

**EXTENDED EVALUATION OF QUALITY LEADERS  
PROJECT (YOUTH) INITIATIVE**

**Interim report**

**Jane Pitcher and Mary Eastwood-Krah**

**November 2008**

## Contents

Executive summary .....	i
1. Introduction .....	1
1.1 Aims of the QLP-Y Project and the evaluation .....	1
1.2 Context: library provision for young people .....	1
2. Methodology .....	4
2.1 Outline of methods .....	4
2.2 Evaluation progress to date.....	4
3. Findings .....	5
3.1 Activities since the December 2007 evaluation report.....	5
3.1.1 Within participating local authorities .....	5
3.1.2 QLP-Y activities centrally.....	8
3.2 Challenges encountered .....	8
3.3 Impact of QLP-Y.....	10
3.3.1 On project participants.....	10
3.3.2 On Quality Leaders and other staff.....	13
3.4 Feedback on Module “Innovation and development in Information Services” . .....	14
3.5 Wider organisational impact and future development of activities for young people .....	15
3.5.1 Current impact .....	15
3.5.2 Future developments.....	17
3.5.3 Potential improvements to services .....	18
3.6 Reflections on the benefits of QLP-Y and issues of effective practice .....	19
4. Discussion.....	20
4.1 Models of delivery of QLP-Y.....	21
4.2 The potential for innovation and how QLP-Y functions in the context of the wider organisation.....	21
4.3 How QLP-Y relates to the national context .....	22
4.4 Sustainability of initiatives .....	22
5. Conclusions and recommendations .....	23
6. Evaluation next steps .....	24
References.....	25
Appendix I: interview schedules .....	26

## **Executive summary**

### *Introduction*

In July 2008 the evaluators of the QLP-Y programme were commissioned to undertake a follow-up evaluation of the programme. The aims of this follow-up evaluation are to prepare an update evaluation report on outcome, progress and developments in QLP-Y since the main Evaluation Report (December 2007). Assess sustainability of staff development and service development activities based on evidence from QLs, Mentors, sponsors and young people. Evaluation activities commenced in August 2008 and will continue until October 2009. This is the interim report on the further stage of the evaluation.

### *Interim findings*

All of the three remaining authorities have continued to deliver some activities beyond the formal end to the programme. In some cases, these were new initiatives and in others built upon previous work undertaken as part of the programme. While the two remaining staff managing the project centrally have returned to their normal university duties, they continue to offer support to the QLs in the three authorities and have encouraged the QLs to contribute to articles and other initiatives. An additional element of provision was the delivery by staff at London Metropolitan University of a module "Innovation and Development in Information Services". All participants agreed the module had been a good opportunity to meet people from other authorities and to have the time to reflect and engage in discussion.

One of the continuing challenges within the library setting is restructuring, which has impacted on all the participating authorities. There are concerns that some restructuring will impact on the work that has been built up under QLP-Y, particularly where it is not clear what place activities for teenage young people will have in future. Local authority bureaucracy continues to present a challenge for project implementation, particularly in relation to IT-based activities. A further challenge is that in some cases young people move on and consistency can be lost. In some cases young people had dropped out. This was also a learning process for young people taking responsibility for organising activities. Nonetheless, all the projects felt that they had managed to contact and engage hard-to-reach young people.

One of the main impacts on young people as a result of their participation in QLP-Y was to show them that libraries could be fun places that had relevance for them and that they could be made to feel welcome. QLP-Y activities had also increased young people's trust in libraries. QLs were in agreement that the activities had helped to build the confidence of many participants, through developing new skills that will help them in the future, including social, leadership and IT skills. By taking ownership of specific projects and having to deal with some of the challenges involved through different local authority rules, participants had also developed administrative and negotiation skills. Feedback from young people who had attended activities was overwhelmingly positive. It was clear they had developed skills, such as graphics, editing and writing; and also the confidence to deal with adults in 'official' positions.

The QLP-Y project has also had some impact on the skills of QLs, such as strategic and leadership skills, and developing a variety of youth working skills. The individual development of QLs through taking on additional responsibilities and developing new working styles was also an important benefit of QLP-Y. The programme had helped change attitudes towards young people more widely within the participating libraries and enabled QLs to identify gaps in service, which have started to be addressed, although it was recognised that there is more to be done in this respect.

While the impact of the QLP-Y project on the wider organisation has been relatively limited, there is evidence of the ways in which QLP-Y has influenced services to young people within the participating libraries. In one authority the courses developed through QLP-Y have become part of ongoing activities for young people. In another, a youth board has been created through QLP-Y and this is continuing beyond the funding. There is also a commitment to creating a teenage zone in each library. In a third authority, a group of young people involved in developing a 'mangazine' has an allocated space they can use to meet on an ongoing basis.

The lack of funding beyond QLP-Y means that relatively few activities have been planned for the future specifically for young people who have been non-users of libraries. Without dedicated funding for these it may be difficult to secure the commitment of partner organisations. There was general agreement amongst QLs that, although QLP-Y had helped to focus attention on the issue of services to young people, more needed to be done to address their needs in future.

Overall, the benefits of QLP-Y were that it helped to emphasise an area of need and bring into libraries young people who were not traditional users; young people were involved in planning and delivering activities; and the QLs themselves had experienced personal development and a broadening of their interests and expertise. Contributing factors were that the QLP-Y project was tailored towards the needs of young people in each authority and the project also developed in the context of what was seen to be feasible for the QLs and each authority to fit in to its organisational structures. All of the libraries worked in partnership with other departments, although the benefits of this partnership were seen more in some projects than in others.

There is a clear indication from the previous evaluation and current work that many activities are innovative, although the QLs have come across challenges to implementing these, particularly because of internal bureaucracy and a lack of IT support and systems. There remains a reluctance to hand over power to young people. More extensive, longer-term change is needed in libraries and the impetus for this may come from external initiatives independent of QLP-Y, although this project has contributed to some culture change and has helped to influence the views of staff beyond those directly involved in QLP-Y. Although responsibility for working with young people should be shared amongst staff, the reality is that some of the impetus came from the QLs within the framework of a semi-formal project, as discussed earlier. There is thus the danger, once the QLs return to their former or new library roles, that they will no longer have the time and flexibility to maintain ongoing projects set up under QLP-Y.

## *Recommendations*

At this stage in the evaluation, there are some intermediate recommendations based on the findings so far:

- A further joint publication involving all of the participating authorities might be useful to summarise the QLP-Y Project, reflect on some of the learning to date and implications for changing the culture, to be disseminated as widely as possible to libraries, youth services and other relevant organisations. This might be in the form of an easily accessible short report, with visual examples, which may also be of interest to young people who have participated or who visit their library.
- The QLs might benefit from help in trying to access funding from other sources and LMU might have a role in supporting them in this.
- If any further developments of QLP-Y are to be considered, there are some key lessons from the earlier stage of the project, which include:
  - Changing title to something 'snappier';
  - Considering ways of measuring the costs vs. the benefits;
  - Building in mechanisms for mainstreaming at the outset, perhaps through embedding roles in written policies;
  - Focus on getting young people involved in steering group/managing activities (again because of potential bureaucratic barriers, it may be necessary to implement a written agreement on this prior to the project).

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Aims of the QLP-Y Project and the evaluation

The Quality Leaders Project –Youth (QLP-Y) was led by London Metropolitan University and funded by the Paul Hamlyn Foundation from October 2005 to December 2007. The project took place in four local authorities. Its aims were:

- To refocus public library service so that services to young people are mainstreamed in accordance with the real needs of young people;
- To provide new skills to library workers so that they can develop and deliver new and innovative services needed by young people;
- Develop, plan and implement new services for young people in partnership with the youth themselves, and with other stakeholders, thereby empowering service users;
- To increase social cohesion by encouraging inter-generational work and by encouraging different communities to work together.

A two-year evaluation of the project was undertaken, with the final report being presented in December 2007. Subsequent to this evaluation, three local authorities, Barnet, Haringey and Portsmouth, have continued with a small number of project activities. In addition, some project staff took part in a Module at London Metropolitan University entitled “Innovation and development in Information Services”.

In July 2008 the authors were commissioned to undertake some follow-up evaluation activities of the QLP-Y programme. The aims of this follow-up evaluation are, as specified in the brief, to:

**Prepare an update evaluation report on outcome, progress and developments in QLP-Y since the main Evaluation Report (December 2007). Assess sustainability of staff development and service development activities based on evidence from QLS, Mentors, sponsors and young people.**

Evaluation activities commenced in August 2008 and will continue until October 2009.

## 1.2 Context: library provision for young people

The QLP-Y Project was set in the context of a declining use of public libraries, particularly by young people in their teen years. In response to lack of usage of libraries by certain groups, there has been a number of Government initiatives designed to make libraries more relevant and attractive to diverse groups in society, including young people. These include:

- *Framework for the Future* (Department for Culture, Media and Sport, 2003), which emphasises the role that libraries can play in ensuring that all groups in society have access to resources, particularly through promoting reading and informal learning, providing access to digital skills and services and introducing measures to tackle social exclusion and develop citizenship);
- *Fulfilling their Potential: a National Development Programme for Young People and Libraries* (Reading Agency, 2004), which outlines a coordinated approach to developing services and a strategy to redefine libraries' relationship with young people aged 11-19;
- *Youth Matters* (2005, 2006) which stress the need for a radical reshaping of provision for young people in order to reduce the gap between the most disadvantaged and more privileged groups in society;
- *Aiming High for Young People* (HM Treasury/DCSF, 2007), the Government's 10-year strategy, which sets out key commitments for improving access to opportunities for young people, including encouragement of a more positive approach to young people, giving young people the opportunity to have a greater influence on services and increasing young people's participation in high quality activities.

In addition, there have been reports emanating from specialist library bodies which also focus on the need for improved services to young people. For example, the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), based on a report entitled *Start with the Child* (CILIP, 2002), has stated that a successful library service for children and young people needs to encompass:

- Appropriate environments and services;
- Services that are relevant and responsive;
- Appropriate help for themselves and those who support them; and
- Support from the community at large to use and benefit from services that are marketed to them and their parents.

The National Youth Libraries Board, a strategic partnership of organisations working with libraries and young people, from central government, the public and voluntary sector, has identified what young people should be able to expect their local library service to offer. This 'offer' statement (web reference [www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//L/Libraries\\_and\\_Young\\_People\\_12583.pdf](http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets//L/Libraries_and_Young_People_12583.pdf)) is based on research, consultation and best practice developed through the *Fulfilling their Potential* programme, *HeadSpace*<sup>1</sup> and other evidence of effective practice and encompasses:

- Empowerment through participation in shaping the design and delivery of services, volunteering opportunities and access to space to "develop citizenship skills and community engagement through volunteering and sharing ideas";

---

<sup>1</sup> A partnership between the Reading Agency and 20 local authorities (libraries and youth services), working with young people aged 11-19 to "create places where young people can read, listen, surf and chill" ([www.readingagency.org.uk/young/headspace/](http://www.readingagency.org.uk/young/headspace/)).

- Access to free, safe and welcoming spaces in the local community and to formal and informal learning support for educational attainment; and
- Quality through “Relevant and inspiring collections of books, magazines and other materials, supported by positive and creative activities” and reliable and up-to-date information on education, training and careers, supplemented by referral services.

A recent Government initiative, *Find Your Talent*, was launched in June 2008. Taking place in 10 pathfinder areas, including Hampshire, the programme gives young people the opportunity to try out different cultural and creative activities. As part of this initiative, Hampshire launched its ‘Push 4 Culture’ campaign, which is coordinated by Hampshire County Council, in partnership with Portsmouth and Southampton City Councils and Creative Partnerships and endorsed by the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH).

The QLP-Y Project has aimed to address the issue of participation and provision for young people within four local authorities. It was noted in the final edition of *QLP News* (September 2008: 1) that “Whilst libraries have, traditionally, been very good at engaging with young children they have generally been less successful at engaging older children/young people, a gap that QLP-Y has sought to bridge”. The previous evaluation report of the QLP-Y Project commented that the project had been successful at engaging young people in libraries, involving them in service planning and helping them to be involved in shaping services that appealed to them. The project had also been effective at developing the skills of staff participating in the initiative, as well as of young people.

Durrani et al (2008) note:

*Securing the Future*, the UK Government’s strategy for sustainable development, refers to the “4 Es” as a way of securing change: Enable, Engage, Exemplify and Encourage, an approach which is exemplified by the QLP model. What makes QLPY different from many other similar initiatives, however, is the link between the development of services and the development of staff. It supports initiatives which young people themselves want and need. These are done not simply to improve services to young people, but also as a tool to develop key leadership skills among staff. It is the development of such skills through the development of personalised services, in partnership with a specific client group, that makes QLP such a unique model.

Starting to bring about organisational change within participating authorities, albeit at a relatively limited level, was also an important component of the QLP-Y Project. This extension of the evaluation will aim to assess to what extent these developments have continued beyond the funded project and whether they are sustainable in the longer term.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 Outline of methods**

The agreed methodology for the evaluation includes:

- Follow-up visits to each of the three local authorities, to interview the Quality Leaders, undertake observation of activities and where possible undertake interviews or focus groups with project participants (one set of visits in 2008 and a further set of visits in 2009);
- Telephone interviews with mentor and where possible sponsor in each of the 3 projects
- Telephone and email contact with QLs between October 2008 and September 2009
- 1 meeting and brief interview with project managers at LMU
- Analysis of documentation provided (including Module evaluation forms, other relevant documentation from LMU and from individual projects, including any monitoring data collected by them if appropriate)
- Production of 2 brief reports, in October 2008 and October 2009, focusing on impact, outcomes, challenges, learning and forward direction.

The aim of the interviews is to consider progress since the previous evaluation and continue to explore challenges encountered and the impact of the QLP-Y programme on: the QLs, young people participating in the programme and other staff in the lead organisations.

### **2.2 Evaluation progress to date**

During August and September 2008, the evaluators collected background information from staff at London Metropolitan University and have undertaken site visits to each of the participating authorities to interview the Quality Leaders, collect any relevant information, observe activities and speak to project participants. As it appears that the bulk of the remaining QLP-Y activities will take place during 2008 and will tail off significantly during 2009, we have endeavoured to interview as many young people as possible at this stage of the evaluation rather than towards the end, as originally planned. We informally talked to thirteen young people in Barnet, and nine young people in Portsmouth<sup>2</sup>. There have been no QLP-Y projects running in Haringey since phase two of the evaluation started. The following table summarises the observation sessions and interviews conducted to date:

---

<sup>2</sup> For this interim report, analysis has been included of some of the interviews and discussions with young people (13 in total), but as one session took place after the draft report had been written, these interviews will be analysed along with other data from young people in the final report.

### Fieldwork activities to date

Date	Authority	Activity
18/08/08	Barnet	Observation of Slam Poetry session, informally talked to 4 young people
27/08/08	Barnet	Interview with QL; observation of Youth Board meeting
2/09/08	Haringey	Interview with QL
20/09/08	Portsmouth	Interview with QL, interview 2 young people (editors of 'mangazine'); sat in art session and informally talked to 7 young people participating
28/10/08	Barnet	Attended the Youth Board 'Away Day' team-building day at Moat Mount- observed and talked to all 12 participants.

The QLs have provided us with records of numbers of young people attending sessions or overall numbers of group members (e.g. the mangazine) and responses to feedback/evaluation forms.

## 3. Findings

### 3.1 Activities since the December 2007 evaluation report

#### 3.1.1 *Within participating local authorities*

All of the three remaining authorities have continued to deliver some activities since the production of the final report for the first evaluation of QLP-Y and beyond the formal end to the programme. In some cases, these were new initiatives and in others built upon previous work undertaken as part of the programme. The QLs commented on the value of the support they received from the team leader at LMU, particularly in relation to editing QLP News and other writing activities.

#### **Barnet**

Barnet has continued to work closely with the Youth and Connexions detached team. A drama project was organised in January 2008, working with a youth worker who specialises in drama. The project consisted of 5 workshops over 5 weeks, where young people did drama and some improvisation. The young people had an input into the design of the project and decided between themselves what the focus of the project would be. The QL commented:

They wanted to do something on gangs and bullying, so that fitted in nicely in the contemporary issues at the moment. He was brilliant; he got them working in groups. They started doing still pictures, so they did an image of something to do with gangs and bullying. And then they gradually worked it into a short piece of a story. Then they didn't want to do it as an actual stage production, they wanted to film it. So we got a guy in who made a film of all the different little plays that they had come up with. And then some of them came along to

edit it. And he really did the work, but they made suggestions on the music and that kind of thing. We finished with a little screening where we invited them and their parents, and we had some staff there as well, so that was really nice. Much smaller scale than the film premiere was but still it was a nice end to the project.

Around 7-19 young people turned up for most of the drama workshops. They ended up with four films as a result.

After that project finished, the majority of young people involved wanted to work on something else, so the QL worked with them to organise a further play station competition: "because it was quite successful, we thought let's do it again". This was quite challenging, because the original core group of young people had moved on: "But because we had a new group of kids it was like starting from scratch. They ran the competition in May 08, but managed to involve the core group as referees". The last play station competition was attended by 66 young people.

Four young people took part in poetry workshops as part of Summer University. They were entered into a Slam Poetry Competition and produced some very thought-provoking urban poetry.

A Youth Board is being set up under QLP-Y. Originally it was going to be a reading group which would advise the library on what stock to buy, but the remit of the group has evolved. It is envisaged that this group will be the voice of young people on youth service provision at libraries. They will be making recommendations on projects for young people, helping design teenage areas, choose furniture and colour schemes and control a budget. It is a mixed and growing group, with some joining after taking part in the Summer University poetry workshops. The group has been meeting regularly, brainstorming and learning communication and organisational skills. The remaining funds from QLP-Y were used for a team building 'away day' for this group on October 28th. Twelve young people took part in outdoor team-building challenges including both physical and mental tasks. The young people bonded and got to know each other better. Two new members joined.

## **Haringey**

Some funding was still available in October 2007, so the QLs suggested doing a further web design course. Workshops took place in February-April 2008, in partnership with Haringey Learning Services and run by the same tutor they had used before – "the tutor is very good, he treats young people well, talks on their level". This was very interesting and fun and the QL felt that young people learnt a lot.

Over the 7 workshops, 11 young people attended, of whom 8 had not previously participated in earlier workshops at Haringey. The age range was 11-16. In their self-evaluation, nearly all found the workshops very or generally useful. The workshops offered the opportunity to learn something new and also to interact with other young people. All participants felt the course should be run regularly.

The two QLs also edited an edition of QLP-Y News in December 2007. After this, the second QL left the authority, so the remaining QL worked on activities on her own: "It has been enjoyable, I have learnt from it and I am quite pleased with myself."

### **Portsmouth**

The 'mangazine', *Yatta!*, has been developing. In December 2007 a manga artist worked with the group, with around 40 young people turning up for this. Initially the meetings were in the children's library, but this space was inappropriate as it was shared with others who found the young people noisy, and the group clearly needed a creative space where they could be expressive and 'loud' if they needed. They booked a room in the arts centre every Saturday, which is also available for the young people to just 'hang out'. Normally about 7 young people turn up each week, with a core group (including two editors) and others who participate less regularly. Most participants are in Year 10, although the two editors are slightly older. The group is quite mixed in terms of ability, and includes a few young people with special needs. The young people were involved in furnishing the room, which was not fully cleared for use until June 2008. They have also now got a computer, which is fairly high specification, with Creative Suite 3. The QL commented: "They [the young people] don't know how to use it but they will on October 31<sup>st</sup>. They have got the guy from the IT dept who redrew the logo, he's going to do a day's training with a small group. It will be amazing for them because that is like industry standard. They will have transferable skill out of it". The mangazine is going to be wide-ranging, as it will be responsive to what the group and readership want. The young people want to educate their readership on manga and Japanese culture, while keeping a focus on the Portsmouth scene and on engaging local young people (for example by reviewing local bands and referring to local hangouts). QLP-Y has now provided funds for printing the first issue and the young people are working on a deadline for the release of their first edition. They will need to fundraise for future editions of the mangazine.

The Liberation project took place over ten weeks from June 2008 and the theme was 'liberation from information isolation'. It was an intergenerational project with visually impaired elderly people being supported by year 9 pupils from a school to download information in MP3 format. The young people also bonded with the elderly at break-time. There was good publicity for this project, and the MP3 players are now part of the QL's offer. The QL is thinking of starting another project, or opening it up to more schools.

Another group of young people, whose apparently disruptive behaviour had been flagged to the QL by other library staff, got involved in poster design and flyers: 'It's your library'. "The idea was that it would be peer-led, so that they'd distribute it to friends rather than we do it. But all the libraries have this poster in a fairly prominent place. We had thousands of flyers printed". The group that engaged in poster design were predominantly from BME backgrounds. A couple of young people from this group formed part of the original magazine group, attending the first 'mangazine' sessions.

### **3.1.2 QLP-Y activities centrally**

Following the completion of the first stage of QLP-Y in December 2007, the two remaining staff managing the project returned to their normal university duties and thus now have limited time available for coordinating the remaining elements of QLP-Y.

An additional element of provision was the delivery by staff at London Metropolitan University of a module “Innovation and Development in Information Services”. This was a six-week reflective learning course aimed at developing awareness of the dynamics of organisational change, with a focus on equality and justice, globalisation, innovation, leadership, politics of information, local authority context, policies, project development and management. The course consisted of lectures, debates, discussions, Weblearn, readings and seminar tasks. There were three assessed written papers, including a comparative essay, a project proposal based on a workplace situation, and a reflective commentary on learning outcomes from the module. The module participants were the QLs from Barnet and Portsmouth, and three participants from Haringey including the QL, the Youth Librarian and the library’s Children’s Services manager. Feedback on this course is discussed in section 3.4.

Two of the QLs have also submitted short pieces for publication in the second issue of DASS’s journal *Information, Society and Justice (ISJ)*.

The QLs from all three authorities also had a meeting with staff at London Metropolitan University to discuss a further event involving young people. There have been different ideas about what this event should comprise, with some people wanting a more flexible, young person-focused interactive event and others suggesting more formal presentations as a means of introducing young people to an academic setting.

‘Linking London Lifelong Learning Network’, the London-wide lifelong learning network, has recently awarded a grant to DASS to develop relevant progression opportunities for library staff. The award will enable DASS to develop new courses for library staff, based on the work undertaken as part of QLP-Y and the *Innovation and development in information services* module.

## **3.2 Challenges encountered**

Some of the challenges reported related to issues that had been raised in the earlier evaluation reports, particularly administration and paperwork initially, time constraints and local government bureaucracy. The lessons from this regarding clear protocols and a communication strategy were detailed in the final evaluation report in December 2007.

One of the continuing challenges within the library setting is restructuring, which has impacted on all the participating authorities. There are concerns that some restructuring taking place will impact on the work that has been built up under QLP-

Y, particularly where it is not clear what place activities for teenage young people will have in future. When there is no longer a formal QLP-Y programme, it will become more difficult for QLs to find the time to devote to work for young people unless this is specifically part of their current role. In one authority, Haringey, a teen library was established during the lifetime of QLP-Y and is flourishing, and thus activities with young people in this age group have been mainstreamed.

Local authority bureaucracy and “getting the big rusty wheels turning” continues to pose a challenge for project implementation, particularly in relation to IT-based activities:

Rules like you can't have a page for kids to add their reviews – IT issues, incredibly frustrating. Ordering a computer is complicated, there is no autonomy – but I guess every authority has its own little rules and ways. (QL)

Project participants interviewed had sometimes found this frustrating, particularly when delays in the local authority meant they were waiting for funding to undertake an activity they had decided to do. Introducing new software has also proved problematic in some cases, because of lack of technological support. While this was initially a major challenge for one QL, by the end of the project this person felt that it had led to significant skills development.

One QL felt that there were different rules for young people compared with other library users: “They want young people to sign in and out.....if this was a group of pensioners, they probably wouldn't ask them to sign in and out”. In some cases, there has been a lot of resistance to innovation and handing over power to young people:

Any time you try and do something new, there's a kind of nervousness around it because you haven't gone through the official channel of going through a job interview and proving you're capable of doing it. (QL)

...a lot of staff feel intimidated by this sort of thing, to actually hand over a space to any group, but particularly to a group of young people. (QL)

Once a project had proved successful, however, the authority was more inclined to own it.

A further challenge is that in some cases young people move on and consistency can be lost. For example, in one authority, the core group largely moved on to other things in their lives and “It is almost like 'yeah I've done that now; I want to go on and do something else'.” This is one of the lessons for projects such as QLP-Y, that young people become involved in certain initiatives but then move into new classes and have different priorities, so there is a need to build in a certain degree of flexibility. One QL commented:

Yes basically we have not been working with any of the kids from the first year. They've all moved on which I think taught us a really important lesson, that with this youth board, we've got to find a way to constantly recruit new

kids, so when the older ones have done a year and they're fed up with it, they can move on and you've still got enough people to make it viable.

In some cases young people had initially expressed an interest in activities and then did not follow this through. Whether this was through lack of confidence or change in interests is not clear, but sometimes peer pressure can cause young people to drop out: "if one of them said 'I'm not doing it', to save face the others would say they weren't either". Spasmodic engagement and drop-out are common features of projects aimed at groups of vulnerable or disadvantaged young people. Nonetheless, all of the projects felt that they had managed to contact and engage hard-to-reach young people: "I think we've done that. This group are a hard to reach group. They'd be out on the steps".

Young people themselves had experienced this frustration when trying to organise a group. One participant commented that for him the challenge was "Getting people to work and getting people organised". In one group, the young people taking responsibility for organising an activity had to involve the QL to bring the group back together and exercise some authority. This was a learning process for them, as was the difficulty meeting deadlines when working with a large group.

The QLs received some support from staff within their authorities to tackle these challenges while they were formally part of QLP-Y, although since the project has finished staff have moved on to new roles or other service demands.

### **3.3 Impact of QLP-Y**

#### **3.3.1 *On project participants***

One of the main impacts on young people as a result of their participation in QLP-Y was to show them that libraries could be fun places that had relevance for them and that they could be made to feel welcome:

Young people were surprised and shocked that libraries could provide activities that they wanted to do in a friendly environment. It didn't seem like they were in a school or a classroom. They felt comfortable. (QL)

...we have shown them that libraries aren't dull, boring buildings where nothing happens, and that actually once you get through the gothic façade, that there are really cool things going on. And that the staff are really nice and helpful, and want them to be there. I think that has been an amazing breakthrough that QLP has made. (QL)

Young people themselves commented on the helpfulness of staff, particularly the QLs. In one project, participants noted that there had been some resistance from other staff earlier on, but this was in part due to some of the group:

YP1:....bearing in mind that there were 40 to 50 of us, there was a bit [of resistance from library staff to young people working in the library] because of the noise. I mean, I'm not trying to sound rude but people who left were the troublemakers that wouldn't shut up

YP2: But they kind of got bored after a while when we weren't doing anything after 3 months, and they just left, so it kind of benefited us in a way.

QLP-Y activities had also increased young people's trust in libraries and to one QL this was a major achievement because "they are not very easy to draw in, young people.... Not many people appreciate how difficult their lives can be, because they are in between being a child and a grown up. Not a lot of people understand them or make an effort".

All QLs were in agreement that the activities had helped to build the confidence and self-esteem of many participants, through developing new skills that will help them in the future, including social and leadership skills, as well as in IT:

...skills that will enable them to go on through to education or jobs for the future. It has helped them to build up their portfolios to take to interviews or to college enrolment days, just to say hey look I've done this. (QL)

Certainly the young people here can put all this experience in their CV. It shows evidence of team work, all these skills that employers want. (QL)

By taking ownership of specific projects and having to deal with some of the challenges involved through different local authority rules, participants had also developed administrative and negotiation skills and learned how to fight for their rights. As one QL noted:

It's like let's go into Argos with a corporate credit card and get some screw fix furniture for a tenner or something? Oh no, we have to go to the supplier, who charges 100 pounds for a desk. QLP is paying for it, which is fine. But it's all that kind of stuff. Well. We want to get some paint at the shop, I'll claim it back. I said to the young people, there is no way you can claim it back. You can't give the receipt to our admin people...so they are learning a lot.

Feedback from the small number of young people who had attended activities was overwhelmingly positive. Through the observations and interviews the evaluators held with participants, it was clear that they had developed skills, such as graphics, editing and writing; and also the confidence to deal with adults in 'official' positions. One young person commented about contacting a promotions organisation, which had been a daunting prospect: "It was just weird, it was like a friendly conversation".

The commitment of young people to the activities was also commented upon by QLs. In some cases participants had to make lengthy journeys to attend sessions, which sometimes involved changing buses, but they still turned up regularly: "So something they did last week has made them think this is worthwhile. I think we are giving them the right kind of environment to make them feel that we do value them, and we do want to listen, and we do want to respond to what they come up with".

The core manga group remained committed to the magazine even when it took six months to secure a creative space for them. Another QL noted that young people who had been involved in QLP-Y were also coming into the library when no activities were taking place:

The library is a hangout. They actually think the library is a hangout in the summer holidays! To me that is the greatest achievement of all. After school they are there. Isn't it much better to draw them into libraries than have them hanging around in street corners? I am actually very proud of what we have achieved. I enjoyed it as much as they did.

One young person commented that the reason for remaining committed was because of his personal interests: "For me it's skills and to get myself known, because I actually want to get into this line of work". For another, it was also a matter of having a sense of personal achievement: "I think I really want to do it because I think this is, you know, something that I helped create, that I have been a part of. And I just want to see it out there and people reading it". Young people involved in the Youth Board were there because they want to have a say: as one young person commented "I can't wait 'til we get to tell them what we want".

Four young people working on the magazine disclosed that they had been victims of bullying at school and seen as outcasts, one of them because of a disability. They expressed how working on the magazine had given them confidence and even some popularity. One of them commented: "Some people bully me at school and some don't talk to me. Now people are talking to me about my artwork, they know I am making the magazine".

All QLS felt that they had succeeded in reaching young people who were not already using the service, or those who were most in need of services. For example, Haringey had targeted two very disadvantaged areas, Tottenham and Wood Green, both of which had significant refugee communities. Their activities had attracted young people primarily from minority ethnic communities and also refugee and asylum seeker young people, including new arrivals to the borough. In Barnet, staff felt that they had been able to attract more minority ethnic and vulnerable young people into all their projects, "because we have been about to buy really contemporary, trendy technology". This was not typical of their usual demographic. In Portsmouth, their activities had helped to bring in young people from a struggling school and more young people from a minority ethnic background.

Through promoting activities via the web, some authorities have also managed to attract a new set of young people to sessions. It was recognised, however, that QLP-Y could only bring in a small number of young people and that there was much more that could be done:

I think we have reached a lot of vulnerable kids, but obviously you're not going to reach as many as you want to, because there are so many. And when you've got a project where you can have 10-20 kids at a time, you've got no hope of reaching all of them. We have scratched the surface anyway. (QL)

### **3.3.2 On Quality Leaders and other staff**

It is clear from comments from Quality Leaders in the three authorities that the QLP-Y project has had some impact on their skills and personal development in one form or another. All the QLs had different job roles and experience and thus the different benefits are reflected in their statements. For example, for one QL who had mainly been involved in adult services, QLP-Y offered an opportunity to work with young people and see youth work in action and “I am a great advocate for it now”. QLP-Y enabled staff to work with other departments and organisations and to learn from seeing different aspects of their service: “It helped to develop me as a librarian as well because I concentrated on a different part of the service that I had never dealt with before. It just shows you that every part is different and you need to think different about everything.”

Although there had sometimes been a considerable amount of work involved in taking on the QL role, the benefits were apparent to QLs: “There is a lot of work, but you are developing personally and professionally, and you can’t undermine that”.

One QL commented that editing the QLP-Y news was also useful learning: “I don’t do editing newsletters every day!”. Also “it was important to put it together, to show what we had been doing for the last couple of years”.

In terms of specific skills gained from QLP-Y, for one QL it was strategic skills (considering how to develop services in the current political and funding climate), having a picture of what is going on elsewhere (“It is very easy to be quite isolated in your own authority, and be constantly thinking about how rubbish or good you are. And you don’t really get to see that, so speaking to colleagues in [other authorities]; and also the Innovations Module meant that we spent more time talking and socialising about it as well.”), developing a variety of youth working skills and “a way to get something to happen”.

Another spoke of the wider benefits of QLP-Y, particularly in relation to taking on additional responsibility and being trusted to develop new initiatives:

It has been a hugely enjoyable and positive experience for me. I feel that I’ve really been allowed to just develop in this little bubble. My mentor has been my support there, but other than that, I’ve just been left to get on with it, which is very rare I think in public service, because you don’t usually have that level of trust. This has improved so many skills, obviously project management, time management, negotiation and persuasion, getting things out of people. Actually being more confident about following up when someone promises you something. Building up partnerships and relationships with other organizations, thinking through and writing proposals, thinking about outcomes and then learning how to evaluate to see whether you have achieved that.

QLP-Y had helped to change attitudes towards working with young people more widely within the participating libraries and enabled the QLs to identify gaps in

service, which have started to be addressed. However, there is no room for complacency:

It has changed my attitude towards services for young people. I have realized that in all these years I have worked in library services, that there was always a big gap in the area of youth. We had services for very young people- we had all the reading schemes and messy mornings and all that stuff. We had services for adults..... there was never a provision for youth. Even the A-level books were in the adult library, never actually acknowledging that it is a teen thing. Once we started doing QLP, I actually realized how big a gap it was. I think it is still a big gap in most places. (QL)

The perceived impact on other staff was more in relation to awareness and how positive it can be to support young people, than in specific skills development. It was felt that some staff seem to be frightened of young people, who have had a bad reputation in the past, and QLP-Y has helped to show them that engagement of young people can be positive. Comments from staff in Barnet (QLP News, Sept. 08: 6) indicated that they appreciated the events targeted specifically at teenage young people and that 'regulars' in the library were also interested in these new activities.

### **3.4 Feedback on Module “Innovation and development in Information Services”**

All respondents agreed that the module had been a good opportunity to meet people from other authorities and to have some time away from work to have the freedom to reflect and engage in discussion. One QL commented that going back to theory “really opened my eyes to things that I had not taken the time to think about. And then using that space to think about what is it that we are doing, why and how we should be doing things”.

Doing the assignments helped participants to think about how they delivered their service and how services might be developed in future. Because many projects were practical, it enabled the QLs to go back to their authorities, feed back their ideas and make recommendations for change.

These views were also expressed by participants in their reflective commentary assignments, which considered how engaging with the learning objectives of the module had helped them in reaching a better understanding of the dynamics of organisational change. One of the commonly expressed benefits of the course was that increased awareness had led them to critically assess their own organisations and responsibilities within them, and to understand change in a positive light, giving them a drive to act to improve service delivery:

The increased awareness I have developed from taking part in this course has enabled me to realise the responsibility I have as one employee within the organisation to analyse what I do and change my own performance. I have looked critically at my organisation and assessed its strengths and weaknesses in relation to the broader context. I now see it as my

responsibility to ‘future proof’ library provision by maintaining my knowledge of local, national, and international developments and to express my views to managers. (QL)

I feel a renewed excitement about the job I am in and want to continue to be a part of developing a service that is relevant to our communities in a rapidly changing society. (Library staff)

Hopefully I will be in a position to influence the leadership, equality and diversity of the service in the borough. (Library staff)

Far too often I hear supposed advocates talking about how libraries improve people’s lives. Let’s go further than this; let’s *transform* people’s lives. This module has provided ample ammunition for the battle. (QL)

While the theory and practical learning complemented one another, some QLs felt that it was quite time-consuming to do the reading and assignments, particularly when they had other commitments outside work. One respondent noted that it would have been helpful to have the course extended over a longer period, to give more time for working on assignments. This was also mentioned by two participants in the student feedback forms<sup>3</sup>. One QL felt that the debates weren’t ‘lively enough’ and that they were more like discussions. Possibly, as another QL commented, this was due to everyone having similar convictions:

I think we all possibly had similar political convictions, maybe not all the same. [There were] no debates - people were preaching to the converted in a way.

One participant also noted in the appraisal form that “it was great to have a small group, but it could have worked well with a few more people”.

### **3.5 Wider organisational impact and future development of activities for young people**

#### **3.5.1 Current impact**

While the impact of the QLP-Y project on the wider organisational context has been relatively limited, as we outlined in the previous evaluation report, this is not unexpected given that the project was relatively short and focused on a few specific and targeted initiatives within the participating libraries. Nonetheless, there is evidence of the ways in which QLP-Y has influenced services to young people within the participating libraries. Some activities delivered as part of QLP-Y are continuing although the formal element of the project has ended. For example, in Haringey, the courses developed through QLP-Y have become part of ongoing activities for young people:

---

<sup>3</sup> DASS: Student feedback ‘your appraisal of this module’ forms, supplied by London Metropolitan University.

The Photoshop and the computer web design courses are now ongoing as part of youth library activities! In fact now the library has become a hang-out for the young people who took part in QLP, they are always in the library, and this is a great thing! They spent last summer here doing activities, learning throughout the summer, and they are now here doing their homework, they feel very comfortable in these surroundings. It is so well-established now that they can ask the youth librarian what course they would like to do, just log on and start it. You don't even have to officially advertise it anymore, it is all ongoing. There is someone to sit and help them - in fact one of the library assistants is being trained at the moment to log them on and help them do web page design. (QL)

Having the equipment through QLP-Y is seen to be an important contribution to the continuation of these activities. In this authority the timing of the web design course coincided with the youth library being established, so the QLs were an integral part of the launch and further development of the new service. Thus in this library, QLP-Y has been mainstreamed. Although the teen library would have happened anyway, QLP-Y helped to develop different ideas and gave the additional impetus: "While we were doing the creative writing workshops etc. the other people in the library were creating the youth library. The timing of our digital photography workshops coincided with the creation of the youth library, so we saw that we had a space for our activities..... It helped to establish the youth library firmly.....It gave it this 'boom! Let's do it'. It enabled us financially to afford the sessions that were provided to begin with, to launch this service. It also gave us the equipment".

In Barnet, the youth board has been created through QLP-Y and this is continuing beyond the funding. A small amount of funding was available through QLP-Y to organise a day activity to get the youth board started and the intention is to bid for further funding from the Youth Opportunities Fund for a residential later on. "Once it is established and it has some power, then people can't shy away from what the young people want. If they say they want a project on photography, then how can you say no, sorry we can't do that? It would be like the Council denying the wishes of the citizen's panel who advise them on what to do. I know our kids don't have the luxury to say we won't vote for you, but what would be the point in them doing it if they had no power?"

As a result of QLP-Y there is a commitment to creating a teenage zone in each library: "In North Finchley we worked on changing the reference room into a teenage room, and it has been hugely successful. We attract many more young people than we did before. We are just about to do the same thing at another library in East Finchley. I think if you've got space for young people to be young people, then they're going to want to fill that and use that for their own needs". The hope is that the libraries spend as much energy on youth services as they do on children's services.

QLP-Y has helped to build bridges between departments and also created links with other library authorities (including other authorities participating in the project, with the possibility in future of a joint venture). An issue of concern in Barnet is that there is nothing formally written down regarding the delivery of youth services in the

authority. With the restructuring taking place, it is difficult to see what will be the legacy of QLP-Y in the future. While targets are related to team plans (and in the past some related specifically to QLP-Y while the project was ongoing) “in the past such initiatives have been funded externally and not come from core funding”. Thus youth services may not be given a priority for mainstreaming in future.

In Portsmouth, the Magazine group is meeting regularly and it is clear that the room is ‘their space’: “even if the young people don’t get round to doing a second edition, that space will exist for them”. They are also involved in raising revenue for future magazines. QL feels that later on there will be pressure to use the space for other things, but as the group meets after school it shouldn’t be too much of a problem. There was also a lot of enthusiasm from participants about the art project: “those young people who took part surprised themselves really, by how cool it was, how good their work was”. They have applied for funding to do a further project, with a display event also planned: “This time we are going to do a launch, and have red carpet, all that kind of stuff. But this wouldn’t have happened without QLP. We proved that it could be done. People thought ‘they [the young people] say they want to do it but will they do it?’ and actually they all took part. It’s only one or two children in those Units that didn’t do anything”.

The youth club also managed to obtain some funding from a local community group to continue the martial arts sessions, based on the demand generated from the original QLP-Y sessions: “so that continued for more young people”.

Within the authority, library services developed as a result of QLP-Y include: the involvement of young people in stock selection; the youth club on a Monday night; and the teen reading group wiki, which is semi-official and has worked reasonably well. The largest impact on the organisation is seen by the QL to be staff learning to treat young people seriously and commitment shown to this user group. There has also been publicity generated for the authority each time an initiative for young people takes place.

### **3.5.2 Future developments**

Although some activities have continued beyond the formal phase of QLP-Y, the lack of funding means that relatively few activities have been planned for the future specifically for groups of young people who have traditionally been non-users of libraries. While the QLs would like to see a continuation of similar initiatives, without dedicated pots of funding for these it may be difficult to secure the commitment of partner organisations. Some participants have ideas about attempting to raise further funding, but this will be for relatively small and time-limited initiatives: “This new government system for funding youth services has been perfect timing for us”.

Although not all QLs are affected to the same extent, the problem for some staff who acted as QLs is that, now their formal QL role has finished, they are expected to return to their normal duties and thus finding time to work on QLP-Y-type activities will be curtailed: “That is one thing that worried me about the end of QLP - is anyone actually going to listen to me anymore? Because I am not a QL anymore, I am just a

children's librarian. Ok, I have got all this experience but so what? It's over. People have very short memories". With restructurings taking place in some libraries, staff who acted in a support role to the QLs have also moved on and thus in some cases the QLs no longer have that wider network of support for undertaking work with young people outside their normal role. The commitment is still there, however: "We have so many ideas for the future as well, it is a case of will we have the capacity to deliver them?".

All QLs acknowledged that the skills they had gained from QLP-Y made them more marketable to undertake similar work should they wish to move on:

If things do not go the way I want, it has given me the skills, confidence and evidence to prove that I can do these things, and so if I do want to go somewhere else, I can say look I have published here.

It has given me a lot of skills to make me marketable, the things that I have experienced out of it.

Two young people interviewed also felt that their achievements might help to draw more young people into the library: "if [this] becomes an established magazine and it's in the library, then [people will think] 'hmm...that can't be quite a bad place to go'. So it will indirectly make people feel that the library isn't a boring place to be. 'Cause it's not. There is a lot to do".

### **3.5.3 Potential improvements to services**

There was general agreement amongst QLs that, although QLP-Y had helped to focus attention on the issue of services to young people, more needed to be done to address their needs in future: "we need to focus more on the teens as well as younger children when developing services". In order to take this further, there needs to be an agreed policy: "the only way you can effect real change is that something has to be embedded". "It needs to be institutionalised". This was made clear through QLP-Y and was also a point that was reinforced in the Innovation and Development module. If responsibility for working with young people is written into job descriptions, then it will be 'owned' by staff.

One QL commented that changes already taking place may to an extent have an impact on services to a wider range of people: "I think librarians have always been defined by specialisms. I think that has changed rapidly now. The specialists are going. If you are a librarian, what makes you worth that extra fiver? In the light of supplier selection, you need to have a role that is not so exclusive, which is why we hope that in the restructuring, youth work is something which is seen to be everybody's responsibility, to the level of job descriptions, to having young people interview new staff".

If there were the opportunity for a further project along the lines of QLP-Y, then it was commented that a 'snappier' title might be more appropriate for young people: "something spiffier for the media".

### **3.6 Reflections on the benefits of QLP-Y and issues of effective practice**

The QLs were asked to summarise what they felt were the main achievements of QLP-Y. First and foremost was that QLP-Y helped to emphasise an area of need and to bring into libraries young people who were not traditional library users. Following on from this, a second achievement was to involve participants in planning and delivering activities and sometimes selecting stock for the library:

[Our authority] had an idea before QLP to start a reading group who would advise the library on what stock to buy. But I don't think we saw it in the formal, powerful way that we are envisaging it now. I think it evolved with QLP. All of us have been overwhelmed with how capable young people are. Before we started we thought 'we could give them little things to do, but actually we can't put them in charge of anything important, because they wouldn't be able to cope with that, or be able to come up with any useful information or ideas.' I think QLP has proven beyond reasonable doubt that you give them whatever, and they run with it. And they come up with much better ideas than we would have. (QL)

The achievements discussed would not have happened in the same way, or may not have happened at all without QLP-Y:

Without QLP we would not have had the budget to do the things we wanted to do. It has meant that we could make an incredible commitment to young people that we wouldn't have had, with all the cuts. (QL)

The evident commitment of young people to sustaining the activities was also commented upon: "the young people really want [this initiative] to work. For me that is the one outstanding thing", noted one QL.

The other main benefit was to the QLs themselves, all of whom had experienced personal development and a broadening of their interests and expertise: "giving me the space to develop, not only myself but the service. And the service has benefited through me doing all this work, so that has been another success story".

One QL reflected on how the process of action learning had initially been challenging, but had promoted personal development:

I look back to the very first project... and I didn't really know what I was doing. I remember getting off the phone squealing because someone hadn't done what they had promised to do - very stressed out about it. Now I still get stressed out but I think of ways round things. I guess that is just the nature of this kind of learning, of action learning. I remember saying at one of the development days that I had been thrown in and it is sink or swim really.

While the QLP-Y funding had been an important component of the project, the added value in terms of the influence on the way in which young people are treated by staff and their perceptions of libraries as places for them was also noted: “But if you look at it from the added value point of view, they have all gone away with more skills, more confidence, they have had a really good time, and that connection with [our] library is made now”. The gains may have been small, but they are seen as significant.

The main factors contributing to the success of the project were seen to be responsiveness to what the young people themselves said they wanted; informal learning within a setting where young people have fun at the same time; allowing the young people to lead on some initiatives and ‘just get on with it; and also using communication mechanisms that are young-people friendly (such as texting them). Project participants interviewed confirmed that they had been involved in planning activities and given the flexibility to do what they were interested in. In some cases, this had led to self-censorship: “Our magazine is staying away from the whole sort of drug referencing, cigarettes, you know stuff that the sort of 16 age range shouldn’t be doing”.

As certain groups of young people may move on, it is important to continue to engage new groups, but also to consider whether members of the original group might take on positions of greater responsibility.

Overall, reflections on QLP-Y confirm that it has been largely a positive experience for participants. One QL said “If anything comes up in future, I wouldn’t hesitate to do it”. Another commented: “I am really quite sad that it’s all over! I think everyone who has been involved has got something out of it”

#### **4. Discussion**

The findings to date have raised a number of issues about the QLP-Y Project. These are discussed below under the following headings:

- Models of delivery of QLP-Y;
- The potential for innovation and how QLP-Y functions within the wider organisation;
- How QLP-Y relates to the national context; and
- Sustainability of initiatives.

## **4.1 Models of delivery of QLP-Y**

The QLP-Y Project was intended to be a flexible initiative and so was tailored towards the needs of young people in each authority. In one authority the advent of the project converged with mainstream developments for young people in their teens, with QLP-Y providing an impetus for specific elements of the new library. There were thus different models of delivery in each authority, although there was a common element of providing young people-centred activities which enabled participants to be involved in shaping delivery. The project also developed in the context of what was seen to be feasible for the QLs and the authority to fit in to its organisational structures. All of the libraries worked in partnership with other departments, although the benefits of this partnership were seen more in some projects than in others. In some instances there was a tendency to leave organisation to the QL, which put a lot of onus on one individual.

In all authorities, QLP-Y was seen as the launchpad for bringing in innovation, especially through providing the libraries with new technology which continues to draw in young people attracted to what's on offer. The evaluation shows that there is a lasting commitment to the user group, for example through the establishment of a youth board in some authorities, through creation of special areas specifically designated for young people and in some libraries involved young people in stock selection.

## **4.2 The potential for innovation and how QLP-Y functions in the context of the wider organisation**

There is a clear indication from the previous evaluation and current work that activities are innovative, although the QLs have come across many challenges to implementing these, particularly because of internal bureaucracy and also a lack of IT support and systems. There remains a reluctance to hand over power to young people, which needs to be addressed. More extensive, longer-term change is needed in libraries and the impetus for this may come from external initiatives independent of QLP-Y, although this project has contributed to some culture change and has helped to influence the views of staff beyond those directly involved in QLP-Y.

It is a matter of concern that restructurings and staff changes may detract from the value of QLP-Y in some authorities, particularly as staff return to their regular duties. At this stage it is unclear to what extent and how the message of QLP-Y has permeated the culture of some libraries or gone beyond the very immediate activities in specific locations. This again comes back to the issue of how to embed the ethos of projects such as QLP-Y in mainstream strategies and ensure that there is continuity of provision. Nonetheless, there have been some important legacies, including developments to the teen library in Haringey, the youth board in Barnet and the space for the manga group in Portsmouth. Provided the QLs are able to continue supporting initiatives which are not mainstreamed, then these could be

ongoing, at least for current groups of young people involved. The question of how sustainable these are will be revisited in the final stage of this evaluation.

### **4.3 How QLP-Y relates to the national context**

In the introduction, we outlined a number of national strategies relating to the need for involvement of young people and other isolated groups in libraries and the role that they can play in shaping provision. Through providing informal mechanisms for learning, particularly through IT-based initiatives, QLP-Y is directly meeting the aims of many of the national strategy documents. It has also been particularly strong in drawing disadvantaged young people into libraries and involving young people in shaping future provision and delivery of services. Thus QLP-Y can be seen as an important venture within the framework of Government policy. Its particular focus on staff development, as well as the development of young people participating in the activities, also distinguishes it from some other programmes aimed at addressing young people's needs. Through the QLP-Y Project, the QLs have become specialists in using new media. For example, the Portsmouth QL was asked to give a presentation at an *Inspiring the I-Generation Conference* on new media for libraries.

In Portsmouth also, the City Council is a part of the *Push 4 Culture* programme, elements of which relate closely to the QLP-Y mode of delivery; and the QL reported that the experience of QLP-Y was used as evidence in the authority's submission.

### **4.4 Sustainability of initiatives**

Although responsibility for working with young people should be shared amongst staff, the reality is that some of the impetus came from the QLs within the framework of a semi-formal project, as discussed earlier. There is thus the danger, once the QLs return to their former or new library roles, that they will no longer have the time and flexibility to maintain ongoing projects set up under QLP-Y.

There do appear to be signs of some longer-term legacy of the project, however. For example, young people are starting to see libraries as fun places to be and staff are beginning to understand needs of young people. It is not clear how extensive this development has been and to what extent this will continue without dedicated staff to sustain interest and disseminate the messages from the project. The importance of external funding became clear during the evaluation and some groups of young people are working with the QL and other staff to try to secure funding for future initiatives. Within specific authorities, the youth library in Haringey will help to ensure some continuity of provision for young people in their teen years, particularly as QLP-Y provided not only some of the inspiration for development of the library, but also some of the equipment needed for work with young people. In Portsmouth, the *Push 4 Culture* initiative, to which QLP-Y also contributed, will provide funded activities specifically aimed at young people and it is to be hoped that the learning from QLP-Y will help to inform the programme's development.

## 5. Conclusions and recommendations

At this stage in the evaluation, certain key messages have arisen from the QLP-Y Project. The previous evaluation and this ongoing evaluation have shown that there have been substantial benefits from QLP-Y for young people participating and for the QLs themselves, in terms of their personal and skills development. The impact on other staff is less tangible and it is yet unclear to what extent the ethos of the project has permeated local cultures beyond the immediate environment in which the project took place. In all participating authorities, young people have been involved in designing activities and in some instances (for example, with Barnet's Youth Board and Portsmouth's Magazine Group), in managing activities and planning future delivery.

There are certain lessons to be drawn from the findings in this interim evaluation report, specifically relating to the potential for sustainability of initiatives. One is the importance of embedding such projects in mainstream strategies in order to ensure that they permeate the culture. For instance, the youth library in Haringey can help to ensure that the needs of this age group of young people continue to be met and that the lessons learned and initiatives developed through QLP-Y which have been found to be effective can be continued within this setting. The importance of spreading projects such as QLP-Y beyond staff directly involved has also been noted. The potential impact of restructurings in some of the authorities on future initiatives based on the QLP-Y model and youth policies more generally needs to be explored further and this will also be a major issue for the next stage of the evaluation.

At this stage in the evaluation, there are some intermediate recommendations based on the findings so far:

- Although QLP-Y News has now reached its final edition, a further joint publication involving all of the participating authorities might be useful to summarise the QLP-Y Project, reflect on some of the learning to date and implications for changing the culture, to be disseminated as widely as possible to libraries, youth services and other relevant organisations. This might be in the form of an easily accessible short report, with visual examples, which may also be of interest to young people who have participated or who visit their library.
- In some authorities young people and the QLs are considering applications for further funding. The QLs might benefit from help in trying to access funding from other sources and LMU might have a role in supporting them in this.
- If any further developments of QLP-Y are to be considered, there are some key lessons from the earlier stage of the project, which include:
  - Changing title to something 'snappier';
  - Considering ways of measuring the costs vs. the benefits;
  - Building in mechanisms for mainstreaming at the outset, perhaps through embedding roles in written policies;
  - Focus on getting young people involved in steering group/managing activities (again because of potential bureaucratic barriers, it may be

necessary to implement a written agreement on this prior to the project).

## 6. Evaluation next steps

The evaluation will continue as indicated in the work plan. This will include:

- ongoing contact with QLs by phone and email and a final face-to-face interview during 2009;
- telephone interviews with mentors and/or sponsors;
- where possible, further observations and interviews with young people (bearing in mind that QLP-Y activities have now almost finished). The following observations have been planned for the near future:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Authority</b>	<b>Activity</b>
To be confirmed	Barnet	Attend further meeting of the Youth Board
To be confirmed	Portsmouth	Attend mangazine launch/ email or phone interview with another YP editor

- interview with LMU managers of project
- continuing to assess the project in the context of wider developments.

Although given the limited amount of data available during the full evaluation it has not been possible to undertake a cost-benefit analysis of the QLP-Y project, we will during the next stage of this evaluation endeavour to obtain information on the broad costs of the project and consider to what extent the activities represent value for money.

## References

Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (2002) *Start with the Child*. Report of the CILIP Working Group on library provision for children and young people. London: CILIP

Department for Children, Schools and Families (2007) *Aiming high for young people: a ten year strategy for positive activities*. London: DCSF.

Department for Culture, Media and Sport (2003). *Framework for the Future – Libraries, Learning and Information in the Next Decade*. Resource Publications. Available online via:

[www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive\\_2003/framework\\_future.htm](http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2003/framework_future.htm)

Department for Education and Skills (2006) *Youth Matters: next steps*. (0260-2006DOC-EN). Available online via: [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk)

Durrani, S; Smallwood, E; Richens, H; and Lusted, C (2008) *Innovation in youth services The Quality Leaders Project (Youth) empowers young people*. Paper presented at "Empowering the Public: Management Development Implications of Further Public Services Reforms in Personalising Services, and Applying New Management Tools to Create Public Value" [2008 EFMD Conference on Public Sector Management Development](#), 29-30 May 2008. Dublin.

The Reading Agency (2004) *Fulfilling their potential: a national development programme for young people's library services*. St Albans: TRA.

National Youth Libraries Board 'offer' to young people  
([www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets/L/Libraries\\_and\\_Young\\_People\\_12583.pdf](http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets/L/Libraries_and_Young_People_12583.pdf)).

*QLP News: perspectives on QLP-Y*. No. 8, September.

## Appendix I: interview schedules

### Topic guide for QL interviews 2008

1. Update on activities since December 2007 (what has taken place –including staffing changes, impact of budget changes, successes and challenges). What activities are planned for the future?
2. What elements of QLP-Y are continuing now? (How) Is it a different ‘model’? Has your role changed much? What support do you get for QLP-Y activities (from LMU, mentors, sponsors, other staff)?
3. Have you been working with new groups of young people? How did you identify the group(s)?
4. What, if any, skills have you developed as a result of QLP-Y activities since December 2007? How do you plan to use or build on these in the future (for QLP-Y related work or more widely)?

[note ask about prior qualifications and experience and also the module – how it has added to previous learning].

5. Have there been any personal gains for you as a result of running the QLP-Y activities? Would you have achieved these without QLP-Y?
6. Have any new services been developed under QLP-Y? Would these have been developed if QLP-Y had not happened?
7. Has the QLP-Y project impacted on the way in which services are delivered in your library/your authority (e.g. the role/skills of other staff, introduction of new systems, improving accessibility)? If so, how? Is there anything more you think could be done to improve service delivery for young people?
8. What has been the impact of QLP-Y on young people participating?
9. Do you think QLP-Y is reaching the young people who most need this approach/service? (identify gaps in delivery and how these might be addressed).
10. Overall, what do you think have been the main achievements of QLP-Y so far?
11. What have been the main challenges (and how have these been/might these be addressed)?
12. What, if anything, do you think will be the legacy of QLP-Y once the programme finishes?
13. Any other comments?