

# Public libraries, social class and social justice

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## Abstract

Libraries must be relevant to the needs of local communities which are becoming more diverse and multicultural. In this paper I will examine the link between inequality, social class and the use of public libraries. I will also build on ground breaking research in the UK - *Open to All? The Public Library & Social Exclusion* (Muddiman et al, 2000) - and cutting edge good practice in Canada via the Working Together Project (2004-2008). I will outline the practical steps which are required to develop needs-based and community-led library services. My overall theme is *Public Libraries & Social Justice* (Pateman & Vincent, 2010) and I will explore some of the challenges and barriers to creating socially inclusive libraries and how these can be overcome. I will provide a blue print and a road map for producing strategies, structures, systems and cultures which enable local communities to be fully involved and engaged in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of their library services.

**Keywords:** public libraries, social class, social justice

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## Inequality

There is now a large body of evidence which demonstrates the impact of inequality on a whole range of issues. For example, *The Spirit Level: why equality is better for everyone* (Richard Wilkinson & Kate Pickett, 2010) is a ground breaking book, based on years of research, which provides hard evidence to show:

- How almost everything – from life expectancy to mental illness, violence to illiteracy – is affected not by how wealthy a society is, but how equal it is
- That societies with a bigger gap between rich and poor are bad for everyone in them – including the well off

Wilkinson & Pickett obtained a list of the 50 richest countries in the world from the World Bank. This report was published in 2004 and is based on data from 2002. Countries with populations below 3 million (to avoid tax havens like the Cayman Islands and Monaco) and countries without comparable data on income inequality (such as Iceland) were excluded. That left 23 rich countries which were ranked in order of income

inequality (measured by how much richer the richest 20% are than the poorest 20% in each country).

**Table 1: Income Equality**

Income gap (low to high)		Income gap (low to high)	
Japan	1	Switzerland	13
Finland	2	Ireland	14
Norway	3	Greece	15
Sweden	4	Italy	16
Denmark	5	Israel	17
Belgium	6	New Zealand	18
Austria	7	Australia	19
Germany	8	UK	20
Netherlands	9	Portugal	21
Spain	10	USA	22
France	11	Singapore	23
Canada	12		

Wilkinson & Pickett found a startling correlation between income equality and a whole range of issues including happiness, physical health, mental health, drug abuse, education, imprisonment, obesity, social mobility, trust and community life, violence, teenage births and child well being.

The evidence to support these correlations can be found on the Equality Trust website at [www.equalitytrust.org.uk/why/evidence](http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/why/evidence):

People in more equal societies live longer, a smaller proportion of children die in infancy and self-rated health is better.

Children do better at school in more equal societies.

There is more social mobility in more equal societies.

Communities are more cohesive and people trust each other more in more equal societies.

The Equality Trust has gathered data from over 30 years of research ([www.equalitytrust.org.uk/why](http://www.equalitytrust.org.uk/why)) which indicates that:

In rich countries, a smaller gap between rich and poor means a happier, healthier, and more successful population. The USA, the UK, Portugal, and New Zealand do much worse than Japan, Sweden or Norway.

Meanwhile, more economic growth will NOT lead to a happier, healthier, or more successful population. In fact, there is no relation between income per head and social well-being in rich countries.

If the UK were more equal, we'd be better off as a population. For example, the evidence suggests that if we halved inequality here:

- Murder rates could halve
- Mental illness could reduce by two thirds
- Obesity could halve

- Imprisonment could reduce by 80%
- Teen births could reduce by 80%
- Levels of trust could increase by 85%

It's not just poor people who do better. The evidence suggests people all the way up would benefit, although it's true that the poorest would gain the most.

These findings hold true, whether you look across developed nations, or across the 50 states of the USA.

But do they hold true when it comes to public libraries?

## Public Libraries

David Fuegi & Martin Jennings produced a report on *International library statistics: trends and commentary based on the LIBECON data*. This report was published in 2004 and is based on data from 2001. The LIBECON statistics are consistent with ISO2789 (International Library Statistics) and ISO11620 (Performance Indicators).

ISO 2789 specifies rules for the library and information services community on the collection and reporting of statistics: for the purposes of international reporting; to ensure conformity between countries for those statistical measures that are frequently used by library managers but do not qualify for international reporting; to encourage good practice in the use of statistics for the management of library and information services, and to specify data provision required by ISO 11620.

ISO 11620 specifies the requirements of a performance indicator for libraries and establishes a set of performance indicators to be used by libraries of all types. It also provides guidance on how to implement performance indicators in libraries where such performance indicators are not already in use. ISO 11620 is applicable to all types of libraries in all countries.

There are 32 countries in the LIBECON database of internationally comparable public library statistics. 21 of these countries also appear in the Spirit Level list of 23 states (the two exceptions are Israel and Singapore).

### Table 2: Library Loans, Members and Visits

Table 2 indicates library loans per head of population, the % of population who are library members and library visits per head of population for each of these 21 countries:

Country	Loans	Members	Visits	Country	Loans	Members	Visits
Australia		21	4.21	Japan	4.3	30	6.48
Austria	1.8	10	0.65	Netherlands	12.1	27	5.13
Belgium	7.1	24	5.25	New Zealand		21	4.21
Canada	10.6	21	4.09	Norway	5.2	29	4.98
Denmark	13.4	35	6.14	Portugal	0.3	54	5.27
Finland	19.8	46	12.39	Spain	0.7	19	5.16
France	5.2	20	5.21	Sweden	9.1	27	5.34
Germany	3.7	10	3.64	Switzerland	0.9	30	4.67
Greece	0.2	27	0.23	UK	6.9	56	5.28
Ireland	3.2	24	5.36	USA	6.4	21	4.09
Italy	4.1	28	5.27				

There is no real international consensus on what makes the best library service but if we have to make a judgement based on the internationally comparable and available statistical indicators then those in the above table are very mainstream, consistent with ISO11620 and in no way perverse or eccentric.

### Table 3: Library Loans

Table 3 ranks each country in terms of library loans per head of population, from high to low:

Country	Loans/ pop	Rank	Country	Loans/ pop	Rank
Finland	19.8	1	Japan	4.3	11
Denmark	13.4	2	Italy	4.1	12
Netherlands	12.1	3	Germany	3.7	13
Canada	10.6	4	Ireland	3.2	14
Sweden	9.1	5	Austria	1.8	15
Belgium	7.1	6	Switzerland	0.9	16
UK	6.9	7	Spain	0.7	17
USA	6.4	8	Portugal	0.3	18
Norway	5.2	= 9	Greece	0.2	19
France	5.2	= 9			

Library loans (the number of books and other items borrowed from public libraries) was for many years the key performance indicator for public libraries. The limitations of this indicator are that it only measures one aspect of library performance (predominantly book loans).

### Table 4: Library Membership

Table 4 ranks each country in terms of % of the population who are library members, from high to low:

Country	% members	Rank	Country	% members	Rank
UK	56	1	Belgium	24	=12
Portugal	54	2	Ireland	24	=12
Finland	46	3	Canada	21	=14
Denmark	35	4	New Zealand	21	=14
Japan	30	=5	USA	21	=14
Switzerland	30	=5	Australia	21	=14
Norway	29	7	France	20	18
Italy	28	8	Spain	19	19
Sweden	27	=9	Germany	10	=20
Netherlands	27	=9	Austria	10	=20
Greece	27	=9			

Library membership counts the number of people who register to join the library service, as a proportion of the total population. The limitations of this measure are that not all library members are active library users.

**Table 5: Library Visits**

Table 5 ranks each country in terms of library visits per head of population, from high to low:

Country	Visits/pop	Rank	Country	Visits/pop	Rank
Finland	12.39	1	Netherlands	5.13	12
Japan	6.48	2	Norway	4.98	13
Denmark	6.14	3	Switzerland	4.67	14
Sweden	5.34	4	Australia	4.21	=15
Ireland	5.36	5	New Zealand	4.21	=15
UK	5.28	6	Canada	4.09	=17
Italy	5.27	=7	USA	4.09	=17
Portugal	5.27	=7	Germany	3.64	19
Belgium	5.25	9	Austria	0.65	20
France	5.21	10	Greece	0.23	21
Spain	5.16	11			

Library visits (the number of people who visit a library) is probably the most accurate measure of library use. It counts everyone who uses the library for whatever reason and is more comprehensive than library loans and library membership.

**Table 6: Public Libraries and the Spirit Level**

Table 6 ranks countries by income gap (low to high), loans per head of population (high to low), % of the population who are library members (high to low) and visits per head of population (high to low):

Income gap (low to high)		Loans/pop (high to low)		% memb. (high to low)		Visits/pop (high to low)	
Japan	1	Finland	1	UK	1	Finland	1
Finland	2	Denmark	2	Portugal	2	Japan	2
Norway	3	Netherlands	3	Finland	3	Denmark	3
Sweden	4	Canada	4	Denmark	4	Sweden	4
Denmark	5	Sweden	5	Japan	=5	Ireland	5
Belgium	6	Belgium	6	Switzerland	=5	UK	6
Austria	7	UK	7	Norway	7	Italy	=7
Germany	8	USA	8	Italy	8	Portugal	=7
Netherlands	9	Norway	=9	Sweden	=9	Belgium	9
Spain	10	France	=9	Netherlands	=9	France	10
France	11	Japan	11	Greece	=9	Spain	11
Canada	12	Italy	12	Belgium	=12	Netherlands	12
Switzerland	13	Germany	13	Ireland	=12	Norway	13
Ireland	14	Ireland	14	Canada	=14	Switzerland	14
Greece	15	Austria	15	New Zealand	=14	Australia	=15
Italy	16	Switzerland	16	USA	=14	New Zealand	=15
New Zealand	17	Spain	17	Australia	=14	Canada	=17
Australia	18	Portugal	18	France	18	USA	=17
UK	19	Greece	19	Spain	19	Germany	19
Portugal	20			Germany	=20	Austria	20
USA	21			Austria	=20	Greece	21

There is a close correlation between countries with relatively small income gaps and those with high levels of book loans, library membership and library visits:

- Finland, Denmark and Sweden have high levels of book loans per head of population.
- Finland, Denmark and Japan have high levels of book loans per head of population.
- Finland, Japan, Denmark, and Sweden have high levels of library visits per head of population.

There is also a correlation between countries with relatively large income gaps and those with low levels of book loans, library membership and library visits:

- The USA, Australia and New Zealand rank low in terms of library membership and visits

There are a number of what Wilkinson & Pickett call ‘outliers’, where there is little or no correlation between relative income gap and library performance:

- Portugal has a relatively large income gap but ranks high in terms of library membership and visits
- The UK has a relatively large income gap but ranks high in terms of library membership, visits and book loans

Fuegi& Jennings noted that ‘The UK does not appear to have slipped as far as many British librarians believe, despite startling reductions in loans over a number of years and severe financial restrictions.’

This startling reduction in loans has continued in recent years. Book loans have fallen from 405.9 million in 2001 to 263.2 million in 2010, a decrease of 35%.

Library visits increased slightly from 270.7 million in 2001 to 271.5 million in 2010. However, visits are down by 6.6% from their high of 290.9 million visits in 2005.

*International comparisons of public engagement in culture and sport* (Department of Culture, Media & Sports, August 2011) by Orian Brook uses Eurobarometer, Eurostat and other data to compare Great Britain with other European countries in relation to public engagement in sport and culture. Brook found that there was consistently higher attendance and participation in culture and sport in Scandinavia and the Netherlands.

### **Table 7: Cultural engagement in Europe**

Table 7 shows the percentage of people who visited libraries [see Table in next page].

Finland	72.5%
Sweden	69.9%
Denmark	68.0%
Slovenia	52.7%
Netherlands	50.7%
Estonia	50.7%
Ireland	46.5%
Slovakia	42.2%
Northern Ireland	41.2%

Great Britain	39.7%
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According to the latest Taking Part Survey results (Department of Culture Media and Sport, August 2011) the % of the UK population who are library users has fallen from 56% in 2001 to 39.7% in 2011. Nearly two thirds (60.3%) of the population are not library users. This fall in library performance is in line with the UK's increasing level of income inequality. Despite being the sixth-largest economy in the world and the third-largest in Europe after Germany and France, 13.5 million people, or 22% of the population, live below the poverty line (defined as being 60% of the median household income). This is a higher level of relative poverty than all but four other EU members. Four million children, 31% of the total, live in households below the poverty line. Happiness levels for children in the UK are among the lowest in the developed world. The Equality Trust, in their recent *Research Digest (The Equality Trust Research Digest: Trends & Measures, no.2, 2011)* reported that:

- UK income inequality increased by 32% between 1960 and 2005. During the same period, it increased by 23% in the USA, and in Sweden decreased by 12%.
- In the 1960s Sweden and the UK had similar levels of income inequality. By 2005 the gap between the two had increased by 28%.
- Since the 1980s income inequality in the United States and the UK has increased substantially and has returned to levels not seen since the 1920s

## Social Justice

*The Spirit Level* makes a clear link between income inequality and a wide range of issues including the use of public libraries. The Nordic countries have a small income gap and high levels of library use. The UK has become one of the most unequal countries in the world and this has been reflected in falling levels of library use. The deep cuts in public expenditure are likely to accelerate this decline. Wilkinson & Pickett have suggested that 'Political will is a precondition for success for the adoption of any effective policies to reduce inequality - political will among public and politicians alike. That will only be forthcoming when people recognise how important greater equality is to the quality of social relations - and so to the real quality of life - for the vast majority of the population.'

Pateman & Vincent (2010) also argue for greater equality and social justice. In broad terms, Social Justice is about every one of us having the chances and opportunities to make the most of our lives and use our talents to the full.

For libraries, it must involve:

- Focusing on a needs-based service and targeting resources towards those who need them most
- Knowing and understanding the components of the local community
- Having an active, political role in empathising with, fighting in solidarity with and supporting the local community
- Fully engaging the community, moving as far as possible towards co-production of service provision.
- Embracing equality, diversity and multiculturalism

Culture encompasses more than ethnicity. Culture is the set of shared attitudes, values, goals, and practices that characterizes an institution, organization or group. This definition can be applied to an ethnic group or a social group. In the UK there is a rigid and enduring social class system which makes social mobility difficult. This is another by product of an unequal society. Social class is a highly subjective and contested issue which has largely been ignored by the library profession. Under the governments of John Major, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown the prevailing orthodoxy was that social class was not relevant or no longer existed. The economic recession which began in 2008 has led to a renewed interest in social class and also the ideas of Karl Marx and Frederick Engels (1848) authors of the *Communist Manifesto*.

Hicks & Allen (1999) have tracked changes in the British social class structure between 1911 and 1991. Their work is based on the Office for National Statistics categorization of social class by occupation.

### Table 8: Social Class by Occupied Population

Table 8 indicates that between 1911 and 1991 the middle class grew from 14% to 37% of the population and the working class decreased from 86% to 62% of the population.

	1911	1991
I Professional	1%	5%
II Managerial & Technical	13%	32%
III Skilled	37%	34%
IV Partly Skilled	39%	22%
V Unskilled	10%	6%

Other commentators have used the categories of social class defined by Marx and Engels (1848) to reclassify the UK labour force.

### Table 9: Population by Marxist Categories

Table 9 shows Peter Latham's (2011) reclassification of the *UK Labour Force Survey* (Office for National Statistics, 2009) using Marxist Categories:

<b>Bourgeoisie / Capitalists</b>		<b>1%</b>
<b>Petty bourgeoisie / intermediate strata with contradictory class locations</b>		<b>15%</b>
Senior managers and officials (E.g. directors and chief executives of major companies and senior officials in local government)	7%	
Small employers, self employed professionals and 'own account' workers (E.g. self employed builders, hairdressers and shopkeepers)	8%	
<b>Proletariat / working class</b>		<b>84%</b>
Higher professional workers (E.g. doctors, dentists, professors, professional engineers, clergy and social workers)	6%	
Lower managerial and professional workers (E.g. school teachers and nurses)	22%	
Lower supervisory and technical workers (E.g. employed plumbers or electricians)	8%	
Intermediate workers (E.g. airline cabin crew, secretaries, fire fighters and auxiliary nurses)	9%	
Semi routine workers (E.g. shop assistants, call centre workers and care assistants)	12%	
Routine workers (E.g. cleaners and refuse collectors)	9%	
Reserve army of labour (E.g. never worked or unemployed)	18%	
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

These studies indicate that somewhere between 15-37% of the British population are middle class and 62 -84% are working class.

### Table 10: Public use by Social Class

Table 10 indicates that there are proportionately more library users from the upper socio economic group than from the lower socio economic group:

	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	Jan-Dec 2010	2010/11	05/06 -10/11
<b>Upper socio economic group</b>	52.1%	50.2%	48.0%	43.3%	43.1%	43.0%	43.9%	-8.2%
<b>Lower socio economic group</b>	40.1%	38.1%	38.7%	35.1%	32.3%	33.3%	33.6%	-6.5%
<b>+/-</b>	<b>+12%</b>	<b>+12.1%</b>	<b>+9.3%</b>	<b>+8.2%</b>	<b>+10.8%</b>	<b>+9.7%</b>	<b>+10.3%</b>	

According to this data from the *Taking Part Survey* (DCMS, 2011) nearly 40% of middle class people used a public library in 2010/11 (down from 52.1% in 2005/06) compared to just 33.6% of working class people (down from 40.1% in 2005/06). Given that 62-84% of the British population is working class, the fact that only around a third of this group are library users explains why a relatively low number of White people are library users. The *Taking Part Survey* also revealed:

- Library use continues to be significantly higher among those in the least deprived areas of England
- As educational attainment increases, so too does the propensity to visit and use libraries. People with fewer qualifications than five or more GCSE/O Levels grade A\*-C were 12% less likely to have used a library in the last 12 months. Those with A levels or equivalent were 13% more likely and those with a higher education or equivalent were 23% more likely to have used a library in the same period.
- Readers of the Daily Telegraph, The Guardian, The Independent and The Times all had a highly significant and positive association with library participation. But the readers of the Daily Express and the Sun had a lower frequency of library use.

The scale of the challenge to create a socially inclusive public library service can be seen in this analysis of library use and non use, based on the Taking Part findings:

### Table 11: Active, Passive and Non Library Users

Active users	12.8%
Passive / lapsed users	26.6%
Non Users	60.6%

Only 12.8% of the UK population are active library users. These are people who own a library ticket and use the library on a regular basis. These are quite literally the centre of attention. They are the focus of most of the library service's resources, services and capacity. They use the library most but often need it the least.

A further 26.6% of the population are passive or lapsed users. These are people who own a library card but have not used the library in the past 12 months. They have some needs and could be attracted back into the library via marketing and promotion campaigns.

The majority of the population (60.6%) are non-users. These are people who have never owned a library card. These are people who need the library the most but use it the least. They include large sections of the White working class and some sections of ethnic minority communities.

If this situation is to be reversed then an inclusive paradigm is required where the focus is on getting non users into the library. In this model the library service's resources, services and capacity are focused on the outer circle. The direction of travel is towards the centre, with any spare resources being spent on passive and then active users. This is what I call a needs-based library service.

## Open to All

The conceptual framework for a needs-based library service in the UK was first developed in *Open to All? The Public Library & Social Exclusion* (Muddiman et al, 2000). I was a member of the team that produced *Open to All?*, an 18 month research project which examined the context of social exclusion and the nature of the problems facing public libraries and other public institutions. The record of the public library in tackling disadvantage was critically assessed and the weaknesses of a predominantly "voluntary" approach to exclusion based on access were highlighted. A survey of contemporary public library services and eight case studies of public library authorities suggested that although public libraries were modernising their services, this modernisation was unlikely to refocus the public library on excluded communities and social groups. The project concluded that to do this, and to become more than superficially "open to all", the public library needed to transform itself into a far more proactive, educative and interventionist public institution, with a concern for social justice at its core.

The suggested elements of this transformation were:

- the mainstreaming of provision for socially excluded groups and communities and the establishment of standards of service and their monitoring;
- the adoption of resourcing strategies which prioritise the needs of excluded people and communities;
- a recasting of the role of library staff to encompass a more socially responsive and educative approach;
- staffing policies and practices which address exclusion, discrimination and prejudice;
- targeting of excluded social groups and communities;
- the development of community-based approaches to library provision, which incorporate consultation with and partnership with local communities;
- ICT and networking developments which actively focus on the needs of

- excluded people;
- a recasting of the image and identity of the public library to link it more closely with the cultures of excluded communities and social groups.

This report was launched in August 2000 by Mo Mowlam, Minister for the Cabinet Office. There is much evidence to show the significant impact which this report has had on library services in the UK and abroad over the past 11 years.

## The Network

*Open to All?* was not the first report to recommend changes to the UK public library system. However, most of these previous reports had ended up gathering dust on the shelves of policy makers while public libraries continued to operate in much the same way as when they were first established in the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. We were determined that *Open to All?* would not suffer the same fate and to keep our ideas alive we created The Network which supports libraries, museums, archives, galleries and other cultural and heritage organisations (as well as individuals) who are working to tackle social exclusion. Most of the UK public library authorities have joined the Network as well as a number of national museums and galleries. This means that the ideas contained in *Open to All?* are continuing to reach a very wide audience. Visit our website at [www.seapn.org.uk](http://www.seapn.org.uk) to find out more – and join us!

## Working Together

*Open to All?* also had an impact on library services beyond the UK, particularly in Canada where the Working Together Project (2004-2008) was initiated to develop methods for libraries to work with low-income communities through a community development approach. Working Together was piloted in four Canadian public library services – Vancouver, Halifax, Toronto, and Regina – with the aim of putting the ideas and recommendations of *Open to All?* into action.

Working Together had two main objectives:

- Through establishing ongoing relationships with socially excluded people, work collaboratively with socially excluded communities to articulate and respond to their library service wants and needs.
- Identify and examine systemic barriers to library use for socially excluded people and propose policy and procedural change to address these barriers, including the development of an inclusive service planning model.

Community Development Librarian posts were created and placed in the community to find out what was actually happening and how public libraries were perceived.

This revealed that holistic and systemic changes were required to every aspect of the library service including strategies, structures, systems and organisational culture which are mutually supportive and focused on social justice. The first stage in the transformation process must be the development of a robust strategy and a clear vision which all stakeholders can sign up to. Strategy development should be an inclusive

process and actively involve staff, councillors, board members, partners, suppliers and all sections of the local community.

This will require creative and non-traditional approaches to community engagement to make sure that everyone is involved in the process. This engagement should be towards the empowerment – leadership end of the community involvement continuum.

**Table 12: The Community Engagement Continuum**

<b>PASSIVE</b>	<b>REACTIVE</b>	<b>PARTICIPATIVE</b>	<b>EMPOWERMENT</b>	<b>LEADERSHIP</b>
Local residents and organizations are informed of issues by library service.	Local residents and organizations provide input into the priorities and resource use of library service.	Local residents and organizations influence the priorities and resources of library service.	Local residents and organizations work in shared planning and action with library service.	Local residents and organizations initiate and lead on issues with support from library service.

The next stage in the process of developing a needs-based library service is to remodel the staffing and service structures to enable them to deliver the new strategy. This will require a review of existing structures to ensure that services are in the right place, open at the right time and delivering the right range of services to meet local community needs. Staff roles and skills will also need to be reviewed to ensure that you have *The right 'man' for the job?* (Wilson & Birdi, 2008). This refers to some important research carried out at the University of Sheffield into the role of empathy in community librarianship. The following set of key staff skills were identified as being critical to a socially inclusive library service: Communication, listening & negotiation skills; Influencing relationships; Reflective practice; Improved confidence and assertiveness; Dealing with conflict.

The third stage in developing a needs-based library service is to assess all existing policies, procedures and processes to ensure that they are consistent with the strategy, service and staffing structures. For example, in the Traditional Library Service Planning Model, all stages of the process are initiated and led by library staff with little or no input from the local community.

**Table 13: The Traditional Library Service Planning Model**

<b>Community Assessment</b>	<b>Needs Identification</b>	<b>Service Planning</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Staff review	Staff identify service gaps or under-served communities	Staff review literature	Staff deliver service:	Staff review various inputs:
Demographic data		Staff consult with other staff and service providers	Develop the collection,	Feedback forms
Library use statistics			Hold the programme,	Programme attendance
Comment Cards		Staff develop service response	Design facilities.	Collection use
Community survey results				Library card enrolment

This should be replaced with a Community-Led Service Planning Model where the staff and the local community work together to design, plan, deliver and evaluate library services.

**Table 14: Community-Led Service Planning Model**

<b>Community Assessment</b>	<b>Needs Identification</b>	<b>Service Planning</b>	<b>Delivery</b>	<b>Evaluation</b>
Staff review all of the traditional measures and:  Staff spend time in community developing relationships with local people  Staff hear from community about what is important to them.	Staff discuss with community and hear from them 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 creators and experts.	Community and staff work together to deliver the service:  Community involved in selecting materials  Community active in hosting the programme  Community work with the library to develop policy recommendations.	Community and staff discuss:  How did the process work?  Did the service/policy, etc. actually address the need?  What could have been done differently?

The final and most important stage in developing a needs-based library service is to create an organisational culture which can support and deliver the strategy, service and staffing structures, and systems. Organisational culture has been defined as 'the way we do things around here' and it includes attitudes, behaviours and values, which are difficult to change.

The Working Together project generated an organisational culture shift away from Outreach and towards a Community Development model which is able to identify, prioritise and meet community needs.

**Table 15: Outreach and Community Development**

<b>OUTREACH</b>	<b>COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT</b>
Goes out into the community to deliver a service or programme (story time at school, display at community centre).	Begins with relationship building.
Tells audience what the library has to offer, but rarely seeks opinions of participants and what they might like the library to offer.	Identifies and assists in articulating individual or community needs.
	Identifies and provides services that meet those needs; Investigates ways to work collaboratively to meet needs; Identifies gaps in services and policy.

The Working Together Project has produced two extremely useful guides on how to develop community-led library services:

- *Community Led Libraries Toolkit: starting us all down the path toward developing inclusive public libraries* (Working Together, 2008)
- *Community-Led Service Philosophy Toolkit* (Edmonton Public Library, 2010)

Further information can also be found on the Information for Social Change website. Information for Social Change is an activist organisation that examines issues of censorship, freedom and ethics amongst library and information workers. It is committed to promoting alternatives to the dominant paradigms of library and information work and publishes its own journal, *Information for Social Change* (freely available online at [www.libr.org](http://www.libr.org)).

## Conclusion

Library use is higher in more equal countries and there is a clear link between social class and use of public libraries. The needs of diverse and multicultural communities can best be met by developing socially inclusive, needs based and community led library services. The conceptual framework developed by *Open to All?* and implemented by the Working Together Project demonstrate that public libraries can be key agencies for enabling social change and social justice.

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## Websites

- Information for Social Change ([www.libr.org/isc](http://www.libr.org/isc))
- The Network ([www.seapn.org.uk](http://www.seapn.org.uk))
- Working Together Project ([www.librariesincommunities.ca](http://www.librariesincommunities.ca))