knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-PLIP Case Study – Guide to Interviewing

Who should you interview?

The first step is to decide who to interview. We'd like to focus on three categories:
- users who benefited from the PLIP service
- library staff who took part in the PLIP project, and
- staff of partner organizations (government and non-government / civil society partners supporting the service or benefiting from it).

Within these categories, there are many possible 'right' people to interview. It is important to choose people who have been really involved, who have given time and thought to the PLIP service, who are using it regularly, and who are most aware of it. Choose people who are articulate (can express themselves well) and can explain what they have learnt and how they have benefited.

Once you have decided who to interview, and made arrangements, prepare a list of interview questions. Here are some questions that may help you. **Note – these questions are only a guide.** They are intended to encourage the interviewee to remember what happened and to speak openly and honestly about their experience with the PLIP service. Each interview will be different. Listen carefully to the answers, and adjust your interview as needed.

Guide for interviewing library staff

Involvement
- How did you get involved in the service?
- What role did you play?
- Did you receive any training?
- What did you hope would happen to the library's services as a result of the PLIP service? Did you expect to improve service delivery? Help users find information? Reach out to special communities? Any other expectations?

The service and its impact
- Were there any challenges as you implemented the service? What were they? Did the challenges surprise you? Were they sorted out? How were they overcome?
- What are the results of the PLIP service? Are there any surprise results?
- Do other people like the PLIP service? What do they like about it?
- In your view, is the PLIP service useful?

- What is the most successful aspect of the PLIP service? What do you think is the main reason for the success?
- In what ways has the new service changed your work, and your life?
- Who played leading / important roles in making it a success?
- Thinking back, is there anything you would have done differently?

The future
- Do you think the PLIP service could be implemented in other libraries?
- What advice would you give librarians wanting to implement similar services?
- What would you like to happen next in your library, in relation to PLIP service?

Guide for interviewing PLIP service users

Involvement
- How did you find out about the new service?
- Why were you interested in the new service – what needs did you hope it would meet? Did it meet your needs and live up to your expectations?
- When did you first use the new service?
- Did you need training? Did you receive training? Did the training help? Do you need further training?

The project and its impact
- How often do you use the new service?
- What do you use it for? How do you use it?
- Do you know if other people also use the new service? How do they experience it – are they happy with it or disappointed? How do you know?
- In what ways has the new service changed your life? In what ways has it changed other people's lives? How do you know?
- What do you like best about the new service?

The future
- How could the new service be further improved / expanded in the future?
- What other special community services do you think your library should provide?

Guide for interviewing partner organization staff

Involvement
- How did your organization become involved in the service?
- In what ways is your organization involved?
- How are you personally involved?
- Are you happy with the level of involvement, or the way the library engaged your organization? Is there anything that should have been done differently? If so, what?

The service and its impact
- Were there any challenges as you implemented the service? What were they? Did the challenges surprise you? Were they sorted out? How were they overcome?
- What are the results of the PLIP service? Are there any surprise results?
- Do other people like the PLIP service? What do they like about it?
- In your view, is the PLIP service useful?
- What is the most successful aspect of the PLIP service? What do you think is the main reason for the success?
- In what ways has the new service changed your organization, your work, and your life?
- Who played leading / important roles in making it a success?
- Thinking back, is there anything you would have done differently?

The future
- Will your organization continue to be involved with the library? Why / why not?
- How could the new service be further improved / expanded in the future?
- What other special community services do you think the library should provide?