

RSA Projects

RSA Projects put enlightened thinking to work in practical ways. We aim to discover and release untapped human potential for the common good. By researching, designing and testing new social models, we encourage a more inventive, resourceful and fulfilled society.

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 Projects blog.

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

The RSA, associated throughout its history with design, invention and enterprise, has argued more recently that design is a form of resourcefulness: the deliberate and practised ability to make something out of what's available. It has also argued that this resourcefulness will be better distributed - and society enhanced - if design is released from its narrow definition as a professional activity and thought of as something that everyone has some potential to do. The current programme of debate, research, education and intervention projects focuses on this theme of design as resourcefulness. While continuing to champion good professional design and excellence in undergraduate education, the RSA Design is also finding ways to distribute the insight and processes of design more widely.

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

Student Design Awards

Since their birth as an industrial bursaries scheme in the 1920s, these awards have closely mirrored the evolution of professional design from single-discipline craftsmanship and design for industry to more diffuse forms of service innovation and socially-inclusive professional practice. Today, a series of briefs developed with industry partners continue to challenge professionals-in-training to apply their skills to a range of tricky social problems. At the same time, newly clarified judging criteria require them to show craft, ingenuity, insight, communication and social benefit; all underpinned by the challenge to demonstrate the resourcefulness that makes design so valuable in these days of austerity.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/design/student-design-awards>

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, the valuing of skills as well as subject knowledge, and the engagement of learners with knowledge and skills for citizenship. The RSA Education programme has campaigned for a broader education offer that better equips young people for the demands of life in the twenty-first century. Our current projects maintain these concerns, along with intentions to democratise learning and to increase social justice in and through education.

<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. A review conducted in 2010 has demonstrated that schools involved in Opening Minds have led the way in showing how an imaginative competency-based curriculum can meet the needs of their school, engage learners and excite staff. They have been able to do this while still meeting the requirements of the National Curriculum and examination boards and improving attainment. Over 200 schools are currently implementing Opening Minds.

Following the review recommendations, we have introduced an accreditation system to assure quality and strengthen the support available to schools. A charitable body is being established by the RSA to oversee the accreditation system and the further development of Opening Minds. All schools, whether already implementing Opening Minds or new to using the framework, can now apply to become accredited RSA Opening Minds schools.

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

The Area Based Curriculum

The Area Based Curriculum programme supports schools and community partners in local areas to develop curriculum projects that use the local area and its communities as inspiration, its people as resources of expertise, and the whole area as a location for learning.

The RSA worked with three secondary schools in Manchester in 2008-9 to develop and pilot an Area Based Curriculum, and the evaluation of this pilot is available on our website.

Building on the evaluation of the work in Manchester the RSA is piloting a second Area Based Curriculum project in Peterborough as a key part of the Citizen Power project. The project team is working with schools and community partners in the city to build a network within which partners are able to co-design curriculum projects that take the priorities, resources and context of Peterborough as their starting point. We expect that the project will impact positively on the engagement of the students involved, as well as their attachment to their local area.

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/education/area-based-curriculum>

Social Justice in Education

The programme strand is establishing interventions (externally-funded projects) that seek to address the social class gap for educational achievement by engaging working class young people with education, and enhancing social capital, hence facilitating achievement. We are seeking to infuse social justice principles through all our work, but have also designed a 'Furthering Opportunity' initiative which has received external funding for its scoping phase. This initiative draws RSA Fellows together with working class young people to work on curriculum projects, to facilitate advocacy, social mixing, and curriculum enrichment. It is based within the FE sector, as that where working class young people are concentrated, and itself a sector which suffers from underfunding and lack of advocacy.

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

The RSA Academy at Tipton

The RSA Academy in the West Midlands opened in 2008 and moved into its new building in September 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. The RSA Academy is working with the RSA to develop its Opening Minds accreditation programme. GCSE and post-16 results at the Academy have improved dramatically year-on-year in 2009 and 2010, with several students excelling nationally, and more than ever before achieving 5 A*-C grades. Ofsted have recently graded the academy 'Good with outstanding capacity to improve'; and the Academy boasts an enrichment programme that has this year facilitated pupils to travel to events in the US and South Africa.

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

The RSA is currently scoping the potential development of an RSA family of academies: a model for the ethos and operations of a family of academies has been developed (foregrounding the practice of Opening Minds as an aspect of school improvement), and we are liaising with interested schools.

Enterprise Following two years of research, the latest Tomorrow's Investor report 'Building the consensus for a People's Pension in Britain' describes what a "best practice" pension system would look like. It calls on the coalition government to build a broad cross party consensus in which political parties, employers, unions, and pension funds agree to implement a 'pensions architecture' that brings the UK in line with countries such as Holland and Denmark that enjoy the lowest levels of pensioner poverty in Europe. The third phase of the project is working at communicating this message to the various stakeholders involved in the UK pensions industry.

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

Communities **Connected Communities** Connected Communities is an action research programme that employs social network analysis as a means to understand, plan for and foster the kind of communities that residents want to live in. This is a multi-faceted programme of interrelated research projects that share the aim of better understanding the conditions under which a new civic collectivism, or social productivity, may emerge - one that is organic, spontaneous, and bottom-up. The programme involves producing social and organisational network maps of the local areas concerned by surveying and interviewing local people. One current focus is on the intersection between social networks and mental wellbeing, with a diverse range of projects based all over England. Drawing on local responses, our maps and research are then used to inform bespoke community development strategies that are directed towards regenerating neighbourhoods in inclusive, efficient, locally-owned and embedded ways. <http://www.thersa.org/projects/connected-communities>

Whole Person Recovery

In 2007 the RSA's Commission on Illegal Drugs, Communities and Public Policy recommended that complex drug services should aim to give more control to users. The RSA is working with current and former drug users and practitioners in West Sussex to pilot new approaches. It is currently piloting a series of ideas ranging from Recovery Radio Podcasts to a Small Sparks Scheme. If you would like to follow the pilots' progress log onto_

<http://www.thersa.org/projects/whole-person-recovery>

The Social Brain

The RSA's Social Brain project has created an accessible summary of the most important research in neuroscience, psychology and behavioural economics that is pertinent to social policy (<http://www.thersa.org/projects/pro-social-behaviour/social-brain/reports/changing-the-subject>).

We used this summary to carry out some deliberative research. This latter research is available as part of our Steer report, which was published in June 2010 (<http://www.thersa.org/projects/social-brain/reports/steer-the-report>). The Steer report examines different approaches to behaviour-change and lays out the RSA's own vision of interventions that empower individuals. These interventions are 'reflexive' in that we give citizens knowledge of the underlying principles that govern behaviour, so that they might use those principles to better steer their own behaviour. Over the next year we will test the usefulness of a reflexive approach to behaviour-change through more deliberative work. We will also be expanding the Social Brain project in various ways, including research on the role of mindfulness in promoting mental health and supporting habit change. For more information please email jonathan.rowson@rsa.org.uk <http://www.thersa.org/projects/pro-social-behaviour/social-brain>

Citizen Power **Citizen Power**

The Citizen Power programme is investigating twenty first century citizenship and looking at how people and communities can better shape national and local civic and democratic renewal. Based on theoretical argument, action research and policy analysis, the programme aims to develop ideas and practical policy solutions for cultivating civic activism and reinvigorating decision-making in the UK. The programme feeds into the RSA's broader work on twenty first century enlightenment, pro-social behaviour and social action. For more information please email sam.mclean@rsa.org.uk and emma.norris@rsa.org.uk

Citizen Power Peterborough

Citizen Power Peterborough is a programme of action bringing local people, public agencies and voluntary organisation together to shape the future of the city. The aim is to build connections between people and communities, encourage active citizenship and develop innovative projects to support local people and their communities to make a positive difference. The core message at the heart of the programme is that - people are more powerful than they think.

<http://www.citizenpower.co.uk/>

For more information email georgina.chatfield@rsa.org.uk or susannah.willcox@rsa.org.uk

Citizen Power Peterborough will re-examine many aspects of life in the city through a number of related projects:

Peterborough Curriculum

The Peterborough Curriculum project is connecting local schools with people and organisations in Peterborough to help design parts of their own school curriculum. By getting more people in Peterborough involved with education, and opening our young people's minds to their local area, the aim is to provide a school curriculum that reflects local priorities and values. For more information please email louise.thomas@rsa.org.uk

Peterborough Civic Commons

The Peterborough Civic Commons is a space where local people, important figures and leading thinkers from around the world can discuss new ideas and the things that matter to them. The aim is to build knowledge and confidence on a range of issues of the day – from immigration to economic growth – helping people to see different perspectives, develop practical answers to local and national social challenges and put them into action. The Civic Commons in Peterborough is currently exploring community-led responses to anti-social behaviour. For more information please read our introductory report [here](#) or email emma.norris@rsa.org.uk

Peterborough Recovery Capital

The Peterborough Recovery Capital project is examining how we can best support the individuals and communities affected by problem drug and alcohol use. The project will map existing levels of recovery capital – the range of internal and external resources and assets an individual possesses or has access to – and take a network intervention approach to developing creative ideas that will strengthen and build recovery capital where needed. For more information please email rebecca.daddow@rsa.org.uk

Peterborough Sustainable Citizenship

The Sustainable Citizenship project will encourage, test and support the ideas of local people to promote green behaviour in the city. This will include innovation events to spark off brilliant ideas and a new network of like-minded people, with access to start-up funding to help get the best ideas off the ground in local neighbourhoods. The aim is to make Peterborough even better known for its environmental innovation. For more information please email jamie.young@rsa.org.uk

Peterborough Civic Health

The Civic Health project is developing a survey tool, Civic Pulse, that can be used by local authorities and community organisations to better understand the capacity of local people to take part in their community and to shape the services that they use. The results gathered through the Civic Pulse survey will be used to direct scarce resources to the groups and areas that are most lacking in civic capacity and to the services which are best adept at building the skills and fostering the attributes which may be particularly absent. Civic Pulse will also have a distinctive method which seeks to involve local residents in helping to undertake the survey, providing a chance for them to build their organisational skills, networks and confidence as they research their neighbours. As part of the wider programme of Citizen Power work in Peterborough, we will be piloting the survey tool within one of the city's neighbourhoods during the Spring of 2011.

For more information please email benedict.dellot@rsa.org.uk

Peterborough Arts and Social Change

The Arts and Social Change strand will explore the role of arts and imagination in creating new connections between people and where they live in order to strengthen participation in community life in Peterborough. Creative and arts based approaches underpin engagement for the entire programme of Citizen Power and achieved through a wide range of projects that place artists at the centre of re-imagining the possibilities of what a place could be and how to create this together.

This is not an arts project, nor a research project that 'uses' the arts, but a project that offers practical and imaginative tools for working together to create positive social change.

The programme will establish the city as a place for creative engagement with a focus upon:

- The integrating of arts dimensions across Citizen Power projects as well as within the city's aspirations and initiatives.
- The commissioning of high quality innovative artistic interventions.
- The building and strengthening of a locally based and artists' led network.

This will be delivered through an integrated framework of programming as follows:

- **Creative Gatherings** (building a strong network of locally based creative practitioners).
- **Experiments in Place Making** (locally based artists working within neighbourhoods).
- **Dialogue in Action** (public sector innovation with locally based artists).
- **Artists Residencies** (two artists hosted by two voluntary groups for one year).

- **Commissions** (entitled 'Made in Peterborough' with the first commission delivered by Encounters in the autumn of 2010. 'Take Me To').

For further information please contact jocelyn.cunningham@rsa.org.uk

Arts **RSA Arts**

The current programme of Arts and Social Change within Citizen Power Peterborough is the primary focus for arts programming and will inform an arts infused RSA approach to Projects. This will support our belief that the arts are central to everyday life, building resilience, reciprocity, empathy, providing alternate perspectives and opportunities for collaboration and innovation. An art infused RSA programme, currently in development will encompass three strands:

- a) Place Making
- b) Arts and Social Change
- c) The Value of the Arts

For more information please email jocelyn.cunningham@rsa.org.uk and georgina.chatfield@rsa.org.uk

The 2020 Public Services Hub

The 2020PSH is a research and policy development hub created from the legacy of the 2020 Public Services Trust in early 2011. It specialises in developing practice-based research on social productivity in public services. Based at the RSA, the Hub works collaboratively with local public service organisations, national sector leaders and other national partners to develop social value and social productivity thinking into local and national practice. The pressures on public services are many and varied - spending cuts, future demands, and the challenge of engaging more effectively and creatively with citizens and communities. Within this context, the 2020PSH seeks to apply a long-term, strategic perspective on these pressures, and develop socially productive responses in collaboration with its partners.

For more information please email heidi@2020psh.org

For general enquiries, please contact:

projects@rsa.org.uk