Final Evaluation Report:

Libraries Transforming Communities

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Executive Summary

Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) is an initiative of the American Library Association (ALA), with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, that seeks to strengthen librarians' roles as core community leaders and change-agents through training by the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation in their Turning Outward approach. In partnership with ALA, external evaluator New Knowledge Organization Ltd. (NewKnowledge) conducted a multi-pronged, intensive evaluation to document the progress of the initiative and its impacts over the course of twenty-one months, from March 2014 to December 2015. This final report summarizes findings of the assessment conducted from August to November 2015, and documents the trajectory of the project from spring 2014 to fall 2015.

NewKnowledge assessed activities based on the project's four key areas: 1) intensive work of the Public Innovators Cohort, which consists of library leaders and community partners from ten sites nationwide; 2) scalable learning across the library field using LTC resources and tools; 3) ALA staff and member leader training; and 4) a communications campaign that builds support, visibility, and buy-in for the work of libraries as agents of community innovation and change.

The final evaluation of the LTC initiative indicates that the project met its goals through the following:

Intensive Cohort Work – The Public Innovators Cohort embraced transformative community engagement by using skills and resources from LTC to develop long-term engagement programs and strategies that will continue to serve the public beyond the end of the initiative. With the essential support of institutional leadership and partners, these libraries became agents of change in their communities. Already seen as leaders in community engagement in their own libraries, Cohort members are on their way to becoming mentors for library professionals across the field.

Scalable Learning – The LTC website offers a rich array of resources and information for the library field's long-term use. The tools have become increasingly relevant and sustainable through an iterative process of testing and feedback among the Public Innovators Cohort and conference attendees. With about 25,000 views of the LTC homepage and 10,700 tool downloads over the course of the project, the library field has signaled its need for and curiosity about these resources.

ALA Staff Work – Across leadership and staff, ALA subscribes to the LTC and community engagement principles of listening to, engaging, and empowering the library community. ALA has leveraged promising efforts like Kitchen Table Conversations for ALA members at conferences and Communities of Practice for ALA staff to learn in groups how to enhance member services. Staff support and advocate for organizational changes that will help ALA become more Turned Outward to its members and partners.

Communications – Over the course of the project, the national discourse within the library field and among the public indicated a clear shift toward positive perceptions of libraries' community work. Popular

news media changed from painting a picture of libraries facing various challenges to representing libraries as dynamic public service providers. Academic media consistently supported this vision. ALA conference sessions increased their promotion of community engagement and outreach too, showing growing support among practitioners.

Figure 1. Columbus (WI) Public Library led an art project in which local artists painted benches to distribute across town. Photo credit: Columbus Public Library.

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Introduction

Libraries Transforming Communities (LTC) is a comprehensive initiative of the American Library Association (ALA), the oldest and largest library association in the world, with approximately 58,000 members in academic, public, school, government, and special libraries. The LTC initiative is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, a global philanthropic leader. The initiative addresses a critical need within the library field by developing and distributing new tools, resources, and support for professionals to engage with their communities in new ways. To this end, project leadership established four objectives, as described in the *Gates Foundation Results Framework*:

- **Objective 1, Intensive Cohort Work**: Create an opportunity for a public library cohort to intensively learn and apply the Harwood Institute practice in order to understand its potential for the field, identify barriers to success, and track change results;
- **Objective 2, Scalable Learning**: Contribute resources to the field that will teach librarians new approaches to community engagement and innovation;
- **Objective 3, ALA Staff Work**: Train ALA staff in the Harwood Institute practice to focus the organization outward and align internal process to the work in the field; and
- **Objective 4, Communications**: Build awareness, participation, buy-in, and a sense of urgency—in the field and externally—about strengthening of this type of library work and its potential for community change.

ALA's partner in LTC is the Harwood Institute for Public Innovation, whose Turning Outward approach emphasizes changing the orientation of institutions and individuals from internal (institutional) to external (community-facing). This process promotes taking steps to better understand communities; changing processes and thinking to make conversations more community-focused; being proactive about community issues; and keeping community aspirations at front of mind when planning or carrying out library programs.

In partnership with ALA, external evaluator New Knowledge Organization Ltd. (NewKnowledge) has conducted a mixed-method evaluation to track the progress of the initiative. Interim reports have been submitted in September 2014 (NewKnowledge Publication #PVT.074.175.02), March 2015 (#PVT.074.175.04), and September 2015 (#PVT.074.175.05) to monitor progress and offer recommendations for improvement. A first media discourse analysis report was submitted in August 2014 (#PVT.074.175.03). The evaluation plan and all reports can be accessed at http://www.ala.org/transforminglibraries/ltc/program-evaluation. This final report documents findings of the assessment conducted from August to November 2015, as well as summarizes the trajectory of the entire project cycle according to each of the project objectives. Each section of the report includes the intended primary objective and outcomes, as determined by the *Gates Foundation Results Framework*. An overview of methods provides background on the evaluation activities and participation. Key findings and

recommendations are provided for each section. These recommendations can be used to further improve the trainings and tools, making them more effective and promoting sustainability as the initiative continues past the end of the current funding cycle.

Objective 1: Intensive Cohort Work

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Create an opportunity for a cohort to intensively learn and apply the Harwood Institute approach in order to understand its potential for the field, identify barriers to success, and track change results.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Sustainability for the community engagement work of libraries is enhanced (e.g. libraries and library staff adopt library-led community convenings as a practice, librarians are confident in their skills and practice their skills as part of the day-to-day job, the Turned Outward activities of the library indicate a different way of doing business).

- Cohort participants become champions for this approach by sharing lessons learned, mentoring peers, sharing their experiences, spreading the practice, and providing feedback to ALA on tools for the field.

- Cohort participants communicate and collaborate more effectively with their community partners.

- Cohort participant-led conversations result in community-specific actions (e.g. development of library services to community, programs to address community issues, library involvement with community partners to address issues, community member involvement in issues, work of library, work of partners - with the outcome of strengthening the community).

KEY FINDINGS

- Members of the Public Innovators Cohort demonstrate a commitment to deep community engagement principles and skill in applying the practice.

- Most cohort members strived to become agents of change in their communities throughout the project. Their individual and institutional actions that focus on listening, assessing needs, partnering with other community organizations, and generating new programming demonstrate this commitment.

- Institutional and board leadership have supported Cohort members in their effort to become attuned to their communities' needs and aspirations. Some have even incorporated the LTC approach into formal institutional strategy, indicating that Cohort members' participation in the project will have a legacy at these libraries.

- Partners observed a shift in how the libraries work. Some partners now view Cohort libraries as community leaders and agents of change.

- Members of the Cohort have promoted transformative community engagement principles and resources among their colleagues, as well as with the library field at conferences. This type of dissemination has broadened the project's reach beyond the Cohort institutions to impact the larger field.

- Cohort members have developed skills that allow them to better identify partner organizations with similar motivations and are more likely to form partnerships with these organizations. Cohort libraries have established and nurtured sustainable relationships with compatible partners that have already resulted in community-wide programming that has benefitted community members of various ages and backgrounds.

OVERVIEW OF METHODS

This assessment of the Public Innovators Cohort outcomes uses data from: 1) an online final survey completed by each Cohort team; 2) an online survey of select board members, trustees, and support staff at Cohort libraries; 3) a review of group phone call notes between Cohort members and Harwood trainers; 4) posts and discussion threads in the Cohort Facebook group; and 5) an online survey of select Cohort community partners. We also reviewed secondary evidence from two additional sources to check for consistency with the assessment findings: 1) Cohort self-assessments that were facilitated by Harwood; and 2) four case studies of Cohort teams compiled by Harwood and ALA.

The final survey was called a *progress report* because Cohort members were provided with their own responses to prior surveys they had taken as part of LTC evaluation and asked to reflect on their own progress over time. Cohort teams then respond to ten open-ended questions focused on understanding libraries' expectations, activities, perceptions of the program, and feedback on the tools. It also included close-ended questions to determine if and how libraries used the Harwood tools and training sessions. Cohort teams from all ten participating libraries responded to the final survey. Members at each library responded as a group, with the exception of one library that submitted two surveys. For the purpose of the analysis, we treated the responses from this library as a single data point. The final survey was developed jointly with ALA and conducted via http://apply.ala.org and was therefore not anonymous. However, Cohort teams were invited to submit feedback confidentially directly to NewKnowledge researchers.

ALA and NewKnowledge asked each of the ten libraries of the Public Innovators Cohort to nominate three leaders (mid- to senior-level administrators or board members) in their organization to take the survey. Nine libraries nominated a total of seventeen people, including executive staff, board members, and support staff. Eleven responded to our survey. Even though not all staff had executive titles, it was clear that Cohort members viewed them as leaders and decision-makers at their library. For this reason, we have analyzed their responses as one group representing library leadership. The survey asked library leaders to reflect on their familiarity with LTC, the degree to which LTC tools have been used at all levels of their library, and perceptions of positive growth and challenges related to their libraries' participation in LTC.

For the community partner survey, ALA and NewKnowledge asked each of the ten libraries in the Public Innovator's Cohort to nominate three partners to take the survey. Nine libraries nominated a total of twenty-two partners, twelve of which responded to our survey. The partner survey asked participants to reflect on their relationship with the library, the impact of that relationship on their organizations' work, and how their partnership with the library affects the community.

By reviewing notes of the monthly calls between Cohort members and Harwood trainers, NewKnowledge researchers explored the range activities, depth of involvement, potential barriers, and successes experienced by the Cohort members. A review of posts, comments, and discussion threads in the Cohort Facebook group provided additional insight into topics of most interest to Cohort members.

Our observations and surveys aimed to gain insight into the experiences, learning outcomes, and behavioral changes of the Cohort and their stakeholders. In the past, evaluation monitoring focused on the online interactions among Cohort members, as well as in-person convenings at ALA conferences. In the analysis, we prioritized the surveys and observations of the final evaluation period of the project. We also describe the trajectory of development over time, based on findings from a media discourse analysis report and three interim reports, dated August 2014, September 2014, May 2015, and September 2015, respectively.

FINDINGS

Responses to Previous Recommendations

Recommendations from the most recent interim report in September 2015 (NewKnowledge Publication #PVT.074.175.05) included promoting sustainability by offering mentoring and clear guidelines to libraries and continuing to use ALA Connect for one-way dissemination and resource sharing. Most importantly, recommendations focused on promoting the LTC Facebook group and seeding conversation prompts to encourage the Cohort to continue growing as a community after the grant funding is complete.

Since we offered these recommendations, Harwood has continued to host monthly coaching calls to get updates on activities and provide an opportunity for Cohort libraries to keep in touch with one another. ALA has consistently posted a variety of conversation starters on the Cohort's Facebook page. These posts have been aimed at information and resource sharing, as well as celebrating successes. This social media activity may be important to support the Cohort's social cohesion, which could increase the impact of the grant and provide more value for the Cohort itself. We discuss strategies for maintaining Cohort connections below, in section 1.2.

1.1 Sustainability of Library Community Engagement

Internal Changes in Libraries

When considering changes in their own organizations, Cohort members described an overall internal shift to incorporate LTC principles, approaches, and tools into their long-term work. Almost all of the libraries noted that they trained their staff to use Harwood tools, such as Community Conversations and Aspirations. Many of them stated that community knowledge is an integral part of strategic plan and event planning. One Cohort team remarked, *For programming, we are always asking, "How does this reflect what we are hearing from the community?"*

Another example of long-term planning is from one library that said the Harwood training has led them to open a new location closer to the center of their community instead of expanding their current location. They also characterized a different approach to partnerships: they are more open to saying "yes" to new opportunities to work with community partners or on community projects.

Community engagement also plays a role in the staffing decisions at some libraries. Half of the Cohort teams stated that they now keep community engagement in mind when recruiting or training new staff members.

LTC has resulted in pervasive changes at some of the Cohort libraries. As one Cohort member said, *The Turning Outward approach to decision making now permeates the culture of the Knox County Public Library. Members of the library's LTC team have told and shown me how participating in the cohort has been a game changer for them in terms of working with other library staff members and the community.*

Using the Turning Outward and LTC Tools

The Harwood Institute's practice of community engagement is carried out through a series of tools – including worksheets, resource guides, conversation starters, and activities – that are to be conducted either alone or with a group of colleagues or fellow change agents. These tools help users through each step of the community engagement process, from assessing a library's current community engagement activities, to collecting feedback from the community, to taking effective action. For example, the Turn Quiz worksheet poses a series of conflicting ideas (e.g., activity vs. action, programs vs. people, people as consumers vs. people as citizens) and asks the user to consider, first alone and then with their colleagues, which best describes how they approach their work. The Ask exercise provides instructions and four basic questions (e.g., "What kind of community do you want to live in?" and "Why is that important to you?") for the user to begin soliciting input from members of their community. A full list of tools used throughout LTC can be seen at www.ala.org/LTC/resources.

Harwood also developed new tools explicitly for libraries, based on Cohort members' feedback and concerns about community engagement practices taking root at their organizations. Three library-specific tools were made available to the Cohort in June 2015. These tools were titled, Making It Stick with Staff, Making Meaning of Data, and Tracking Your Progress. The new resources have been received positively by the Cohort and initial testing indicates the tools are useful for deepening library work.

Cohort members thought specifically about the LTC tools that they have used with their staff and their communities. The Harwood tools were used with varying frequencies and in multiple contexts (Figure 2). Cohort libraries were most likely to use Aspirations, Turn Quiz, Innovation Spaces, and the Ask Exercise with their staff. Aspirations and the Ask Exercise were also commonly used with community members, as was the Community Conversations tool. In many cases, libraries used the same tools with both their staff and communities. A few libraries have not used the Intentionality Tests, 3A's of Public Life, Ask Exercise,

and Innovation Spaces. The majority of libraries (range: 6-10) used each tool as provided, though some modified the Community Conversations and the Innovation Spaces tools.
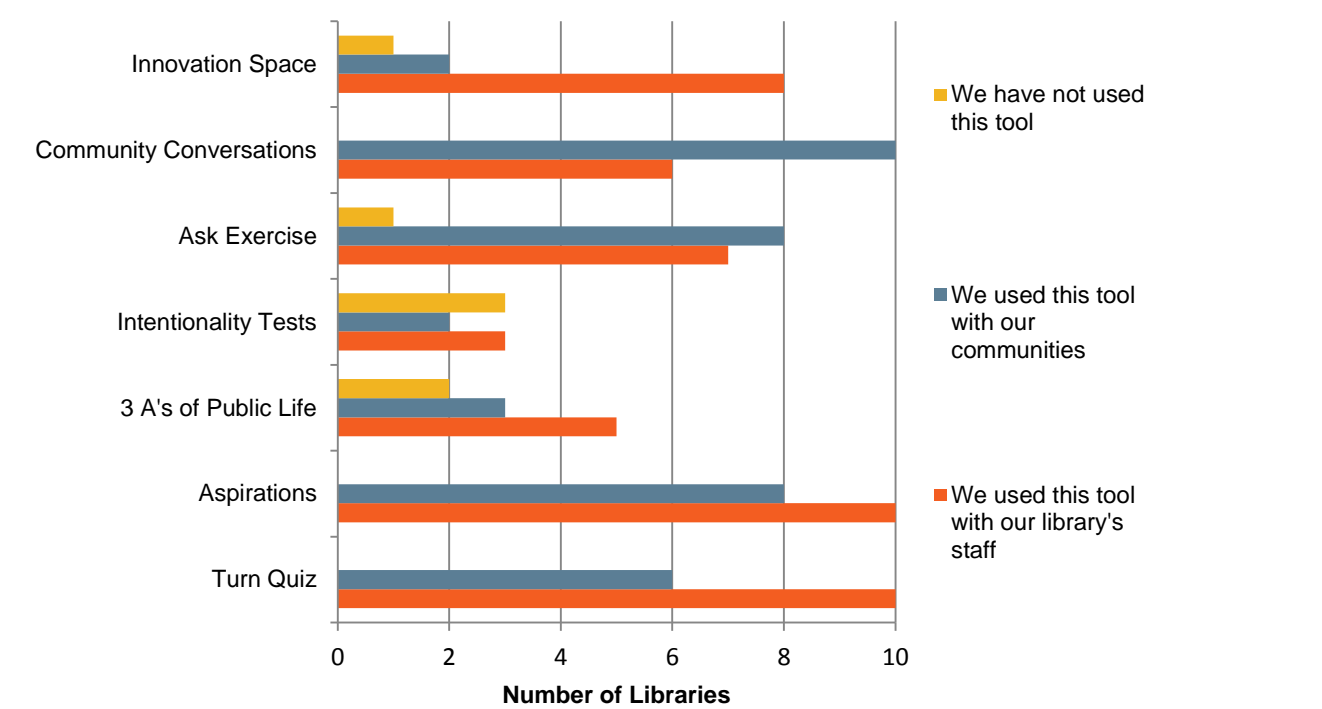
Figure 2. Ways in which libraries have used the Harwood tools.

Note. *N* = 10

These findings indicate that Cohort members are generally using the tools in the contexts intended by the Harwood trainers. The resources with broadest applicability for both staff and community engagement are: Community Conversations, Aspirations, Turn Quiz, Innovation Space, and Ask Exercise. The Intentionality Tests and 3 A's of Public Life appear to be less useful.

Library Leadership's Perceptions of Community Engagement through Turning Outward

Library leaders (including board members, executive staff, those in decision-making positions or others who could bear witness to changes occurring internally) at Public Innovator Cohort libraries were generally impressed with the LTC initiative and the staff who worked hard to make changes at the level of library practice. They indicated strong support for the LTC approach and perceive widespread support for their libraries' work as public service providers.

Nearly all library leaders strongly agreed that they fully support new initiatives and plans that came about as a result of intensive community engagement programs. On average, all strongly agreed that the LTC

initiative has helped align their library's efforts with community aspirations. Some agreed that they have incorporated Turning Outward into their institution's strategic plan, but others were ambivalent about the degree to which the LTC approach has been absorbed into institutional strategic planning (Table 1).

Table 1. Library leaders' perceptions of LTC's impacts on their institution.

	Average Score	Not sure
I fully support new initiatives and plans that came about as a result of Turning Outward.	4.8	0
We have worked with new or different parts of the community as a result of Turning Outward.	4.6	1
Turning Outward has helped align our library's efforts with community aspirations.	4.5	0
I now think differently about my library's role in our community.	4.4	1
Our library professionals have been able to train other staff in Turning Outward to better engage with our community.	4.4	2
Our work has changed because Turning Outward has helped us redirect our library's strategic plan.	3.7	0

Note. Responses are based on a five-point Likert scale, of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

Note. *n* = 11

Thinking about institutional changes over the course of the LTC funding, library leaders perceived the biggest change in how their libraries provide training in, approaches to, and prioritization of community engagement work. They also tended to agree that community members and media are talking about the libraries' community work differently and more often than before LTC (Figure 3).
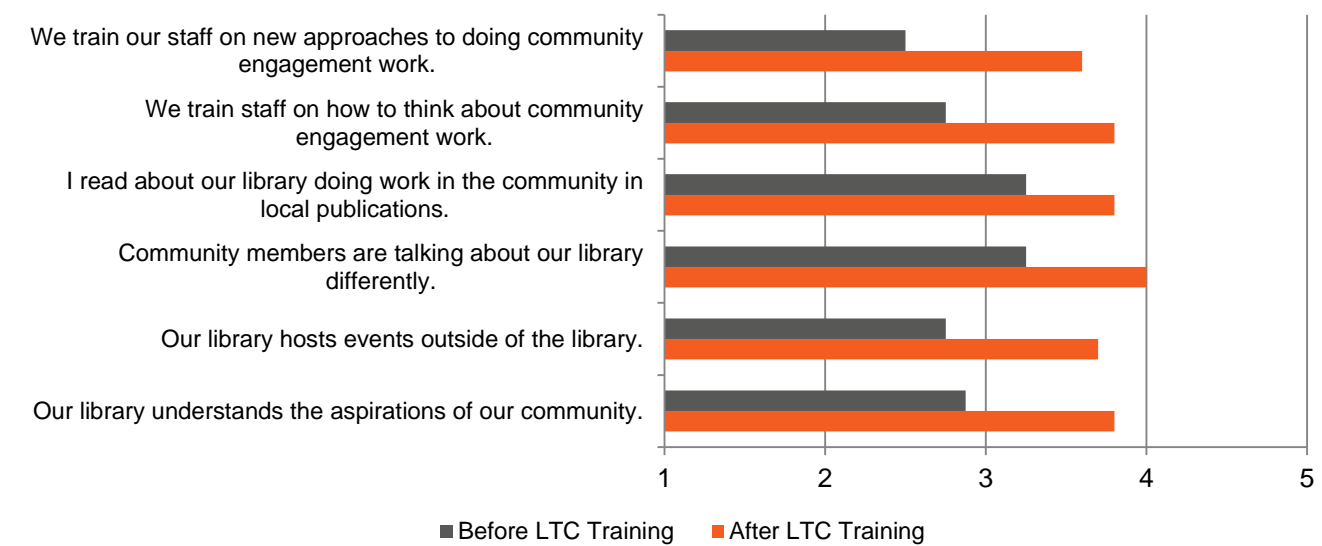
Figure 3. Library leaders' perceptions of community programming before and after their libraries' participation in LTC.

Note. Bars indicate the mean for each item. Responses are based on a five-point Likert scale, of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). One respondent was not involved with the library prior to May 2014, so *n* = 9 for *Before LTC Training* items and *n* = 10 for *After LTC Training* items..

Even when unable to distinguish between the various Turning Outward tools, survey respondents were aware of LTC's role in community programming at the library and perceived an overall positive impact on the library. They were most familiar with the Community Conversations exercise, which nearly all said their library had done with their communities, as well as with the staff and board.

When asked to think about challenges library leadership encountered as part of LTC, four thought it was difficult to understand how LTC is different than other outreach initiatives. Two experienced resistance from the staff and one thought it was challenging to learn, understand, or use the terminology. The remaining respondents thought it had gone smoothly.

Change over Time

Cohort members have demonstrated the substantial change in attitudes, intentions, and actions related to community engagement and the LTC approach. Their perceptions and use of the tools are perhaps the most indicative shifts in this process. Early in LTC, we observed some confusion about and even reluctance to use the tools as they were initially presented by Harwood. These sentiments were rooted in frustration about Harwood's terminology or "jargon" and confusion over the goal of each tool. Through coaching and support by ALA and Harwood, the Cohort became more comfortable using the tools, and became able to adapt the tools to fit specific audiences or issues. Most recently, several Cohort libraries simplified the language surrounding the tools when talking with their staff or community members during exercises.

In the past, examples of tool adaptation were explored in Interim Report 3 (NewKnowledge Publication #PVT.074.175.06), based on Tip Sheets that Cohort libraries presented in the June 2015 Work Space. These Tip Sheets indicated how libraries applied a given tool, including changes in terminology and descriptions of effective strategies. One team described the Community Conversations tool as guidelines for engaging in *loosely structured conversations with 8-15 people designed to help an organization gain a better understanding of community needs.* The team regularly held Community Conversations with adults living in the neighborhood, teens from a local Community Center, Vietnamese- and Spanish-speaking adults in a library ESL class, parents attending a school parent meeting, seniors attending the Community Center's Senior Lunch Program, and members of a Community Center church group. They described benefits such as the opportunity to *communicate realistic promises to residents that help demonstrate the library's accountability to the community*. They also advised others to plan ahead if hosting a conversation for non-English speakers because it can take some time to effectively translate the Community Conversation questions into another language. They also suggested bringing a sign-up sheet to collect participants' contact information.

Both the Cohort members and their library colleagues indicate that intensive community engagement is well on its way to becoming institutionalized. Early in the project, Cohort members had some concerns about whether other staff and library leadership would embrace this new way of thinking. The survey of board members and trustees unequivocally shows a commitment to LTC's principles, in some cases explicitly integrating the approach into institutional strategic plans.

1.2 Participants Champion the LTC Approach

Learning in a Cohort of Practitioners

Cohort members benefited from developing social connections with other Cohort members and their willingness to champion the LTC approach was in part motivated by opportunities to network and reflect on their experiences as a group. Cohort members have shared lessons learned and supported one another throughout the initiative. In the final survey, two of the libraries indicated that they had looked forward to forming a community with other LTC practitioners, and one expected that *a tight knit cohort would be formed and that we would have a community*. A few of the Cohort libraries emphasized the importance of learning from other libraries in different communities across the country. Cross-institutional learning and relationships are an important part of the legacy of the LTC funding for both the Cohort libraries and the field at large. Providing ongoing opportunities for members to develop and sustain these relationships in person and online will strengthen and grow the network of library professionals trained in community engagement. In turn, a strong network will sustain the work of libraries that are gathering public knowledge to initiate community-centric services.

Usefulness of Tools for the Library Field

There are mixed but generally positive comments about the tools. The Community Conversations tool was the most popular, with users noting that it supported their ongoing work and can be easily adopted across the wider library field. One respondent praised the Step-By-Step Guide to 'Turning Outward' to Your Community (based on the latest version of the Public Innovators Lab Workbook) and felt that it is ready to be distributed to the wider field. Many libraries felt that the tools should modified or generalized for broader use. For example, a glossary could be added to clarify the language used in the tools. More complicated tools (e.g., Take Effective Community Action) need to be simplified so they can be used with library staff who had not undergone training. Cohort members appreciated that community engagement work is time-intensive, however felt that simplifying the tools could also reduce the time commitment and allow busy professionals to engage in the practice while maintaining their other job functions. This lower time commitment – at least initially – may also help to increase support from executive level staff. More library professionals will be able to embrace the work of community transformation without sacrificing their current duties and responsibilities if tools are more flexible. This tool flexibility should include both the ability to modify the tools for specific audiences and issues, as well as the means to determine the most appropriate use of the tools outside of the prescribed protocols.

Harwood coaches convened monthly calls with a group of Cohort members to get updates on their progress, discuss challenges, and brainstorm solutions. Most of the libraries stated that coaching calls were important for supporting successful use of the Harwood tools, however, the calls were not equally helpful. Some felt that too much time was spent recapping activities and too little time was given to developing ideas for how to move forward. Underlining the value of social connections among the Cohort members, two of the libraries stated it was useful to learn from the other libraries to see the different applications of the tools. Two of the libraries also suggested that if the tools were simplified, there would be less of a need for coaching.

Harwood anticipated that libraries would require different resources and levels of attention from coaches. After setting an initial plan with periodic calls with two Cohort subgroups, Harwood coaches adapted the type of support they provided to each library. Harwood's responsive and flexible approach in the support of the Cohort responded to the unique needs of the Cohort members and provided a platform for social learning.

The Future of Community Engagement among the Cohort

All of the Cohort libraries are planning to continue using the LTC approach in some way that advances the library field's collective practice in community engagement. Three of the libraries emphasized that they will continue to gather Public Knowledge, using it in their strategic planning or to plan new programs. Four of the libraries stated they will continue working with their community partners and seeking new opportunities for collaboration. Four of the libraries will continue to use the Harwood tools, particularly the Community Conversations tool. Perhaps most importantly, many of the libraries plan to roll out the Harwood training to more branches in their library system or to train more of their staff members in the Harwood method. These training efforts will help to spread the practice to the field by making transformative community engagement an integral part of professional development.

In Interim Report 3 (NewKnowledge Publication #PVT.074.175.06), we made recommendations about supporting inter-Cohort activity through social media. A review of the LTC Facebook page showed that Sarah Ostman, ALA PPO's Communications Manager, has consistently posed questions and made comments to start conversations. For example, she has posted information about new Harwood learning opportunities (e.g., webinars), celebrated media coverage of the Cohort, shared information about funding opportunities, and asked Cohort members to be leaders or mentors for new library professionals pursuing other types of training in community engagement. Occasionally, the group has shared news about programs and achievements, information about their communities, and updates on their own work. However, several of the Cohort members are the most active in making posts and contributing to group conversations on Facebook.

Now that there is a core group of active contributors on the Cohort's Facebook page, we recommend continuing to encourage Cohort members to start their own conversations to share experiences, give feedback on using the tools, and support one another. As the grant funding draws to a close, it may be

worthwhile to talk about how the Cohort will continue to act as a group – in what capacity and through which medium will they remain in touch? It is clear that following the experience of participating in LTC, the Cohort plans to continue interacting beyond the close of the grant. The goal will be to find a method for communication that benefits the whole group and provides the same level of information sharing and support. This is also an opportunity for the Cohort to self-identify as mentors and role models for the field, as the grant comes to a close and ALA and Harwood phase out their active involvement in training.

Change over Time

Early on in LTC, Cohort members had apprehension about the precise activities they should be doing and goals they should have. This sentiment receded as the group found their stride and focused on their own communities and unique programming opportunities. Toward the end of the initiative, Cohort members were happier learning from their colleagues on other teams and less worried about being unfairly compared with each other or worried about their progress along a particular trajectory. In fact, the Cohort has increasingly embraced and relied on the social network they have established over the past year and a half. This group can and should be a lasting learning community that continues to support each other's efforts and help when they meet challenges.

As described above, Cohort members have become more comfortable with the tools, particularly after early consternation about the vocabulary. As the LTC project team focuses on promoting the tools across the library field to those with little to no training or support in the Harwood approach, we continue to recommend the creation of a glossary of terms and their definitions. A glossary tool will facilitate an easier transition for new users of the Harwood method who may be overwhelmed with the complicated vocabulary.

ALA and Harwood actively supported the adaptation of tools by Cohort teams, giving them opportunities to present the modified tools to their peers and the field at large. The tools as they have been tailored for libraries according to their specific needs can be explored on the LTC blog and the "Libraries Transforming Communities: 'Turning Outward' Tools in Practice" YouTube videos. The ALA website also offers a recording of a training webinar for the tools, called Go Out and Play: Community Engagement through Turning Outward.

From the evaluation team's perspective, the Cohort has remained committed to assessment efforts and providing feedback on tools, coaching, communications, and project structure over the life of the project. The Cohort's dedication to this process has demonstrated an effort to improve the project so that resources are more successful with peers. LTC project leaders and the coaches have been responsive to feedback and recommendations from both the Cohort and the evaluators, which has benefitted the project. Cohort members have also shown an interest in identifying outcomes and measuring impacts internally at their institutions. Responding to this, ALA has encouraged libraries to participate in the Public Library Association's Project Outcome (https://www.projectoutcome.org/), which provides a way to understand and share the impact of essential library services and programs. The LTC Resource webpage

(www.ala.org/LTC/resources) offers a series of self-assessment tools as well. ALA may consider offering a space on the LTC page or ALA Connect where libraries can upload their self-assessments, along with additional measurement strategies developed by libraries.

1.3 Communication and Collaboration with Community Partners

Relationships with Community Organizations

Cohort members commonly described having more "intentional" partnerships as a result of their LTC involvement. They discussed how community knowledge obtained through the Community Conversations and Ask tools enabled them to identify partners that can address community needs, and also helped them to more effectively communicate with partners about the community. Two of the libraries emphasized that *small successes have allowed people to build relationships*: they feel they have stronger connections to their partners by collaboratively developing smaller programs that resulted in long-term partnerships and even community-wide initiatives. One library stated that now community organizations come to the library instead of the library having to go to them, and feel they have a stronger "political" pull.

Feedback from Partners

In a survey of 12 community partners, half had been involved with their library for more than five years, three worked with the library for three to five years and another three partners for one or two years. Partner organizations ranged from charitable community organizations, schools, arts organizations, municipalities, faith-based organizations, and groups that provide after school services.

When reflecting on the reasons for partnering with the library, nearly all believe the organizations share a vision for what they would like to achieve in the community. Some also said that they participated in a Community Conversation exercise and others were approached by the library about collaborating.

Community partners believe that they already have a strong record of public service and that the libraries supplemented or complemented this record. Respondents were fairly neutral about the ability of their partnership with libraries to help partners engage the community in new ways, make their work more effective, help them understand the community's aspirations, and learn about new groups of people in the community (Table 2).

Table 2. Community partners' level of agreement on their partnership with Cohort libraries.

	Average Score
My/our work is more effective because of our partnership with the library.	3.36
I/we engage the community in new ways through our partnership with the library.	3.36
I/we feel our partnership with the library helps us understand our community's aspirations.	3.18
I/We have learned about new groups of people in our community because of our relationship with the library.	3.09

Reflecting on the history of their partnership with the libraries, community partners indicate some positive effect in the importance of the libraries' role in their own community work overall (Figure 4). The biggest change was that partners were more likely to agree that they work with the library to identify community aspirations. This finding indicates that partners are indeed aware of the library's efforts to learn about the community's needs in their own words. In spite of gains in this area, community partners remained fairly neutral over all about the importance of libraries to their work. As evaluators, we recognize that effective community partnerships take a long time to develop and that all of the Cohort teams have laid the groundwork for continued collaboration. Substantial quantitative results from those collaborations are not necessarily in evidence yet because of the natural – and often slow – progression of truly transformative community work.
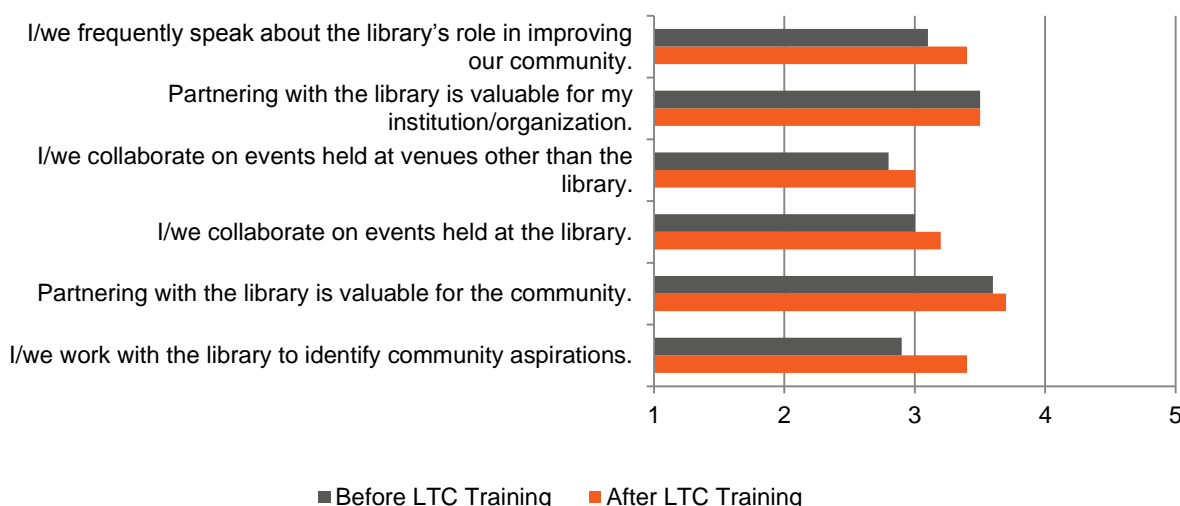
Figure 4. Community partners reflect on the change in the role of the library before LTC and after LTC training.

Note. Responses are based on a five-point Likert scale, of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

In spite of community partners' lukewarm or neutral responses to inquiries about the impact of their relationship with the libraries, their open-ended comments tell a more affirmative story, detailing instances of notable positive outcomes and recognition of the libraries' contributions. These comments illustrate both a variety of activities that libraries participated in, as well as the depth of their involvement and impact.

The library has supported the Literacy Council in outreaches to impoverished and underserved populations. By collaborating during workshops and having the library

join us, we have had a stronger attendance rate at these events. Being at the same place at the same time as the library seems to have decreased the stigma attached to looking for help. The [library] has also made getting a library card easier so we have been able to walk our students, many of whom read below the third grad level, cards.
– Community Partner

The library is a key and essential partner for our county's educational partnership. They are not only the thought leaders, but also the action takers in regards to changing how we do learning during the summer. Through our partnership with the library this summer we were able to bring enriching and academic programming to children across the county to meal sites – changing the way we do business in out of school time – by going to where the students are and not expecting them to come to us. – Community Partner

The public is more aware of the desire and need for books at the hospital due to the partnership with the library. – Community Partner

Partners also noticed a substantial increase in public service activities during the life of the LTC funding:

I have never seen the library in this community as active as it has been in the last 2 years. The leadership is impressive and the service remarkable! – Community Partner

Our library has held community forums, offered teen and young adult alternatives, altered the layout of each branch to be more inviting and accessible, brought in weekly workshops and speakers, restarted their mobile library system (called a pop-up library), and invited summer youth to volunteer and learn skills since 2014. I am sure I am forgetting something; the services have deepened considerably.
– Community Partner

The LTC initiative has been an extraordinary boost to this community's image and reputation. – Community Partner

Cohorts' View of Partner Perceptions of the Library

Nearly all of the Cohort libraries believe they are perceived differently as a result of their LTC-inspired work with partners. They have noticed an increase in community partners wanting to work with the library. Libraries feel they are seen as a positive force in their community. One library stated they feel more open because they are now seen as a *safe-zone which encourages the sharing of ideas*. Another library said they are more present in their community by having off-site programming. Yet another remarked:

The library was seen as a collaborator before and is now seen as a change agent and leader. People working on projects often approach the library first for assistance. The placing of the Sœur

[sic] de Vincennes statue in the library is an example. People often say to me, "No one does as much for the community as the library does." – Cohort Member

One library said they are not sure about the community's opinions. Another library was unable to comment on this because of staffing challenges at the library, perhaps suggesting the staff person who had contact with the partners was no longer working or otherwise unable to discuss partners' perceptions.

Change over Time

Early on, Cohort teams focused on how to find the right partners and discern between productive and problematic partners. At the project's end, many of the Cohort members said they were more confident in convening conversations with other organizations and letting initial contact grow into a full-fledged partnership. Cohort members also appear to worry less about being perceived as competitors, instead persisting in efforts to engage other organizations to show how their strengths can complement each other. We suspect that this change has come about because libraries have become more comfortable with the intensive outreach work, are navigating partnerships better, and feel more in tune with community needs and their ability to address these needs. As one Cohort member stated in the last interim evaluation, they have become *cheerleaders for the whole community* (NewKnowledge Publication #PVT 074.175.05). The media training effort has evidently assisted some libraries in publicity for joint programming as well.

Partner organizations clearly value and respect the LTC Cohort libraries' contributions to joint programming or existing programs. They view the libraries as true public service institutions that are good partners and admirable community leaders. Partners have not yet perceived systemic internal changes at their own organizations, but are clear about the positive impact for the community.

1.4 Increase in Community-Specific Actions

Strategies for Community Engagement

Cohort teams now have formal community engagement plans, and some have described a shift from marketing library services to engaging and "actively listening" to the needs of their community. These activities were varied and included organizing community events (cleanup day, city fundraising events, science camps), conducting Aspirations and Community Conversations exercises with members of the public, recruiting librarians from other institutions to participate in LTC, conducting internal trainings, and reaching out to community organizations.

These long-term and substantive efforts signal Cohort members' commitment to becoming agents of change in their communities, where they are able to act on behalf of their constituents for positive improvements in local civic life. Comments from the Cohort, library leadership, and community partners substantiate this new role that library professionals have assumed. Some examples of long-term listening and action initiatives that have come out of the training are as follows.

- Root for Columbus – This initiative engaged residents of Columbus, WI around their shared aspirations for their community and led to a series of locally-driven projects that are addressing challenges in the community, building a sense of civic pride, and creating more trust and stronger relationships.
- Anti-Violence Leadership Workshops – The library has co-facilitated and provided resources for an ongoing workshop cycle at the Mason Square Branch in Springfield, MA. This series aims to build a cohort of non-violent advocates to promote change in the neighborhood, at once addressing concerns about public safety and the need to cultivate local leaders.
- Food Drive & Fine Forgiveness – The Knox County Public Library (IN) hosts an annual food drive for families who experience food scarcity when school is not in session. Partnering with the local United Way chapter, the library paired the food drive with a fine forgiveness program, where for every nonperishable food item donated by patrons, $1 in fines was forgiven.

The Cohort has achieved much more than these examples. Full stories of each library's community engagement initiatives are thoroughly documented in Case Studies funded through the LTC initiative (see www.ala.org/LTC).

Responses to Community-Specific Suggestions & Actions

Cohort libraries reported universally positive feedback from the community, with many people volunteering at and attending library-sponsored events and commenting that the library was a leader in the community. Feedback from community organizations was often positive as well.

Cohort members reported that some organizations felt they were already doing the work suggested as a result of Community Conversations and other community engagement exercises. Similarly, library staff being trained to use the Harwood tools sometimes felt that their work already embodied the LTC approach. Coaching call discussions touched on this contrast between overwhelming grassroots support from community members and lukewarm responses from organizations and individuals needed to implement larger change. However, some individual libraries reported a positive shift in these partner attitudes in their final survey responses. For example, the police commissioner in one of the locations initially reacted defensively towards the library's suggestions for ways to increase public safety, but later invited a Cohort member to be part of the police precinct's roundtable discussion.

Change over Time

The Cohort has seen a marked increase in community-specific engagement over time, following LTC's Cycle of Public Innovation and Stages of Development tool found on the last page of the Public Innovators Lab Workbook. At first, Cohort teams spent time developing a community-focused mindset that prioritized shared aspirations rather than problems in the community. Following this, Public Knowledge was gathered and Cohort teams and teams held Innovation Spaces and shared this Public Knowledge with partners in the community. Only with this solid foundation and mutual understanding were teams able to develop community engagement plans and begin to take concrete action. As evaluators, we found that the Public Innovators Cohort made substantial progress given a relatively short funding cycle for this type of complex

transformative work, with sufficient evidence indicating that progress is likely to continue. We believe that most Cohort teams are now in the third and final stage of development, *Embedding and Sustaining the Change*. A few are in the second stage, *Executing Strategies and Action that Fit the Community*.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Consider making a glossary of terms and definitions so that new learners can become more easily acclimated to LTC's unique vocabulary. This has been a barrier for some in the past.

- Partner organizations initially may resist suggestions that come out of the Turning Outward exercises because they focus on the services they already provide and perhaps are not accustomed to libraries taking on a strong community action role. Community partners and potential collaborators clearly take pride in their work as community leaders. We recommend providing additional training materials that help libraries acknowledge and build off of the work that is already being done.

- Now that there is a core group of active contributors on the Cohort's Facebook page, we recommend continuing to encourage Cohort members to start their own conversations to share experiences, give feedback on using the tools, and support one another.

- We recommend scheduling consistent activities at conferences to help the Cohort stay connected to each other and able to build their leadership in the field. First, provide opportunities for Cohort teams to meet, update each other on their work, and socialize. Second, encourage Cohort members to continue presenting at conferences so they can remain accountable regarding the training they have received. This will help the field increasingly recognize them as go-to authorities on transformative community engagement and field-wide mentors.

Figure 5. Hartford Public Library held a series of conversations bringing together police and residents from Hartford's North End in June 2015. Photo credit: Judy Wyman Kelly

Objective 2: Scalable Learning

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Contribute resources to the field that will teach librarians new approaches for community engagement and innovation.

DESIRED OUTCOME

- Librarians have long-term, sustainable access to a wealth of resources to support their work doing community engagement.

KEY FINDINGS

- The LTC website offers a rich array of community engagement resources and information about the Turning Outward approach.
- The professional community has shown great interest in the online resources, with nearly 25,000 views of the LTC homepage and 10,700 unique downloads of LTC resources over the course of the project.
- LTC project leaders have optimized the community tools, refining them over time specifically for the library field based on feedback at conferences and from the Cohort.

OVERVIEW OF METHODS

For the final evaluation, NewKnowledge used ALA PPO's Google analytics data on Web traffic relating to LTC website (www.ala.org/LTC) and resources (www.ala.org/LTC/resources). Google analytics enable us to visualize trends in access and use over time for the broader library field. NewKnowledge researchers also reviewed posts, links and emails provided by ALA related to a December 2015 webinar and upcoming conference session scheduling.

In the past, monitoring took into account the use of tools and sessions at ALA conferences, monitoring surveys for conference attendees, email questionnaires with Cohort members who had been involved in LTC conference sessions, and Web traffic analysis. In the analysis, we prioritized Google analytics of the final evaluation period of the project. We also describe the trajectory of development over time, based on findings from the three interim reports.

FINDINGS

Responses to Previous Recommendations

Recommendations from the most recent interim report in September 2015 suggested organizing conference sessions to enable maximum participation, varying the types of sessions offered to challenge

programming librarians who may be engaged in intensive community engagement work already, and increasing the library field's access to and understanding of LTC resources.

Since we offered these recommendations, ALA hosted a well-attended webinar featuring three Cohort libraries and has scheduled LTC-related programming for the 2016 ALA Midwinter conference in Boston, MA and the 2016 PLA conference in Denver, CO.

On December 1, 2015, a webinar entitled Go Out and Play: Community Engagement Through Turning Outward featured Cohort representatives from Red Hook (NY), Columbus (WI), and Spokane (WA). The registration rate of 250 was considered very high, indicating great interest from the library field. One trustee who attended the webinar on behalf of her library provided the following feedback:

Thank you for offering such a great webinar. When we started with our own modest project, I think we felt as if we were alone in our efforts. As we proceed and research and read and then listen to the stories from Red Hook, Columbus and Spokane, we realize that we are all faced with the same issues. Our team will certainly be making use of the materials offered. – Library trustee

Upcoming conference programming is also indicative of ALA's willingness to act on recommendations, in this case to diversify the ways in which conference attendees can interact with LTC-affiliated content. This includes having opportunities to learn from those who have been engaged in the work of transformative and intensive community engagement and able to offer insight to colleagues at other libraries. The following are currently scheduled in upcoming months:

- Deep Dive Session: Trust and Opportunity: Transforming Libraries, Transforming Communities in Mid-Sized Urban Settings at the ALA 2016 Midwinter Meeting in Boston on Jan. 10, with presenters from LTC Cohort libraries Hartford (CT) Public Library and Springfield (MA) City Library.

- Extraordinarily Engaged: How Three Libraries are Transforming Their Communities at the PLA 2016 Conference in Denver on April 7, with presenters from LTC Cohort libraries Red Hook (NY) Public Library, Columbus (WI) Public Library, and Spokane County (WA) Library District.

- Extraordinary at Any Size: Tips for Keeping Your Library Relevant and Your Community Engaged for Every Size Library at the PLA 2016 Conference in Denver on April 9, with presenters from LTC Cohort libraries Los Angeles (CA) Public Library, Spokane County (WA) Library District, and San Jose (CA) Public Library.

2.1 Increased Access to Resources

The broader field of library professionals who did not directly participate in the LTC training appeared increasingly more able and more likely to access resources over the course of the grant funding.

Web Traffic

Google Analytics enabled the LTC project team to monitor traffic on the project homepage and subpages, and determine the number of times the LTC tools have been downloaded. Over the entire project (January

2014 through November 2015), there have been almost 25,000 views and 20,000 unique views to the LTC homepage and over 28,500 views and 23,000 unique views to all subpages combined (e.g., Resources, About LTC, Cohort, Blog; Table 3). As in previous periods, the Resources subpage received the most traffic, with 12,251 views and 9,453 unique views alone. The LTC Blog was also popular, with over 5,500 views and over 4,700 unique views. The most popular blog post was a follow-up interview with Scott Bonner, the director at the Ferguson Public Library, after he spoke at the 2015 ALA Midwinter Conference about lessons learned during the protests in Ferguson, MO.

Table 3. Web traffic and downloads over the entire project.

	Total	Unique
LTC Homepage Views	24,922	19,761
LTC Subpage Views	28,563	23,207
LTC Tool Downloads	10,782	5,187

Rate of page views was relatively constant over the course of the grant, with spikes in April 2014 when the Cohort libraries were announced and a large spike in August 2015 during the ALA annual conference (Figure 6).
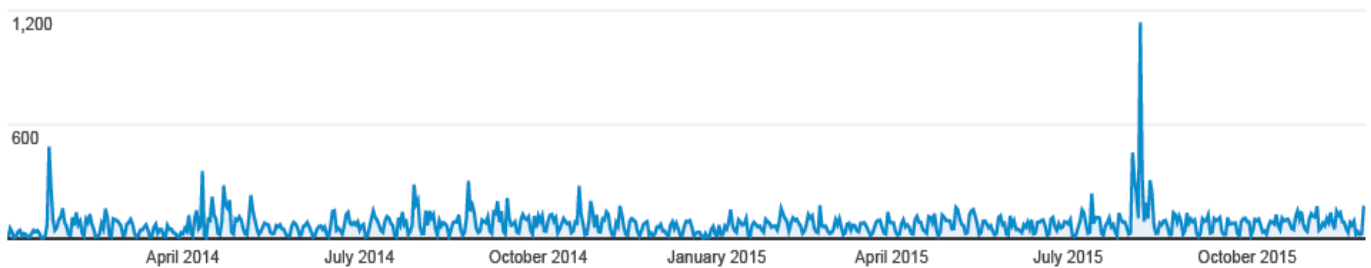

Figure 6. Page views over the course of the grant.

There have been about 5,200 unique downloads of LTC tools over the course of the grant (Table 3). The Public Innovators Lab Workbook, Aspirations, and Ask tools were especially popular. Download patterns varied throughout the grant period, with some spikes corresponding to ALA conferences (Figure 7).
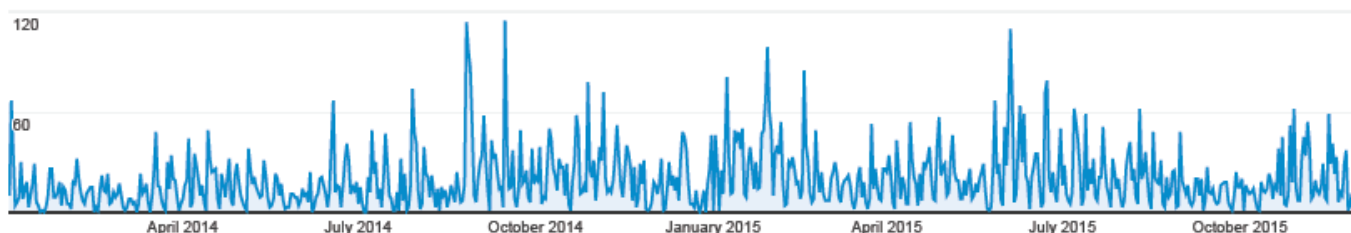
Figure 7. Resource downloads over the course of the grant.

Change over Time
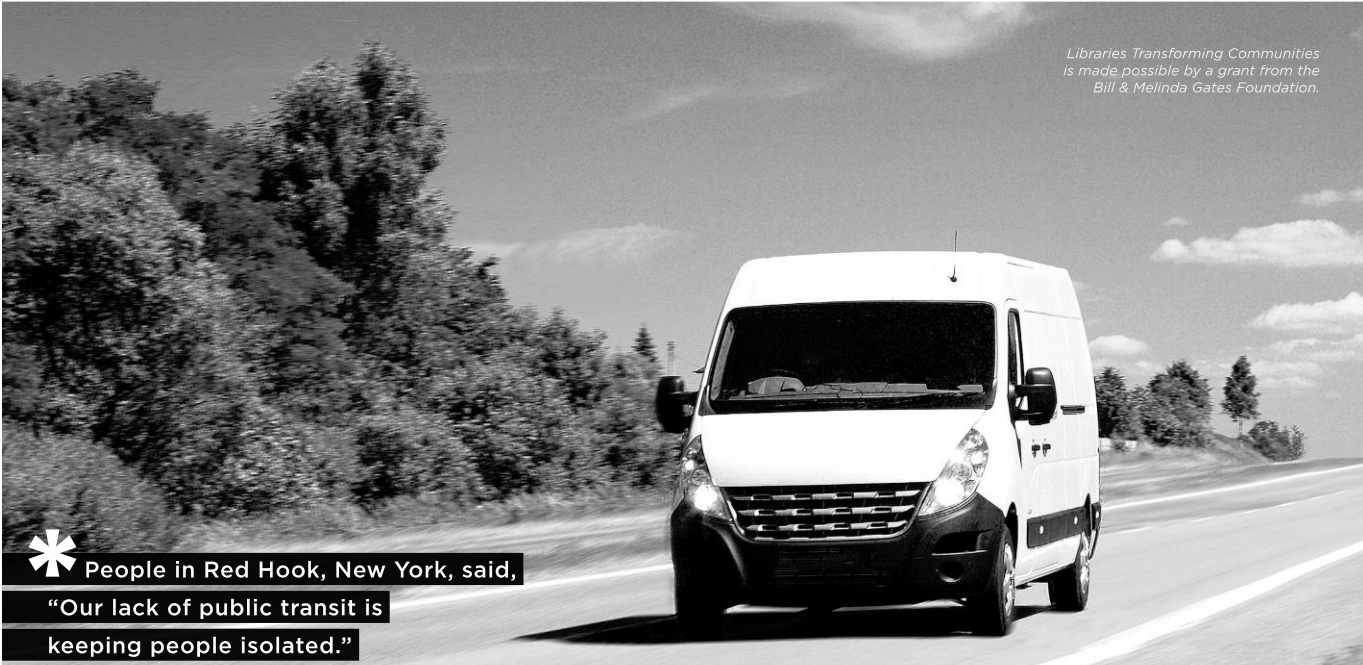
The LTC leadership team has increased the number of resources available online as the project has progressed. Tools like A Step-by-Step Guide to "Turning Outward" to Your Community have been refined based on feedback from the Cohort and the needs of the field. Conference sessions continue to be an important in-person learning opportunity for library professionals who are unfamiliar with the LTC approach, would like a refresher, or wish to dive deeper into implementing what they learned. Attendance at these sessions has fluctuated from conference to conference, often indicating scheduling conflicts but perhaps also suggesting that sessions could be updated to build on previously presented material so that deeper learning opportunities are available.

The library community has shown a strong interest in the online resources and tools developed through the LTC initiative. There have been thousands of views and downloads since they were first made available online, and analysis shows that they continue to attract attention. Given that we can now assume that the tools are being used broadly at least in some capacity, focus should shift to gathering information about libraries' experience and encouraging a support network. ALA and Harwood can continue to learn from how the tools are being used going forward, in a range of library and community types even more diverse than the original ten Cohort locations. Library professionals who download the tools and attempt to replicate and adapt the LTC approach for their library will need support. Since it is not feasible for ALA and Harwood to continue the level of involvement that was possible with grant funding, mechanisms should be in place for libraries to support each other as many will face similar challenges and share similar successes.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- It is in ALA's interest and the interest of the library field at large to continue encouraging and accepting conference proposal submissions related to deepening the work of deep community engagement and civic leadership. This should be inclusive of a range of libraries at various stages in their community transformation work.

- ALA may want to continue inviting Harwood Institute trainers and / or coaches to conferences as budgets allow to work directly with libraries interested in community engagement.

- ALA is advised to set up a forum or mechanism for gathering feedback from those who are downloading and using LTC-related tools, promoting cross-learning between libraries themselves.

- More thought should be given to ways libraries can support one another in efforts to develop intensive community engagement plans, rather than relying on ALA and Harwood for support.

Libraries Transforming Communities is made possible by a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

❊ People in Red Hook, New York, said, "Our lack of public transit is keeping people isolated."

…so the library borrowed a van and is taking its programming directly to the neighborhoods that need it.

Communities have challenges. Libraries can help.
Learn how at ALA 2015.

"Turning Outward to Lead Change in Your Community"
Saturday 8:30 & 10:30 a.m., 1 & 3 p.m.

ALA American Library Association   LIBRARIES TRANSFORMING COMMUNITIES   HARWOOD

Visit **ala.org/LTC** for free resource guides, webinars and more.

Figure 8. LTC promotional material for the 2015 ALA Annual Conference.

Objective 3: ALA Staff Work

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

Train ALA staff in the Harwood Institute practice to focus the organization outward and align internal process to the work in the field.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- ALA becomes a more Turned Outward organization (e.g., member conversations regularly convened, conversations actively inform ALA planning processes and decision making).
- ALA communicates and collaborates more effectively with partners and allied organizations (e.g., convenes partner conversations as part of partnership planning process, conversations inform partnership planning and help to align messaging).
- ALA staff and member leaders become "fluent" in the practice this initiative seeds in the field and can support the work of library professionals (e.g., ALA officers and committee chairs are active in this work, bringing it to the committee level; staff actively participate in and facilitate conversations; feedback used to inform strategic planning, conference planning, and member support).

KEY FINDINGS

- With some exceptions, ALA staff embrace the LTC principles and believe that they are in a position to make a difference.
- When given the opportunity, ALA staff take advantage of investments in training.
- Most ALA staff have not yet rigorously or widely applied specific tools and practices, particularly with partner organizations and members.
- Staff are developing nascent but promising efforts to develop community engagement practices, such as forming Communities of Practice to build learning groups around specific issues.
- Staff are not yet confident in applying the LTC approach or using the tools and will require more support and training to effectively implement the practice in their units.
- Even though they have hope for ALA's effort to become a community-driven organization, staff perceive barriers to the organization's ability to apply the LTC approach on account of its institutional structure and culture.

OVERVIEW OF METHODS & PARTICIPANTS

The main source of data for Objective 3 was an online survey in October-November 2015 of ALA staff who had participated in one or more Harwood Institute training session. Out of 95 ALA staff invited to take the

survey, 22 participated, with 19 of those completing the full survey. The survey asked ALA staff members the degree to which they had used the Harwood tools, been involved in LTC events, their reflections on the Harwood Institute approach, and their perception of LTC outcomes for their own work, as well outcomes for ALA as an organization. A December 2015 professional development training for ALA staff was outside the scope of this evaluation, but evaluators reviewed the agenda and asked project leadership for their reflections.

In the past, we have used the following data sources to measure ALA Staff Work: 1) notes taken by designated note-takers during Kitchen Table Conversations at ALA conferences, 2) a review of ALA staff activities and staff member reflections on the LTC website subpage titled ALA Staff Turning Outward, 3) relevant emails forwarded by LTC project leadership to the lead evaluator, 4) phone calls and in-person conversations throughout the project cycle with LTC project leadership who work at ALA, and 5) a survey immediately following the Intentionality Forum of April 2014. In the final analysis, we prioritized the online survey of staff for the final evaluation period of the project. We also describe the trajectory of development over time, based on findings from the previous three interim reports.

FINDINGS

Responses to Previous Recommendations

Recommendations from the last interim report suggested that ALA leadership continue to learn about and address internal communication barriers as related to the various aspects of the LTC initiative, communicate with and possibly mentor new members following ALA conferences and at periodic intervals throughout the year, and carefully consider following up with suggestions from ALA staff on shifting internal working culture.

Since we offered these recommendations, our surveys and conversations with LTC project leadership suggest that ALA staff have shown interest in the LTC initiative and are support continued training in the LTC approach. About 180 ALA staff members attended the December 2015 Harwood-led professional development opportunity, many of whom traveled to Chicago from locations in other states. Many staff members requested that ALA continue to provide such opportunities. The peak of traffic to the staff page on the LTC website coincided with the December 2015 training, indicating that ALA is becoming a more community-focused organization.

We note that in comparison to the Cohort training and coaching, the grant's investment in this objective was relatively small. This difference most likely explains the more modest gains made by the efforts of ALA staff to become more deeply engaged in community work.

3.1 ALA Turns Outward

Overall, ALA staff embraced the principles and value of deep and transformative community engagement. They believe that they are in a position to make a difference, though most have not yet applied specific practices or used the Harwood tools.

Most agree that they have a personal responsibility to ensure ALA members' voices are heard and have ideas about how to improve the member experience. To a lesser extent, staff feel that they can understand ALA members' needs (Table 4).

Table 4. ALA staff's perceptions of their role and activities with members.

	Average Score	_n_
I feel a personal responsibility to ensure that ALA members' voices are heard.	4.2	21
I have ideas about what ALA staff can do to improve the member experience.	3.9	21
I better understand ALA members' needs.	3.5	20

Note. Responses are based on a five-point Likert scale, of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

Less than half of responding ALA staff members indicated having used the LTC tools. Out of 22 responses, five respondents said they have used the tools internally with other ALA staff members. Four indicated using tools (such as the Aspirations exercise) with ALA members or member groups. The majority of staff said they have not yet applied the LTC approach in their own work or shared work with others, but state they have plans to do so in the future. Open-ended responses indicate that one member adapted a tool for another ALA grant-funded project and another simply tries to keep the approach in mind, rather than using a specific tool. One commenter said that they would participate in an activity if expected to, suggesting that s/he may not proactively use tools unless it were required.

ALA staff are fairly neutral about how the LTC approach has changed the organization's practice so far. They believe Turning Outward approach has influenced ALA member services slightly more than ALA conference planning and institutional decision-making processes (Table 5).

Table 5. Perceptions of how ALA has applied the Turning Outward Approach.

	Average Score
The Turning Outward approach has influenced ALA member services.	3.6
The Turning Outward approach has influenced ALA decision-making processes.	3.4
The Turning Outward approach has influenced ALA conference planning.	3.4

Note. Responses are based on a five-point Likert scale, of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

Note. *n* = 20

While the survey showed that most staff responses to LTC were positive and optimistic, it was clear that they have some concerns about potential barriers to fully implementing LTC principles throughout ALA. Notably, many of these comments indicate a belief that ALA may need to undergo an institutional cultural change to achieve change. These verbatim comments show a range of perspectives about how institutional change may affect many aspects of the organization:

- *The ALA budgeting process is very siloed and doesn't support cross-unit collaboration.*
- *The operational structure of the larger ALA and various degrees of support (and non-support) from ALA leadership are the largest barriers to long-lasting improvements as a result of the Turning Outward approach.*
- *Limited time to engage in opportunities for training and participation due to workload and meeting deadlines along with travel schedule.*
- *Genuine and greater effort needed to change ALA business-as-usual model. Participants in the activities did not include some key units/staff that deal a lot with members, probably because of supervisors' choices – the "usual suspects" were involved.*

Several staff also commented that everyone at ALA should adopt the Turning Outward approach, no matter which unit they belong to.

Change over Time

ALA staff have increasingly embraced the LTC approach over the course of the project. Importantly, the trainings and other activities have helped staff understand the value of engaging and listening to the ALA member community. Throughout the duration of the LTC grant period, ALA has hosted Kitchen Table Conversations at both Annual and Midwinter conferences. Although not widely attended, these are an invaluable way to help members feel like their voices are heard and to enable ALA to critically reflect on its structure and operation.

Even though staff affirmed their commitment to the principles of LTC that prioritize community engagement and listening, they have not been able to universally apply the practice. This may require more in-depth training and long-term plans for activities. Some staff point to aspects of ALA's culture (e.g., budgeting and organizational structure) that may prevent the organization from fully realizing its goal to be an agent of change in the nationwide community of librarians. The evaluators recognize that the December 2015 training was very well attended by staff and may be responsible for changing some of the opinions previously shared via the survey.

3.2 ALA Communication and Collaboration

Two ALA staff indicated that they have used LTC tools with partner or ally organizations, but did not provide further detail. This lack of sharing with other organizations suggests that staff do not yet feel comfortable or able to help other organizations engage in the practice of intensive community engagement, likely because they do not yet feel it is characterizes ALA's own organizational culture.

Change over Time

There has been some evidence of cross-unit collaboration or support for community engagement activities during the project, but very few instances of ALA collaborating with other organizations to implement the community engagement practices.

3.3 ALA Leaders Become Fluent in Harwood Practice

ALA staff have attended a range of LTC-inspired activities and conference sessions. Given the number of participants in each activity, it appears that many staff took part in more than one session. The "Making ALA More Welcoming" and the "Working Effectively Together" meetings were the most popular (Table 6).

Table 6. Frequency of LTC-inspired activities attended by ALA Staff.

Activity	*n*
"Making ALA More Welcoming" meetings, led by Ron Jankowski	16
"Working Effectively Together" meetings, convened by Keith Michael Fiels, facilitated by Cheryl Gorman of the Harwood Institute	11
Intentionality Forum (April 7 or 8, 2014), staff training led by Harwood Institute coaches	8
Kitchen Table Conversations held at ALA Annual 2014 (Las Vegas), ALA Midwinter 2015 (Chicago), ALA Annual 2015 (San Francisco).	4
Libraries Fostering Community Engagement ALA Connect group or networking reception at a national conference	2
Libraries Transforming Communities "Turning Outward to Lead Change in Your Community" conference sessions, held at PLA 2014 (Indianapolis), ALA Annual 2014 (Las Vegas), ALA Midwinter 2015 (Chicago), ALA Annual 2015 (San Francisco)	1

Note. ALA staff could participate in more than one activity, so the total exceeds the number of survey respondents.

In October 2015, ALA conducted its own survey of staff to measure interest in working groups focused on shared learning and skill building, a desire that had emerged from the Making ALA More Welcoming meetings. Out of 50 staff, nearly all indicated that they would like to participate in the working groups, called Communities of Practice (COPs). Based on feedback from meetings and the staff survey, ideas for how to characterize COPs include:

- Intentionally bringing staff together who work on similar tasks or specific areas to share information and experiences in an inclusive and collaborative environment;
- Allowing members to learn from each other through informal sharing;

- Encouraging a culture of organic collaboration and information sharing to help everyone do a better job;
- Identifying each COP to define its own goals;
- Incorporating member experience and input;
- Helping a COP's members develop professionally and personally;
- Including self-identified members, rather than assigned; and
- Being easily findable by new and current staff.

One suggestion was to start with creating a social media COP, using existing groups that focus on email marketing, youth media awards, and conference marketing as test cases. This is a positive development toward cross-unit sharing of knowledge indicative of efforts to help ALA become a community-centric organization.

Staff members heard about the Turning Outward approach and related activities through a variety of channels. Communications from the Executive Director of ALA and word-of-mouth through conversations with ALA colleagues are the most common way that staff first learned about the LTC initiative (Table 7).

Table 7. Ways staff heard about the Turning Outward approach and activities.

	n
Message from Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels	16
ALA colleagues	13
Message from Senior Associate Executive Director Mary Ghikas	3
ALA President/Officers/Committee Chairs	2
ALA conference program schedule	1
ALA publications/newsletters (American Libraries magazine, Cognotes)	1
Other	1

Note. Respondents could select multiple options, so the number of responses exceeds the total sample size.

Survey respondents represented many ALA units, where one to three members answered the survey from the following: Association of College & Research Libraries, Information Technology & Telecommunication Services, Member Programs & Services, Office for Intellectual Freedom, Office for Research & Statistics, Public Programs Office, and Publishing. Eight staff did not indicate their unit in the survey. Given the level of tool use or intention noted above, this list of units indicates a diversity of staff members who are familiar with LTC principles or beginning to apply the practice.

ALA staff members are committed to Turning Outward and view it as a positive addition to the work of the organization. Even though only some indicate that they currently use the approach in their work, many more suggest that they will use it in the future. To accomplish these goals, staff strongly believe that they need more support before they fully apply deep community engagement practices. Not surprisingly, given this recognized need for additional support, staff are not fully convinced or confident that they can use the

LTC approach to make their work more effective. Staff are also somewhat ambivalent about having shared the LTC tools with colleagues or their plans to do so in the future (Table 8).

Table 8. ALA staff's perceptions of, plans for, and experience relating to the Turning Outward approach.

	Average Score	*n*
I need more support to help me understand how to use the Turning Outward approach in my work.	4.5	19
The Turning Outward approach is directly relevant to my work.	4.1	20
I plan to use a Turning Outward approach in my work in the future.	4.0	20
I believe that the dialogue and action being taken internally as a result of Turning Outward benefits the rest of the association.	4.0	21
I currently use a Turning Outward approach in my work.	3.7	20
I am confident that I can use the Turning Outward approach to make my work more effective.	3.7	21
I plan to share the Turning Outward approach with colleagues who are not yet familiar with it.	3.2	21
I have already shared the Turning Outward approach with colleagues who were not familiar with it.	3	21

Note. Responses are based on a five-point Likert scale, of Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5).

Change over Time

We have observed more commitment to and action resulting from the LTC project over the past year and a half. Early on, ALA developed a plan for LTC training that aligned with its own organizational structure and goals. Staff have clearly taken advantage of these investments, with many participating in multiple exercises. In early 2015, ALA leadership has taken more clear and decisive action. Executive Director Keith Michael Fiels has sent multiple organization-wide emails to staff about the LTC initiative and opportunities for staff to get involved. These examples indicate substantial gains in internalizing the LTC approach. In spite of these gains, there is still some ambivalence about how ALA will fully implement the new approach on an organizational level and how individuals think of themselves as a cohesive whole working across distinct units.

Moving forward, ALA plans to continue with a Harwood trainer as a consultant to help the organization progress in its effort to become more deeply engaged with its community. This consulting will include quarterly visits from the trainer, assistance with understanding takeaways from Kitchen Table conversations at conferences, and facilitating staff groups or committees. ALA will also continue to support staff action groups, such as the Make ALA More Welcoming group. Meanwhile, the PPO will assist ALA's executive director and his effort to lead the organization in becoming more community-centric.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Continue to provide updates on new LTC-inspired efforts, activities, and organizational changes via letters and updates from ALA leaders. These communications have the double advantage of keeping the initiative top of mind for more staff, as well as demonstrating the support of leadership.

- Give ALA staff a constructive and safe forum to share concerns about barriers to ALA becoming more community-centric. This effort may start with providing a comment box after all-staff meetings and evolve into committees targeting specific barriers and working with leadership on implementing changes.

- As action groups begin to form and solidify, encourage group leaders to recruit a range of staff to each group. Make sure members represent different units, types of training, and levels of seniority within ALA.

- Begin to consider and strategize about the best partners and collaborators to join ALA in its effort to become more in tune with its community of library professionals. This process may begin (or revisit) talking with existing partner organizations and looking for opportunities in Kitchen Table conversations at conferences.

Figure 9. The Suffolk (VA) Public Library opened pop-up libraries across town. Photo credit: Suffolk Public Library.

Objective 4: Communications

PRIMARY OBJECTIVE

The goal across all target audiences will be to build awareness, participation, buy-in, and a sense of urgency—in the field and externally—about strengthening this type of library work and its potential for community change.

DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Shift in discourse about public libraries in the national and local media away from the narrative about libraries in crisis and debate over libraries as "essential institutions" to one of libraries as agents of positive community change.
- Excitement in the field evidenced by member-driven conference sessions and activities related to libraries as engines of community development at ALA annual, division, and state library conferences.

KEY FINDINGS

- Over the course of the grant funding, newspaper media coverage shifted the story of libraries from a focus on budgets, fines, and cutting hours to a new narrative of programming and service.
- Academic media showed less of a change in narrative about libraries, remaining consistent with focus on programs and information, presumably because academics and library professionals were already aware of field-wide efforts.
- LTC leadership, Cohort members, and other library professionals have increased dialogue about community engagement principles at ALA conferences over time.
- There has been media coverage about the specific activities of the Cohort libraries, as well as broader efforts aligned with LTC.

OVERVIEW OF METHODS & ANALYSIS

NewKnowledge conducted a second library media discourse analysis in the fourth quarter of 2015 to evaluate the national and local discourse about public libraries in the time since the first media discourse analysis in the second quarter of 2014. A full description of the first set of findings can be found in the *Library Media Discourse Report* (NewKnowledge Report #PVT.74.175.03). This second media discourse analysis included 800 newspaper articles and 2,167 academic journal articles. This number far exceeds the dataset that comprised the first media analysis, which only included 713 newspaper articles and 944 academic journal articles. The first media analysis used time intensive methods for obtaining media metadata, such as titles and abstracts. The revised search strategies for this final media analysis resulted in more standardized metadata being available in our searches. Consequently, we could download

metadata more efficiently for analysis. The overview below outlines the methods for this more efficient analysis process.

We also analyzed media coverage of the Public Innovators Cohort itself to understand the discourse about the LTC initiative in particular. NewKnowledge researchers, ALA staff, and the Public Innovators Cohort collected local media stories and academic journal articles that focus on the role of public libraries in their communities. This media coverage included 11 articles that ranged from news articles, op-eds, personal narratives, and conference papers.

Data collection for this study was modeled after previous online research that has effectively used media sources to create a data corpus, and then through the analytic plan the data corpus was explored for consistent themes (Steinkuehler & Duncan, 2008).

Composition of the Data Corpus

A NewKnowledge team member with training in the field of Library Sciences led all database searches. One newspaper database and three academic library journals were used to determine where library discourse occurred, the content of the discourse based on titles and limited article abstracts, the regions of the discourse, and the method by which the discourse is shared (newspaper vs. journal). The NewKnowledge team used a newspaper database available through library subscriptions, ProQuest Gannett Newsstand. LexisNexis was not used in this round of the media discourse analysis because of changes in this database's metadata and abstract export functions. The three academic and professional journals included in this round of analysis are Public Libraries, Library Journal, and American Libraries. College and Research Libraries News journal was not included in this round of analysis due to the limitations of the metadata and abstract export functions of the database containing this journal.

Newspaper Data

ProQuest Gannett Newsstand contains local, regional, and national newspapers. We used ProQuest Gannett Newsstand because its coverage focuses on local and regional newspapers in large towns to mid-sized cities. We anticipated that these types of newspapers would be more likely to describe the types of libraries addressed by the design of LTC. Gannett's coverage evenly represented the majority of ALA's regions, with the exception of the southwest region (Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas). In spite of this gap, the analysis for all of the other regions was sufficiently representative to aid our understanding of national trends in media discourse about libraries.

The search for articles was conducted by using the search term library, and the subject headings were limited to *library*, *libraries*, or *librarians*. We limited the document type to news and used the function to remove duplicate articles. The date range used for this search was February 1, 2014 to November 18, 2015. As with the first media discourse analysis, we sorted results by *Relevance* (determined by the database). After loading the results, we excluded international sources with the Location parameters.

Metadata and abstracts were exported to an Excel file using the database's export function. The final dataset from this database include 800 articles.

Academic Journal Data

As a comparison dataset with the newspaper titles/abstracts, we searched three academic and professional journals specializing in library subjects to compose a journal article dataset. These journals are accessible through ProQuest academic databases. We included the following journals: *Public Libraries* magazine, *American Libraries* journal, and *Library Journal*. Readers of these publications are often students and professionals within the field of library sciences. We conducted a separate search for each of the journals, using the same search parameters. We did not use search terms and limited results to the date range February 1, 2014 to November 18, 2015. As with the newspaper analysis, we excluded international sources with the Location parameters. For all journals, tables of contents and front matters were also excluded. Specifically for *Library Journal*, we excluded all book and product reviews from the search results. We further refined datasets by removing articles that did not include abstracts. The final dataset for these journals include 987 articles from *American Libraries*, 911 articles from *Library Journal*, and 269 articles from *Public Libraries*, for a total of 2,167 articles.

Data were stored as Excel files. For each data unit, the NewKnowledge team documented descriptive information about the data collection methods such as the data retrieval date and retrieval site/pathway.

Analytic Plan

We collected descriptive statistics from all of the newspaper data files in order to document the date of the publication, the state it was published in, the name of the publication, title of the article, and an article abstract (if it was provided). For academic journal articles, we documented similar descriptive statistics that consisted of the date of the publication, where it was published, the title of the article, and the article's abstract.

The research team used semantic analysis software, called Leximancer, to analyze the data corpus extracted from news articles and journals. The Leximancer software is based in natural semantic language processing, used to identify semantic patterns from written language. It conducts automatic content analysis of text to uncover themes from the connections between words used in a data corpus. By ranking words based on their frequencies and then assessing their co-occurrence with other words, the software can generate specific "concepts" for sets of words that are semantically close.

The software produces visualizations of the concepts and their connections. These illustrations feature colored circles that represent importance and relevance of themes in which prominent (or "hot") topics are red, orange, or yellow, and the less important themes are green, blue, or purple. We include these visualizations to supplement textual descriptions of the findings. Leximancer allowed the researcher team to tailor analysis depending upon the specific research questions. This software further enabled the team to identify trends available through national media content to determine the nature of library discourse, while

also exploring the relational properties of semantic content in the media sources from the February 2014 to November 2015 time period.

FINDINGS

Responses to Previous Recommendations

Prior recommendations included continuing to compile library media pieces to support the second media discourse analysis, offering a training in presentation skills for Public Innovator Cohort members, and offering both Cohort members and general ALA members more opportunities to tell stories of libraries spearheading transformative community engagement activities with their communities at conferences and on the LTC blog.

Since we offered these recommendations, ALA has continued to send us publicity about the Cohort libraries and the LTC initiative, which were included in additional analysis. Additionally, LTC blog posts have received many views in the last few months, especially the follow-up interview with Scott Bonner, Director at Ferguson Public Library, who shared his experiences and strategies during and following the protests in Ferguson, Missouri, in the summer and fall of 2014. We applaud ALA for following up on this story, which had broad interest among the library community both shortly after the protests as well as one year later.

4.1 Shifting Discourse About Public Libraries

Newspapers

The second media analysis included articles published from February 2014 to November 2015. Thirty-one states were represented in the newspaper data corpus. New Jersey (115 articles) and Ohio (114 articles) have the highest representation.

The most central theme that emerged was *Library* with 1,287 hits in the dataset, which was closely related to the following themes, in order of prominence: *Programs*, *Books*, and *Services*. Each theme contains a number of concepts that illustrate the theme. Figure 10 illustrates the relationships among the themes, where nodes and lines within each theme represent concepts and their connections. The concepts of each overarching theme are described below, but are not indicated in Figure 10 for legibility. Colors of the theme spheres represent the prominence of connections, where red, orange, and yellow indicate a "hot" theme and relationship, while purple, blue, and green represent lower levels of connectivity.
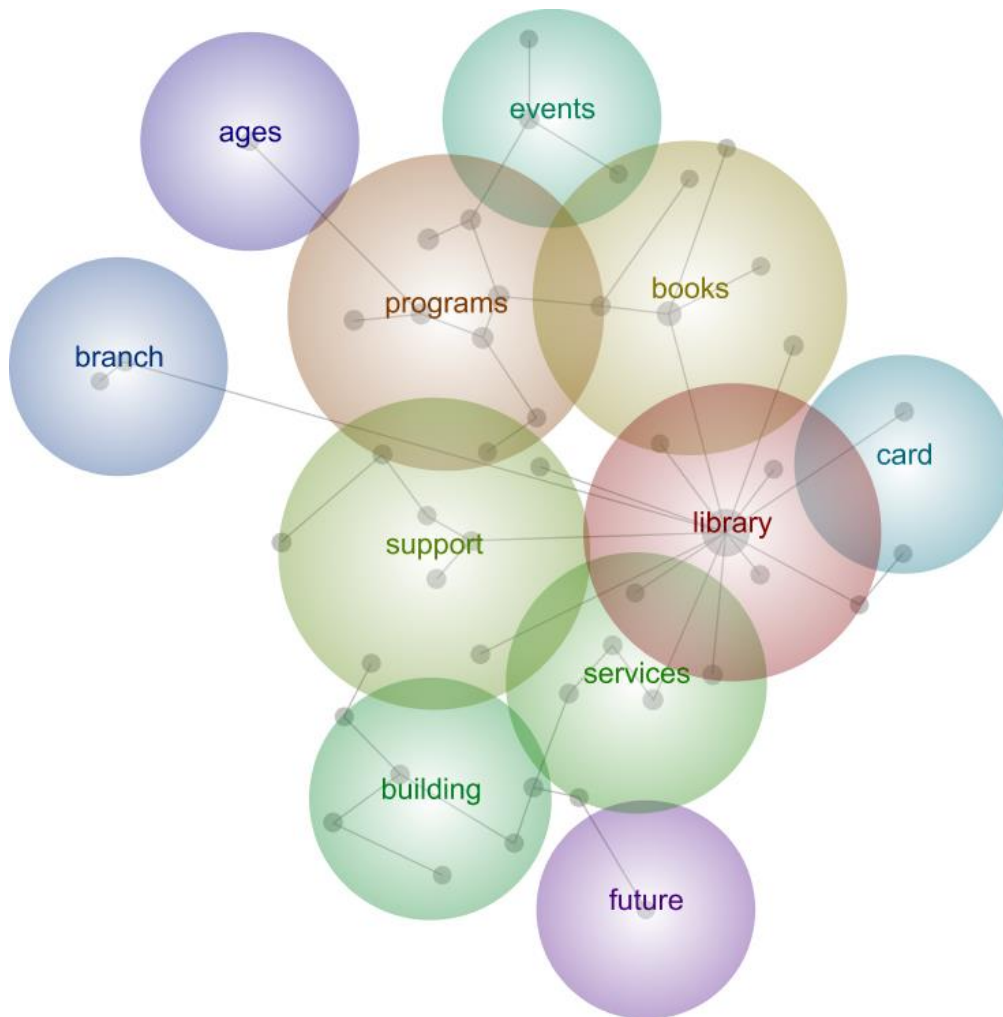
Figure 10. Themes found in newspaper articles that reference libraries.

For example, prominent concepts found within the Library theme include **public** (64 hits) and **system** (45 hits). Quotes that illustrate **public** referred to members of the community and a descriptor of the libraries (i.e., public libraries). One article even described community-focused listening activities.

> *Library meetings typically are held in the Children's Room because the 50-year-old library does not have a meeting room – that's one of the deficiencies the Board of Trustees' nine-member building committee was there to address, along with the need for a larger Eastern Shore Room, more room for technology and youth services, and a bigger work area for staff, among other needs identified in past studies and public input sessions.*

The concept *system* within the *Library* theme mostly includes articles about updating library systems and computer programs, as well as a network of library branches in a single system. Examples are:

New library system promises easier access

The library system now includes four locations with 145,000 volumes and 46 public access computers, along with wireless Internet access at all locations.

The second most pertinent theme that emerged was *Programs*. Common concepts in this theme are *reading*, *children*, and *summer*. As expected, these concepts are all related and many were about summer reading programs for children. Others pointed to initiatives that include other types of activities and public services, such as the natural sciences, art, and meal programs:

For preschool age children we offer early literacy programs, for older children and teens we supplement education with hands-on science, technology, engineering, arts and math (STEAM) programs.

Last year there were 13,741 meals served in libraries throughout Hamilton County thanks to a collaboration among the public library, Cincinnati Public Schools, and Window Arts Enrichment that feeds kids in the summer and offers opportunities for literacy programs helping youngsters become better readers.

The third theme to emerge was *Books*, which overlaps with *programs* and the less prominent themes *events*, *family*, and *Saturday*. Many of the titles and abstracts in the *Books* theme actually described programs, particularly if *book* appeared early in the text. This indicates that book and reading-focused programming efforts are a clear part of the public story of libraries across much of the country.

The "Books and Reading Canine" (BARK-9) program helps to improve children's reading and communication skills by employing a powerful method – reading to a dog.

The fourth most prominent theme was *Services*, which contrasts with the theme in first round of the media discourse analysis, *fines*. Examples of this theme include headlines about expanding services that point to a public story of libraries' utility to their communities. Often this narrative relates to increasing the diversity of programs at the libraries.

The Clermont County Public Library board and staff members work hard to provide services and programs that patrons want.

Filmmaking adding to East Brunswick Library services

Overall, the media analysis indicated a focus on library programs and events that signal a positive shift in the national news discourse. Many excerpts referred to the importance of the library understanding public opinion and addressing the community's needs. Media coverage of programming was prominent, overlapping with many other themes like services, books, and the public.

Academic Journals & Magazines

The analysis of the academic publications told a similar story to the newspaper study, where *Library* and *Programs* surfaced as the most prominent themes in a dataset of 2,167 articles. The third most prevalent theme was *Information*.

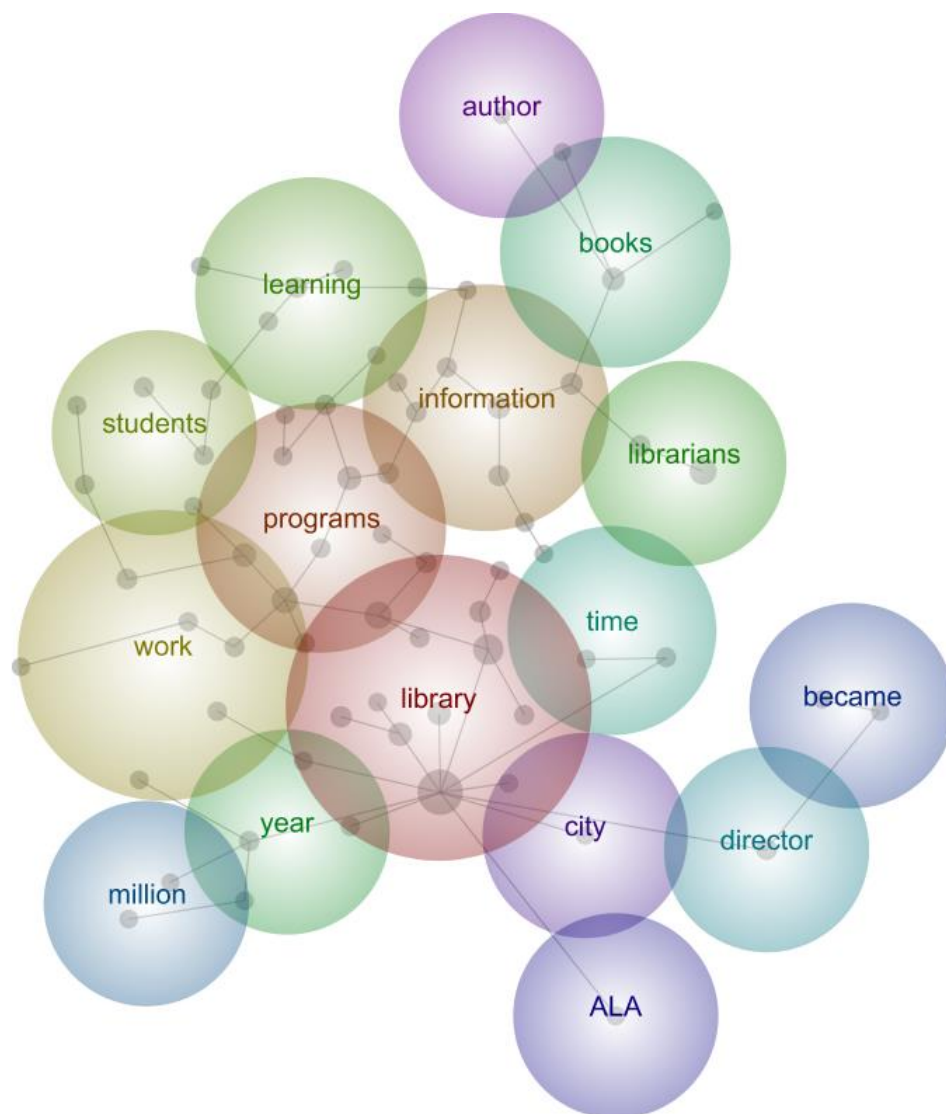Figure 11. Themes found in academic journal and magazine articles that reference libraries.

The most important concepts within the Library theme were *service*, *public*, *community*, and *staff*. The service concept referred to the benefits that libraries provide for their communities, as well as the work that individuals or groups perform at their institutions. For example, one article advocated for listening to and

making the most of resources offered by library supporters. Another article discussed how libraries could serve their communities as providers for basic needs during times of community crisis or natural disaster:

It takes a significant step forward in framing an ideal outpost library that can reach into the gap as an element of humanitarian aid in the wake of a disaster when basic services and cultural institutions are unavailable or inactive.

The Library theme's second concept was public. Similar to newspapers, this concept described the category of public libraries. **Community** was the third-most prevalent within the Library theme, where the term referred to the people served by the library and the surrounding population. One article described how community support helped to establish a library in New York, with the slogan "Powered by Community." Other journal articles described libraries' leadership in their community:

Data and outcome savvy libraries "lead by example" in their communities, gaining the esteem of stakeholders to whom they are accountable and attracting community partners.

The staff theme referred to library professionals. In one case, an article urged staff to promote their library and the library field in casual interactions. The second most prominent theme was **Programs**, which included the concepts of **access**, **use**, and **resources**. **Access** indicated programs that increased access to materials or services. One article in particular described a popular New York City program in which libraries serve as centers to apply for ID cards that give residents access to cultural and municipal organizations, including the city's libraries. Another article predicted that libraries will provide access to resources on copyright.

Kyle Courtney, copyright advisor and program manager at the Office for Scholarly Communication at Harvard Library in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has been recognized as a Change Agent by Library Journal. Courtney believes copyright issues will define libraries over the next decade and that librarians are in an ideal position to help people use and access the wealth of information they maintain.

The **use** and **resources** concept within the **Program** theme described how library materials and services are used and how libraries use resources. These often referred to specific programs or events facilitated by libraries. For instance, one partnership of the library system in Brooklyn, New York sparked a program for kids to do storytelling with computer programming and robotics. Another article pointed out how the public used the library's programs to learn languages:

People are getting library cards so they can use Mango Languages to learn Cherokee, says Roy Boney, manager of the Cherokee language program.

The third most prominent theme, **Information,** included two main concepts: **development** and **literacy**. The development concept focused on institutional or staff development, with some journal articles calling attention to development about skills for library users. For example:

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions encourages the establishment and development of an international network of libraries of accessible materials.

Songs contribute to language development by providing the correct pronunciation of unfamiliar words that children may later encounter in books and by increasing children's exposure to "rich words."

For the *literacy* concept within the *Information* theme, many excerpts described information literacy at all levels (K-12 and university).

Change over Time

Although *Library* was, unsurprisingly, the most central theme in the first and second rounds of the media discourse analysis, both the concepts supporting that theme and the most strongly related themes have changed since the beginning of the LTC initiative, particularly in news publications. Before, part of the library coverage told a story of funding cuts, fines and systems that track fines, and reduced hours. The most recent analysis pointed to a new, more positive library narrative, focusing on outreach, service, and books. Many of the patterns identified in the recent analysis overlapped with community-focused programming. The fourth most prominent theme was *Services* in the most recent analysis, contrasting with the fourth theme in first round of the media analysis, *Fines*. The shift in narrative has been less palpable in academic coverage, most likely because professional changes in practice tend to occur and be discussed in academic journals before they popular news outlets absorb these stories.

Earlier in the project, Cohort members felt their new efforts and emerging programs would not sell in media outlets. Over time, they have proven that this is not the case, with many spearheading their own media efforts, contributing blog posts and op-ed style pieces to online publications, and working with journalists at local news organizations.

4.2 Conference Sessions Focused on Libraries as Community Changers

LTC Conference Sessions

To track professional dialogue relating to community engagement principles, we reviewed ALA conference sessions from 2012 to 2015, including both Midwinter and Annual meetings. (Data from Midwinter 2013 were not available.) We counted the frequency of five session tags that embody LTC principles: civic engagement, outreach services, public programs, public services, and transforming libraries. Although most conference sessions were not related directly to LTC, we observed an increase in the percentage of conference sessions related to these principles, with marked gains in all categories except for civic engagement (Figure 12). The outreach services tag saw the biggest increase, from 1.5% of all conference sessions in Midwinter 2012 to 4.3% in Annual 2015.
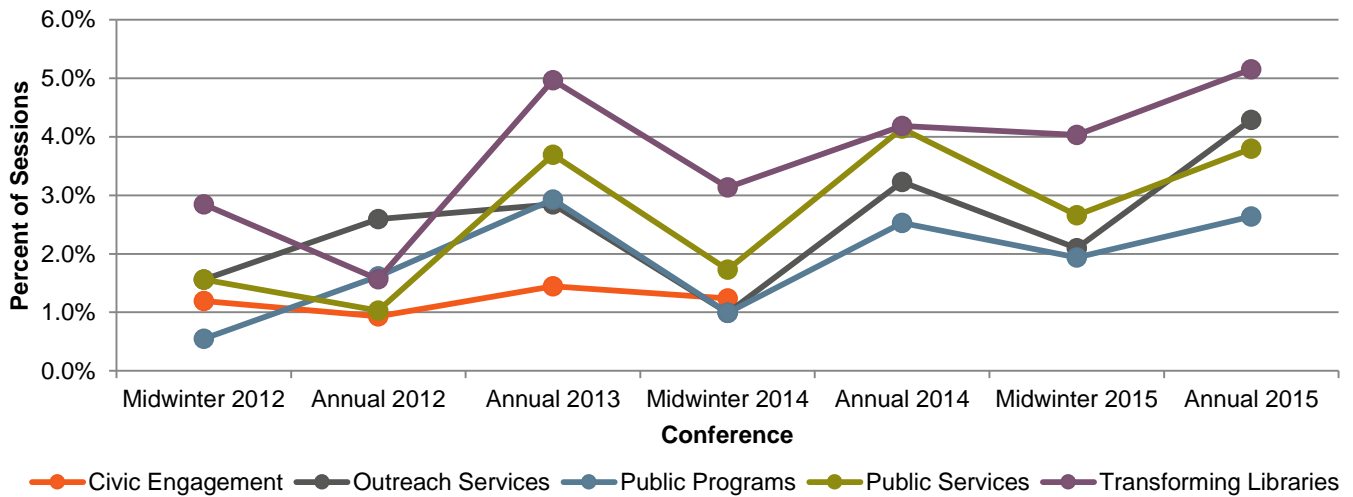
Figure 12. Percentage of conference sessions related to LTC principles of community engagement and transformation.

Note. Percentages rather than total number are presented to control for variation in the number of sessions at each conference. Midwinter conferences have fewer sessions than annual conferences. (Midwinter 2012: N = 1089; Annual 2012: N = 2043; Annual 2013: N = 2357; Midwinter 2014: N = 1213; Annual 2014: N = 2293; Midwinter 2015: N = 1240; Annual 2015: N = 2425)

We summed the percentage of sessions with each relevant tag to obtain the total percentage of sessions related to community engagement and transformation (Table 9). Some sessions may have been tagged multiple times, so the total percentage represents a maximum value. Midwinter conferences include a smaller percentage of sessions related to the ideas that underpin LTC than Annual conferences. These percentages suggest that interest and involvement in community engagement at Midwinter conferences has grown since LTC started in 2014; the interest at Annual conferences is more mixed, with a slight decrease between 2013 and 2014 and an increase from 2014 to 2015.

Table 9. Percentage of sessions related to LTC principles

Conference	Total number of sessions	Maximum percentage of sessions related to LTC principles*
Midwinter 2012	1,089	7.7%
Annual 2012	2,043	7.7%
Annual 2013	2,357	15.9%
Midwinter 2014	1,213	8.1%
Annual 2014	2,293	14.1%
Midwinter 2015	1,240	10.7%
Annual 2015	2,425	15.9%

Note. Percentages do not account for sessions that are tagged with multiple interests, and therefore represent a maximum.

We noted some inconsistencies in tagging across years. For example, LTC sessions were not tagged using the same terms for each conference. We recommend that ALA PPO use consistent tags to ensure that interested parties can find the relevant sessions and to generate accurate data.

ALA and Harwood convened a Public Innovators Lab October 14-16, 2015 in Detroit, MI. The workshop followed the same format as the LTC Cohort and was refined based on the LTC Cohort's feedback. This experience was intended as a way for library staff to gain hands-on training in the Harwood practice. Five topics were central to the workshop: Being Turned Outward, Understanding My Community, Creating Conditions for Change and Sustainability, Deciding on the Right Path, and Making an Agreement with Myself. While this was a pay-to-attend event outside the scope of the grant, it signifies the ability of the LTC leadership to develop modified curricula based on feedback from participants, making the Harwood approach increasingly suited to the library field.

ALA collected attendance data at the Harwood conference sessions at the PLA and ALA conferences in 2014 and 2015. These data indicate that the number of people attending each conference session declined over time (Figure 13). This trend occurred even when the total number of attendees at a conference increased, such as between the relatively small Midwinter 2015 and much larger Annual 2015 conferences. The decline can be partly attributed to normal conference-related conflicts (e.g., inconvenient location within conference venue, too many desirable sessions planned concurrently), but may also reflect a saturation point with the content and fewer attendees who have not already participated on a prior occasion. Library professionals may have a greater interest in hearing "real life" experiences, including successes and challenges, of libraries that have applied the LTC practices. ALA and Harwood may consider varying the conference sessions include practicing skills or developing new skills, or even combining skill development with storytelling, This strategy may draw new participants who have already received some training at a previous conference.
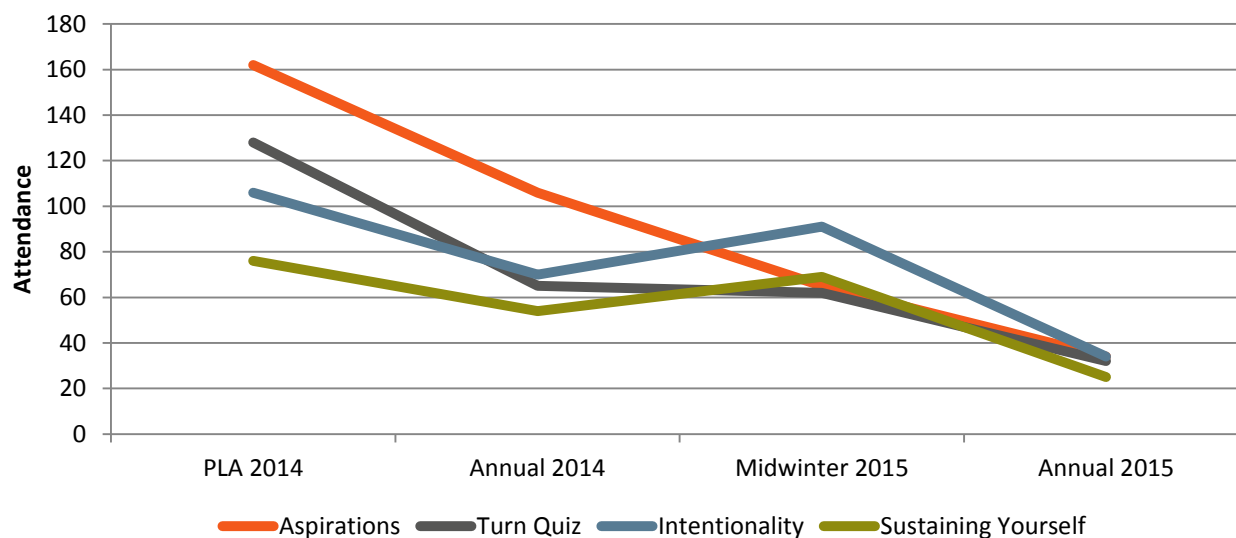
Figure 13. Attendance at each Harwood conference session during the project.

4.3 Additional Analysis: Media Coverage of the Public Innovators Cohort

NewKnowledge also compiled a collection of articles about the Public Innovators Cohort and initiatives similar to LTC. These articles appeared in both academic sources and popular news outlets, from local newspapers to Huffington Post. The articles described specific LTC initiatives among the Cohort libraries, as well as field-wide shifts in practice. Titles often focused on community. For example:

Hartford Public Library Builds, Strengthens Community–Police Relationships

How Libraries Are Transforming Into Community Anchors

Library's Role in Community Examined

Some articles spoke about initiatives that have grown out of LTC, such as the Michigan Community Engagement Training article by the Library of Michigan and the Midwest Collaborative for Library Services. The article publicized a new opportunity for Michigan-based libraries to receive the Harwood training, which was based on the LTC program structure. This indicates increasing support for and investment in the LTC approach across the field.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- We recommend that ALA use consistent tagging to ensure that interested parties can find the relevant sessions and to generate accurate data.
- Going forward past the end of the grant funding, libraries with experience in intensive and transformative community engagement should lead conference programming about community engagement, acting as

guides for libraries of similar types. The basic four conference sessions that have been offered previously can be tailored more specifically to a particular type of library rather than grouping everyone together. That way, the content can be made more relevant, and concrete examples will serve to illustrate the true value of the LTC approach.

- Interactive sessions that deal with more advanced stages of the Harwood approach will be a valuable addition to conference programming, as libraries continue to deepen their work with communities.
- We recommend media training be provided either at conferences or through a series of webinars to continue to build the capacity of libraries to tell their own stories of community transformation as they use LTC principles.

Figure 14. Library professionals attend a Harwood/ALA Public Innovators Lab in Atlanta in October 2014. Photo credit: Chris Sava

Discussion

The National Context

The LTC initiative supports a democratic society that promotes both individuals' and communities' pursuit to actualize positive goals. The US has a vibrant landscape of federal and philanthropic sponsorship of the public's lifelong learning. These learning initiatives develop programs and resources accessible to audiences at community institutions, such as libraries, museums, science centers, community centers, gardens, and parks, among others. Libraries have long been recognized and valued as leading advocates for this type of learning, where library professionals uphold principles of open and private access to information. ALA and the Gates Foundation's vision for libraries in LTC goes beyond learning support into the arena of civic engagement. Through Harwood's unique approach to training institutions for deep community engagement, many libraries that participated in LTC became a nexus of civic action through programming, resource distribution, and partnerships. They became civic actors – and in some cases, civic leaders – in their pursuit of improving community conditions.

Federal agencies like the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS) have a complementary vision for libraries. In IMLS's strategic vision, the agency aims to *promote museums and libraries as strong community anchors that enhance civic engagement, cultural opportunities, and economic vitality* (IMLS 2013). Libraries that have intensive and transformative community engagement practices – like those represented among the Public Innovators Cohort – can and should borrow this language in how they think of their institutions and work. Libraries are *community anchors* that have the resources and relationships to help their publics in vital ways. With LTC, libraries show that they not only enhance civic engagement, but also *enact* civic engagement through listening to and helping their community improve its conditions.

Throughout LTC, the focus on establishing long-term partnerships between libraries and community organizations is indicative of a broader shift in how cultural organizations approach their work. Many institutions like libraries, museums, zoos, science centers, parks, community centers, and religious organizations have tended to think of their work with the public in terms of disciplinary siloes. The zoo provides informal science learning through facilitated experiences with animals. The library facilitates learning through information access and programming. In part because of these siloes and the funding infrastructure that supports these institutions, many cultural organizations feel they need to compete for funding or public users / visitors. Because of this perception, many often work independently. But more and more institutions have realized the value in partnerships, where two or more organizations pool resources and expertise through programming or other collaborations.

This partnership-focused perspective signals an understanding that the public can gain more from institutions working together rather than apart. Thinking of partnerships in this way points toward

institutions' recognition that they are integral and interrelated parts of a productive community. Federal agencies have supported projects that take advantage of this opportunity for partnerships. For example, the National Science Foundation funded Wild Minds, an initiative that supported partnerships between science centers and zoos in the same city to co-create complementary exhibits and programming on similar topics (see Science Centers and Zoos: Creating Public Value through Complementary Strengths).

LTC effectively trained libraries to build the relationships needed for long-term and symbiotic partnerships with community organizations. This is part of the central tenets of the Turning Outward approach: creating partnerships that are deliberate and help both the community and the partners achieve their goals. The Cohort proved that libraries can excel in being productive partners for community organizations, and even facilitators of partnerships among other institutions. The process of building new partnerships challenged some of the Cohort members, and will likely do the same for other libraries who attempt to start new intensive community engagement initiatives.

Moving from the Cohort-Learning Model to a Community of Practice

For the past few decades, research and practice using cohort-learning models has figured prominently in higher education. More recently, other sectors have used cohort learning in professional development and professionalization initiatives. The Public Innovators Cohort featured as a central part of LTC's design, where small teams from 10 libraries participated in rigorous training in community engagement perspectives and practice. Even though each library team applied the learning in their own institution, ALA and Harwood designed the training and support activities as social exercises. These interactions enabled the teams to hear about successes, innovations, and challenges from peers as they moved through the process of trying new ideas. The *Library Journal* published an article about cohort learning that included a description of LTC as an example of multi-institutional cohort initiatives.

The Cohort served as an effective incubator or testing ground for training library professionals in transformative community engagement. With the expert guidance of Harwood trainers leading focused sessions on specific skills or tools and coaches providing long-term support to each of the libraries, as well as the funding support from the Gates Foundation, Cohort members were able to safely try new practices and adapt the LTC tools for their needs. But this process was clearly a substantial investment of time and resources for all of the participants in the project. We anticipate that it is unlikely that high numbers of libraries will be able to engage in this intensive process by themselves, without the support of peers or leadership in the field.

To magnify the project's impacts among more libraries in the field, we recommend framing and promoting intensive community engagement training and application as the work of a *community of practice*. Using Wenger, Trayner, and de Laat's formulation of the term, communities of practice are a group of individuals, in a common enterprise or profession, who share information and experiences and collaborate to strengthen their skills and knowledge. This type of group is based on the premise that networking and community involvement (in this case, in the community of library professionals) enables individual and

collective learning, helping to improve both the participants' performances and that of their organizations. This framework also suggests that the nature and content of the interactions that initiate the learning – such as sharing resources, learning from each other's experience, or helping another resolve a challenge, gain knowledge, or stimulate new ways of thinking – determine performance outcomes. Thriving communities of practice are often self-sustaining, as they organically develop internal leadership and equitable sharing among peers.

LTC has done the foundational work of building a group of expert practitioners, tailoring community engagement tools for the field, and generating field-wide interest around this type of library work. We believe that one of the lasting outcomes of the LTC initiative could be a self-sustaining and growing network of librarians committed to transformative community engagement. The following principles and guidelines may help the beginnings of a lasting network of librarians dispersed across the US. Many of these points are overlapping.

Building on Existing Structures – The library field already has a vibrant community of professionals who are committed to ongoing professional development and contributing to the field's growth. We advise tapping that energy in the field through existing structures and activities that are well known to librarians. National and regional conferences are popular events that could be forums for sharing news and techniques. Based on the evaluation, the most successful sessions may be a combination of storytelling from specific libraries and training exercises. ALA Connect may also serve as a contact point for libraries doing this work (see more below). Eventually the network may move some activities outside of established structures.

Inclusivity in Leadership – In the early stages of the network, it will be important to set an inclusive tone with leadership of the network. Above all, network leaders should also be engaged in learning, rather than being expected to provide unerring guidance to others. In this way, leading the network could be thought of as facilitating the network. Leadership from peer library professionals who are engaged in the work of deep community engagement may help build trust and a sense of safety in sharing successes and failures. We believe members of the Cohort will excel as early leaders or facilitators of the network, as the field is already looking to them as role models. Recognizing that new community engagement perspectives or practices may emerge, we also encourage early leaders to welcome others who have attempted transformative community engagement to bring their experience to the conversation. Finally, it will be imperative that ALA leadership continues to show vocal support for the network and the library community's work in this area.

An Accessible and Welcoming Network – Membership to the network should be open to all willing learners, instead of limiting inclusion to only those who have attended certain trainings or achieved certain goals. The network will thrive with all levels of skill and expertise, ranging from librarians who have never organized programs to veterans in this area. Recognizing varying levels of resources across libraries, the network should accommodate different levels of engagement so that library professionals can feel

comfortable working within their own constraints. Accessibility may also relate to resources and language. For instance, the vocabulary involved in many of the LTC tools may seem confusing or even off-putting to uninitiated individuals. An early activity of the network leaders or the Cohort may be to create a glossary for LTC tools, activities, and principles.

Multiple Points for Interaction – A challenge to creating a self-sustaining network lies in binding individuals in disparate contexts. In addition to conferences, try using different platforms for different purposes. ALA Connect's discussion boards may serve well for informally sharing news and asking for advice. Webinars may discuss a particular type of community aspiration and how some libraries have addressed these hopes. Small group phone calls, organized according to a principle of pairing like-with-like (libraries of similar type or community size), may be best for mentoring. If a platform does not work for a specific objective or group, try others. Make sure a menu of these options is publicly posted on the LTC page, with a directory of contacts for each type.

Ongoing Learning and Support vs. Getting It Right – A principle of both leadership and membership should focus on learning rather than skill mastery. The highest priority for the network will be to provide support and opportunities for this learning to as many library professionals as possible. Focusing on "getting it right" can create barriers to leadership (e.g., no one thinking they are expert enough to assume a leadership position) and distract from the principles of support and inclusivity.

Looking Ahead

The LTC initiative has contributed to field-wide changes in how libraries approach and articulate their work. We have observed strong momentum in several areas that will ultimately magnify the impacts of the grant. Within ALA, LTC has built a solid platform for continuing change through a simultaneous top down and bottom up process. The uppermost levels of leadership guided strategic thinking and provided communications to demonstrate and generate support for institutional changes. Meanwhile, staff efforts in action groups and ALA membership's interest pushed from the ground up in equal measure, to support an integrated approach to enacting change. Harwood helped ALA in this top-down and bottom-up process throughout the project, in line with their theory of institutional change.

The Libraries Transform Campaign, launched by ALA with support from Overdrive in 2015, is another example of how new ways of conceptualizing what a library is and does now permeate ALA. Libraries Transform is designed to increase public awareness of the transformative value, impact, and services provided by libraries and library professionals. Already, the campaign has received substantial attention on social media and through in-person canvassing. Elsewhere, the Cohort's achievements and regional or city-based efforts to undergo training with Harwood indicate that the field can and will pursue community-focused perspectives and practice, guided by ALA's leadership.

Conclusion

From 2014 to 2015, ALA pursued an ambitious goal of changing how libraries serve their communities with Libraries Transforming Communities. Funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the project clearly demonstrated an investment in libraries' work as public service organizations. The comprehensive evaluation found that the cohort-learning model for early adopters of the new practices was effective. The Public Innovators Cohort so deeply embraced the principles and practices of the project that they sparked both internal institutional change and community-wide change in how the public and partners perceive libraries. In turn, ALA staff began their own process of listening to and engaging with its professional membership. Both ALA staff and Cohort members are spreading the LTC principles and practices among the professional community. National media coverage has begun to reflect these cultural shifts.

We conclude that LTC has achieved its goal of strengthening libraries and librarians' roles as community leaders and change-agents. Future investments in a supportive and self-sustaining network will magnify the impacts of ALA and library professionals who have changed their practice through the Libraries Transforming Communities approach.

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