

QLP News

Quality Leaders Project for Black Library and Information Workers

No1

July 2001

Welcome to the first issue of QLP News

The first issue of the *QLP News* is released on July 5th which is an important date for Black librarianship in Britain. This is the day we gather at the “Black Contribution to British Librarianship” Conference organised by the Library Association in Manchester. This year’s conference is a special one as it takes place as part of the Umbrella 6, indicating a further step in mainstreaming race equality in British librarianship.

Another important reason for celebration is the launch of the Diversity Council (DC) on March 14, 2001. The DC brings together a number of organisations to form a national organisation for the first time. The Diversity Council is supported by the Library Association and Bob McKee has taken a personal interest in ensuring a successful launch. It is also actively supported by the American Library Association through active participation of Prof. Ismail Abdullahi. The DC has started a quarterly publication, *Diversity*.

Both Associations have also supported the Quality Leaders Project in different ways, as has Re:source (formerly Library and Information Commission) which funded the initial feasibility study.

As the QLP finishes Phase 2, it has been decided to launch the *QLP News* to inform Black library workers as well as the profession as a whole, especially library managers, about this important development. The QLP has gone from a concept initiated by Merton Library to a well established programme of developing Black LIS workers while improving services to Black communities. It is particularly relevant in the context of the Government’s emphasis on social exclusion and the requirement to “mainstream social exclusion”. The Stephen Lawrence Inquiry recommendations, the Best Value and Annual Library Plan requirements as well as findings of Roach and Morrison and *Open to All?* require innovative ways of meeting neglected needs. The QLP offers an effective practical solution to a long term failure of British librarianship in the field of race equality.

It has been decided that the Social Exclusion Action Planning Network will publish future issues of the *QLP News*. Please contact the Network if you wish to contribute articles, comment on the QLP or if you wish to receive future copies. We urge all employers and Black workers to participate in the QLP.

Shiraz Durrani
July 2, 2001

Introduction to the QLP ¹

There are concerns about the lack of equal employment opportunities within public library services. Acknowledging that “institutional racism does exist in our profession,” Bob McKee reported that out of over 20,000 personal members of the LA, only 1.2% - i.e. 286 individual members - were of African, Caribbean, or Asian background. Also worrying, he revealed that only 3 Black members earned over £27,000 ².

There are also concerns about the match between public library services and the needs of black people. With the advent of best value reviews and performance plans in 2000, it is very likely that the poor value for the black community offered by public library services will rise in visibility and gain more management attention and commitment.

The Quality Leaders Project is an initiative that addresses both the problem of value for the black community and equal employment opportunities within the library services, and it does so within a best value framework. The key proposition of this initiative is that the meeting of unrecognised or under-recognised needs (new needs) requires new services, and new services require new skills and know-how (including new management know-how).

The main assumption of the QLP project is that development projects are critical for developing the new know-how that a new service requires for its design and delivery.

Management Research Centre completes Stage 2 Report

The Management Research Centre of the University of North London has completed its report on Stage 2 of the Quality Leaders Project (QLP). A summary of the Report was presented to the Library Association’s Equal Opportunities sub Committee on 29 June by Geoff Mills, Head of Community Library Services, Birmingham Library and Information Services. The Sub Committee will discuss the full report at its next meeting on October 18th. Copies of the full report are available from Shiraz Durrani or from Social Exclusion Action Planning Network.

Where are we now?

- The two Quality Leaders from the London Borough of Merton and Birmingham City Council presented their proposals at a meeting of the project’s Advisory Team on 26 April 2001.
- A further meeting of the Advisory Team on 15 June 2001 discussed the lessons learned from Stage 2, as part of the evaluation process led by the Management Research Centre, University of North London.
- A draft evaluation report is being discussed by Merton and Birmingham.

¹ From Joyce, Paul: *The Quality Leaders Project (QLP) Feasibility Report. Part 2 Conclusions and Proposals.*

² Khan, Ayub (2000) Stamping out institutional racism. *Library Association Record* 102(1) pp. 38-39.

Highlights from Evaluation of Stage 2 ³

Executive Summary

- The experience of the Quality Leaders was very positive
- The nature, range and transfer of learning achieved suggests that the QLP constitutes a highly effective model of 'management development through service development'
- The success of the QLP in developing the Black library workers who took part suggests that it can be recommended in this context
- The QLP model could be extended to the development of different groups in different areas
- There is clear evidence that the QLP has the potential to successfully develop the services offered by the authorities who took part, and it is recommended the authorities proceed to Stage 3
- There was evidence of a number of specific concerns around the implementation of QLP, however these were generally of an operational nature
- A more comprehensive 'QLP training manual' would aid the process, and the production of this is strongly recommended

2. Context

- Roach and Morrison – "Public Libraries, Ethnic Diversity and Citizenship" 1998
- Low representation of Black library workers in the Library Association, and in senior posts in librarianship

- The advent of Best value reviews and performance plans, likely to reveal the poor value for the Black community offered by public library services
- QLP Stage 1 – the Feasibility study reported in April 2000 – concluded that the QLP represents a sound method of developing the value of services for Black communities as well as developing Black managers

3. Components of the Quality Leader Approach

- A service development project managed by a Black library or information worker with potential for development (a Quality Leader)
- Six month secondment (say 3 days a week) for Quality Leader with appropriate cover
- A project Development Team to carry out activities specified by the Quality Leader
- A Mentor, someone in a managerial role and an appropriate role model, to provide day-to day support, guidance and coaching to the Quality Leader
- A senior manager, preferably at Directorate level, as a Project Sponsor to authorise the actions that the Quality Leader wishes to take, including establishing a Development Team, and to provide strong and clear management commitment to the development project, including budget provision

³ Summary from the MRC Report prepared by Geoff Mills.

- Communication and reporting channels
- Induction and learning programme within the service for the Quality Leader
- A formal programme of action learning sessions (supplied for the pilot by University of North London)
- Consultation exercise
- Best Value framework
- A formal service development proposal, for presentation at the end of the secondment

4. Evaluation

What was learned by Quality Leaders

- Both Quality Leaders reported that they had developed significantly over the course of the project, and notably in confidence, and this was supported by the Mentors
- The importance of secondment from existing responsibilities
- The value of meeting a range of people that the Quality Leaders would not otherwise come into contact with
- The transfer of learning to the practical work situation
- Increased awareness of management systems, structures and processes that operate in the authority and an appreciation of the problem with these
- Confidence to apply for more senior positions
- Development of a wide array of knowledge, skills and attitudes as a result of participation

Scheme Design and Operational Difficulties and Successes

- On the whole, participants felt that the overall design of the scheme was very good,

covering relevant issues in a compelling and motivating way

- It was felt that the scheme was suitable for extension to a wider cross-section of people
- Concern was expressed over the recruitment and selection process with respect to both Quality Leaders and the recruitment of authorities onto the scheme
- The two participants handled the pressures of the pilot scheme well, but concerns were raised about the possibility that other potential participants on future QLP schemes may not be able to deal with the responsibility and pressure so well. This needs to be taken into account at the recruitment stage. The co-learning during the Learning Sessions could have been enhanced with a larger number of Quality Leaders
- Concerns around issues of time
- The operation of the Development Teams was not a success, and the Quality Leaders themselves ended up doing most of the work, rather than managing the team doing the work – different but valuable learning experiences took place as a result.
- Lack of certainty of outcomes following the six month development project – the need to manage expectations more closely.
- Improvements to the induction process for all stakeholders would make the scheme seem less daunting
- General concern around communications and reporting both in terms of managing the QLP itself, and within the development projects within

each of the authorities. It was suggested that a more active role in managing the QLP and communications could be taken by an external body

5. The Service Development Proposals

- Service proposals were prepared by both Quality Leaders, which is an important output criterion which both authorities have successfully achieved
- There is a need to incorporate a much greater emphasis upon the necessity to be more outward-looking in developing service proposals. In other words, consultation *before* the development of ideas for new service
- The original design for the QLP suggested the development of a proforma for a service development proposal, however this was subsequently dropped from this pilot phase due to budgetary restrictions

6. Conclusions

- It would appear that the learning experienced by the Quality Leaders spanned the continuum of knowledge (e.g. Best Value), skills (e.g. leadership) and attitudes (e.g. confidence) and the project can therefore be judged to have been a success with respect to these three traditional measures of training efficiency.
- There was also strong evidence of transfer between the learning that was occurring and the work setting of the Quality Leaders, again indicating that the QLP has been successful in this alternative measure of the success of training outcome,

although this is of course to be expected given the design of the scheme and the focus upon the Development Project as an integral part of the learning process.

- There was evidence that the co-learning which occurred in this pilot fell somewhat short of that which was expected and this was attributed primarily to the low numbers of authorities recruited on to the pilot. This had implications for the quality of co-learning that was developed in the action learning sessions, which in turn impacted upon the added value of the model over and above that which could have been provided through a more traditional training programme in conjunction with a secondment.
- In relation to this added value dimension, the key areas which were identified correspond to the specific and unique elements of the QLP approach which were inherently built in to the design of the scheme. Three key areas were identified:
 1. The nature of the on-the job learning (i.e. a focus upon the development of a new service, rather than simply some sort of placement within an existing service)
 2. The quality of learning transfer that occurred (due, presumably, to transfer vehicle provided by the structured format of the learning sessions and the action planning tool that was adopted)
 3. The range of learning variables that were covered (spanning the entire range of

skills, knowledge and attitudinal variables and the considerable number of specific development areas within each of these components.

- While there were a number of concerns raised with respect to the implementation of the QLP, these were generally of an operational nature and would be easily rectified by following more closely the specifications set out in the description of the Quality Leader Approach. In this regard, it was suggested that the production of a QLP manual would aid this process and the production of such a manual is strongly recommended.
- There was clear evidence that the QLP was effective in developing the Black library workers who took part in the scheme. The QLP can therefore be recommended as an effective way of developing black library workers, however it was also strongly felt that the QLP could be extended to the development of different groups in different areas and a piloting of the extension of the QLP in this way would be encouraged.
- There was clear evidence that the QLP has the potential to develop the services offered by the authorities who took part in the pilot, however, as the service development proposals have not yet been formally put to the authorities concerned, no clear assertion can be made in this respect, which is the subject of the third phase of the QLP. Given the success of the second stage, it is recommended that the QLP proceed on to the third stage

Who's who of QLP

The core team

The core team is made up of people from the following organisations:

- *Birmingham Libraries*: Geoff Mills
- *Business Management Centre, University of North London*: Paul Joyce and Dean Bartlett
- *Merton Libraries*: Shiraz Durrani and John Patemen
- *Social Exclusion Action Planning Network*: John Vincent

Quality Leaders

- *Birmingham Libraries*: Alan Lewinson
- *Merton Libraries*: Michael Junor

QLP Advisory Group

The Advisory Group is made up of a large number of prominent individuals and representatives of various organisations.

Some organisations:

- Association of London Chief Librarians (ALCL)
- Black Caucus, American Library Association
- Commission for Racial Equality
- Diversity Council
- LASER
- The Library Association
- LINK
- Merton Race Equality Partnership (MREP)
- Re:source
- Refugee Forum and ARHAG
- Social Exclusion Action Planning Network

Quality Leaders' Proposals ⁴

Alan Lewinson, Birmingham Library Services

"A series of introductory sessions centred on awareness and user education workshops initially within the African Caribbean Community".

Elements of the proposal:

- Programme of staff development
- Staff Transfer
- Staff Involvement
- Raising the profile of the profession within the African Caribbean community
- Target culturally diverse areas as well as those areas where the population is predominantly white to experience the benefits

Michael Junor - Merton Libraries

"Community Resource Centre" - Service initiative development.

The Mitcham Community Resource Centre would operate within Mitcham Library offering resources on health, Black history, community notice boards, display boards, enquiry desk. It would support community activities, meetings, training, exhibitions, promotions, conference space. The centre aims to contribute to Community Development, Lifelong Learning, Economic Regeneration.

⁴ Notes from Quality Leaders' presentations and group discussions, Merton Civic Centre, April 26 2001.

QLP Stage 2 ⁵

A project team for the development of the new service will be established and will include or even be led by a quality leader. The development team will need to develop the initial idea and make corrections to it on the basis of more thorough appraisal of the black community's needs and meticulous planning of operational processes, resources, and implementation steps. The development team would also need to appraise and correct the local best value performance indicators and targets suggested by the feasibility study. Following on from this, the development team would need to confirm that the new service is the best value option by considering alternative ways of delivering the new services (procurement, partnership working) and by benchmarking the performance and cost parameters of the new service. This is essentially a cost-benefit exercise.

The output of the development stage would be a comprehensive proposal for service development ready for submission through the relevant channels for authorisation.

A critical assumption of this phase of the overall programme is that the development project is the vehicle for developing the new know-how that a new service requires for its design and delivery, and that is critical for the meeting of the "new needs" of the black community. (The new needs might be simply

⁵ *Meeting needs of communities & workers*; Ideas discussed by Paul Joyce, Shiraz Durrani and John Pateman on 16 December 1999.

hitherto ineffective needs that were not addressed by existing library services.) The project team should be assembled with care. As well as black library workers it needs to include experienced librarians and a senior member of library management. The team will need to be well resourced in terms of the part-time secondment of its members to work on the project (e.g. a day a week for 6 months?). The team, including the quality leader, will need to debate new ideas, solve issues, visit other library services, and test out ideas wherever possible.

The evaluation research would investigate the effectiveness of the development project in developing the capability and expertise of the quality leader, the robustness and suitability of the local best value performance indicator, and the quality of the comprehensive proposal for service development. The purpose of the evaluation would be to establish the optimum conditions and strategies for using development projects to enable the occupational development of the quality leaders.

<p>Executive Summary QLP Feasibility Study, and Proposals. March 2000⁶</p>
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This report summarises the findings of research, conclusions regarding the feasibility and suitability of the Quality Leaders Project (QLP), and proposals for the next phases.

The research and feasibility study was commissioned in December

1999 and was being completed in March 2000. A follow up report will provide more detailed findings, elaborating on and extending the research findings and conclusions of this report.

We have found that there is a need for more consultation of Black and Asian communities in relation to the content and delivery of services they receive from local authority libraries. This consultation should be based on a systematic approach to obtaining feedback from communities by libraries. We have found little evidence of consultation via direct links with community groups, neighbourhood committees whose remit includes libraries, and user groups or panels within libraries.

Black and Asian communities do experience benefits as a result of public library services, but they also have experienced problems in relation to them. In particular there are problems regarding the composition of stocks of books, music, and videos. There are deficiencies in addressing the Black British experience through the existing stocks. There are problems in terms of library service events for the Black and Asian communities. There are also problems – such as customer care and service availability – that may well be problems for all members of the public.

In this report we draw attention to the value of book-fairs and other cultural events to raise general awareness about the library, to establish contact with smaller booksellers that specialise in ethnic minority books, and as a way of

⁶ The feasibility study was funded by the Library and Information Commission (now Re:source).

generating more feedback from users.

We have also discovered concerns about the recruitment of Black and Asian library workers, and their promotion within library services. This report recognises the possibility that equal opportunity employment initiatives can produce benefits for the black users of library services, but note that there has been almost two decades of equal employment opportunities policies within some parts of local government.

The report provides some evidence on the feasibility of service developments and employment initiatives as perceived by managers and professionals in the library services covered by this study.

On the basis of the findings we have concluded that the idea of using the Quality Leaders Project (QLP) looks feasible. There appears to be scope to better exploit library resources and tailor solutions to the present deficiencies in the value of services for local black communities. This is important in terms of achieving the goals of social inclusion in respect of library services. The QLP programme, if effectively implemented, will be more than a worthwhile endeavour to better meet needs of communities. The challenge of developing new services should help to develop black managers who can champion new services.

The QLP now needs to move to the next two phases. Two challenging areas have been identified for development projects. It is critical, if

momentum is to be maintained that top management commitment is translated into a process that provides for fast paced development and a strong evaluation framework to ensure lessons learnt in the development phase are recognised and disseminated.

QLP Documentation

- Report Commissioned by the Library and Heritage Services of the London Borough of Merton for a Project Supported by the L.I.C. A Quality Leaders Project for Black Library & Information Workers - Final Report of Research Findings, Feasibility Study, and Proposals. By Management Research Centre, University of North London. 6 April 2000.
- Boosting the number of Black leaders. *Library Association Record*. 102(9) September 2000.
- An evaluation of the Quality Leaders Project: A pilot of stage 2 of the Quality Leaders Project with London borough of Merton and Birmingham City Council. Dr. Dean Bartlett, Management research Centre, University of North London. July 2001.
- *Time to make a difference*. *Library Association Record*. 102(5) May 2000, p. 246.
- The curate's egg approach? *Library Association Record*. 102(5) May 2000, p. 248.
- Ethnic minorities: Merton's Quality Leaders Programme offers chance to improve services. *Library Association Record*. 102(5) May 2000.
- Boosting the number of Black leaders. *Library Association*

Record. 102(9) September 2000.

- *Meeting of minds (QLP) The Library Association Record.* 103(6) June 2001, p.326.

Some relevant conferences

- *Libraries and social and political exclusion: An international perspective.* An Information For Social Change/Link One Day Conference 24th April 1999 Overseas Development Institute, London.
- *The significance of the Stephen Lawrence inquiry for public libraries.* The Library Association, London and Home Counties Branch of the Library Association in Association with The Association of London Chief Librarians. 28 June 1999.
- *Everybody Welcome? The role of libraries in a socially inclusive society.* 16th March 2000, Shrewsbury. Shropshire Library Service.
- *Quality Leaders Project for Black Library and Information workers (QLP).* Social Exclusion Action Planning Network/Quality Leaders Project. Joint Conference: Public libraries tackling social exclusion. 5 June 2000. London Voluntary Sector Resource Centre.
- *Implementing standards to tackle social exclusion.* Open to all? Training Course organised by the Social Exclusion action Planning Network. Tuesday 5 September 2000, LA.

Some useful publications

- *Diversity* Newsletter of the Diversity Council. Quarterly, No. 1 (June 2001)
- *Information for Social Change* (2 x a). Issue No. 11 Combating

racism in library and information services

- *Newsletter* Social Exclusion Action Planning Network. (Monthly) No. 26, June 2001.
- *Open to all? The public library and social exclusion.* (2000) Vol.1 Overview and conclusions; Vol. 2 Survey, case studies and methods; Vol. 3 Working Papers. Dave Muddiman, Shiraz Durrani, Martin Dutch, Rebecca Linley, John Pateman, John Vincent. London: Resource: The Council for Museum, Archives, and Libraries.
- *ReachOut* Newsletter of the BME/Outreach Services, Merton Library and Heritage Services (Quarterly) No. 1 May 2001.
- *Social and Racial Exclusion Handbook for libraries, archives, museums, and galleries.* 2nd edition, August, 2001. By Shiraz Durrani. Published by Social Exclusion Action Planning Network.

Ideas for action

Equality and Entitlement⁷

Libraries hold a central place in social life. The questions before us today are to examine what libraries are there for and how to organise them better to enable us to organise a more relevant service for the next century. It is important for us to examine different influences and issues side-stepped in the past.

Entitlement should be seen within a particular context and as an issue of

⁷ Notes from a talk given by Gus John, Director, Education, Leisure and Libraries, LB Hackney to Library Staff at Stamford Hill Library on Thursday February 23, 1995.

fundamental human rights in Britain. All human interaction takes place on the basis of culture, however we define it. We feed off different cultures in social life and at work. We unpack different packages of experience and culture. Culture underpins and underlines racialisation of oppression, immigration, crime and also of resistance to oppression itself. We live in a society with an overarching culture of racism that is all pervasive. It is not possible to appreciate other oppressions (e.g. of women) without understanding this.

This racialisation of oppression and immigration poses personal challenges at work for all. Managers need to ask themselves, "where do I stand? What constitutes sound judgement in this dynamic situation? What management culture exists and relates to racism. What conscious or sub-conscious notions of supremacy and of white cultural supremacy exists at work places. All products of creativity are steeped in cultural supremacy. What active leadership am I going to give on issues of race and to combat the culture of racism."

Collective Guilt

In a situation where managers' actions are perceived as racist, how do managers react to the sense of racism that staff and users see in them? Do they dismiss it as "case of individual chip on shoulder"? or see it as a case of mass hysteria. Faced with the culture of racism, what support do I offer Black managers. When Black staff's grievances are delayed, what action does the organisation as a whole take? What action do senior managers take against managers

who see all Black staff as collectively guilty?

It is important to monitor how each of us as managers discharge our duties as managers in terms of racism. How do we reduce the number of disciplinaries of Black staff?

Resistance to oppression is a normal reaction among the oppressed. Our fundamental instinct is towards justice. Although the slaves knew that they would lose a limb if caught resisting, they continued to resist. Wherever there is oppression, there the oppressed will unite to resist. When Black people resist, this resistance is racialised and seen as another reason to stereotype and marginalise Black people.

Change of Culture

We should have a perspective on the dynamic potential for growth as we try to make our services relevant. Hackney Council earned itself good reputation as an employer in the 1980s. It employed many Black people. But it did not ask itself what then happens once BEM staff get employed. There are blockages and the question then is how to get rid of these blockages to BEM employees getting higher jobs and not to leave them at the bottom. How do you enable staff to participate fully in the running of the organisation?

Policy and **practice** are two important ways in which these problems will be addressed. The Action for Change will guide the Directorate of Education and Leisure Services to resolve the problems that exist in Libraries. Issues to be addressed will include stock,

staffing, and access to library service. Policy and resource implications of the necessary changes will be addressed. **Change of Culture** is necessary to address the issues of rights, entitlement, quality with equality, service delivery, and management issues.

“Anti-racism is about breaking hierarchies, traditional methods of working, of relating to people, of becoming more broad based in representation and concerns. The challenge of racism is a challenge to democracy” (Race & Class).

The future of QLP

A number of authorities and Black LIS workers have shown an interest in participating in the QLP programme. A funding proposal and promotion material is being prepared by the core group of QLP. Proposals for funding will be sent to Re:source, the Library Association, the CRE and other possible partners. Any individuals or authorities (academic, public authorities, information organisations) wishing to be part of the next round of QLP are invited to indicate their interest to the QLP core group. Future issues of *QLP News* will report on developments.

London Borough of Merton has set up Merton Ethnic Minority Staff Network as recommended in the Scrutiny Review, *The Past we Inherit, the Future we Build* which was a response to the Stephen Lawrence – Macpherson Inquiry report. Details from monica.wambu@merton.gov.uk

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