

Press Update Spring 2008

GEOFF MULGAN

Geoff Mulgan contributed a guest editorial to Ethos on local government, which was reproduced in OpenDemocracy – 22nd April

“So have we reached the end of the centralising road? I suspect we have. Many of the big trends which are likely to shape the next few decades point in a localist direction. Climate change is encouraging people to think again about sourcing local food, working locally, driving less and walking more. Equally, an ageing population is likely to care more about the local quality of life. Even the internet is, paradoxically, doing much to strengthen local ties as people find new ways to link up with others living near them.”

“People Power: Mulgan for local democracy” - by Geoff Mulgan

<http://ourkingdom.opendemocracy.net/2008/04/22/people-power-mulgan-for-local-democracy/>

He is also joined by Will Hutton in his comment piece on the British banking community in the current economic situation – 22nd April

If British banks want to benefit from government largesse without losing public support they need to act urgently, not just to meet their needs but to show they understand that this is a deal not only with government but also with society. As the trade unions learned a generation ago, when powerful interests are given excessively favourable deals they're often storing up trouble for themselves. Monday was a pivotal moment that revealed the close inter-dependence between the financial system and government and society. But now that the relationship is out in the open, it's vital that it comes with responsibilities as well as rights.

“This is no bankers' bet” by Geoff Mulgan and Will Hutton

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/commentisfree/2008/apr/22/banking.mortgagesSAFFRON JAMES>

STUDIO SCHOOLS

The Launchpad studio schools model was mentioned in The Guardian on January 22nd, in Mike Baker's analysis of the impact of school size on education performance – 22nd January

Also positive is government support for the Young Foundation's “Studio Schools”. These schools, with a maximum of 300 students, are aimed at bridging the gap between school and work for 14- to 19-year-olds.

“People Power: Mulgan for local democracy” - by Geoff Mulgan

<http://education.guardian.co.uk/egweekly/story/0,,2244349,00.html>

TRANSFORMERS

The launch of ‘Transformers: How local areas innovate to address changing social needs’ was accompanied by quotes from Geoff Mulgan in an article covering the new report in The Times – 22nd January

“IF YOU don't have to innovate in the public sector, you usually don't,” says Geoff Mulgan, director of the Young Foundation, a centre for social innovation. Research out today from his organisation and the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts (Nesta) looks at innovation in local government and local areas across the UK and internationally. “It's striking how much the will to change is important and in the UK context that often comes from external pressure,” says Mulgan, and a damning inspection report from the Audit Commission is an example of one such pressure.

“If it's not working, experiment” by Jennifer Taylor

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/career_and_jobs/public_sector/article3224364.ece

Public Servant Daily (23rd January) and New Start magazine (25th January) also drew attention to the report

Every area in the country has the potential to innovate successfully to tackle urgent social needs but most lack the right funding, leadership and support from local and central government, according to a new report from NESTA and the Young Foundation.

“Local authorities ‘must support innovation’” – Public Servant Daily

http://www.publicservice.co.uk/news_story.asp?id=4937&topic=Local%20government



Richard Halkett, executive director of policy research at Nesta, said: 'Identification of underperformance by bodies like the NAO can be a driver for improvement. But there needs to be recognition across the NAO of the role they have in whether innovation is something seen as a failure or a point of learning and an acceptable risk. Innovation involves risk and risk can mean failure but we have never heard the message from NAO that "this scheme failed but was the right thing to do".'

"Poor areas held back by red tape and lack of innovation, says report" – New Start Magazine

The authors of 'Transformers' also produced a viewpoint piece for Local Government Chronicle – 21st February

Our research has demonstrated that every area in the country has the potential to innovate successfully, even where there is little history of innovation and no institutions, such as universities, which have traditionally been thought necessary for innovation to flourish. But most places lack the right funding, leadership and support from local and central government. As a whole local government has not properly worked out how to shape, incubate and grow the best ideas.

"Pathways to Innovation" by Nicola Bacon, Nusrat Faizullah, Geoff Mulgan and Saffron Woodcraft

LOCAL CHARTERS

Vicky Savage's guide for 'How to develop a local charter' appeared in New Start Magazine's Learning Curve section – 1st February

If you wanted to change something in your neighbourhood where would you start? Local authorities are doing much to engage individuals but it can still be difficult to navigate the array of public services in a community, let alone influence their delivery... Local charter are a good way of bringing all this information together in one place. Residence can see at a glance what's happening locally and service providers can capture the ideas and priorities of local people in order to tailor their delivery to the individual neighbourhood.

The potential for success that Local Charters could provide was illustrated in an article by The Guardian with a case study of Staffordshire Moorlands district council

Nicola Bacon, local projects director at the Young Foundation, which has produced a guide for local authorities wanting to develop a charter, goes one step further. "Even the process of bringing agencies and the community together - prioritising people's wishes, and working out how resources can respond - can be a big benefit," she says. The trick, Bacon adds, is for charters to be tailored to local need - much in the way Staffordshire has done in Biddulph.

"Little things mean a lot" by Robert Bullard

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/apr/16/communities.localgovernment/print>

WELLBEING

Geoff Mulgan is quoted in an article about Wellbeing, which also quotes Sir Richard Layard, a project partner of the Young Foundation's Local Wellbeing project – 18th February

Geoff Mulgan, the former head of the No10 policy unit, says: "Wellbeing will be the major focus of government in the 21st century, in the way that economic prowess was in the 20th century and military prowess was in the 19th century."

"Teaching happiness: The classes in wellbeing that are helping our children" by Jules Evans

http://www.timesonline.co.uk/tol/life_and_style/education/article3391035.ece

The Local Wellbeing Project was also the focus of an article by Madeleine Bunting following a visit to a case study in South Tyneside – 30th April

What makes Seligman's work unusual is that PRP has been rigorously evaluated - unlike many other forms of therapeutic assistance to combat depression or schemes to teach emotional skills, such as the government's current Seal (Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning) programme in schools. This is what first caught the interest of the economist Lord (Richard) Layard, and of Geoff Mulgan, director of the Young Foundation, who are working with South Tyneside, Manchester and Hertfordshire to develop a programme of work in their Local Wellbeing Project.

"Happy mediums: Can we 'immunise' young people against unhappiness and depression?"

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/apr/30/mentalhealth.youngpeople>

UPRISING

Rushanara Ali introduced the UpRising project in an article for The Guardian – 20th February

The time is ripe for a radically different approach which seeks out the brightest and best from less privileged backgrounds who are often ignored and excluded, and whose talents go wasted, to help them take up positions of power. This year, the Young Foundation will launch the UpRising leadership programme, a new organisation to support and train a new generation of public leaders.

"Let power reflect the people" by Rushanara Ali

<http://www.guardian.co.uk/society/2008/mar/19/policy.publicservices/print>