Count Me In: The dimensions of social inclusion through culture and sport


Abstract

This study was set up to examine claims made for the ability of cultural projects to promote social inclusion (cultural projects are here taken to include those incorporating sport, the arts, media, heritage and outdoor adventure). This was to be achieved primarily by collecting evidence from a sample of 14 projects selected from some 200 that had volunteered their services. The report to the government’s Social Exclusion Unit (SEU) from the Policy Action Team (PAT10) (1999) noted the potential. In his foreword, Chris Smith (then Secretary of State for the Department for Culture Media and Sport (DCMS)) wrote: “... art and sport can not only make a valuable contribution to delivering key outcomes of lower long term unemployment, less crime, better health and better qualifications, but can also help to develop the individual pride, community spirit and capacity for responsibility that enable communities to run regeneration programmes themselves”. Similar statements have followed from other politicians, particularly in the recent Commons debate on sport and social exclusion (22/11/01), and again in the public health debate (13/12/01). However, the PAT 10 report also came to the same conclusion as previous commentators (e.g. Glyptis, 1989; Allison & Coalter, 1996; Long & Sanderson, 1998) that there is little ‘hard’ evidence of the social benefits that accrue.
Keywords: Social inclusion; inclusive education; vocational education; Albania. Thus, the included/excluded dualism apparent in the writings of social inclusion and exclusion cannot be taken at face value. The politics of dualistic inclusion/exclusion deserve questioning in other ways. One of these is to consider in what sense there is a single centre of social integration, who is excluded from what, and whose representation of the centre is privileged (Jackson, 1999:133). Social inclusion, the converse of social exclusion, is affirmative action to change the circumstances and habits that lead to (or have led to) social exclusion through economic development. It focuses on poverty and social exclusion risks that remain even after the onset of economic growth.