

CLES Bulletin is a topical summary of issues which have appeared in the professional press, government publications and current research. Its aim is to provide a pithy précis of a subject area, drawing out the specific and common issues raised.

CLES BULLETIN

Inclusive Regeneration
From the margins to the mainstream
CLES Bulletin No. 24 July 2004



Written by **Stuart MacDonald**
Policy & Information Researcher, CLES, E-mail: stuartmacdonald@cles.org.uk
Express Networks, 1 George Leigh Street, Manchester, M4 5DL



Introduction

Investment in regeneration initiatives over the past 30 years has resulted in millions of pounds going into poor and deprived communities without, in some areas any discernible return. Part of the problem is that regeneration has failed to be all-encompassing in its inclusivity. It is for this reason that regeneration has failed to meet the challenges set by deprived communities.

Developing inclusive approaches to regeneration is a high priority for government, local authorities and voluntary and community groups alike. Policy is unlikely to achieve its aims of greater inclusion unless matched by a full understanding of the diversity of experience within regeneration areas, and an appreciation of the strategies necessary to ensure regeneration benefits all. This CLES Bulletin will explore themes of diversity and social inclusion within regeneration programmes.

Inclusive Regeneration

The diversity of experiences mean routes to regeneration and inclusion will differ, as will priorities for regeneration programmes. For example projects will generally emphasise the skills required to acquire a job, however we are aware that not all of the paths to employment are the same: for example capacities, confidence, childcare, and the nature of the local economy are all important issues in acquiring a job.

Today, more than ever, Britain's deprived communities and the daily existence of people within those communities, are characterised by diversity and complexity. It is increasingly evident that even within the same communities, individual experiences of poverty and exclusion can be very different. By inclusive regeneration we mean regeneration activity that ultimately benefits all people currently living in and experiencing poverty, deprivation and exclusion.

Regeneration policies and practitioners need to find a new approach to tackle the problems faced by both people and places if they are to prove successful in tackling poverty and exclusion. Greater emphasis has to be placed on making regeneration inclusive, through engaging people in regeneration, in different ways

suitable to their needs and abilities, to ensure that regeneration works for them and that it works for all. Delivering inclusive regeneration requires an understanding of the issues faced by communities and the skills required to build a more inclusive agenda¹.

Inclusive Issues

Issues of race, gender, age and disability remain marginalised within regeneration policy, despite an increasing emphasis on social exclusion/inclusion. Understanding the problems faced by these minority groups is an essential first step in engaging with diversity. This bulletin will explore issues of race and gender, but a full acknowledgement of all diverse groups is required for effective regeneration policy, be it the elderly, young men or gay/lesbian groups.

Ethnic minorities in Britain account for 8% of the population, 67% of people from black and ethnic minority communities live in the 88 most deprived districts in England (Neighbourhood renewal areas) compared to 37% of the white population.² More than half of African-Caribbean and Africans and over a third of South Asians live in districts with the highest rates of unemployment. Only 5% live in an area of low unemployment compared with 20% of white people.

People of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin represent the poorest groups on virtually every measure. Sixty per cent of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis are poor - four times the poverty rate found among white people³. The persistence of these levels of deprivation amongst minority communities suggests that much greater attention needs to be paid to them by mainstream services and more account taken of them in the formulation of general economic and social policy.

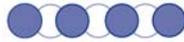
There are also some striking differences in the way that men and women experience poverty and exclusion. In general, women have lower incomes than men. They are more likely to be carers, and they account for 91%

¹ CLES Summer School Programme, June 2004

² Strength in Diversity, Home Office, May 2004,

<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/strengthindiversity.html>

³ Ethnic diversity, neighbourhoods and housing, Kusminder Chahal, Foundations, February 2000, <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/foundations/110.asp>



of lone parents. They are often the majority in poverty on deprived housing estates, and though they are in

the majority on community groups, most decisions in public meetings are made by men⁴.

“Women are disproportionately affected by those issues that regeneration aims to tackle – poverty, disadvantage and discrimination. That means that gender should lie at the heart of regeneration strategies. And yet, while we see women as the driving forces behind a lot of community activity they are still too often absent from decision-making”⁵

Sue Brownill and Jane Darke at Oxford Brookes University reviewed existing research to discover how both race and gender can inform regeneration strategies⁶. The study found that

- Women and ethnic minorities are over-represented in areas undergoing regeneration. However, race and gender are rarely prioritised as major strategic issues within regeneration policy at the national, regional or local level.
- The nature of poverty and exclusion in regeneration areas is different for different groups. For example, women may be excluded by lack of confidence, domestic responsibilities and economic discrimination. Ethnic minorities face stereotyped attitudes and in some cases barriers of language or custom.
- Other barriers to 'inclusive' regeneration were:
 - partnerships and other regeneration agencies typically failed to involve fully all sections of the population;
 - many guidelines and evaluations failed to consider race and gender⁷.

The findings of Brownill & Darke are largely applicable to the whole range of diverse groups within society. A better understanding of the diversity of

regeneration areas will produce policies that are more likely to benefit all.

Inclusive Skills

How do you deliver 'inclusive regeneration'? The Egan review refers to inclusive visioning as a generic skill that is required in regeneration, this needs innovative thinking and approaches to engaging and including the community. The ability to vision a future state for a community including all dimensions of the community. The ability to articulate a vision and get buy in from a wide variety of people. Imagining a future state and simultaneously the implications of getting there⁸. The Egan review is a big step in the right direction for developing skills and sharing experiences of inclusive regeneration. However, many feel that the Egan review doesn't go far enough, including CLES, in identifying skills for a more inclusive agenda.

In the 1999 Urban White Paper, 'Towards an Urban Renaissance' from the Urban Task Force⁹, Lord Richard Rogers made a call to improve the quality of regeneration delivery by providing resources at a regional level; as a result nine centres of excellence to promote skills development are in development, one for each English region.

In the North West, the regional centre for excellence has recently been set up under the name RENEW, which is led by the North West Development Agency and the Government Office North West. Along with key regional stakeholders they have formed a new partnership overseeing the initiative. Addressing social inclusion in neighbourhoods and promoting the social economy will form an important part of the organisational model.

⁴ Gender and the Reality of Regeneration,

http://www.wmra.gov.uk/documents/WMRA_2004005.pdf

⁵ See 4.

⁶ 'Rich mix': Inclusive strategies for urban regeneration, Sue Brownill & Jane Darke, Policy Press

⁷ 'Inclusive' strategies for race and gender in urban regeneration, <http://www.jrf.org.uk/knowledge/findings/housing/hr0108.asp>

⁸ The Egan review: skills for sustainable communities,

ODPM, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_urbanpolicy/documents/page/odpm_urbpol_028549.hcsp

⁹ Towards an Urban Renaissance, Urban Task Force, 1999, http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=2866&l=2



Regeneration is akin to an art form, in that it involves creative thinkers and innovators. Creativity is a vital part of dealing with the diversity within regeneration, it is vital for positive change that we have people involved in regeneration, who have the abilities and

skills to think cross sectorally, think differently, and think in the context of the problem. In this, more effort must be made to increase and retain regeneration skills within the sector. The regional centres of excellence are

an excellent starting point, though it must be ensured that they don't just focus on traditional skills, but also set in train methods for developing innovative and creative skills that are locally specific and tailored as well.

Inclusive Policies

There is a real need to 'mainstream equality' i.e. make equality integral to how we plan, develop and deliver regeneration policies. It is recognised that inequality and disadvantage are not necessarily the result of an intention to discriminate, but we need to understand that many 'accepted' ways of developing and implementing policies can exclude or marginalise certain groups.

Regeneration policies need to have issues of inclusivity built into them, strategic objectives need to include the many minority groups that reside in a regeneration area. An inclusive vision needs to be at the heart of any regeneration policy. Consideration also needs to be taken of people who are considered to be part of several minority groups, for example a policy aimed at young men would need to take into account the diversity within this group, for example young Asian men, or young disabled men as well as young men on the whole.

More time needs to be spent on the formation of partnerships, with better consultation of the community to ensure all interests are represented. The short timescale of many projects results in the initial procedures of bringing together partnerships a less than inclusive process. Often only the existing community leaders or spokespeople find their way onto partnerships, when there may be several groups left without a voice. At the local level, better baseline

information will result in target setting that recognises diversity as a major regeneration issue.

At the regional level there needs to be an improved promotion of the different cultures to be found within an area, this will help agencies to understand the diversity of an area.

At the national level there needs to be much better cross department activity to identify the impact of policies on minority groups. The Government is working towards this aim and is currently seeking to develop a community cohesion and race equality strategy (Strength in Diversity), which will be launched in the autumn of 2004 and which will form the basis of a renewed programme of action, across Government and more widely, to build community cohesion and reduce inequalities.

Conclusion

Practitioners need to find approaches in which emphasis is placed on making regeneration and service delivery inclusive, through engaging people in different ways.

1. Inclusive regeneration must work at all levels of polity- from the neighbourhood to the local through the regional and up to the national. Only by making regeneration effective across the board can we expect it to work at all.
2. Regeneration initiatives in the future will need to be grounded in good information that reflects the diverse nature of people's poverty, only then can an adequate solution be found.
3. The panoply of people's experiences of poverty and exclusion cannot be met by specialist policy responses, what it required is a mainstreaming of diversity to ensure people occupy a central position, making them a focal point within regeneration.

Consultation on the document 'Strength in Diversity' is open until 17 September 2004. The document can be downloaded from <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/docs3/strengthindiversity.html> and responses can be emailed to: ccresconsultation@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk

For more information on this topic please contact:
Stuart MacDonald
Centre for Local Economic Strategies (CLES)



Express Networks, 1 George Leigh Street,
Manchester

M4 5DL, Tel 0161 236 7036 Fax 0161 236 1891

Email info@cles.org.uk Web www.cles.org.uk