

Social inclusion, the museum and the dynamics of sectoral change

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Introduction

In the last two years, the term social inclusion has been widely adopted, though frequently misapplied, within UK museum sector policy and rhetoric. Originally understood by many to be simply a synonym for access or audience development, (concepts that most within the sector are at least familiar, if not entirely comfortable, with), there is now growing recognition that the challenges presented by the inclusion agenda are, in fact, much more significant and the implications more fundamental and far-reaching¹. A growing body of research into the social role and impact of museums suggests that engagement with the concepts of social inclusion and exclusion will require museums - and the profession and sector as a whole - to radically rethink their purposes and goals and to renegotiate their relationship to, and role within, society. In short, if museums are to become effective agents for social inclusion, a paradigmatic shift in the purpose and role of museums in society, and concomitant changes in working practices, will be required.

Though the focus of this paper, the instigation of change, draws upon government policy development and research within the UK context, a consideration of the relevance of the concept of social inclusion to the museum highlights the broader, international relevance of this discussion.

Understandings of Social Inclusion and Exclusion

The concepts of social exclusion and inclusion have generated multifarious understandings depending on the environment within which they have been applied or considered. As complex, multi-layered concepts the ways in which they have been appropriated and interpreted within various contexts (countries, theoretical traditions, professional arenas) have sometimes been startlingly different. For cultural organizations, the meaning, significance and implications of social exclusion and inclusion have been fluid, evolving and problematic.

Within France, where the term originated, social exclusion has been used to describe a process of social disintegration, an erosion of the bonds between the individual, society and the state (Silver, 1995). Within this ideological framework, museums might be understood by some commentators to be positioned as agents of social reform, echoing interpretations of nineteenth century museums' roles as civilizing instruments of the state. Indeed, some have interpreted the UK government's recent policy initiatives as a disturbing attempt at social control². This view undoubtedly merits further exploration, though this paper, drawing on recent conceptual and empirical research, adopts a less determinist view of the museum's role in promoting social inclusion. It is argued here that museums and other cultural organizations have the potential to empower individuals and communities and to contribute towards combating the multiple forms of disadvantage experienced by individuals and communities described as 'at risk of social exclusion'³.

Recent research suggests that museums can contribute towards social inclusion at *individual, community and societal* levels. At an individual or personal level, engagement with museums can deliver positive outcomes such as enhanced self-esteem, confidence and creativity. At a community level, museums can act as a catalyst for social regeneration, empowering communities to increase their self-determination and develop the confidence and skills to take greater control over their lives and the development of the neighbourhoods in which they live. Lastly, museums, through the representation of inclusive communities within collections and displays, have the potential to promote tolerance, inter-community respect and to challenge stereotypes. As agents of individual, community and societal

change, museums have demonstrated their potential to contribute towards the combating of issues such as poor health, high crime, low educational attainment and unemployment. These issues were highlighted by the UK government as the four key indicators of social exclusion (GLLAM, 2000). In this way, the role of the museum in tackling exclusion and promoting inclusion is understood in terms of its social impact in relation to disadvantage, discrimination and social inequality. With this interpretation, the international relevance of this discussion begins to emerge. Museums in many countries are developing their social role, purpose and impact, forming partnerships with health, welfare, social service and other agencies and are seeking to deliver social outcomes in relation to disadvantage. At an international conference on museums and social inclusion at the University of Leicester in March 2000, speakers from countries including Australia, Kenya, South Africa and the United States discussed their museums' increasing interest in these issues, traditionally perceived as irrelevant to the cultural sector.

Recent Policy Developments in the UK

Earlier this year, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS, 2000) issued its policy guidance on DCMS funded and local authority museums, galleries and archives in England, making explicit their new expectations of the sector. Significantly, the document establishes the notion of social responsibility for museums, galleries and archives, acknowledging that they have an important role to play in the combating of social exclusion. In setting out the government's new expectations of the sector, the document begins to acknowledge the degree of change that these new responsibilities are likely to demand; not simply partial changes in practice but, rather, more fundamental changes in the role of museums in relation to society. In his introduction to the policy guidance, the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport states,

Finally, I recognise that this change will not be easy, and will take time. This may be inevitable because we are looking for sustainability and long-term cultural change in the role of museums, galleries and archives, not a short term "quick fix". In conjunction with the Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries, we will be encouraging museums, galleries and archives to play their full part in helping to foster social inclusion (2000: 3).

How can traditional museum agendas, that are manifest in deeply entrenched systems and structures, be challenged in order to bring about a museum sector that is better positioned to deliver on social inclusion agendas? What factors serve to inhibit the more widespread adoption of inclusive values and working practices and through what kinds of mechanism can these influences be addressed to effect sector-wide change?

A shift towards a more outward looking, audience-focused sector is evidenced in a variety of ways; the widespread adoption of the language around inclusion in museum policy, increased research activity⁴, and increasing attention to the issues through conferences, seminars and considerable coverage and debate within the pages of professional journals. In the face of external pressures for change, a growing number within the sector have argued that traditional museum agendas are increasingly untenable and that social inclusion provides a way forward for the development of museums. Yet, evidence of more widespread change within the sector remains elusive and many suspect that, though it is not always publicly voiced, internal resistance to change is high. Indeed, in some quarters, the backlash has already begun⁵.

Museums and Change

Museums, of course, are no strangers to the concept of change. Indeed, much of the museum studies literature from the last decades is based upon the assumption that museums are now operating within a turbulent and rapidly changing environment, requiring new approaches to their management, new sources of funding and new and evolving working practices. Often, museums as organizations have been characterized as lumbering,

prone to inertia, unwilling and unable to proactively respond to change. A number of studies have explored the imperatives for change that museums face as well as the management implications and, often traumatic, consequences of organizational change itself⁶. In contrast this paper focuses, not on individual, organizational change but rather on the *processes* of change, as applied to the museum sector as a whole, and the approaches that might be deployed to better understand, and more effectively initiate and sustain, sector-wide change.

Methodology

This paper builds on research undertaken for the Heritage Lottery Fund as part of their strategic assessment of the needs of the museum sector⁷. Interviews were conducted with Jocelyn Dodd, Nottingham City Museums and Galleries, Fran Hegyi, Scottish Museums Council and Julie Allsop, Lincolnshire Museums. In addition, the paper draws on data from a project undertaken by the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries (RCMG), University of Leicester, for the Group for Large Local Authority Museums, during 2000. The research team⁸, were commissioned to explore the contribution of the GLLAM museum services to social inclusion. Telephone interviews with 22 senior museum managers of large local authority museum services were conducted and follow-up site visits used to document and analyse case studies of individual museum projects.

This paper firstly considers the imperatives for change that the concepts of social exclusion and inclusion have brought to the sector. Drawing on key, theoretical approaches to the management of organizational change, the paper then considers the relevance of these to the instigation of change, not within individual museum organizations, but within the sector as a whole. How might an understanding of the processes of change be applied to the sector and its attempts to respond to social inclusion imperatives? The analysis is informed by the identification of those factors that might serve to inhibit the widespread adoption of inclusive values and working practices and the mechanisms through which these can be addressed.

Social Inclusion and the Emergence of Associated Change Imperatives

Demands for increased accessibility and a desire to broaden museums' visitor profiles have preoccupied the sector for many years. For many, social inclusion has been similarly aligned with the notions of audience development and access; perceived as another term to describe the need to engage with, and attract, those audiences that have traditionally been underrepresented in museum visiting. However, more recently, research into the origins of the concept and its applicability to the cultural sector has contributed to an enhanced understanding of the change imperatives that the social inclusion agenda brings with it.

The term 'social exclusion' has secured increasing popularity and usage since it was first coined in France during the 1970s. Since then, the term has largely replaced 'poverty' in political discourse and within European social policy and there has been considerable debate around the differences between the two concepts and the policy implications of these (Walker, 1997). These differences are significant in explaining the cultural sector's interest in, and engagement with, social inclusion. Walker, who defines poverty as "a lack of material resources, especially income, necessary to participate in British society", defines social exclusion as "a more comprehensive formulation which refers to the dynamic process of being shut out, fully or partially, from any of the social, economic, political and cultural systems which determine the social integration of a person in society" (1997: 8). Walker's definition, incorporating reference to cultural systems, usefully suggests the relevance of social exclusion to museums⁹. Since the election of New Labour in May 1997, the combating of social exclusion (and the promotion of inclusion) has emerged as central to many areas of government policy making.

Though the meaning and understandings of social exclusion have shifted through time and continue to vary from context to context, central to the concept is its multidimensional nature; a characteristic that helps to explain the interest it has received within a diverse range of professional spheres from museums and libraries to education, health and welfare

agencies. There is increasing recognition that the problems described by social exclusion cannot be considered in isolation and that, similarly, solutions must be found through an understanding of the complex interrelationships between the multiple forms of disadvantage that the term describes.

When the debate was dominated by definitions of poverty, those agencies assigned responsibility for tackling its root causes and alleviating its symptoms were more likely to be confined to the domains of employment and welfare. Now within a framework of social exclusion, responsibility is more widely shared - a broader range of institutions are considered as having a role to play as part of a multi-agency approach to tackling the symptoms and causes of exclusion. (Sandell, 1998: 406)

Adopted as one of the UK government's highest priorities, social exclusion has been defined by the Social Exclusion Unit, situated within the Cabinet Office, as "a shorthand term for what can happen when people or areas suffer from a combination of linked problems such as unemployment, poor skills, low incomes, poor housing, high crime environments, bad health, poverty and family breakdown." (DCMS, 2000: 7) Calls for museums to contribute to the combating of exclusion and the promotion of inclusion have therefore prompted a debate around museums' potential to not only enhance access for those groups identified as at risk of social exclusion but to play a more direct role in combating the disadvantage and discrimination which those groups experience. For some within the sector, these new roles and social responsibilities may represent an inappropriate departure from the traditional goals assigned to museums; goals that centre on the functions of preservation, display, interpretation and education. However, some within the sector, including museums which have been individually working in this way for many years, are enthusiastic about the opportunities presented by a political agenda dominated by social inclusion and have begun to advocate more widespread adoption of inclusive values, goals and working practices¹⁰. Furthermore, the Heritage Lottery Fund has led a sector-wide needs assessment which includes identification and analysis of the strategies that will be required to reposition the sector to ensure museums can deliver outcomes in relation to inclusion¹¹.

Alongside the pronouncement of new government expectations, made explicit in their policy guidance, research findings have further fuelled the debate, presenting empirical evidence of the impact of museums on disadvantage and social inequality¹². The emergence of this and other data is likely to further influence professional discourse and encourage debate around the social role and purpose of museums. How might the far-reaching changes in museum policy, and concomitant changes in practice, now demanded by government be facilitated throughout the sector?

Conceptualizing Change

In order to plan effective interventions one needs some kind of comprehensive change theory which explains how to initiate change, how to manage the total change process, and how to stabilise desired change outcomes. (Schein 1980: 209)

A vast body of literature on change management and organizational theory has developed in recent decades in an attempt to enable the managers of organizations to understand and appreciate the dynamics and complexities around change. This considers the opportunities offered by an evolving and unstable external environment and the challenges presented by the, often painful, process of change within the organization and its effects on those that work within it. The majority of this research, closely linked to the field of strategic management, is unsurprisingly focused on the organization as the unit of study; principally for-profit organizations and their response to changing economic, political and social factors. Similarly, as has already been stated, accounts of change within the museum sector have often focussed on individual organizations and their responses to change imperatives. Whilst this literature largely focuses on organizational change, the overarching concepts and

theories can usefully be applied to an analysis of the change imperatives affecting the museum sector, resistance to these, and the processes by which long-term, sustainable, sector-wide change might be facilitated.

Though research on organizational change has produced an array of models and approaches to different aspects of change management in the past three decades, much of this acknowledges its debt to the seminal work of the social psychologist, Kurt Lewin in the 1940s and 1950s (Senior, 1997: 262). Though, Lewin's research emerged from an entirely different context, the overarching concepts he developed to explain individual behaviour, resistance to change and group dynamics have been widely adapted by management theorists to explore organizational change in the last five decades.

This debt is summarised by French and Bell (1990: 25) when they say: 'Lewin's field theory and his conceptualising about group dynamics, change processes, and action research were of profound influence on the people who were associated with the various stems of [organization development].' This remains the case to the present time. (Senior, 1997: 264)

Two of Lewin's key concepts that have been most extensively adapted and applied to organizational change by management theorists are the three phase model of change and force field analysis. Though these have been used to develop an array of approaches to organizational development and change, some of these have been criticised for being overly systemic and over-reliant on scientific management techniques. In our analysis below, consideration is also therefore given to the significance of individuals and the political and cultural factors that influence the change process.

Lewin's Three Phase Model of Change

Drawing on the work of Lewin, most models of organizational change consist of a series of phases through which an organization will move; *unfreezing*, *moving* and *refreezing*. (Senior, 1997: 262) Though use of this model has been criticised for oversimplifying the complex process of organizational change¹³, it is, nevertheless, widely used by management theorists to underpin approaches to change. The three phase model of change offers a foundation for understanding the *processes* involved in repositioning the museum sector and identifying the *principles* that might underpin initiatives aimed at securing long-term change.

The process of *unfreezing* principally involves creating a motivation and willingness to embrace change. According to Nadler (1993: 92), the first step is to "identify and surface dissatisfaction with the current state". In doing so, resistance to change can be lessened by identifying, and making explicit, the inadequacies of current modes of operation or working practices. Senior (1997: 263) suggests that this can be achieved through "the introduction of information showing discrepancies between desirable goals and modes of operating and what is currently happening" thereby creating a climate of dissatisfaction within which a willingness to change can be fostered. It is possible to identify elements of this *unfreezing* stage within the museum sector at present. Recent research, identifying the potential for museums to act as agents of social inclusion¹⁴ might usefully serve as a benchmark against which museums can measure their performance. Similarly, research that has exposed the inadequacies of current museum practice in attempting to attract traditionally under-represented audiences might also serve to generate discontent¹⁵.

Nadler (1993: 92) also highlights the importance of creating opportunities for participation in, and ownership of, the change amongst those who will be responsible for its implementation. "One of the most consistent findings in the research on change is that participation in the change tends to reduce resistance, build ownerships of the change, and thus motivates people to make the change work". This would suggest that change is most likely to be secured and sustained if mechanisms for both consultation and the empowerment of individuals and organizations within the sector are adopted.

The second phase in the change process is that of *moving* which, within organizational theory, involves strategies that will serve to move an organization from its current to its desired

state (Senior, 1997: 263). Nadler (1993: 93) advocates the use of what he terms 'multiple and consistent leverage points', an approach that recognises the interconnected nature of different elements within organizations. In essence, Nadler is advocating the simultaneous use of a range of different strategies that, together, will serve to move the organization forward through its transitional state of change.

If... an organization is made up of components which are interdependent, then the successful alteration of organizational behaviour patterns must involve the use of multiple leverage points, or modifications in the larger set of components which shape the behaviour of the organization and the people in it... Change which is in the direction intended and which is lasting therefore requires the use of multiple leverage points to modify more than a single component. (Nadler, 1993: 93-94)

This principle of managing organizational change, when applied to analysis of the museum sector, suggests the need for an holistic approach with multiple and complementary strategies that together can support and encourage sustainable developments.

The third and final phase in Lewin's model of change, that of *refreezing*, 'involves stabilising or institutionalising the changes.' (Senior, 1997: 263) . Clarke (1994: 102) identifies two important elements within the *refreezing* process. First, an assessment of procedures and systems that will reinforce and support the changed behaviour within an organization and secondly the identification and publicising of successful change. In terms of organizational change, new procedures and systems might include a new performance appraisal system that rewards and reinforces the required behavioural changes¹⁶. From a sector-wide perspective, the structures designed, for example, to create and maintain standards in museum provision such as the Registration Scheme¹⁷, must similarly be reassessed in order to support change and this will be considered later in the paper. Secondly, the publicising of museums' contributions to inclusion will serve to increase awareness of the social role and contribution of museums both within and outside of the sector, to advocate the benefits of an inclusive approach and to reward those achieving within this area through recognition.

This application of Lewin's three phase model of change to the museum sector usefully highlights the principles which should underpin attempts to create sector-wide change. From this understanding of the overarching process of change we can move towards a framework for identifying the more specific *mechanisms* and individual *strategies* which together are most likely to initiate and sustain the required changes in working practices. Here, another of Lewin's widely adapted theories can be of use.

Force-Field Analysis

The technique that has become widely referred to as 'force-field analysis' (see figure 1.) is used to represent, in a given scenario, the balance between driving forces for change and restraining forces, or change inhibitors, that work to maintain the status quo. Widely used within the literature on organizational development, the model suggests that successful strategies for change will require the strengthening of existing driving forces, the introduction of new and additional forces for change and/or the removal or weakening of those forces that oppose or act to restrain change (Cole, 1994: 145, Johnson and Scholes, 1999: 505). Whilst this model has been used to conceptualise resistance to change within an organizational setting, it nevertheless offers a useful framework for the analysis of sector-wide change. In the face of powerful change imperatives, what factors can be identified to explain resistance to engaging with social inclusion agendas and how might these be addressed?

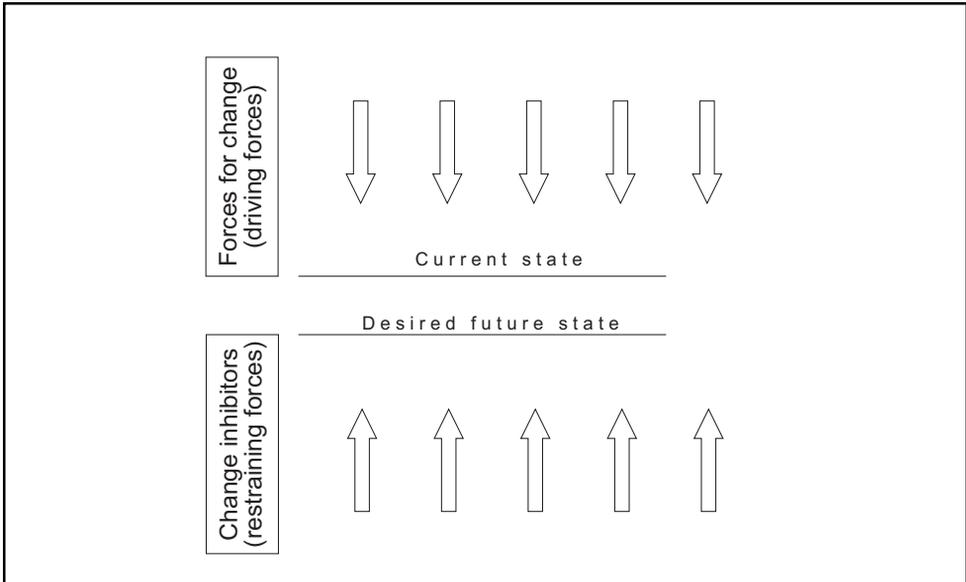


Figure 1. Force field analysis (after Lewin)

Change Inhibitors

In order to identify what is needed to create a committed, motivated, well equipped and resourced sector that is better able to promote social inclusion, it is helpful to identify the forces that serve to inhibit widespread change within the sector. Figure 2¹⁸ illustrates these forces. In this representation of the current situation, the forces against change are much stronger than those for it. An emerging government policy, a new strategic body for the sector¹⁹, a minority of committed individuals, the development of new funding streams and opportunities²⁰ and a growing body of research, are pitted against deeply entrenched attitudes, structures and systems.

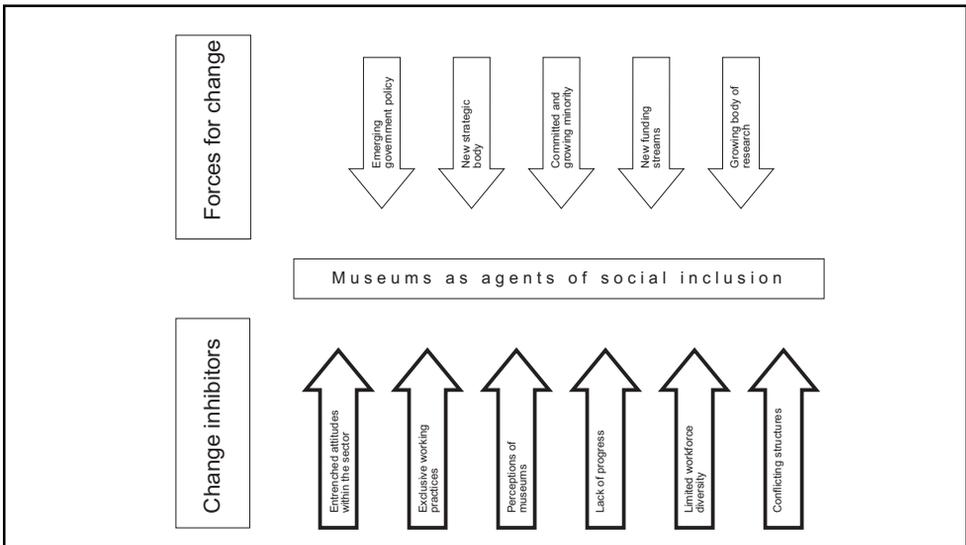


Figure 2. An assessment of current forces against change within the sector

This analysis identifies five predominant change inhibitors. Firstly, and most significantly, a resistance to change that is manifest within entrenched attitudes amongst museum workers. Though there has been limited empirical research into the attitudes and values of museum staff, that which does exist suggests that most do not subscribe to the notion that museums have a social responsibility to tackle issues of inequality and disadvantage. Ginsburgh and Mairesse in their survey of Belgian museums, asked curators to rank possible missions for their organizations and found that, “education and permanence (i.e. ensuring that collections are preserved for future generations) are the highest rated missions by the majority of museum. Missions which are at the root of the New Museology current, such as quality of life (enriching the intellectual life of the community) and social role are not ignored, but they are assigned fairly low priority” (Ginsburgh and Mairesse 1997:21)

Secondly, though there is increasing consultation of audiences, (a trend encouraged by the introduction of ‘best value’²¹), few museums share decision-making with individuals or groups outside of the organization or genuinely empower audiences to influence their direction. Museum practices are traditionally rooted in a belief in the authority of the museum professional as ‘expert’ that serves to constrain dialogue between the museum and the communities it seeks to engage with. These undemocratic and exclusive working practices conflict with the key principles on which successful social inclusion work, in all contexts, is based²².

A third change inhibitor is the attitudes towards museums, held by those agencies traditionally most closely involved in tackling the forms of disadvantage now described by the term social exclusion. Many museums find themselves excluded from new initiatives as they are rarely considered as appropriate partners by social, welfare or health agencies. (Sandell, 1999) A similar unwillingness to acknowledge the potential for the cultural sector to engage with social issues has been voiced within mainstream media. In her article, ‘Ignorance on Display’ in *The Guardian*, (2000: 5), Catherine Bennett berates the DCMS following publication of their policy guidance. “Ideally, museums would concern themselves, as so many already do, with being good museums, and the social exclusion unit would concern itself with poverty. The only meeting point between the two should be at the museum door: can everyone afford to walk in?” Fourthly, there has been limited guidance and information available to the sector. Though the terms increasingly appear in museum policy documents, there remains a lack of understanding of the processes involved in working towards inclusion-led objectives. Finally, it has been argued that the nature and composition of the museum sector workforce serves to support the status-quo. The sector is characterized by exclusive approaches to recruitment and selection resulting in a profession that is often resistant to diversity and closed to new perspectives and ways of working²³.

How can these change-inhibitors, as illustrated in Figure 2, be overcome and how can the forces for change be enhanced and strengthened? What are the characteristics held by those museums that have successfully engaged with issues of social inclusion and how can these be developed and built upon throughout the sector?

Central to these questions is the need for a paradigmatic shift in attitudes within the sector; a mind-set change that is open to radically different roles and responsibilities for museums as well as new relationships with audiences. Such changes cannot be realised overnight nor can they be achieved through single initiatives such as the introduction of, for example, new funding streams, central government policies or new approaches to training. Rather, there is a need for complementary approaches that will both *enable* and *enforce* long-term, sustainable change. This section considers the strategies and mechanisms by which change in the sector might be both *enabled* (through means that support and encourage new approaches and practices) and *enforced* (through the establishment of standards and requirements that can serve to combat resistance). Building on the principles required to underpin the process of change (through *unfreezing*, *moving* and, finally, *refreezing*), described above, force field analysis can be used to identify “multiple and consistent leverage points” (Nadler, 1993: 92) that together may be applied to initiate sector-wide change. These are illustrated in Figure 3 and discussed below.

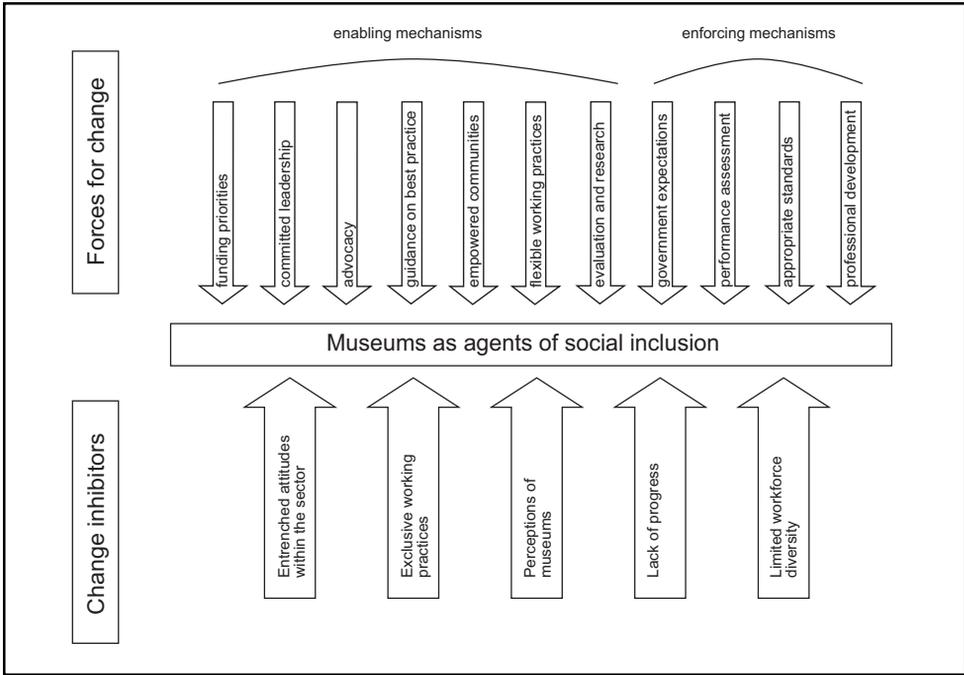


Figure 3. The role of enforcing and enabling mechanisms in tackling change inhibitors

Enabling Strategies

Drawing on the opinions and experiences of practitioners working in the sector, to identify the characteristics of those museums that are already operating effectively as agents of inclusion, the paper now explores the means through which these might be disseminated and embedded throughout the sector.

Much of the literature on organizational change suggests that an approach, based solely on coercion, obligation and a reliance on enhanced forces for change, is likely to generate increased conflict and entrenchment amongst those cautious of the prospect of change. Cole (1994: 145) states that “The better way of overcoming resistance, therefore, is by focusing on the removal, or at least weakening, of the objections and fears of the resisting side”. It follows therefore that, alongside enforcing strategies and mechanisms that alone are likely to produce anger, frustration and backlash within the sector, enabling mechanisms and strategies must also be in place to support and facilitate the necessary changes. No single strategy can be identified to effect such a change though a consideration of the circumstances in which effective organizations are already operating provides some illumination. Furthermore, many of the prerequisites for change identified below, are interlinked. For example, the democratisation of museum practices might be both *enforced* through the introduction of new standards and *enabled* through training.

A Shift in the Values and Attitudes of Museum Staff

The social value of the museum has got to be considered as important and valuable as the preservation of collections, their interpretation and other aspects of museums’ provision. (Dodd, 2000).

All research participants interviewed for this paper identified the need for a radical shift

in the values and attitudes of all staff working in the sector. Though there is increasing recognition of the need to diversify and broaden audiences there remains a resistance to the notion that museums have a social impact beyond their educational role. A resistance to change and an unwillingness to engage with issues of social inequality are the most powerful forces for inertia and present the greatest challenge to this analysis of sectoral change.

The sector needs to open up - become more outward looking and exposed to the agendas of other organizations (Dodd, 2000)

Those museums that already view their role as an agent of social inclusion have developed a way of working that is outward looking and open to dialogue with a wide range of both agencies and communities. These organizations are willing to be exposed to, and to respond to, changing social, economic and political issues and agendas and, in the case of local authority museums, often have close links with other departments.

Funding Priorities

Funding for small pilot projects can be used to change attitudes within the museum - to show people its not scary, its not necessarily extra work but a different way of doing things. You can start small and grow from there - that way you get more commitment and ownership. Staff can learn from their experiences and see the benefits generated from projects their colleagues have initiated within the museum. (Allsop, 2000)

In those museums that are widely recognised as leading the field in terms of social inclusion, the shift in attitude has taken many years to spread through the organization and become embedded in both policy and practice. (GLLAM, 2000) Often small, pilot projects have been initiated by a minority, demonstrated the potential of the museum and, in doing so, have brought about incremental changes in perception amongst staff with more traditional agendas. In this respect, the re-focusing of funding sources provided by a range of bodies to encourage small, pilot projects through which success can be demonstrated, (and indeed, from which lessons arising from failed projects can be learnt), is likely to encourage and contribute towards longer-term change.

Committed Leadership

You undoubtedly need a top-down commitment - someone who can say categorically that this is what the organization is all about. (Hegyí, 2000)

Research participants highlighted the importance of committed, dynamic leaders with a willingness to take risks, support staff in their, sometimes experimental, approaches to working with audiences, and act as an effective advocate for the organization's work. Much of the impetus for the development of projects aimed at social inclusion has come out of education and outreach teams. A committed senior manager is needed to engender a sense of shared values throughout the organization and to facilitate change within all departments and teams. (GLLAM, 2000)

Advocacy

At present museums are not considered as relevant or appropriate and therefore remain excluded from many initiatives. (Hegyí, 2000)

A lack of advocacy on the part of many senior museum managers has contributed towards a 'vicious circle of invisibility' (GLLAM, 2000) that has often served to conceal the museum's value as a partner in inclusion initiatives. In some museum services it has taken many years of advocacy work to persuade politicians, policy makers and social, health, and

welfare agencies that museums can be useful partners with which to work. A minority of museum services have found that, by demonstrating the role that museums can play, they have secured funding from sources that were previously closed to them²⁴.

Guidance on Best Practice

People can read a definition but don't know how to translate that into their own working practices. (Allsop, 2000)

Whilst some staff may be opposed to the concept of inclusion as part of their work, others are simply uncertain of the processes and practices that can be used to develop socially inclusive approaches within their role. Staff training and development, that will develop amongst all museum workers both an ethos of social responsibility and the tools, skills and knowledge to begin to work in an effective way, is needed to help to effect wider change.

Training

It might say 'social inclusion' in the policy documents but the practice does not always reflect this - training is needed to demonstrate how the philosophies and principles can be implemented. (Hegyi, 2000)

The need for appropriate training was also highlighted, from pre-entry professional training courses to ongoing opportunities for continuing professional development²⁵. Whilst the skills and tools for socially inclusive work might usefully be acquired through training courses, other innovative methods of training and development are likely to be more effective in beginning to shift deeply held beliefs and attitudes.

Museum people are still quite patronising about excluded communities. By developing approaches to training that are based on real experiences, delivered by or with input from groups or individuals who have been excluded from the museum, patronising and offensive attitudes can be challenged. It's almost like a bridge between the lives of the average museum worker and the people we're trying to work with. (Dodd, 2000)

At Nottingham Castle Museum and Art Gallery, the Drawbridge Group, a consultative group of disabled people, devised and delivered relevant, tailored training, in a non-threatening environment, for all museum staff in disability awareness. This proved to be highly effective in encouraging, amongst individuals, increasing recognition of their responsibility to consider access issues in their daily working practices (Dodd, 2000).

The Democratization of Museum Practice

To be more effective as agents of social inclusion, museums must seek to renegotiate the basis of their relationship with communities. Rather than developing aims and objectives internally, based on the organization's agenda and priorities, museums must learn to develop mechanisms through which communities can be empowered to take part in the decision-making process. For many, this democratisation of the museum and the resultant sharing of power, resources, skills and knowledge between museum and audience, challenges the very notion of the museum professional as 'expert'. For others, giving audiences a stake in the museum and specific projects has proved to be the only way to engage with groups that may have perceived museums as irrelevant to their lives.

Flexible Working Practices

You need to respond quickly to community needs. For example, many groups will not wait around for two years for an exhibition simply because that is the next gap in your programme. (Dodd, 2000)

Working with some groups at risk of exclusion can be a challenging experience and many museums have had to develop new working practices to accommodate their needs. Traditional museum working practices may feature for example, long lead-in times for new projects or a requirement for approval from a governing body before changes in a programme can be agreed. Such rigid and inflexible approaches are likely to conflict with the needs of communities that might be rapidly changing and unpredictable. (GLLAM, 2000) Similarly, funding bodies, (including those outside of the sector), tend to expect a way of working that is based on the establishment of clear objectives at the outset of a project and evaluation of outcomes against those objectives at the project's conclusion. For many museums, such requirements have proved to be unrealistic as they have discovered a need to be flexible about both the projects' aims and outcomes if they are to be truly responsive to community needs. This flexibility within the expectations of funding bodies is therefore identified as a further enabling mechanism in this analysis of sectoral change.

Evaluation and Research

The research project commissioned by GLLAM also confirmed the need for further research and evaluation within the sector; to identify the social impact of the museum, to inform museum practice in this area and to convince those within and outside of the sector of the potential that exists for museums to contribute towards social inclusion. (GLLAM, 2000)

The Nature of the Workforce

We should have a more balanced staff - as many people who know about the community and their needs as we do about the collections and their needs. If we are really serious about inclusion being at the heart of what we do then our resource allocation should reflect that. (Dodd, 2000)

Though all staff have the potential to work towards inclusion, many services have found it necessary to recruit more staff in the areas of outreach, education and public services. For some inclusion initiatives, museums will require staff who hold an in-depth understanding of diverse potential audiences and who are aware of networks that will provide routes into the community. Similarly there is increasing recognition of the strategic significance of workforce diversity, especially in terms of ethnicity. The UK has lagged behind Australia and the United States, in particular, in exploring the potential links between diversity in the organization's workforce, its programmes and collection and its audiences. Recent research has highlighted the exclusive nature of museum recruitment and selection practices that account, at least in part, for the under-representation of ethnic minorities within the UK workforce and suggests a need for the sector to become more open to a wider range of skills and experiences. Figure 4 suggests that a virtuous circle of diversity can be created through the adoption and implementation of positive action initiatives in recruitment, participatory approaches to collecting and programming, and targeted approaches to audience development²⁶.

Enforcing Mechanisms

The enabling mechanisms described above are designed to create a motivation and impetus for change and to support the sector through the transitional *moving* phase described by Lewin's three phase model. However, an intellectual agreement on the way forward and the need for change is often insufficient. As Bowman (1998: 145) states, "The structures and processes in which the old routines are embedded must be changed as well."²⁷

The force field analysis in figure 2 suggests that some of the key structures that regulate and promote standards within the sector are in conflict with, rather than support and complement, the new approaches to museum policy and practice demanded by social inclusion. In itself, the recently issued policy guidance from DCMS, *Centres for Social*

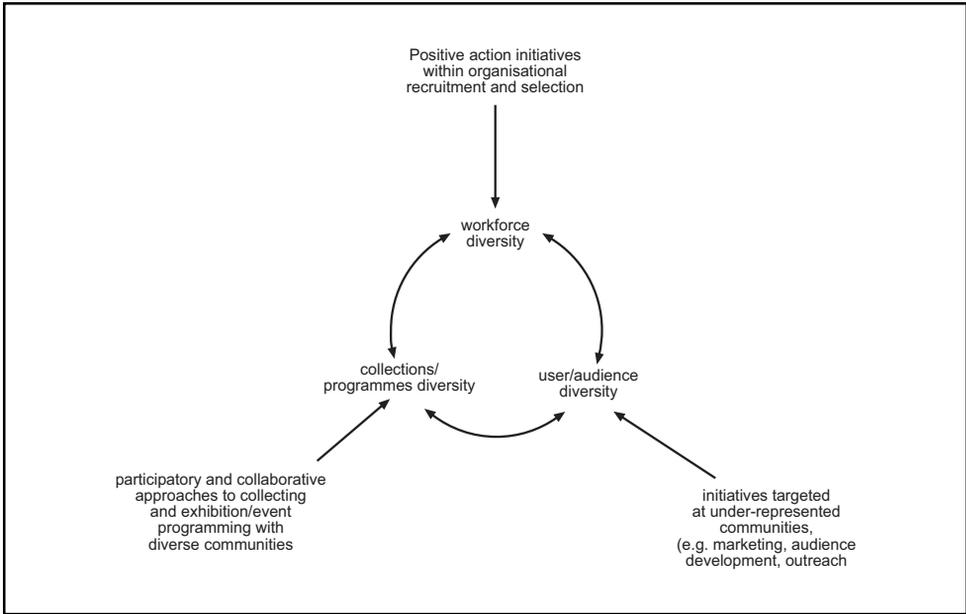


Figure 4. Diversity management in the museum - a conceptual framework

Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All, is highly significant since it explicitly acknowledges the notion that museums have an *obligation*, as well as merely the potential to tackle the symptoms and causes of social exclusion²⁸. More specific mechanisms of enforcement have, to date, revolved around the Registration scheme, established by the Museums and Galleries Commission in 1988²⁹ and performance indicators, in particular those set by central government.

The Registration Scheme is designed to act as both a minimum standards scheme and also a means through which museums can be encouraged, through advice and guidance from Area Museums Councils and Resource, to improve in all areas of practice, beyond the minimum requirements necessary to achieve registered museum status. Nevertheless, at present the scheme is heavily biased towards standards of collections management and care, although there are proposals to introduce new requirements into subsequent phases of the scheme, centred on standards of educational provision (Wilkinson, 2000). Indeed, at present, the only absolute requirement for the achievement of registered status pertains to the need to be open to the public in an appropriate way. (Babbidge and Ewles, 2000). This bias both reflects and reinforces the sector's collections-oriented ethos. Subsequent developments, such as the Designation scheme have similarly continued to promote the pre-eminence of collections over audiences and issues of access and inclusion (Anderson, 1997: 20). In order to facilitate the *refreezing* process of change, through which new ways of working are incentivized and supported, (Clarke, 1994), the Registration scheme might usefully be developed to oblige museums to introduce inclusive approaches to their work. Building on current proposals to introduce education-based criteria into subsequent phases, the scheme might be further expanded to oblige museums to provide evidence that they are introducing more democratic and consultative practices, for example, the establishment of user and non-user panels. Related to this, the Museums Association's Code of Ethics, which is used to underpin the Registration Scheme, is currently under review and the Association is planning to explicitly include issues of social responsibility, reflecting the new expectations that have arisen around social inclusion. Recommendations that will be presented to the Museums Association's Ethics Committee in September 2000 include, for example, a requirement for museums to develop mechanisms through which audiences

can directly influence the direction of museum projects. (Vaswani, 2000)

Similarly there is recognition within the sector, amongst those committed to issues of inclusion, that performance indicators have neglected to address these issues sufficiently³⁰. More recently, attempts have been made by central government to introduce new indicators that may be linked to future funding, to seek to ensure that museums diversify and broaden their audience profiles.

The country's leading museums and art galleries have been told they must meet strict quotas of ethnic visitors, or they could lose their funding. In a move that has angered many museum directors, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport has ordered them to ensure that up to 12 percent of their visitors are from minorities. (Cobain, 2000)

Such measures may indeed prove problematic for many museums and, it might be argued, are more likely to encourage tokenism, short term and unsustainable initiatives rather than effect real change within the sector. More appropriate indicators might be developed to reinforce and complement the developments to the Registration Scheme, proposed above. Instead of focussing on hard quotas, museums might be obliged, for example, to implement the democratic and collaborative practices on which effective inclusion work is based.

Conclusion

The concept of social inclusion has generated substantive change imperatives and exposed a gap between the new expectations of the sector and the reality of current policy and practice. The relationship between museums and society is shifting and, whilst the terminology will undoubtedly evolve, it is likely that the underlying demands for museums to become more responsive to changing socio-political agendas and to adopt a greater degree of social responsibility will continue.

Museums, perhaps even more so than other organizations, develop values, routines and ways of working that are often resistant to change. These in turn are reflected and reinforced within sector-wide structures and systems that can support and help to maintain a status quo. It is unlikely that the degree of change, discussed in this paper, will be achieved within the sector without the support and motivation of the majority. Many of the strategies proposed in this paper, such as training, will take time to be fully effective as aspiring museum professionals, with new attitudes and competencies, progress into positions of influence and power. Change catalysts, who can advocate the adoption of new roles and responsibilities, will undoubtedly play an important part in persuading those reluctant to adopt new approaches to museum practice, of the benefits of doing so.

The process of change can be simultaneously, exciting, messy and stressful. Whilst an understanding and analysis of the dynamics of change will never produce a precise blueprint for sectoral transformation, they can nevertheless assist in unravelling and reshaping the complex, multifaceted and often unpredictable forces that influence the change process.

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I am grateful to members of the Research Centre for Museums and Galleries, Professor Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Dr Theano Moussouri and Helen O'Riain who, with the author, undertook research for the Group for Large Local Authority Museums into the contribution of museums to social inclusion on which this paper draws. I would also like to thank Stuart Davies, Jocelyn Dodd, Fran Hegyi and Julie Allsop for agreeing to be interviewed and for their invaluable comments.

Notes

1 For a detailed discussion, see Sandell, R. (1998) 'Museums as agents of social inclusion', *Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship* 17 (4) and Sandell, R. (2000) 'Means to an

end', Arts Business, 14 Feb 2000).

2 See for example, 'Tate Curator's Arts Broadside: Labour Accused of Populism and Social Engineering', *The Observer*, 14 May 2000.

3 This term is widely used in UK government policy.

4 For example, the Group for Large Local Authority Museums (GLLAM) commissioned a major research project to identify their contribution to social inclusion. See GLLAM (2000) 'Museums and Social Inclusion - the GLLAM report'.

5 See for example, 'Tate Curator's Arts Broadside: Labour Accused of Populism and Social Engineering', *The Observer*, 14 May 2000.

6 See, for example, Janes, R. R. (1995) *Museums and the Paradox of Change: a Case Study in Urgent Adaptation* (Calgary: Glenbow Museum), Spalding, J. (1999) in Moore, K. (ed.). *Management in Museums* (London: Athlone) and Gurian, Elaine Heumann (1995) *Institutional trauma : major change in museums and its effect on staff* (Washington, DC : American Association of Museums).

7 The author was commissioned to identify the needs of the sector to enable museums to be able to contribute more effectively to social inclusion.

8 The project research team at RCMG comprised Professor Eilean Hooper-Greenhill, Dr. Theano Moussouri, Helen O'Riain and Richard Sandell.

9 This is explored in more detail in Sandell, R. (1998) 'Museums as agents of social inclusion', *Journal of Museum Management and Curatorship* vol. 17, 4).

10 In his foreword to 'Museums and Social Inclusion: the GLLAM report', (2000) David Fleming, director of Tyne and Wear museums states, "... there is no disputing the fact that museums are natural engines for social inclusion work as long as we choose to adopt this role".

11 See note 5.

12 See for example, 'Museums and Social Inclusion: the GLLAM report' (2000).

13 See for example Moss Kanter, R., Stein, Barry A. and Jick, Todd, D. *The Challenge of Organizational Change* (New York: The Free Press).

14 See note 10.

15 See for example, BMRB International (1998) *Cultural Diversity: Attitudes of Ethnic Minority Populations Towards Museums and Galleries*, (London: BMRB International Limited).

16 See, for example, the analysis of British Airways using Lewin's change model in Goodstein, Leonard, D. and Warner Burke, W. (1993) in Mabey, C. and Mayon-White, Bill (ed.) *Managing Change* (London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd):169.

17 Launched by the Museums and Galleries Commission in 1988 and currently under review by the new strategic body for the sector, Resource: the Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives.

18 The diagram can be used to conceptualise the forces for and against change in a given situation.

19 Resource: The Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries was created in April 2000. In its manifesto the organization states, "Resource will be a force for change, advising Government and the museums, archives and libraries profession on all the key issues which collectively define their future. At its heart is a strong commitment to improve the experience of those who currently use our museums, libraries and archives and those who will do so in the future." (Resource, 2000).

20 For example, the Heritage Lottery Fund's Access Fund.

21 Best value is a government initiative that, "places a duty on local authorities to consult with and involve their users in the provision of appropriate services" (DCMS, 2000: 9)

22 In their report to the Social Exclusion Unit on the role of arts and sport in promoting social inclusion, Policy Action Team 10 identifies the importance of community involvement, participation and empowerment. "A model which offers control by those who are involved, albeit in partnership with funding agencies, local authorities and other stakeholders, is likely to have much deeper impact on those involved and the wider community" (DCMS, 1999: 42).

23 For a detailed discussion of these issues see Sandell, R., (2000) 'The strategic significance of workforce diversity in museums', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 6 (3).

24 For example, the Heath Action Zone, social services departments.

25 Indeed, a further enforcing mechanism might be introduced through the validation and recognition of postgraduate museum training courses by the Cultural Heritage National Training Organization (CHNTO) and the Museums Association to ensure the provision of social inclusion training within course curricula.

26 For a detailed discussion of these issues see Sandell, R., (2000) 'The strategic significance of workforce diversity in museums', *International Journal of Heritage Studies*, 6 (3).

27 Though Bowman refers to organizational structures and systems, this principle is also pertinent to analysis of the museum sector.

28 "Combating social exclusion is one of the Government's highest priorities, and I believe that museums, galleries and archives have a significant role to play in helping us to do this." Chris Smith, Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport, Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All, DCMS, May 2000.

29 The scheme is currently under review by Resource: The Council for Museums, Libraries and Archives.

30 "There was also a recognition that until social inclusion was included in specific performance indicators, the museum sector in general was not likely to engage fully in this debate and move the necessary resources in this direction. At present a very small percentage of a museum's entire budget is spent on services such as education and access." (Scottish Museums Council, 2000).

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