Welcome To Your Library

connecting public libraries and refugee communities

Evaluation Report

November 2007

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Foreword

From the Chair of London Libraries Development Agency

Welcome To Your Library has been a long journey. It started as a pilot with five London boroughs in 2003, and, after a much-needed pause for breath and reflection, rolled out in an ambitious national programme involving multiple partners. The idea was to engage refugees and asylum seekers in service delivery at a local level.

Why public libraries? Because we are talking about groups that are particularly marginalised and libraries are one of the very few services that anyone can access freely, irrespective of status or money. And because libraries act as gateways to civic presence, with the library card as an easily accessible symbol of citizenship. Welcome To Your Library also acted as a visible manifestation of libraries at the forefront of community cohesion.

Welcome To Your Library identifies new ways of identifying and developing genuine, sustained community engagement and partnerships that have a real impact – something that is of great interest to the local government sector as a whole. The findings and practice emerging from the project have wider implications for the local government sector, with some interesting lessons on connecting people with services. We hear about 'hard to reach' groups, but could it be that it is the services that can be hard to access?

I would like to thank Paul Hamlyn Foundation for their generosity both with funding and time; and our local government and other partners in both stages of the project. My thanks also go to Helen Carpenter, the project co-ordinator, for her dedication and inspiration, and to John Vincent of The Network for his patient support, advice and guidance. Finally, to the judges of the CILIP/LiS Libraries Change Lives Award 2007 for recognising the project's achievements.

I hope that this evaluation report, and the accompanying good practice guide, will be widely read and provide the basis for ongoing development of ideas and innovation in partnerships.

Councillor Flick Rea
Chair, London Libraries Development Agency

Executive summary

Welcome To Your Library (WTYL) is a national project connecting public libraries with refugees and asylum seekers, funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation and co-ordinated through London Libraries Development Agency. By increasing opportunities for participation, WTYL aims to improve access to and the quality of public library services for everyone. This is the report of the external evaluation of the national phase of the project.

The evaluation took into account the progress of the project against its aims and objectives, the impact of the project based on the views of a range of stakeholders including refugees, and a review of the distance travelled by the project.

WTYL contributed highly relevant learning to public library service planning and delivery and provides good practice examples in relation to:

- Mapping need

- Developing project management skills

- Reaching refugee communities

- Building effective and sustainable partnerships

- Enhancing access

- Providing a range of effective projects that support community cohesion

- Enhancing non-project staff awareness of relevant issues.

This good practice is timely and relevant to the current challenges public libraries face in increasing access to services.

The defining feature of the national phase was the degree to which the participating library services incorporated learning from the project into core services. This is of particular importance given that the strategic environment within which libraries operate puts great emphasis on mainstreaming practice in relation to contributing to compliance with efficiency targets, achieving community cohesion, and other strategic priorities.

The project's achievements of its aims and objectives and stakeholders' assessment of the impact of the project indicate that WTYL has largely been successful in fulfilling its intentions, and in doing so has made a strong and positive contribution to defining how best to support refugees and asylum seekers and the role public libraries can play.

The main learning points from WTYL are:

- The importance of effective planning and evaluation based on the mapping of need. Project work in this area has the potential to be a benchmark for public libraries in carrying out activities that enhance social inclusion. There also need to be mechanisms in place to ensure library staff's understanding of how to situate and promote the work of public libraries in the wider policy context, a role that is contingent on there being a recognised role for libraries in contributing to cross-sectoral agendas

- Where there has been effective ownership and leadership and willingness to change, services are making a real difference in their understanding and practice in relation to community engagement. Change management by chief librarians is key and enhancing their role in leading on social inclusion is vital

- The importance of partnership development at all strategic levels alongside community engagement cannot be over-stressed. WTYL has drawn out the need for this to be set within a long-term phased approach to partnership development to enable cross-sector skills sharing, innovation, and opportunities to apply with partners for funding to test and develop new ways of working.

The recommendations regarding how learning from the project can be applied more widely across library services with different audiences include the following:

- Creating an infrastructure for sharing information is key, and learning has to be centralised so that the overall library sector has access to resources that will assist them in planning and delivering community engagement activities. It is important that the development of such an 'information hub' is not 'left' as the responsibility of the WTYL project and The Network alone. This work needs to be nationally co-ordinated, set within the overall context of the development of public libraries, and led by the Museum Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), Society of Chief Librarians (SCL) and other strategic bodies.

- This should be set within a long-term strategy that provides for:
  - Clear performance indicators relating to social inclusion, community cohesion and community engagement targets, including guidance on how to evidence outputs and outcomes
  - Support for chief librarians to engage with national policy and cross-sectoral agendas
  - Structural changes such as workforce development to ensure a diverse workforce.

- Establishing "critical friends" in positions of authority in other sectors with no direct connection to library service delivery in order to increase the interaction with cross-sector initiatives.

1 Introduction

1.1 The Welcome To Your Library project

ADP Consultancy (ADP) was commissioned by London Libraries Development Agency[1] (LLDA) to carry out the external evaluation of the Welcome To Your Library (WTYL) project.

WTYL is a national project connecting public libraries with refugees and asylum seekers[2], funded by Paul Hamlyn Foundation[3], and co-ordinated through LLDA. By increasing opportunities for participation, WTYL aims to improve access to and the quality of public library services for everyone.

WTYL project activities ended in November 2007. However, WTYL is a concept whose applicability will continue to exercise an influence on library service development. This longer-term influence is explored further in the findings section (Section five) of this evaluation report.

WTYL vision and aims

WTYL's vision is to connect public libraries and refugee communities in order to nurture learning, well-being, and a sense of belonging for all. WTYL builds on library services' engagement with social justice matters and addresses key issues such as citizenship and cohesion.

WTYL aims to realise its vision and achieve its aims through:

- Participation of refugee communities throughout the work of the project

- Partnerships to raise awareness and increase levels of use of library services

- Confident, trained library staff

- Sharing good practice based on evidence

- Advocacy for the importance and value of public library work with refugees and asylum seekers.

Pilot phase

This national phase builds on a pilot project that was delivered in the London boroughs of Brent, Camden, Enfield, Merton and Newham between May 2003 and June 2004 via the funding of dedicated short-term project staff. The pilot phase provided some key learning outcomes for the further development of the project[4], and in particular identified the need for libraries to:

- Work within a wider policy context, not at the periphery of local government services, and place their work at the heart of the strategic agenda of what government is aiming to achieve in terms of social inclusion and community cohesion; and

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1 London Libraries Development Agency (LLDA) was created in 2000 to develop and implement a co-ordinated strategic vision for library and information services across London. For further background about LLDA, please visit www.llda.org.uk.
2 In the context of this report, the terms 'refugee(s)' or 'refugee communities' refer to both refugees and asylum seekers.
3 For further background about Paul Hamlyn Foundation please visit www.phf.org.uk
4 The independent evaluation and final report of the pilot project are available online www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk/editorial.asp?page_id=24

- Achieve the active involvement of the users whom libraries are seeking to reach, in relation to planning as well as delivery.

National phase

In 2005, a further £250,000 from Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) enabled WTYL to extend the project nationally from its original focus in London to include local authority areas from across England. This national phase of the project built on the pilot, adopted a comparable approach and carried out similar activities to those of the original pilot authorities.

Rather than recruiting dedicated staff at local level whose work was subsidised by project funding as in the pilot phase, it was expected during the national phase that core library staff would deliver the project, with the focus being on mainstreaming learning from the project in the longer term into daily service delivery. Libraries participating in the national phase identified one or more staff members to act as WTYL project workers[5].

Project infrastructure

The project co-ordinator started in post in June 2005. One of her first tasks was to develop a workplan for the national phase of the project, which included:

- Creation of an e-digest and website, and planning of events to support shared learning and dissemination of good practice across the individual projects

- Provision of more extensive resources to train and mentor the wider library staff team in order to support culture change in planning, delivering and sustaining services for refugee communities

- Sharing of lessons from WTYL so that they could be applied to both policy and

practice in other areas of service planning and development.

A National Policy Advisory Group[6] (NPAG) was set up to oversee the project. The NPAG included representatives from key stakeholders including refugee community organisations (RCOs), the Society of Chief Librarians (SCL), the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (MLA), the education, housing and health sectors, and participating library services. The NPAG did not have an executive decision-making role but could make recommendations regarding the work and direction of the project.

The project co-ordinator also worked closely with The Network[7], an organisation that links libraries and archives, museums, and other culture and heritage organisations with relevant initiatives aimed at tackling social exclusion.

The five public library partners in the national phase of WTYL were selected and announced in November 2005, after a competitive selection process that assessed 19 applications[8], including two from consortia of several local authority library services wanting to work together and one cross-sector application from the health promotion sector working together with a public library service. The selection criteria ensured that participants in the national phase of WTYL included:

- Library authorities in asylum-seeker dispersal areas outside London

- At least one local authority with relatively small numbers of refugees or asylum seekers

- Library services at different levels of experience of working with refugees and asylum seekers

- A range of different local authority types spread across England.

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5   The term 'project worker' is used in this report to describe library staff that worked directly on the project.
6   More information about the National Policy Advisory Group is available at
     www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk/editorial.asp?page_id=25
7   More information about The Network is available at www.seapn.org.uk.
8   An application form was used as the first stage in the section procedure whose content was agreed with the NPAG.
     This is available at: www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk/listDocuments.asp?page_id=70&page=2. Shortlisted applicants
     were interviewed by Helen Carpenter, the WTYL project co-ordinator and John Vincent from The Network.

Participating libraries

The library services that participated in the national phase of the project were located in the following areas[9]:

- Leicester City Council

- Liverpool City Council

- London Borough of Hillingdon, in partnership with Healthy Hillingdon and Health, Opportunities, Promotion and Education (HOPE), the Healthy Living Centre for Hillingdon

- London Borough of Southwark

- Tyne & Wear (comprising a consortium of the following councils: Gateshead, Newcastle City, North Tyneside, South Tyneside and Sunderland City).

Project activities

Building on the approach taken in the pilot project, the national phase included the following portfolio of activities:

- Mapping of refugee communities and support organisations

- Identifying barriers for refugees to library use and ways to overcome these

- Awareness training for library staff on issues facing refugees

- Developing local partnerships with RCOs and others

- Structured taster visits and ICT sessions for refugees

- Simplifying library joining procedures for refugees

- Providing ESOL community language and reading support for refugees

- Acquiring new stock with input from refugee communities

- Storytelling and other events and workshops bringing together communities and cultures.

1.2 The evaluation

Evaluation of the WTYL project was carried out at a number of levels, and included a range of performance management, monitoring and review activities and independent external evaluation.

Management, monitoring and review

The project co-ordinator had overall responsibility for ensuring that performance management, monitoring, and review activities were completed by each participating library service. During the project these activities were based on a service action plan drawn up by each library service, which outlined activities that were designed to achieve locally-identified aims and objectives.

In order to map progress against the aims and objectives identified in its service action plan, each library service provided the project co-ordinator with quarterly reports and monthly diaries in which they reflected on their working practices and achievements during the previous month.

Independent external evaluation

ADP Consultancy was appointed to undertake an independent external evaluation of the project. This evaluation set out to review:

- The effectiveness and impact of WTYL

- The learning and changes that have occurred as a result of the work

- How learning from the project can be transferred and applied more widely in public libraries with different audiences.

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9   The phase "five participating library services" is used from this point on in this report to mean the three library authorities and two groupings listed here.

The approach adopted by ADP to the evaluation consisted of working with WTYL partners to draw out and document the experiences, insights and achievements that took place throughout the national phase of the project. The rationale for adopting this approach was to ensure that the evaluation could collect longitudinal evidence, for example of skills development or added value provided by project activities, that had not been anticipated when project targets were set. The evaluation process involved gathering evidence and feedback from a variety of stakeholders engaged with the project.

Service evaluation

The purpose of the service evaluation was to identify the extent of qualitative changes in participating libraries' approaches and practices relating to encouraging use of services by refugees. ADP carried out the service evaluation in conjunction with the project workers from the five participating library services. ADP also convened introductory meetings to identify the aims of the project and follow-up meetings to review the issues emerging from project delivery. A further meeting was held towards the end of the evaluation period to establish what had worked and to identify why the project had or had not made progress.

The service evaluation included consultation with stakeholders through:

- Meetings with chief librarians and other members of senior library management teams to identify the perceived impact of the WTYL project

- Focus groups and meetings with branch staff to discuss the ways in which the project had influenced their working practices

- Interviews with external partners and observations of partnership work to identify how partners viewed and implemented the involvement of libraries in the delivery of their own services to refugees.

Section two of this report summarises the project achievements that were identified by ADP as a result of their consultation with participating libraries.

Section three of the report summarises stakeholder views, including issues for further consideration that were identified through environmental testing.

Environmental testing

Environmental testing of the project's effectiveness consisted of refugees undertaking mystery shopping visits to participating branch libraries. Mystery shoppers were asked to report on various aspects of their visit, including the nature of the welcome extended to them and the ease with which services could be navigated.

Distance travelled

ADP was able to assess the longitudinal effectiveness of the project by working with the project co-ordinator and LLDA to review the overall impact of the programme during its lifespan. LLDA facilitated a group of external consultees, with the aim of identifying methods to maximise the impact of WTYL. The group's views are incorporated in the recommendations in this report.

ADP drew up an evaluation framework for use as a guide in order to capture the 'distance travelled' by WTYL. The framework is based on a number of themes agreed as being of relevance through consultation with key stakeholders.

The evaluation framework sought to identify the impact of WTYL on library services in terms of the following issues:

- Strategic policy

- Service planning

- Service delivery

- Community cohesion

- Social capital

- Reading and learning.

Distance travelled was measured in three distinct but potentially overlapping stages with the ultimate aim of identifying the most effective methods of ensuring the embedding of good practice throughout a given library service.

Project-led: where work was largely dependent on the commitment and initiative of an individual and was therefore unlikely to continue beyond the life of the project

Shared vision: where work was viewed as a library service priority, was promoted internally and externally, and commitment to the aims of the project was forthcoming from senior library management teams, thus ensuring that learning was shared

Embedded: where work was fully integrated into the library service and tended to be naturally developed with involvement of internal and external partners from the earliest planning stage onwards. Partner organisations and the local community were likely to recognise the library service's role in the promotion of social inclusion.

A copy of the evaluation framework is provided at Annex I.

The evaluation framework was employed as a discussion tool rather than an audit of practice. The framework informed the evaluators' review of the impact of the project that is detailed in Section four of this report.

1.3 What the national phase of WTYL aimed to achieve

A person-centred approach

The WTYL national phase aimed to adopt a person-centred approach, in order to make sure that services were relevant and appropriate to refugees, in contrast to a service-led approach, ie one based on what libraries 'could do for' refugees, which had primarily been adopted in the initial pilot.

A person-centred approach to service delivery generally views the service user as the best authority on their own needs, fully capable of identifying the services they need to support

them. In adopting a person-centred approach, service providers carry out consultation with individuals and groups to identify the most appropriate services to deliver.

Outcomes

The national WTYL project set out to achieve the following outcomes:

- Dissemination of good practice and sharing of learning more widely across library services

- Provision of increased resources to support the delivery of training to and mentoring of library staff in order to assist positive changes to the planning, delivery and sustainment of services for refugee communities

- Sharing of lessons learnt from the project, so that these can be applied to both policy and practice in other areas of service planning and development

- Increased ability of library staff to apply learning from the project to public library service planning and delivery for everyone, by the target date of end of 2007.

1.4 The strategic context for WTYL's work

The strategic context within which WTYL operated evolved throughout the project, both in terms of the profile of the refugees with whom WTYL worked and the policy issues that were relevant to the project.

Refugee profile

Both the profile of the refugee communities with whom the libraries were working and the audience who would be likely to benefit from project activities changed during the project's lifetime. In the period during which WTYL was piloted, policies relating to the dispersal[10] of asylum seekers dominated the agenda, and

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10   Under the 'dispersal scheme' introduced through the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, new asylum seekers were sent to regions across the UK, with the aim of reducing a perceived disproportionate burden on public services in South-east England.

learning from the pilot phase of WTYL was concerned with informing the practice of library services in local authority areas that had not yet experienced the presence of refugee and asylum-seeker communities in significant numbers.

During the national phase, the issue of non-refugee migrant workers increased in profile as levels of work-motivated inward migration to the UK increased. Unsurprisingly, the constituency of project partners' work widened to include economic migrants in increasing numbers in addition to refugees and asylum seekers. Migrant workers from the most recent European Union Accession States (A8) have been free to come to the UK to live and work since 1 May 2004 and have settled in urban and rural areas across England. This change in the demographic profile of potential library service users means the learning from WTYL has a wider relevance and applicability.

Policies

Government legislation and policies affecting refugees and asylum seekers are extremely wide-ranging. Relevant issues include those covered by legislation and policy specifically aimed at addressing immigration and asylum matters, such as changes to the asylum rules and tightening of immigration procedures, and more general shifts that impact on refugees and asylum seekers, for example, changes to the funding and remit of English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) teaching provision, Every Child Matters, and the Shared Priorities agenda of local authorities. Two key areas for consideration by the project were community

cohesion[11] and community engagement[12]. Both themes have taken on a rapidly-growing prominence in local and national government thinking in relation to disadvantaged groups during the lifetime of the project.

Community cohesion

The concept of community cohesion has been important to the work of the WTYL project. The Commission on Integration and Cohesion was announced in June 2006. WTYL responded to the consultation on the issues that the commission was concerned to address and the practical steps that can be taken to create more cohesive and integrated communities[13]. The WTYL response made reference to the volunteering scheme for refugees delivered by Leicester Libraries[14] as a practical example of the contribution that libraries could make to community cohesion.

The growing importance of this area of policy is further demonstrated by the announcement in October 2007 of a £50 million government investment package to help local authorities boost community integration and support the creation of specialist teams to tackle tensions in communities that have experienced changing patterns of inward migration.

Citizenship

The promotion of citizenship is integral to the success of community cohesion. Since 1 January 2004, all adults wishing to become British citizens in the UK have been required to attend a citizenship ceremony as the final stage in the

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11   Community cohesion describes a situation where:
- There is a common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities
- The diversity of people's different backgrounds and circumstances is appreciated and positively valued
- Those from different values have similar life opportunities
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and with neighbourhoods

  (adapted from LGA Community Cohesion Unit Guidance)

12   In its simplest form, community engagement is the process of involving people in the decisions that affect them. It can mean involving communities in the planning, development and management of services or be about tackling specific issues in an area, such as crime, substance misuse, or lack of facilities. It draws on current thinking which suggests it is only by listening to the experiences and ideas of people living in the most disadvantaged communities that solutions can be found which will make a lasting difference.

13   WTYL's response to the Commission for Integration and Cohesion consultation is at www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk/listDocuments.asp?page_id=70

14   See section 3.5 of this report for further details of the Leicester volunteering programme.

process. Citizenship ceremonies are conducted on behalf of the Home Office by registrars in local areas.

From November 2005, British citizenship tests were introduced for people seeking to become British citizens. The tests, which attract a fee, cover issues concerning government, society and practical matters. The test is computer-based and is composed of a series of 24 questions. It is based on *"Life in the United Kingdom: A Journey to Citizenship"*, the official handbook for the Life in the UK tests.

Community engagement

Community engagement was also a policy issue that increased in profile during the project, as reflected, for example, by MLA and SCL making this a priority for development, and The Big Lottery Fund's (BIG) introduction of an £80 million funding programme for public libraries to work on community engagement issues. BIG will be funding a number of libraries to carry out projects that extend beyond traditional activities, and to encourage library services to work with communities in order to:

- Invigorate libraries as centres of wider community learning and development and learning-based activities

- Create, improve, and develop library spaces that meet the needs of the whole community

- Be innovative and promote good practice in the ways libraries are designed and run

- Work with existing users and non-users, voluntary and community groups, and other community service providers

- Reflect local and national strategies.

Contributing to strategic objectives

The strategic objectives of local authorities and other public sector bodies exercised considerable influence throughout the national phase of WTYL. Activities delivered by each of the project partners were influenced by the

relative priority placed within their own local authority's social inclusion agenda on the following issues:

- Learning and culture

- Improving health, housing and social care

- Creating prosperity

- Meeting the needs of children and young people

- Community safety

- Ensuring opportunities are open to all.

Role of public libraries

The need for libraries to adopt new ways of working in order to benefit communities and individuals has been highlighted by MLA, which recognises that:

- The changing demographics of the UK require that libraries track and respond to emerging demands for a range of new services, with a particular focus on ICT developments

- Workforce development is a key issue for libraries, with research identifying gaps and shortages in workforce skills in areas such as customer care, leadership, advocacy and management. There are concerns about the composition of the workforce in the museums, libraries and archives sector with estimates that 60 per cent of staff are over the age of 40, and a recognition that there is a very low proportion of disabled people and people from ethnic minority groups who work in the sector

- Partnership beyond the sector is key, with the need to recognise and develop the relevance of public library service delivery to other policy objectives

- The profile of libraries as spaces for reflection, learning and creativity needs to be linked to the needs of local authorities in meeting strategic objectives. Libraries need to be able to demonstrate the effects and effectiveness of services through measuring outcomes and demonstrating impact.

2 WTYL achievements

2.1 Introduction

In order to demonstrate the effectiveness of WTYL, this evaluation sought to identify the extent to which WTYL's activities and outcomes fulfilled the aims and objectives defined by the project partners at the outset of the national phase. In this section, achievements are grouped according to the broad areas in which all partners demonstrated progress.

Each sub-section details the collective achievement of the overall WTYL project and also provides relevant case studies from individual projects. Selection of individual case studies was based on a desire to provide a representative flavour of the work undertaken across the range of project partners, and the studies chosen are a non-exhaustive sample. Learning points from WTYL are listed at the end of each section.

2.2 Mapping need

The five participating library services worked with very different communities and refugee and asylum seeker support structures. Each partner library service undertook an exercise to gauge the size, location and make-up of the communities in its area. The understanding of each library service of the specific needs of its local refugee and asylum seeker population was key to the success of the project.

Mapping need proved to be an essential foundation for project action plans, and community profiles were used to enhance service delivery.

Mapping need case studies

In **Southwark**, the mapping exercise undertaken by the project identified a number of newer communities including Somali, Iraqi, Afghani, Kurdish and Iranian communities, in addition to more established communities such as Latin American, Vietnamese, and Francophone African. Being able to identify the various communities resident or active within the local authority boundary enabled the project manager to establish a plan for working with each different community and to make decisions about priorities and appropriate service developments and delivery methods for individual communities.

In **Hillingdon**, the mapping exercise enabled the project to identify which individual library branches might be most effectively deployed to engage with refugee and asylum seeker communities. The exercise helped to identify where such communities tended to live in the borough and also identified potential partner organisations, including local schools with which the local libraries could work to provide services. This enabled the project to direct its resources to those branches that could have the most impact during the lifespan of WTYL, with more libraries becoming engaged at a later date.

In addition, mapping has been adopted in some of the libraries involved as an ongoing needs-analysis tool.

Ongoing needs analysis

Being able to provide quantitative evidence of need helped to identify funds for stock for **Liverpool** Libraries. A presentation on the community languages collections to the senior management team (SMT) drew on information acquired from RCO partners about the changing nature of the population in Liverpool and the expectations that newer communities had regarding library services. The SMT agreed a substantial increase in funds (almost 50%), to develop stocks for the newcomer populations.

Learning points

Drawing up community profiles provided participating library services with a sound foundation on which to build WTYL activities. The process of carrying out mapping exercises yielded a number of key learning points:

- Gathering accurate statistics is difficult due to a lack of reliable data at a local and national level

- Dispersal policy and recent economic migration increase the transience of populations, which means that community profiles are subject to constant change

- Working with other bodies such as academic research departments or local authority asylum teams may well enhance access to up-to-date data sets but it is important not to rely excessively on these sources, as contact with refugees themselves provides the most accurate mapping data

- There was huge value in working with RCOs to understand better the make-up of local communities, as effective mapping is reliant on the direct input of refugees

- Engaging with RCOs at an early stage in the project created key longer-term relationships

- Mapping is an ongoing process, and continuing engagement with relevant organisations and groups in order to refresh data is needed. Understanding these issues ensured that WTYL projects were flexible and able to respond to emerging need.

2.3 Project planning

Mapping need constituted the first stage of the development of project plans. The aims, objectives, methodologies, targets, performance indicators and timelines provided in project plans were used to inform and monitor the progress of project delivery.

Initially, many of the project workers found the planning process difficult to engage with and required a high level of support from the project co-ordinator. However, over time, each project partner developed the skills to draw up a project plan that set out WTYL objectives in their local area.

Plans were based on aims and objectives that had been identified through mapping need and were assisted by the support and direction provided by the WTYL project co-ordinator. Examples of some of the typical aims included in plans were to:

- Create a more structured approach across library services regarding the best methods of meeting the needs of refugees and asylum seekers for the long term

- Identify the key barriers for refugees and asylum seekers in attempting to use public library services and develop solutions to overcome these

- Raise awareness and increase use of libraries by refugee and asylum seeker communities

- Develop public library staff skills and confidence in working with refugees and asylum seekers.

Learning from WTYL was increasingly embedded in library service plans and tended to be mainstreamed into library services.

Project planning case studies

"WTYL is included as an action in our service plan under our priority, 'to work towards quality customer service for all'. The service plan is about to be reviewed. At the next review meeting I will ensure this includes sustaining WTYL beyond the life of the project. In addition, I am continuing to embed WTYL into the work of the service through the service plan and liaising with and involving colleagues." **(Newcastle project worker)**

WTYL is incorporated into **Sunderland** Libraries Annual Library Plan 2006–2008 under key aim three – Access/Inclusion/ Lifelong Learning.

"Service Equality Action Plan and services to Refugee and Asylum Seeker communities and ethnic minorities feature highly in our actions for the coming year, again integrating these services into the mainstream of library services." **(Liverpool project worker)**

Learning points

- Project planning that put the overall desired outcomes from the project into a workplan was a relatively new concept for some of the project workers and one that required considerable support in the attainment of a clear, succinct format

- Successful planning required substantial critical assessment and revision, and project staff typically reviewed their plans a number of times before arriving at a final version

- It was necessary for participating library services overall to increase their active engagement with refugees to support their participation in service planning and delivery

- Project staff were more aware of the importance and value of planning once the projects started delivering and achievements became apparent

- Partnership structures, eg the Tyne & Wear consortium and the partnership comprising Hillingdon Libraries, Healthy Hillingdon and HOPE, reported benefits deriving from the particular approaches they adopted, eg Hillingdon found that the use of a cross-sector project steering group to lead the work of the project, agree a shared vision, and develop an action plan has been extremely effective in both planning and reviewing the work of the project.

The importance of effective planning was clearly articulated by project workers, for example:

"Our work on the WTYL project has enabled us to refine our existing work. Developing the project plan was really useful in terms of getting the project together. As a result of doing the plan we are able to relate our practical work to how it fits in with policies and strategies. It has been really useful to give the project focus. It shows how it all fits together and how it fits with all the other policy and strategy development that's going on, not only locally but regionally and nationally as well." **(Leicester project worker)**

2.4 Partnership development

Partnership development was one of the strongest features of the national phase of WTYL. WTYL library services engaged with and initiated a wide variety of partnerships throughout the project.

Partnership was developed and supported in a variety of contexts:

- The inclusion of formal consortium and partnership delivery models in the range of agencies selected for the national phase provided an opportunity to demonstrate the value of working collaboratively across local authority boundaries and the value of cross-sector working

- Extensive contact and ongoing communication with RCOs and other refugee forums resulted in learning for library staff and increased engagement with non-user communities

- The delivery of more established partnership was achieved through joint projects with partners such as local schools, colleges and refugee groups.

Value of collaborative working case study

Healthy Hillingdon[15] and **Hillingdon** library service made a joint application to be part of the national phase of WTYL, based on an existing working relationship and shared vision between the two organisations.

Participation in WTYL provided a platform to strengthen this by co-developing strategy and project working around access to libraries by refugees and asylum seekers. Healthy Hillingdon was able to use its skills and experience in community engagement to work with and support library staff so they developed confidence, skills and new activities. Having a community worker who already had strong partnership links with a wide range of relevant organisations including RCOs provided the essential link to bring refugees into direct contact with the library service and its staff. Healthy Hillingdon was also able to contribute learning and skills to WTYL work as a whole, for example by sharing ideas about evaluation techniques in a community setting and ways of reflecting on and documenting progress.

Partnerships were mutually beneficial for participating libraries and external agencies, and highlighted the role that libraries can play in meeting strategic objectives such as community cohesion.

Partnership development case studies

Working with partners EMTRAS (Ethnic Minority, Traveller and Refugee Achievement Service) and Groundwork (a Trust working for sustainable communities) the Community Development Librarian at **South Tyneside** organised an ICT learning course consisting of five weekly sessions for some of the BME women who attended the initial library tour and computer taster session previously provided by the library. Sessions took place in the Reference Library. Ten women, accompanied by female friends and relatives, have attended them.

In **Hillingdon**, the project has worked closely with a local junior school that has a large refugee population within its catchment area. Work has resulted in the school sending three classes each week to the library and also engagement with parents. In addition to the benefits to the children, the school reports that parents are now more confident about coming to the school to discuss their children's learning experiences.

Sunderland libraries developed an ongoing relationship with Washington Asylum Seeker Project (WASP) that had benefits for each of the partners. WASP identified that having a personal contact with the project worker meant they felt more confident in encouraging the asylum seekers they worked with to use the library. The Sunderland project worker organised a coffee morning-style event at Washington Town Centre Library and City Library and Arts Centre. The event at Washington was successful, with 36 refugees and asylum seekers from WASP, in comparison with lower attendance levels at parallel events at other library branches. WASP and other refugee forums also helped to identify the community languages into which

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15   www.hillingdon.gov.uk/index.jsp?articleid=7057

promotional materials needed to be translated. The library published leaflets about the library service publicising its stock of citizenship test books in Farsi, Russian, French, Portuguese and Spanish (the languages identified by WASP as the most common local community languages).

Community cohesion case study

A partnership between the Easi[16] Project from the North East Refugee Service (NERS) and **North Tyneside** Libraries took the form of ESOL classes run concurrently with a drop-in session that provided information and advice to refugees and asylum seekers.

Success factors

- Travel costs were covered and Sure Start agreed to charge only a nominal fee of £1 per session for the children of those people attending the group

- NERS and the library worked together to ensure a warm welcome to the library

- Local volunteers are tutors for the ESOL group.

NERS provided feedback about the success of the partnership:

- NERS had not previously identified the library as a potential partner and were pleased that the library had approached them

- NERS felt that the confidence and level of engagement of branch staff with the drop-in session increased over time

- The welcoming and accessible approach of the librarian contributed to the success of the project

- NERS gave examples of other library users increasing their engagement with refugee participants, eg sharing newspapers and explaining local services

- The participants benefited from friendships formed within the group and valued the social interaction – *"I like to come here. I like to see my new friends. I learn more every week."*

- The majority of session participants joined the library – *"The library is good, it is warm and I like it because I can read the papers, and I can use the computers and work on my English."*

A key success factor for the partnerships developed through WTYL was the adoption by the libraries of a phased approach. This involved an initial stage of getting to know RCOs by visiting them in their own premises, attending RCO-led events, and demonstrating a commitment to learning about the needs of refugee communities.

This 'ice-breaking' stage acted as the necessary prelude to joint participation in practical work such as attending or organising cultural events or consulting on stock, which provided 'real-world' evidence of a commitment to partnership working. Once both parties to such activities had gained experience of joint working and established personal contacts, trust and understanding developed. This groundwork proved to be essential, although it should be acknowledged that enduring relationships of trust can often take years rather than months to develop.

Learning points

- Partners needed to be aware of existing partnerships and forums in their area and draw on these when they were starting their mapping

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16   More information on the Easi (Empowering Asylum Seekers to Integrate) Project is available at www.easidp.org.uk.

- Partners report that it takes time to create effective partnerships, and trust needs to be established through regular contact, personal visits and delivering on commitments

- There is a need to accommodate different ways of working and draw out complementary viewpoints. For example, a project worker reflected that:

  "The partnerships we've put in place have been key to getting things done. It can sometimes be difficult to engage with each other as we often have different ways of working, but some of our best ideas have come from discussions we've had with partners. I'm not sure we'd have got this far if we hadn't been able to establish these relationships"

- Project staff learned how to engage with RCOs, with introductory personal visits being more effective than email or phone calls

- The capacity of RCOs to engage in partnership can be limited through lack of funding, the organisation being dependent on one or two key contacts, and/or demands from a wide range of initiatives to become involved

- Similarly, the capacity of libraries can be affected by lack of time, and lack of staff continuity and commitment

- Refugee forums and local authority departments can have extensive databanks and helped make introductory contacts for the libraries

- Once libraries develop relationships with individual organisations and trust is achieved, word of mouth can promote the role of libraries as a partner to other agencies

- The library services adopted an incremental approach to partnership and increasingly focused on service delivery rather than one-off events:

  "We have avoided holding one-off events and focused on planning services to the refugee community that will be available in the future and adaptable to changing needs and requirements"

- Agencies in other sectors, eg housing, health, refugee support, may not view libraries as a natural partner, so proactive contact and a clear explanation of the specific role and value of library services is needed

- Examples of partnerships from WTYL highlight the role libraries can play in providing space, resources and achieving input with established partners

- Effective partnerships are likely to be achieved through phased partnership development work.

2.5 Enhancing access

The pilot project identified the importance of enhancing access to library services, starting with simplifying joining procedures. This approach was taken forward in the national phase, with participating libraries focusing on a range of activities to enhance access, including reviewing joining procedures.

Partners identified and produced the promotional materials that were needed to attract individuals to library services, and also gave consideration to the key languages in which promotional materials needed to be published. Relevant materials produced by WTYL participating library services include:

- A general welcome leaflet

- A postcard for asylum seekers to bring to the library to satisfy current identification requirements for joining the library

- Information about library services in various languages

- A multi-language Welcome To Your Library poster

- A sheet using words and icons, ie non text-dependent that highlight the services available in each language

- Availability of Language Line, a 24-hour telephone interpreting service, at first point of contact with the library

- Dual-language library guide.

Participating library services recognised the value of promotional events to encourage non-users to visit the library, and reported that outreach work[17] and information stalls at public events helped to promote library services and support projects in achieving the objectives outlined in their individual action plans.

Project staff worked with refugee groups to identify how best to promote library services and enhance communities' use of these services by, for example, attending events organised by refugee organisations and arranging for these agencies to distribute library welcome materials to their communities/service users.

Promotion and event case studies

Newcastle Libraries used its mobile library to visit Brighton Grove in the west end of Newcastle, a culturally diverse and busy area. It was the first time that the library service had used the mobile library outside its usual route, and the process entailed a lot of planning (eg potential parking sites had to be identified, the police had to cordon off a designated area, extra library staff had to be involved and briefed beforehand, appropriate stock and software had to be found, loaded onto the mobile library, and taken off afterwards). Newcastle Libraries used this as an opportunity to promote citizenship stock and software as well as library services generally. The learning from this event was used at other festivals and events to promote library services.

Hillingdon held a *Celebrating Cultures in Hillingdon* event during Refugee Week 2007. 342 people attended an event that included outdoor music and speeches and an indoor afternoon of cultural sharing. Participants made the following appreciative comments when asked what they had liked

most about the day: *"What a fantastic colourful event for Hayes." "Seeing people happy and the integration between different cultures" "Learning about cultures that I never knew existed."*

South Tyneside Central Library hosted a Diwali celebration which was attended by about 200 people from all the communities living in the borough. Their 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. Project staff commented: *"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."* Library staff at a focus group related that they had found this event really useful in getting to meet communities who tended not to use the library.

One of the project partners developed plans for a film that could be used widely across their library branches. The film is due to be completed in March 2008.

Film promotion

Liverpool Library Service is working with Sola Arts, a locally based community arts project, to produce a short film that describes the benefits for refugees and asylum seekers of using library services and highlights best practice to library staff regarding how to encourage communities to use their services.

The film, which is aimed at both the public and library staff, will draw on the skills of Connecting Cultures, a refugee artist

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17 Taking library services to other venues eg providing a library service in a mosque or holding reading sessions in a community centre.

collective, whose members will lead on making and editing the film. The film will feature a series of interviews with library staff, volunteers, and key external partners, in which they describe their experiences of and attitudes to the library service. The film will be translated into a number of appropriate community languages.

It will be used to emphasise the importance of delivering accessible, relevant library services to new communities in Liverpool.

Learning points

- The project benefited from adopting a proactive approach to encouraging access and succeeded in reaching non-users. In Southwark, for example, over 300 people have joined the library as a result of outreach activities such as visits to refugee day centres and work with a Somali mother-and-toddler group

- Project staff attended a wide range of events to encourage potential users to join the library, eg participating in RCO events, visiting schools, signing new users up at citizenship ceremonies

- The project used a variety of methods such as producing promotional materials, organising events, revising stock to ensure effective engagement

- One partner expressed caution regarding the value of solely relying on events: *"We've done a few events and I'm not convinced by them. They can be good in raising your profile but you sometimes find that it's the same people that come to each event. I think we've done some good ones but I want to do things that people are going to appreciate and use longer term. So if it's a toss-up between doing an event and doing something that helps people longer term, I'm going with the longer term."*

- Achieving access to library services was dependent on staff being engaged and playing a part in welcoming refugees to the library.

2.6 Contributing to community cohesion

A considerable number of WTYL activities have focused on encouraging community cohesion through citizenship programmes, engaging refugees in service planning, and supporting routes into volunteering and employment.

A significant challenge for the participating libraries in contributing to community cohesion involved working differently with communities and partners to maximise impact. This meant being proactive in identifying needs with RCOs and refugee communities and delivering services with RCO involvement.

This section identifies a number of examples where WTYL activities started to demonstrate a longer term impact for service beneficiaries, eg delivering support that could lead to sustainable employment, and also unanticipated additional outcomes from programmes.

Citizenship

During the lifetime of the project, all the participating library services supported refugees' engagement with citizenship activities by ensuring that specialised software was available in libraries to enable prospective citizens to carry out practice citizenship tests and provide support to people wishing to undergo such tests. Library staff attendance at citizenship ceremonies also provided a means of promoting library services to refugees.

Citizenship case studies

"The citizenship test practice group started at the Central Lending Library in March 2006. Refugee volunteers determined that Saturday morning would be the best time to run the sessions. The Central Lending Library also holds a drop-in session for people to practise questions prior to taking the official test. By the end of December 2006, 274 people had attended the groups. As a result, the scheme

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was extended to four other libraries across Leicester with funding from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). Securing the NRF funding was helped by using the existing WTYL plan to fit with the Stronger & Safer Communities block of the Local Area Agreement that needed to be met in order to meet the funding requirements. Citizenship software has now been added to all computers in the libraries. In addition, The Learning Centre, where the tests take place in Leicester, now signposts people to the library so they can practice the test."
(Leicester project worker)

"Liverpool Libraries are already partners. Liverpool University is hosting their Connect Centre in Central Library, which is also a designated UKOnline centre. Citizenship exams are taken here, so we decided that we could support this by introducing 220 "Life in Britain" software packages in the community libraries on a free-to-use basis. We are just completing an evaluation of its use across other library authorities, but it looks likely that we will pilot this across key libraries in 2007 with a view to eventually networking it across all of the People's Network machines in Liverpool." **(Liverpool project worker)**

"We promoted the library service at ten citizenship ceremonies in January, February and March, joining on average 50 new clients to the libraries on each ceremony day. The policy that all staff should attend this initiative is proving to be very successful, with staff reporting positively back to the branches, ensuring that there is a constant stream of staff willing to attend the ceremonies."
(Southwark project worker)

Participating library services took a proactive approach and included information on citizenship tests at promotional events and local festivals:

"The people who came to events were very interested in finding out more about citizenship and were not so interested in the refreshments, which I thought was a good sign! One very keen customer attended both events and stayed for the whole duration! She was particularly interested in using the software as she had her test booked in May. All libraries are scheduled to have the new software installed by 9th August 2007 and the working group has edited some instructions for staff to use."
(Newcastle project worker)

Advisory panels

A number of activities increased the involvement of local refugee communities in service planning, including advisory panels.

Advisory panels case study

In **Southwark** the project has sought to establish a series of advisory panels from particular local communities, which would work with the libraries to advise on service development, and develop skills and knowledge within both libraries and communities. The project has carried out work with the Southwark Community Refugee Forum to develop a plan for the development of library engagement with key communities. Libraries have been able to identify priority groups through this work and are now planning to work with specific communities to set up advisory panels. The Library Services Community Services team has worked with the local Somali Advisory Forum to establish its first advisory panel.

Social capital

WTYL activities can be viewed as supporting the creation of social capital[18], including providing opportunities for volunteering (and thereby developing additional skills), providing facilities and supporting funding applications.

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18   "Social capital" is a wide-ranging term that refers to the norms, values and networks that are available to individuals to support both individual and collective action.

Facilities and resources case studies

In **Leicester**, the library service has provided facilities, including office space and computers. A number of groups including the Afro-Innovation Group, the Federation of Iraqi Refugees, the Babies of the World Group and the Arabia Women's Group have used space at various libraries across the city to provide a range of services to communities.

The success of the WTYL project has enabled the library service to spend the money from the *Libraries Change Lives Award* [19] on laptops for the groups to increase capacity for volunteers to use libraries' ICT and other useful resources.

Gateshead Libraries' work with local refugee organisations resulted in a group approaching the library to ask it to provide a reference for a funding application. The group also requested that the library support it in providing meeting facilities for the project should the funding application succeed.

Encouraging interaction

In developing projects and activities to address the needs of asylum seekers and refugees, WTYL has provided a number of instances where additional benefits have been gained. For example, organising discussion groups or ESOL classes has provided an opportunity for individual refugees to develop friendship and increase confidence in social interaction in addition to achieving the desired outcome of the session.

Understanding formal documents case study

Leicester Libraries developed a number of informal reading and discussion groups that are used by a range of different communities who come together to practise their English. The groups, including one that looked at formal documentation from, for example, the Home Office, the local authority, utilities providers, banks etc, have used volunteers from local communities to run the groups and provide help and support to each other. The success of the groups has been recognised both in terms of enabling additional funding to be secured from the NRF to continue the work and in relation to expanding the catchment of the work to include not only refugees and asylum seekers, but also non-refugee EU nationals and members of 'settled' BME communities in the Super Priority Areas covered by the NRF.

Conversation clubs case study

Liverpool Libraries are hosting a *"Conversation Clubs"* pilot – informal sessions where people who speak English as a second or other language can have access to an enjoyable, informal means of improving their conversation skills. The sessions are held in a sociable, fun and relaxed setting, where everyone is encouraged to talk about a wide range of topics from gardening to world and social issues.

Project staff attended a conference, *"Connecting Communities"*, where they learned of concerns about proposed government changes to ESOL funding and their potential effects on English-language acquisition across Liverpool. The proposed changes affect asylum seekers in particular, who will be unable to access free ESOL

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19   WTYL was the winner of the *Libraries Change Lives Award* 2007 drawing specifically on the volunteering and employment programmes delivered by two WTYL participating library services – Camden Libraries, (one of the WTYL pilot boroughs) and Leicester Libraries, working with LLDA.

provision for the first six months of their residence in Britain.

By the end of the day, and after consultation in group workshops, it was agreed that as well as providing learning materials, Liverpool Libraries had a role in supporting ESOL provision through informal means in order to attempt to plug the gaps created by the legislative changes discussed at the conference. Many of the community organisations and education providers who attended the conference thought that libraries were in an ideal position to establish conversation clubs at key library venues, which could help build the confidence and enhance the skills of individuals learning English as a second or other language.

Volunteering

Leicester Central Library delivered *"Refugees into Libraries"*, a volunteering scheme for refugees made possible through additional funding from the Home Office Refugee Challenge Fund.

Volunteering case study

In **Leicester**, the Refugees into Libraries project involved training volunteers in all the skills required of a library assistant, and gave those involved the opportunity and experience of working and interacting with library customers and staff. This provided the volunteers with a range of opportunities to practice the use of English, understand how the library worked, and obtain valuable work experience. The Senior Community Librarian commented:

"The benefits of the project have been two-fold. It has provided volunteers with the opportunity to speak English with people from different cultures and has challenged perceptions.

It has been a very positive experience. I think in Leicester most communities tend to rub along together quite well and this has been demonstrated through the project. We must have done something right because people keep coming back to the library and using the services that are offered."

Over 20 refugees from Iraqi, Turkish, Somalian, Kurdish, Burundian, Tanzanian, Fijan and French Algerian backgrounds have participated. One has gone on to get a paid job as a library assistant in Leicester. Another has a paid job as a cleaner in a local primary school and is also a parent governor. The library assistant commented:

"Working as a volunteer on the project really helped me to gain confidence. I knew I wanted to work somewhere that I could interact with the public and I have done that here. After volunteering I got the job as a library assistant which I'm really pleased about."

The success of this type of work is demonstrated by ongoing demand for volunteering opportunities, and is reflected in the comments of one of the partner organisations working with the library:

"The project went very well and lots of our users have benefited from it. The volunteering went particularly well. It was just the kind of experience that the women we work with needed to help them go into the labour market. There is still a big demand for volunteering opportunities."

The library staff have had a key role in mentoring and befriending individual volunteers and some staff have signed up to the Time Together programme run through Timebank and co-ordinated through Refugee Action in Leicester.

Learning points

- Partners reported that it has proved easier to engage greater numbers of women and children than men when delivering cultural or reading projects[20]

- Access to/availability of childcare is a major issue in recruiting people to activities, including adult education classes

- Promotion of project activities takes a considerable amount of time, and the adoption of a phased approach analogous to that adopted in relation to partnership development may be necessary in order to gain the trust of intended beneficiaries

- Libraries need to move from delivering services 'to' people and move to delivering services 'with' people, through consulting on appropriate services and engaging with external partner agencies in delivery

- Libraries can provide 'generic' resources for the community, eg space to meet, access to facilities such as computers etc, which might act as a 'soft' or 'indirect' method of encouraging use of a wider range of library services

- Libraries can contribute to the accumulation of social capital by designing programmes that enhance the skills and resources of refugee communities.

2.7 Staff awareness

Improving the awareness of non-project library staff of the needs of the refugee communities in their local area has been a major success of WTYL. This has been achieved both through formal training activities and also as a result of non-project staff's willingness to engage in a wider range of activities to support the work of the project.

Training

Staff awareness training has been a key component of WTYL across the five participating library services. All participating services recognised the important role that all frontline staff play in ensuring access to library services, and as such they actively sought to engage non-project branch staff in WTYL activities.

Project staff in all participating library services have either facilitated or initiated the delivery of awareness training for non-project staff.

Staff training case study

In the **North East**, training was developed that both dealt with raising awareness of the issues facing refugees and asylum seekers in particular and exploring the wider field of social exclusion in general. This training was delivered for the North East Consortium by The Network working with the North East Refugee Service. Three one-day courses ensured that over sixty staff acting in a range of roles were able to participate in the training.

The training was designed to provide non-project staff from the libraries in the North East Consortium with an understanding of the overall life situation of refugees and asylum seekers, and to help library workers both reflect on their current perceptions of refugees and identify potential barriers to library services for these groups.

The usefulness of the training has been recognised both by those taking part and others, including library management. The combination of refugee awareness training with the wider social exclusion element was considered to be particularly useful. In the words of one attendee:

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20 To explore the reasons for this fully is beyond the scope of this evaluation, but, from the evidence, it appears that libraries were regarded by women (as individuals and as parents) as a safe environment, library staff were predominantly women, and it was culturally acceptable for women and children to visit the library. This area could benefit from being explored further.

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"The facilitator was very informative about putting social exclusion into context. I also discovered a lot about socially-excluded groups that I had maybe not thought about."

A manager from one of the libraries commented:

"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 refugee and asylum seeker awareness training into context. If at all possible, future training should include this element."

The involvement of refugees in the training who were able to bring their personal experiences to the training sessions was also considered to be an important factor in increasing awareness and understanding:

"Another important area for inclusion, if possible, is testimony from refugees 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."

Other activities

Projects involved non-project library staff in a range of WTYL activities:

- Workers volunteered to staff promotional stalls and attend publicity events

- Staff contributed to library events such as Refugee Week and other cultural events

- A number of members of staff 'championed' WTYL in their libraries and worked closely with project workers.

Learning points

- It was helpful to position awareness of refugee issues within the context of an overall duty to improve customer care, as

this was a familiar concept for non-project staff. In some cases, staff were better able to understand the project's work by considering it within the context of tackling social exclusion

- The confidence of non-project staff and their level of engagement with and appreciation of relevant issues was enhanced by participation in project activities, eg attending an event, staffing a stall

- The project workers were initially viewed as the 'experts', but as staff awareness of relevant issues increased, the collective responsibility of all library staff to ensure a welcome to the library was progressively appreciated

- When arranging training:

    — Training needs to be carried out in an atmosphere of openness in order to allow participants to feel able to express and deal with personal issues

    — The number of participants needs to allow for all attendees to participate, ie numbers at each event should be kept low

    — There is a value in having a mix of staff at different levels as participants.

2.8 Summary

The achievements of WTYL provide practical learning and good practice examples of connecting public libraries with refugees and asylum seekers. The learning from WTYL has been captured in a Good Practice Guide that accompanies this evaluation report.

This experience is timely and highly relevant to the challenges facing public libraries. The selection criteria ensured the participating library services worked with very different communities and the project has produced a volume of experience and material that cannot all be referred to in the evaluation. The WTYL website provides further examples of good practice.

3 Impact

3.1 Introduction

The impact of WTYL has been examined from two perspectives:

- The practical impact of the project on refugees' attitudes to and engagement with libraries, as assessed by project workers, chief librarians, other library staff and external stakeholder organisations. Views were also sought from refugees who carried out environmental testing visits to participating library branches

- The policy and other high-level impact that WTYL achieved in terms of:

    — Sharing good practice based on evidence

    — Advocacy for the importance and value of public library work with refugees and asylum seekers.

3.2 Assessment of the practical impact of WTYL

The libraries worked to achieve the aims and objectives identified in their action plans[21]. The service evaluation findings detailed in the previous section of this report identify the areas in which partners have achieved the aims and objectives they set for the national phase.

Key achievements have included:

- Gaining experience in mapping need

- Developing project management skills

- Reaching refugee communities

- Building effective and sustainable partnerships

- Enhancing access

- Providing a range of effective projects that support community cohesion

- Enhancing non-project staff awareness of relevant issues.

Project worker feedback

The project workers were responsible for delivering the aims and objectives identified in the action plan for each participating library. Feedback was sought from project workers regarding their experiences of working on the project in terms of what had helped them and any barriers they faced.

What helped

Project workers identified a number of aspects of the project that helped them to achieve their aims:

- They were very positive about the support offered by the WTYL project, particularly the one-to-one support provided by the project co-ordinator:

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21   Copies of the action plans for each of the WTYL partners can be found on the WTYL website
      www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk/editorial.asp?page_id=37#anchor633

"The support from the WTYL team has been invaluable in helping the future development of the project. We have had so much input and encouragement from them that has been really useful."

- Project meetings enabled project workers to meet colleagues, discuss progress, and learn about other partners' approaches to specific issues, eg volunteering

- Project workers drew considerable support from colleagues within their own library services, whether or not these co-workers were directly involved with the project, for example, the Tyne and Wear consortium met monthly and worked collaboratively on issues such as research and stock. Liverpool Libraries shared their element of the WTYL work among three project workers based within the library service's learning & social inclusion team, and this approach provided flexibility and access to support. Chief librarians tended to view the project as strategically important and provided encouragement. Library colleagues increasingly appreciated the value of the project

- The relationships developed with external organisations over the course of the project provided project workers with ideas, opportunities and support. A number of ongoing working relationships have developed between project workers and refugee organisations.

Barriers to achieving project objectives

Project workers reported a number of barriers:

- **High levels of change** – restructuring was taking place in a number of participating library service areas, including reviews of management structures and the revision of the role of branch libraries. One local authority experienced a major review of its library service during the life of the project. In another the central library closed for a major new building programme.

- **Changes of policy** – eg the future of a number of activities was threatened by the removal of funding for ESOL activities.

Library services' own priorities were subject to change, eg an increased focus on health issues

- **Engaging colleagues** – although one of the summative achievements of the project was increasing the awareness of staff, there were a number of instances, particularly in the early stages of the project, where project workers faced a lack of engagement from colleagues. This took both 'organisational' form, eg the marketing department not responding to requests for assistance with promotional materials, and individual, eg a lack of volunteers for events

- **Space** – space was limited in several of the libraries, eg rooms previously available for use by the community had been given over to computers or stock

- **Lack of clarity regarding the role of the library** – one of the issues raised by a number of refugee forums was the lack of clarity about what a library was. There was initial surprise at the involvement of the library service, with a view that libraries only provided books. This also applied to individual refugee users of the library. A project worker commented on how it was necessary to raise awareness of what the library could do:

    "Some of our best work has been with people who have no concept of what a library is. We have informed people about the service, what it offers, and what they can get from it, and we think we have started to change people's views and perceptions of the library and in some cases introduced people to a totally new thing."

The evaluators' own impression was that project workers grew in confidence as the project developed and were able to address potential barriers:

- All project workers had other, ie non-WTYL, responsibilities and found it a challenge to manage and prioritise WTYL work alongside other commitments. Over time, particularly where non-project colleagues acted as champions for the project and other staff took on project-

related activities, project workers were generally successful in managing this challenge.

- A number of project workers initially found the project planning aspect daunting, as it was a relatively new concept, but over time developed greater confidence in this element of their work.

The project workers themselves reported that over time they had enhanced their own skills, established new contacts, and were more confident in service delivery. In the words of one project worker *"it's a different way of thinking and doing."*

The value and impact of project workers' contribution to WTYL and the management of change in working with refugees was confirmed by the feedback of chief librarians, library staff and external partners set out below.

Chief librarian feedback

The commitment of senior library staff, including chief librarians, was key to securing a link to strategic policy. Chief and principal librarians were consulted on where WTYL fitted within the strategic agenda for the library service, and were also asked to assess whether WTYL had made an impact on other aspects of the library service's work, and if so to comment on whether this impact was positive or negative.

There was broad agreement from chief librarians that WTYL has been highly relevant to the high-level aims of their services. Senior library staff reported that WTYL had provided a focus for their overall approach to social inclusion, in the sense of offering an opportunity for dedicated work with a specific socially excluded customer group. Senior managers also stated that WTYL had enhanced the development and maintenance of links with other organisations and was therefore recognised as contributing to the strategic positioning of library services in relation to community engagement.

Interviews with chief librarians and heads of service demonstrated consensus on a number of factors summarised below.

Value to the library service

- The majority of consultees found that WTYL was a *"great starting point."* In many cases it provided guidance regarding how to engage with a specific non-user/low-use customer group, that could be applied more widely in libraries' future work. One chief librarian reflected *"We needed this and it has changed the way we are thinking."*

- WTYL increased the profile of libraries across the local authority: *"The work of WTYL links to the council's corporate objectives, and when we can show people that, they start to take notice of what libraries are doing."*

- *"The work of the project has informed our thinking on how wider services should be delivered."*

- WTYL established partnerships: *"the project has helped us build up trust with the people we want to work with and the groups that support them."*

- A chief librarian reported that WTYL had *"skilled up"* the project worker by providing support in working on social inclusion. This was *"very timely and focused our approach."*

Sustainability

Chief librarians recognised the wider applicability of the approaches adopted by WTYL and took measures to ensure the sustainability of the project. All partners have committed to continuing the work of the project:

- *"The work that we started with WTYL is now part of our service delivery. It's not just a stand-alone project – it is integral to the work that we are doing in libraries."*

Need for further development

A number of chief librarians felt that WTYL had provided the foundation for future achievements, and in recognition of that, believed further development work was needed:

- One consultee felt that although WTYL had been valuable it had been a 'starting block', and the library service had remained primarily rooted in service delivery 'to' refugees. Experience of working with a community empowerment organisation during an application to the Big Lottery Fund had further challenged the library service's thinking regarding how to work 'with' local people, namely, it had raised the possibility of local community representatives having a place on a planning groups

- Another chief librarian reported that: *"We've enrolled lots of new people as potential library users and we now need to make sure they are using us. If they aren't, we need to find out why and see what we can do about it."*

Library staff feedback

Focus groups with 'non-project' library staff identified a range of views including:

- Appreciation of WTYL as a resource to enhance awareness of the needs of refugees. One staff member highlighted *"It's certainly widened my horizons. When I look at people now I really don't make any assumptions on the basis of race for example."*

- The project worker was viewed by many non-project colleagues as an *"expert"* resource. Although non-project staff had engaged with the project at a number of levels, eg staffing events or leading on WTYL-related library activities, they valued support from the project worker. There was a developmental aspect to this expert/non-expert issue ie at first it was an obstacle for non-project workers ('this work is for the expert, I don't have the skills'), whereas over time staff did get involved, and, while they continued to regard the project worker as the expert, this was in a positive sense as a source of support

- Training had been useful and had challenged the views of non-project staff and encouraged them to reflect on how the library appeared to others. Branch managers reported an increase in awareness of refugee and social exclusion issues across their staff teams following the training

- The project had led to changes in the customer/user base. One library manager commented:

  "The work has helped us move away from just working with our 'traditional users' – older, white, middle class 'ladies' – it has really helped us get a new clientele of younger clients, including young asylum seekers and second-generation refugees. You should see this place at exam time. You can't move for people. It may not suit everyone but it makes it an exciting, dynamic place to come to and work in."

- One staff group reflected on how the project had prompted them to consider the profile of staff in the library, ie that they were mainly white women. This was an issue identified throughout the evaluation, and the findings at Section five of this report address this

- The Leicester volunteer project has created library employment opportunities for volunteers. One volunteer who had gained paid employment as a library assistant fed back on her experience:

  "Working in the library has increased my confidence, let me learn new things, meet new people, talk about things and get a job. I think that's good."

  "The staff in the library are really helpful. I think we've worked well together. I'm really thankful for everyone's help."

Feedback from external partners

Consultation was undertaken with a range of external stakeholders, including both relatively new contacts and established service delivery partners.

External partners were extremely positive about the relationships they had developed with libraries. Organisations and forums such as Refugee Action and North East Refugee Service, and Washington Asylum Seeker Project all reported that they had not previously considered the library as a potential partner but had gained tangible benefits from working with the libraries, a process that had changed their perception of the value of library services. This represents a considerable endorsement.

Partners reported that libraries, and the WTYL project workers in particular, brought valuable contributions to their own work:

"The work of the library has opened up other activities to our users such as citizenship classes and access to lots of other services both in the library and at other places."

"Getting experience of libraries through the central library has also led to people using their local libraries more as they become more confident."

"The experience of the volunteering programme in the library has led other organisations to do similar things. Age Concern are benefiting from engaging with refugees and asylum-seeker volunteers and getting volunteers with language skills."

"The library has provided a lot of support to Refugee Community Organisations and has helped them get office space in the central lending library and in the reference library. Not only is this really useful it has also helped the volunteers working in these projects to get a better understanding of the way libraries work."

Environmental testing

Four refugee individuals worked with ADP to conduct an environmental testing exercise, which involved carrying out 'mystery shopping' in a number of library branches. Participating library services identified branch and community libraries that had been involved with WTYL as suitable candidates for environmental testing. All mystery shoppers were refugees and were confident English speakers. They each

visited a number of libraries for around 30 minutes per visit and were asked to report back on relevant issues such as how welcome staff made them feel and how easy it was to locate community language stock.

Feedback

Feedback followed a consistent pattern in most areas:

● **Premises** – Library premises tended to be easy to find and well located, with the exception of one library that proved difficult to access

● **Staff** – With a few exceptions, staff were found to be friendly, welcoming, and helpful when dealing with enquiries about joining the library. *"They are extremely friendly and helpful. If you ask them just one question they are on hand to explain to you the range of services the library can offer."*

● **Stock** – Community language books were available

● **Navigation** – Children's services were well signposted, eg using a crocodile smile welcome, alphabet or numbers as indications of where the children's section was located; ICT facilities were easy to locate, although it was often unclear to the testers whether there was a charge for use

● **Welcome** – Most partner library services reviewed their joining procedures during the lifetime of the project and have either implemented or plan to implement simplified joining procedures. This was a pleasant surprise for the refugees who undertook the environmental testing visits to the libraries:

"I was surprised indeed, not because of the staff's friendly and helpful behaviour, but because I was told that becoming a member of the library, all you need is to fill in a form"

"Staff were very friendly and welcoming. I managed to register only with a GP prescription as a proof of address."

"It was appreciated when staff said "hello" and "goodbye" to everyone."

The environmental testing identified promotion and signposting as key to ensuring access. Suggested methods included assisting refugees to navigate the library, clearly distinguishing between free and fee-charging services, and ensuring that access routes to ICT and other services is clear.

Barriers

The environmental testing identified a number of barriers that applied across all the library branches libraries visited:

- **Lack of profile for refugee communities** – A major issue raised by all environmental testers was that they could not 'see' themselves or their community in the library[22]. This consisted of there not being:

  — Many refugee users in the library

  — Visible signs of the existence of refugee communities in the area

  — Leaflets or posters representing RCO events

  — Mainstream displays of work including refugees.

- **Unfriendly or inattentive staff** – When the reception staff were not friendly this caused a barrier. One environmental tester felt that staff were reluctant to ask him for ID, were nervous around him, and treated him *"like a shop lifter."* Another noted, *"The staff seemed to ignore me. They were chatting on the phone and it wasn't a job related conversation."*

- **Lack of signage** – The testers found few signs in community languages and reported, *"if you don't speak or read English you will get lost."*

3.3 Assessment of promotional and policy impact of WTYL

In the national phase, WTYL aimed to connect public libraries and refugee communities in order to nurture learning, well being, and a sense of belonging for all. The Project Co-ordinator's role had a particular focus on meeting the aims of:

- Sharing good practice based on evidence

- Achieving advocacy for the importance and value of public library work with refugees and asylum seekers.

This section reviews the infrastructure put in place to share good practice and describes the promotional and advocacy achievements made by the project.

Website

The project co-ordinator worked with The Network to commission and recruit website developers and develop content for a dedicated website www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk[23].

The aim of the site is to support shared learning across the library sector, ie beyond the participating library services. Site content includes practical tips, case studies, an extensive resources section, events and training listings and a message board.

The WTYL website has proved to be a valuable resource for library services generally, with usage rising steadily since it was launched at the end of January 2007, from 2,465 separate visitors in February 2007 to 6,379 in October 2007.

The website had a high profile with staff in WTYL-participant libraries, who valued their involvement in WTYL. Staff reported they used it as a reference source.

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22   Although there was an example of a display about mental health that included a specific reference to refugees, that made the environmental tester feel "inappropriately singled out"
23   WTYL worked with Electric Putty Ltd to develop the site – www.electricputty.co.uk

The market for the site has taken on international dimensions, with large numbers of visits from users based in the USA for example[24]. One student at the University of South Africa, studying for an honours degree in Health Sciences and Social Work, registered on the site through an interest in doing an assignment on WTYL as part of her coursework, and subsequently interviewed the Project Co-ordinator by phone.

The site includes a case study based on the volunteering work initiated by Leicester libraries, with a link to a youtube film made by Leicester library staff, that features refugee volunteers talking about their experiences[25]. The project co-ordinator used this film extensively while on her travels as a direct means of demonstrating the achievements of WTYL work, which may have had a greater impact than simply talking about them.

E-digest

The e-digest is a weekly compilation of events, courses, policy documents, practical resources and news relevant to WTYL work, compiled by the project co-ordinator and The Network.

The e-digest has nearly 400 subscribers, most but not all based in the UK. The digest has received positive feedback from two surveys of subscribers and a high percentage of respondents pass it on through their networks.

WTYL project workers use the e-digest as a resource and cascade information in the digest to their colleagues.

Although most e-digest subscribers work in libraries, an increasing number of users are based in other sectors or council departments, for example council officers with specific responsibility for community cohesion.

Profile

LLDA co-ordinated an advisory group whose aim was to identify how to best maximise the impact of WTYL. A meeting of the group in August 2007 identified a number of challenges in relation to achieving and maintaining a high profile for WTYL:

- The learning points from WTYL need to be disseminated and sustained at local, regional and national level – both within and outside the sector, and in terms not only of recommendations for practice but also of influence on library, local authority, and government policy

- One of the major barriers to raising the profile of WTYL-related activities is a perception on the part of other local government service providers that library services are not 'natural partners' ie that their role is unclear in terms of contributing to overarching policy agendas such as regeneration. The strategic positioning and presentation of public libraries is critical to their future

- 'Critical friends' are needed, particularly individuals in positions of authority in other sectors with no direct connection to library service delivery, eg representatives from refugee forums or health organisations.

The WTYL website and e-digest outlined in the previous section have played a key role in project promotion and dissemination of learning points. In addition, the project co-ordinator has led on achieving an external profile outlined below.

National recognition

The profile of WTYL has been enhanced by its recognition in the following awards schemes:

WTYL was the winner of the CILIP/LiS *Libraries Change Lives Award* 2007, an achievement

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24 Overseas use of the site has been driven partly by the award of a *Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship* to the project co-ordinator in 2007. The theme of the fellowship was *"The Role of Public Libraries in Multi-cultural Relationships"*, and the award enabled her to travel to thirteen cities in Canada, USA, Sweden, Denmark, the Netherlands and Belgium. During her visit, the project co-ordinator introduced many people working in or with the library sector to the project and the site and also kept a blog at http://helencarpenter.wordpress.com

25 http://uk.youtube.com/watch?v=glZwzpuXcZ8

specifically related to the volunteering and employment programmes delivered by two of the WTYL participating library services, Camden Libraries, (one of the WTYL pilot boroughs) and Leicester Libraries, working with LLDA.

Nigel Thomas, chair of the judges' committee and member of the supporting Community Services Group of CILIP commented:
"The LCL award highlights excellent practice by libraries, who work in partnership in tackling social exclusion issues on the front line. The panel of judges felt that this project showed how libraries could change the lives of refugees and asylum seekers who came to this country seeking help and support. We found that the project challenged prejudices and perceptions and enabled its target group to gain a real foothold in building a new life. We are delighted that it has been recognised."

WTYL was also one of six finalists shortlisted in the community cohesion category of the *Sustainable Communities Awards* 2007[26].

Local recognition

In Southwark, the community library service manager, who has responsibility for WTYL along with a range of other community library service provision, won the council's Star award for Community Service of the Year. The Star awards recognise the achievements of outstanding officers who have 'gone the extra mile' in their work to improve council services, make positive changes, and engage residents.

The Audit Commission's recent review of cultural services in the London Borough of Hillingdon made the following reference to WTYL at paragraph 72 of its report:

"The Council can demonstrate that some of its activities have a positive impact on the quality of life of local people. These include:

'Welcome To Your Library', which offers support for refugees to learn English. Anecdotal evidence from Somali and Tamil refugees suggests this helped them feel more confident to access

services and has created a sense of belonging. Over 1,000 have joined libraries and/or are involved in activities such as ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) classes."

Advocacy

WTYL has been the subject of numerous presentations throughout the lifespan of the project, delivered by many people involved or connected with WTYL work. As well as giving presentations, individuals involved in WTYL have attended events outside the library sector where they have been the only person representing libraries, and have taken the opportunity to speak from the floor wherever possible. Advocacy opportunities include:

● Joint presentation by the project co-ordinator and a member of staff from Hillingdon Libraries, together with a health visitor and community worker (who work with Healthy Hillingdon and the library service on WTYL) plus one of the Tamil women's group who meet on Hillingdon library premises, at a CILIP Career Development Group (CDG) conference (April 2007). This was the first time that CDG had ever facilitated a presentation partly delivered in Tamil that was translated live at the event. A combination of first-language delivery in a community language and the content of the presentation, which included direct testimony both from a project beneficiary and from another sector, had a powerful impact on delegates.

● Liverpool Libraries referenced WTYL in a presentation at a major conference, "Delivering Sustainable Communities through Libraries: New Opportunities for Local Government" with two presentations by government ministers[27].

● Lyn Brown MP's presentation to an all-party Parliamentary group on libraries made reference to the Leicester project in a speech, highlighting work by libraries to promote refugee integration.

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26 This award is sponsored by the Local Government Chronicle and the Health Service Journal.
27 www.neilstewartassociates.com/se201

A Local Government Information Unit conference on migration included a workshop presentation on employment and refugees by the Camden Libraries WTYL project worker, a representative from Camden RAISE[28] and project workers from Leicester Libraries on their experiences with offering refugee work placements and volunteering opportunities.

The CILIP/LiS Libraries Change Lives Award to WTYL resulted in an article in The Guardian[29].

The project co-ordinator and others involved in WTYL have generated coverage in the professional press and other specialist magazines. Examples range from the Local Government Chronicle and CILIP Update to Book Aid International's networking newsletter.

The WTYL work has also been referenced on the web, for example by the Information Centre About Asylum and Refugees in the UK[30] and by the British Council.[31]

WTYL has been included in various guides, eg it is profiled in the *Understanding the Stranger: Building Bridges Community Handbook*[32]. The handbook examines 21 projects from across the UK that aim to mediate tension and build bridges between local host communities

and asylum seekers and refugees. The projects included are drawn from both the statutory and non-statutory sectors and include small-scale grassroots initiatives in urban settings. The handbook includes a WTYL case study.

The Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship associated travel and networking that the project co-ordinator undertook in 2007 both enabled the project to learn from the experiences of others and also provided an opportunity to promote WTYL. The project co-ordinator gave a number of presentations about WTYL, including at:

- A fringe meeting at the American Libraries Association annual conference in Washington in June 2007

- A breakfast seminar for staff in Stockholm public libraries

- A formal morning seminar with staff from Malmö library service in Sweden, which was also attended by library representatives from Copenhagen and other towns and cities in Sweden

- A presentation to staff and colleagues from external organisations at the Netherlands Public Library Association in The Hague.

28   www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk/editorial.asp?page_id=53
29   www.guardian.co.uk/society/2007/may/02/immigrationasylumandrefugees.asylum1
30   www.icar.org.uk/?lid=8704
31   www.britishcouncil.org/info@uk-resources-initiatives.htm
32   www.gulbenkian.org.uk/publications/social-change/understanding-the-stranger

4 Distance travelled

4.1 The distance travelled evaluation framework

Purpose and structure of the framework

The evaluation framework acted as a guide to support the assessment of the 'distance travelled' by WTYL. The framework is based on a number of themes agreed as being of relevance through consultation with key stakeholders.

The evaluation framework sought to identify the impact of WTYL on library services in terms of the following issues:

- Strategic policy
- Service planning
- Service delivery
- Community cohesion
- Social capital
- Reading and learning.

Distance travelled was measured in three distinct but potentially overlapping stages with the ultimate aim of ensuring the embedding of good practice throughout the library service.

Project-led: where work was largely dependent on the commitment and initiative of an individual and was therefore unlikely to continue beyond the life of the project

Shared vision: where work was viewed as a library service priority, was promoted internally and externally, and commitment to the aims of

the project was forthcoming from senior library management teams, thus ensuring that learning was shared

Embedded: where work was fully integrated into the library service, and tended to be naturally developed with involvement of internal and external partners from the earliest planning stage onwards. Partners and the local community were likely to recognise the library service's role in the promotion of social inclusion.

Themes from the review of distance travelled

The framework was used as a tool to stimulate discussion, from which a number of overarching themes emerged:

- ADP identified a significant level of embedding and mainstreaming arising from the national phase. While the pilot phase was innovative in terms of its overall approach and the priorities it aimed to address and the national phase could be viewed as delivering 'more of the same', the defining feature of the national phase was the degree to which the participating library services incorporated learning from the project into the planning and delivery of core services

- According to the indicators used in the distance travelled framework, embedding practice was consistently achieved, particularly in the areas of service planning, service delivery and reading and learning. These areas tended to be those that library services felt most confident in addressing, and relevant changes had a largely internal focus.

- There was general consensus that additional development work was needed to address the remaining themes – influence on strategic policy, community cohesion and social capital. These all rely on the profile and role of the library service in external environments being clearly defined. For example, there was a barrier in contributing to local strategic policy when libraries were not yet viewed as a natural partner in Local Strategic Partnerships or instrumental to the implementation of Local Area Agreements.

4.2 Embedded practice

Service planning

The distance travelled evaluation locates the outputs from this workstream clearly in the terrain of embedded practice. The rationale for this decision is based on the following analysis:

- The planning process employed by the project focused on mapping need and developing a service plan, which generated a considerable number of transferable learning points in relation to planning as a general activity. With the support of the project co-ordinator, project workers developed considerable skills in ongoing planning and responding to need, ie their approach became progressively more 'reflective'[33]. The promotion of the role of effective planning by the project will continue with the WTYL website providing a support resource.

- Consultation with chief librarians and library staff confirmed that learning from WTYL has been embedded into library service planning and has been used in the planning of other services, eg:

  — Children's services primary care lead officer identifying how health promotion, WTYL and library outreach could be linked to children's centres

  — Older people's services managers adopted lessons from WTYL for older people's services (Hillingdon)

  — The local authority has a Refugee and Asylum Seekers Strategy which includes a key aim of providing better services to refugees and asylum seekers resident in Southwark by identifying and linking the various relevant services that are currently being provided. The library service's Social Inclusion Action Plan includes a commitment to working with refugees and asylum seekers in partnership with other departments and agencies (Southwark)

  — The library service features in the strategies of local organisations, eg Kensington Regeneration community cohesion planning (Liverpool).

Service delivery

WTYL has made significant contributions to service delivery, and the project learning has been firmly embedded in delivery practices. In particular, progress has been made in the following areas:

Enabling access – While many public libraries have responded very positively to the social inclusion agenda, some still have very cumbersome joining and charging policies, and most have very little in the way of proper marketing or publicity programmes. WTYL has provided good practice examples of practical revisions that can be made to remove barriers and increase access. These include considerable work on enhancements of community language stock, achieved in conjunction with local refugee communities.

Enhancing the awareness of staff – project staff have made significant achievements relating to both raising among colleagues the profile of their work with refugees, and providing training and support to develop staff awareness of issues that they themselves should bear in mind when working with refugees.

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33 Reflective practice in order to support a flexible approach to planning and delivery based on reviewing emerging developments and evolving understanding, which is nonetheless based on sound planning principles.

Developing partnerships – WTYL has highlighted the importance of spending time and resources on developing partnerships with internal stakeholders (ie the wider library service, other local authority departments) and external partners (eg RCOs, health service teams) in order to provide effective and external services.

Reading and learning

The WTYL project enhanced work on reading and learning, with a particular focus on meeting language needs. The rationale for rating these activities as embedded is based on the following findings:

- The project worked on a range of issues relating to reading and learning, eg purchasing community language stock and materials, facilitating children's reading sessions in community languages

- Where projects encouraged integration, eg in attending an ESOL class, participants reported additional unanticipated outcomes such as friendships and being more familiar with local services

- Conversation clubs have provided an opportunity to use the library space/ environment to talk and learn about a wide range of topics including social issues, and have the potential to act as a good practice example of a successful community cohesion initiative by widening participation to include all library users.

4.3 Shared vision

Strategic policy

Both the overall project and the individual participating library services were successful in identifying how their day-to-day work linked to strategic policy agendas in theoretical terms, with a particular understanding of and focus on social inclusion. However, the degree to which this identification translated into a strong and enduring influence on policy was patchy. The distance travelled evaluation therefore 'rates' activities in this area as corresponding to the

level of shared vision rather than embedded practice. The rationale for this decision is based on the following observations:

- There was minimal evidence of links into local strategic policy, eg inclusion in Local Area Agreements as a contributing partner

- Partnerships were largely personality-led rather than library service-led

- The positioning of libraries in the strategic policy environment remains a significant challenge due to the lack of informed understanding 'from the outside' of the wider role and value of libraries in enhancing community cohesion, community engagement, social capital, and social inclusion overall.

Community cohesion

WTYL has played a significant role in highlighting the importance of work aimed at enhancing community cohesion and contributing to such work. Project workers have developed high levels of community development skills. This learning achievement is demonstrated both by the success of the community cohesion projects delivered by participating library services, and also by the number, range and strength of partnerships and levels of stakeholder engagement achieved during the project's lifetime.

However, the distance travelled evaluation places the level of achievement in this area as shared vision rather than embedded practice. The rationale for this decision is based on the following findings:

- A pattern of delivery where services predominantly continue to be delivered "to" refugees rather than "with" them

- Conclusions from the refugee environmental testing exercise, which reported there were no visible signs of refugees being an integrated part of the overall library user group

- Rare examples of the project advocating on behalf of refugees and raising awareness in the wider community of refugees' contribution to the community.

Social capital

WTYL was concerned to support the development of social capital both within refugee communities and between such communities and others, and reported positive unanticipated outcomes for the project, eg the informal interaction that took place during/after ESOL classes, conversation clubs etc. These interactions created friendships and encouraged additional activities such as going on trips and visiting local shops. Similarly libraries proactively providing space for groups to meet as part of ongoing partnerships contributed to the creation of social capital (eg in one of the ESOL projects it was noted that existing library users started to chat and share newspapers with asylum seekers using the project). Activities in this area are ranked as shared rather than embedded due to their being relatively new (and, as yet, not 'fully-formed') outcomes.

5 Evaluation findings

Objective evidence of the project's success in meeting its targets and stakeholders' assessment of the impact of WTYL both indicate that WTYL has largely achieved its aims and, in doing so, has made a strong and positive contribution to the debate about methods of supporting refugees and asylum seekers and the role that public libraries can play in this arena.

5.1 Learning and changes that have occurred as a result of the work

The main learning points from WTYL are:

● The importance of effective planning and evaluation based on the mapping of need. WTYL learning points in this area have the potential to act as a benchmark for public libraries in enhancing social inclusion. Effective planning and evaluation need to be accompanied by ensuring that relevant library staff understand how to relate to and promote the work of public libraries in a wider policy context. The success of these activities is in turn contingent on a wider recognition (ie beyond library services) of the role that libraries can and do play in contributing to cross-sectoral agendas

● Among library services where there has been recognition of the strategic and practical importance of project activities at leadership level, and particularly where this has translated into an active willingness to enhance libraries, there has been a real difference in their understanding and practice in relation to community engagement. Change management by chief librarians is key and enhancing their role in leading on social inclusion is vital

● The importance of partnership development at all strategic levels alongside community engagement cannot be over-stressed. WTYL has drawn out the need for this to be set within a long-term phased approach to partnership development to enable cross-sector skills-sharing, innovation, and opportunities to apply with partners for funding to test and develop new ways of working

● Public library positioning is essential and is not something that projects alone can achieve. The embedding and mainstreaming of learning from WTYL has been valuable but additional support and action will be required to incorporate learning into public library work and practice in a consistent way.

5.2 Recommendations to enable wider application of WTYL project learning in public libraries

Project learning points are highly relevant to the current challenges facing public libraries both in terms of how best to respond to the needs of diverse users and in demonstrating the particular role that libraries can play in enhancing community engagement.

ADP's review of the strategic environment indicates that learning from WTYL is timely, given both the overall expectation that libraries should improve outcomes for communities, and the likelihood that increasing inward migration levels from other EU countries will offer up a challenge to all public libraries to develop strategies to respond to an increasingly diverse (potential) user base.

The recommendations regarding how learning from the project can be applied more widely across library services with different audiences include the following:

- Creating an infrastructure for sharing information is key, and learning has to be centralised so that the overall library sector has access to resources that will assist them in planning and delivering community engagement activities. It is important that the development of such an 'information hub' is not 'left' as the responsibility of the WTYL project or The Network alone. This work needs to be nationally co-ordinated, set within the overall context of the development of public libraries, and led by MLA, SCL and other strategic bodies.

- This should be set within a long-term strategy that provides for:

  — Clear performance indicators relating to social inclusion, community cohesion and community engagement targets, including guidance on how to evidence outputs and outcomes

  — Support for chief librarians to engage with national policy and cross-sectoral agendas

  — Structural changes such as workforce development to ensure a diverse workforce.

- Establishing "critical friends" in positions of authority in other sectors with no direct connection to library service delivery in order to increase the interaction with cross-sector initiatives.

Annexes

Annex 1

Welcome To Your Library distance travelled evaluation framework

This framework is intended as a guide and discussion tool to capture the "distance travelled" by the Welcome To Your Library (WTYL) project. Its intended audience is the participating partners in WTYL. It forms part of the external evaluation and will be used to help identify the softer outcomes that the project achieves. The main purpose is to help identify what evidence you can provide about your achievements and provide consistency when the external project evaluators ask for feedback or discuss progress with you.

Distance travelled is the progress the project makes in terms of achieving change that leads to a sustained and consistent "Welcome" to the library for asylum seekers and refugees.

This framework is intended to demonstrate the impact the WTYL project is making. It is based around a number of themes eg community engagement, that represent the work being undertaken in the project. Each theme is presented in a table format that breaks the theme down to into three stages that are summaries of the distance the project could travel. You are encouraged to collect evidence that illustrates which stage you are at in each area.

How to use this framework and what it can be used for is outlined in detail in the guidance that accompanies this framework. Please read the guidance note before using this framework.

Distance is a continuous measure and projects might start at different stages. Progress can be moving from one stage to another rather than aiming to reach the final stage in all areas of the project.

The framework is based on illustrative examples – these are not prescriptive. The framework also aims to encourage links with relevant policy or performance monitoring such as Framework for the Future, Local Area Agreements, Every Child Matters and the emerging performance framework from the Local Authority White Paper.

If you have any questions about this framework
please contact Alison or David at ADP Consultancy
T: 020 7415 7052 or
alison@adpconsultancy.co.uk or david@adpconsultancy.co.uk

Welcome To Your Library distance travelled

Content

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Impact of WTYL on reading & learning	Reading	8
	Learning	

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Welcome To Your Library distance travelled – continued

Impact of Welcome To Your Library on strategic policy

Theme	Project led	Shared vision	Embedded
Contributing to local strategic objectives	Links are in place with local strategic bodies including Local Strategic Partnerships (LSPs), Learning Skills Councils (LSCs) based on specific initiatives such as WTYL	Library service plays active role in local strategic bodies including LSPs & LSCs and contributes responses to policy proposals	Libraries viewed as an obvious partner for relevant local strategic objectives and encourages forums for addressing local strategic objectives based on knowledge of need of diverse range of groups
Contributing to regional & national strategic objectives	Awareness of regional & national strategic objectives in relation to project-specific issues eg asylum seekers & refugees	Opportunities to contribute to regional & national strategic objectives on range of social inclusion issues are identified and pursued	Regional & national strategic objectives are taken into account in planning services & active engagement is in place
Relevant policy & performance indicators	This incorporates a wide range of policy including Local Area Agreements, Local Strategic Plans, Every Child Matters etc		

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Welcome To Your Library distance travelled – continued

Impact of Welcome To Your Library on library service planning

Theme	Project led	Shared vision	Embedded
Contributing to the library's strategic objectives	Library incorporates social inclusion measures including WTYL in strategies and plans	Library is committed to incorporating social inclusion measures including WTYL in strategies and plans and encourages other departments to	Social inclusion measures are incorporated in the strategic planning process and includes consultation and engagement with range of stakeholder groups including refugee groups, young peoples groups etc
Leadership commitment	The senior management team (SMT) is aware and supports the project	The SMT plays an active role in sharing and championing the impact of WTYL both internally and externally	Lessons from WTYL and other social inclusion projects and consistently promoted and considered when designing and delivering service and policy
Contribution to policy & performance indicators	This incorporates addressing Framework for the Future and anticipates performance management requirements from the Local Government White paper		

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Welcome To Your Library distance travelled – continued

Impact of Welcome To Your Library on library service delivery

Theme	Project led	Shared vision	Embedded
Working practices	Working practices eg discretion with ID on joining, appropriate signage and promotion of WTYL etc dependent on promotion by key staff such as WTYL project workers	Working practices developed through consultation with refugee groups and followed by all staff including cover staff being made aware of working practice approach	Working practices and developed and reviewed including consistent consultation with representative from a diverse range of groups eg refugee groups and older people groups
Front line staff engagement	Staff are encouraged to learn names, attend and assist at events and apply discretion with ID on joining	Staff are wiling champions of access and recognise and address social inclusion issues through taking a positive approach to front line service engagement	Front line library staff are recognised and sought out as a source of support and information by diverse range of users eg refugees, young people, older people, lesbians
Stock	Stock in introduced on the basis of community profile and integrated into the main stock. Project staff take the lead.	Stock is introduced on the basis of discussion with local community and feedback from staff and other stakeholders & covers a range of needs eg child & adult & delivery methods eg outreach, events	Regular and consistent consultation in place to review community needs, that incorporate feedback and ideas from staff and promotes innovation.

Welcome To Your Library distance travelled – continued

Community engagement and cohesion

Theme	Project led	Shared vision	Embedded
Engagement	Library provides range of services eg ICT and reading groups & signposts refugees to support eg Sure Start, ESOL, Health providers, mental health support citizenship test support	Library consistently provides range of services & referrals & opportunities to participate in library and/or community through eg volunteering & employment	Library is viewed and used as one of the main resources for engagement eg volunteering, information, advice & guidance on a range of issues and facilitates meetings etc that promote library as a community resource
Partnership & participation	Effective personal contact with individuals and groups and hosting of one off events.	Regular contact and consultation with number of groups. Projects with partners & groups involved in service planning.	Processes in place that incorporate partners' views etc in service planning & mechanism for identifying appropriate lead partner for project planning including identifying new partners
Diversity & social trust	Individual asylum seekers & refugees are made to feel welcome by library reception staff, layout of building, resources etc & seek out Project staff with queries	Diversity of background & circumstances are appreciated & positively valued and appropriate service provided	Strong & positive ongoing relationships developed that encourages engagement in planning & service delivery across a range of applications

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Welcome To Your Library distance travelled – continued

Theme	Impact of Welcome To Your Library on social capital [1]		
	Project led	**Shared vision**	**Embedded**
Social engagement & participation	Specific initiatives are in place that support access to cultural, leisure & social groups, signposting information is available and facilitation around specific policy issues eg access to health services	Library works with partners to identify strategy for promoting social engagement and hosts specific events	Library consistently works with partners on providing resources and facilitating social participation eg by delivering programme to support young people involved in crime or promoting women's groups
Social interaction, social networks & social support	Information, advice & support promotes awareness of institutions, contact with public officials or political representatives, access to information on local or national issues	Library provides resources such as meeting space for eg tenant associations, neighbourhood forums and encourages debate and discussion	Library works with partners and is viewed by diverse range of local community as resource for social networks and facilitates range of civic participation options such as debates

1 Wide ranging term that refers to the norms, values and networks that are available to individuals to support both individual and collective action

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Welcome To Your Library distance travelled – continued

Impact of **Welcome To Your Library** on reading & learning and information needs

Theme	Project led	Shared vision	Embedded
Promoting reading	Specific WTYL initiatives are in place eg book promotions, reading group, literature event to complement availability of language & culturally relevant stock and resources. Signposting to ESOL and other reading support	Library has a strategy to increase promotion of reading, drawing on a range of activities including targeted reading groups eg BME or community, published reading lists from specific audiences. ESOL provision linked to library and library delivering other reading support	Work with partners to deliver joint events, involvement of user feedback in designing reader events and consistent and ongoing application of strategy
Promoting learning	Specific initiatives are in place eg access to ESOL & basic skills classes, support in volunteering & mentoring schemes, IAG in situ or by referral	Library has a strategy to promote and deliver services that promote learning including addressing the needs of specific audiences	Work with partners to deliver joint events, involvement of user feedback in designing events and consistent and ongoing application of strategy

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Annex 11

Environmental testing findings

Accessibility of library services for refugee users was assessed by mystery shopping visits undertaken by refugees. Summary findings are presented below using the feedback provided by the environmental testers.

Thanks are due to the individuals from North East Refugee Service, SOLA Arts and Refugee Action who carried out the environmental testing.

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Environmental testing findings

Library	External signage	Internal signage	Environment	ESOL stock and information	Joining procedures	Customer care	Other
1	The library is far from the town centre and no signs, neither on the road nor on the library itself. The entrance is large but does not seem to be a library, because on the door is written: Activity Centre.	No welcoming sign but it's very welcoming. No signs in community languages and nothing associated with refugees. Not sure if things are free.	I think for English speakers, it would be easy to use all services the library can offer, but hard for non English speakers to use any service. The display is good but the children area is too small and not decorated. I noticed the children's area only after asking staff about it.	With the help of the library catalogue and the labelling order, it's easy to find any book in library. Foreign language books seem to be abundant, but nothing really interesting to me.	Staff told me that to be member of the library requires two items: Proof of ID and proof of address (TV licensing, bills).	Staff are extremely friendly and helpful.	
2	No sign on the road but easy to find. No one can miss it. On both sides of the library, you can clearly see written:" Central Library". The entrance is very clear.	Very welcoming, in fact on one of the biggest leaflets you can notice the following sentence: Welcome Diversity and Equality.	It's not really clear all the services the library can offer. If you cannot speak English it's hard to use any library's service. You need to feel confident enough to ask.	If you need books in languages other than English, you need to use the catalogue on the computer. Good stock of books.		They are extremely friendly and helpful. If you ask them just one question, they are on hand to explain to you the ranges of service the library can offer.	All PCs open access, most with internet access, but all software in English. Also, no-one available to assist with using PCs.

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Environmental testing findings – continued

Library	External signage	Internal signage	Environment	ESOL stock and information	Joining procedures	Customer care	Other
3	Easy to find, located on the corner of the road, with a sign.	Small but clearly designated entrance but no welcome sign and no information indicating if the services are free of charge or not.	The shelves were labelled but there were no signs where to find different categories of books. On the other hand, the library is so tiny that it's not possible to miss something. Information/leaflets only in English. Nothing that would be of relevance to refugees. General impression was that the place is neglected and poor.	Community languages section had only Asian languages (Bengali, Urdu and Tamil) but obviously it reflects local population. The books were quite old and worn.	One proof of name and address is needed to register.	Smiling and welcoming staff. I was given a welcome pack when I approached them.	There were some activities for children when I was there (face painting, arts etc) and to my surprise the person who was leading it was singing a song with a refrain 'Pizza Hut, McDonalds' (?!). I imagine that the next thing those children would ask for would be to go Pizza Hut or McDonalds.
4	Easy to find, in a pretty small street Pleasant location – green surroundings.	Neat and tidy, books are well looked after; clear labelling (in English) and signs where to find books.	Two quiet study rooms, many computers running European Computer Driving Licence course for a small fee. Separate room for children, with big windows, plants, colourful shelves.	Books from Indian subcontinent only. Magazines in community languages (wider range including Arabic). 'ImaginAsian' – books by Asian writers translated into English.	One proof of name and address is needed.	Young, well trained and professional staff.	

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Environmental testing findings – continued

Library	External signage	Internal signage	Environment	ESOL stock and information	Joining procedures	Customer care	Other
5	Difficult to find, located in the building hosting community and sport centres.	Nice, well organized reception area and security provided by automatic entrance and exit gates. However it is not clear whether you need a card to enter, or will the gate simply open when you pass (which is the case).	Two study rooms with many computers. Children's section just by the entrance – friendly and welcoming, nicely arranged with a smiling crocodile.	Relatively small and difficult to find collection of community languages (South Asian only).	One supporting document needed.	Friendly and polite staff (the only staff who actually said 'hello' and 'bye bye' to everyone).	In the Society section there was an educational publication about asylum seekers and refugees. However, it was indicated that only one person has ever borrowed it. It should make librarians think, and maybe organize some awareness raising event there.
6	It's the most difficult to find. The library is part of a huge oval building, and it's difficult to find because no sign showing the entrance. Nothing is written on the door to associate with the library, just a small picture of books on the window.	No welcome sign and the library does not seem to be welcoming.		Foreign language books are scarcely present.	In this library I had the feeling that staff just didn't dare to ask me an ID. This feeling gave me a sense of alienation. I was not one of the visitors but a subsidiary, a satellite of the library.	Staff are more formal and not very friendly or helpful.	

Environmental testing findings – continued

Library	External signage	Internal signage	Environment	ESOL stock and information	Joining procedures	Customer care	Other
7	It is not really clear where the library is as there are no signs in the road. However, it's not 'hidden' so finding it is not a problem.	The entrance is fine and spacious but there is not a single note in any community language. Inside there is absolutely no information in any other language than English.	The library is rather big and children's area is clearly separated from other parts of the library with an arch at the entrance; it looks nice and friendly, and due to end of Ramadan it had a big colourful sign 'Happy Eid'. Besides there is a specially designated table for children after 3.30pm.	There are very few books in community languages – a shelf in Arabic, Bengali and Chinese. I was told that there is something in Urdu as well but couldn't find it.	I managed to register only with a GP prescription as a proof of address.	Staff was very friendly and welcoming.	The display is neither neat nor tidy and the books don't seem to be well looked after e.g. some shelves are not big enough for larger items etc. It all looked a bit 'scruffy'. For instance, English-Persian dictionary was placed upside down.
8	The library is easily located as it is on the main road.	There are information posters and leaflets displaying library services. Welcome is in various languages & so are leaflets but not in Farsi – my language.	It would be nice to separate the children's section from the main library as grownups get irritated when the kids talk loudly.	Good range but difficult to locate if you don't speak English.		Staff are friendly and helpful sometimes.	

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Environmental testing findings – continued

Library	External signage	Internal signage	Environment	ESOL stock and information	Joining procedures	Customer care	Other
9	It is clear where the library is, but if you are visiting first time, it can be hard to find because I was lost first time and also the sign is small and easy to miss.	Once you get to the library door you can clearly see through window inside of the library, but there isn't any sign saying welcome in any languages, also there isn't any sign saying free service neither.	The children section is quite big and eye-catching compared to other small libraries. There are some toys and tables and chairs and some posters on the wall. It is a beautiful space for children.	They are not many books compared to other libraries, and they got small selection of books. There aren't any books in other languages.	Is clear that you don't need any identity or card to use the library but need to register especially to use the computers.	There was only one staff in that time. She is friendly and seems helpful.	Hard to concentrate, because there is only a small table. During my visit I was the only black person in the library even though it is based in an area with lots of refugees.
10	I was in front of the library but I couldn't see it. I asked someone and the library was in front of me, because the sign is very small and not very eye catching.	It looks welcoming but there aren't any sign in any languages saying welcome and also there isn't any sign saying the service is free.	I can't concentrate in that library because there are people talking and staff as well.	It is not obvious where to find the books other then English, because I tried to find it and couldn't. Also there aren't many books collection compare to other library.	There are some computers and you can use it if you got library card. I ask the staff whether I could use the computer; she says you need library card to use the library computer. I told her I haven't got that card. And she says you need to register to the library, and you need proof of identity or letter that shows your address on it.	They are very friendly and very helpful, as I was asking some question and they helped me. They were very patient.	I saw a machine that you can use for paying your bills.

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Environmental testing findings – continued

Library	External signage	Internal signage	Environment	ESOL stock and information	Joining procedures	Customer care	Other
11	No signs in the road but it's on the corner so can't be missed.	Information on where certain books are located – signs hanging from the ceiling. Again, there wasn't any information in community languages, either at the entrance or inside.	No visible display relevant to refugees. I only found a tiny Community Outreach Project leaflet about learning for refugees when I was about to leave. The leaflet was actually well designed and very informative.	There were no books available in community languages. There are two shelves labeled 'Black Interest' and that's it when it comes to ethnic diversity.	Is clear that you don't need any identity or card to use the library but need to register.	The staff seemed to ignore me. They were chatting on the phone and it wasn't a job related conversation.	Children's section unwelcoming and gloomy – it's not even properly separated from the rest of library (lack of space I guess). It doesn't have anything colourful or cheerful. Leaflets on pet care were much nicer… At least they had pictures of smiling dogs.
12	Despite no signs on the road the library is easy to find. Moreover, the transparent material the library is built with makes it well visible.	It seems welcoming. Before you get up stairs, you will notice the slogan on the wall saying: "Welcome to the Library." No signs in community languages. If you don't speak/read English, before you find a book you will get lost between children library, CDs & DVDs sections.	Four signs divide the library in four sections, Two down stairs and two up stairs. It becomes clear that most services are free, only when you read the phrase written under the signs saying; "It's free and easy to join the library".	With the help of the library catalogue and the clarity of the labelling system, it's obvious where to go, if wanted any thing, books in foreign languages included. There is a good stock of foreign books.	I was surprised indeed, not just because of the staff friendly and helpful behaviour, but because I was told that becoming a member of the library, all you need is to fill in a form. Not one document is required.	Very friendly.	My suggestion is to create a TV section inside libraries. Documentaries concerning the UK history in particular and the world in general are culturally and socially educative.

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Welcome To Your Library – Evaluation Report

This report is available in large print on request.

To find out more about the work of London Libraries Development Agency, visit www.llda.org.uk

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