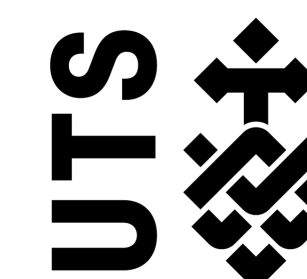


From Pages to Pixels:

Exploring the role of Libraries in Promoting Digital Health Literacy with Migrants and Refugees



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BACKGROUND

Public libraries have the potential to enhance the digital health literacy of migrants and refugees by offering resources like multilingual materials, digital literacy courses, internet access, and space for community workshops. Research indicates that improving health literacy skills can lead to better health outcomes for refugees and immigrants, with pilot programs showing significant improvements through library-based interventions (Naccarella & Horwood, 2021). Additionally, public libraries can play a crucial role in addressing digital inequalities by providing digital literacy resources and peer-to-peer support, especially given the growing digital divide exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic.

METHODOLOGY

Using a design thinking and co-design approach (Valentine et al., 2017), a workshop was conducted with participants with refugee backgrounds, representatives from health and community services working with refugees and staff from the local library at Fairfield City Council in South West Sydney—a council with the highest number of residents on refugee/humanitarian visas. The workshop used the five stages of design thinking (empathise, define, ideate, prototype & test) to ideate potential solutions to define and empathise on issues, misconceptions, and behaviours rooted in the lived experiences of refugee and librarian participants. **Participants:** 5 librarians, 10 refugee support staff (all refugee backgrounds).

OBJECTIVES

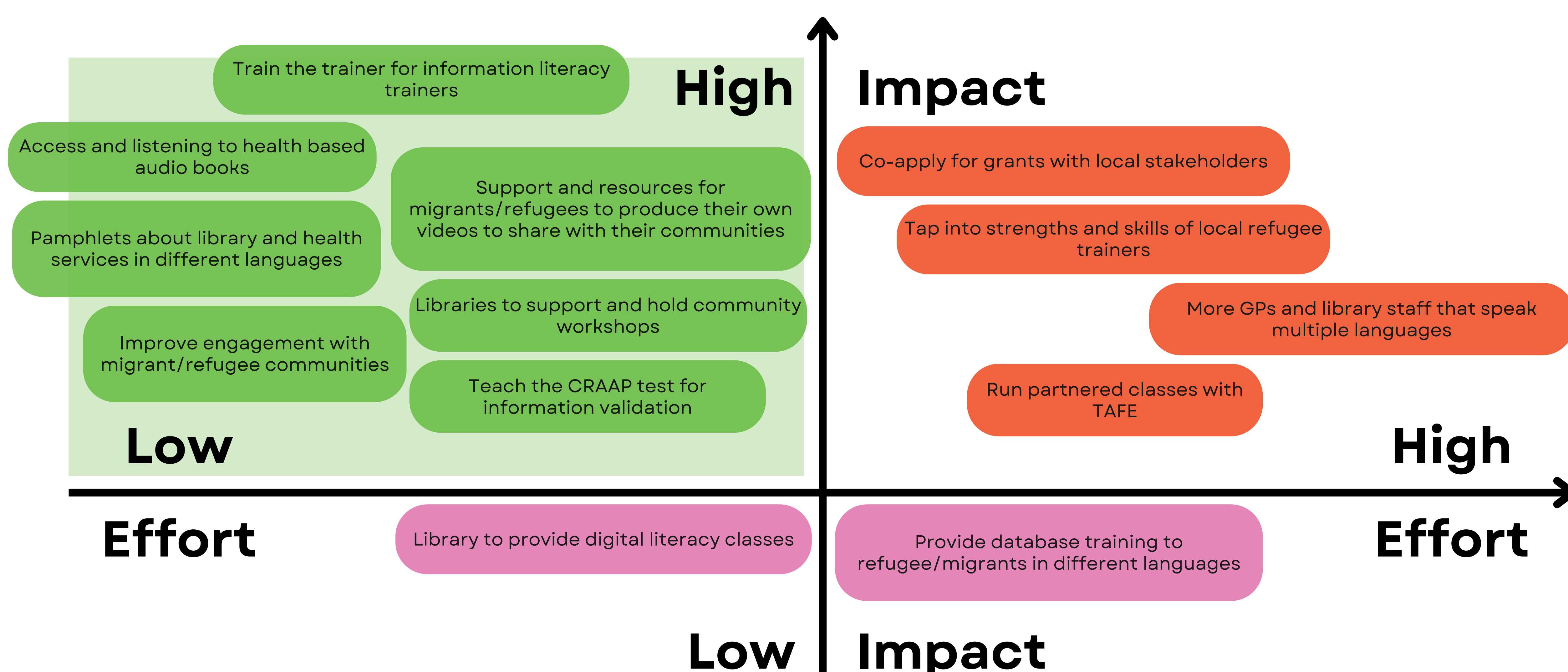
- Explore the role of public libraries in enhancing the digital health literacy of refugees.
- Identify the specific needs of refugees and librarians to better address health literacy.
- Develop innovative, community-driven solutions to combat misinformation and enhance digital health literacy.

FINDINGS

Access to translation resources, trust-building between communities and professionals, co-led services by community leaders, and recognition of different cultural expectations and beliefs were identified as critical themes. The workshop generated innovative ideas to reimagine the role of public libraries in enhancing the digital health literacy of refugees and combating misinformation. The needs of both refugees and librarians were identified, leading to the development of potential solutions that could significantly enhance the role of public libraries in supporting digital health literacy.

CO-IDEATED REFUGEE-CENTRED SOLUTIONS

Participants co-ideated solutions for libraries and migrant/refugee initiatives and rated each on an Effort/Impact Matrix. Those rated “low effort” but “high impact” should be prioritised first.



CONCLUSION

Public libraries are well-positioned to contribute to the health literacy movement by offering universal free access to information, educational opportunities, and health and well-being support. However, to fully realise this potential, there is a need to reimagine libraries as health-literate, multi-purpose workspaces that support refugee and migrant communities.

REFERENCES

- Naccarella, L., & Horwood, J. (2021). Public libraries as health literate multi-purpose workspaces for improving health literacy. *Health Promotion Journal of Australia*, 32, 29–32.
- Valentine, L., Kroll, T., Bruce, F., Lim, C., & Mountain, R. (2017). Design thinking for social innovation in health care. *The Design Journal*, 20(6), 755–774.