



QLP News



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THE NEWSLETTER FOR THE QUALITY LEADERS PROJECT –
MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SERVICE DEVELOPMENT

Editorial

Welcome to the fourth issue of QLP News – the newsletter for the Quality Leaders Project. QLP has changed and developed considerably since the last issue – the project is now in the third strand, - Youth (QLP-Y). QLP-Y has attracted funding for this strand from the National Youth Agency (phase 1) and Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF). It has been embedded in the Department of Applied Social Sciences (DASS) at London Metropolitan University from where it is now run in collaboration with the Management Research Centre (MRC) at the University.

The first phase of QLP-Y which focused on the developing project management skills of Quality Leaders and their teams and on the delivery of audience development proposals by the participating Quality Leaders. This phase finished in autumn/winter 2004 and produced some excellent results. The current phase started in October of the same year with a number of new authorities participating – Barnet, Haringey, Lincolnshire and Portsmouth.

Other exciting developments include the appointment of two new dedicated members of staff, Emily Sowter (Lecturer in Youth Policy) and Michael Goetzinger (Research Assistant), to work on the project, as well as a number of development days for participating authorities which have taken place and the launch of the new website for the youth strand of QLP.

QLP-Y addresses a variety of issues such as innovation in the public sector, leadership development, reaching the community, improvement of the 'information world' and the role of libraries in the world of today. An article has been dedicated to each of these issues in this issue of QLP News. Latest developments in the management of the project like our impending external evaluation and our new website are also documented.

We are also happy to announce the formation of the Progressive African Library and Information Activists' Group (PALIAct), a new initiative between DASS and African librarians and information workers (see inside). This is a project related to QLP. We are also pleased to note the requests to participate in QLP-Y from Goa in India and support from USA.

We hope that this issue of QLP News will be both interesting and informative, and welcome your comments, feedback and suggestions (please find contact details in the content section).

QLP-Y UPDATE

The second phase of the Quality Leaders Project-Youth (QLP-Y) formally started with a Development Day on 13 October 2005, as reported in *Youth Ideas & Issues* (No. 6 November, 2005). The period from that date until April 2006 has been one of rapid change. To start with, the two QLP-Y staff started work and rapidly began to play an important role in the Project.

As noted above, a new publication, *Youth Ideas & Issues* was started with the first issue in May 2005. The latest issue is no. 7 (February, 2006), and the 8th issue is being prepared. This has helped to keep all stakeholders informed about developments in QLP-Y, as well as with management issues and youth policy and other initiatives.

Participating authorities got busy soon after the Development Day to meet

Project requirements. An initial delay was caused by the fact that this stage of QLP-Y (Stage 2) had not immediately followed the Stage One as initially planned. This stage, funded by the National Youth Service, is where the Quality Leaders had been provided learning opportunities in project work, consultation, service development among other areas and had completed a service development plan based on consultation with young people. However, there were a number of changes in authorities participating in the programme when the Programme started.

Similarly, a number of authorities appointed new Quality Leaders. These changes meant that new service development plans, based on fresh consultation, had to be undertaken. This delayed the start of the implementation stage.

At the same time, major restructuring has been taking place in Youth Services in all authorities. As a result, some QLP-Y programmes could not develop or sustain partnerships between libraries and youth service. At the same time, some library services were also involved in restructuring and this also meant a rather slow start of the project.

Perhaps the authority that was most affected by restructuring was Liverpool where the Quality Leader came from the Youth Service. In the event, Liverpool decided to withdraw from the Project "in order to focus more closely on the local challenges presented to us as we reorganise and develop our Youth and Community Service and continue to develop our Library Service". Before withdrawing, Liverpool felt that they could continue participating if QLP-Y could work closely with another PHF-funded Project – "Welcome to your library". However the aims, work requirements and scope of the two projects are very different.

Regrettable as Liverpool's withdrawal was, it did not affect the progress of QLP-Y, as the actual number of authorities we had planned

for was four. The funding allocation was also based on four participating authorities. We had taken five authorities for just such a contingency.

Among key developments during this period was a series of visits made to all participating authorities by two members of the Steering Group. This was considered by all authorities as an extremely useful exercise and enabled the Project to move ahead with clarity and confidence. Reports from the visits are included in the Attachments to this Report.

The project has also benefited from additional support – financial as well as in other ways – from the Department of Applied Social Sciences (DASS).

This is in the form of administrative support and services (such as accounting and budgeting). A number of key DASS staff have actively supported QLP-Y in a number of different ways which enables the project to be more efficient. Their enthusiasm and support – often beyond the call of duty – need to be acknowledged.

A Project such as QLP-Y does not operate in vacuum and a large network of supporters and sympathisers has been built up. This includes organisations and individuals. The formation of a QLP-Y Advisory Group will help to strengthen this support as well as bring fresh ideas to the project.

LIVERPOOL WITHDREW FROM QLP-Y IN APRIL 2006

Liverpool withdrew from QLP-Y on Friday April 28. This is due to a reorganisation in the authority which left Liverpool unfortunately short of the staff and the time needed to continue participating in QLP-Y. The Youth and Community Service and the Library Service will still try to jointly develop the best possible services to young people, and continue to participate in other projects, aimed at target groups similar to the ones focused on by QLP-Y (young people, refugees, asylum seekers), such as 'Welcome To Your Library' and 'Fulfilling Their Potential'. The QLP team will stay in contact with the QLP Steering Group and share information about any Liverpool based developments and outcomes with them. The QLP Project Group wishes all QLP participants from Liverpool good luck with their future projects and is looking forward to hearing about updates about them.

The NEW QLP website

By Emily Sowter and Michael Goetzinger

The Quality Leaders Project already has a link on The Network website – the Network is an organisation which aims to tackle exclusion in libraries, museum archives and galleries - (<http://www.seapn.org.uk/qlp.html>), which allows people to look up and download information and key documents regarding the QLP project including all publications, reports and similar material.

The QLP Steering Group decided that the project would benefit from having its own dedicated website, containing all the information the 'old' website, but also being usable for all those involved in the project in a more innovative way. Key documents and paperwork (e.g. budget authorisation forms) will be available to download, cutting down on the amount of paperwork sent out to authorities. There will also be opportunities (in the form of discussion forums) to get involved in discussions, leave messages, and share ideas between individuals and authorities, which will lead to a strengthening of the communication links between the participants and the public. Members (QLs, Steering Group, etc.) will have passwords for access to certain areas relevant to them to focus the flow of information. Members of the public will be able to access most of the documents.

The new website (still under construction) can be viewed under: <http://www.qlp-y.org.uk/>

The Power of Innovation: the role of the 'public sector entrepreneur'

by Dean Bartlett

Interest in innovation processes in the public sector has grown substantially in recent years. Under conditions of increased fiscal pressure, it is necessary not only to maximise efficiency in the provision of services, but also to innovate and discover new ways of doing things in order to 'achieve more, with less'. Hence, there have been extensive reforms in local government over the past decade or more which have introduced a wide range of new structures and practices aimed at improving efficiency and performance. Generally, these reforms have been cast in terms of a movement away from the bureaucratic foundations of local government and its hierarchical governing structures and towards a more market-oriented, corporate governance or managerialist model through decentralisation and developments such as compulsory competitive tendering, the introduction of internal markets and a more commercial style of management.

There has, however, been much criticism directed towards this model of public management and, in particular, the focus upon performance measurement which it has been seen as inevitably engendering. It is important, in this respect, to note that local authorities are encouraged to place performance management within a community strategy framework. According to government guidance the community strategy for each area requires "consultation processes which identify and balance the needs of the community as a whole". It is this new mandate for responsiveness which constitutes one lever through which the public sector entrepreneur can attempt innovation in the design and delivery of services to the public, and transform the role of performance management which can be viewed not only as a driver of change, but also as a tool at the disposal of the public sector entrepreneur which, if required or desirable, can be used to embed and institutionalise innovative changes driven forward by the 'champion' of an innovation in response to the needs of the public or service user.

The role of the champion of innovations, themselves based upon creative ideas derived from community consultation, constitutes that of the 'Quality Leader' which lies at the heart of the QLP model.

Developing good quality leadership, which is then applied to leading the development and implementation of user-defined innovations, in this case within public library service provision for young people, is what QLP-Youth is all about. However, leading such innovations can be difficult.

The entrenched cultures of local government and their associated problematics constitute problems which need to be overcome. The forces of conservatism which impede the smooth unfolding of an innovation from within can be more responsive to transformation into a 'citizen-oriented culture of performance' through the use of entrepreneurial management development and this constitutes the task of the individuals at London Metropolitan University, who deliver these aspects of the programme.

At least three differing conceptualisations of the public sector entrepreneur have been advanced. Firstly, the pioneering trailblazer who is concerned with introducing innovations in order to promote efficiency and better serve the public. Secondly, entrepreneurship may be conceived of as a 'by product' of the application of strategic management and leadership principles to public enterprises. Thirdly, entrepreneurship as portrayed in the 'reinventing government' literature suggests entrepreneurs as 'empowered employees who are able to effect innovative solutions to "customer" problems and needs'. Other classifications and descriptions of public sector entrepreneurs exist, however our experience of working with public library staff throughout the various stages of the development of the Quality Leaders Project suggests that none of these adequately capture either the spirit of the public entrepreneur or the power of innovation, especially in the context of cross-service provision and joined up working that is taking place between libraries and youth services in this phase of the project. Having recognised this fact, the most difficult challenge we face is harnessing that power and using it to transform the services, and thereby the life-choices, available to socially excluded young people.

External evaluation in QLP

By Michael Goetzinger

Evaluation: The general process of a systematic and critical analysis leading to judgments and recommendations regarding the quality of a higher education institution or a programme. Evaluation is carried out through internal or external procedures. (Vlăsceanu, p. 37, in Vlăsceanu, L., Grünberg, L., and Pârlea, D., 2004, *Quality Assurance and Accreditation: A Glossary of Basic Terms and Definitions*, Bucharest, UNESCO-CEPES)

As stipulated by the contract between the Paul Hamlyn Foundation (PHF) and London Metropolitan University, the QLP Steering Group (SG) will appoint an independent external evaluator in early June. The objective is to evaluate the success of this programme by assessing the impact of the programme on innovation within the participating

authorities and improvement of the services these authorities offer. This will allow both the appointing bodies to get a picture of the progress and impact of the various projects within QLP-Y and for the participating QLP teams to obtain feedback and to gain the ability to measure their development on both a personal and authority level. The evaluation design will incorporate a range of methods to provide data on the evaluation objectives, such as an analysis of the data gathered through interviews or questionnaires with the QLPs, members of the PG and other interested parties (such as young people) who participate or contribute to QLP-Y, and critical reviews of other aspects of the project (e.g. the QLP website). The appointee will therefore, amongst other things, visit the projects

and the members of the SG, interview personnel and participants (facilitators and young people), and then be able to give an unbiased and productive input to the project. The information gained through the feedback of the evaluator will be fed back directly into the project and thereby help to improve both the various initiatives held in the authorities and project structure as a whole.

The SG is in the process of inviting the tender of potential candidates and wishes to thank Georgie Parry-Crooke, the 'Course Leader MA Evaluation and Social Research' in DASS and an expert with a vast experience in evaluation, and Susan Blishen (PHF) for their valuable and highly appreciated support in the planning and execution of this process.

Delivering an Ideal Information World

by Shiraz Durrani

information world, but at present it is only a pilot project that needs to be mainstreamed, both in terms of funding and in being taken up by a larger number of local authorities. This is an area being currently explored by a number of organisations and key individuals and the QLP Steering Group and will be one of the tasks of the proposed QLP Advisory Group.

At the same time, one cannot create a model of "excellence" in a vacuum. Unless the culture in the profession as a whole changes, a new effective leadership develops and accepts the principles and practices that underpin QLP, no significant change can take place. The profession has not fully accepted the need for change and is often in denial of the serious decline facing it unless drastic changes are made. But when that consciousness arises, as it surely must under increasing pressure from the Government and forces of globalisation, QLP will be ready with a model that can develop relevant information services for all. An African saying goes, "there are no paths, traveller. Paths are made by walking". QLP takes this simple truth very seriously.

This "simple truth" is now helping to create a sister organisation to QLP-Y, this time in Africa whose development is often forgotten in Britain. This is the Progressive African Library and Information Activist's Group (PALIAct) – also supported by DASS. While learning from the experiences of QLP, PALIAct goes further in some areas such as community involvement and partnership (not merely consultation), active involvement of information as well as other professionals, and perhaps the most important, involving only those people who are true "activists" in the struggle for information. Two pilot projects are being set up, in Kenya and Ghana. The most striking aspect of PALIAct is the tremendous enthusiasm and commitment shown by all those involved – mostly working in their own time, out of commitment to their communities.

While QLP-Y has a lot to teach others, it also needs to be an open, learning organisation itself. The experience to date shows that it had learnt, grown and developed as a mature organisation ready to take on new challenges.

NEWS FROM OUR QLP TEAMS

Creative writing workshops in Marcus Garvey Library – Haringey

By Selma Ibrahim (Quality Leader - QL)

The QLP-Y team in Haringey organised creative writing workshops with a mentoring element which were run by Kenny Campbell, a published author, who developed the courses in conjunction with the QLPs and the Springboard Trust, which runs ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) classes for young refugees.

These workshops consisted of an introductory session to ascertain pupils' abilities, a number of workshops to address creative writing issues and then a concluding session to bring all these elements together. This led to the identification of the most promising participants who were then selected for four sessions of further training with the aim to train them as mentors. The final of these four sessions saw the mentors facilitate a workshop their peers under the supervision of the QLPs and the author who provided the course. By doing so, this initiative did not only benefit the

participating young people by giving them creative writing skills but also guaranteed a future added value to the services of the library for young people – creative writing sessions held by fellow peers instead of professionals who are sometimes seen as 'out of touch' with the world of young people by these adolescents.

The initiative was a big success as the vast majority found the workshops beneficial to their writing and English language skills, enjoyable and useful. In particular, the peer-mentoring element has been well received and should be considered by future organisers of such activities. Certain inconsistencies in the attendance of the participating young people which might reduce the effectiveness of the workshops and limit its benefits should be addressed though. Nevertheless, the diverse mix of participating young people and their enthusiasm make this activity an example of good practice in audience development.



NEWS FROM OUR QLP TEAMS

QLP in Barnet

By Hannah Richens (Mentor)

Barnet had to delay their start in QLP-Y phase 3 because of internal restructuring within their authority. A new QL, Catherine Lusted, has been appointed, and the QLP team is beginning to take its first steps towards realising the QLP project in Barnet. No workshops have been delivered as yet, but consultation had begun and links to the local Youth and Connexions Service that had previously not existed have been established.

This newfound sense of partnership is already paying dividends – the profile of the team within Barnet council is now much higher and the consultation with young people has been noted by inspectors as an example of good practice.

The workshops will really kick off in the summer, following a brief hiatus caused by local elections and personnel changes. For example, young people will create a DVD

production detailing their thoughts about the library service, the facilities they would like and the things they want to see changed. This will in turn lead to a big presentation, which has been scheduled for December, where these young people will present their findings to senior staff from the Youth, Education and Library services.

This and other planned initiatives augur well for QLP-Y in Barnet.

QLP News from Lincolnshire

By Wendy Bond (QL)

The recent project visits by the QLP Project Group were very productive and enabled all participants to face to face about the way ahead for QLP in Lincolnshire, and also to relate some of the issues at first hand that such a large rural authority has to contend with. It was agreed that the key to the QLP-Y process in Lincolnshire is the ability to orchestrate several projects running across the county – without such a broad level of commitment from staff, the impact of QLP-Y in the county would be minimal. QLP-Y in Lincolnshire will be focusing on approximately 10 towns around the county, taking in the Boston area in the south, Grantham centrally and Lincoln in the north.

The first initiative in Lincolnshire was the

idea of 'Evaluation by DVD'. In one of the first consultations undertaken the QLPs talked with a group of young people about their wants and needs for a newly built library in Moorland, a deprived area of Lincoln. The young people were given room to explain what they would like to find in such a new library, and the outcome is a variety of services and activities such as computing and PC/PS game facilities, new CDs/DVDs for rental, the availability of magazines for their age group and the opportunity to take part in reading and maths lessons. Music and design were also topics that were mentioned repeatedly. A space where they could be away from the older generation with a notice board to communicate and opportunities for

refreshments, and a space to 'park' their younger siblings while at the library, were other priorities for them. All this allowed very useful insights into the needs and wishes of these young people.

This consultation was filmed in order to allow to recapture both the issues and themes raised and also the mood of this meeting. A DVD of this consultation will be produced to act as a device for library staff to show what a consultation with young people of this age group looks like. This might be very helpful to dispel many negative ideas and prejudices about consulting with young people – something that is often considered 'too difficult or impossible'.

What is happening in QLP Portsmouth

By Dave Percival (QL)

One of the outcomes of the consultation of QLP-Y in Portsmouth was the recognition of a need for literacy support and access to ICT facilities in library settings. Therefore, the first series of workshops will be aimed at young people learning English as a second language in the city - Youthworks, a company which provides training in web design and web site development, will provide training and guidance to around 10 young asylum seekers and refugees to help them to be able to create their own website which can then be marketed in the whole region. The sessions will take place in Portsmouth's Central Library in an existing ICT training suite which is largely under-subscribed at present. The multicultural librarian will facilitate the workshop induction sessions in the library, and the Youth Service will provide staff with expertise in ICT. Consultations with various

projects in the city working with these groups of young people have taken place, and promotional material has been distributed to other centres. The workshops will provide facilities and training that go beyond the existing provision in the area which puts emphasis mainly on the acquisition of basic ICT skills.

Another round of activities will have a Bollywood theme and have been designed to address unmet needs in Portsmouth, once again identified by the consultation process. Until very recently, the nearest theatrical screenings of these films took place in Southampton, about twenty miles away. Knowledge amongst non-library users of the availability of such films in the Central Library was extremely limited, and for the young people who were aware, the collections were

not up-to-date enough. To address these issues, the local QLP team plan screenings of films in a local independent cinema which will be alternated with library-based sessions on elements of the Bollywood formula such as music, dance, art and storytelling. These sessions will be provided by members of the Youth Service and external providers. Although the idea for this initiative comes originally from consultation with the local Bangladeshi community, it is expected that the actual reach of the project will include other groups of young people too.

All participants in sessions in Portsmouth will be encouraged to become QLP-Y "activists" and to invite their fellow peers to use the libraries by involving them in the design and running of future audience development workshops.

Globalisation and effects on libraries

(This article is part of the paper 'The professional is political: redefining the social role of public libraries' by Shiraz Durrani and Elizabeth Smallwood which will be published in the Progressive Librarian, <http://www.libr.org/PL/>, in June 2006)

The key issue is to decide what the social role of librarians is. Should they take the social, economic and political situation they find themselves in as "given" without understanding why and how we arrived at this situation? Is it their role to dig deeper into "facts" that are given to them by their social environment? Is it appropriate to see the role of librarians in the same light in which Marx saw the role of philosophers: "The philosophers have interpreted the world in many ways. What matters is changing it."¹

But before we consider the question of librarians trying to change the world, we need to question whether they even interpret their worlds. A large number of professional libraries remain unconnected to the social and political reality around them. Their model of a "global library" is much like McDonald restaurant outlets which serve the same product in every part of the world. While this approach may be a useful one in ensuring a standard level of service, and a useful model for maximising profits for the McDonald chain, it is disastrous for libraries if they want to root themselves in their local communities.

Librarians trained to run such global libraries take professional pride in being "neutral" in the social divide all around them. They thus become increasingly isolated from the majority of people in their local communities. Forces of corporate globalisation then push them even further from their communities by offering to save staff time and mental effort by supplying pre-packaged "best sellers", guaranteed to meet the wants of the 30%2 of the population – and to boost the profit margins of transnational publishers and booksellers. The success of their libraries is then judged by the number of such best sellers they manage to loan out. No critical questions are asked or answered here: what is a library all about? What is its social role? Who has the power to make key decisions, and on whose behalf are decisions made?

The "global library", then, is a standard library service that can be located in any geographical, social or political situation, in any historical period, and still be expected to function normally as a "library". The global librarians who run these global libraries take pride in their non-political stand, in their "neutrality" in the social struggles going on all around them. They claim to be outside social struggles taking place in their societies, somehow uplifted to a loftier position by their "professional" training. Their class position in their societies isolates them from the

struggles of working people whose basic need for information is ignored by their libraries.

Corporate globalisation can be described as the "process enabling financial and investment markets to operate internationally, largely as a result of deregulation and improved communications" (Collins). We do not intend here to go into details of what globalisation is and how it affects libraries, as this has been dealt with adequately in a number of sources.³ However, a key point that needs to be made is that not only are new technologies making it possible to rationalise tasks and work practices, but it makes it necessary to change at a faster rate as technological progress is changing the world around them. At the same time, many traditional library tasks are increasingly being handed over to private companies, rather than being done in-house. As the whole local authority sector is redefined to become facilitators of service rather than direct providers, significant changes are on the way. Other areas of local authority work are also changing. For example, household waste collection is no longer done by local staff; schools and education are being removed from local authority control. It is inconceivable that libraries will continue existing as they now are for very long.

We are not arguing that all changes associated with globalisation are necessarily bad. But we would like to see more librarians in Britain adopting the 10-point plan, proposed by Mark Rosenzweig, supporting "democratic globalism" as opposed to corporate globalisation:

We shall oppose corporate globalization which, despite its claims, reinforces existing social, economic, cultural inequalities, and insist on a democratic globalism which acknowledges the obligations of society to the individual and communities, and which prioritizes human values and needs over profits.⁴

Iverson explains how the politics of globalisation affects libraries and their local communities. The inherently political role of librarians is clear:

As our global society becomes increasingly based on the commodity of information, power becomes increasingly focused and managed by those with access to information. Those without such access remain marginalized.⁵

However, Iverson notes, librarians often reject any stated political stance, seeing themselves as "neutral service providers" a position encouraged by their training:

While librarians are trained to maintain an objective or neutral stance they are also expected to make decisions regarding "good"

and "bad" materials. Unfortunately, they do not often recognize the inherent bias at work in making these decisions and generally regard the selection of materials as apolitical.⁶

Few librarians have taken Muddiman's warning seriously:

Exclusion thus challenges public agencies like the library service to produce policy and practice which will challenge social division and create a harmonious, diverse and more equal civil society where access to knowledge is a fundamental right of social citizenship. If the public library can rise to this challenge it might begin to successfully reinvigorate and reinvent itself. If it fails, then the public library too, like the poor and excluded communities it exists to serve, might find itself consigned to the margins of the "information" society in the twenty first century.⁷

Faced with a situation where libraries are blindly walking into extinction, it is important that those with conviction and commitment stand up for a new role of libraries in society – and actively practice this new role. In the world ruled by corporate globalisation, it is too easy to drift along with the tide of "neutral" librarianship and do nothing to make libraries play a central role in liberating people, their cultures, and their economies from the privatised future that globalisation has planned for them. This is not merely something that may happen in the future. It is already happening, as Rosenzweig points out:

Trade ministers and negotiators alike are under increasing pressure to expose more services, like education, healthcare, culture, ...to the market powers of transnational corporations.

A new approach, in which real democracy, equality and transparency flourish, is essential.

- 1 Karl Marx in his Theses on Feuerbach. "Almost 30 per cent of the population use libraries for borrowing books or other items". Audit Commission (2002).
- 2 The politics of globalisation is covered admirably by A. Sivanandan in his article "Globalism's imperial war" (12 March 2003), available from <http://www.irr.org.uk/2003/march/ak000008.html>. The library aspects are covered by IFLA at: <http://www.ifla.org/III/rlm/p1/wto-ifla.htm#3>; see also Durrani (2000), especially pp.89-94.
- 3 Ten point programme presented to the groups which met at the Vienna Conference of progressive librarians sponsored by KRIBIBIE (2000) Available from <http://www.libr.org/PLG/docs.html>.
- 4 Iverson (1998/99).
- 5 Ibid.
- 6 Muddiman (2000).
- 7 Rosenzweig, Mark (2005).

Bridging the Gap between the Public Services and the Community

By Michael Goetzinger

'Change driven from the centre has its limits. It is vital that service reform is to be driven from the bottom, as well as enabled by the centre... The priority for reform... is to put the public at the heart of public services, making 'Power to the people' the guiding principle of public sector improvement and reform... Along with choice we must also provide the public with a louder and clearer voice... New forms of engagement are not an attempt to supplant local government, but to enhance it.' – Rt Hon Tony Blair *British Prime Minister* (speech at the Guardian's public services summit, Thursday January 29, 2004, retrieved at <http://society.guardian.co.uk/futureforpublicservices/comment/0,,1134531,00.html>, on Wednesday May 24, 2006)

The need to make public services more accountable and responsive to local people has been well documented and is widely acknowledged by policy makers, public service workers and the public alike. Change, improvement and innovation in the public sector cannot be driven by a centralised decision-making body or authority but need to be based on, or at least acknowledge and respond to, the opinions, desires and wishes of the people affected – the local citizens. A national framework of good practice is surely desirable but can only lead to the desired result – an improved living standard for these citizens – if local conditions and requirements are taken into account in the planning and delivery of such services.

The role and responsibility of the local authority is therefore to (re-)engage the citizens by giving them a voice, consult them, in order to deliver relevant services in a way that fulfils their wishes, includes them

in the delivery through, for example, incorporation of the voluntary sector, and achieves a dynamic relationship between authority and community. To succeed in this task, local people have to know what the services provided by the authorities are, how they are being delivered and how they can be influenced. They have to be supported to develop the necessary skills and to gain confidence in their role as active and entitled citizens in order to become empowered members of the community.

As mentioned above, there is a vast amount of policies regarding this notion, and the Blairite Government has included them into its delivery frameworks for the public sector. As a result, community involvement should improve the performance of the authority, reduce social exclusion and increase the social cohesion within the community.

Looking at the issues mentioned here, it becomes clear how QLP-Y reflects these policies and is relevant to the delivery of the essential public services by public libraries and youth services. It brings the 'target audience', young people, at the centre of the service delivery by designing new initiatives according to its feedback, encourages cooperation between various departments and members of the community (as facilitators), and it improves the performance of the participating authority by creating these new activities, improves the skills of the participants (both public sector workers and young people) and tackles social exclusion. In short, data collected from the public are processed and acted upon by the centre (public sector) leading to change and innovation which results in better public service performance and an improvement of the life quality of the citizens.

Progressive African Library and Information Activists' Group (PALIAct) By Shiraz Durrani

The African Progressive Librarian and Information Activists' Group (PALIAct) is a DASS initiative in partnership with a group of progressive African librarians and information workers. DASS has played a crucial role to bring together a number of progressive information activists from Africa by providing a new vision based on experiences of progressive librarians and political activists in Africa, Europe and USA. It is part of the progressive librarians groups around the world, perhaps the most prominent one being the Progressive Librarians Guild in USA with its publication *Progressive Librarian*.

Just as QLP is an attempt to develop relevant skills and competencies in staff to deliver a relevant service to young people, PALIAct is a similar attempt at an international level. It has not developed to the same extent as QLP-Y, but has attracted a great deal of interest as seen in press coverage in a short period of time. At the same time, a pilot project is being established in Kenya and this has already set some

ambitious targets. It has not only developed new skills and provided valuable experiences to PALIAct staff, but the Kenya Centre is embarking, in partnership with the Network Institute for Global Democratization (NIGD) based in Helsinki, to provide training to librarians in collecting and disseminating information from the World Social Forum. In this role PALIAct and DASS are becoming an important presence in developing new skills among African information activists.

PALIAct aims to provide a new vision to help create a people-orientated information service that could meet the information needs of workers and peasants. It works towards providing an anti-imperialist and a Pan African world outlook among African librarians and information workers. It also seeks to set up an alternative information service in partnership with the potential users of the service as a way of showing what needs to be done. PALIAct aims to form partnerships with progressive information and other workers within Africa and overseas.

Development Days One and Two

The QLP Project team held two Development Days at Ladbroke House at London Metropolitan University. The first took place on Thursday 13th October and focused on giving support in the planning and organising of consultation and audience development activities to the Quality Leaders (QLs) while the second on Friday 19th May had a more reflective approach and tried to address the needs and wishes expressed by the QLs along with encouraging group work and action planning. Both were very well received by the audience and another Development Day was scheduled for November of this year.



QLP, and the importance of leadership development in an historical context

By Shiraz Durrani

No country, organisation or profession can expect to achieve its vision without developing its members in areas such as appropriate ideological awareness and orientation, an understanding of historical and current contradictions facing the country or organisation, a clarity about who and what their allies are in terms of achieving their goals, an understanding of organisational change brought about by innovation and creativity. The development of leadership requires that these theories are then reinforced by opportunities for practical work as a way of gaining experience which can give increased confidence to individuals as well as to organisations. It is only through such life-long learning programmes that there can be

any hope of ensuring the sustainability required for long-term development.

These points were well understood in Kenya in the early 1960s when Pio Gama Pinto, Bildad Kaggia, Oginga Odinga, Joseph Murumbi and others set up the Lumumba Institute for developing political cadres. Those who killed the Institute (and Pinto) did a great disservice to the cause of African liberation. Today we can learn from this history and develop a thousand Lumumba Institutes as a way of developing our people to lead the war for African's second liberation which starts with liberating our minds.

A number of programmes being delivered or developed at the London Metropolitan

University's Department of Applied Social Sciences are suitable for such a leadership programme. All of these are capable of being delivered in partnership with African Universities if there is interest. These include the Quality Leaders Project (QLP), "management development through service development" with its "combating exclusion, managing equality" and other project management modules, and various information management modules and short courses, including "leadership for innovation, equality and change", "Society, Information and Policy", "Information and Social Exclusion", and "Information for Development" which would be of particular relevance in Africa.

CORRESPONDENCE

This section contains correspondence relating to QLP-Y available for a wider audience.

QLP-Y Goes to India

Subject: Re: *QLP-Youth programme* From: "Rajashekhar D. Kumbar" <raju_kims@yahoo.com> Date Mon, May 15, 2006 7:18 am
To: "Shiraz Durrani" <s.durrani@londonmet.ac.uk>

Dear Sir,

Greetings.

Thank you very much for your kind information. I am eagerly looking at your further publications on QLP-Y studies. You are welcome to make use of my letter to publish in your publications and I would like to know, the articles which published in your publications are listed under LISA. I will be happy if I get an opportunity to work with the such a reputed university in the universe please send me the more details about the Ph.D. programme with the financial details.

Thanking you,

Sincerely,

Rajashekhar D. Kumbar

Dear Rajashekhar,

We are very pleased to note your interest in QLP-Y. However, we do not have any formal network as such, but a mailing list of people who are interested in our work. I will make sure you receive information from us, including the next issue of "QLP News" which will be ready soon. We are also designing a new website which will carry more information and documents on QLP. We will send you details of this when ready. At the same time, I am not sure if you are proposing to register for Doctorate at our University. If so, I could send you some information on it.

I attach some recent material on QLP-Y, together with an article on the Progressive African Library and Information Activists' Group (PALIAct), which may be more relevant to needs in India. We are setting up two pilot projects in Kenya and Ghana to test out our theories. Further details about this are available from.

We are also working on the next issue of "PALIAct Ideas & Action" which will carry some recent developments and ideas. We would like to include your letter in the "QLP News" – would you have any objections? I hope you find this information helpful. Do send us any articles you may write on QLP-Y.

best wishes,

shiraz

Dear Sir,

Greetings.

Myself Rajashekhar D. Kumbar, Librarian, PCCE, Goa, INDIA came to know while browsing the internet about your QLP-Youth programme networking. Sir, I have been doing research activities on implementation of TQM in library management. I have published articles on TQM studies. I have completed the project work on TQM studies during my Master of Philosophy study. I am interested to do Doctoral research work on the same subject. I feel becoming a member of your QLP-Youth programme network will add great value to my research work and will provide me extreme knowledge and resource from it. I will be happy to know more details about the network programme and would like to join the same.

Thanking you.

Sincerely,

Rajashekhar D. Kumbar, Librarian

Central Library, Padre Conceicao College of Engineering Agnel Ashram, Verna, Madgao - 403722 GOA

Support from abroad

12 Nov 05: FROM: Roland Barksdale-Hall [best@surf724.com] TO: Shiraz et al,

I commend you on your work to address quality services for youth. Recent unrest in France should give us all around the world pause to reflect upon what occurs when we ignore our youth.

As a youth director in my community, I sometimes am perplexed by the lack of resources for development of our youth. I hope a concrete action plan and timelines emerge from this useful study.

Best Wishes, Roland Barksdale-Hall, Associate Faculty, Bryant & Stratton College, Cleveland, Ohio

(Also Editor, Newsletter, Black Caucus of American Library Association)