The potential of Generic Social Outcomes in promoting the positive impact of the public library: evidence from the National Year of Reading in Yorkshire.

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Objectives of this presentation

• National Year of Reading 2008
• Introduce the MLA Generic Social Outcomes (GSO) as a tool
• Outline the use of GSO framework in an evaluation project on the NYR
• Reflect on future development and potential use of the GSO framework
• Raise some issues for later discussion...
The National Year of Reading 2008

Reading any thing, any time, any where
NYR 2008 campaign values

• Impact – both personal and social
• Celebration – positive, enjoyable experiences
• Diversity – of reading experiences and communities
• Participation – co-production of the year with communities and partners
• Creativity in development and delivery
• Legacy – to create a lasting change in lives and systems
The demand for evidence
‘so what...?’

Capturing the Impact of Libraries final report

– Predominance of one-off evaluations of time limited programmes and pilot schemes over research on core services
– Lack of baselines against which to measure change
– Lack of qualitative in-depth research that analyses the specific nature of interactions that take place in libraries

(DCMS/BOP Consulting, 2009: 2)

Rediscovering reading: an evaluation of the role of Public Libraries in the National Year of Reading
Streatfield et al 1999
NYR evaluation – MLA client objectives

• To investigate the efficacy of the NYR programme in Yorkshire as it relates to the place shaping and social inclusion targets of the NYR.

• The overall objectives are to investigate the impact of the NYR in two sample local authorities in relation to
  – Target beneficiaries
  – Partnership and cross departmental working

Researchers used GSO framework as this was specified in the MLA brief.

Longitudinal research
Methodology – data collection strategies

A variety of research methods used to collect qualitative data from key stakeholders in North Lincolnshire and Calderdale

Phase 1 October-November 2008
- semi-structured interviews with key library staff
- focus group interviews with NYR steering group partners through written responses to key questions
- information gathered from documentation and publicity materials provided by each case study authority

Phase 2 May-June 2010
- semi-structured interviews with key library staff
- information gathered from documentation and publicity materials provided by each case study authority
Data analysis

The MAXQDA Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) package used to code and validate the data as required by MLA (Yorkshire) by using the

- Generic Social Outcomes framework
- PSA National Outcome and Indicator Set
- and a third level of coding developed to identify issues raised by the interviewees.
Generic Social Outcomes

Developed by the MLA to help museums, libraries and archives to
• deliver against key agendas and maximise their contribution to communities
• evidence their contribution to outcomes.

GSOs seen as an important tool because of the increased emphasis of outcomes as well as outputs
GSO framework

Generic Learning Outcomes (GLO) developed as part of the MLA Inspiring Learning for All framework

GSO framework developed and piloted by Burns Owens Partnership (BOP) in 2005 for the MLA sector

GSOs outline ways in which museums, libraries and archives impact on social and community themes:

— Stronger and Safer Communities
— Strengthening Public Life
— Health and Well Being

(BOP)
Generic Social Outcomes Indicator Bank
For museums, libraries and archives
Table showing social outcome themes from tiers one and two

1. Stronger & Safer Communities
   1.1 Improving group and inter-group dialogue and understanding
   1.2 Supporting cultural diversity and identity
   1.3 Encouraging familial ties and relationships
   1.4 Tackling the fear of crime and anti-social behaviour
   1.5 Contributing to crime prevention and reduction

2. Strengthening Public Life
   2.1 Encouraging and supporting awareness and participation in local-decision making and wider civic and political engagement
   2.2 Building the capacity of community and voluntary groups
   2.3 Providing safe, inclusive and trusted public spaces
   2.4 Enabling community empowerment through the awareness of rights, benefits and external services
   2.5 Improving the responsiveness of services to the needs of the local community, including other stakeholders

3. Health & Well-Being
   3.1 Encouraging healthy lifestyles and contributing to mental and physical well-being
   3.2 Supporting care and recovery
   3.3 Supporting older people to live independent lives
   3.4 Helping children and young people to enjoy life and make a positive contribution
We had a case study published on the MLA website based on phase one.

National Year of Reading Evaluation – Yorkshire

The key aims of the National Year of Reading were to support ongoing work to achieve national literacy targets, engage parents and families in reading with their children and develop adult literacy. MLA Yorkshire, Renaissance Yorkshire and Arts Council England, Yorkshire jointly commissioned a regional National Year of Reading 2008 coordinator to work with local authority steering groups on strategic intervention, legacy development and corporate engagement. The regional steering group sponsored a longitudinal evaluation of the National Year of Reading in Yorkshire by Leeds Metropolitan University. Phase one has been completed, generating an interim report which looks at the impact of the National Year of Reading, both on the organisations that delivered it and their work with target groups.

The report used the following dimensions of analysis:

- qualitative data from interviews across each authority with practitioners, partners and steering groups filtered through the perspective of MLA’s Generic Social Outcome (GSO) framework.
- qualitative data from interviews across each authority with practitioners, partners and steering groups filtered through the National Indicator set.

Case study record created on: 18/04/2010

MLA funded: Yes

Institution: MLA Yorkshire and Carolyn Rankin and Dr Avril Brook (Leeds Metropolitan University)

Key partners:
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- Calderdale Council
- North Lincolnshire Council

Team members:
Carolyn Rankin, Dr Avril Brook

Start date: August 2008
End date: December 2008
Results of the NYR evaluation

The analysis of data collected across both phases of the evaluation process shows considerable evidence of NYR related activities in supporting the three first tier social outcomes ‘Stronger and Safer Communities’, ‘Health and Well-Being’ and ‘Strengthening Public Life’.
1 - Stronger and Safer Communities

Tier 2 - Supporting cultural diversity and identity

The Manga event brought all sorts of people in to the library who have never been before. I want to go one step further and consult those people about using our services. (phase 1)

One of our big successes is the manga. We’d had one before we last saw you now we’ve had three – we get a group of about 150 supposedly hard to reach people... some of those people come back, I see some of the men twice a week sitting on our sofa reading manga and I know they are from that event (phase 2)

We are doing a lot of great stuff, including breakthrough initiatives for some groups e.g. making materials for homeless people. We have never done that before. (phase 1)
2 - Strengthening Public Life

GSO Tier 2 - Improving Services

The NYR has pushed towards a service located outside the library. Were it not for the NYR we would have contented ourselves with providing stock within the library and the outreach might not have happened (phase 1).

From now people who want to rent council houses will have to bid for them online ... so we are doing open planned sessions so people who don’t have computer skills or access to the internet at home can come to the library... and we can show them how to do it (phase 2)
GSO Tier 2 - Safe, inclusive and trusted public spaces’ and ‘Building the capacity of community and voluntary groups’.

We are taking out of this year a commitment to changing the pattern of city and local libraries, where most things happen (phase 1).

In terms of redevelopment, a place becomes a hub if it becomes a place where the community gets used to expecting exciting and valuable reading events, workshops, festivals on a regular basis. I hope that will emerge from the NYR (phase 1)

The other ongoing success is the literary festival as that started win the NYR... and we run workshops for people who want to improve their writing skills, these are hugely popular and developed out of the NYR... And the whole reader profile – we have 40 readers groups now (phase 2)
GSO Tier 2 Healthy life-styles, mental & physical well-being

We are reaching the homeless, new immigrants, people with mental health problems – the potential is much more than we are doing. I hope that we will maintain the commitment to be creative (phase 1).

...the health theme might not be an obvious theme for a library but there is an attempt to work with the local PCTs ... another initiative is called NHS Choices... if someone who comes in wants to look up a health condition we actually log them on and show them how to use it (phase 2)
Results & Implications -
6 key themes from phase 1

- Improving services and sharpening the focus of what is on offer.
- Working in partnership and strengthening partnerships
- Dealing with challenges
- The importance of activities and events
- Stronger communities – with a particular emphasis on improving group and inter-group dialogue and understanding and supporting cultural diversity and identity
- Legacy of the NYR
Findings from phase 2

The six themes derived through the analysis of Phase 1 data were still evidenced in Phase 2

Emphasis now on –

– Differences rural/urban experiences – resources
– Initiating and consolidating partnerships
– Importance of reading for social engagement
– Continuation of NYR – embedding
Conclusions

• Libraries need to become strategically aware and need to be seen to take the lead so that they are recognised for their impact – particularly in light of today’s economic climate
• GSOs can provide a framework for enabling public libraries to show social return on investment
• GSO framework does show how public libraries can contribute to diverse agendas and demonstrate their value to the community – but issues of translation and interpretation
• Professional generosity
Future development and potential use of the GSO framework

Indicator Bank being developed to

• create a tool and to build on and extend the themes

• provide practical guidance to practitioners - still very focussed on museum sector

MLA encouraging practitioners to use the GSO framework... but the MLA are soon to be subsumed into the Arts Council
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Tier 3 GSO Indicator</th>
<th>Possible questions to ask</th>
<th>Examples of evidence</th>
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<tr>
<td>1.3.7 Families say that they have improved communication and relationships within the family following activity at the museum, library or archive. S/A,V,B,P</td>
<td>How has your relationship/communication with your family improved as a result of this experience? What do you do differently with your children as a result of participating in this project? As a result of this experience we now talk to each other more. (true/false)</td>
<td>“…where we have had repeated family and early years projects I can see a huge improvement in the communication skills, social interaction and development of those involved.” Tony Wilson, Storyteller</td>
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<td>1.3.8 Families keep in touch or do more things together as a result of the experience. B,P</td>
<td>Please tell us about anything your family has done that is new or different as a result of this experience. This experience has inspired me to get in touch / stay in touch with other members of my family. (true/false)</td>
<td>“…we were given an excellent atmosphere to build strong and interactive bonds between fathers and kids.” Dad, Sure Start West Derwentside</td>
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<td>1.3.9 Families say that they learnt together and from each other. K,U/S</td>
<td>What surprised you about working with your family today? Have you learned something you didn’t know about someone in your family? We felt that we could discuss a range of views as a family. (true/false)</td>
<td>“It has helped me build a good bond with my two sons and without the help of the museums this would have been very difficult to achieve.” Dad, Surestart Leadgate</td>
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<td>“On many occasions people have started completing their pedigree charts…and have immediately telephoned other family members for further information…the project has spurred people on to ask further questions about their family.” Worker, Woodhorn Our Woodhorn project</td>
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<td>“Learners felt that the ICT skills they had learned helped them stay in touch with families and have more in common with younger members of their family.” VIP Project Evaluators, MLA South East</td>
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<td>“The kids look at things differently so it’s interesting to hear their views; You have family discussions when you visit museums; It is a good opportunity to bring topics up you would not usually bring up; You are learning together; Parents’ views taken during a survey of participants in Yorkshire</td>
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</tbody>
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References


ERS (2009) Local Authorities in the National Year of Reading - a review of cross-authority partnership working


Rooney-Browne, Christine (2010) Methods for demonstrating the value of public libraries in the UK. A literature review for the CILIP Library and Information Research Group Scan Award 2010
Thank you for listening.
Any questions/comments please?

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