SUPPLMENTAL BACKGROUND INFORMATION – CONTEXT FOR STRATEGIC PLANNING DISCUSSIONS

Paul Takala, Chief Librarian/CEO, Hamilton Public Library   October 2022

This document has been developed as a supplement to the background reading shared in June and in preparation for the strategic planning discussions. In each case the most highly relevant sections of longer documents have been extracted. Links are provided to the full text for those that wish to explore more deeply.

1. **Resilient Communities: Libraries Respond to Climate Change**- American Library Association (ALA)

   https://www.ala.org/tools/sites/ala.org.tools/files/content/ResComm_ProgGuide%20FINAL100820.pdf

   a. Page 3, Program type introduction paragraphs pages 4,9,16, 19, 23

2. **Community-Led Libraries Toolkit-** Vancouver Public Library

   https://www.vpl.ca/sites/vpl/public/Community-Led-Libraries-Toolkit.pdf

   a. Pages 4-16

3. **The Information Needs of Citizens: Where Libraries Fit In-** Lee Rainie, Pew Research Center, Washington, D.C. (2018)

   https://www.pewresearch.org/internet/2018/04/09/the-information-needs-of-citizens-where-libraries-fit-in/

   a. Slide 6-7, 12, 19, 22

ALAAmericanLibraryAssociation

October 2020

A Programming Guide for Libraries

Resilient Communities

LIBRARIES RESPOND TO CLIMATE CHANGE

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Libraries and Resilience
A Letter from the Resilient Communities Advisors

As we put the finishing touches on this guide, it is clear that 2020 will rank among the hottest in recorded history, with a 36 percent chance of breaking the all-time record set in 2016. July alone saw more than $3 billion of extreme weather damage to the Earth; by September the western United States was raging with some of the worst wildfires in over 100 years. The climate is in chaos: floods, hurricanes, wildfires raging, ocean warming, polar ice caps melting. Mass species extinction is a reality. Ecological collapse is no longer a doomsday prophecy; the future of life on Earth is actually at stake.

We see times of great distress on the horizon. What can we do now, as people and as library professionals?

The answer: We must build the world we want to live in. "Do what you can, with what you have, where you are," to quote Theodore Roosevelt.

As respected community and resource centers, libraries are well positioned to mobilize citizens to learn about climate change and take action—at home, in our towns and cities and around the world. Together we can future-proof and adapt. At this unique turning point in history, we are the generation to rescue our collective future by dismantling systemic oppressions, reversing overconsumption, creating protective and forward-thinking policies, and enabling practices that put people and planet first and prioritize a just energy transition.

> **"Do what you can, with what you have, where you are."**
> THEODORE ROOSEVELT

In the face of dire climate change events, **Resilient Communities: Libraries Responding to Climate Change** showcases the ever-flexible and nimble role of library workers. And there is so much to showcase! Across the country, libraries and other institutions are finding their allies, banding together, and making ripples of change. In the face of chaos and uncertainty, they are teaching climate science, self-regulation practices, dialogue and deliberation skills, kindness for one another and the Earth. In this guide, we share just a sliver of the exciting work that is already in motion.

We invite you and your library to join us as change-makers in this work. Because the fact is, we cannot return to business as usual. A new story is unfolding, a shift in narrative from hierarchy to complexity, interdependence and interbeing. In this time of intersecting crises—the climate change emergency, systemic racism, COVID-19—we must pivot, transform, stretch, reflect, listen, demand, act. We need to act as if our lives depend on it, because they do.

—*Madeleine Charney, April Griffith, Juan Rubio, & Beth Filar Williams*

LEADING A VIRTUAL FILM DISCUSSION IN 7 STEPS

1. **Prepare:** Get familiar with the film. Watch it in advance and identify themes that will help you lead a meaningful discussion. Also consider tech: Allow plenty of time prior to the scheduled discussion and make sure your platform is working and everyone knows how to use it.

2. **Do an icebreaker.** Once your participants are logged in, offer an easy introductory activity. Depending on the size of the group, it can take the form of a question. One of our favorites: What film would you take with you to a desert island? If the group is very large, ask a few volunteers to respond and continue with the next portion of the activity.

3. **Ask who has watched the film.** Have an informal poll to see how many people have watched the film already. Ask them to type a yes or no or give a thumbs-up on the screen.

4. **Ask for a recap.** Begin by asking someone to summarize in two or three minutes the film watched. You can present this exercise by explaining how any media text can be summarized with a famous example: "Dorothy takes flight during a tornado with her dog, Toto, and enters a magical world. She learns about human characteristics such as courage, intelligence, and love. She battles evil and later discovers that it was all an illusion."

5. **Start the discussion.** Begin with general questions such as: What stood out to you in the film? Is there anything that surprised you? Did you learn anything new by watching the film? If so, what was it?

6. **Continue with more specific questions:** What was the message of the film? Was there more than one message? What were some of the creative choices the filmmaker used to deliver the message?

7. **Conclude:** The end of a film discussion is a great opportunity to talk about moving to action. Ask: Is there anything you might do or say differently as a result of viewing this film? Are there any specific actions you're planning to implement? End the discussion with suggestions on how to get involved to promote climate change awareness and sustainability. Present a list of organizations doing work in your area where the participants can learn more, get involved, or advocate with elected officials.

WHAT ABOUT A SYNCHRONOUS ONLINE SCREENING?

Asking people to watch a film on their own time before a discussion is one way to format a program. While it's a bit trickier logistically, you may prefer to host a live viewing party. Netflix Party is one possible platform, although participants must have their own Netflix accounts and interactions are limited to a chat box. YouTube Premiere allows for viewing parties of content available on YouTube. It is also possible to host a screening via Zoom or other video platform by sharing your sound (under Advanced Settings)—but make sure you have the proper public screening permissions before you do.

Book Club Programs

After decades of attracting the attention of scientists and environmentally minded people, sustainability and climate change are moving to the forefront of public consciousness. Over 70 percent of the upcoming college-age generation care about global warming and climate injustices. A resilient and climate justice approach is growing.

One way to grow this in your community is through book reads and discussions. There are numerous new reads that can be read as a group to achieve different goals: to spark consciousness, build climate change knowledge, reflect and think, share lived experiences, grow community resiliency, create action, or uncover untold stories.

Picking the right book, facilitator, platform, questions, and activities can be challenging, and the logistics of hosting a book club program is complicated by the pandemic. But we encourage you to persist. A book club that brings together folks in the community to listen and learn can lead to change—in attitudes, understanding, or action. We hope these recommended titles and discussion questions, along with suggested processes and platforms, will resonate with your readers in a virtual setting.

BOOKS FOR LIBRARY DISCUSSIONS

A Field Guide to Climate Anxiety: How to Keep Your Cool on a Warming Planet 🗗

by Sarah Jaquette Ray · University of California Press · 2020

Ray, a professor of environmental studies at Humboldt State University, offers concepts to help us combat climate change while grappling with feelings of powerlessness and despair. Ray offers strategies for climate justice activists to avoid burnout, pulling together works of adrienne marie brown's emergent strategy, Per Epsen Stoknes's Five Ds, Bob Doppelt's transformational resilience, Rebecca Solnit's justice work, and Glenn Albrecht's solastalgia, just to name a few. In summary: find pleasure in the work, slow down/be mindful, remember this is not a new crisis, find what you can do well and do that part, it takes a community, and you need to be able to dream of desires/envision a possible future. Written for Ray's college students, this "existential toolkit for action" is also great for adults or who want to do something about the climate crisis but struggle with anxiety when faced with the dire predictions of climate scientists.
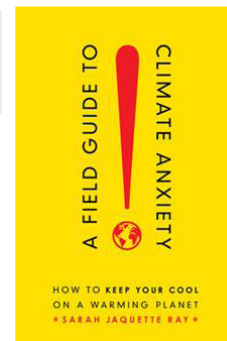
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS TO GET STARTED

- How do you experience or observe the role of emotions in climate justice work?
- The heart, the hand, and the head are all needed for sustained engagement. What are the effective implications of the content you are daily exposed to?

Community Dialogues

Opportunities to share our love for the world—and to deeply listen to one another—are rare. Community dialogues create a space specifically for connecting with our neighbors and learning from one another.

PROGRAM DEEP DIVE

The Work that Reconnects: A Spiral Journey 🔗

Based in the teachings of Joanna Macy, this 1.5-hour program unfolds as a spiral journey through four stages: Coming from Gratitude, Honoring our Pain for the World, Seeing with New/Ancient Eyes, and Going Forth. Each of these stages leads naturally to the next. The journey helps us experience firsthand that we are larger, stronger, more creative—and more deeply interconnected—than we knew.

The Work That Reconnects is available to everyone as "open source." While you needn't be an expert in The Work that Reconnects, can you invest time before the program to learn about Joanna Macy's three stories: "Business as Usual," "The Great Unraveling," and "The Great Turning"? This foundation will bring important authenticity and meaning to your facilitation. For more in-depth preparation, consult the Facilitator Competency Framework.

Because this program may arouse vulnerability, it is important to show and review Group Guidelines (a.k.a. Shared Agreements) before commencing. These may include:
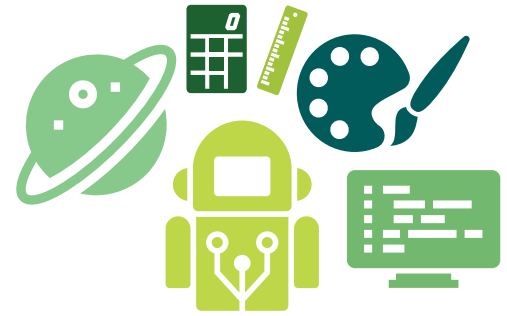
- One person speaks at a time
- Be lean of speech; stick to the agreed length of sharing
- Take the lessons, leave the stories (confidentiality)
- Practice active listening; focus on the speaker, refrain from interrupting
- Be respectful of one another
- Value the process as much as, if not more than, you value the outcomes

PRO TIP At the start of your program, quickly assess the number of participants and decide whether they'll communicate only through the chat or if you will unmic them (recommended for 10 or fewer).

Assign three or four people per breakout room. Allow 10 minutes per breakout and explain that each person has two minutes to share their response. Remind them to introduce themselves before they begin. Explain that anyone can leave a breakout at any time and return to the main room by clicking "Leave Room" on the bottom right of the screen. Participants can also ask for assistance by clicking "Ask For Help." If you have any concerns about a particular breakout room, you can visit a room to check in (see the breakout room pop up window, right side column "visit").

Hands-On STEAM Programs

Hands-on STEAM (science, technology, engineering, art, and math) programming is a great way to introduce patrons of all ages to the sustainable solutions already being implemented in settings ranging from energy production and manufacturing to households and homesteads.

In practice, these programs usher participants toward a greater understanding of the principles behind the science and technology critical to building a resilient infrastructure, and they teach mindful practices that reconnect people to their own practical abilities as makers.

Hands-on educational workshops, whether virtual or in person, are also an opportunity to spark creative minds and empower individuals to begin their personal journey toward building a more sustainable future.

PROGRAM DEEP DIVE

Build a Solar Rover ⌁

When this program was implemented at the Eureka Springs Carnegie Public Library, the goal was to show participants about how solar panels work and to introduce them to the engineering process; how to troubleshoot an issue, step back, and make changes to improve upon a design.

Training for this program was delivered to our librarians by Asia Ward of RECharge labs (now KidWind), who developed the program curriculum. View instructions for building Solar Rovers and many other renewable energy project-based programs, as well as teaching strategies for various age groups.

PRO TIP Do not assume participants are familiar with videoconferencing. Give a quick orientation to the mechanics of your platform, being sure to cover features like muting and gallery/speaker view.

Planning for this program began two months in advance to provide plenty of time for various supplies to be shipped and to 3D-print the axles. We discovered that some of the small motors we used were faulty, so be sure to test all the electronic components prior to implementing and distributing the materials for the program to make sure everything is functional, and to consider ordering a few extra spare parts, if possible.

We delivered this program twice: once with tweens/teenagers, and again the following week with families and elementary school-aged kids, both during our summer reading program. We sent teens postcards to promote the event, and for families we included the program in the summer reading program calendar as one of our weekly hands-on STEM programs.

Mindfulness Programs

Communities are increasingly seeking to build resilience through mindfulness practices, as witnessed by the blossoming of such programs in libraries around the U.S. According to John Kabbat Zinn, "Mindfulness is awareness that arises through paying attention, on purpose, in the present moment, non-judgmentally." In light of the COVID crisis, emphasis of this program is on strengthening our collective immune system and our responsibility (response + ability) to sharpen self-regulation skills in service to the greater good. As we learn to slow down our reactions, we can listen to others (and ourselves) with greater compassion. Improved decision making (yet another outcome of practicing mindfulness) is a critical societal tool, much needed in these times of multiple crises. There is also evidence that eco-anxiety can be addressed using mindfulness skills.

PROGRAM DEEP DIVE

Introduction to Mindfulness: Nourishing Ourselves in These Times ⬀

This one-hour virtual program blends learning, interacting, and five brief practices: straw breathing, gentle stretches, guided meditation, silent sit, and gratitude. Sharing activities with prompts can be done via chat, or you can offer the option for individuals to un-mic if there are fewer than 10 participants (encouraging everyone to be lean of speech). It is helpful to have a second staff person to monitor chat and assist with participants' technical issues.

Using this free and downloadable slide deck, the group can explore important questions about how they are impacted personally by crises (e.g., COVID-19, climate change) and how to take care of themselves so they can remain engaged and grounded in these times of great change.

Asking people to share "popcorn style" (taking random turns) can use a lot of program time. You might choose instead to do "rounds," calling on each person. Emphasize that it's fine to say "pass." You can circle back to those who passed later and ask if they'd like to share. Invite participants to take part in a few basic practices. (Note: Each practice takes about five minutes, including directions.)

- **Straw breathing:** *Show Slide 12.* Invite participants to sit straight yet relaxed, draw air through the nose (with belly expanding) and release silently through pursed lips. See: elementalhealthandnutrition.com.au/straw-breathing-anxiety

- **Gentle stretches:** *Show Slide 13.* Demonstrate one of the movements. Invite participants to practice one of the movements for a few minutes. Explain how these are easy to teach to others, including children. See: niroga.org/education/curriculum/pdf/15_min-tls_protocol_english.pdf

> Download these slides at bit.ly/mind-slides

Community-Led Libraries Toolkit

Working Together

engage
collaborate
participate

welcome.

wayfinder

almost ready?

Overview

**Social Exclusion, Public Libraries,
and The Working Together Project**

great... lets get started →

3

Preface: Why Working Together

By Brian Campbell
Founding Director and former National Director *(retired)*
Working Together Project

Vancouver Public Library (VPL) initiated the Working Together Project[1] in 2004 to develop methods for libraries to work with low-income communities through a community development approach. Funded as a demonstration project by the Office of Learning Technologies of Human Resources and Social Development Canada, funding was available over three years which was extended to four. The long-term funding was invaluable, allowing the participating libraries both to undertake the lengthy process of understanding and implementing community development approaches and to incorporate some of their lessons into their library systems. Unfortunately, program and funding constraints centred the Project on urban communities, despite recognition that rural libraries have similar issues.

Why was such a project necessary?

The dominant belief in 2004, as it is today, was that libraries serve the whole population and are open to all who choose to use it. Indeed, libraries have instituted many programs to reach out beyond their buildings. Libraries view themselves—and are viewed by many users—as the "living room" of the community. They score well in surveys of public services, often ranking just behind the public safety services such as fire and police.

However, other surveys echo library statistics showing that the whole community is not using the library. Usage statistics were particularly troublesome in urban areas with high concentrations of poor, immigrant, and socially excluded individuals. British librarian John Pateman estimated that 40 percent of his community were not library users and 30 percent were marginal users.

Based on their experience directly serving patrons, library staff at VPL and across Canada expressed concern that libraries were no longer serving poor and socially excluded people. Many staff pointed to the increasing number of rules, the impact of fines, and the focus on information technology as alarming factors.

This situation is not peculiar to libraries. A substantial body of literature, including the Royal Commission on Poverty (1968) and literature pre-dating the Commission's report, demonstrates that government offices, schools, and hospitals are alien and frightening to many who are socially excluded. Such government institutions—public libraries included—primarily serve the middle class, and so are alienating to many people.

What then is to be done if we are serious about serving the whole community?

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[1] *The Libraries in Marginal Communities Demonstration Project* started on February 25, 2004 and ended on October 31, 2005. The *Working Together Project,* which started on November 1, 2005 and is scheduled to end on April 30, 2008, evolves the philosophies and concepts of the first demonstration project. Throughout the Toolkit, these two related demonstration projects are referred to collectively as "the Working Together Project" or "the Project."

The initial *Libraries in Marginal Communities Demonstration Project* proposal outlined the basic philosophy of the Project:

> *Librarians have important skills and information to share with low-income communities. The community has important knowledge of itself. The effort in this project will be to take a community development approach to putting library skills at the service of the community by working with them to link library services to community understanding of its needs.*

The first phase of the Project placed Community Development Librarians (CDLs) in the community to find out what was actually happening and how public libraries were perceived. While libraries had made attempts in the past to use a community development approach, with a few exceptions, it has been decades since there was a systematic effort across the profession.

A significant shock for the CDLs was to discover that many people are critical and even angry at libraries because of their experiences. Many did not think of the library as a place for them. "Their kind" was not welcome. This response is verified by the many discussions within libraries concerning smelly users, inappropriately dressed patrons, and people sleeping in cubicles and with their head on tables.

Fines and charges were quickly identified as a barrier for low-income individuals during this first phase. Children are often discouraged from using the library for fear of accruing fines. One of the most significant early debates within the Project was whether fines should be eliminated, especially for children, and what would be the financial impact on libraries. Interestingly, the issue of encouraging "responsible use" became another important debate within the first years of the Project, a debate which often overshadowed the need to encourage socially excluded people to even enter the library.

The insights gained in the first phase of the Project resulted in its renaming. First named *Libraries in Marginal Communities*, the CDLs understood that the name implied a one way relationship and not the mutual and reciprocal relationship our philosophy encouraged. The Project was renamed *Working Together: Library – Community Connections.*

The Project also began to understand the gulf that exists between outreach—libraries' usual approach to communities—and *community development*, an important distinction that is discussed later in this Toolkit.

this way →

"...change

While there are many specific library policies that work against socially excluded individuals, the Project gradually grew to understand that the issues confronting the socially excluded were much larger than individual policies. The culture and environment of the library is also problematic. As a bureaucratic institution, the library develops policies and procedures that simplify and ease the efforts required to maintain a stable organisation, not the least of which is the comfort and convenience of the staff and administration, as well as the interest of its mainstream socio-economically advantaged users.

Sustainability is crucial to the success of such an approach. Too often, attempts to reach out to socially excluded non-library users result in token programs or services tangential to the overall service structure of the library. This partition of services exposes such services during the next financial crisis. If the Working Together Project has shown anything, it is that working with socially excluded people to meet their library needs requires far more than just re-organising existing programs and delivery. Acknowledging that current library models do not work for many socially excluded people necessarily acknowledges the need for more fundamental change. It recognises that change is an ongoing process and that initial attempts, while perhaps partial and modestly effective, are still an important beginning.

In essence, a single staff position or policy change will not be sufficient. Transforming staff roles to work with socially excluded communities means changing the way we look at planning, customer service, and policy. It means moving toward a model in which every user is viewed as a complex individual, with history and community, requiring human contact to fully meet their needs. Such a transformation shifts the library back to its human roots.

Importantly, those excluded by current service approaches extend far beyond those defined as socially excluded to include major demographic sectors such as seniors, youth, and children. While the Project's community development approach has been oriented to socially excluded communities, the lessons and approaches are important to radically transform traditional library service for us all.

...is an ongoing process"

Introduction: Community-Led Libraries Toolkit

By Sandra Singh
National Director, Working Together Project
Director of Systems and Special Projects, Vancouver Public Library

FOUR YEARS OF LEARNING ...

Over the past four years, Human Resources and Social Development Canada (HRSDC) has funded two related demonstration projects—referred to collectively in this Toolkit as the **Working Together Project** or the **Project**[2]— that explored the application of community development techniques in developing more inclusive public library services. Led by Vancouver Public Library, the partner libraries—Halifax Public Libraries, Toronto Public Library, and Regina Public Library—have all invested significantly in this exploration. This investment is an important recognition by four of Canada's largest urban public library systems that public libraries need to find new and better ways of understanding and serving socially excluded community members if our institutions are to play the important social and economic roles we aspire to fulfil.

During the course of our work, we have sought to achieve two main objectives:

1
Through establishing ongoing relationships with socially excluded people, work collaboratively with socially excluded communities to articulate and respond to their library service wants and needs.

2
Identify and examine systemic barriers to library use for socially excluded people and propose policy and procedural change to address these barriers, including the development of an inclusive service planning model.

In order to achieve these objectives, Project staff have been working in four urban neighbourhoods across the country with populations who have been alienated from or who do not feel welcome in the public library. Using community development techniques, staff have been working to both understand the barriers faced by community members and to collaborate with them to eliminate barriers and plan relevant services that meet their self-articulated needs.

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[2]   *The Libraries in Marginal Communities Demonstration Project* started on February 25, 2004 and ended on October 31, 2005. The *Working Together Project,* which started on November 1, 2005 and is scheduled to end on April 30, 2008, evolves the philosophies and concepts of the first demonstration project.

follow me →

Our experiences over the past four years have led us to six key lessons:

- Library culture, along with rules and procedures, create significant barriers to inclusion.
- Libraries must recognise that *same* or *consistent* customer service, which does not take into account socio-economic disparity, results in inequitable services that further disadvantage socially excluded people.
- Planning relevant and effective library services for socially excluded community members requires a collaboration of equals between the community members and the library.
- Relationship building is at the core of effective service planning.
- Staff "soft skills" such as empathy, interpersonal competence, and open-mindedness are essential.
- People want to see themselves represented in the library and to have an opportunity to participate.

SHARING OUR EXPERIENCES ...

Drawing on the experiences of the four Working Together Project libraries, **The Community-Led Libraries Toolkit** discusses the techniques used by the Project staff as they worked with their communities both to identify and eliminate barriers to service and to develop and test a service model in which socially excluded people can actively participate as equals in library decision making and planning.

The Toolkit has some specific objectives:

- To increase libraries' understanding of the unintended consequences of traditional library policy, procedure, and practice.
- To improve our understanding of the different ways libraries have traditionally involved communities and to promote a community-led approach for service to socially excluded communities.
- To support lasting improvements in the provision of inclusive and accessible library services for socially excluded communities.
- To facilitate the empowerment of socially excluded community members through participatory service planning processes.
- To foster constructive and collaborative working relationships between libraries and socially excluded communities.

To achieve these objectives, **The Community-Led Libraries Toolkit** provides philosophical and practical guidance for all stages of the library service planning process, from developing an understanding of community and needs identification through library policy development, service planning, day-to-day customer service, staff development, and evaluation. In addition to being a valuable resource for managers and librarians working with socially excluded communities, the Toolkit content should also be useful for any staff seeking to develop community-led practices, regardless of the social or socio-economic group they most directly serve.

The Toolkit is comprised of three main sections:

1

Part I   Overview: Social Exclusion, Public Libraries, and the Working Together Project
Includes background and context for the Project and its experiences.

2

Part II   Community-Led Service Planning: Developing Inclusive Public Libraries
Discusses systemic barriers to library service and presents *The Community-Led Service Planning Model*.
This part also contains eight **Tools** for use by staff in conjunction with the Community-Led Service
Planning Model.

3

Part III   Supporting the Inclusive Public Library
Identifies and discusses the institutional conditions necessary to support the inclusive public library,
including discussions on policy development and application, staff development, and service evaluation.

ⓘ PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER …

Public libraries have the potential to be one of our community's most important social institutions.

Already, we are recognised as important contributors to early childhood education, economic prosperity, cultural
diversity, literacy, and lifelong learning. Now, we just need to openly acknowledge that we fulfil these important
roles for primarily the middle class and/or those already able to confidently engage in community life.

We need to change the lens through which we view ourselves, our processes, and our services. Our new lenses
need to be those of socially excluded communities—we need to understand how the library looks and feels to them.
From there, it is a simple process change—changing the way we engage so that planning and decision making is
collaborative and participatory.

The Working Together Project has been experimenting with various techniques for achieving this evolution for the
past four years and we are pleased to share our experiences and learnings with our public library colleagues across
the country through this **Community-Led Libraries Toolkit**.

Implementation of the Community-Led Service Planning Model will start us all down the path toward creating
a dynamic and engaging social institution that is responsive to and inclusive of our whole community in ways that
respond to their unique and diverse needs. Getting there may not be without its challenges, but our hope is that
this Toolkit, which is based in experience and designed to help move libraries/library staff through these challenges,
will provide valuable assistance.

Social Exclusion

By Annette DeFaveri

National Coordinator, Working Together Project

Public libraries are often described as inclusive, neutral, and barrier-free institutions. Our mandates and mission statements include commitments to providing equal access to all community members, creating welcoming environments, and reflecting the diversity of our communities. Libraries appear to be the definition of inclusive institutions. We seem to embody the values necessary to build inclusive communities. Ask any librarian if the library is an inclusive institution and the answer will likely be yes.

It is clear, however, from library literature and our experiences, that libraries serve some segments of the community better than others, and some segments not at all. This tells us that libraries are not truly inclusive and emphasises the need to discuss policies, practices, services, and attitudes that inhibit inclusion.

When the Working Together Project asked librarians to talk about developing inclusive library practices and services, discussions stalled. Many librarians were hesitant to discuss social inclusion issues with us because they believed that the library already was inclusive. Some librarians cited long open hours, appropriate physical access, and creative programming as evidence of inclusiveness. Others defined inclusiveness by describing their own comfort level serving anyone who walked through the library's doors and by their personal commitment to developing original programming. The dilemma for the Project was to have discussions about inclusion that went past personal definitions and further than asset-focused examples.

To begin discussions about social inclusion and libraries, the Project started discussing *social exclusion* and communities. Social exclusion should be understood in broad terms. It can affect any stratum of our society, including people who are poor or live in poverty, people who are unemployed or underemployed, and people who are members of ethnic or cultural minorities. Being excluded can mean being alienated from the political, social, economic, and cultural life of the community because of race, gender, sexual orientation, or class. Excluded communities can include new immigrants, refugees, the working poor, and groups that have been historically isolated such as African Nova Scotians and First Nations people. For some people, being excluded can stem from, or bring about, drug addiction, mental illness, and homelessness. The conditions that define social exclusion can often be multiple.

it's not a good feeling

When we focused on social exclusion, we learned from community members how exclusion affects their lives and defines their needs. We discovered that library services we thought of as inclusive fell short of meeting many community needs and were, in some cases, alienating to community members. We learned about individuals such as one teen who was afraid to come in to the library because he was sure the security gates would alert staff to his fines. The teen believed that library staff would take his skateboard in lieu of the money he did not have to pay those fines. We learned about a group of moms who, after attending one story time, never came back to another. They were embarrassed because they had talked while the librarian sang, and were told not to do so. In one community, physically disabled people, parents with strollers, and elderly community members could not navigate the steep rough path that was the only walkway from the bus stop to the library.

At a conceptual level, libraries may appear to be inclusive institutions, but whether this is reflected in the realities of service prioritisation, the manner in which services are delivered, and the institutional culture must be continuously questioned.

Ultimately, the Project learned that it is impossible to conceive of inclusive services without first understanding social exclusion. We had to transcend conceptual definitions and focus on a critical assessment of our existing practices and services. Understanding that there is social exclusion in our communities and recognizing that it does keep people from engaging with mainstream institutions such as public libraries is necessary before we can create truly inclusive libraries.

...lets change that
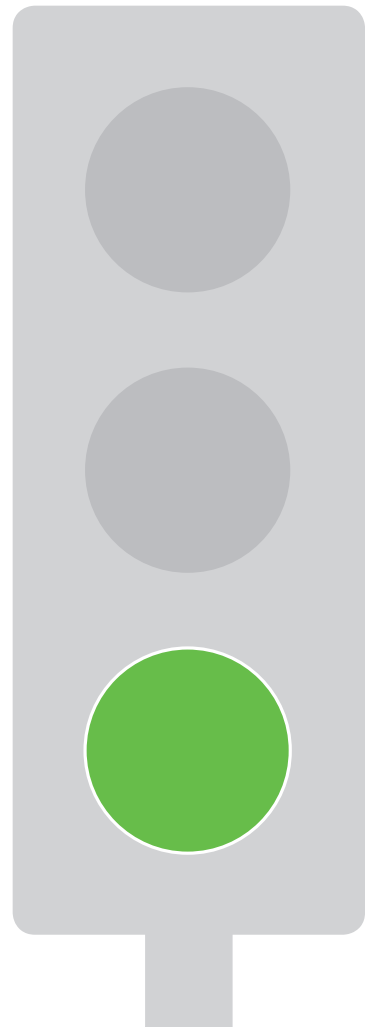
Working Together Project Sites: Overview

Project Communities

After receiving funding confirmation from HRSDC, the Vancouver Public Library selected three additional library systems to participate in the Project based on their population demographics, previous experience working with socially excluded communities, and commitment to the goals of the Project. Each library system then selected a community with which to work. In each case, the focus was on connecting with socially excluded people who were not using the library.

VANCOUVER

Vancouver Public Library identified Mount Pleasant, a culturally-diverse neighbourhood located just outside of the downtown core, as its Project community. Mount Pleasant is characterized by a higher-than-average level of poverty, with the most recent census data suggesting that just over one-third of the community are low-income households. Due to its history as a low-income neighbourhood, the community is home to a number of social service agencies. In Mount Pleasant, poverty creates the exclusion that defines many community members' lives. The neighbourhood is also undergoing rapid change as parts of the community gentrify.

HALIFAX

Halifax Public Libraries focused their work on the Greystone public housing community and the 500 block of Herring Cove Road. As Greystone is public housing, all residents have low incomes and most receive income assistance. The units include families with children, seniors, and adults receiving a disability pension. About 15% of the residents are African Nova Scotian. The community is geographically isolated on a steep hill with one road leading to it. Grocery stores, banks, the library, and other services are two kilometres away. Residents have low literacy and high unemployment. The exclusion many residents experience is compounded by their geographical isolation.

TORONTO

The Toronto Public Library decided to work in two communities: Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park. Many new immigrants, beginning in the 1970s and continuing today, settled in these neighbourhoods. Flemingdon Park is a diverse community with roots in the Caribbean, Africa, South East Asia, China, and other parts of the world. Thorncliffe Park has a high concentration of Muslims, mainly from South East Asia. Among the many languages spoken in these communities, the main ones are Tamil, Chinese, Farsi, Gujarati, Urdu, Punjabi, and Tagalog.

Thorncliffe Park and Flemingdon Park are very densely housed communities of high-rise apartments. Both communities have high poverty rates and overcrowding. Settlement assistance is in high demand by the ongoing influx of newcomers. Education levels are generally high, but unemployment and underemployment are challenges, along with inclusion in Canadian society and economy. Many adults in these communities, particularly recent immigrants, face challenges accessing ESL classes and skills training, as well as barriers to recognition of overseas experience or qualifications.

REGINA

The Regina Public Library selected North Central Regina, which has a population of 10,500 people. The Aboriginal population, which comprises forty percent of the North Central population, is increasing rapidly as families move from rural areas to the city. Many people in the community live in poverty, have low literacy skills, and lack the skills needed to compete in the workforce. In addition, many youth and seniors are isolated within the community. The unemployment rate is high at 15%, compared to 4.2% for the rest of Regina. There is a high rate of transience and many of the houses in the community are old and in poor repair.

Although the Albert Library has had a Community Advisory Committee for over twenty years, the branch is still not reaching many segments of the community. Many residents feel that the library has nothing to offer them and are not comfortable using it.

Establishing the Community Development Librarian Position

The role of the Community Development Librarian (CDL) was fundamental to the Working Together Project. The attitudes and new skills required to work successfully outside the library and with socially excluded community members were tested and embedded in the requirements for this position. CDLs developed new ways of collaborating and partnering with community members, while working with community members to address questions of service equity, systemic barriers, and inclusive library practices. Insights and models for new methods of community-led library work were mediated through this position.

Initially, the Project sought to establish the Community Development Librarian position as a permanent position in the Project's partner libraries. In some cases, this was appropriate and successful. In other cases, libraries made the decision to incorporate the attitudes, qualities, and skills of the CDL into existing positions and job descriptions because they viewed such skills and attributes as important for all library staff if systemic change were to be achieved. The process of redefining the role of the librarian in the community began with the CDL position and will continue in each partner library after the Working Together Project ends.

engage →

Community Engagement in Context

Over the life of the Working Together Project, we have answered many questions about the difference between community development and outreach and have seen recent literature that even uses the two phrases interchangeably. Likewise, we have heard some confusion about the difference between consulting the community and collaborating with the community. The following discussion clarifies the differences between outreach, consultation, community development, and community development in a library context. Its intent is to provide context for the Community-Led Service Planning Model.

Types of Community Engagement

OUTREACH

Outreach is a long-standing public library service. At its core, outreach involves delivering a message that the library believes to be important, such as that reading to your pre-schoolers is important for early literacy development, that the library has important online resources that will help high-school students do their homework, or that the library offers a wide-array of services with broad appeal.

As staff, we decide on a format that these messages will take—perhaps a storytime visit to a new mother's drop-in, a books-for-babies campaign, an online research program at the local high school, or a library talk at the local neighbourhood house. If we have not already identified a location—often as a result of a community request or by our needs assessment—we find places that will allow us to come and deliver the program, message, or service. Our hope is that people begin to understand that the library is an important community resource.

In all cases, the purpose is the same: we have a message that we need to convey, so we create a service, program, or presentation that allows us to convey the message and then take it out into the community to ensure people understand the important services we offer.

Outreach happens in the community. The librarian is the authority, and the focus is on "information out" or service delivery.

CONSULTATION

Consultation is another long-standing tradition in libraries. We are constantly trying to understand our users and what they want from the library. Often, to do this, we use consultation tools such as surveys, comment cards, polls, or focus groups. Consultation, however, is wholly focused on getting information on what the community wants or needs. After the results of consultation have been gathered, libraries have traditionally worked in-house to develop service responses.

Consultation can happen in the library or in the community. The library is asking for feedback, and the focus is on "information in" or hearing from the community. Importantly, traditional consultation techniques favour existing library users and/or economically-advantaged, engaged, and confident non-users.

SOCIAL/COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Public libraries have long been active partners in many local social development initiatives. Libraries sit as service provider partners at the table during community undertakings, such as the development of community-wide crime reduction strategies, literacy initiatives, or early childhood education strategies. By participating in these activities, the library is a partner in what we would consider traditional social development initiatives. When libraries talk about their community development activities, they are usually speaking about this type of engagement. When libraries discuss their community development focused partnerships, they are most commonly referring to this type of service-provider-to-service-provider social development focused partnership.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN A LIBRARY CONTEXT

When the Working Together Project discusses *community development in a library context*, we are referring to the application and evolution of philosophies and techniques that community developers use to work with communities within the context of library service planning. In particular, we use it within the context of working directly with socially excluded people in our communities to plan services.

The focus of community development in a library context goes beyond receiving feedback or hearing from the community (consultation or "information in") and extends to encompass meaningful and active community member engagement in service prioritization and planning.

Community Engagement in Context

The continuum on the following page illustrates increasing user engagement in service development as one moves from left to right. On the far left of the continuum, the library is in charge of determining what community needs it will respond to and how it will respond to them, and the relationship with the community is one in which the library informs and educates the community about library services. As we move toward the right, we see increasing concentration on hearing from the user. Further right, we see engagement of the community on panels and committees and, to the far right, we see the community leading the library. Hence, *community-led libraries*.

see for yourself →

The various types of community engagement are charted below. Please note that the *partnering* in the right column is traditionally with other service organisations as referred to above in the discussion of Community Development.

PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT CONTINUUM

GIVING INFORMATION	GETTING INFORMATION		ENGAGING	PARTNERING / COLLABORATING
INFORM / EDUCATE	**CONSULT**	**DISCUSS / DEBATE**	**ENGAGE / PARTICIPATE**	**PARTNER / COLLABORATE**
Library plans services and informs the public of the services.	*Library asks the community what it wants or finds important.*	*Library asks the community what it wants or finds important.*	*Library involves community in library activities.*	*Library works with community members to plan services.*
OUTREACH	SURVEYS	FOCUS GROUPS	ADVISORY COMMITTEES	COLLABORATIVE SERVICE DEVELOPMENT
LIBRARY BOOTHS	POLLS	PUBLIC MEETINGS	EXPERT ADVISORS	
MARKETING	OVER-THE-DESK CHATS	SEMINARS	COMMUNITY PANELS	
PROGRAMMING	FEEDBACK FORMS			COMMUNITY-LED SERVICE PLANNING
ICT TRAINING				
LITERACY PROMOTION				
PRESS & PAMPHLETS				
OPEN HOUSES				

LISTENING

CONSULTING

ENGAGING

COLLABORATING

There is a role for each of these ranges of engagement in library services and libraries will need to think strategically about when and where each technique is best used.

However, the Working Together Project strongly advocates the partnering/collaborating model when developing services for socially excluded communities. Our experience with the Community-Led Service Planning Model has shown that this highly collaborative approach is what works when trying to engage socially excluded community members in library services. It is the model which allows us to truly see the library through the community's eyes, allows the library to learn from the community's experiences and perspectives, and allows the library to engage them in decision making and planning. It demonstrates to socially excluded community members that we trust them, believe in them, and value them as highly as other users. This model will allow public libraries to evolve into truly inclusive social institutions.

PewResearchCenter

The information needs of citizens

Lee Rainie

Director, Internet and Technology research
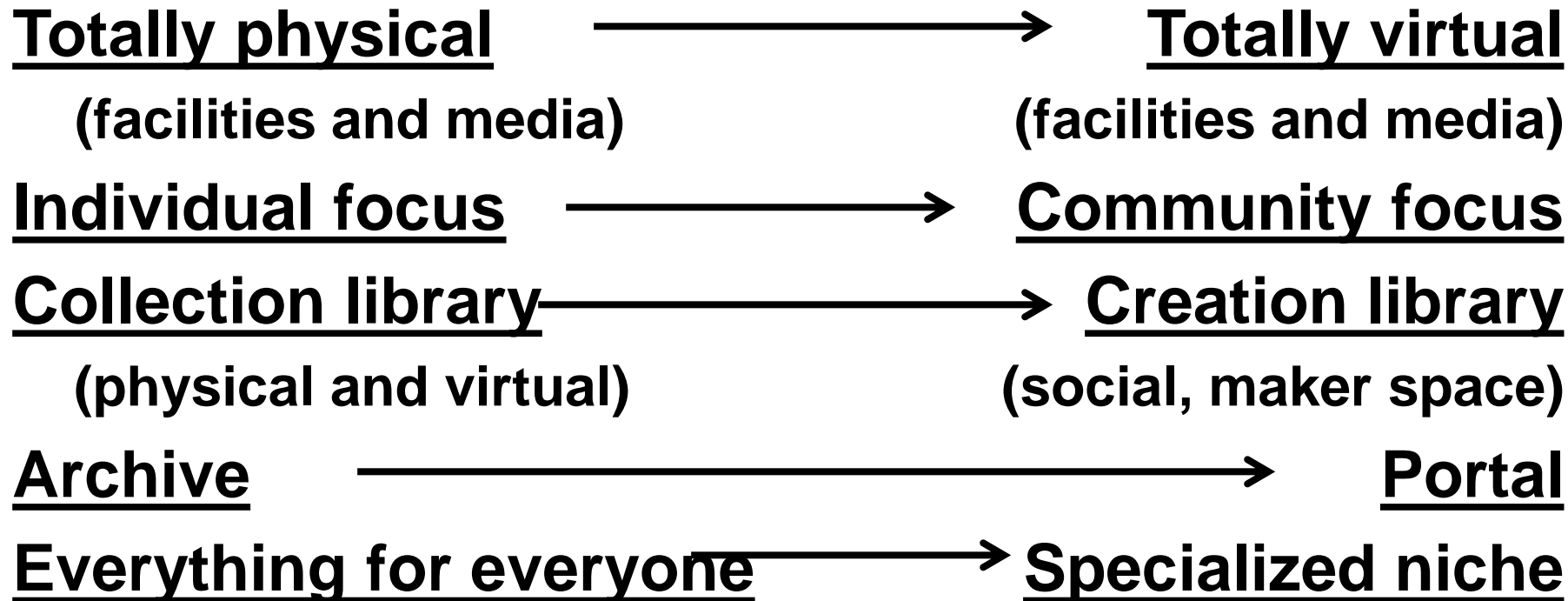
March 23, 2018

Public Library Association

@lrainie | @pewinternet | @pewresearch

1. **People seek personal enrichment and entertainment in new ways**
2. **People seek knowledge and reference expertise in new ways**
3. **Some groups especially need and want access to technology through trusted institutions**
4. **Learning is a social process**

5: Where they fit on these continuums ALA's "Confronting the Future"

Totally physical ⟶ **Totally virtual**

(facilities and media) **(facilities and media)**

Individual focus ⟶ **Community focus**

Collection library ⟶ **Creation library**

(physical and virtual) **(social, maker space)**

Archive ⟶ **Portal**

Everything for everyone ⟶ **Specialized niche**
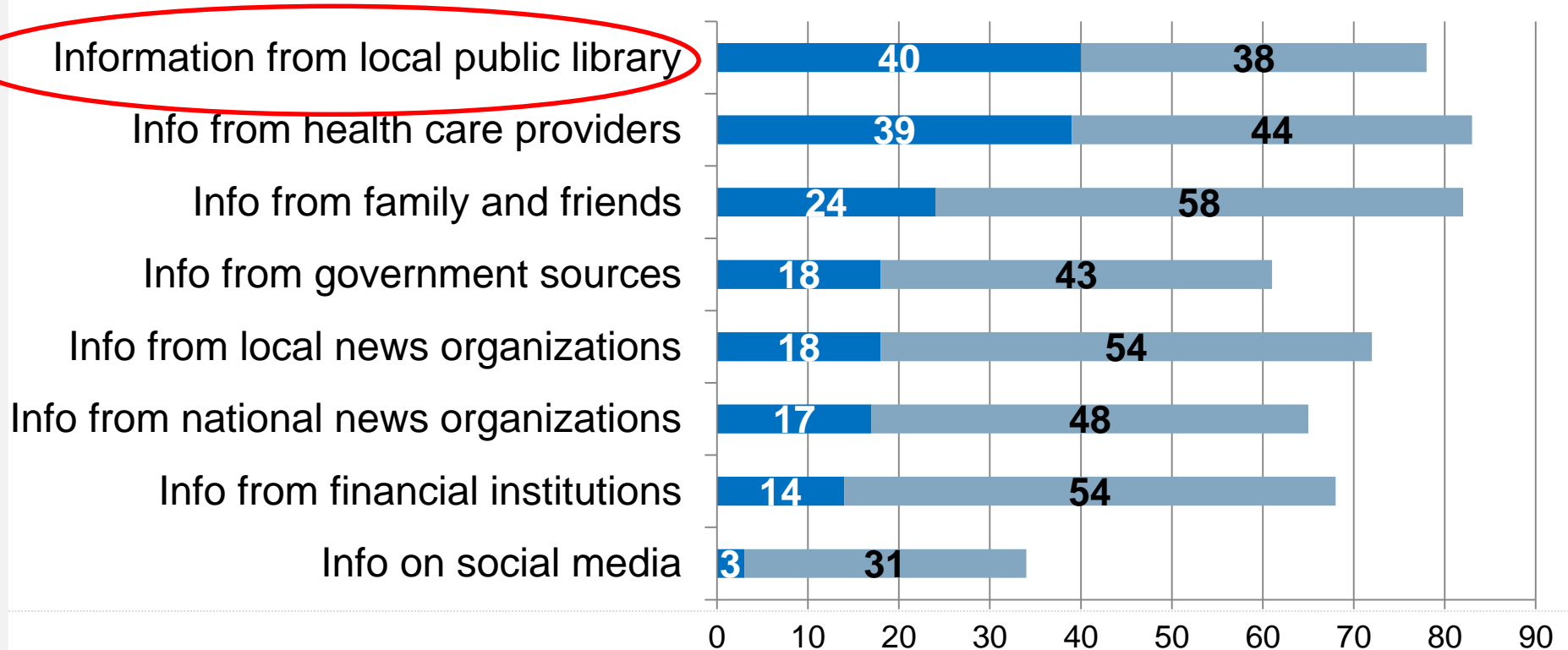
- **People think libraries are important, especially for communities**
- **People like and trust librarians**
- **People think libraries level of the playing field for those without vast resources**
- **People believe libraries have rebranded themselves as tech hubs**
- **People still read books**

People's trust in various sources of information

■ a lot ■ some

Source	a lot	some
Information from local public library	40	38
Info from health care providers	39	44
Info from family and friends	24	58
Info from government sources	18	43
Info from local news organizations	18	54
Info from national news organizations	17	48
Info from financial institutions	14	54
Info on social media	3	31

If your local public library CLOSED, would that have a MAJOR impact, MINOR impact or NO IMPACT on …