+

An Infopeople Webinar

Wednesday, June 12, 2013
12 noon to 1:00 P.M.

Community Led Library
Service Development

Presenter: Francisca Goldsmith

francisca@infopeople.org

Infopeople webinars are supported by the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services under the
provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered in California by the State Librarian.

+ Agenda

- What and Why Community Led Service Development

- Benefits of the Community Led Service Development Approach

- How Community Led Service Development Looks in Real Libraries

- Posture and Process, Not Project

- Challenges in the US Specific Context

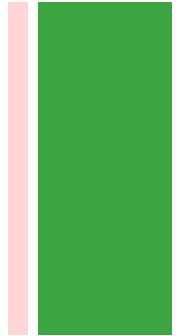- Discussion
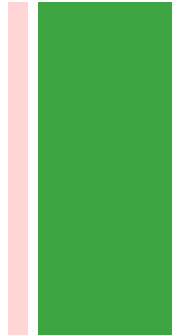
+ This was once a helpful structure!

Context, technology, and needs have changed.

Community Led Service Development Has a 50-year History

- UK urban public libraries

- Canadian public libraries, urban, suburban and rural

- US public health education

- US library teen services

- Real life experiences and learnings are available readily and quickly, no matter where in the world we are. (We call it "the Internet").

- Toolkits and experts already exist and are available to us.

+ Let's See Where Our Standard Library Survey Methods Take Us

- We like quantitative data collection…counting is easy to learn and it's factual (right?)

- We respect demographic data as community revealing
  - Who was counted?
  - What time of day does the count reflect?
  - When do generalities about demographic groups get in the way of understanding individuals?

Which of the following languages do one or more staff speak at your library?
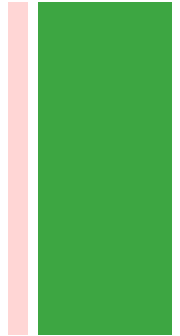
- Spanish

- Dutch

- Amharic

- Japanese
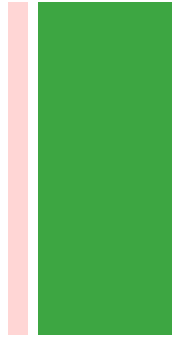
+ Wow! Nobody has staff who speak English?

+ Is the following true or false about your library's community?

- Almost all of the community's fine artists live in middle class conditions in my library's service area.

And you know this how…?

# Do Traditional Assessment Metrics Reveal Community Assets?

- We have been relying on quantitative data to gather evidence that the community uses and understands us in proportion to their access abilities around collections and public space.

- We look to professional reviews and jobbers to give us input in deciding how to build and maintain our collections.

- We collect class visit numbers to measure the size and strength of our partnerships with local schools.

- We evaluate library programs through attendance numbers and comment cards provided by audience members.

+ Traditional Metrics Show Us Our Own Assets…

...and, Maybe, Community Needs

- Has your library's collection budget decreased since 1995?

- Do local schools rely on your children's collection to fulfill summer reading list assignments?

- Are any of the public washroom stalls large enough to accommodate a wheelchair?
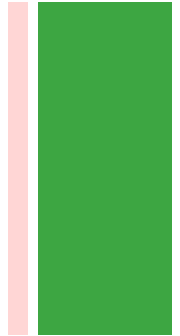
Social Exclusion

- List in the text chat box, ONE community segment you already know is isolated from library services

- Geographic isolation?

- Physical health status incompatible with services available?

- Mental health status stigmatism?

	Socially Included ⟷ Socially Excluded			
Income	Receive regular income, reliable source, know minimum, can predict amount, can budget	Receive regular income, various payment dates, various amounts, difficult to budget	Receive unreliable income, various sources, cannot budget	Little to no income
Ability to Pay	Own your own home	Can afford to live independently by paying market rent	Can afford to live independently by sharing expenses with others	Cannot afford to live independently / No fixed address
	You own and operate a well-functioning, insured car	Someone in your family owns and operates a car - the car is shared among several family members	You have a good transportation arrangement with relatives/friends, or easy access to public transportation, with reasonable routes, times and fares	Rely on others for transportation, some reliability issues OR No dependable transportation, interferes with work/school/appointments
Security	You generally feel safe at home, in your neighbourhood, on errands and at work	You take a few extra safety precautions	You make substantial efforts to feel safe (check to see who is outside before you go out, concerned about ex/enemy, have guard dog)	You need protection (e.g. restraining order) or you have recently moved so that you feel safer
Social Support	You have a network of friends and family who gladly help you with practical tasks and emotional support	You have 1-3 relatives or friends who can assist you when called upon	You are mainly self-sufficient, but you sometimes delay tasks or decisions until help is available	You avoid a lot of situations because you don't have the support you need OR no one to turn to

Courtesy of Halifax Public Libraries, NS

What's It Like in Your Community?

- Aspects of my community have deep needs concerning information access

- Community sectors of adults have educational needs

- My community needs venues for cultural experiences

- My community includes agencies, organizations and/or individuals with information transfer skills and interests

- There are accessible lifelong learning opportunities in my community

- Cultural interests and experiences are bountiful in my community

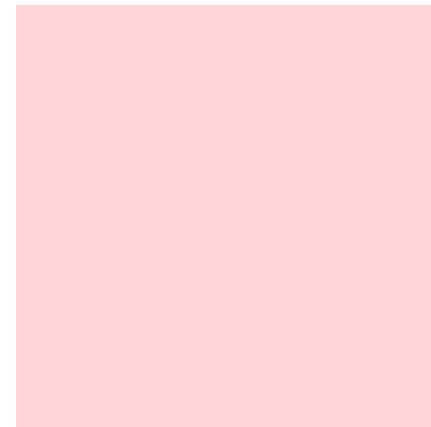# Benefits of Community Led Service Development in a Public Library Context

- Aligning library assets with community collaborators' needs

- Enhancing library commonwealth with community assets

- Expanding community connections and engagement opportunities to meet marginalized community members

- Bringing flexibility to services during time of environmental fluidity

Analyze Where and When to Provide Value

- Forego duplicating services provided more readily by others
  - Use budget where it matters
  - Lose outmoded ~~services~~ traditions

- Move from provider to facilitator
  - A customer trades for your wares; patrons are empowered to demand because they've funded; community engagement services puts community members first

- Identify and analyze how best to serve a marginalized community sector
  - Listen, engage and collaborate
  - You can't address everyone at once!

- Invest in flexible staff and staffing through staff wide training and service support

+

What words do YOU use to describe community member involvement with your library?

Community-Led Service Planning: Key Differences

	COMMUNITY ASSESSMENT & NEEDS IDENTIFICATION		SERVICE PLANNING AND DELIVERY	
	COMMUNITY ASSESMENT	**NEEDS IDENTIFICATION**	**SERVICE PLANNING**	**DELIVERY**
TRADITIONAL PLANNING	Staff review: – Demographic data, – Library use statistics, – Comment cards, and – Community survey results.	Staff identify service gaps or under-served communities.	Staff review literature. Staff consult with other staff and service providers. Staff develop service response.	Staff deliver service: – develop the collection, – hold the program, or – design facilities.
COMMUNITY-LED PLANNING	Staff review all of the above and... – Staff spend time in community developing relationships with community members. – Staff hear from community about what is important to them.	Staff discuss with community members and hear from the community what their priorities are.	Service ideas are the community's ideas. Community is engaged in the planning of the service. Staff act as partners and facilitators rather than as creators and teachers.	Community members and staff work together to deliver the service: Community members involved in selecting collection materials. Community members active in hosting the program. Community members working collaboratively with the library to develop policy recommendations.

From the *Working Together Toolkit*

Community Led Service Development in Real Libraries

- Musquodoboit Harbour, NS

- Douglas County, CO

- Capt Wm Spry, HFX, NS

- Technology availability and assistance in a rural context

- Embedded reference beyond the building walls

- Food pantry recipe help in aid of food security

Musquodoboit Harbour

- Community asset mapping identified group of young women engaged in employment training that required tech access

- Group's meeting time could not be altered due to geographic isolation of members and lack of public transit

- All library staff met weekly for an hour of training and sharing of community information learned through entry work

- Library staff member responsible for building security became able to rearrange her schedule to provide community group with training space fitting their scheduling needs

"Before the process... we were meeting our own understanding, our own guessing of the needs of the community, with some facts thrown in."

Musquodoboit Harbour staff member's view of her library's community approach before training in community led development methods

"[P]ut all your pre-conceived notions aside, you need to start with a blank slate... It takes a different perspective and it takes time. It is a mind shift, it is a shift in thinking …."

Staff training evaluation comment, Musquodoboit Harbour

"We had to relearn how to do things. Instead of suggesting, ask. You think you know what they want but you don't. It seems to work a lot better when you know what they really want."

Musquodoboit Harbour staff observation, a year after community led service development was adopted as approach to the library's work

+ Douglas County

- In-library reference services faced plummeting use

- Service value recognized as context sensitive

- Service moved out from unused context to community groups where the need for reference guidance is lively

- Ensuing partnerships enrich both library and organizations it serves

- Information developed in the field informs evolving in-building applications

- Recognition of library service value promotes respect for retaining it as a community resource
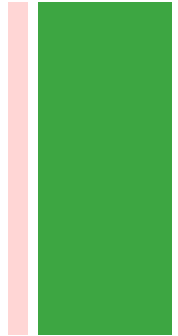
Captain William Spry Library
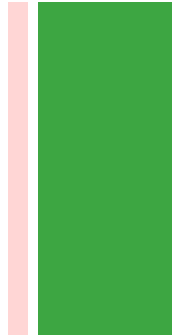
- Working Together discovery location (HRSDC [Human Resources and Skills Development Canada]-supported exploratory project)

- Learning how to enter the community
  - Asset mapping
  - Listening
  - Negotiating in-house changes to respond to discovered realities

- Linking community assets that meeting community needs needs

- Arts and small business

- Technology upgrading for employment

- Materials return collection points

- Food pantry client support

Quick Case Study: Connecting Spryfield's Food Pantry Community Members with Preparation Advice
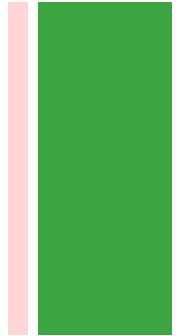
- Food pantry staff and customers identify that some food waste and hunger occur when unfamiliar ingredients are provided

- Pantry staff place library's phone number on packages of food

- Library staff and pantry staff communicate about week's grocery offerings

- Library staff researches and supplies callers with recipes

Canned garbanzo beans: Drain them, mash with a potato masher, add salt and pepper and just enough mayo to hold it all together. Spread it on bread to make a lo-cal, high fibre tasty sandwich.

Community Led Service Development Is a Mode, Not a Project

- Training required for all (This isn't outreach)

- Start up time needed

- Initial community asset identification must lead to decisions about which library traditions should be cut or scaled back

- Every staff member has a role to play in the delivery of services developed with the community

- Community and library evaluation is ongoing and provides guidance for refinement
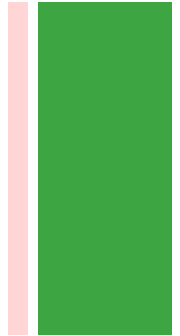
Challenges Presented by our US Context

+ Local tax support requires that voting library supporters understand why and how this service reboot enhances their stake in the community

Government data collection focuses on quantitative data that does not align with outcome measured service features

Americans are predisposed to think first of "me" and then of "us"

We Can Be Sure of a Few Things

- Change is constant

- We can lead into the change

- We already know how to find out some things (After all, we have librarian skills!)

- No two communities are exactly alike

- Diversity is ubiquitous and valuable

- Community led service development has worked elsewhere (Yes, including in unionized libraries)
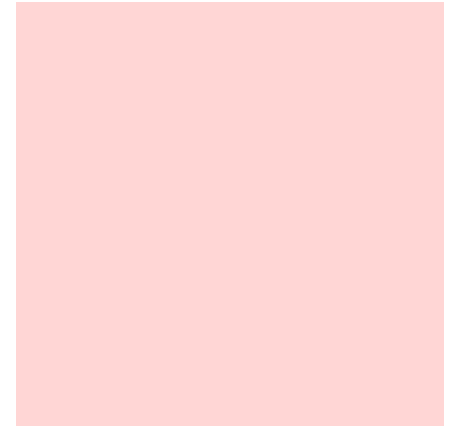
+ So Let's Talk about Challenges

Thank you

Francisca Goldsmith

francisca@infopeople.org

Infopeople

helping libraries think differently