

RSA Projects

At the heart of the RSA's mission is the question of what role citizens need to play in closing the social aspiration gap: that between the world we aspire to if we are to deliver the common good, and the one we are creating with current behaviours, models, and understanding.

RSA Projects will play a critical role in developing our thinking: projects will engage Fellows, be action and outcome focused, linking theory and practice.

Fellows are actively encouraged to get involved with all aspects of the RSA's work and to develop their own local and issue based initiatives. The RSA develops its project work through dialogue, reflection and evaluation including through our Project blogs.

We really welcome Fellows' input. All projects aim to involve Fellows directly in the design and delivery of our work. We always have ideas in development: please visit our website for more information.

<http://www.theRSA.org/projects>

Design

RSA Design & Society

The RSA believes that the resourcefulness of designers - their readiness to improvise and prototype, their bravery in the face of disorder and complexity, their holistic and people-centred approach to defining problems - has a critical role to play today in making society itself more resourceful. The Design & Society team aims to demonstrate this central hypothesis. Its testing grounds are university and school education, communities and public debate. <http://www.RSAdesigndirections.org>

Design & Behaviour

We often behave in ways that are inconsistent with the sort of society in which we would prefer to live. This project explores the contribution that design and technology can make to help us change our behaviour: through creative problem solving methodologies, participative design, and the application of psychology to products and services that enable and encourage behaviour change (so called "persuasive technology"). For more information please email jamie.young@rsa.org.uk

Design Directions

Our work in higher design education aims to help universities produce designers with the skilled formal judgement and practical optimism traditionally associated with design, but who are also inclusive in their processes and able by their influence to increase the resourcefulness of non-designers. The principle higher education vehicle is Design Directions, a programme of student awards. Annually, 8-12 industry and trust-sponsored briefs ask design students and recent graduates to propose solutions to intractable social and service issues. As part of this, Design Directions Plus introduces briefs complex enough to merit enhanced experiences for finalists; stakeholder workshops, mentoring and work placements with stakeholders. <http://www.thersa.org/projects/design/designdirections>

The Royal Designers for Industry

The title 'Royal Designer for Industry' (RDI) was introduced by the RSA in 1936 to reward and promote a high standard of industrial design and enhance the status of designers. Now regarded as the highest accolade for designers in the UK, it is awarded annually to those who have achieved "sustained excellence in design".

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/design/rdi>

Education RSA Education

RSA Education develops innovative, practical educational projects in response to the challenges faced by today's children and young people. The RSA has a long history of working towards good education being available to all, and of developing education that prepares people for the real world.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/education>

Opening Minds

Opening Minds is a vision for radical change in schools, founded on an alternative curriculum created to develop key competences in young people: competences for learning, citizenship, relating to people, managing situations, and managing information. Over 200 schools are currently implementing Opening Minds and this year the RSA will carry out a major evaluation of this work, and launch Opening Minds on the international stage. The purpose is to heighten students' sense of belonging to a multicultural Europe together with a deeper understanding of what this might mean. The idea of a 'European Citizen' is at the heart of this project. The Opening Minds competences will be used to begin to make students across Europe aware of what it means to be a global citizen.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/education/opening-minds>

The RSA Academy at Tipton

The RSA Academy in the West Midlands opened in 2008 and will transfer to its new building in 2010. With 1100 students it aims to become a centre of excellence for the teaching of Opening Minds, offering a variety of courses to its students including the International Baccalaureate. It is establishing a training centre offering courses in implementing Opening Minds.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/education/rsa-academy>

Education Alliance and Campaign

The Education Alliance is a new partnership between a group of charities that share the vision of education that is set out in the RSA's Education Charter. The organisations in the Alliance run a range of innovative programmes and together work with over one third of all secondary schools in the UK. Their goal in working together is to see these programmes better understood, and used more widely. The Alliance will undertake three main areas of work: a public campaign that will try to influence the public debate on education; work with teachers that will try to bring together information about innovative projects in one place so teachers can find it easily, and talk to other schools doing the same thing; and research and policy work that will look at creating evidence based on Alliance initiatives, using the research to influence education policy.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/education/education-campaign>

School Governors Network

The RSA will support governors working in challenging schools as they develop their strategic leadership skills. The network will enable governors to respond to the needs of communities and schools.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/connected-communities/rsa-school-governors-network>

Schools without Boundaries

The Schools without Boundaries programme seeks to create a shift towards the school as an institution fully embedded in its wider community. Schools can equip young people not just with skills and knowledge, but the relationships and attitudes that will foster good citizenship. The school itself can be a vital resource for local communities. We are entering a new context of constrained public spending and heightened social pressures particularly in diverse or disadvantaged communities. In the coming years it is more important than ever that schools play this role effectively.

To this end, the RSA has worked with three secondary schools in Manchester to develop and pilot an Area Based Curriculum. We believe that area based curricula encourage and enable learners to make a positive contribution to the city's future as well as their own. The evaluations of the pilot will be available in December 2009.

The aim of the project is to create a transferable curriculum model that could be adopted by any city or town that can then apply its own social and historical context.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/education/future-schools-network>

Community Qualification

The RSA is developing a new national accreditation scheme to acknowledge and assess the skills needed to engage, involve and empower communities in social change. Subject to feasibility testing, the scheme will recognise existing, unacknowledged skills among volunteers, drive up standards in professional practice and encourage citizens to do more in their community by helping to build their confidence in this area.

The Social Brain

The RSA's Social Brain project has been working on an accessible account of the most important research into brains and psychology. This account will then be used to carry out some deliberative research. The purpose of this latter research will be to introduce the new knowledge to people who might not have come across it. We will then document their reactions and feedback, which will help inform how the RSA develops various community-based projects next year. For more information please email matt.grist@rsa.org.uk

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/pro-social-behaviour/social-brain>

Arts and Ecology

The RSA Arts & Ecology Centre

The RSA Arts & Ecology Centre supports, promotes and debates artists' responses to current environmental challenges, encouraging insights into their implications and exploring alternative futures. Activities include new research, artists' commissions and regional and international events; and an interdisciplinary network of interested individuals and organisations. The Centre encourages engagement through its website, and aims to be a hub for information and a catalyst for action.

<http://www.rsaartsandecology.org.uk>

Environment

The RSA Environment Awards Forum & Accreditation Scheme

The RSA Environment Awards Forum & Accreditation scheme celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. Initiated by a group of RSA Fellows, the Forum offers advice, guidance and expertise to UK award schemes and businesses working in the fields of environmental advancement and sustainable development. On behalf of Defra, the Forum also runs an overarching, national accreditation scheme to recognise and promote the highest standard UK award schemes.

<http://www.rsaaccreditation.org>

Civic Capitalism

Technology in a Cold Climate

This project is a collaboration between the RSA and Intellect (the trade association for technology companies). Through this short project we are bringing clear thinking to the question of how the technology sector and policy makers could better understand the potential of technology in helping to meet the various challenges that face the UK – especially in the context of a cold economic climate. Guided by a steering group of experts, the project combines a rigorous approach with rapidity by commissioning independent academic research in advance of a one-day symposium to be attended by senior delegates from business, policy and academia. For more information please email

jamie.young@rsa.org.uk

Tomorrow's Investor

Most people own shares indirectly – through their pensions in particular. Yet very few realise the rights of ownership. Tomorrow's Investor investigates the concept of shareholder democracy, looking to improve working practices and provide better returns for Britain's investors. This project is nearing completion and the RSA will soon set out the case for a new low cost, transparent pension fund, and how we deliver such a product.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/tomorrows-business/tomorrows-investors>

Enterprise and 'Olderpreneurs'

The RSA has a long history of work around enterprise. The current economic climate, alongside other long-term broader challenges - such as the need to plan for an aging population - suggest a strong role for enterprise and the need to unlock the potential for people to innovate and create new growth businesses. This project will aim to explore the potential of 'olderpreneurs', those over 50, many of who will be hit hardest by the recession. It will explore how current support and networks enhance entrepreneurialism and the needs of this particular group. Working with chair of the RSA, Luke Johnson, the PRIME Initiative and other partners, the project will also explore the role Fellows can play in supporting olderpreneurs and their businesses. Please email steve.broome@rsa.org.uk for more information.

Connected Communities

Connected Communities

Connected Communities is an action research programme that explores the potential of social networks to plan for and foster the kind of sustainable communities we want to live in. This programme of related research projects aims to better understand the conditions under which a new collectivism, or social productivity, may emerge - one that is organic, spontaneous, and bottom up. The programme will include working with communities to visualise and map social networks and their consequences, and to then co-produce and implement strategies to regenerate neighbourhoods in inclusive, efficient, locally owned and embedded ways.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/connected-communities>

Digital Inclusion

To harness the benefits of digital media and tools, citizens need to be able not just to access information online, but to collaborate and connect with one another. This project will investigate how online social networks can build social capital and empowered citizens in deprived communities. For more information please email steve.broome@rsa.org.uk

Rethinking the Community Garden

Published as one of the Sustainable Development Commission's 19 Breakthrough Ideas for the 21st Century, the RSA plans to set up 'dispersed urban farms', assembled from various parcels of land in communities. 'Farms' will include currently under-used land earmarked for development, bits of publicly owned land, and parts of or whole private gardens. The project will employ a local 'farmer' from the community to produce food for local participants, and also to cultivate more environmentally friendly behaviour, and social connections between diverse members of communities through the common interests of food and gardening. For more information please email steve.broome@rsa.org.uk

User Centred Drugs Services

In 2007 the RSA's Commission into Illegal Drugs, Communities and Public Policy recommended that complex drugs services should aim to give more control to users. The RSA is working with practitioners in West Sussex to pilot new approaches. It will explore the drivers and barriers to services and investigate the potential for empowering users in line with the government's aim of providing more personalised public services.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/public-services/drugs-commission>

Redesigning Public Interaction with the Police

Working with the National Policing Improvement Agency, a multi-disciplinary team of RSA projects staff, Fellows, police officers, and citizens are using the principles of complexity theory, service design, and persuasive technologies to learn how to deliver more effective and empowering citizen-focused policing. The project will bring together four short research commissions into a final symposium later this year. For more information please email steve.broome@rsa.org.uk

Prison Learning Network

The Network explores best practice, innovation and challenges for offender learning and skills. It brings together prison governors, education providers, probation and NGOs to support their work and aims to prompt a wider public discussion on how investment in offender learning and skills can benefit society.

http://www.theRSA.org/projects/prison_learning_network.asp

Citizen Power

Citizen Power

The Citizen Power project looks at the role of civic engagement in shaping public policy and the link between citizen power and civic and democratic renewal. Based on rigorous research and analysis, the project aims to develop ideas and practical policy solutions for cultivating active citizenship and positioning citizens at the heart of decision-making in the UK. The project will feed into the RSA's broader work on pro-social behaviour and developing a vision of a 'new enlightenment'. A major part of this venture includes a Citizens of the Future project in the city of Peterborough where we are aspiring to put into practice an ambitious and inclusive model of future citizenship.

For more information please email sam.mclean@rsa.org.uk

The 2020 Public Services Trust

The 2020 Public Services Trust is an independent think tank and registered charity, based at the RSA. The Trust exists to stimulate deeper understanding of the challenges facing public services in the medium term. Through research, inquiry and discourse, it aims to develop rigorous and practical solutions, capable of sustaining support across all political parties.

The Trust is running a major new Commission on 2020 Public Services, chaired by Sir Andrew Foster, to recommend the characteristics of a new public services settlement appropriate for the future needs and aspirations of citizens, and the best practical arrangements for its implementation.

For more information on the work of the Trust please visit www.2020pst.org or contact: Heidi Hauf at heidi@2020pst.org

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