Community-led interest group (BCLA) Meeting

Tuesday, September 18, 10am-12pm   Hosted by Mikale Fenton (NVCL)

Attendants (in person): Mikale Fenton (NVCL), Gordon Yusko (UBC), Allison Jones (SLAIS student, UBC), Lynn Brockington (WVML), Michelle Yule (WVML), Heidi Schiller (VPL), Jorge Cardenas (BPL), Header De Forest (SFU), Shideh Taleban (NVCL)

Attendants (video call): Nick Ubels (SLAIS student, UBC), Tara Thompson (Okanagan Regional Library), Rachel Burke (FVRL), Melissa Millsap (Chetwynd Public Library)

Regrets: Michelle Patenaude (VPL), Ariel Caldwell (VPL), Anne Bechard (and the rest of the RPL CL team).

Outline/agenda:

1.(Re)introductions and updates?

2.Discussion of our statement and our vision

3.Logistics: next meeting date (potentially Nov 20, 27, Dec 4), location and confirm frequency

1. (Re)introductions and updates?

After dealing with some technical issues, all participants introduced themselves, their roles and how they feel affiliated with this group.

2.Discussion of our statement and our vision

Mikale started the session by reading our current statement and vision on the BCLA website. The group started by defining "what is community-led?" in their organizations.

Mikale: based on the Community-led libraries toolkit, which is dated but still being taught at UBC and some other places, what does it mean? Mikale's understanding of CL is something that is directly articulated by and worked through by the community. However, most of the CL works that libraries do are at the service level and the challenge is doing it at the collaborative level. How to keep things at the CL level is a challenge.

Heidi: for defining CL at VPL, they use the CL toolkit, Edmonton PL toolkit and .....,they gather their definition from all of these and their understanding is following on a collaborative approach. VPL did a big staff engagement around how their staff understand it and where is the confusion and learned that most staff believe that CE and CL are the same.

What community engagement is: philosophies and practices about relationship building.

CL is more stemming from those relationship buildings and using the community approach to design, deliver and assess the work.

Jorge is more interested in HOW we use each definition and how we approach it regardless of how we each define it. The current definition is mainly on how we focus a lot on the outcome, he is more interested on how we try to make it happen?

Mikale: acknowledging the fact that CL is mainly about the process and not the definition is the key. The importance of this group is to take what we learn and talk about here to our organizations and learn that our organization's approach is not the best and we can have a professional body and take it to our organizations and have other kinds of services program planning.

Gordon: the statement is a kind of overarching statement for the group and he is wondering if it's just going to live on the website about who we are and what we do? But he is more interested in the practical aspects of this group and he wouldn't worry about the definition that much, rather to find the practical path towards CL.

We all confirmed that we don't need to do too much towards the definition and it is good as it is for our website.

Heather pointed out what they learned from a conference in Ontario on "decolonizing library spaces" and the keynote was talking about three different styles in the frame work: values and how you design experiences and work toward those values. Mikale, brought up the idea of having a discussion about the values for this group and for each member. What are we trying to do?

Alison, talked about one line in the current definition for the website about barriers in the CL. Mikale responded with bringing up the "Working together project" where few libraries came together and some of their findings were about barriers and community access. Social exclusion was one of the results of that project.

Heidi talked about how do you define who is CL for? You can do CL for everyone and when you are talking about socially excluded group you HAVE to use the CL approach.

According to Jorge: focusing on socially excluded communities is his definition of CL.

Mikale: Who we define as socially excluded is also important here, which might be different for each organization.

VPL tries not to only focus on the socially excluding groups for the CL. They go back and forth about it a lot and the fact that they have limited time and resources and thinking about library services to fill the gap about equity is important. Children and teen services librarians also use a lot of CL approach and how should we address that?

Gordon: input channel for the CL approach, did you come up with those at VPL?

Heidi: developing the training for staff: what they are considering is "community of practice" through social innovation and innovation lab. The people who are involved are interested in co-creating and co-learning about models, practices, tools about specific topics. Heidi would like to develop a community of practice for the staff after their training and it would be nice to see if this group can do something similar.

What are the info structures for community support and community engagement can also be a topic for this group.

Rachel likes the community of practice idea very much

Tara: when things come from aspiration they are more powerful. The idea of sharing docs or ideas is really great.

Gordon is wondering if this group considers itself as a community of practice.

Lynn brought up the question of WHO is the community in our minds? We each have a different definition. At PBL it's defined as who are socially excluded, immigrants, new business owners, seniors, youth defined by city (15-29) and depending on each branch, you can focus on one of these groups. Approaching it day by day: what are you trying to do today?

Heidi: ideas of equity and social inclusion is really crucial for libraries. Connecting people from different parts of life through CL is also really important. Creating the infostructures to connect the community is the key.

Mikale: how did you come up with these definitions of the community? Who are we missing when talking about our target population? We select more from a place of assumption. Recent immigrants, new comers, youth, FN are examples of our targets. It is going to be helpful to share this groups' process of how we each define communities? How to more effectively connecting the community?

The idea of having a wiki or online tool to share our practices and brain storming would be great. Sharing something we learned in our organizations maybe through a presentation would be great for this group.

Melisa's view: Who isn't in your community? Why? How to approach them?

Heather, is excited about learning about how people came to the definition of community, processes, how we can share our experiences? Sometimes the title of each program can be hard for the audience to understand what it is and learning that is important. Regardless of who our communities are we can each learn from each other in the room and take away things that are relevant to us from these meetings.

Who are our communities, what type of structures help them to use our services? The notion of being aware of your privilege and how to use it toward your organization is important. Sometimes be a better listener and recognizing your privilege to understand who are missing from your services and your community is important. When we talk about involving community and policy making, it sounds interesting although it requires a lot more work. We can experiment more as some organizations who have fewer people for policy making.

How can we collaborate with one another to avoid reinventing the wheel?

What would be our sub-heading or categories of interest? Suggestions: Templates, worksheets, keeping track of contracts/relationship building. Resource list, relationship management, plain language training. Specific activities and techniques others have used, how we can use this information and what we learn here both back with the community and internally?

Mikale talked about when you learn something out of your community how would you use that for your community? How would you incorporate it into your collection, programming, how to best promote it to that specific group, what could be shared with the front line staff about available resources and where to record all of these? We can have a break down form that we can each fill after each meeting for just 5 minutes and meet and talk about them.

The idea of storytelling and sharing stories, case studies, success stories, failures and sharing those was brought up by Heidi that can be done by this group.

Gordon mentioned that we can build our guiding principles as our group norms. Having a value statement can be a good option. Having communities as a part of this group can be a potential option. Incorporate some rules in our future meetings and having a structure for meetings can be useful too. Liberating structure can be used for our group.

How do we attract students to this model and this group?

Through current students participating in the meeting or reaching out to them through Jorge's upcoming class at SLAIS.

Where do we want to go with the group?

Working through issues that we come up through the group, opportunity to bring ideas about what we've learned in our practices, storytelling, having a distributed responsibility for the content of the meeting. Identifying topics, practices, concepts that we are interested to focus on as a group can be a good step. A way to do it: to distribute something that everyone can share their ideas and share the survey.

Brainstorming about how to do this work?

- Learning about systems theory

- Implicit bias and how to concentrate on that?
- Decolonization of library services and practices?
- How the private sector comes up with the process of decision making and design?
- Actual examples of CL programs that we may have heard or done and learning about them?
- We need to get practical or order to continue as a group
- There is a room for both theory and practice
- Creating a wiki with subheadings that we can keep track of theories and sample of our practices and other libraries resources and services that we can go to and consult
- Having an opportunity to bring up an issue and we all brainstorm about it
- As an student experiences and case studies are interesting and we might have students share their research and work and creating more experiential opportunities through your systems for students to come and learn in practice
- A series of journal club at BCLA which also covers the CL
- A journal club as a tool for CL group
- Trying to get connected more with SLAIS and students, include students and reach out to them more and look at them as a community to approach
- Creating student reps as official positions at the group
- Consider having a CL meeting at SLAIS in future

3.Logistics: next meeting date (potentially Nov 20, 27, Dec 4), location and confirm frequency

- date: will be put in a doodle (Nov 20, 27, Dec 4)
- Frequency: TBD
- Location: TBD