Contact

SCOTTISH MUSEUMS COUNCIL

museums and social justice

How museums and galleries can work for their whole communities

INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

Foreword

Museums can, and do, make an important contribution to social justice. The national cultural strategy, *Creating our Future …Minding our Past*, highlighted the importance of realising the potential contribution that culture can make to education, promoting inclusion and enhancing people's quality of life. Historically, many of Scotland's best museums and galleries have had social inclusion as their raison d'être. In future, we can as Donald Dewar wanted "Build on the commitment to social justice which lies at the heart of the political and civil life in Scotland". To make this happen, we want to encourage everyone working in the museum sector, and bring the potential role of museums to the attention of others tackling inequalities and disadvantage. We are pleased therefore, to welcome the work of the Scottish Museum Council's working group on social justice and the publication of this document.

Allan Wilson MSP
Deputy Minister for Sport and Culture

Margaret Curran MSP
Deputy Minister for Social Justice

The Scottish Museums Council has long advocated the right of everyone to experience their history and culture, irrespective of their circumstances in life. Our museums have enormous potential to make a unique contribution to the social justice movement, by enabling everyone to engage with the past and look towards the future. We have no choice in this matter: we have to create successful systems for social justice. These will cost money but the cost to all of us, if we fail, will be far higher: in unemployment; crime; ill health; and, overall a dreadful waste of the innate talents of our people.

Professor Malcolm McLeod
Chair, Scottish Museums Council

Introduction

'…Scotland is on the threshold of a new future. A future where everyone matters, where together we can build on the commitment to social justice which lies at the heart of political and civic life in Scotland.'

Donald Dewar in *Social Justice… a Scotland where Everyone Matters*, 1999.

'Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.'

Article 27 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Museums and art galleries preserve, display and promote Scotland's cultural heritage and elements of world cultural heritage. They merit public funding on the basis that the opportunity to be inspired by great artistic or scientific achievements or to explore evidence of a community's and of humanity's past, is not an optional, but an essential element in our society. It is a right of all citizens of Scotland.

The integrity of museums depends on these experiences being available, not just in ways which suit the better-off, the socially confident, and well-educated but which recognise the social and economic realities of the lives of all citizens. Current analysis of the problems facing people who are excluded from society's opportunities suggests that, in the past, the range of welfare, educational and other support mechanisms have not been adequate, since they do not recognise the complex, interdependent nature of social exclusion.

The government has therefore called for a strategic, integrated approach, which will effectively tackle poverty and deprivation. A host of public and voluntary agencies have a contribution to make, crucially by working together in partnership. Given that museums are an essential part of civil society rather than luxury institutions, they too have a contribution to make. Insofar as access to cultural heritage is a matter of rights and citizenship rather than a privilege, then the imperative for museums and art galleries to be socially inclusive is a matter of **justice** rather than welfare.

This document sets out the unique role which museums and galleries have in the movement towards an inclusive and just society. It makes recommendations both to national and local government and to individual museums. Acknowledging that changes cannot occur overnight, it provides guidelines for museum services that will enable museums to begin to meet the aim of achieving social justice.

In particular, we hope this document will:

➜ encourage museums and galleries to place social inclusion at the centre of policy and practice
➜ increase the awareness of organisations working towards social inclusion of the potential contribution of museums and galleries
➜ generate wide debate about the social role, ethos, structure and management of museums and galleries, especially in the context of the National Cultural Strategy

➜ suggest ways in which museums and galleries can develop effective social justice strategies to meet current social demands
➜ demonstrate the contribution museums and galleries are already making towards social inclusion
➜ provide examples of good practice through case studies.

The cost of developing inclusive procedures and practices for the sector and individual museums will be significant, both in terms of time and money, and will also take several years to produce tangible results. The subtlety of the desired outcomes may also mean that they are not directly attributable to the work of museums but are the result of the collaborative effort across many agencies and sectors.

Whatever the cost, this must be balanced against the far greater cost of inaction. The cost to society of unrealised human potential, much less the welfare, health and support systems required to treat the symptoms, is incalculable. The willingness of museums and galleries to embrace the social justice agenda must be matched by a commitment from government at local and national level to reviewing the funding of the sector in order that Scotland can meet its responsibility to provide adequate cultural provision for all.

01
The Social Justice Agenda and Museums

This section sets out the context in which the social justice agenda in Scotland has developed and relates this to current practice in museums and galleries. It offers broad definitions of the concepts explored later - social inclusion, social justice and cultural inclusion - as well as describing the current framework for museums in Scotland.

1 Museums and their Role

Many of Scotland's greatest museums have had social inclusion, as understood at the time, as their driving purpose from the outset. The National Galleries of Scotland can trace its origins back to the Drawing Academy set up by the Board of Manufacturers, which was established in 1707 to relieve poverty by encouraging education and industry. At the opening of Kelvingrove Art Gallery and Museum in 1902, the Lord Provost of Glasgow said:

The Corporation at least were satisfied that art was in itself a refining and improving and ennobling thing, otherwise they would not have felt justified in doing what they have done in order to provide for the reception of so many citizens to view the treasures that would henceforward be housed in the building. And there was the question of the educational value of the museum and the opportunities afforded the young people and the lads and girls who have possibly outgrown the ordinary day school and others for still further pursuing their studies, and so broadening and enlarging their general culture.

The current Museums Association definition of a museum is:

Museums* enable people to explore collections for inspiration, learning and enjoyment. They are institutions that collect, safeguard and make accessible artefacts and specimens, which they hold in trust for society.

* The term museum is understood to include art galleries.

It is clear from this statement that museums have a clear relationship with the wider society in which they function and a duty to make their collections and services accessible for all. If the needs of society change, museums must respond and adapt their activities in order that society can make the fullest use of their collections. The work they do in enabling people to explore their unique resource - collections of real things - can be done in ways which contribute to inclusion or, if done without due thought and consideration of society's needs, to exclusion.

Current Framework

There are some 400 museums and galleries in Scotland, run by national and local government, independent trusts, universities and other organisations that constitute a major cultural resource for Scotland. Over half of these are independent museums, often small trusts run entirely or mainly by volunteers. They represent the artistic, scientific, natural and historical heritage of the people and through a variety of services make a significant contribution to cultural life.

Museums are governed by a range of legislative acts including the Local Government and Planning Act (1982) which sets out the notion of adequacy and the Disability Discrimination Act (1995) which requires museum services to ensure their services are accessible to people with disabilities.

Government policy reflects a concern that museums should develop, as part of their core activity, more effective ways of fulfilling their responsibilities to people who are socially and culturally excluded. The legislation, under which Local Authorities run and fund museums, states that they must "make adequate cultural provision". While there is no formal definition of adequacy, government policy requires that social inclusion must be a key element of cultural provision.

The recently published national cultural strategy *Creating Our Future… Minding Our Past* states that one of the Scottish Executive's key aims is that it 'will ensure that the significant contribution of culture to work in other areas of national priority, including social justice and education, is fully developed.'

The Scottish Museums Council (SMC) as the representative body for the vast majority of Scotland's museums, is aware of the potential contribution museums and galleries can make towards social justice and so convened a working group to develop ideas in this area and to produce this document. The group was made up from people working in the museum and galleries sector and also representatives from the Scottish Executive, local government and other public bodies.

Museums and galleries have always aimed to be a resource for everyone. They have a particular role to play in increasing access to education and lifelong learning, and in promoting active citizenship through voluntary participation. It is now time to consider what more museums and galleries, government and those who are able to influence policy in Scotland must do, to realise this aim for the 21st century.

The Educational Role

Museums have a unique and important contribution to make to the formal and informal education sectors, enabling children and people of all ages to experience their heritage in an educational environment. Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that *'Every child has the right to play… and to participate freely in cultural life and the arts.'* Museums and galleries are well placed to meet this obligation in creative and imaginative ways. For example, targeting primary school services at schools in deprived communities can make a direct contribution to local social inclusion agendas.

Museum and gallery education however, needs to move beyond the traditional narrow identification of education with schools. As public spaces with rich collections, museums can be exciting, dynamic environments to inspire and enable lifelong learning, for both individuals and groups.

Working in a more formal sense with nursery schools, early intervention programmes, Special Educational Needs schools, secondary schools and Further Education colleges, can also extend the range of audiences served. Leisure visitors can engage in informal learning by interacting with the museum displays and exhibitions. The range of learning can extend beyond the traditional museum content, and include key skills such as literacy and numeracy, and new museum audiences can be developed by working with agencies concerned with these issues. An important element in facilitating lifelong learning is the times that museums are open. A review of opening hours in consultation with target groups may greatly facilitate self-directed learning by a wide range of users.

Volunteering

Many of Scotland's museums, particularly smaller independent organisations are created by volunteer activity and can be seen as manifestations of active community involvement. Many rely entirely on volunteers for their survival but at present, very few younger people are engaging in voluntary activity across the cultural sector. Volunteering can provide a useful route for people to participate in cultural activities if it is managed in a structured way. However, there is a need to ensure that appropriate volunteering opportunities promoting skill-development and therefore genuinely contributing to a person's employability, are offered by museums and galleries.

2 Social Justice and Social Inclusion

Social Justice

The concepts of social justice and social inclusion are closely related. In this document, we have chosen to use the term social justice as we maintain that an individual's ability to participate fully in and have access to his or her cultural heritage is a matter of basic human right, not welfare.

Social justice and social inclusion are part of a wider movement in social policy development and constitutional reform that has been gathering strength for a number of years. In 1992 John Smith, then leader of the Labour party, described his vision of a society which would '*enable every individual to live free from want and to enjoy the fullest possible social and economic opportunities.*' In order to realise this vision, he established the Commission on Social Justice whose remit was to analyse public policies in the fields of employment, taxation and social welfare. Reporting in October 1994, one of its key recommendations was a greater decentralisation in government, including the establishment of a Scottish Parliament.

Also emerging from the Commission's report was the concept of social inclusion. In August 1997, this was brought to the fore of the agenda of central government by the establishment of the Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) within the Cabinet Office. The parallel Scottish Social Inclusion Network (SSIN) in Scotland was also created, demonstrating the commitment of the new Labour government to '*tackling the scourge and waste of social exclusion*'.

Museums and Social Justice

How museums and galleries can work for their whole communities

Kevan Brown

More information
for this case study
appears on page 15.

Case Study
Methil Heritage Centre, Fife
Methil was identified by the Urban
Aid Programme as a priority area.
This museum, through its location,
is strategically placed to promote social
justice. From the beginning the aim of
the museum was to meet the needs
of local people.

04 The aim of these units is both prevention
and to provide improved co-ordination
of policy between governments,
assemblies, government departments
and non-government organisations in the
UK, in recognition that social justice cannot
be achieved without establishing effective
working links between all interested parties.

Since the re-establishment of the Scottish
Parliament in 1999, social justice has
been one of the firm policy priorities and
the focus of much development work
across all departments. The Scottish
Executive Development Department is at
the centre of this policy development and
is home to the Scottish Social Inclusion
Network. Ministerial responsibility for
social justice lies with the Minister for
Social Justice, although the ministers for
Education and Enterprise and Lifelong
Learning also have considerable interest
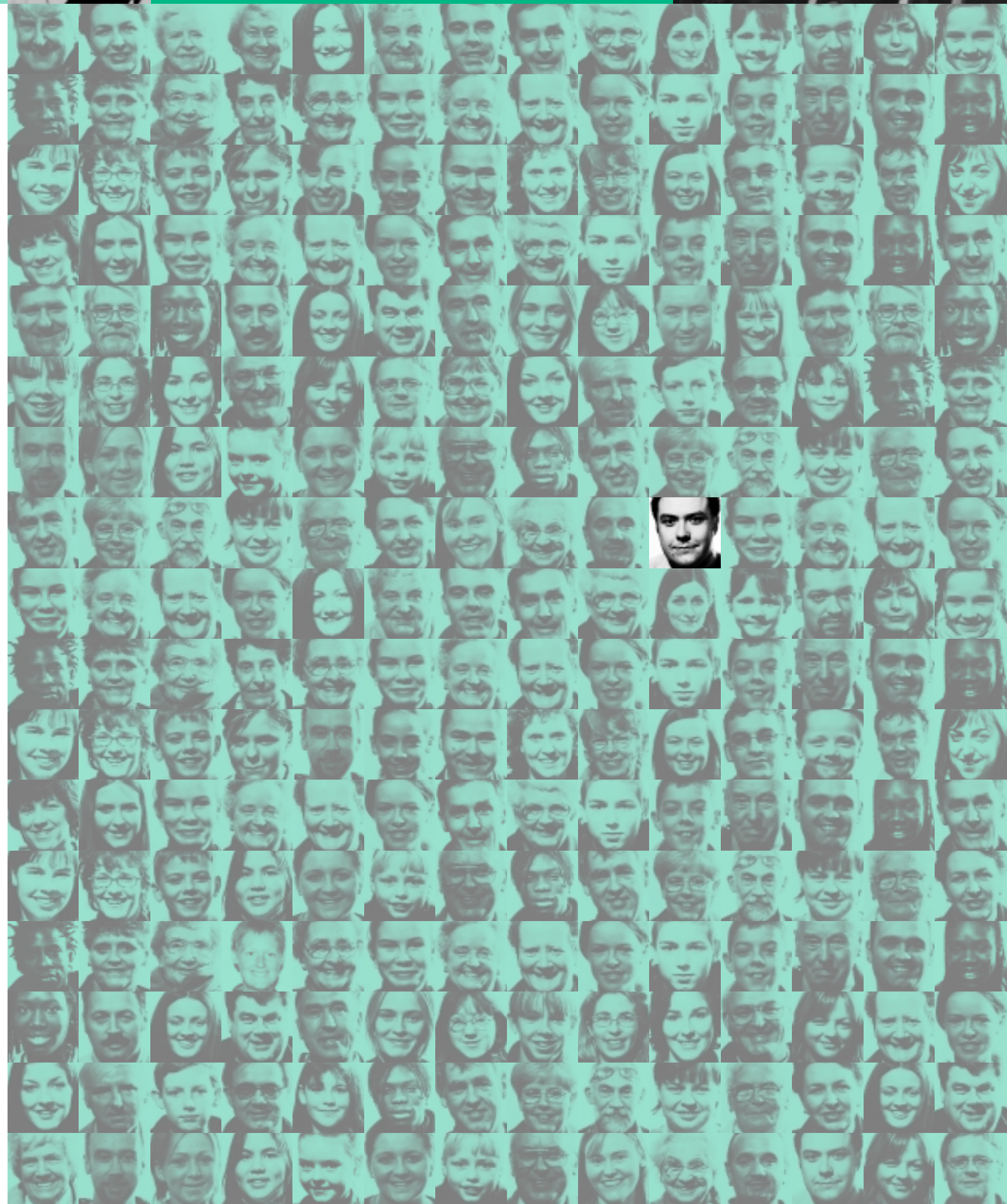in and input into policy development.

What is Social Inclusion?

Social inclusion can be thought of as the
co-ordinated response to the complex
system of problems that has become known
as social exclusion. This dynamic,
multidimensional concept is difficult to pin
down, having different interpretations and
uses in various aspects of public life. The
government's definition of social exclusion
is *'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.'*

The key characteristic of social exclusion is
the interdependency and influence of one
dimension on another. For example, low
educational attainment may lead to low
income in later life, or poor housing may
lead to poor health. This can lead to
exclusion from one or more of the other
dimensions. For example, unemployment
or low pay may, in time, lead to political,
social or cultural exclusion.

It is this complex network of interactions
between different aspects of exclusion that
enables museums and galleries to play a
part in creating a more inclusive society.
Because various forms of exclusion are
linked and reinforce each other, work in the
cultural dimension through museums and
galleries may contribute to individuals
changing their lives and tackling problems
in areas such as unemployment and
health. The scale and complexity of the
exclusion means that the most effective
solutions are those which address a
number of its dimensions and involve the
collaboration and collective working of all
agencies as well as those individuals
directly affected.

Museums and Social Justice

How museums and galleries can work for their whole communities

David Clough

More information
for this case study
appears on page 15
and 16.

Case Study
Kilmartin House, Argyll & Bute
A sense of cultural ownership is encouraged.
A meeting place is available for events such as
musical evenings, committees and school parties.
Socially inclusive policies, which many consider to
be of key importance of museums, will remain a
costly luxury for institutions that do not receive
public investment.

3 Cultural Exclusion

06 Cultural exclusion is the process by which
people encounter barriers to participating
in and being represented in the cultural
sphere. This is perhaps the arena in which
museums and galleries are most readily
able to engage. In Scotland, approximately
25%[1] of the population never visits a
museum or gallery. A recent survey[2] in
Glasgow found that, in the previous month,
more than twice as many people from
social group AB, as from social group
DE had visited museums.

This gives us an indication of the nature
of the issues we need to tackle if museum
services are to meet their moral obligations
to the public. Current analysis suggests
that non-visiting, for many people, is a
consequence of their lack of access to
economic, educational or other
opportunities, rather than lack of interest
in museums. People may of course choose
not to visit museums during their leisure
time but this decision should be a positive
choice, rather than a consequence of
exclusion. Cultural exclusion then is part
of people's overall experience of exclusion
from society's benefits. People who are
excluded can easily feel that museums and
art galleries are simply irrelevant to their
lives, or that museums are valuable
institutions, but "not for the likes of us".

Consultation with non-visitors from
deprived communities in Glasgow identified
the feeling of not belonging in those places
where society preserves and displays its
cultural treasures as the single most
important barrier to visiting museums.
It is expressed clearly, for example, in the
assumption among residents of nearby
housing estates that The Burrell Collection
and Kelvingrove charge for admission,
despite the fact that these museums
have always provided free entry.
This assumption arises partly from lack
of information, reflecting a failure of the
museums to communicate their admission
policy. More importantly, it is an expression
of a feeling that something so valued would
be outside the reach of people who at
every turn of their lives feel excluded
from society's opportunities.

The implication of this research is that
cultural inclusion has an integral role in
the creation of a more inclusive society
and that work in the cultural sphere
can have an impact on the educational,
economic and social aspects of exclusion.
It also makes clear that although social
exclusion is a societal problem affecting
large numbers of people, the reality is
the personal experience of individual
people. Building up sufficient trust
among people who have had a lifetime
of negative experiences of society's
institutions makes encounters with
museum staff critical.

4 A policy for Scotland

For museums in England, the Department
for Culture, Media and Sport publication
*Centres for Social Change: Museums,
Galleries and Archives for All* addresses
many of the issues we raise in this
document. In Scotland, the museum
sector is the responsibility of the Scottish
Executive Education Department within
the portfolio of the Minister for
Environment, Sport and Culture.

Scotland is a distinct country within the
United Kingdom, with its own institutions,
identities and cultures. Many of the
problems experienced throughout the UK
in relation to exclusion apply in Scotland.
There are though, particular issues which
may have a higher or lower priority in
Scotland than in England. For example,
at the present time, approximately 1.1%
of people in Scotland are from an ethnic
minority background, compared to 6.5%
in the UK as a whole.

Social Inclusion is based on the principle
of organisations working together to tackle
deep rooted and interlinked social
problems. As many of the relevant statutory
and voluntary organisations with which
Scottish museums work differ from those
in England, we believe it is useful to
acknowledge this difference. Scotland's
distinctive social, cultural, and institutional
structures as well as government
administration calls for this separate
but complementary document which
is relevant to all museums and related
agencies in Scotland.

[1] *Scottish Household Survey Bulletin 3*
   February 2000

[2] *Lowland Research 1998/99 cited in Glasgow*
   City Council Best Value Review, Glasgow
   Museums, June 2000
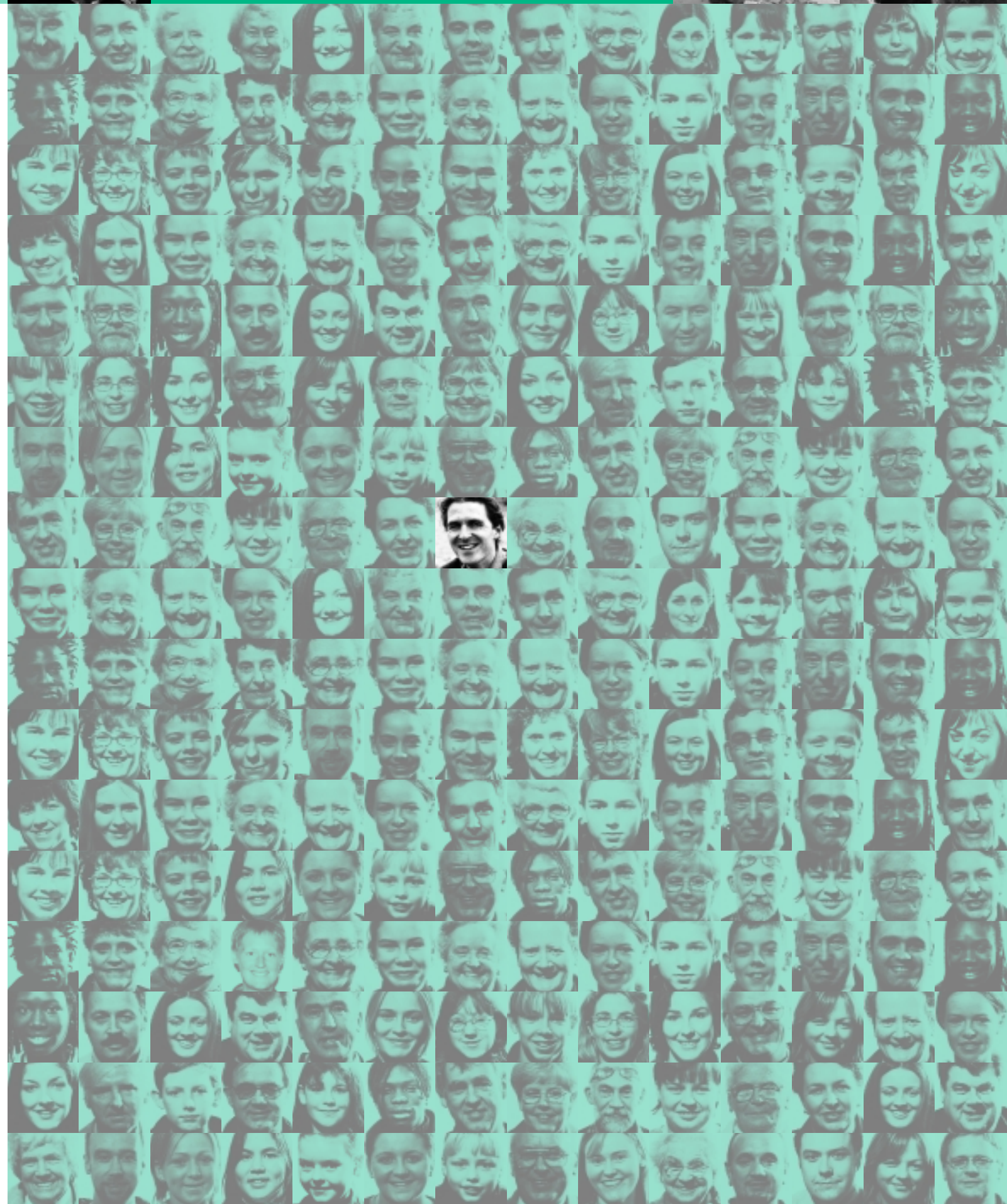
02
Barriers to inclusion

08

While a percentage of all sections of society will choose not to visit museums and art galleries, preferring other means of spending their leisure time, it is wrong to assume that this is why such a high percentage of excluded people do not visit. Until everyone has been offered an opportunity to become museum users in ways which recognise the realities of their lives, the barriers to visiting or using museum services are so great that many people have not in fact been offered a real choice at all.

Strategies to enable museums to become more inclusive and to contribute to the wider goal of tackling social exclusion need to address in detail why people do not use museum services. These barriers preventing museum use can be identified as:

(i) institutional
(ii) personal and social
(iii) perceptions and awareness
(iv) environmental.

The DCMS publication *Centres for Social Change: Museums, Galleries and Archives for All* includes a list of these barriers which is set out below, slightly modified to reflect the Scottish context.

(i) institutional

These are the barriers that museums themselves, and their staff, consciously or unconsciously may create, and which may discourage or restrict usage by certain people or sections of the community. They include:

→ unsuitable or unduly restrictive opening hours, or restrictions upon the availability of services
→ inappropriate staff attitudes and behaviour
→ direct and indirect discrimination
→ inappropriate rules and regulations
→ charging policies which disadvantage those on low incomes
→ acquisition, exhibition and cataloguing policies which do not reflect the needs or interests of the actual or potential audiences
→ lack of signage in buildings, so that people cannot easily find their way around
→ lack of a sense of ownership and involvement by the community
→ lack of adequate provision of services or facilities for people with disabilities.

Non-visitors also express a view that they would feel uncomfortable visiting a museum because they don't know enough, that museums are for educated people, and that their lack of knowledge would be exposed, perhaps by being asked a question.

Creating an atmosphere of welcome, to dispel this fear of embarrassment, involves a major change in all functions for many museums. While outreach staff may build up relations of trust with non-visiting groups, and persuade them to visit, every member of staff they encounter when they get there must reinforce the welcome. Research from retailing and from visitor attractions in the United States suggests that a positive encounter with a member of staff is one of the most important factors in creating a positive memory of a visit. The opposite is also true - one negative encounter may put people off an institution for life.

(ii) personal and social

These possible causes of social exclusion can be experienced by individuals as a result of cultural or community circumstances. They include:

→ lack of basic skills in reading, writing and communication
→ low income and poverty
→ lack of social contact
→ low self esteem
→ lack of a permanent fixed address.

(iii) perceptions and awareness

Perceptions that museums and galleries are 'not for us' exists both in individual and community terms. This perception causes difficulties for:

→ people who are educationally disadvantaged
→ people who live in isolation from wider society
→ people who do not think that museums are relevant to their lives or needs
→ people with a lack of knowledge of facilities and services, and how to use them.

(iv) environmental

Environmental barriers include:

→ difficult physical access into and within buildings
→ problem estates and urban decay
→ the isolation experienced by people in rural communities
→ poor transport links
→ transport costs.

Rural Exclusion

Social exclusion is often thought of as being an inner city problem, and in terms of numbers this is certainly predominantly the case. In isolated rural areas however, unemployment, low income and poor health can combine with geographical isolation to cut people off from a significant number of society's opportunities. In some rural areas of Scotland, the absence of museum provision means that people have in effect no access to their local heritage,

raising issues about whether local government is, under the terms of the 1982 Local Government Act, making "adequate cultural provision".

Disability Discrimination Act (1995)

Considerable improvements have been made recently in providing access on equal terms for disabled people. There is still a long way to go, not just to meet the provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act, but to meet the best practice standards which are constantly developing as understanding of how services can be improved increases. As with other forms of social exclusion, the combination of a disability or infirmity with low income, unemployment, illness or poor education can make a difficult situation much worse.

Ethnic Minorities

Members of Scotland's ethnic minority communities, for example, may be excluded if they experience any of the above barriers. However, members of such communities who are not excluded in other terms may feel less than welcome in museums if their presence and history in Scotland is not acknowledged in history displays, or if their cultural and artistic achievements are not celebrated in museum and gallery displays.

Funding

Revenue funding is a major problem for museums of all sizes. The percentage of a museum's budget and staff time committed simply to staying open and

maintaining current levels of service may leave only a tiny proportion available for social inclusion activities. However, being open, even for free, does not necessarily promote better access, and some diversion of resources to demonstrate a genuine commitment to social justice is essential to achieve credibility with partners and funding agencies and to fulfil the museum's function.

Considerable funding for social inclusion work is available in education, social work and economic regeneration budgets. Museums may, through partnership projects, be able to access these funds, but only if they have demonstrated a commitment to social justice from within their own budgets, however small. Furthermore, social accountability is increasingly becoming a key requirement for public funding.

The reality of social exclusion as experienced by individuals, families and neighbourhoods, is usually a combination of the factors detailed above. Long term unemployment leads to poor housing, which makes health problems worse. These in turn can create a sense among younger members of such families of pessimism about the future, which is demoralising and can lead to poor educational attainment, anti-social behaviour and under-achievement.

09

03
A Social Justice Strategy

A Social Justice Strategy

1 Tackling the Barriers: The Reality

The reality of developing museums so
that they are effective in promoting social
justice is that long term and sometimes
difficult changes need to be made to the
way they work. Many Scottish museums
have carried out projects that help improve
access, develop new audiences or aim to
contribute to a more inclusive society.
While some have been able to sustain
socially inclusive work over many years,
within large museums it often remains
the responsibility of a separate section
or department - few have been able
to incorporate it into their core service.
For all museums, social justice can be
seen as just one more priority to juggle
within the running of the museum.

For museums at the beginning of this
process, it is important to recognise
the time consuming nature of the work,
which involves building up relationships
with new organisations and individuals.
Experiments are necessary and
project failures nearly inevitable. While
additional resources will be essential
for museums to engage more fully with
the social inclusion process, it will only
be possible for museums to be effective
if they work in partnership with others.
These partners may be local government
departments such as education or
social work, health boards, voluntary
organisations – all of whom which have
a great deal of experience of working with
excluded people - who can make contacts
and provide resources enabling museums
to contribute to their objectives.

Below is an outline strategy for museums
beginning to adopt a more inclusive way
of working. This does not reflect the great
variety of scale, resources, circumstances
and existing social inclusion work of
Scottish museums. However, it is hoped
that it will provide a useful framework for
museums which they can adapt to their
individual circumstances.

Year 1

Concentrate on building up a picture
of your local community profile, making
contacts and identifying target audiences.
This is when relationships with client
groups and agencies need to be developed.
Begin a pilot project.

Year 2

Conduct evaluations on any pilot projects
and draw lessons to be learned both about
the projects themselves and the way of
working. Draw up a Social Justice Strategy
for years 3-5 in light of this.

Year 3

Implement Year 1 of the Social Justice
Strategy. Include a review of internal
policies and procedures and working
practices to ensure that as an organisation
the museum is as inclusive as possible.

Year 1 Getting Started

First Steps: Raising Awareness

➜ All museums should conduct a formal
Access Audit to identify changes they
need to make to comply with the
Disability Discrimination Act. The audit
should include all types of access
including physical, intellectual and
financial. It could also be extended
to cover access to decision making
and volunteering.
➜ Discuss with staff, volunteers and
governing body what social exclusion
means in the museum's catchment area.
➜ List existing services and review them
using the list of Barriers to Inclusion, to
identify possible areas for development.
➜ Review long term displays and
presentation of building (internal and
external). Whose culture and history
do they represent - and not represent?

First Contacts

➜ Contact Community Education or
Social Services for details of their
Community Learning Strategy and
for help with identifying groups
with which to work.
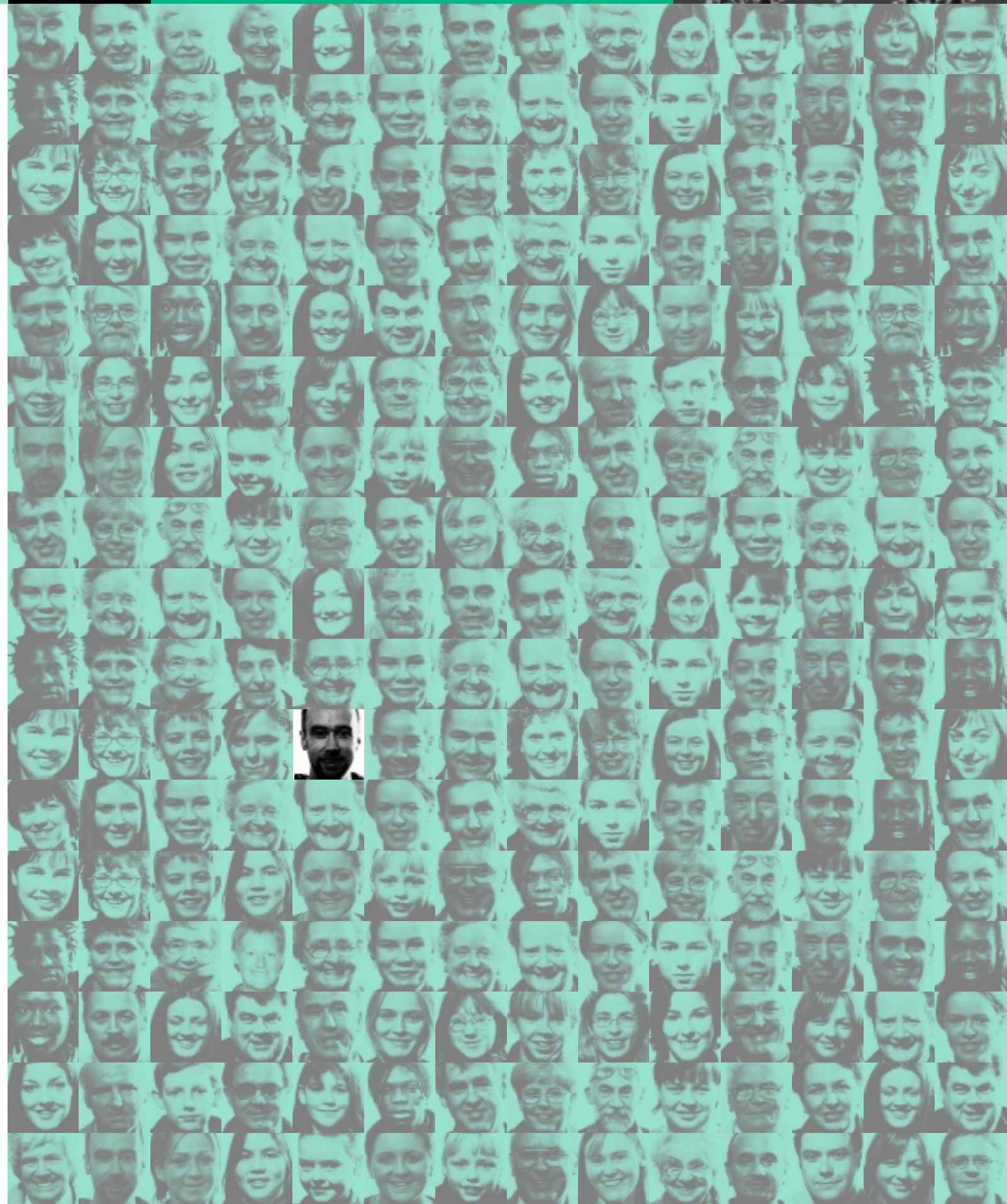
Nat Edwards

More information
for this case study
appears on page 17.

Case Study
Open Museum, Glasgow
Over the past decade, the service has developed
over 50 exhibitions as well as numerous handling
boxes, table-top displays and local museum
events. Over 1,000 loans of kits and exhibitions
are used in approximately 150 local venues
across Glasgow each year.

Museums and Social Justice
How museums and galleries can work for their whole communities

➔ Consult a number of groups of
non-visitors, from various sections
of the community, about museum
services. This may simply involve
asking Social Services, Community
Education and Education departments
to invite two or three different client
group representatives who do not
visit museums to make a visit and
to comment on their experiences
(e.g. a mothers and toddlers group
from a deprived area, a pensioners
group from a day centre, a youth club,
members of the local mosque).

➔ Contact the Planning Department of
the local authority and / or the local
library to get information upon which
a profile of the community in your
catchment area can be based.

➔ Collate all information and make
explicit your assumptions about who
visits the museum. Organise a basic
survey to identify who comes.

➔ Compare your visitor profile with the
community profile. Who is not visiting?
Are there any under-represented groups?
Which are the excluded groups?

➔ Identify successful model(s) in other
museums which can be a basis for
a pilot project.

➔ Try to identify the museum's point of
view - the unconscious assumptions
about who the museum is for.
Interpretation of collections should
not be from a single perspective but
reflect the social and cultural diversity
of Scotland's people, their backgrounds
and interests.

➔ Select a pilot project to be carried out
while the information is being collated.

➔ Review existing plans for exhibitions,
events, education programmes and
other activities. Could any of these be
developed to address barriers to inclusion
and have an element of participation by
excluded groups? What group might be
interested in working with the museum
on the project?

➔ Review uncommitted resources in the
museum programme and identify staff
and funds that could support exhibition
events or education programmes which
have an inclusive basis from the start.

Year 2

➔ Complete and evaluate pilot project.

➔ Evaluate the work done in last year
with staff, volunteers, governing body
and representatives of relevant
agencies and community
representatives.

➔ Evaluate what worked both for the
people you worked with and for you.

➔ What could you have done better?

➔ What advice would you give someone
doing a similar project?

➔ What time-scales would you have
worked with?

➔ Would you have changed the budget?

Three Year Plan

Develop a three year plan which

➔ builds on the evaluation of the
pilot project

➔ links the museum's priorities
with those of key agencies involved
in social inclusion

➔ secures long term partnerships

➔ reduces barriers and develops a
more inclusive museum by improving
access, developing new audiences
and promoting a more inclusive society

➔ identifies key changes in the way
the museum operates to ensure
sustainable commitment to social
inclusion and provides staff and
volunteer training where necessary.

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04
Case Studies

Consideration should be given to the following issues and elements of them should be built into the three year plan.

Partnerships

Seek agreement from key partners to work with the museum over this period, on the basis of overlapping priorities. Agreement on the evaluation of shared targets is crucial to sustaining successful partnerships.

Audience Development

Audience development involves the systematic targeting of specific groups over long periods of time to attract and sustain their interest in the museum. It includes:

➔ establishing contacts with members of the community, to learn about their interests, and the services the museum might be able to provide
➔ adapting the museum's service so that it is welcoming and relevant to target groups (this could include signage; display and exhibition themes; existing or new collections; events and activities)
➔ specific marketing targeted at the community
➔ follow up developments so that the group is not "dropped" after one event or exhibition but actively included, thus encouraging a sense of ownership of and belonging in the museum.

Promoting Social Change

Museums can contribute to a more inclusive and tolerant society by arranging exhibitions, events and education programmes which address current issues of concern, particularly for excluded groups (e.g. the AIDS quilt exhibition in the National Museums of Scotland). They can also seek to reflect a more inclusive society by ensuring that their governing bodies, staff and volunteers represent the social and cultural diversity of the relevant community.

Sustainability

Effective working with people means building up relationships which can be sustained over a long period. The resource allocation needs to reflect the time-consuming nature of the work, and the necessary follow up on projects.

Year 3

➔ Implement the first year of your three year plan.
➔ Review plan and develop targets for year 4.

Other Resources

➔ Most local authorities will have policies concerning access, education and social inclusion, which will provide valuable information about the local community, and suggest ways of aligning museum targets with the priorities of the local community.
➔ Local libraries will have lists of local voluntary organisations. Alternatively, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations will be able to provide contacts in your area.
➔ SMC can provide information relating to the location of a Social Inclusion Partnership near the museum.
➔ The providers of the case studies have agreed to offer more detailed information about their projects to colleagues.
➔ SMC may be able to assist you directly with funding or can advise on potential sources.

1. Methil Heritage Centre, Fife

Seven years ago, Methil was identified by the Urban Aid Programme as a priority area. Originally set up with funding from the Urban Programme, Kirkcaldy District and Fife Regional Councils, this museum through its location is strategically placed to promote social justice. From the beginning, the aim of the museum was to meet the needs of local people. As such, the museum building was seen as one part of the larger service: much of the provision would be concerned with outreach. Establishing successful working partnerships has also been crucial to the success of the centre.

The Workers Educational Association approached the centre to act as a partner in a nationwide oral history project called *Salt of the Earth*. This involved working with volunteers who learned the skills needed to plan and schedule the project, use recording equipment, conduct interviews and to produce a CD with a selection of their recordings and set up a display. One successful outcome was that many local people who had never visited the centre became involved. The centre has also taken its exhibition out of the museum to places where traditional non-visitors might go. For example, a small photographic exhibition was held in local pubs encouraging people to bring their friends back to see the exhibition. This was a success both for the centre and the pubs involved.

As part of Levenmouth's Summer Activities Programme, the Centre ran a *Trash Band* project in partnership with Methil's Community Centre, Barnardo's Aberhill Youth Project, external facilitators, the Council's Museums Service and Community Education Department. Young people made musical instruments from rubbish and then created pieces of music which recreated the sounds of Methil in days gone by (e.g. the sounds of the coal hoists). This was particularly successful in including younger local boys in developing skills such as teamwork, investigation and communication.

**For more details, contact
Kevan Brown. Tel (01333) 422100**

2. Kilmartin House, Argyll & Bute

A Perspective from the independent sector

The main barriers preventing social inclusion in rural areas are lack of access to employment, transport, educational opportunities, social opportunities and good housing. The principal reason for the establishment of Kilmartin House was to enable access to the cultural heritage of Kilmartin Valley for Argyll's population by providing a cultural venue in a rural community as an exercise in promoting social justice. Since the opening of the museum, the community has an increased awareness of its heritage and a confidence drawn from knowing that it represents a significant resource. It has also enabled many of the cultural artefacts removed from the area to be returned.

As an independent museum, the promotion of social justice is supported by providing a high quality visitor experience to the cultural tourist, rather than by direct support from local or central government. From the conception stage, Kilmartin House Trust adopted the principle of employing local people wherever possible, for all aspects of building works, display preparation, landscaping and IT infrastructure. Opening Kilmartin House doubled the employment opportunities in Kilmartin and provided a heightened sense of self-esteem for the community. The museum is open all year round, ensuring the ten jobs created in setting up and running the museum, are permanent, full-time positions, all too rare in "seasonal" destinations such as Argyll. The indirect economic benefits have yet to be quantified, but include promotion of local produce and encouragement of local businesses, particularly accommodation providers. (continued)

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For those within the immediate locality, a sense of cultural ownership is encouraged by allowing free entry into the museum. In a further effort to encourage integration, a meeting place is made available for events such as musical evenings, committees and school parties.

These activities promoting social justice are made possible by the ethos of a locally developed educational trust, which is run by young volunteers and requires a substantial fund-raising effort.

The dilemma for small independent museums is that if the contribution of independent museums to rural communities is not recognised, this could lead to a pragmatic duality of purpose. For an independent museum such as Kilmartin House to remain financially viable, it will have to attract affluent visitors from the higher socio-economic groups, potentially reinforcing social exclusion. Socially inclusive policies, which many consider to be of key importance of museums, will remain a costly luxury for institutions that do not receive public investment.

**For more details, contact
David Clough. Tel (01546) 510278**

3. Cordale Housing Association, West Dunbartonshire

Proposed Independent Museum, Turkey Red Trust

This organisation has been active for the past ten years and represents the community of Cordale in the village of Renton. Renton itself dates back to 1715 when the first bleachfields in Scotland were established as part of the textile industry in Argyll. At one stage, up to a dozen firms were based in the area, bleaching, dyeing, and printing cloth which was exported to India and West Africa. The demise of the industry caused mass unemployment in the area and today around 75% of the Housing Association's tenants are on benefit. The Association is actively promoting community development and social inclusion on a number of fronts including developing a museum with the Turkey Red Trust, named after a type of dye used in the printing process. This is being done in consultation with the local council and the Social Inclusion Partnership. The idea for a museum came originally from the community who wanted to see a disused church in the village put to some use and to find a way of remembering the textile industry that had been so important. The Turkey Red Trust was born and received £8,000 from West Dunbartonshire Partnership to carry out a feasibility study for a museum. The aim of the museum will be to raise the awareness of textiles in the Vale of Leven and to create employment and volunteering opportunities.

Although a permanent collection is not yet in place, members of the community have been donating material, photographs and stories. The Trust has already secured funding from Awards for All for an exhibition to take around libraries and schools in the area giving the people of Renton an opportunity to see their lives and heritage represented.

**For more details, contact
Stephen Singer. Tel (01389) 721216**

4. Open Museum, Glasgow

The Open Museum, Glasgow's Community Museum Service was established in 1990. Its key objectives are: to extend museum access to excluded communities by taking objects and exhibitions into non-museum local venues; to find new ways that museums can support community development through collaboration with other agencies; and to have a positive effect on the development of the city's museum service by feeding back what it learns in the field.

Over the past decade, the service has developed over 50 exhibitions as well as numerous handling boxes, table-top displays and local museum events. Over 1,000 loans of Open Museum kits and exhibitions are used in approximately 150 different local venues across Glasgow each year. Local people who have participated in Open Museum projects have gone on to form their own art clubs, join college courses and gain qualifications, demonstrating the potential museums have to help build capacity within the community to help combat social exclusion.

**For more details contact
Nat Edwards. Tel (0141) 287 2675**

5. Aberdeen City Museum and Art Gallery

Revisioning the Gallery - working with children in foster care.

Emerging from a concern about how the Aberdeen community perceives the gallery collections, it was decided to consider the relationship between the pieces housed in the building and those outside, in the public domain. Working with young people in foster care, the project was conceived by an artist and researcher from Gray's School of Art in association with the Cultural Services Education Officer and the Children's Representative Officer from the Social Work Department.

The intention was to introduce the young people in foster care to the notion of appearance and identity through looking at the portraits in the gallery collection. Starting with a didactic approach to the chronology, styles and language of the paintings, the participants were then invited to consider how best they might represent themselves in a portrait. Using the media of photography and writing, the group created images of themselves.

Technicians at the Art School assisted by printing the photographs and the Gallery and Art School staff reproduced the written text as labelling. An exhibition of the work was mounted in the gallery, the pieces being placed in the vicinity of paintings that had inspired them.

The outcome of the project was to make the group aware of their part in the ownership of the collections, to make them more confident in their use of the City's resources and to enhance their social development.

**For more details contact
David Atherton. Tel (01224) 523652**

Museums and Social Justice

How museums and galleries can work for their whole communities

David Atherton

More information
for this case study
appears on page 17.

Case Study
Aberdeen City Museum and Art Gallery
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An exhibition was mounted, the pieces being
placed in the vicinity of paintings that had inspired
them. The outcome was to make the group aware
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make them more confident in their use of the City's
resources and to enhance their social development.

**6. National Museums of Scotland,
Edinburgh**

**Full of Love and Memory
The AIDS Memorial Quilts Exhibition**

This project was organised in collaboration
with the Names Project UK and the City of
Edinburgh Council Sexual Health Team and
demonstrates how museum exhibitions
can be used to tackle difficult social issues
affecting those excluded from society.
The target audience was school pupils
from the City of Edinburgh, East,
West and Midlothian. During the
exhibition, fourteen AIDS memorial quilts
were exhibited in the main hall of the
Royal Museum, designed to celebrate the
lives of people who had died of AIDS
related illnesses. Groups of schoolchildren
participated in workshops facilitated by the
Sexual Health Team who had to be aware
of the need to vary approaches of working
with different age groups, learning styles
and levels of knowledge.

Informal evaluation showed that the
quilts made an impact on many pupils,
provoking discussion, comment and
emotional reactions.

*I thought it was sad because
of the deaths.*

They were full of love and memory.

Important messages concerning
transmission routes of HIV were
considered by pupils, and it is clear
that the exhibition helped to promote
tolerance and understanding.

*It was amazing to see that anyone
can get AIDS.*

*I also learned you can touch someone
and hug someone with HIV and you
won't catch it.*

Formal evaluation of the project revealed
that the majority of the aims were met,
including raising awareness and levels
of information about HIV and AIDS.

*The children came away with a
good knowledge of how to stay safe.*
Teacher, East Lothian

Museum staff were also aware of what
they had learned from the process too
as the collaborative approach offered
opportunities to raise the skill and
knowledge level of all involved.

**For more details, contact
Elspeth Mackay. Tel (0131) 247 4180**

These case studies do not in themselves
make a socially inclusive society but what
they do is to engage with a section
of society that is excluded either because
of rural isolation, disability, ill health,
housing etc. These examples of work
should therefore be viewed within a wider
context of work that promotes social
inclusion, such as that carried out
by health boards, housing associations
and Social Inclusion Partnerships.

Museums and galleries alone cannot
change society but they can change
themselves and the services they offer,
to ensure that as many people as possible
are included in cultural life. A visit to
a museum does not make a person included
but it can slowly change perceptions of how
Scotland views and values its visitors and
above all its own citizens.
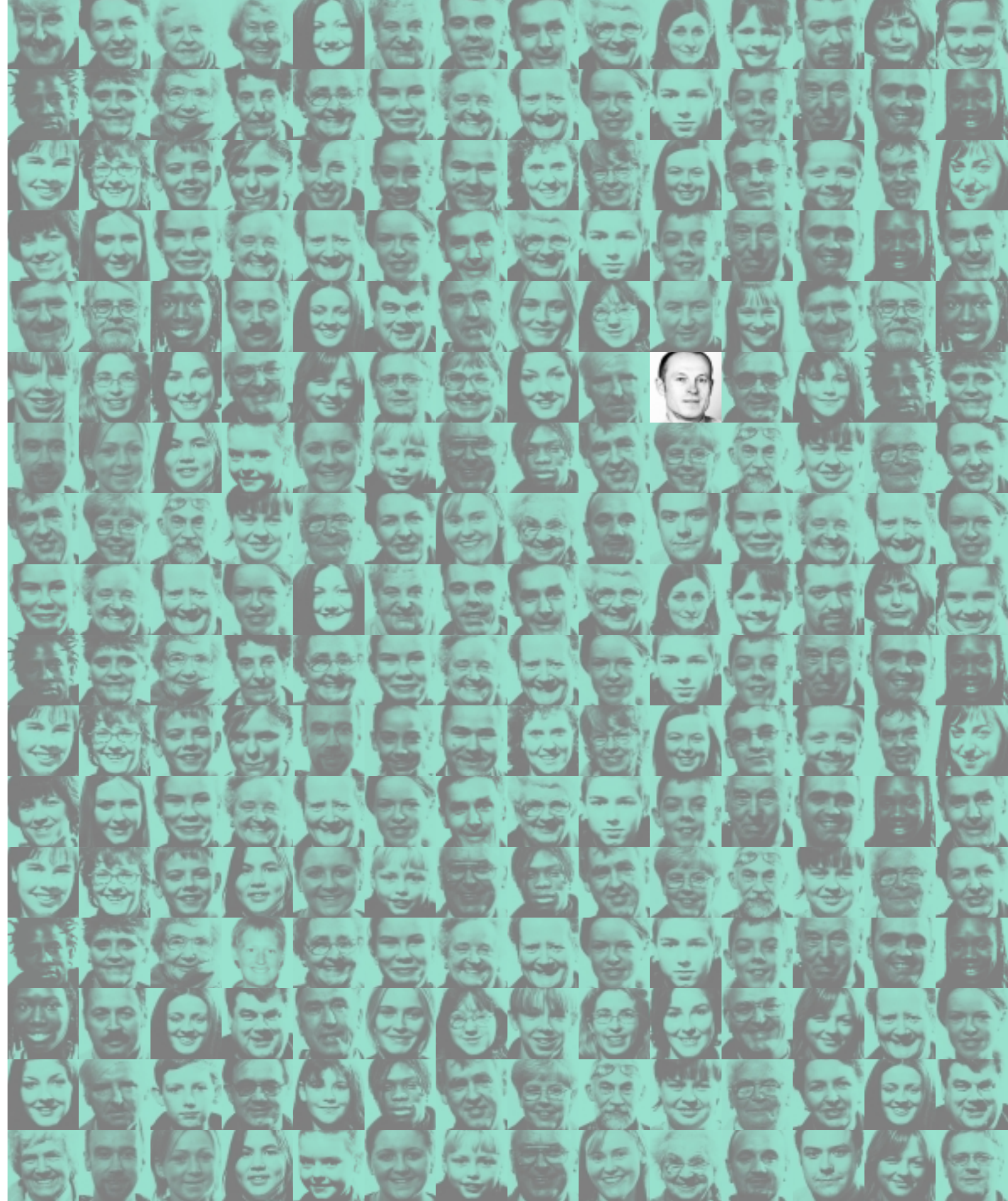
Elspeth Mackay

More information
for this case study
appears on page 18.

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Recommendations

Government

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➔ National and local government should
promote the consideration of the role
of museums and galleries in the
development of social justice policies.

➔ The Scottish Executive should support
museums in making a sustainable
contribution to social justice
particularly by working with
Social Inclusion Partnerships.

Museums and Galleries

➔ Social inclusion should be
fundamental to all museum policies.

➔ Management commitment to
integrating socially inclusive policies
and practices should be demonstrable.

➔ All museums should develop, with
appropriate partners, a three year plan
detailing access and audience
development activities. This should
identify how the partners can
contribute to a more inclusive society.

➔ Museums should review expenditure
on public services, and in particular
those services which are focused on
excluded audiences.

➔ Museums, governing bodies and
representative agencies should make
reference to wider government
agendas and make practical
suggestions and recommendations
as to where and how museums
can contribute.

➔ Museum services should meet the
requirements of the Disability
Discrimination Act.

Members of the Social Justice Working Group

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The Scottish Museums Council welcomes
comment on the content of this document
from museums, government and
organisations or individuals concerned
with promoting social justice.