

A Community Profile of the Broomhall Community of Sheffield  
A presentation from the Report for the Upgrading of MPhil/PhD Transfer

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#### Overview

- ↻ Aim of the PhD project
- ↻ Objectives of the PhD project
- ↻ Current status of the project
- ↻ Community profiling and methodology
- ↻ Preliminary results (2003-2005)
- ↻ Next steps towards the Viva Voce and completion of the PhD program (2005-2006)

#### Aim of the PhD project

To analyse, through the application of community profiling, the information needs and community issues affecting the people in Broomhall, Sheffield, and to evaluate how information providers seek to meet those needs.

#### Objectives of the PhD project

- ↻ To analyse the major information needs and community issues affecting the people in the communities of Bromhall.
- ↻ To evaluate to what extent the information providers located inside the limits of catchment areas meet those needs.
- ↻ To analyse the implications of this study for policy makers.
- ↻ To analyse the overall effectiveness of the community profiling tool.

#### Current status of the project

- ↻ This PhD project began on 29.09.2003.
- ↻ A community profile of the Broomhall community of Sheffield (a 23, 498 words MPhil/PhD transfer report submitted on 11.10.2004 to the Departmental Research Committee)
- ↻ An application of community profiling to analyse the information needs and the community issues affecting the people in Broomhall, Sheffield, to evaluate the roles of their information providers (A final research proposal, 5, 161 words long, approved and

accepted as part of the upgrading MPhil/PhD transfer report on 24.05.2005 by the Departmental Research Committee).

- ↪ Delivery of the MPhil/PhD transfer report presentation towards the complete upgrading process by the Departmental Research Committee. (20.06.2005).
- ↪ Upgraded status as a PhD student (expected during June 2005).

### Community profiling and qualitative research methodology

What is community profiling?

“A COMPREHENSIVE DESCRIPTION of the NEEDS of a population that is defined, or defines itself, as a COMMUNITY, and the RESOURCES that exist within that community, carried out with the purpose of DEVELOPING an action PLAN or other means of IMPROVING QUALITY OF LIFE OF THE COMMUNITY.”

(Hawtin, M., Hughes, G. and Percy-Smith, J., 1994: 5, 13).

### Community profiling and qualitative research methodology

Why doing a community profiling for the Library and Information Studies (LIS) field?

- ↪ *To relate the LIS service to the realities of the community being served.*
- ↪ *To systematically collect evidence about the community.*
- ↪ *To establish LIS service priorities.*
- ↪ *For marketing purposes of LIS service.*

(Beal, C., 1985: iii-vii).

### Community profiling and qualitative research methodology

Is community profiling new to LIS?

- ↪ It is interesting to note that this approach is apparently being ‘found’ as ‘new’ by the current British government at the Museums, Archives and Libraries. (*Whitehead, J. & Rowan, T., 2005*).
- ↪ Christina Beal (1976, 1985) in the British LIS scenario already used it in the 1970s and 1980s.
- ↪ Since 1896 a similar approach was used with a different denomination (*Sarling, J.H. y Van Tassel, D.S., 1999: 7*), but with the same essence of analysing the community to be provided with LIS services.

### Community profiling and qualitative research methodology

Why using Qualitative Research methodology?

For the use of LIS field qualitative research methodology can be defined as:

“A process of INQUIRY that draws DATA from the CONTEXT in which events occur, in an attempt to describe these occurrences, as a means of determining the process in which events are embedded and the perspectives of those participating in the events, using induction TO DERIVE POSSIBLE EXPLANATIONS BASED ON OBSERVED PHENOMENA.”

(Gorman, G.E. & Clayton, P., 1997:23).

## Community profiling and qualitative research methodology

Why using qualitative research methods?

“The methods used by qualitative researchers exemplify a common belief that they can provide a ‘deeper’ understanding of social phenomena than would be obtained from purely quantitative data”

(Silverman, D. 2000: 89)

## Community profiling and qualitative research methodology

Qualitative research methods:

- ↪ Observation - note taking by walking the streets.
- ↪ Focus groups – stakeholders.
- ↪ Informal and structured interviews.
- ↪ Documents or literature review - scholarly publications, public & private statistics, population census, and grey literature.
- ↪ Triangulation of methods – to obtain reliability and validity.

### Preliminary results (2003-2005)

Major community needs and/or community issues in Broomhall are:

- ↪ Housing development – demolishing & building – people moved out
- ↪ Unemployment – abandonment of community
- ↪ Drug addiction
- ↪ Health – heart and respiratory diseases (drinking, smoking, unhealthy food)
- ↪ Multiculturalism – social exclusion
- ↪ Educational exclusion – due to linguistic barriers (about 60 languages are spoken in Broomhall)

( the project will analyse how these community needs/issues translate into informational needs and issues, and how information providers address them)

(NB: This is a presentation given to the public on 20 June 2005 in the Department of Information Studies at the University of Sheffield, Sheffield, UK. It is based on the 60 A4 pages report , A Community Profile of the Broomhall Community of Sheffield, submitted on 18 October 2004 to the Departmental Research Committee of the Dept. of Information Studies at the University of Sheffield. This report was

done from 29 September 2003 to 18 October 2004. The results are preliminary and more research is needed to confirm or discard these findings. The whole research project will be completed when the PhD thesis be completed by mid 2006. Until then these results should be considered with this caveat.)

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