

RSA Projects

RSA Projects apply enlightened thinking to realise untapped human potential and tackle social problems. We believe that people can do more than they know. Working in co-operative and enterprising ways, we develop and test new blueprints for society. Our vision is an enlightened society of inspired, resourceful and fulfilled people.

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. While Design & Society is demonstrating this central hypothesis in university and school education and in public debate; a series of action research projects aim to discover how much design can increase the resourcefulness of particular communities, for example, neighbourhood police officers and people with spinal injuries. The approaches we employ include service design and emerging techniques such as "persuasive technology" and other design for behaviour change discourses.

<http://www.RSAdesigndirections.org>

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 and the RSA Academy are carrying out a major review of the support offered to schools, as well as research into the impact of Opening Minds in schools.

<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 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. It is establishing a training centre offering courses in implementing Opening Minds. GCSE results at the Academy in 2009 were better than any seen by the predecessor school, with several students excelling nationally, and more than ever before achieving 5 A*-C grades.

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

Whole Education

In response to the RSA's hugely popular Education Charter, The RSA, in partnership with a number of other high-profile charities, have launched the Whole Education movement. Whole Education aims to work with parents, schools, young people, business and the wider public to transform the vision and provision of education in the UK. The organisations involved in the alliance run a range of innovative programmes and together work with over one third of all secondary schools in the UK. Whole Education's aim is to promote excellent practice and to help support school practitioners, youth group leaders and parents deliver programmes which engage, stimulate and equip young people with the skills and knowledge they will need to thrive in the world beyond school. Read more about the campaign here.

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

School Governors Network

The RSA continues to support innovation with school governors by working with the Schools Governors One Stop Shop in developing a network of RSA Fellows who are members of school governing bodies.

<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 early 2010.

In 2010 the RSA will pilot a second Area Based Curriculum in Peterborough as a key part of the Citizen Power project, drawing on the lessons from Manchester and the needs of the local community in Peterborough.

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

RSA Civic Certificate

We are in the process of designing a new community development qualification with the aim of recognising, encouraging and supporting civic action, particularly that which occurs in local communities and that mobilizes collective effort. Broadly, the project is envisioned as a vehicle and learning framework to directly build capacity for active citizenship. The specific objectives of the project are to: develop a learning framework, modules and outcomes for the RSA Civic Certificate; ground the modules in current RSA research topics, learning and values to enable to participants to become RSA change-makers in action; recruit and train RSA Fellows to provide support, guidance and expert knowledge to those taking the Civic Certificate; pilot the Civic Certificate in 2-3 areas; and roll out the Civic Certificate and position it as a route to becoming an RSA Fellow, particularly for groups under-represented in the RSA Fellowship. For more information please email jonathan.rowson@rsa.org.uk

The Social Brain

The RSA's Social Brain project has created an accessible summary of the most important research in neuroscience and psychology that is pertinent to social policy (<http://www.thersa.org/projects/pro-social-behaviour/social-brain/reports/changing-the-subject>). This summary is currently being used to carry out some deliberative research. The purpose of this latter research is to introduce new knowledge about brains and behaviour to people who might not have come across it before, and to document their reactions. The feedback that comes out of this research will help inform how the RSA develops various community-based projects over the coming year. One strand of this work will be working with frontline public service workers to test whether their learning about brains and decision-making might improve their confidence, productivity and public relations. Another strand of work will be a contribution to the teaching content of the RSA's Civic Certificate (working title). The final strand will consist of designing and trialling an area based 'social game' that encourages citizens to act collectively and strengthen and widen their social networks. 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. The arts will be an integral part of the RSA programme in Peterborough, engaging community participation and researching the

relationship of art to social change.

<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>

Enterprise **Technology in a Cold Climate**

Through this short project we are bringing clearer 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 combining independent academic research with a one-day symposium attended by experts from business, policy and academia. The project's final report is due to be published in early February. 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. The first phase of this project is nearing completion and the RSA is currently working to set out the case for a new low cost, transparent pension fund, and develop a blueprint for how we could deliver such a product.

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

Connected 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, which will focus on two case study areas (New Cross Gate and Knowle West) in the first instance, involves working with people to visually map the social network structure of their local community. These maps are then used to inform bespoke strategies that are drawn-up in partnership with the communities concerned and that are directed towards regenerating neighbourhoods in inclusive, efficient, locally-owned and -embedded ways.

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

Media Ecologies

In one of the case study areas, Knowle West, the action research conducted under the Connected Communities banner has a particular focus on the relationship between social and digital capital. Working alongside the [Knowle West Media Centre](#), a community organisation that employs digital arts and media to engage the population, we are looking to understand the relationship between the use of digital (online and

telecommunications) networks and 'real-world' social inclusion. As the fieldwork nears completion, we are starting to plan how to best engage Fellows in online forums and 'design and ideas' symposia to test and validate our findings, and to help build-up our social capital strategies. For more information please email jonathan.rowson@rsa.org.uk

Rethinking the Community Garden

Developed 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 is being trialled in 2010 with a pilot in New Cross Gate. For more information please email alasdair.jones@rsa.org.uk

User Centred Drug Services

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 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>

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. Its final report will be published in February 2010.

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

Citizen Power

Citizen Power

The *Citizen Power* programme looks at how citizen power can and should shape civic and democratic renewal. Based on rigorous action research and policy analysis, the programme aims to develop ideas and practical policy solutions for cultivating active citizenship and positioning individuals at the heart of decision-making in the UK. The programme feeds into the RSA's broader work on pro-social behaviour and community empowerment. For more information please email sam.mclean@rsa.org.uk or emma.norris@rsa.org.uk

Citizen Power: Peterborough

Citizen Power: Peterborough represents a new approach to exploring and reviving notions of place and identity at a local level. A partnership between a pioneering, activist think-tank (RSA), an ambitious local authority (Peterborough City Council) and an influential national arts body (Arts Council), this project aims to build an active and sustainable citizenship through empowerment and innovation in the arts, public services, education and social media. For more information please email sam.mclean@rsa.org.uk or emma.norris@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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