<u>ANLTC/Swets Research Fund</u>

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Project Title: Local Community Engagement: Extending the role of the academic library to meet the university's mission.

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1.Terms of Reference

- To identify current library practice internationally (including Europe, Australasia and North America) including strategies and models of service delivery to an external local community.

- To identify current practice in the Irish academic library context, specifically CONUL Libraries.

- To identify the benefits and challenges for libraries in developing services and outreach activities to an external local community.

- To identify appropriate opportunities for DCU Library to increase engagement and enhance services to the external community.

- To identify opportunities for cross-sectoral collaboration.

CONUL Libraries comprise:

Dublin City University
Dublin Institute of Technology
National Library of Ireland
National University of Ireland, Galway
National University of Ireland, Maynooth
Trinity College Dublin
University College Cork
University College Dublin
University of Limerick

2. Introduction

The relationships between Irish academic libraries and their wider communities have rarely been symbiotic. The full extent of the potential benefits for both libraries and communities has not yet been wholly realised.

The third report of Ireland's Information Society Commission has noted that *"our ability to think, and to select and use the information at our disposal will be the critical determinant of future success of the Information Society in Ireland"[1]* Implementation of life-long learning initiatives further advance the goal of an information literate society.

CONUL libraries have a pivotal role in promoting such activities and do this as a matter of course in their interactions with their traditional customers – the staff and students of the university. However current thinking has begun to highlight the need for, and benefits of, libraries stepping beyond the traditional boundaries of the university walls and engaging with local communities that surround these learning environments.

Libraries play an important part in fostering and developing arts and culture, in particular, language and literature. In support of DCU's commitment to the wider community, DCU Library has run an annual creative writing competition for the past ten years and has organised numerous internet workshops for both young school children and older citizens.

Most university strategies on wider community engagement discuss the business and corporate communities. In turn, many of our library strategies set objectives around services for these groups and current practice in CONUL libraries demonstrates this also. Our universities also engage in outreach activities through their very partnerships with other universities. Similarly for the library community, there are plenty of national collaborative outreach activities taking place.

However for the purpose of this research, the term "local community" is being used in its geographical sense and refers to the general public who inhabit the surrounding areas of academic institutions.

This research aims to map international best practice, examines the reasons for successful community engagement initiatives and investigate the feasibility of implementing these initiatives in an Irish context. It also reflects on the outcomes of national initiatives and examines opportunities for furthering these successes.

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[1] Information Society Commission, 2000.

3. Methodology:

The methodology for this research comprised:

- A literature review of international best practise

- A survey of all CONUL Libraries to identify existing national 'outreach' initiatives

- Meetings with appropriate local units and agencies in DCU:

  - DCU in the Community
  - DCU Access Office
  - Office of the Theme Leader for Civic Engagement
  - Membership of DCU's Civic Engagement Strategy Committee
  - Co-ordinator of DCU's Intergenerational Project

- Meetings with external bodies, organisations, public libraries:

  - Co-ordinator of FOYLE (Northern Ireland's Inspire)
  - Cross sector Co-ordinator – Library Council of Ireland
  - Library staff – Ballymun & Coolock Dublin City Council Libraries

Attendance at CILIP Information Seminar: Shall We Dance?: Universities Working in Partnership With Their Wider Communities, Sheffield, United Kingdom.

4. Best Practice in International Library Community Engagement.

Whilst there is a substantial body of discussion in the international literature around universities engaging with their wider communities, with the exception of the United States, the point of view of local community users in relation to access to academic libraries is not well represented. A lot of the literature I located on this topic was sourced from trawling web sites and from direct contact with library staff either by email or attendance at seminars.

The debate around enabling access to this group has almost entirely been left to librarians. For the most part, they find themselves caught between a professional desire to enable such access and the harsh realities of budget or space constraints and the needs of their institution's staff and students.

The United States has the longest and most progressed history of engagement with this debate. In fact many of the civic and philosophical issues they highlighted more than 50 years ago are, I believe, only starting to be addressed by academic libraries in Ireland today. In 1958, Vale Deale promoted the idea of academic libraries contributing to good community relations by providing access to the local community and cooperating with local libraries – both of which could be accomplished "with little effort and almost no expense"[2].

In a 1967 symposium address to college and university librarians, E. Josey acknowledged that as tax payers, residents could argue they had a right to free access and recommended co-operative arrangements amongst libraries in a geographic area including central acquisition of stock and joint storage centres.[3] This forms the basic ethos of 'joint use libraries', which I discuss in more detail in Section – which I discuss in more detail in Section 4.2.

Around this time, the issue of providing access to second level students also came to the fore. As school libraries came under pressure to provide resources, they often referred their students to the nearest college library. Despite the fact there was no obligation on the college library to these students, it saw the public relations value of its role in supporting the student recruitment mission of its institution.[4]

In 1974, David Kaser wrote about the proliferaton of 'universities without walls', external degree programmes and open university students all of whom naturally want to use nearby libraries. [5]Kaser proposed models to support library services on a national basis and outlined the potential problems in trying to achieve this.

In an editorial entitled Libraries and Social Capital[6], Anne Goulding discusses the role of UK government policy in supporting services and places which enable community members to meet and interact:

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[2] Deale, 1958
[3] Josey,. et al, 1967
[4] Schwartz., 1970
[5] Kaser, 1974
[6] Goulding, 2000

"The issue of privatised public space and its effect has been a key issue in recent times for urbanists, geographers and sociologists who argue that there has been a shift in emphasis from the public to the private sphere and that there us an increasing trend towards privatisation of the public sphere."

It could be argued that university libraries are publicly funded spaces and that their privatisation for the interests of their staff and students is excluding their neighbours who can, quite literally, live on the other side of the university boundary walls thus furthering the perception of our universities as "ivory towers".

As stated above, librarians in the United States have an impressive record of engaging with their local communities. The American Library Association hosts a civic engagement discussion forum, supporting the ethos of 'library as space' for deliberative dialogue amongst their communities. This blog[7] lists civic engagement activities taking place around the country and is a simple but effective method of communicating ideas and feedback on the topic.

The recently published title "Academic Library Outreach: Beyond the Library Walls" [8]is also an excellent source. Although US based, it provides practical examples of community outreach initiatives that can be achieved in an Irish context – from school and public library relationships to special collections and discipline specific outreach.

4.1 Case Studies: Libraries providing access to collections

4.1.1 United Kingdom

Inspire is a national library access programme facilitating collaboration amongst libraries throughout England to support lifelong learning, widening participation and social inclusion. Inspire is funded to work with public, academic and national libraries to ensure learners have seamless access to the most appropriate learning materials relevant to their needs. It achieves this through Findit! - a cross regional libraries collection discovery tool. Members of the public who don't get their information need satisfied at their public or academic library can apply for an Inspire passport and access the collections of a participating library. Inspire achieves it aims through implementation of the following 'Kitemark Criteria':

- Libraries agree to permit access for visitors to hard copy materials for reference purposes as a minimum offer
- Libraries can set their own access and referral conditions
- Libraries will ensure their staff are informed about Inspire
- Libraries will promote use of Inspire amongst learners and potential learners

An Inspire Evaluation Report provides recommendations for the future development of the scheme.[9]

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[7] http://discuss.ala.org/civicengagement//
[8] Courtney , 2009
[9] Inspire, 2008

The FOYLE Project is the Northern Ireland network of Inspire Libraries and is supported by the Library & Information Services Council of Northern Ireland. Librarians in the Derry area were keen to promote better community relations and wanted to build on the success of Inspire. FOYLE comprises 21 member institutions including some libraries based in the border counties. Access to collections is by means of the Inspire passport.

The majority of material accessed through the scheme has been in the humanities – on the whole, requests for genealogy and local history material are higher that other disciplines. One of the most encouraging learning points of this project is that there haven't been any detrimental effects on the service of each library to their existing users. Similarly, there have been no problems with overdue or lost book stock.

Most members of the public do not know that they can access university collections and it has been important to promote this initiative to members of the public – which was achieved through radio programmes and press releases. The only costs involved have been for promotional material and staff time. Like Inspire, FOYLE has an excellent set of documentation for both library staff and users on their web site. [10]

Training for staff has included visits to member libraries – staff felt it was easier to refer users to libraries when they had a greater sense of what their collection looked like – although as the scheme expands and there is more distance between the libraries, this has not remained conducive.

The success of Inspire and Foyle has demonstrated to funding agencies that librarians work collaboratively to share resources and ensure better value for money. As with many community engagement initiatives, the value of FOYLE has been anecdotal - feedback has been achieved through passport holder feedback cards. The "feel good factor" of providing the service has been enough of an impetus for libraries to engage with the project. Similar projects are currently being piloted in Ireland (See Section 5.1)

4.2 Case Study: Joint Use Libraries

There is a growing international trend to merge the physical spaces and services of libraries from different sectors. A Joint Use Library is one in which two or more distinct library services providers…serve their client groups in the same building, based on an agreement that specifies the relationship between the providers.

One such example is the Martin Luther King Library[11], a collaboration of San Hose Public Libraries and San Hosē State University Library. Access to the collections of these libraries is seamless. Services for all library users are

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[10] http://www.liscni.co.uk/inspire/index.html
[11] http://www.sjlibrary.org/gateways/index.htm

provided by means of a "Paths to Lifelong Learning" philosophy with seven categories: children, teenager, university students and faculty, distant learners, the business community, adults & seniors and a multicultural gateway. This concept is currently being explored by Dublin Institute of Technology in their plans for a new campus.

4.3 Case Studies – Libraries Promoting Life Long Learning

4.3.1 Australia

In support of Queensland University of Technology's strategic goals, their Library developed a programme of community engagement initiatives. Due to funding constraints the initiative has been curtailed but it does provide an idea of how a successful community outreach initiative could work. Through correspondence with library staff, I learnt that A Community Outreach Librarian part time role was instated to provide outreach assistance to schools.

The then QUT Libray's policy document on community engagement includes a section on 'Contribution to the Profession' and notes the importance of individual voluntary contribution of time by staff as an indicator of the success of the programme. High school students received information literacy training and could avail of a school associate membership scheme where year 12 students were able to borrow material. The schools involved were able to indemnify the library against any material lost or damaged. Uptake for this service was highest amongst schools that had relationships with their branch libraries in areas of lower socio-economic status

4.3.2 United States

Like many US university libraries, the Library at Arizona State University, a partner institution of Dublin City University, provides an ambitious programme for second level students in preparation for their student career at ASU. In recognition of the fact that potential students aren't yet familiar with using a large research library, the Library collaborates with teachers to design an information literacy training programme that prepares them for their undergraduate career. Their Guide for teachers[12] states that teachers:

- Must be teaching an advanced placement course and that their students are already proficient at using their school and public libraries.

- Are encouraged to involve their school librarian in the design of a pre test information literacy skills.

- Are advised to integrate library assignments into the curriculum and classroom activities.

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[12] http://lib.asu.edu/services/community/k12

- Should include critical thinking and active learning techniques.

The payoffs for the university library for such an initiative are considerable:

- By providing teachers with these guidelines and examples of learning activities, the ASU Library is able to facilitate the transition of students from secondary to tertiary level thus further assisting them with the integration of first years.

- The ability for second level teachers to utilise the facilities and resources of a university library benefits their students as they are exposed to the academic library environment before they become undergraduate users.

- The input from university library staff in designing the guidelines and liasing with teachers requires some initial planning however, after this investment; it is the teachers and their school librarians that are responsible for planning learning activities and managing their pupils.

- It strengthens relations between the university and local schools and promotes the principal of the university library as a builder of civic partnership.

4.3.3 England

The University of Huddersfield Library runs Project SCULE – 'Schools and Colleges University Library Experience.[13] The aims of its programme are to:

- Provide a positive learning experience for pre-entry students by presenting the Library as a welcoming, accessible environment.
- Raise the standard of information literacy skills amongst schools which will impact on standards and entry into higher education
- Raise the aspirations and break down barriers to higher education in students from non-traditional backgrounds.

Learning activities for Year 10 pupils include a library trail and accessing SCULE webpages. For older pupils, sessions are subject specific, include half or full day visits and the pupils are allowed to borrow. Future plans for the programme include university library staff visiting the schools to provide blended learning with teaching staff and the development of assessment tasks.

The main challenges cited were trying to find sufficient suitable and available library staff, trying to find suitable space and time and promoting the project to schools. The benefits include providing students with skills that they can use in their future academic career and supporting the university's mission to recruit students from the local area.

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[13] http://www.hud.ac.uk/cls/scule/

4.3.4 Scotland

The Scottish Information Literacy Project[14] is an innovative pilot which aims to develop a national information literacy framework. The initial purpose of the project was to produce secondary school leavers with a skill set which higher education could recognise and develop, or which could be applied to the world of work directly. The project has also expanded to include the primary school sector and life long learning.

This pilot has entailed a massive consultation exercise with views being sought from educators and librarians in all sectors. The specific aims of the project are to:

- Define information literacy learning in terms of statements of skills, knowledge and understanding.

- Support a continuing learning process through identifying a learning pathway within the context of SCQF (Scottish Credit Qualification Framework) as part of an educational guidance or personal development planning process.

- Map the existing learning that is taking place allocating a notional level to learning outcomes utilising relevant reference points such as the SCQF generic level descriptors with the intention of providing a general shared understanding of each level which can then be linked to academic, vocational or professional practice.

- Enable the notional levelling process and outcomes to become transparent and clearly understood by other learning providers, receiving organisations and or employers to meet the needs of the lifelong learner more effectively.

- Incorporate and highlight CILIP's information literacy skills and competences definition and SQA's Information Handling Skills Intermediate 2 qualification.

The project has identified 'exemplars of good practice' within the cross curricular area of information literacy for dissemination through the Learning and Teaching Scotland online service[15]. The site provides a toolkit for teachers and students from 9-18 years of age and is an excellent resource for librarians also.

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[14] http://www.gcal.ac.uk/ils/index.html

[15] http://www.ltscotland.org.uk/informationliteracy/

4.3.5 Ireland

The Library Association of Ireland is currently investigating the development of a national information literacy framework for Ireland and CONUL libraries are supporting this initiative.

5. Current Practice in CONUL Libraries

In September 2008, CONUL libraries were surveyed to identify what services they provided and how they engaged with their local communities. This survey took the form of a four page questionnaire with five questions and was circulated to library staff involved primarily with the Reader Services function. (Appendix 1) Participants were contacted later again to tease out some of the points raised in the survey and as an opportunity to provide an update on this activity.

Library policies on access to community groups vary widely; however there seems to be an awareness of the importance of community engagement at a strategic level.

Four out of eight libraries did make reference in their strategic plans to improving services for their local community and/or supporting their institutions in this manner. However, the objectives that were set were not explicitly stated – this may be due to the various challenges associated with delivering services to this community. I will return to these challenges in Section 6.

Two libraries provide access to their building, electronic resources and borrowing entitlements to secondary school pupils, however only one of these provide reference/subject service and offer a training programme.

Feedback indicates that libraries tend to target the local business community and there is a higher percentage of formal access, borrowing and reference services for business and corporate membership than there is for local community individuals/groups and school pupils.

Eight of the nine CONUL libraries provide access to their library to local community individuals; seven allow book borrowing (the majority of these charge for this service) and eight allow access to electronic resources however this access is limited to databases that provide for walk in users under the terms of their licence.

Only three libraries offer training to local community groups and/or individuals. Where libraries do provide training to the local community, the main challenge they cite is that the resources they provide training in have to be freely available.

The National Library of Ireland is the only library to provide access or offer a training programme to primary schools. The majority of CONUL libraries do however provide tours to support institutional open or 'shadow' days.

In Questions three, four and five, the survey provided an opportunity for libraries to describe their existing community outreach activities. There are many varied activities, some of which were expanded on in follow up interviews. The main outreach activities currently taking place in Irish academic libraries are listed here.

5.1 Providing Access to Collections

UL Library's development plan makes reference to "co-operating with resource sharing, research and other initiatives at regional, national and international levels".

In terms of access to collections, by far the biggest initiative to date is COLICO's (Committee on Library Co-operation in Ireland) Pathways to Learning Programme. PAL has been exploring the feasibility of providing cross-sectoral pathways for learning to users of the public, academic, national and specialised libraries in Ireland to promote wider participation in the knowledge economy. Based on the success of the UK's Inspire and Northern Ireland's FOYLE Project (See section 4.1.1), PAL is currently piloting two schemes – a regional project - Cork PAL and a thematic project - Music PAL.

Both schemes will work on the principal of access and referral whereby if a participating library cannot satisfy a request for material, it can refer the user to an alternative library in the scheme. Both initiatives will provide access to their hard-copy resources only. All PAL patrons are subject to the rules and regulations of the institutions they visit.

Cork has been selected as the first regional choice because of its range of public, educational and health libraries and archives. The co-ordinating team for Cork PAL have selected I-CAN (Integrated Cork Access Networks) as their project name as a means of reflecting the locality and in order to create a brand presence in the region. In house library training will take place during Summer 2009, with a pilot in Autumn 2009. It is intended to formally launch the scheme in Spring 2010. It will be interesting to see if these schemes will provide a higher level of exposure to special collections; whilst perhaps popular with a niche group within an institution, these collections can be of enormous interest to a larger more geographically diverse group of the public.

Music PAL is a national scheme, comprised of cross sector Irish libraries, north and south. The scheme aims to expand the range of music resources available to users of all participating libraries and archives, by establishing a routine structure for referral and access to relevant materials held outside the user's 'home' library. The project will be rolled out on a pilot basis in June 2009 with a view to launching in early 2010.

5.2 Promoting Life Long Learning

DCU has created a pilot programme called the Intergenerational Project to explore the potential of learning opportunities between older people and younger third level students. The participants completed two modules – Communications and ICT. They attended a library session on locating electronic material and competed a tour of the building and services.

NUI Galway Library have set up a working group on non traditional learners with a view to reaching recommendations on how best to provide their service to access, community and other students. Community outreach is a key strategic aim of their university and the library is keen to get involved in this area.

TCD Library is involved in the TAP (Trinity Access Programme) by preparing potential students for the transition to third level education by providing a series of interactive sessions on information handling and library study skills.

The DIT Digital Community project offers certification courses to inner city Dublin communities. Participants attend a ten-week module and are taught basic teaching skills. DIT Mount Street library staff have taught information literacy skills on the course for over six years. Many of the participants have gone on to become teachers working within their own communities and employed by the Digital Community Project.

DCU has established an outreach centre in Ballymun called DCU in the Community. The mission of the centre is to provide educational opportunities to local communities in North Dublin in order to increase participation and promote equality in third level education. The Library has delivered sessions in the centre on using the internet to adults returning to education.

TCD Library has been providing library tours and activities for transition year students for a number of years. The students go on pre arranged visits to various departments including Manuscripts, Early Printed Books, DRIS (Digital Resources and Imaging Services), the Map library, Legal Deposit and the conservation department. They then receive a quiz whereby they source information through out the library with an opportunity for discussion about how they found it at the end.

The National Library of Ireland has devised an extensive educational programme for primary, secondary and third level students. It also promotes activities for life long learners and families.

DCU Library has liaised with DCU'S Access Service to provide training for school groups. One example is the Take 5 initiative for transition year students where the library is providing a session on searching for and evaluating information found on the web with an emphasis on social networking sites. The library has also provided sessions for primary level students in the past.

5.3 Providing Civic Spaces and Building Civic Relationships

DCU Library has been organising an annual creative writing competition for the past ten years, inviting participants of local literacy groups in the North Dublin area to take part. For those participants who receive commendations, they attend a creative writing workshop. This event has been supported through funding from NorthDubCo Ltd.

NUIM Library invites members of the local community to library exhibitions and has made their space available as a venue for book launches and local art exhibitions. Their current strategic plan includes a commitment to community engagement stating that they will "contribute to social, economic and cultural development at local, national and international level by providing an inclusive library and information service".

TCD Library publicise a variety of public library individual events and projects related to reading including the IMPAC award.

6. Challenges for Libraries

6.1 Staff Engagement

One of the main challenges cited by libraries who participate in community engagement initiatives was that of acceptance or willingness on the part of staff to get involved. One of the international libraries I contacted stated that many staff initially viewed participation as 'additional' work not for their direct clients – the students and staff of the university. It is essential that these initiatives are endorsed by the university – like many CONUL libraries' institutions, QUT had community services as one of its university goals and performance indicators. However, in addition to this, there was endorsement by library senior management and planning for such activity was included in strategic and operational plans.

Closer to home, Elaine Urquhart, Co-ordinator of FOYLE, reinforces this point:

"*This may seem a very obvious point, but the more senior people in your organisation know about and back your project the better the chance is that it will be mentioned at important meetings and promoted at strategic level. Within my own organisation, senior officers were delighted to have the scheme to mention to members of the local community when they met them at formal and social events.*" [16]

Similarly, librarians' involvement in outreach activities should be addressed in performance evaluations. Presently, such activities are dependant on the goodwill of library staff who feel a sense of civic responsibility. Building a broad sense of support for civic engagement spreads the workload and prevents burn out of committed volunteers.

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[16] Urquhart, 2009

DCU's present strategic plan on civic engagement includes the following objective which, if implemented, would go a long way to support the efforts of library staff involved in community initiatives:

"To develop appropriate and relevant recognition mechanisms for DCU staff for civic engagement activities." [17]

6.2 Financial Resources to Support Strategic Aims

The difficulty in securing funding was cited by many CONUL libraries as the reason for not being able to provide the type of community outreach service they would ideally like to offer. Once respondent stated:

"The only challenge can sometimes arise from the expectation of an entitlement to the service and that the service would be free"

Where libraries do offer outreach services in support of their institution's strategic aims, there is a sense that resources are not following these aims. It is interesting to note that as far back as 1998, The Library Council of Ireland cited the requirement of financial support in order to facilitate university library access to the public:

"The proportion of institutional budgets allocated to third level libraries has fallen…at the same time, third level libraries are being asked to open their doors to the public. This would require considerable investment."[18]

6.3 Electronic Resources & Licensing Agreements

Where traditionally university libraries have been freely providing public access to their print collections, it has proven much more problematic with online material. As one CONUL library stated:

"The main challenge we found with training local community groups is that the resources we train them in have to be freely available. Showing them how to use BSP is obviously of little value to them. This involves quite a lot of work/research in advance by the librarians. "

Provision of walk in access *is* patchy; there are a myriad of technical and policy issues yet to be resolved. A report by the UK's Research Information Network[19] highlighted three key issues for development:

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[17] Dublin City University, 2009

[18] The Library Council, 1998

[19] Research Information Network, 2006

1. The Licence agreements with publishers and aggregators are often complex and unclear. A UK register of licences, noting in particular the terms and conditions for walk-in access, should be created as a matter of urgency. Negotiations with the relevant bodies should be undertaken in order to create a common form of words to cover either the provision or denial of walk-in access.

2. There are administrative and technical issues that follow from providing access to the public through secure university networks. These should be noted by both the current JISC/SCONUL/UCISA project on electronic access to HE members away from their home HEI, and a new programme to be initiated in association with the shift to Federated Access Management technology.

3. Although Libraries already face pressures from staff and students of their own and other HEI institutions, it is in the interest of society that resources should be devoted to the development of public access. Continued funding to the Inspire programme …will facilitate this mission throughout the UK.

Certainly the points raised above are relevant to the Irish context and I have highlighted one specific recommendation for the Irish university library sector (See Section 7.3)

6.4 Measuring Community Engagement

The ability of institutions to measure community engagement is problematic. Metrics for research include successful bids for funding and citation analysis. Those for teaching include student retention, student satisfaction surveys and ultimately employment. Community interaction in the form of business relationships and consultancy can yield financial gains, but there are, as yet, no defined metrics for measuring institutional community engagement. So where does that leave libraries?

There are no 'quick wins' for libraries' involvement in community engagement. It can often take years for libraries to see any sort of payback. For many, the library is often seen as an inviting point of contact with the institution. Payback as a measurement of community engagement often takes the form of renewed respect for the support libraries provide to their institutions in 'breaking down barriers'. Staff satisfaction at getting involved in community outreach activities and the opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in other sectors are also motivating factors.

7 Recommendations

7.1 It is in the best interests of CONUL Libraries to get involved in activities for local schools as a means of supporting the student recruitment mission of their institutions.

Most CONUL libraries already offer tours to local primary and secondary school pupils. Some of these are organised through their institutions' Access Services. CONUL Libraries could capitalise on these existing relationships to assist colleagues in their local school libraries in "train the trainer" initiatives, similar to that of Arizona State University (See Section 4.3.2).

If university librarians play a role in second level information literacy training, it will give them an insight into the abilities of their future students. This will enable them to design learning activities that are appropriate to their needs, thus aiding the transition of those students to third level.

For libraries that are concerned that they don't have the relevant staff resources, or space available, the tours, or training could take place during the month of June. This month is optimal as it allows schools to participate before they break up for Summer and the majority of third level examinations are complete by this time.

Each library has a responsibility to support institutional goals of student recruitment and attracting future students. Promotion of the university library to school students is a recruitment tool that demonstrates to university administration that the library is concerned about the institution as a whole.

7.2 The Pathways to Learning initiatives should be evaluated with a view to suitability for further regional expansion.

The success of the Inspire and Foyle projects has demonstrated that academic librarians are good at collaborating with colleagues from other sectors to facilitate access to members of the public. Once local procedural issues and initiative wide co-ordination are fully embedded, the PAL initiatives have the potential to realise true community engagement.

Despite the low fiscal cost involved, these projects will, however, require strategic support to sustain momentum and realise their true value both locally and nationally. COLICO should look at ways of sustaining and developing PAL for libraries in all sectors.

7.3 When negotiating licence agreements and wherever possible, Irish university librarians should endeavour to secure the provision of walk-in access for members of the public.

The ability to provide access to electronic resources for local community individuals and groups is problematic. Centralised licence agreements co-ordinated through consortia such as IReL (Irish Research electronic Library)

have simplified the process of interpreting complex wording of publisher licences.

However, there is further potential to realise the specific entitlements of walk in users. Compiling a listing of publishers' licences with regard to this group would go a long way to ensuring that university libraries are not inadvertently infringing licence conditions where such access is not allowed under the terms of the licence.

7.4. The Library Council, The Library Association of Ireland, COLICO and CONUL all have a continued role to play in fostering cross-sector collaboration and developing the continuing professional development skills of librarians to engage in community outreach initiatives.

The ability to identify suitable cross sector projects that contribute to community engagement requires many skills. These bodies can greatly facilitate the sharing of ideas amongst the profession and help to develop advocacy, liaison, negotiating and communication skills that will equip librarians to further advance the community engagement missions of their institutions.

7. 5 CONUL Libraries should exploit existing freely available resources, capitalise on initiatives already available and extend these to their local communities.

University libraries sometimes organise activities around events such as World Book and Copyright Day, or Library Ireland Week. For the latter, DCU has hosted a number of lunch time book readings by academics who are authors or poets and invited staff and students. These could be advertised in public libraries and opened up to members of the local community.

Another way for libraries to build relationships is to apply for a travelling exhibition from the National Library of Ireland. Their Outreach Department make versions of their exhibitions available to other cultural institutions and libraries. University libraries could collaborate with school librarians to house an exhibition to coincide with a local school project.

CONUL libraries could also share any freely available online resources they have with the wider community – directly with members of the public or with libraries in other sectors. For example, there are many freely available online information literacy tutorials developed y university libraries which could be utilised by other groups.

There are also inter-university networks already established which libraries could exploit further. 'Campus Engage'[20] is an inter-institutional network which facilitates information sharing on best practice community engagement

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[20] http://www.campusengage.ie/

initiatives and publicises the events of staff and students. Some of the resources being developed by Campus Engage include a website with a database of activities - to give practitioners ideas and contacts, training workshops, visiting guest speakers, a conference on civic engagement in 2009, and 'Engage' magazine. This could be a useful tool for CONUL libraries to both publicise their own activities and learn about others that they could get involved with.

There are many students currently participating in Community Based Learning projects. CBL is 'a way to link theory learned in the classroom with practical experiences in the local community through a specific project or placement.'[21] Library staff could liaise with academic staff to identify suitable 'volunteer students' to assist them with outreach projects. The students develop their civic skills and the library gains extra support.

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[21] Dublin City University, 2008.

8 **Conclusion**

In 1996, the US National Association of State Universities and Land Grant Colleges made recommendations on the future of public universities. Their report entitled 'Returning to our Roots: The Engaged Institution'[22] highlighted an increasing sense of dissatisfaction by members of the public – universities were viewed as unresponsive to community needs, bureaucratic and above all complacent.

A lot has changed since then and certainly, in an Irish context, huge strides have been made to overcome many similar such shortcomings. Our universities have ambitious civic engagement strategies that recognise the need for and benefit of engaging with our neighbours on the other side of our campus walls. At the same time, we are being faced with "budget pressures, demands for more accountability and productivity, and financial support that has shifted away from the institution and is given in the form of direct student aid."

The present downturn in the Irish economy will see further cuts in university funding and at the same time, more accountability required when it comes to value for money. As outlined in the DCU Civic Engagement Strategy:

 "*In this environment it is vital that the university perseveres in its efforts to embed civic engagement as a mainstream university action and facilitate its' growth and development among staff within DCU's schools, research centres and support units.*"[23]

Whilst CONUL libraries face huge challenges in meeting the needs of their traditional users – the staff and students of our universities - it is incumbent on them to strive to ensure that the local community is not forgotten. There are a lot of good initiatives happening on the ground. As a group, CONUL libraries need to look at how they can sustain and improve upon these activities and support our universities' strategies into the future.

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[22] Kellogg Commission on the Future of State and Land-Grant Universities
[23] Dublin City University, 2009

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Appendix 1

CONUL Libraries Survey September 2008.

This questionnaire contains five questions and will take approximately ten minutes to complete.

1. Apart from the regular staff and students of your institution, please indicate any of the following user groups that have access to your library (please select all that are applicable with yes or no)

	Access to Library	Book borrowing	Access to electronic resources
Local community* groups			
Local community* individuals			
Local primary schools			
Local secondary schools			
Business/industry partners			
Graduate membership			
Corporate membership			
Open University membership			

* For the purpose of this questionnaire, 'Local Community' refers to the general public, including community groups and voluntary organisations that inhabit the surrounding areas of your institution.

2. In addition to providing traditional services have you ever provided any of the following services to these groups?
(Please select all that are applicable with yes or no)

	Reference service	Subject service	Training programme
Local community groups*			
Local community individuals*			
Local primary schools			
Local secondary schools			
Not for profit organisations			
Business/industry partners			
Graduate membership			
Corporate membership			
Open University membership			

If you answered yes to any of the above, please provide further details:

3. Does your library strategic plan set specific objectives around access and or services specifically to the local community? If yes, please list these here:

4. Has your library ever collaborated with a public or school library on any initiative? If so, please provide details:

5. If you have provided any access or services specifically to the local community, have you ever encountered any issues or challenges? If yes, please indicate:

Thank You for taking the time to complete this questionnaire.

Please email your completed questionnaire to: siobhan.dunne@dcu.ie or post it to:
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Dublin 9.