

Taking action within the Historic Environment Sector to link people and place

There is enormous goodwill within the historic environment sector to take action to broaden its appeal and engage with new participants so that participation in the historic environment is open to all. Power of Place has identified that this can be done through linking people and place, working in the context of a multicultural society. This work involves two groups - under-represented social groups and socially excluded groups

The word "multi-cultural" is used here in its broad sense to point to the diverse ways of life in any society, each distinct enough to necessitate particular action in order to ensure that the form of engagement with each of them is socially and culturally relevant. These include for example working class culture, minority ethnic cultures, or the culture of mining communities.

A key to addressing the overarching theme of engaging everyone with the historic environment sector is the development and embedding of working practice against a multicultural context. Within the sector as a whole, there is a huge job to be done around this. At the same time, we should recognise that there are various starting points and staged developments which can assist the heritage organisations to gain the initial confidence to make a start. For example, there is in existence isolated examples of good practice, which can reassure and inspire action. The drawing together, review and promotion of these, would be a very positive starting point.

Actions to broaden the appeal of the historic environment and and engage with new participants include:

1. Laying down the basis for developing the theme of linking people and place within the historic environment sector

- 1.1 Awareness raising - Seminars to enable a deepened understanding of what under-representation, social exclusion and action for social inclusion means, and where the opportunities for action may be, sharing the inspiring and satisfying nature of working with under-represented and socially excluded groups
- 1.2 Develop model access policies and action plans re linking people and place as a resource in order to assist heritage organisations to put people and place on their agenda
- 1.3 Supporting action - including setting up a support network of personnel taking action and enabling experience sharing
- 1.4 Publish discussion papers and run events to fuel debate around under-representation and social inclusion
- 1.5 Identify issues and concerns around under-representation and social inclusion
- 1.6 Capture, review and promote existing good practice
- 1.7 Identifying the gaps and opportunities for development

2. Action to link people and place

- 2.1 Address issues and concerns and open up opportunities for developments to link people and place
- 2.2 Reach out and engage under-represented and excluded groups with heritage, including enabling representation and participation
- 2.3 Identify and nurture organisations representing under-represented and socially excluded groups to lay down the basis for partnership
- 2.4 Build the capacity of potential partnership organisations to engage with heritage (Heritage will be a new area of engagement for many of these groups who however have many parallel skills. BEN has already begun to introduce heritage as a theme to its network)
- 2.5 Identify and resource the needs of partnership organisations representing under-represented and socially excluded groups. (It is a characteristic of such organisations that they are often highly skilled but under-resourced, and steps need to be taken to ensure equal partnership)
- 2.6 Formulate and resource pilot / action research projects, in partnership with relevant organisations representing under-represented or socially excluded groups, based on issues and concerns, and opportunities for development