Staffing: 3 f/t, 2 p/t (1 of these short-term), 50 part-time unpaid.

The Millennium Project: Consultation and local involvement Awareness of how the district had changed over time with shifts of immigrant populations; wanted to document this and make people aware of it. It was an opportunity to invite ALL communities (and Jewish history was on an equal footing with the others). *It was not an exhibition by the museum, for the community.* Community groups were consulted; representatives from as many community associations as possible were invited. The museum got info about local groups through the SRB. For many it was their first chance to display the history of their community. The museum asked people to supply objects, photos, memories, etc. Also a photographer was commissioned to record the area as it is now; this exhibition will tour (without charge) and then be archived in the local library. A part-time officer co-ordinated the projects, funded by Manchester City Council. The travelling exhibition got a grant from NWMS (AMC). Funding also came from SRB, HLF and M&G Access Fund.

Challenges: the committee (working group of community representatives) were all there in a voluntary capacity, so it was difficult to get people to turn up. 'They often don't understand what's involved in an exhibition – your deadlines, etc.' Also an issue regarding the timescale (Aug to Nov) – too long a lead in;

enthusiasm was beginning to wane. The committee still meets regularly, planning events, trails, etc.

Advantages: small museums are less intimidating. Tried NOT to have meetings in the museum and have not pushed the museum aspect too hard.

Needs: Funding - they would have liked the project officer to be full-time and need help on marketing. More networks to distribute leaflets and posters .

Social Inclusion? Would like to include people who don't normally come to the museum but have to charge admission, being dependent on the income. Free admission is proposed for targeted individuals/groups on 3 days; and special times for women's groups (e.g. Muslim) are being considered.
The project was an opportunity for communities to tell their own stories. They may even consider setting up their own museums. The museum tried to fit in with festivals, etc., to serve appropriate foods and not to accept funding which might cause offence, e.g. Boddingtons Brewery.