Walthamstow Library
— Co-design —

Overview

Project overview: Working with the Walthamstow library as part of a co-design process to improve the services.

Aim: To assess and understand what works, what could be done better, and gaps in both service provision and residents' experiences.

Timeline:

Oct 25: Co-design workshop

Nov 15: Co-design session

Oct 11: Walthamstow Forest: Project brief

Nov 1: Visiting the library and the space

Dec 6: Evaluation and Analysis of data

— *Participants' Profile* —

- Attend knitting and sewing class every Thursday

- **Incentivised** to participate with 10 pound Sainsbury voucher

- Mainly elderly women based on the observations

- Various ethnical and religious backgrounds

- **6 participants**

- Some had plans to attend after

- **Workshops**: participants interact and collaborate with each other, promoting inclusivity
- **Ice breaker**: get to know the participants and make them feel comfortable
- **Journey mapping**: spot unsatisfying problems about the library and make them more relatable
- **Hopes and Fears**: identify common expectations of the participants
- **Prototyping**: work together on the solutions aligning with the stakeholder needs (Sunlight Foundation, 2024)

Tools and Methods, Analysis
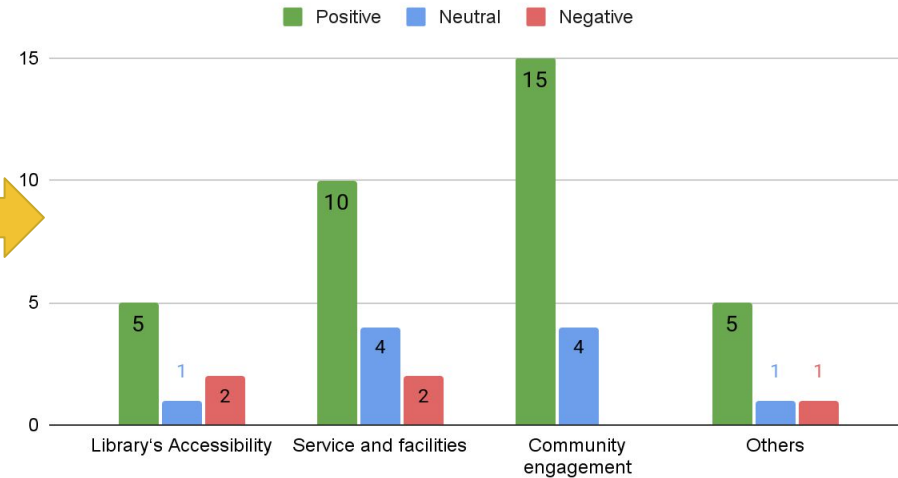
Data Collected

Activity 1: Journey Mapping

3 Themes:

1. **Community engagement**
2. **Service and facilities**
3. **Library's accessibility**

Walthamstow Library

	Before class	During class	After class
🙂	Travel by bus. May stop off to buy some water & treats for class	Have a few minutes chatting to my friends - asking what they are making	Sometime I go to the market or visit my other friends
😐	Would love to have more helpers in teaching sewing etc.	Ask questions about the next stage in what I am making	I go home and relate to my friends what I have achived
☹	The toilet need to be more cleaner	Look at others to see what they are making and ask questions where necessary	

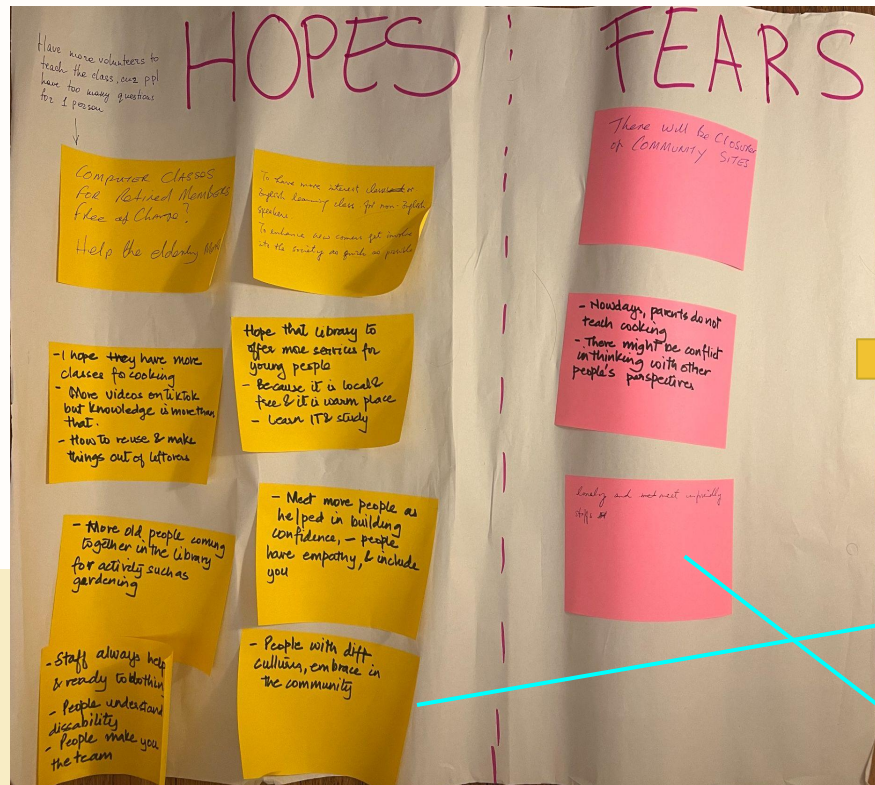Try talking about any interactions and impressions about the library services

Experiences of 3 Themes

Positive · Neutral · Negative

	Positive	Neutral	Negative
Library's Accessibility	5	1	2
Service and facilities	10	4	2
Community engagement	15	4	
Others	5	1	1

Data Collected

Hopes and Fears

Pie chart:
- Others 5.9%
- Library's accessibility 17.6%
- Community 35.3%
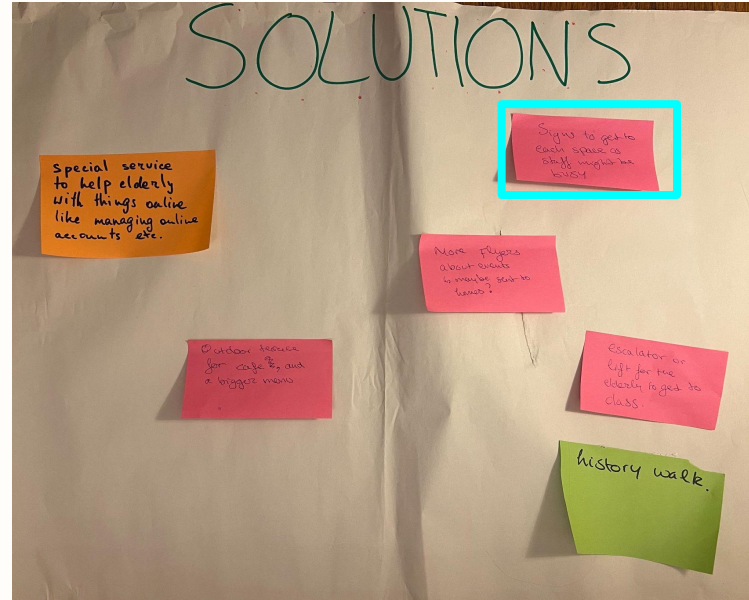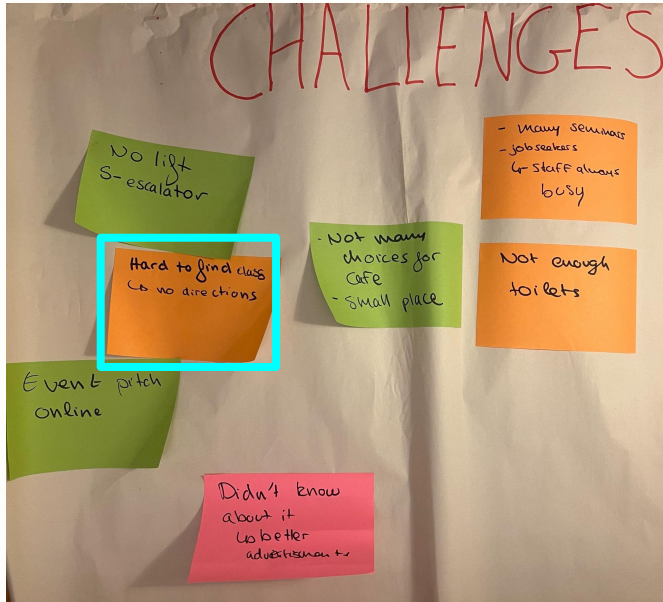- Service and facilities 41.2%

Hopes: 'I hope that more people with different culture background can embrace the community.'

Fears: 'I fear to meet unfriendly staffs'

Data Collected

Activity 2: Hopes, Fears, Challenges and Solutions

CHALLENGES

- No lift & escalator
- Hard to find class → no directions
- Not many choices for cafe - small place
- Many seminars - jobseekers → staff always busy
- Not enough toilets
- Event pitch online
- Didn't know about it → better advertisement

SOLUTIONS

- Special service to help elderly with things online like managing online accounts etc.
- Signs to get to each space as staff might be busy
- More flyers about events → maybe sent to houses?
- Outdoor terrace for cafe's and a bigger menu
- Escalator or lift for the elderly to get to class
- history walk

T: Library's accessibility

F: I fear i can't find the classroom → C:How might we find classroom and lift more easily? → S: More direction signs inside and outside the library

Evaluation of findings

What works

➔ Knitting classes
➔ **Variety** of activities
➔ Providing a cozy and **friendly** space
➔ Friendly and **helpful** staff
➔ Maintenance of the building (clean and tidy)

What could be done better

- **Advertisements** of other ongoing activities or services within the library
- Directions or **signage** to classrooms and lifts
- Availability of choices in the cafe
- Toilets: Waiting time
- **Additional** knitting classes

Gaps and Constraints

Gaps

- Limited understanding of broader library initiatives.
- Indications of inconsistency in how services were perceived
- Services less accessible to a younger audience, main target group: above 30

Constraints

- Participant time
  - Some participants had to leave because of prior engagements
- Language Barriers
  - Non-native English speakers occasionally struggled to articulate their points
- Overlapping Discussions
  - Some participants dominated the discussion
- Refocusing the discussions
  - Some participants when on a tangent, not relative to the activity at hand

Recommendations

special service to help elderly with things online like managing online accounts etc.

More Flyers about events to maybe sent to homes?

history walk.

Signs to get to each space as staff might be busy

Lack of **awareness** about services due to limited communication

Residents focus on specific activities and **miss** other resources

Directions to get around the Library

Social media

Posters and **calendar** distributed during activities

Signs with directions
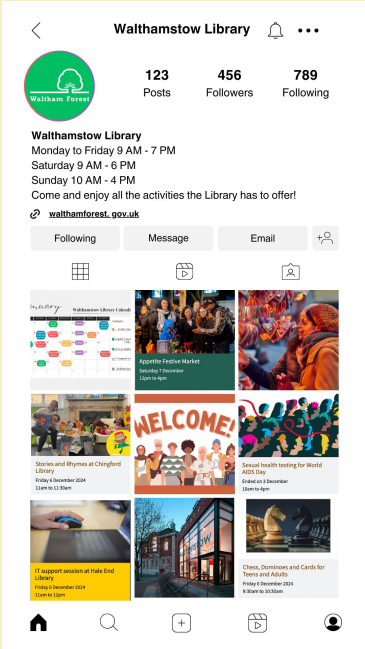
Small **map** flyers

Recommendations

Financial constraints:
- Budget gap due to rising social care costs, inflation and housing pressures (Walthamstow, 2024).

Social media

Platforms like Instagram/Facebook to target **younger** demographics (Schwab, 2014)

Cost-effective, dynamic posts showcasing events and classes.

Time-consuming

Posters/Calendars

Posters and monthly calendars to **inform** all residents.
Distribution in familiar environment to foster trust (Wilkins, 2018).
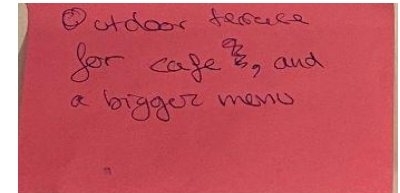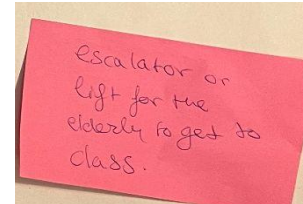
Recommendations

Signs

Add **clear** signage for rooms and lifts.

Provide maps at the entrance or in print for **easy navigation**.

Other solutions proposed

- **Infrastructure** focused
- Not possible the **financial constraints**
- **Long**-term goals

Thank you for listening

REFERENCES

Schwab, S. (2014). *Reaching Teens Using Social Media*. [online] Crackerjack Marketing. Available at: https://crackerjackmarketing.com/blog/reaching-teens-using-social-media/.

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