SOUTH TYNESIDE LIBRARIES
WELCOME TO YOUR LIBRARY

FINAL REPORT NOVEMBER 2007

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South Tyneside Council

WELCOME TO YOUR LIBRARY FINAL REPORT NOVEMBER 2007

WELCOME TO YOUR LIBRARY VISION AND AIMS

We will connect public libraries and refugee communities to nurture learning, well being and a sense of belonging

Welcome To Your Library is a national project connecting public libraries with refugees and asylum seekers. By increasing opportunities for participation, Welcome To Your Library aims to improve access to and quality of public library services for everyone.

This will be achieved through:

- **PARTICIPATION** of refugee communities throughout the work
- **PARTNERSHIPS** to raise awareness and increase public library use
- **CONFIDENT, TRAINED** library staff
- **SHARING GOOD PRACTICE** based on evidence
- **ADVOCACY** for public library work with refugees and asylum seekers

Background to the project

Funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation and co-ordinated through the London Libraries Development Agency, the Welcome To Your Library pilot project took place in the London boroughs of Brent, Camden, Enfield, Merton and Newham in 2003-4.

In 2005, a further £250,000 from the Paul Hamlyn Foundation enabled Welcome To Your Library to extend the project nationally to the end of 2007. By this time we expect activities to have become an integral part of public library work.
For background information about Welcome to Your Library visit the LLDA website:
www.llda.org.uk/cms/contentpage/wtyl

WTYL partners

After a competitive selection process, five additional public library partners participated in the national project:

- London Borough of Hillingdon working with Healthy Hillingdon
- Leicester City Council
- Liverpool City Council
- London Borough of Southwark
- Tyne & Wear (a consortium comprising councils in Newcastle, Gateshead, North and South Tyneside and Sunderland)

Context: shared priorities

South Tyneside Libraries, in common with other library authorities, is seeking to put into effect the vision expressed by the Government for public libraries in *Framework for the Future*. Section 6, *Community and Civic Values*, is particularly concerned with the need for libraries to engage with "hard to reach" groups, such as asylum seekers. Local councils also share the need to implement the national children's agenda *Every Child Matters*, and to make sure that services deliver the five outcomes.

SOUTH TYNESIDE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE WTYL PROJECT AIMS

SOUTH TYNESIDE MBC AND LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICE

South Tyneside is a small metropolitan borough with a population of 151,500. At the last census 2.7% of the population were found to be from ethnic minorities. The largest resident BME community is of people originating from Bangladesh, of whom there are upwards of 800 living in South Tyneside. There is also a well-established Yemeni community, one of the oldest Arab and Muslim communities in the UK, founded by seamen settling in the Borough from the 1890s onwards.
In addition to the settled BME communities, over the last few years 150-200 asylum seekers have been resident in at any one time in the South Shields area of the Borough.

As a relatively small, tightly staffed service, South Tyneside Libraries did not have the capacity to devote 0.5 of a Librarian's time to the project which was the WTYL requirement for full partners. However, as part of the Tyne and Wear Consortium, we were able to participate by offering a share of the 0.5 time, either as a block of time, or as a few hours on a weekly basis. This was delivered by Jackie Buckley, one of our two Community Development Librarians. In addition, Lindsay Casselden, the Community Development Co-ordinator, did some work on the project.

The Library Unit Plan, *Everything we do,* sets out our commitment to engaging with everyone living in the Borough, "To develop a workforce and service which reflects the nature of all the members of our community". The Community Development Strategy details these as target groups, including RAS, and ESOL learners, and "outreach to BME groups".

At the beginning of the project, Community Development staff had already been working on the accessibility of South Tyneside Library Service for the BME communities, and the levels of staff awareness of their needs.
At that time, the position was:

- **Membership**: there were no forms to fill in, as details of people joining were entered straight onto the database. ESOL class members could enrol as a group. Women without their own ID could enrol using their husband's ID.
- **Returning books**: asylum seekers could bring books from another authority to our libraries, and we would return them.
- **ICT**: free internet and word processing were available via the People's Network in all the Borough's libraries.
- **Outreach**: Staff had visited the weekly Churches Key Project Drop-in Centre. The Library Service was represented on the Authority's Multi Agency Group for Asylum Seekers and Refugees.
- **Partnerships**: the Library Service had worked with ESOL educators to provide a venue and inputs into Awareness of Another Culture classes for ESOL students, in the Central Library.
  Cultural Kaleidoscope: we had also worked with ESOL providers and NEMLAC to stage an arts event with asylum seekers living in the area, with craft exhibits, singing, dancing and presentations. The following year the education providers made the preparations for this into a certificated course, and these took place in the Library, with the performance at a local Theatre.
- **Mela**: we had participated in the annual Mela in South Shields for the last three years.
- **Resources in other languages**: the Central Library had a collection of mixed Indic language books, from Bright Books, which were regularly exchanged. We had a small collection of novels in European languages.
  Dictionaries covering a variety of languages were available, having been purchased following advice from ESOL teachers.
  We also had language cassettes for learning English.
  In 2005, we had been successful in obtaining a Small Grant from NEMLAC, to purchase and set up a Bengali books and newspapers collection. The Bangladeshi community, the Borough's largest BME group were involved in the selection of this. A collection of books in Arabic had been bought by the Library as part of a regional initiative, several years previously.
- **Public Library Services to Refugees and Asylum Seekers in the North East Research Project**: the Library Service had been involved in work on this NCL-MCG initiative, the aim of which was to produce a report on the current situation.
- **Training**: some of our staff had attended various courses of cultural awareness training, including a Cultural Diversity course run by the Tyne and Wear Learning Network in November 2004.

To develop our RAS engagement, South Tyneside produced a plan at the beginning of the WTYL project and agreed on the following aims:

By a process of engagement and consultation with asylum seekers and partners South Tyneside Libraries will:

1. *Increase awareness of libraries amongst asylum seekers and refugees by outreach*

2. *Collaborate on a range of educational and cultural initiatives*

3. *Provide suitable training to help staff to understand the needs of asylum seekers and refugees and respond to them appropriately*

4. *Provide opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to volunteer in libraries*

5. *Network with other library authorities in the Region to share information and resources to help asylum seekers and refugees*

These five key activities were incorporated in the Tyne and Wear Consortium Plan, and were worked on by staff both in South Tyneside and, where appropriate, the sub regional Consortium group.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Key objective 1: *Increase awareness of libraries amongst asylum seekers and refugees by outreach*

- The Community Development Librarian regularly attends the authority-wide Multi Agency Support Group for asylum seekers, which is held monthly. This has facilitated the formation of links with other service providers such as EMTRAS (Ethnic Minority, Traveller and Refugee Achievement Service), PCT, Adult and Community Learning Department, Customs House (theatre and arts centre), and the Tyne & Wear Museum Service, which facilitates partnership working.

- She also visits the Tuesday afternoon Asylum Seekers drop-in, run by Churches Together, to raise awareness of the library service with the attendees. About 20 asylum seekers (including children) generally attend weekly.

- In March 2007, a research report on *RAS Library/Information Needs* by Shona McTavish and Alison Pickard of Northumbria University was received. This had been commissioned by the Consortium, and undertaken as part of the PEARL agreement (Partnership in Education, Research and Learning) between the University and local authorities in the region. Information for the report was gathered through focus groups of RAS resident in the different Consortium partnership areas. (See Appendix A).

- The library staffed information stalls at BME events, such as the BME Health Information Day (October 2006) and the Mela, (July 2006).

Key objective 2: *Collaborate on a range of educational and cultural initiatives*

- The library was used as the venue for several 10-session courses of *Social Awareness of Another Culture* for asylum seekers and refugees by our partner the Adult and Community Learning Department, incorporating a library tour by our staff. This was delivered to 6 students at a time. Students attending the courses were able to develop their confidence in using the Library as it had become a familiar environment.

- The Community Development Librarian worked with EMTRAS (Ethnic Minority, Traveller and Refugee Achievement Service) to facilitate in the Library a series of support sessions for young asylum seekers preparing to take their GCSEs, delivered by their staff. Library computers and materials were made available for them to use and staff gave them a tour of the library. 6 sessions were attended by up to 8 young people on each occasion.

- We arranged for the Library Theatre to be used in July 2006 for the presentation of ESOL learning certificates at a ceremony attended by 50 asylum seekers and refugees, working with our partners in Adult and Community Learning. All the attendees enjoyed the presentation and refreshments and the RAS were able to sign up for further ESOL and other educational courses.

- Library awareness and basic computer skills were delivered to BME mothers with limited English from the EMTRAS *Keeping up with the children* groups. About 100 women attended sessions in the library from May 2006 to June 2007. During the sessions they were shown around each Central Library department, and given a brief introduction to computers. All sessions included refreshments and discussion. Following requests for more computer training, a 5-session course, with a Groundwork tutor, was run for 10 women in June 2007, followed in October by a 9-part course for 8 women. The project aim was to avoid social exclusion of the women, and to promote integration into the community. By joining the library on their initial visit with the accompanying interpreter they gained access to books, magazines, information and free internet use. Developing computer skills helped them to keep in touch with distant relatives and support their children's learning. Feedback forms from the women attending, some of whom had not previously visited the library, all gave high ratings to their visit, and commented on how much they had enjoyed themselves.

- To commemorate the 200th Anniversary of the Abolition of the Slave Trade, an exhibition loaned from Anti-Slavery International was shown in the Central Lending Library from 17th-30th March 2007. The exhibition covered not just the achievements of earlier abolitionists, but modern slavery (which is one of the causes of refugees fleeing from their own countries), and ongoing abolitionist work.

- £600 funding was received from MLA-NE in March 2007, in response to the bid submitted individually by each Consortium member, to buy guides and support material to pass Citizenship tests for use by RAS in all the South Tyneside libraries.
  Eighteen copies each of three titles relating to the new Citizenship test (implemented in April, and to completely replace the old one in June) were purchased, and an event to launch these aids was held at the end of May 2007. Using our own funding, software to assist applicants to prepare for the Citizenship test called *Life in Britain*, was purchased from *220Soft* at the end of March, and was put onto all the Central Library pcs prior to the Citizenship materials launch, to offer an alternative to the book based support.

- In October 2006, the Central Library hosted a Diwali celebration, which was attended by about 200 people from all the communities living in the Borough. Our first ever collection of books in Punjabi was launched, and the public enjoyed classic Indian dancing and music, mendhi painting, traditional Diwali refreshments and children's craft activities connected with the Festival. It was particularly gratifying that people of a variety of faiths and ethnicities came to the Library for the Festival, (not just Hindus and Sikhs) and that they all joined in the activities and felt welcome. The Central Library also celebrated Diwali this year, focusing on Family Learning.

Key objective 3: *Provide suitable training to help staff to understand the needs of asylum seekers and refugees and respond to them appropriately*

- As South Tyneside has a very small ethnic minority community (2.7% at the last Census) and only about 50 families of asylum seekers, some staff have very limited experience of dealing with people from other cultures or understanding their backgrounds. This means that RAS awareness training has been a priority for us. Altogether 74 South Tyneside Libraries personnel, including all the front line staff, attended Asylum Seeker Awareness training from November 2006- September 2007. This was delivered in 7 half-day sessions, by NERS trainers or on one occasion Council equalities staff, and three full day sessions, one at Sunderland, one at South Shields and one at Gateshead. These consisted of social inclusion training by John Vincent, in addition to the NERS input. (see Appendix B for Impact Assessment)

- The Community Development Co-ordinator and Community Development Librarian each attended a number of Conferences, seminars and training days related to RAS throughout the WTYL project period, including the *Regional Refugee Conference* in February 2006 and the *Refugee Integration Conference* at Leeds, June 2006.

Key objective 4: *Provide opportunities for asylum seekers and refugees to volunteer in libraries*

- Volunteering in libraries has presented a challenge to us. This is in part because as a small local authority, with neighbourhoods with some of the highest levels of deprivation in England, we do not attract refugee settlers to the same extent as surrounding authorities, and we only ever host about 50 families of asylum seekers at one time. In addition, Cultural Services, of which Libraries are part, is currently in the process of formulating a strategy and support mechanisms for cultural volunteering for the whole department.

- However the Community Development Co-ordinator and Community Development Librarian have developed their understanding of the requirements of supporting RAS volunteering by taking part in training and informational events on volunteering by RAS, including the WTYL Training Day in Leicester, March 2007, the NERS *Let us make a change* event in June 2007 and the OneNE *Cultural Volunteering and Employability Conference* in July 2007.

Key objective 5: Network with other library authorities in the Region to share information and resources to help asylum seekers and refugees

- In September 2007, the Consortium approved *The Tyne and Wear Consortium Resource Sharing Policy*, a scheme devised by Sunderland, for sharing foreign language books required by refugees and asylum seekers. (see Appendix C)

South Tyneside Libraries, as part of the Tyne and Wear Consortium, has achieved all the key objectives set out at the beginning of the project, with the exception of **Objective 4,** putting in place volunteers.

Objectives 1 and 2 have become integrated into the mainstream work of Community Development staff, with asylum seekers and refugees being perceived as a priority target group, and engagement with that community included in library and departmental plans and performance indicators.

The achievement of **Objective 3** has meant that all frontline staff have received training to help them work effectively with refugees and asylum seekers. After initial setbacks concerned with the incompatibility of electronic systems, the Consortium was able to reach a practical compromise with regard to the sharing of foreign language material for short-term use, thus achieving **Objective 5**.

In addition to meeting the objectives of the WTYL project, we have also achieved a partnership with other Consortium library authorities based on developing respect and trust during the period of involvement. This has facilitated sharing ideas and best practice concerned with RAS engagement.

ONGOING WORK WITH REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

South Tyneside Library Service continues to endeavour to combat social exclusion by engagement with disadvantaged groups, such as RAS, and has local performance indicators to meet for this work. We will:

- Continue our attendance at the Multi Agency Support Group

- Continue to mainstream BME library events and provision

- Participate in the Tyne and Wear Resource Sharing Policy

- Purchase a new collection of books in Arabic

- Funded by our partner the PCT we will acquire and make available a collection of health books and leaflets in Indic languages and Arabic

- Participate in regional RAS events/initiatives and training

- Work with other Cultural Services staff, to set up a cultural volunteering strategy

- Facilitate, with our partner Groundwork, a further 8 sessions of structured computer training in the Library for BME mothers

- Work with CREST (Compact for Racial Equality in South Tyneside) to set up and run a social group in the Library for BME young men

- Work with South Tyneside College to continue sessions of Library Awareness and introduction to the Citizenship software for ESOL students

- Continue to meet Consortium partners at regular intervals, to exchange views and best practice to do with RAS involvement and liase over University of Northumbria students' proposed further research into RAS library use

New challenges have been posed by the Government in documents such as the White Paper *Strong and prosperous communities* (October 2006) and *the Lyons inquiry into local government* (final report May 2007), to do with the reinterpretation of "community engagement". Disadvantaged people, such as RAS must be not merely encouraged to use libraries, but to be involved in shaping the service outcomes that local people want to see. Engaging communities in this "place shaping" role will be an important part of our future work.

Lindsay Casselden Nov 2007

APPENDIX A

RAS LIBRARY AND INFORMATION NEEDS REPORT

RESEARCH INTO REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS (RAS) LIBRARY/INFORMATION NEEDS

A report prepared by Shona McTavish and Dr Alison Pickard on behalf of
Newcastle, Gateshead, Sunderland, South Tyneside and North Tyneside
Public Library Authorities

March 29th 2007

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RESEARCH INTO REFUGEES & ASYLUM SEEKERS (RAS) LIBRARY/INFORMATION NEEDS

1. *Introduction*

The Welcome to Your Library (WTYL) Tyne & Wear (T&W) consortium is comprised of the library authorities in Newcastle, Gateshead, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland. The consortium has identified the need to establish evidence based information around RAS' access to libraries and their information needs, and feels strongly that the information should come directly from RAS themselves (i.e. not to make assumptions). As all the library authorities in the T&W consortium had time/capacity constraints, they approached colleagues from the School of Computing, Engineering & Information Sciences at Northumbria University. This research was carried out under the PEARL (Partnership in Education, Achievement, Research, and Learning) consortium agreement which facilitates joint endeavours between the relevant PLAs and Northumbria University. Colleagues from the Information and Communication Management subject group within the School agreed to undertake some research with RAS on behalf of the consortium. It is hoped that this research will benefit Library Authorities by providing information they can use to consider their services in relation to RAS. Also, because an independent organisation is conducting the research, it will be objective and more credible than if it had been carried out in-house. This research study focuses on T&W and will concentrate on responses from RAS.

2. Aims

- to establish evidence based information around RAS' access to libraries and their information needs
- to find out what RAS see as being the barriers to using the library
- to establish a methodology for engaging with and involving RAS in the development of services and in order to build trust and good relationships

3. *Methodology*

The research took an interpretivist approach to investigating the library/information needs of refugees and asylum seekers in the North East of England. The purpose of the research was to gain insight into the attitudes and opinions of this group to library services within the region. In order to avoid making assumptions about possible needs of the group it was decided to allow the data to emerge naturally rather than design an a priori framework that could potentially restrict the discovery. The interpretivist paradigm demands the harvesting of rich, detailed, descriptive qualitative data that allows for insight and discovery. The emergent design of interpretivist research does not allow for a detailed plan before the research begins 'the research design must therefore be 'played by ear'; it must unfold, cascade, roll, emerge' [Lincoln and Guba, 1985 p.203]. However, it is possible to develop a design which allows for the iterative nature of the study. In this investigation an initial plan was constructed which allowed the researchers access to appropriate groups in appropriate locations and provided an open structure to facilitate open sharing of the research participants' personal views on the central issues of this research.

Taking into consideration the nature of the research participants it was decided to arrange focus groups in locations within each Public Library Authority (PLA), it was important that participants felt comfortable and familiar with these locations to encourage open discourse. Powell [et. al.] define a focus group as, 'a group of individuals selected and assembled by researchers to discuss and comment on, from personal experience, the topic that is the subject of the research' [1996, p. 499]. The focus group technique has been used in social research since the late 1930's [Kreuger,1988], but possibly the most obvious use of the technique has been in market research where it is applied to investigate consumer preferences and habits. Focus groups were chosen as the most appropriate data collection technique for a number of reasons, focus groups allow 'a variety of perspectives and explanations [to] be obtained from a single data-gathering session' [Gorman &

Clayton, 1997, p.142]. This meant that optimum levels of data collection could be anticipated within the very limited time frame for the actual fieldwork. Because of the circumstances of this research community it was also thought that they would be more willing to share their views if they were in a familiar space and surrounded by familiar faces. It was important to recognise the cultural factors which could so easily have influenced the data collection in this investigation. 'The purpose of focus groups is to enable a range of perceptions, feelings and attitudes from participants across a range of issues to be explored. It is possible to conduct relatively in-depth discussions with a small group of participants who may be only a small proportion of the target population or the entire target population. They have the potential to allow for a wide range of views, beliefs and perceptions to be generated in a single data collection exercise.' [Pickard, 2007 p.220] In this research it was necessary to keep the data collection as open as possible to allow the participants the freedom to voice whatever issues were important to them without being restricted by preconceptions of the researchers.

In this investigation focus groups were arranged in Sunderland, Gateshead, Newcastle and South Shields. For all but one of these, researchers attended established meetings where the RAS' community felt comfortable and were surrounded by familiar people. In one location it was necessary to use a designated space in the central library but the members of the focus group were all familiar with the space and the meeting was also attended by an objective observer known to the group. Due to the number of different native languages of participants in one of the groups it proved much more useful to sit with a range of very small groups within a large communal room, and to engage in group conversations with a maximum of 4 participants at a time. Where language was a real barrier an interpreter was used for clarity. In 3 of the 4 locations all focus group participants were female, in the 4th location all participants were male and, as not all were willing to take part, it was decided to use individual interviews.

4. Key Findings

The findings of this research report are structured around five key themes and where appropriate recommendations have been made within the discussion of these themes. It should also be noted that all RAS interviewed as part of this research used a library service but this should not be taken as meaning that this is 'usual'. It is likely that on being approached as regards their willingness to participate in focus groups or individual interviews that they opted to do so purely because they were users and felt that they would have something to say, knowing something about libraries. We must ask ourselves if one does not know about, or use libraries, is one likely to volunteer to participate in research about libraries?. This research cannot answer that question but does provide some points for consideration by PLAs in reaching RAS.

4.1 Finding out about Libraries

4.1.1. Libraries are potentially used more where they are situated around sought after amenities. For example, people who live in one area did not necessarily use the library in that area preferring to use those close to where they did their shopping. Some RAS clearly preferred their branch library to use of a central library. However, the branch libraries were often spotted as a result of, for example, visits to doctors or when shopping, suggesting their closeness to amenities. For some people branch libraries were perceived as more accessible, where central libraries were viewed as 'big' and 'difficult to go into'. For others, however, use was made of a central library as they were not aware that there were such things as branch libraries.

4.1.2. RAS in discussing how they became aware of the library service highlighted the following scenarios:

- Support Workers (some RAS were also shown where the library was by support workers)

- By chance, where on speaking to his landlady about paying for access to the Internet, being told 'why pay? Go to the library'.
- It was found that children were often the ones who introduced adults to public library services. Children had been made aware of public library services though school.
- Some RAS were studying and found out about libraries from their place of study
- Found it by themselves. (Walking along – oh! there is a library)
- Asked neighbours
- Nobody told me, I have been in (town) for 18 months and did not know about libraries
- Community group drop-in sessions (held in local churches and largely staffed by volunteers)
- Told to ask in library for help about something
- Refugee Centre
- ESOL

It is clear from the above scenarios that schools, refugee centres, ESOL, community support workers and drop-in sessions are key links for this particular group and there is the potential for PLAs to work more closely with these groups to promote their services. Furthermore, it was recognised by the researchers during the data collection process that local churches and their volunteers play a key role in supporting RAS and as such could provide a valuable link to RAS and their potential needs.

4.2 Need for increased participation by Libraries?

4.2.1. Asylum seeker groups would welcome an increased participation and representation from libraries at their drop-in sessions (highlighted by volunteers/workers and also evidenced in authorities where this did happen).

4.2.2. The majority of people we spoke to were women, many who had children, and as a result valued a library service. However, because they were extremely busy they were often only able to visit the library occasionally or at the weekend. We would suggest therefore that there is the scope for libraries to become more active in the drop-in sessions and to consider taking certain library services out to the RAS. In addition, through library staff being present at these sessions, they will be increasing awareness of the types of services on offer in the library, and, at the same time, becoming familiar faces to the RAS and thereby potentially encouraging future visits to local libraries. Library staff, once known to the RAS, could also arrange to take groups to the library (volunteers/workers thought this would prove useful to RAS who attend their drop-in sessions).

4.3 Impression of Libraries

4.3.1. Libraries, where used, are considered welcoming, comfortable and nice places to be, with friendly staff. However, the first visit for some RAS to a library can be daunting. Factors mentioned included the look of the building, not knowing what it would be like inside, what to expect, and a lack of confidence in English. For some RAS, accessing a library was new to them, not having the same facilities in their previous country. For one RAS, on entering the library and being met by a fellow language speaker, expressed huge relief at this encounter. However, once in the library many RAS mentioned that they felt comfortable asking questions and seeking help.

As language is an initial barrier to RAS there is the potential for PLAs, once regular and consistent contact has been made with refugees, that the refugees themselves are encouraged to act as volunteers in introducing RAS to the library and its many services.

4.3.2. One or two people mentioned that they had not opted to use the library earlier because they thought that they would have to pay. Linked to 4.3.3 below, this suggests that information surrounding access to the library being free needs to be emphasised.

4.3.3. Libraries offer a lifeline in enabling communication with friends and family through the use of their Internet facilities. Some of the RAS also suggested that it would have been useful if they had known about the library and this service on entering the country and on being re-located. Although some people mentioned that library information was provided in the information pack that they were given on entering the country, we would suggest that this perhaps did not always stand out or perhaps the information that is provided is not around the types of services that would immediately attract them to use the library, e.g., does the information provided highlight free access to the Internet or even free access to the library? Of course there will also be the problem of limited English on arrival for some people and hence why the information provided would perhaps not initially stand out. Many RAS expressed a preference to have someone explain any information to them. Taking this point into consideration, there is the potential for PLAs to look to providing information on the library and its services in visual formats in addition to printed materials.

4.4 Services highlighted as being used

4.4.1 The main service highlighted as being used was the Internet for communication with family and friends and to keep up-to-date with happenings within their original country. Libraries were also seen by some as social places, a place where they can meet up with friends or just to be around people. Additional services highlighted were:

- Borrowing Books (for children mainly but also some adults mentioned borrowing books for themselves)
- Borrowing books to help with English Language
- Photocopying
- Use of computers for homework and use of computers while children play
- CDs

4.4.2 Reasons given for not using certain services included:

- Use of Internet but not books as there were few books available in their native language. However, many mentioned that as their English improves then they will borrow books in English

4.4.3 The majority of RAS interviewed did not highlight any items or services that they would like to see provided by the library service, being very happy with what they have access to. But one needs to bear in mind that for many RAS this is the first time that they have had access to a library and as such are they not likely to be impressed with what is provided? The few examples that arose out of the conversations held included:

- Scanner
- Dictionaries covering native language
- More computers
- Being shown how to use the Internet (not only access to written help as preference was to be shown)
- Wider choice of materials in native language
- Activities for 5-8 year olds (perceived activities held in libraries as being for younger children)

4.5 When is the right time to find out about Library Services?

Clearly from what has been discussed above, many felt that they would like to have known about the library from day one, particularly in relation to Internet access. A few people also highlighted its

value as a place to go, somewhere to meet people and importantly, somewhere to see people! Only a few people suggested that knowing about the library services on arrival was too soon.

What also emerged from the conversations held was that for some people it was not until they had a specific need, e.g., transport details, that they then identified that the library held this type of information. Linked to the Internet point discussed above, perhaps in promoting its services to RAS libraries need to place more emphasis on the day-to-day types of information, focussing on specific types of information, in addition to providing an overview of the services offered.

5. Key issues for consideration by PLAs.

- Local churches and their volunteers, Schools, Refugee Centres, ESOL, Community Support Workers, and drop-in sessions were identified as key links for this particular group of RAS.
- RAS groups would welcome an increased participation and representation from libraries at their drop-in sessions.
- Libraries are potentially used more where they are situated around day-to-day amenities such as shops and health centres.
- Branch libraries are often perceived as more accessible than central or larger libraries, however, not everyone was aware of the existence of branch libraries.
- Majority of RAS interviewed were women with children who felt that they were too busy to visit the library on a regular basis.
- Libraries, where used, are considered welcoming, comfortable and nice places to be, with friendly staff.
- First visit to a library can be daunting for RAS.
- Many RAS have no experience of libraries prior to entry into this country.
- RAS felt comfortable asking questions and seeking help from staff in libraries.
- Not all RAS are aware that they can access a library free of charge.
- Libraries can offer a lifeline in enabling communication with friends and family through the use of their Internet facilities, but RAS need to be aware of these services and, importantly, any charges for these services.
- Information on libraries provided to RAS on arrival needs to be highlighted and explained through a range of mediums.
- The RAS who used libraries were very pleased with what the libraries had to offer. However, Library Authorities need to bear in mind that the RAS had no expectations, many having no prior experience of libraries and therefore nothing to measure current services against.
- Main services used by RAS include, use of PCs, books, CDs, photocopying
- Services requested by RAS include access to; scanner, more PCs, language dictionaries, native language materials, and activities for 4-8 year olds.

6. Lessons Learned

This was a small scale research project and this section considers points that could prove useful to the authorities forming part of this research who wish to expand upon this research, and to other authorities looking to carry out their own research into the needs of RAS.

- As a small scale research study the findings identified above cannot be generalised across library authorities but serve as an indicator as to potential areas for consideration in terms of library service provision to RAS.
- Informed participation. We cannot emphasise enough the need for any groups being visited for the purposes of data collection to be aware, in advance, of the nature of the research, how it is to be carried out, for what purpose and by whom. Leaders, volunteers, and RAS

within the drop-in sessions need to be made aware. Where they are not fully aware then much of the time allotted to gathering data from RAS can be lost.

- Through exploring the idea of the research with various potential sites prior to the research being carried out, there is also the possibility of identifying additional or more appropriate sites with a larger user group of RAS and thereby affording the potential to gather more in-depth data.
- If you have any language speakers of the RAS' native tongues within your authority it could prove useful to have them accompany the researchers to act as translators. There might also be volunteer language speakers supporting, for example, drop-in sessions. It is worthwhile identifying these people in advance and seeking their assistance.

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APPENDIX B

ASYLUM SEEKER AWARENESS TRAINING IMPACT ASSESSMENT

ASYLUM SEEKER AWARENESS TRAINING: THE IMPACT ON STAFF

Altogether 70 South Tyneside Libraries staff, including all the front line staff, attended Asylum Seeker Awareness training from November 2006-June 2007. This was delivered in 7 half-day sessions, by NERS trainers or on one occasion Council equalities staff, and two full day sessions, one at Sunderland, and one at South Shields. These consisted of social inclusion training by John Vincent, in addition to the NERS input. Analysis of the sessions is from impact assessment forms completed by staff at the shorter sessions, and at the all day South Shields session.

Nearly everyone taking part felt that their knowledge of RAS had increased due to the training (95.7 for the short sessions, and 100% for the longer). 100% of attendees at the longer course could see that it would help them in their work in the library, but only 76.6% of short course attendees could see that. Possibly an understanding of the library context of social inclusion helps staff to see the relevance to their work of greater knowledge of target groups.

Perhaps because they were not seeing the training as part of the libraries larger social inclusion agenda, 39.8% 0f trainees at RAS awareness only sessions felt they needed no further training, and 17.5% asked for training more targeted to library service delivery.

Where tutors shared personal testimony of social exclusion, trainees often commented on their assessment forms, with 24% noting benefit from Finn Goddard's experiences in refugee camps, and 47% benefiting from the personal experience of John Vincent and Nasrin Ahmahdi. 52.5% overall noted that the dvd of asylum seekers talking about their lives useful. 15.5 % of trainees overall asked for sessions where RAS themselves could talk to them about their needs.

A wish to have information updates, especially with regard to local provision for RAS was highlighted by 21% of RAS awareness only attendees, and 18% of the full day session ones.

Conclusions

There can be no doubt that library staff learn new information from RAS Awareness sessions, and that the majority feel this will help them deliver a better service to this group of library users. In an area such as South Tyneside with a very low BME community (2.7%) and small numbers of asylum seekers (approx 150-200) this is particularly important, as staff may have had limited past experience of helping, for example, people with limited use of English.

The introduction of a social inclusion session to the training had a very positive effect, and staff who received this as well were able to put their RAS awareness training into context. If at all possible, future training should include this element.

Another important area for inclusion, if possible, is testimony from RAS themselves, whether in person, or on dvd, as staff responded well to personal histories and were enabled to see the human dimension of statistics and regulations. Similarly, social exclusion testimony from tutors serves this purpose.

The importance of updating this training, and keeping staff conversant with developments in this area of service delivery is crucial to successfully engaging with RAS. The use of RAS volunteers in libraries, for example, will require the informed support of library staff at all levels.

LC 29/06/07

APPENDIX C

TYNE AND WEAR WTYL CONSORTIUM
RESOURCE SHARING POLICY

WTYL Welcome to your Library

Tyne and Wear Consortium Resource Sharing Policy

1.0   Mission Statement

1.1   Ensure the continuous development of the work undertaken by the Welcome to your Library Tyne and Wear Consortium in connecting Public Libraries and Refugee Communities to nurture learning, well-being and a sense of belonging for all.

2.0   Aim

2.1   To provide relevant material, resources and activities to meet the needs as identified by Refugees and Asylum Seekers.

2.2   To develop a policy and procedures for the sharing of resources from the Foreign Language Collections within the Consortium Authorities.

3.0   Tyne and Wear Consortium Members

3.1   Gateshead Council

3.2   Newcastle upon Tyne City Council

3.3   North Tyneside Council

3.4   South Tyneside Council

3.5   Sunderland City Council

4.0   Resource Sharing Policy

4.1   All Consortium Authorities to agree to sharing resources from their Foreign Language Collections via Inter Library Loans Scheme free of charge.

4.2   All Consortium Authorities to agree to the procedures for sharing resources from the Foreign Language Collections.

4.3   All Consortium Authorities to agree to the delivery of resources from the Foreign Language Collections via the North East Regional Van.

Example of resource sharing procedure

- South Tyneside Public Library Service receive a request for Kurdish fiction from a member of the Refugee and Asylum Seeker Community.

- Sunderland Public Library Service is contacted as they hold, as part of their Foreign Language Collection, Kurdish fiction.

- Kurdish fiction is loaned to South Tyneside Public Library Service for a set time period and delivered via the North East Regional Van.

4.4   All Consortium Authorities to agree to provide contact details of their Inter Library Loans Scheme:-

Name of Authority	Email address	Telephone Number
Gateshead Council	ill@gateshead.gov.uk	(0191) 433 8400
Newcastle upon Tyne City Council	Inter.library.loans@newcastle.gov.uk	(0191) 277 4166
North Tyneside Council	ill@northtyneside.gov.uk	(0191) 200 6116
South Tyneside Council	bookrequests@southtyneside.gov.uk	(0191) 424 7858
Sunderland City Council	illos@sunderland.gov.uk	(0191) 514 8480

5.0 Conclusion

5.1 To ensure the success of the resource sharing policy, all Consortium Authorities to agree and follow the policy and procedures agreed by the Consortium Authorities' representatives.

5.2 Each Consortium Authority's representative to cascade the policy and procedure information to relevant staff:-
- Person responsible for the Inter Library Loans Department
- Staff working in the Inter Library Loan Department
- Frontline members of staff.

APPENDIX D

PHOTOGRAPHS