Strengthening the "Ecology of Library Training" for KLF and its Members

Foundation for a 3-year Training Plan

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Executive Summary:

KLF and its member libraries have initiated a process to develop a library training plan for 2015-2018 that strategically supports the realization of member training priorities within KLF's collaborative model.

Survey Outputs:

Through the use of survey tools, particularly 'Thought Exchange', the KLF Library Directors (LDs) have identified and endorsed the following as key areas for training for themselves and their staff:
Library Directors - General Leadership & Management Skills, Human Resource Management and Trends for the library of the future
Library Staff – Digital Savvy, Programming, Interpersonal Communications, Adaptiveness to Change

Conversation Outputs:

The May 8th LDAG Training Plan Conversation recognized that training is a complicated process with several possible levels of delivery and engagement. Effective training teaches new skills or knowledge, builds learner confidence, inspires and improves moral. Examples of effective training facilitated by the KLF were discussed. A good practice is to support training across the federation by various strategies to develop a 'culture of learning' within libraries in the region.

Next Steps:

The following are cited as considerations in developing and implementing a regional training plan:

1. Form a small training task group to identify preferred options for monitoring and reporting training outcomes. The goal is to equip member libraries with a simple system for reporting on the impact and outcomes of KLF-facilitated training.
2. Form a small training advisory committee to inform the development of KLF's annual training schedule and provide guidance to KLF on the following:
    a. Training is a spectrum that ranges from informal to formal, self-directed to other-directed, and ideally results in embracing a culture of continuous learning. See Appendix A. Determine the degree to which the KLF training plan can encompass and reflect this full spectrum.
    b. Determine if KLF conferences reflect the most effective use of time and resources for training or whether shorter and more targeted face-to-face training events are more appropriate.
    c. Hosting or facilitating a member training session on how to write effective staff training plans.

3. Use LDAG meetings for updates on training plan development and delivery, and to identify any new training opportunities or priorities.

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The Opportunity

KLF and its member libraries have initiated a process to develop a library training plan for 2015-2018 that strategically supports the realization of member training priorities within KLF's collaborative model. The process and plan provide valuable opportunities to strengthen the ecology of library training within the KLF network in three core ways:

    a) Increasing the alignment of KLF-supported training with the specific strategic goals and objectives of member libraries,

    b) Engaging members in the development of each year's training menu and delivery, and

    c) Creating simple indicators and feedback loops between KLF and members to help document the impact and outcomes of KLF-supported training.
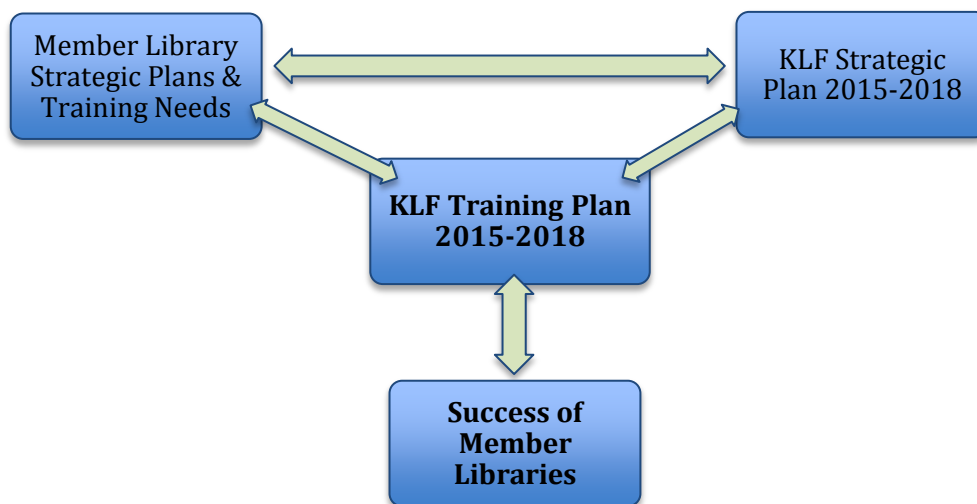
A Simplified Library Training Ecosystem

Library Training in KLF's Strategic Plan for 2015-2018

KLF's vision statement is *collaborating to support outstanding library services*. In a survey conducted to inform the development of KLF's strategic plan, **library directors and staff identified professional development as the #1 challenge in which KLF could be most helpful to them**, and 63% indicated that currently KLF meets their professional needs either moderately well, very well or extremely well. Technology was identified as an area with a growing demand for professional development. The loss of the Community Library Training Program, the diverse range of training needs and realities of KLF members, and finding appropriately skilled library staff were among the top challenges identified in relation to staff capacity and training.

Provincial funding expectations for KLF in regards to training require that it:
- Support province-wide efforts to develop and provide cost effective and accessible training programs for library staff, trustees and volunteers.
- Share with the Ministry a written plan and program for training initiatives
- Demonstrate the outcomes of federation training programs

KLF's Strategic Plan identifies professional development as a strategic issue, identifying the following priorities:
- Support the development of a culture of learning
- Maintain and build partnerships as appropriate
- Develop priorities
- Role in brokering professional development opportunities (advising members of training opportunities)
- Need for review, feedback and evaluation

KLF Strategic Plan Components Related to Training (in bold)

Strategic Goal	Objective	Indicators	Strategies	Responsibility
1. Continue collaboration amongst members, and with external partners, to provide a range of services and activities to enhance library services	**KLF members collaborate internally and with external partners on training**	**KLF libraries develop and share in-house strategies to support staff learning** **The KLF acts as a hub for training and information sharing for member libraries**	• **Conduct annual training needs assessment** • **Clearly state expected goals and outcomes for training** • **Organize training events, including conferences, when these are deemed to meet desired outcomes**	KLF staff in consultation with library directors
2. Leverage investment in shared IT infrastructure and apply web-based	Working with the BCLC, the KLF and its members will opt-in and employ	**The KLF supports member libraries in adopting new services that arise from**	**The KLF provides support to member libraries adopting Sitka**	KLF staff in consultation with library directors

Strategic Goal	Objective	Indicators	Strategies	Responsibility
opportunities to improve library services	technology to enhance library services	**affordable and appropriate technological advances** **The KLF utilizes online and remote training services as appropriate**		

Key Learnings from ThoughtExchange and Director Training Needs Survey

Library directors shared valuable information in the KLF's Director Training Needs survey in January 2015 followed by ThoughtExchange in April 2015. Both engagement opportunities created important inputs to the KLF training plan conversation held in conjunction with the LDAG meeting in May 2015. ThoughtExchange was useful in illuminating training priorities for directors and staff over the coming one to two years. Eighteen directors participated in ThoughtExchange, assigning 2031 stars to help prioritize 132 thoughts that were subsequently clustered into key themes as shown in the tables below. Complete results can be found at http://thotex.com/sites/3vnb7zWlx60.

Director Training Priorities

Training Focus Area (total # stars assigned)	Summary of Topics Identified
1. General Leadership & Management Skills (264)	Leadership soft skills, time management, communications, project management, financial training, public speaking
2. Human Resource Management (106)	HR management tools and techniques, labour laws, best practices, staffing
3. Trending (90)	Planning effectively for the library of the future
4. Community Engagement (68)	Marketing, social media, building relationships in the community
5. Board-Director Matters (61)	Fundraising, succession planning, Board-trustee communications, creating governance docs
6. Library Practice (53)	Service assessment, teen programming, Marc records, e-devices
7. Technology (28)	Keeping up with new technology

Staff Training Priorities

Training Focus Area (total # stars assigned)	Summary of Topics Identified
1. Digital Savvy (294)	E-devices, online databases, digital help to patrons, computer troubleshooting, general computer skills,

2.	Programming (102)	Non-traditional programming/off-site programming, reader advisory, program development, children's programming, maker spaces
3.	Interpersonal Communications (101)	Dealing with higher needs patrons, conflict management, active listening, etc.
4.	Adaptiveness to Change (101)	Time management, creative problem solving, self-leadership, big picture thinking
5.	Effective Outreach (31)	Promoting library services; building community connections; social media
6.	Customer Service (28)	Customer service excellence
7.	Processing (12)	

Perspectives on KLF's Role in Training Support

Priorities

1. Organize training opportunities (359)

2. Support training dialogue within membership (97)

3. Communicate training opportunities (71)

4. Facilitate exchange in communities of practice (69)

5. Fund training (43)

Key Learnings from May 8 LDAG Training Plan Conversation

The facilitated conversation touched on five themes:
1. Examples of past training that was effective and why
2. Priority topics and most effective delivery modes for director training
3. Priority topics and most effective delivery modes for staff training
4. Strengthening the feedback loop between training, training outcomes and library strategic plans
5. Member engagement in developing the training agenda

Examples of effective training
By examining past training, directors observed that effective training accomplishes one or more of the following:
a. Teaches new skills
b. Imparts new knowledge, strategies and/or tools for application
c. Builds the learner's self confidence in a particular area
d. Reinforces existing knowledge or skills so that learners are more likely to use them in day-to-day work situations
e. Inspires or offers a new way of doing or seeing
f. Improves overall morale and inspiration around a job or task
g. Makes participants feel like they are not alone
h. Builds new relationships and enhance professional networks

Several KLF-facilitated trainings were identified as leading examples of effective training:

- Conversations in leadership, supported by Skillsoft e-learning, were valuable to directors because the blended program structure (online/phone). Overall accountability for learning provided a clear focus for the facilitated phone conversations among directors.
- Children's programming workshop in Creston was excellent because it brought in a "superstar" trainer touring the province and allowed for inclusion of other community members involved in children's programming, which enriched the workshop and strengthened community relationships.
- KLF Conferences:
  - A funding talk fundamentally changed one library's approach to funding
  - Sitka training at past conferences has been very helpful
  - A strategic planning workshop assisted one library in creating its first strategic plan
  - A cataloguing session was excellent, in part because of takeaway reference materials that still get used today

Examples of good practices in support of training:

- KLF communicates training opportunities with member Libraries
- Blended learning approaches are valued for how they support structured exploration and professional exchange on key topics
- *"Every Library Director is a CEO"*[1]*:* there is considerable value in training that can strengthen director capacity for addressing everyday leadership and operational challenges
- On-demand training often works best for small libraries because of their staffing and scheduling limitations.
- Scheduled "Happy Hour" for staff training as part of job expectations.
- Incremental in-house training based on required core competencies.
- Cross-training of staff based on core competencies associated with different roles is effective because staff are gaining real appreciation of each other's roles while at the same time building capacity. Allocating training time for this to occur is important.
- Focused conversations with other library directors and community members with specific expertise can be helpful.
- Personal growth and development work will often result in more creative, productive approaches to conflict and working well with others.

Priorities for Director Training

A core priority for directors is to increase their skills, knowledge and capacity in areas associated with general leadership and management (as opposed to foundational library skills). The format of and topics addressed by the Skillsoft program were well-received, and have been helpful in building a community of practice that gives directors a forum to share learning, pilot ideas with each other, and exchange tips and experiences.

In future Management or Leadership training, the reading and study material could be made more engaging by choosing more contemporary and accessible material to be used as jumping

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[1] This quote from Ursula Brigl was in reference to the University of Victoria's now discontinued library diploma program, however, it also provides an insightful lens on the training needs of Library Directors.

off points for conversation, learning and innovation. Suggested formats included TED talks, trending books and articles, podcasts, guest speakers or experts, etc.

Another core priority for directors is keeping up with fast-changing trends in technology and society, and what that means for community libraries. It was suggested to add a half-day session to the twice-a-year LDAG meetings and use this time to focus on "trending" issue in library services for our communities.

Training needs and priorities may vary somewhat according to the size of a library, and attention should be given to balancing the needs of larger versus smaller libraries. For example, volunteer management is a higher priority for smaller libraries.

Hosting a session on creating effective training plans for library staff may also strengthen efforts to develop KLF's training plan.

Priorities for Staff Training
Increasing "digital savvy" with e-devices, computers and online software was identified as the number one priority for staff training.

Face-to-face sessions for staff remain important for both building skill and supporting heightened inspiration and morale. Several suggestions were made on how this could be accomplished:
- Organize a "Library Staff Day" once per year, adopting a three-year cycle that would see the theme/focus cater to different types of staff each year, e.g. front desk, cataloguing, etc.
- Occasional face-to-face workshops and events on specific topics (Creston children's programming workshop was cited as an example of this)
- Half-day sessions that are replicated in each of the four sub-regions, e.g. an annual session on e-devices that would be led by a KLF supported facilitator and staff bringing in a range of devices
- Continue hosting KLF conference every three years

It was also suggested that the facilitated peer-to-peer conversations for directors could be replicated for specific communities of practice among staff, including programmers, front line technology support, customer service etc.

Building better feedback loops between training, training outcomes and strategic plans
Directors recognize the general principle that training should, ideally, integrate some measure of participant accountability for integrating new information, tools or strategies into their work. The time for exploring how to do this during the May 8 LDAG meeting was limited. One idea was for participants in any KLF-sponsored training to document how they intend to apply their new tools or learnings on the job. This could be monitored using a brief learning survey three to six months later to help capture and document training impacts and outcomes.

It is suggested that library directors have a valuable role to play in creating the needed communications and feedback loops between KLF-sponsored training, training outcomes and

the alignment of training with both member and KLF strategic plans. It is proposed that a small task group be formed (three to four library directors) to explore options for how to do this most effectively. This group would then present its leading ideas for discussion and decision at a future LDAG meeting.

Next Steps

Appropriate library training and professional development opportunities play a critical role in community libraries keeping pace with the direction and speed of changes in technology, society, patron needs and expectations. The landscape for professional library training has also changed significantly over the last several years, increasing the onus on library federations and individual libraries to develop and implement staff and volunteer training plans and strategies.

Directors recognize that there is a considerable pool of expertise and experience within the existing KLF membership and they are enthusiastic about structured opportunities to share that knowledge amongst each other. This suggests that supporting the development of strong communities of practice within the KLF membership is a promising avenue for supporting capacity development in directors and different types of staff.

The following are cited as considerations in developing and implementing a regional training plan:

1. Form a small training task group to identify preferred options for monitoring and reporting training outcomes. The goal is to equip member libraries with a simple system for reporting on the impact and outcomes of KLF-facilitated training.
2. Form a small training advisory committee to inform the development of KLF's annual training schedule and provide guidance to KLF on the following:
    a. Training is a spectrum that ranges from informal to formal, self-directed to other-directed, and ideally results in embracing a culture of continuous learning. See Appendix A. Determine the degree to which the KLF training plan can encompass and reflect this full spectrum.
    b. Determine if KLF conferences reflect the most effective use of time and resources for training or whether shorter and more targeted face-to-face training events are more appropriate.
    c. Hosting or facilitating a member training session on how to write effective staff training plans.
    d. Creating an annual schedule that reflects the training needs of all sizes of libraries.
3. Use LDAG meetings for updates on training plan development and delivery, and to identify any new training opportunities or priorities.
4. KLF to continue communicating training opportunities to its members.
5. Build on the success of the blended delivery model used for the Skillsoft director training and explore options to apply this model to other library staff training needs.
6. Continue inviting non-library participants to participate in training if it makes sense to do so (i.e. non-library children's programmers were invited to the children's programming workshop in Creston).
7. Add a ½ day to LDAG meetings for directors to address emerging issues and trends in library practice.

APPENDIX A: A Spectrum of Approaches to Training[2]

1. Informal Training and Development

Informal learning is very likely the most common form of learning. There is no formal structure or curriculum, and usually no expert trainer who teaches students. There usually is no formal recognition of completion, for example, a certificate or diploma. Informal learning is ideal for very experienced people. Formal learning is ideal for new learners, for example, to learn a new technology or specific procedure.

Informal training and development is rather casual and incidental. Typically, there are no specified training goals as such, nor are their ways to evaluate if the training actually accomplished these goals or not. This type of training and development occurs so naturally that many people probably aren't aware that they're in a training experience at all. Probably the most prominent form of informal training is learning from experience on the job. Examples are informal discussions among employees about a certain topic, book discussion groups, and reading newspaper and journal articles about a topic. A more recent approach is sending employees to hear prominent speakers, sometimes affectionately called "the parade of stars".

Informal training is less effective than formal training if one should intentionally be learning a specific area of knowledge or skill in a timely fashion. Hardly any thought is put into what learning is to occur and whether that learning occurred or not. (However, this form of training often provides the deepest and richest learning because this form is what occurs naturally in life.)

2. Continuous Learning

Continuous learning is learning how to learn. Typically, this involves developing skills in reflection, which is the ability to continually inquire and think about experience to draw conclusions and insights. It also involves the ability to conceptualize the learning process. Continuous learning is often associated with the concepts of systems thinking and organizational learning. Continuous learning is NOT about continually taking courses -- it's about developing skills in reflection and inquiry -- it's about learning how to learn so that your life and work experiences become your own learning lab. Organizations and other environments are changing rapidly. Therefore, it's extremely important to continually be aware of those changes, and to be reflecting on them and learning from them, as well.

3. Self-Directed Learning

Self-directed training includes the learner making the decisions about what training and development experiences will occur and how. The learner selects and carries out their own learning goals, objectives, methods and means to verifying that the goals were met. Self-directed training seems to be more popular of late. Note that one can pursue a self-directed approach to informal or formal training. For example, self-directed, informal training might include examples of informal training listed above (book discussion groups, etc.), as long as the learner chose the activities and topics themselves, either for professional or personal reasons. Self-directed, formal training includes the learner's selecting and carrying out their own learning goals, objectives, methods and means to verifying that the goals were met. (For additional

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[2] See http://managementhelp.org/training/methods/formal-and-informal-methods.htm for more information.

information about self-directed learning, see The Strong Value of Self-Directed Learning in the Workplace.)

Probably the most important skill for today's rapidly changing workforce is skills in self-reflection. The highly motivated, self-directed learner with skills in self-reflection can approach the workplace as a continual classroom from which to learn.

4. Other-Directed Learning

This form, of course, is where someone other than the learner drives what training activities will occur. Other-directed, informal training includes, e.g., supervisors sending employees to training about diversity, policies, sexual harassment in the workplace.

Other-directed, formal training includes where someone other than the learner specifies the training goals will be met in training, how those goals will be met and how evaluation will occur to verify that the goals were met. This form of learning is probably the most recognized because it includes the approach to learning as used in universities, colleges and training centers. This form of learning typically grants diplomas and certificates. Note that this form of training, although readily available in universities, etc., is usually somewhat "generic", that is, the program is geared to accommodate the needs of the most learners and not be customized to any one learner. Therefore, a learner may pay tuition fees to learn knowledge and skills that he or she may not really need.

Another form of "other-directed', formal training is employee development plans. The plans identify performance goals, how the goals will be reached, by when and who will verify their accomplishment.

"Other-directed', formal training can be highly effective for helping learners gain desired areas of knowledge and skills in a timely fashion. A drawback is that learners can become somewhat passive, counting on the "expert" to show them what they should be doing and when.

5. Formal, Systematic Training and Development

Systematic, formal training involves carefully proceeding through the following phases:
a) Assessing what knowledge, skills and /or abilities are needed by learners;
b) Designing the training, including identifying learning goals and associated objectives, training methods to reach the objectives, and means to carefully evaluate whether the objectives have been reached or not;
c) Developing the training methods and materials;
d) Implementing the training; and
e) Evaluating whether objectives have been reached or not, in addition to the quality of the training methods and materials themselves