Welcome to the latest issue of Among Equals, the quarterly campaign update from The Equality Trust. Please support our campaign by emailing this newsletter to friends and colleagues, or by printing a few copies to distribute.

Inequality in focus: the A41 Photography Project takes off...

“How can we explore the consequences of inequality through photography?” That was the question Colin McPherson and local equality groups along the route of the A41 road set out to answer... and now all their hard work has come to fruition. The A41 Project: Visualising Inequality opened on 27 February and will run to 6 May at The Public gallery in West Bromwich. Further exhibitions are planned in Milton Keynes, Birkenhead and London. More information about the launch can be found at: thepublic.com/exhibitions/a41-project-colin-mcpherson

The project's images have been created by Colin McPherson with contributions from local equality groups in the West Midlands, Merseyside, London and Milton Keynes.

Chris Burgess, from the West Midlands group, commented: "Working on the project has further opened my eyes to the impact of inequality. Thinking about how the income gap undermines trust, health, social cohesion, you realise that its effects are visible all around us."

The A41 Photography Project is the first of twelve outputs being released this year which, together, comprise our exciting Educational Materials project. For more on this, see The Young Person’s Guide to Inequality on our website at: equalitytrust.org.uk/get-involved

An update from One Society...

Our One Society project team, who focus mainly on policy work, have had a very busy period recently. Highlights include:

* Co-hosting a parliamentary event with the progressive Conservative group, Bright Blue, at which Conservative MP Matt Hancock, Minister for Skills, said his party must become “the party of the low-paid”.

* Responding to the Government’s consultation on measuring child poverty, voicing serious concerns about the consultation’s confusion between the causes and outcomes of poverty and their lack of conceptual clarity.

Meanwhile One Society’s recent report on local authority pay found its way into a major Labour Party publication on “One Nation Localism”.

Future plans include:

* Further Inequality Policy Exchange (IPE) meetings, not only with like-minded organisations but also reaching out to those whose work is not traditionally associated with income inequality.

* Hosting a national Fairness Commission conference for local authority staff and council leaders later in 2013.

Follow One Society’s work and, in particular, their excellent twitter feed at: onesociety.org.uk

Keep up with the latest news …

Subscribe to our Blog: equalitytrust.org.uk/blog/rss.xml

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More recent evidence on the harm of inequality…

We thoroughly recommend our recent research update on an important academic paper that further illuminates the harm of high levels of income inequality and adds another dimension to The Spirit Level thesis. The paper, entitled Cultural activity and income gaps in the member states of the European Union, sets out the relationship between income inequality and cultural activity.

The 2012 study by Polish sociologists Szlendak and Karwacki demonstrated that across Europe there is a strong association between the income gap within a country and the cultural activity of its citizens. Cultural activity was found to be significantly higher in more egalitarian countries, such as Sweden and Denmark, than in highly stratified countries, including Portugal, Poland and Greece.

Wilkinson and Pickett’s argument that in more unequal countries status (and its outwardly visible markers) is of greater importance than in more egalitarian countries was thought to explain the association between egalitarianism and higher levels of cultural activity.

The paper can be found on our website at: equalitytrust.org.uk/news/do-swedes-really-aspire-sense-and-portuguese-status

Look out for more upcoming research updates on:

* Income inequality and 30 day outcomes after heart failure, pneumonia and heart attacks.
* Changes in income inequality and the health of migrants.

Would you like to join or form a local equality group in your area?

In our newsletters we regularly feature one of our affiliated local equality groups and the fantastic work they do. These groups are formed of people from all walks of life who come together to raise the issue of income inequality in their local areas and push for change.

The groups have sprung up all over the country in the past four years in response to the phenomenal success of The Spirit Level and, together, they help us achieve far more than we ever could otherwise in driving income inequality up the social and political agenda.

So, A MASSIVE THANK YOU to all those who’ve joined and helped drive forward our local groups programme. However, the groups can always benefit from having more people to help them in their work – and we always need new groups in new areas.

In the UK we currently have groups and contacts in: Aberdeen, Birmingham & West Midlands, Bristol, Cumbria, Exeter & South West of England, Hampshire, Inner Moray Firth, Leeds, London, Manchester & North West of England, Milton Keynes, Norfolk, North East of England, Northern Ireland, Orkney, Oxfordshire, Sheffield, Stroud & Gloucestershire, S.Wales (Newport), Suffolk, Sussex, Swindon and York.

Internationally we currently have groups and contacts in: Austria, Argentina, Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, France, Germany (Munich), Italy, Ireland (Galway), Netherlands, New Zealand, Pakistan, Philippines, Portugal, Singapore, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, USA (Arizona), USA (California), USA (New England / Connecticut), USA (New England / Vermont), USA (New York), USA (Oregon), USA (Virginia) and USA (Washington State).

For contact details for all of the above groups please visit: equalitytrust.org.uk/get-involved/take-action/local-groups

If there are no groups in your local area but you think you might like to start one, please get in touch and we can guide you through the first steps in setting up a group. Even if it’s just you or maybe you and a friend or two, we can help you get started with advice and ideas.

Contact Bill Kerry at: bill.kerry@equalitytrust.org.uk


And remember the words of Margaret Mead: “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

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