



Carnegie Library Lab: Reflections on a Programme for Public Libraries 2014-2020

Written by Dr Jenny Peachey



CHANGING MINDS • CHANGING LIVES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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Our heartfelt thanks also go to Tom Forrest who designed and delivered the online learning programme for our Carnegie Partners – a core element of the programme offer and a revamped version of which is now available on the CILIP website – and to Blake Stevenson for their evaluation of the programme. This report includes information collated by Blake Stevenson as part of an evaluation conducted on behalf of the Trust. Thanks also to Douglas White, Head of Advocacy and Rachel Heydecker, Policy and Development Officer for their comments on this report and to Liz McDonald for her work in helping to design the original programme.

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Executive summary

Carnegie Library Lab aimed to contribute to the building of innovation and leadership in the public library sector across the UK and Ireland through providing:



Project funding

Between £5,000-£15,000 to enable participants to introduce an innovative project in their library and “learn through doing”



Bespoke online learning programme

covering topics such as innovation and creativity, leadership, power and hierarchy, and change and transition



Mentoring

to assist with personal, professional and project development



Networking opportunities

Opportunities to meet face to face and to attend the prestigious Libraries Connected Annual Seminar



Evaluation

Input from external evaluators to support evaluation

21
PARTNERS
19
PROJECTS



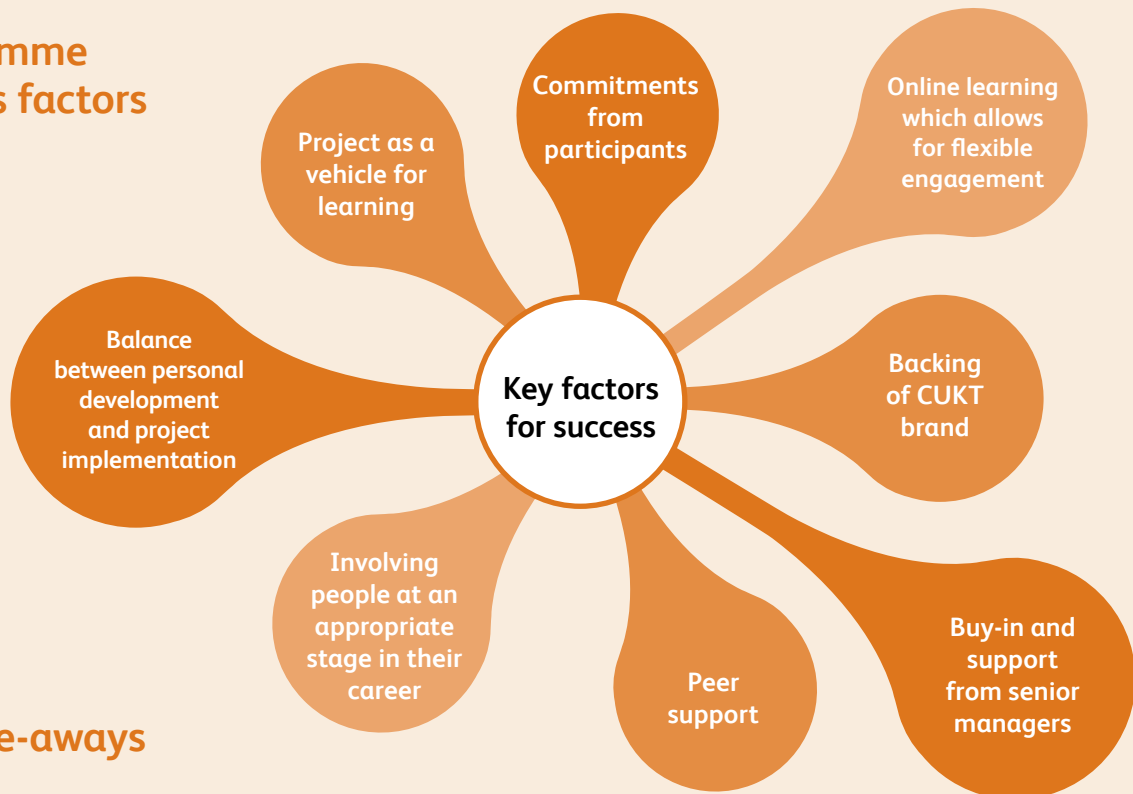
 Cohort 1  Cohort 2  Cohort 3

Impact

The impact on participants has been significant and there have been real benefits to some services, the sector and the public who use the public libraries.

Participants	Library services	The wider sector	The public
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New and improved leadership skills ✓ Wider skills development ✓ Improved confidence ✓ Networking opportunities ✓ Career progression 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ New partnerships ✓ Profile raised and increased awareness and use of services ✓ Development of new programmes and resources ✓ Increase in membership or attendance ✓ Upskilling of staff and volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Sharing learning with wider audiences ✓ Increased value placed on upskilling of library staff ✓ Wider replication of successful projects ✓ Developing leadership in the sector 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ✓ Improved numeracy and writing skills ✓ Improved health and wellbeing ✓ Improved understanding of coding, robotics IT skills and web design ✓ Enhanced sense of community and connections ✓ Improved understanding of copyright law

Programme success factors



Key take-aways

1 “Plus-funding” programmes are resource intensive in terms of staff time and cost, but they are well worth running: where programme aims include capacity building, this type of programme can deliver a range of benefits for the beneficiaries in terms of skills and experience that small grants alone cannot.

2 It is helpful to think about sustainability in broader terms than project sustainability: projects can be vehicles for forging partnerships, professional development and learning that all go on to bear fruit and render something more sustainable than the project itself.

3 Independent Trusts and Foundations are often in the best position to take risks and to enable others to take risks also.

Foreword

The Carnegie UK Trust is known for its rich heritage of working with public libraries. It is perhaps less well known that we stepped away from working with public libraries in the 1950s, thinking that we had contributed all that we usefully could to the sector.

Embarking on Carnegie Library Lab – a programme aimed at supporting leadership and innovation in the sector – was part of a wider process of the Trust re-engaging with the public library sector. We were keen to explore what role, if any, we could meaningfully play in support of libraries in the 21st century.

Needless to say, the world, the sector, the Trust and ways of working have moved on considerably over the life-time of the five-year programme. We have witnessed the impact of further austerity policies; Brexit, cuts, and closures. It was also a period of time in which Scotland and England both published their first national strategies for public libraries, CILIP published the Public Library Skills Strategy and Libraries Connected became a National Portfolio Organisation of Arts Council England and launched the Transforming Leadership programme. For our own part, we moved into the context of a new strategic plan and grew in confidence in engaging with public libraries through other work.

In some ways, the external environment was reflected in our hopes and fears for the programme. We knew it was a challenging and uncertain context in which to ask library staff to be putting time into developing applications and ultimately taking part in initiatives that took them away from delivering their day-to-day work. And yet, ultimately, we were heartened by the response to the programme; many members of library staff were keen to participate in professional development and had some truly innovative ideas up their sleeves. We were also acutely aware that if we weren't going to put resource into supporting the sector over this period, both *despite and because of* the external environment, when *would* be a good time?

Looking ahead, the broader, positive changes in the external environment perhaps lessen the need for a programme like Library Lab. Equally, it might mean that learning from the programme can be put to good use in informing future support, in line with sector-led strategies.

The outcomes from the programme have been significant, with all Carnegie Partners (the name given to our programme participants) reporting positive experiences despite challenging and external pressures affecting the wider sector, including the acquisition of new skills and confidence. In turn, for a significant proportion of the Partners, these skills and a newfound confidence have led to opportunities, personal promotion and/or a raised profile in the sector.

Running Carnegie Library Lab has been a rich and rewarding experience. We are keen to share what we learned and the things we needed to weigh up whilst running the programme in the hope it will inspire others to engage with and support public libraries and the staff that are running them.



Sarah Davidson
CEO, Carnegie UK Trust

Introduction

Why run Carnegie Library Lab?

“Being a Carnegie Partner...I have had the opportunity to work with people and do things I otherwise wouldn't have had. This brings benefits to my project and my career more generally.”

Our core purpose as a Trust is to improve the wellbeing of people in the UK and Ireland. Andrew Carnegie believed in the power of public libraries to improve wellbeing because they gave people the opportunity to advance themselves and live fuller lives. Following from this, in its first fifty years, a third of the Trust's income was spent on public libraries: buildings, rural and mobile services, infrastructure for interlibrary loans, supporting the first professional training for librarians and much more. We stepped away from working with the public library sector in the 1950s, to focus on other priority areas for wellbeing.

Our motivation for reconnecting with public libraries in 2010 stemmed from a recognition that there were complex challenges facing the sector in terms of funding, technology and changing populations. It also stemmed from the recognition that public libraries still have a vital role in supporting personal, community and societal wellbeing through contributing to policy goals around learning, community, culture and the economy.¹ We were therefore keen to explore whether or how, as an operating Trust, we could support the sector.

In terms of determining the shape that support should take, we took into account the context in which the library sector was operating. At the time the programme was being scoped and developed (2013-14), two key issues emerged. First, there was a recognition that there was an emerging mismatch between the skills that library staff require “on

the job” and those in which they were perhaps formally trained.² Leadership and innovation – and opportunities to learn from peers – were noted by stakeholders as areas where there were few developmental opportunities available for library staff. Secondly, a significant reduction of funding (in England in particular) meant that there was a feeling that in some library services there was a sense there was limited opportunity for freedom, in terms of funds or spirit, to “just have a go” at things and to innovate.³

Given the importance of leadership and innovation for the future strength and sustainability of the sector, we wanted to develop a programme that included a learning package on these issues and related skills. We also aimed to develop a package that could be shared more widely when the programme came to a close. This was important as we knew we could only ever support a small number of library staff during the lifetime of the programme, while we had the benefit of ensuring that anything we shared with the wider sector had been “tested” by our Carnegie Partners. We also wanted to enable staff to innovate through running projects in a low risk way – to give space to “just have a go”.

For ourselves, Carnegie Library Lab was one of the first substantive pieces of libraries-related work we were embarking upon after a considerable hiatus – and as an operating trust rather than a grants giving trust. We were therefore keen to test whether there was a meaningful and useful way in which we could support public libraries.

1 See <https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/publications/speaking-volumes-leaflet-to-view/>

2 This view has been concretised in the [Public Library Skills Strategy 2017-2030](#). The importance of skills development is identified in the [Scoping study towards a blueprint for public library development and sustainability](#) as a key element for strengthening the sector in England. Skills development is also referenced in the refresh of Scotland's national strategy for public libraries.

3 CIPFA statistics reveal that since 2010, there has been a 29.6% decline in spend on libraries in England, Wales and Scotland, from over £1 billion in 2009-10 to just under £750 million in 2018-19 and that the workforce has been reduced from 18,028 full time equivalent staff in 2014-15 to 15,300 in 2018-19. CIPFA Public Library Survey (2018-19): <https://www.cipfa.org/about-cipfa/press-office/latest-press-releases/decade-of-austerity-sees-30-drop-in-library-spending>

What was Carnegie Library Lab?

“Library Lab gave me the confidence to see there could be a different approach to doing things in the libraries sector.”

Carnegie Library Lab aimed to contribute to the building of innovation and leadership in the public library sector across the UK and Ireland, by supporting both professional and personal development and innovative practice through practical project work. It worked with three small cohorts of early to mid-career individuals for 18 months at a time. The programme ran 2014-2020 and offered each cohort:

- **project funding** (£5,000-£15,000) to enable participants to introduce an innovative project in their library and “learn through doing”;
- a **bespoke online learning programme** that covered topics such as innovation and creativity, leadership, power and hierarchy, and change and transition;
- **mentoring** to assist with personal, professional and project development;
- **networking opportunities** (opportunities to meet face to face and to attend the prestigious Libraries Connected Annual Seminar); and
- input from external **evaluators** to support evaluation.

As a programme that was focused on both personal and professional development *and* project development and delivery, a key aspect to Carnegie Library Lab was that the person applying was as important as the project idea being put forward – and in both cases we were looking for potential rather than the finished product.

How to read this report

Carnegie Library Lab was an experiment in supporting leadership and innovation in the public library sector across the UK and Ireland.

As with any experiment, we knew what we wanted to test but could not be certain what the final outcome would be – and we learned a lot along the way. We are keen to share the benefits and impact of Carnegie Library Lab to inspire others to consider this type of working with the public library – or indeed, other – sectors. This report is neither a guide to good practice nor an evaluation. It is rather a reflection on what it is helpful to take into consideration in the design and delivery of a programme of this nature. In particular, we hope that this report is helpful to others designing or delivering a programme that supports individuals and projects through any of the following: funding for project development and delivery, online learning, mentoring and facilitation of a network. We close with some key take-aways from running the programme and broader reflections.

We hope the benefits and outcomes of the programme to the public, programme participants and their services outlined in this report encourage funders who are not already working with the public library sector to dip their toe in the water. The report may also be of interest to people considering applying to programmes like this. It will hopefully help them get an insight into what participants in this programme got from it and the challenges they experienced.



Our participants and their projects

During Carnegie Library Lab we worked with twenty-one Carnegie Partners delivering nineteen projects across the UK and Ireland.

The participants

Our Carnegie Partners were motivated to take part in the programme in order to gain confidence and develop skills whilst delivering a worthwhile project for their community and their service. Some also pointed to the opportunity to develop a small network of peers and the benefits this could bring.

“I would like to enhance leadership skills and use this as an opportunity to focus on reaching a demographic the service finds it challenging to engage, with a view to further service development in this area.”

“I am keen to access learning opportunities, develop skills and have a network of peers to bounce ideas off as well as deliver a project with a deprived community.”

“I would like to improve leadership and creative thinking with a view to improving the services available to the public in remote areas.”

“I would like to advance my career, network, gain confidence and deliver a worthwhile project whilst developing skills and abilities.”

Map of our Carnegie Partners



- Cohort 1
- Cohort 2
- Cohort 3

“I want to react positively to the challenges facing the sector through the project and to make the most of the personal and professional development opportunities the programme offers.”

The projects

COHORT 1: 2014

Information showcase Troy Mcintosh, Kirklees

Aim Increase the profile of Kirklees library service through communicating the impact and value of the library.

Why do this? Because standard reporting practices don't capture the life, diversity and impact of what the service does.



Commons are Forever Aude Charillon, Newcastle

Aim Promote and educate people about public domain works, open culture, digital rights and copyright laws in fun and engaging ways.

Why do this? Because people need to know how to use online content legally and understand their rights.



Digital Toybox David Hayden, Edinburgh

Aim Enable young people to develop programming skills and learn about robotics by introducing a digital toybox package that can be rotated among libraries across Edinburgh.

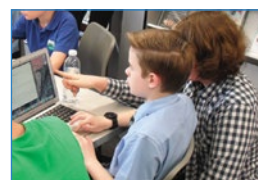
Why do this? Because whilst not all young people have access to the necessary kit, digital skills will be crucial in their ability to fully participate in the changing world. Having a package that can be moved between libraries means its value can be more widely shared.



The Ideas Garage Claire Lewis, Monmouthshire

Aim Enable young people to develop skills and confidence through a community-led programming club.

Why do this? Because being able to code and understand rather than consume tech is of increasing importance and yet not all young people have access to the necessary tech to do this.



Courtesy of Chepstow Community Hub

The Library After Dark Writers' Café Helen McMahon, South Dublin

Aim Support new and emerging writers through workshops (e.g. poetry, crime fiction, memoir, drama) with expert facilitators outside of usual library opening times.

Why do this? Because there is both an interest in writing among the community and learning to be gained for the service in opening the library out of hours.

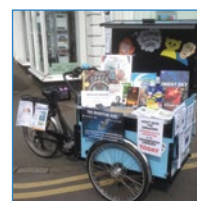


Courtesy of @rocshot

Get on your Library Bike Anish Noble-Harrison, Swindon

Aim Promote local libraries and increase use among hard-to-reach communities through a 'library bike'.

Why do this? Because the library has so much to offer and would like to think differently about how to reach out and engage.



Rub a Dub Hub Eileen Russell, Northern Ireland

Aim Help parents and carers support their children's literacy development through a virtual environment, curated by early years and other experts, hosted on the Libraries NI website.

Why do this? Because there is a need for parents and carers to access good quality information and resources to support them to support their children's literacy and wellbeing.



Courtesy of Libraries NI

COHORT 2: 2016

Cook2Learn Frances Tout, North Somerset

Aim Improve participants' numeracy, literacy and ability to prepare healthy meals through cookery workshops in libraries.

Why do this? Because cooking grounds key literacy skills in a practical, every-day tasks in a locality where 27% of children aged 4-5 are overweight/obese and 63% of adults are overweight/obese.



Logo designed by North Somerset Council

History in Action on the Screen Naomi Kenny, Falkirk

Aim Children and local history volunteers to collaborate on producing short, locally relevant historical films using green screen and editing tech.

Why do this? Because it provides a fun and intergenerational route for children to engage with a rich local history and identity whilst developing digital skills.

**Sense of Place** Natassia Reilly, Dungiven and Limavady

Aim Enable participants to learn about the area's culture and heritage through events and workshops enabling people to produce songs, stories, photographs and videos about the local area.

Why do this? Coming out of a post-conflict situation means bringing people together over what is shared has the potential to support individuals to establish a shared sense of identity.

**IT Makes Sense!** Caroline Mackie, Lambeth

Aim Improve the employability and work-readiness of young people not in employment, education or training, care leavers and ex-offenders in an area of deprivation in London through providing IT and coding workshops.

Why do this? The library catchment includes areas of high economic deprivation and unemployment and feels it should be delivering for its community.

**Adopt a Book** Jo Kirkpatrick, Devon

Aim Increase the lifespan of the books in the Archive at a time when budgets for restoration are tight, through giving people the opportunity to 'adopt' a library book in return for a donation.

Why do this? To both counteract the impact that lack of funding has had on special collections, which have an intrinsic value in being both local and historical in nature, and to engage the community with the library and this rich heritage.



Courtesy of Libraries Unlimited
© Guy Newman

Art In-formation Harriet Hopkins, Bridgend

Aim Improve confidence among young people in a disadvantaged area and change the way in which the library engages with young people through providing short courses in creative subjects.

Why do this? To try and improve the relationship between libraries and its hardest to reach demographic and to help develop their digital, literacy and communication skills.



COHORT 3 2018

Unhampered Reads Claire Pickering, Wakefield

Aim Developing themed hampers and a training package to enable staff, health officers and volunteers to inspire conversation, reminiscence, creative writing and spoken word in local communities.

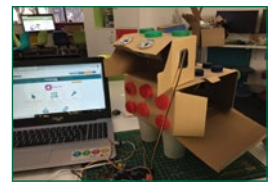
Why do this? To bring poetry and prose to communities who would not normally engage with traditional reader groups in a creative way, while developing a training package to enable individuals to deliver creative activities through co-created community events in a range of settings.



Reuse, Recycle... Robots Maria Reguera, Redbridge

Aim Educate children about the importance of recycling through inspiring them to create and programme robots using recycled materials and affordable electronic components.

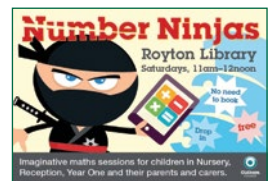
Why do this? To enskill young people and give them an advantage in the changing job market, while using recycled materials and affordable electronics to pique interest and inspire them to borrow tech equipment from the library.



Number Ninjas Kate Smyth, Oldham

Aim Encourage children (age 4-6) to explore, investigate and learn, while supporting parents/carers to access activities focussing on maths through play, as well as coding and story and rhyme sessions with counting songs and books.

Why do this? To provide extra support for parents and carers in the area to help their children access educational, cultural and social activities.



Libraries at Night Emma Hubbard, Bexley

Aim Explore the potential for libraries to be at the heart of a local cultural offer and the long-term feasibility of using libraries at night through delivering an innovative cultural programme in library buildings at times they would normally be closed to the public.

Why do this? To demonstrate the potential for libraries to be at the heart of a local cultural offer, and form a testing ground to implement different operational and financial models



STEMshops Lisa Battle, West Lothian

Aim Engage more young people, especially girls, in STEM based activities through delivering in libraries.

Why do this? To overcome any implicit peer pressure or judgement found in the school environment whilst introducing STEM activities to young people in a safe space of learning, knowledge and opportunity.



#MyLibrary Nichola Farr, Powys

Aim Explore the potential of promoting and fundraising through the purchase of library-themed greeting cards and bespoke merchandise inspired by "Oxfam Unwrapped".

Why do this? To allow the library service to experiment with generating income and to develop a 'brand' in a time when exploring potential sources of income is increasingly important for public libraries.



Impact and Benefits

As a programme aimed at supporting the personal development and innovative ideas of individuals, Carnegie Library Lab sought to bring benefits to participants and the library service in which they worked. In supporting these areas, the programme implicitly sought to bring benefits to members of the public and the broader library sector. For a full list of the outputs and outcomes of each project please see our [final cohort snapshots 1-3](#).



The Impact of Carnegie Library Lab on Participants

“I am more decisive and confident...
I have grown my networks and my status and recognition in the library world has increased.”

“I am more motivated now to expand my ambitions. I am no longer looking inwards at the organisation I work for; I am interested in the library service as a whole, including Wales, England and beyond.”

Carnegie Library Lab provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on their strengths, assets and areas for growth or development. The vast majority of partners expressly described a growth in their leadership skills, ability to innovate and confidence following their participation in the programme. In fact, a number of partners went on to secure a promotion during or after their involvement in Carnegie Library Lab and attributed the programme with having played a role in contributing to this success.

A number of participants also described how their interest and understanding of the wider public library sector had grown and their horizons had expanded. Others related how their personal profile had been raised in their service and sector. The most notable

being one Carnegie Partner from cohort 1 who went on to be **Public Librarian of the Year** and another Carnegie Partner from cohort 3 securing a place in the **New Year's Honour list**. Whilst participating in Carnegie Library Lab was by no means the reason why these individuals excelled, it provided, in part, a platform for the ambition and vision of these individuals to begin to be realised.

Carnegie Partners also fed back that their skills had developed. Those most frequently mentioned by Partners included:

- ✓ Project management
- ✓ Budget management
- ✓ Event management
- ✓ Time management
- ✓ Public speaking
- ✓ Delegation
- ✓ Securing buy-in for a piece of work from colleagues and partners
- ✓ Project specific skills (eg. Registering a trademark or use of specific types of equipment)
- ✓ Working in partnership
- ✓ Self-evaluation

The programme also offered opportunities to build a network and strengthen relationships not only with one another, but within their organisation, with external partners and with their communities.

“I now have access to a network of individuals in the local community and in the literary world. This is a network I intend to continue to build and cultivate.”

“We now also have a great working relationship with the informatics department in King’s College London and look forward to working on other projects in the future.”

“I have been able to meet and network with a wide range of people through the programme, CUKT staff and fellow partners and mentors at meetings, delegates from other library authorities and heads of service at conferences.”

There were also additional benefits in terms of new experiences:

“The project has given me experience of radio and television that I would not otherwise have had – and has given me a much broader view should I plan any marketing campaigns in the future.”



Carnegie Library Lab as a stepping stone

**Maria Reguera, Development Librarian:
Digital Services & Innovation, Vision
Redbridge Culture & Leisure**

Maria credits Carnegie Library Lab with increased confidence to apply for funding and a self-belief and self-assurance that her experience and knowledge are valuable and worth sharing with others. She also sees the programme as having expanded her network within the sector, both nationally and internationally.

Maria successfully applied for funding from another grant programme during the period of Carnegie Library Lab, which she believes was possible due to the confidence she gained through Library Lab. The new project draws on some of the ideas and materials from her Library Lab project, “Reuse, Recycle...Robots”.

Maria has been invited to speak at another library service’s staff conference about creating a makerspace and to inspire staff about what can be achieved when incorporating STEM learning activities into their library offer. She has also been invited to deliver training for library staff from other services in a paid capacity.

In January 2020 Maria was awarded a British Empire Medal in the New Years Honours for services to Libraries, with Carnegie Library Lab acknowledged in this award.



The Impact of Carnegie Library Lab on Services

Carnegie Library Lab supported the development and delivery of an innovative idea in a library.

Whilst the project was primarily a vehicle for participants' learning and development, in some cases the project itself became a new library offer, provided the opportunity to test new products or to trial ways of working.



Development of a new library offer: Rub a Dub Hub, Libraries NI

Rub a Dub Hub (RADH) supports parents and promotes children's literacy development. It is an online offer that includes: video clips to support better understanding of children's brain development and how to support development, audio clips for rhymes and songs, book surgeries with recommended reads to support parents and children dealing with challenging times and emotions, and tips on making reading fun. The materials are curated by a range of early years and other experts. Whilst the original idea had been to make a standalone website, the Senior Management Team saw its potential and suggested it become an integral part of the Libraries NI offer.

A number of high profile public representatives and education and health care professionals were invited to the launch of RADH to spread the word about the resource.

Key stats:

- ✓ More than 40,000 visits to the website⁴
- ✓ Nearly 70,000 page views within the website

4 From launch at end 2016 to November 2019.



Opportunity for services to trial new products: Adopt a Book, Libraries Unlimited

Adopt a Book is a British Library inspired project to enable library users and book enthusiasts to fund restoration works on specific books in Exeter Library. Books to be restored are selected by staff to reflect the diversity of the Special Collection of rare and valuable books and to appeal to a wide range of people. Enabling library staff to promote and facilitate adoptions and marketing were both integral to the success of the project. In terms of marketing, it proved effective to draw on the existing reputation and use of the library website and social media channels, and having a physical showcase of books played a key role in successful comms.

Key stats:

- ✓ 9 books adopted
- ✓ Over 30 donations
- ✓ Donations total almost £5,000⁵

5 From launch at December 2017 to November 2019.

Opportunity for services to trial ways of working: Libraries at Night, Bexley



Libraries at Night was an innovative cultural programme that animated public library buildings at times they would normally be closed to the public. Events held over a two week period included a murder mystery evening, a comedy night and jazz, rock, orchestral and other concerts. The project served as a testing ground for different operational and financial models, to help inform and develop a business case for a longer-term approach to utilising libraries as evening venues with curated programming.

Key learning:

- ✓ People are willing to pay for events in the library and to try new things
- ✓ There is a market for good value entertainment in the town centre
- ✓ There is a need for lightweight shelving to enable flexible use of space
- ✓ It is best to space activities out rather than running them in close succession.

Other additional benefits that the innovative projects brought the service included:

- ✓ Raised profile of the library
- ✓ Opportunities to build relationships with expert practitioners and external partners
- ✓ Attracting new audiences
- ✓ Increased footfall and membership to the library
- ✓ Upskilling of staff and volunteers in areas relevant to the project
- ✓ Going on to secure further funding from a different organisation

In terms of additional benefits, some projects provided the impetus and rationale for project leads to join forums or groups within the wider council structure, or to take their work into new venues. Partnerships were forged with a major university, departments in the local council, local businesses, community organisations and many more. In terms of perception, one project reported that as a result of the events they had been running 53% of attendees said their image of public libraries had improved (47% said they already valued public libraries). Again, one project saw an increase of 15% in library membership from the areas it had been targeting whilst another saw attendees who had not used the library before or had not done so for a long time come in to set up or reactivate their library cards. In terms of upskilling of staff, many projects saw staff developing skills through sharing learning, shadowing, helping create guides for activities or delivering activities themselves.



The Contribution of Carnegie Library Lab to the Sector

Carnegie Library Lab aimed to have an impact on the wider libraries sector. There were various routes for enabling impact: participants' influence on practice and the perceptions of public libraries, and the Carnegie UK Trust promoting the value of skills development and its focus on public libraries.



Knowledge transfer

Some participants were very focused on sharing developments and learning with a wider audience. Some shared materials created through their project, while others shared learning through reports, articles and conference presentations. Again, a handful of participants received enquiries from other services about how to deliver the activities developed in different services. A small number of participants moved to new services after, or during, their time on the programme and introduced their projects in these new services. These mechanisms enabled successful projects to be replicated elsewhere; knowledge to be transferred; and the profile of the individuals involved to be raised as a result.

For example, in Newcastle, work developed through Library Lab has led to greater awareness of the importance of open data across England. The Library Lab partner has contributed to conferences and written articles and is now involved with DCMS libraries team in a project about how libraries should use open data. The participant was also invited by the Carnegie UK Trust to participate in a study trip with senior stakeholders to learn more about the issue of data privacy and to collaborate on a practical piece of work on protecting citizens' privacy in public libraries. Elsewhere, a Library Lab participant wrote blogs, and delivered presentations to Masters students and libraries staff across their local area. In Exeter the library service has been approached for advice in setting up a similar scheme to the Adopt a Book work in a different area. In Swindon, other organisations within and outside the library sector learned about the benefits of the 'Library Bike' model and how to implement it.

Raising Awareness and Changing Perceptions

Many of the programme participants spoke of the impact that the programme had in increasing awareness of the range of services that their library offers, and on broadening the number and range of people visiting the library. Some of the projects, for example, Swindon, Bridgend, Edinburgh, Northern Ireland, Bexley and Oldham, have attracted new audiences, some of whom have continued to visit and use the library since taking part in the project. It has also changed how some existing users use and view the library.

For example, in one area the project helped to raise awareness of the tech offer in their library service. In Bexley, the project encouraged local people to attend cultural events at the library, some of whom said they did not normally go into the town centre at night but felt that "the library was a safe space, and this encouraged them to attend the events". In Swindon, more than 40 people who took part in the Library Bike project are now active users from hard-to-reach communities who were prompted to join as a result of taking part in the project. Our participant in Bridgend reported that library staff

had observed an increased number of visitors to the library during the Library Lab project, and that participants who had not used the library before or who had not visited in some time came in to set up or re-activate their library membership. In Northern Ireland, the Rub-a-Dub-Hub project led to an increase in the number of pre-school children registering with the library.

In a different vein, seven participants were mentored by people outside the library sector. Many of these mentors reflected on how they had learned about the library sector, or how their perception of the sector, had shifted as a result of engaging with the programme.



The online learning programme

The Trust committed resource to develop the online learning materials used for Carnegie Library Lab into a revamped course on leadership and innovation. This course is now freely available to all as a self-directed learning experience on the CILIP website.⁶ We drew on all three cohorts' experience of the programme to adapt and develop the course.



Attracting more funding

Carnegie Library Lab provided proof of concept to other funders interested in engaging with the sector. Engaging Libraries, which was initiated in 2016 and is currently in its second iteration, is a joint programme between three funders.

⁶ <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/CarnegieLeadership>



The Contribution of Carnegie Library Lab to the public

The long-term aim of Carnegie Library Lab was to support future public library leaders and innovators with a view to delivering services that remain true

to the purpose of the public library and are better attuned to the needs of the public. Assessing how far this long-term aim is achieved was outside the scope of the evaluation. However, in terms of individual projects it was possible to see some more immediate benefits to members of the public who engaged in projects.

Below are a handful of examples that illustrate the range in the type of outputs and outcomes some of the projects delivered. For a full list of the that outputs and outcomes by project and a summary of the outputs of each cohort please see our [final cohort snapshots 1-3](#).



Over 7,500 people reached face-to-face across all projects



Almost 450 workshops and events held



✔ **Numeracy:** In Oldham, 85% of parents/carers thought that attending a Number Ninjas session had increased their child's interest in maths through play and 65% reported that attendance had increased their child's confidence in maths. In North Somerset, 76% of participants in Cook2Learn reported improved confidence in using weights and measures.



✔ **Health and wellbeing:** 85% of participants in Cook2Learn reported improved understanding of importance of a balanced diet and 81% reported greater awareness of healthy food options. Meanwhile, there was an improvement in confidence of children and young people participating in workshops in Bridgend.



✔ **Coding, robotics and recycling:** 89% of children who took part in robotics sessions in Redbridge reported that had learnt a lot or quite a bit about coding, robotics and recycling. In Edinburgh, young people developed coding skills and knowledge of coding, robotics, media, textiles and electronics.



✔ **IT skills and web design:** All participants in the pilot sessions in Lambeth said they felt more confident in their IT skills and web design, and all participants in the first web design session in Monmouthshire went on to create their own webpage.



✔ **Enhanced sense of community and connections:** Project participants in History on the Green Screen forged intergenerational relationships, whilst A Sense of Place attendees reported learning about local legends and customs they were previously unaware of. In Lambeth, University students who volunteered to support the delivery of IT skills classes reported feeling more involved in their community.

We Love Monuments!
Photography competition



Submit your pictures
1st to 30th
September 2015

To participate: take pictures of listed buildings and monuments in Newcastle, share them on Wikimedia Commons under an open license then email us for a chance to win a prize. Ask a member of staff for the detailed rules and explanations!

✔ **Copyright law:** In Newcastle, participants reported increased awareness of copyright law; 53% improved their understanding of how they can use open licenses.



✔ **Writing skills:** In South Dublin, project participants have developed their writing skills, gained confidence and experimented with a variety of genres through after dark writing workshops (South Dublin).

Courtesy of @rocshot

Key Considerations – Programme Scope

Carnegie Library Lab was developed over a number of months in conversation with key stakeholders in the sector. Development continued throughout the lifetime of the programme: data and evidence from the evaluation was used throughout the programme to help refine and improve its structure and content. Through this, we aimed to shape an offer that was relevant and appropriate. A lot of thought went towards the programme scope: the focus of the offer, the target participants, the level of funding to be made available, the overall ethos of the programme and so forth.



Focus of the offer: person and project

Carnegie Library Lab was a programme that supported the development of both people and projects. Our own understanding of what this meant evolved over the five years we ran the programme. This was partly as a result of how participants engaged with the programme and partly as we developed a more confident position on the role of projects in participants' professional development and in terms of what sustainability meant in different contexts.

In hindsight, we perhaps put too much emphasis on the projects when we started out. This was reflected in how we communicated the programme and in the application form which asked for project information ahead of personal information. This perhaps led to us receiving a larger proportion of applications where the motivation for participating in Library Lab was the opportunity to access funding, rather than to engage with an opportunity for professional development.

Over time we grew more confident in presenting funding for project development and delivery as a vehicle for professional development. Likewise, we felt more comfortable with our emphasis on sustainability shifting towards a focus on individuals

and investing in them rather than the projects per se. This led to us switching the application form around and asking for personal information ahead of project information. This led to a marked difference in the nature, focus and number of applications received.

There is an onus on funders to design a programme that is relevant to the sector and to clearly communicate its aims and objectives – and through this, communicate how potential applicants should engage with the offer. The application form is an important tool for this: both explicitly and implicitly it seeks to gain a better understanding of not just the skills, experience and ideas of individuals, but applicants' motivation, in applying for a programme. Following from this, there is an onus on library services (who know applicants better than any funder is likely to through a selection process), to nominate applicants who understand the purpose of the programme and are motivated to engage with it for the right reasons.

Things it might be helpful to consider when developing a programme that involves both professional development and project development include:

- How far project and professional development are discrete or integrated offers.
- How far either project or professional development is more important in terms of the focus and structure of the programme.
- How best to communicate what the programme offers given what part of the offer will be picked up on will be affected by the context and the expectations of a sector.



Participants and Potential

Carnegie Library Lab was framed as a programme for “mid-career” individuals. We used this broad category to reflect the fact that leadership exists and is important at all levels. We also used this term to ensure that people with a range of skills, experiences and expectations of what they wanted from the programme could come forward. The framing was also partly in recognition of the fact that neither length of time in service nor job titles across the UK and Ireland were necessarily indicative of where individuals were in their career.

The broad interpretation of “mid-career” meant there was diversity in the skills, experience and knowledge of participants. This led to a richness in perspectives and what people had to offer. Broadly speaking participants’ experience of peer learning was very positive. It is worth noting, however, that the wide interpretation of “mid-career” also meant that some participants were quite far apart from one another with the result that, in such small groups, peer learning was sometimes less effective – and some gained more from the experience than others.

Things it might be helpful to consider when developing a programme that seeks to identify potential include:

- No one kind of participant is ‘better’ than another, but the breadth of diversity within a smaller cohort can have pros and cons. In terms of any particular programme, what is most important in terms of what participants get out of the programme and does this mean narrowing or broadening the bandwidth accordingly?
- What are the best ways of capturing attitude, openness to developing ideas and ways of working that are most relevant for the programme in the application process?



Funding

There were two key funding decisions involved in designing Carnegie Library Lab: the size of the grant to offer participants for their projects and what proportion of the overall programme budget should go directly to libraries to deliver projects (as opposed to learning opportunities, networking and evaluation).

For Carnegie Library Lab, offering relatively small amounts of money (£5,000-£15,000) was a conscious decision. We were mindful of attracting the right level of applicant and feedback from stakeholders was that there was room for the sector as a whole to gain confidence in applying for funding. This meant we were keen to offer sums that were small enough not to feel intimidating to staff, whilst substantial enough to enable staff to develop and trial meaningful projects, and experience project and budget management.

In terms of weighing up how much money to “put out the door”, a key consideration was the overarching change we wanted to see and reflecting on the best mechanisms through which to achieve this change. In this instance, we felt that the project, the online learning, networking and mentoring had equal and complementary merit. Again, in terms of the networking, making connections between staff from across the UK and Ireland and giving them the opportunity to develop a sense of a cohort and learn from one another was a critical element of the programme. In this way, the value of Carnegie Library Lab very much resided in this combined offer. In many ways, the project was a professional development opportunity that provided a practical route for trying out learning from the wider programme.

Things it might be helpful to consider when considering the balance of funding to go out the door and the amount to directly hand to programme participants include:

- What is the change you want to see and what are the best mechanisms to achieve this change?
- How experienced as a whole are the organisations/sectors you are seeking to work with in applying for funding?



Programme ethos: Learning versus delivery

Carnegie Library Lab was a test and learn programme and we were conscious that we were only ever directly supporting a very limited proportion of the sector. As such, for us, the bigger picture was about learning and sharing learning from the programme more widely, to bring benefits to the public library sector more broadly. Again, whilst we hoped all people and projects would flourish, we recognised and wanted space for people to challenge themselves. Given the diversity in participants' experience and the contexts in which they worked, we were conscious that what constituted a challenge would vary and that some people would find project development and delivery easier than others. This focus on learning – for us and for our participants – meant that we were open to enabling others to take risks that they may not be able to take with their core budgets.

The focus on learning meant that there was flex for participants' projects to evolve and change. Framing the project funding in terms of a broader learning opportunity took some of the pressure off individuals and services, giving permission to “have a go” and see what came out of the experience. There was also a built-in project development period to ensure participants had space to test out and develop their ideas, check in with mentors, discuss with colleagues, procure equipment and try things out before rolling out their project. Again, we made a conscious decision to be as accommodating as possible in terms of delays and changes to projects.



A focus on learning meant that we considered how much support felt appropriate. We sought to be as supportive as possible. However, we also recognised that providing too much support could be an indication of failure, as participants wouldn't have had the time and space to develop and deliver on their own, undermining the sustainability of their learning.

Things it might be helpful to take into consideration in determining in the right approach for supporting projects include:

- What feels proportionate for the amount of funding given.
- Whether to have a standardised system of checking in or if these would be tailored to individuals.
- Staff capacity to provide generic versus tailored support.
- Participants' personal preferences in terms of wanting to be challenged or encouraged.
- An individual participant's circumstances and context.
- How to find the right mix of support from different places - funder, mentor or line manager.
- The tone of any interaction to ensure it was true to being a “check in” so we could identify whether/how we could support individuals rather than a “check up” on progress.



Wider support

“The support of my line manager and the senior management team ... has been key to the successful implementation of the project.”

Whilst we were keen to support participants ourselves, we were also aware that support from participants’ managers and colleagues was essential for a positive experience of the programme and the success of participants’ projects.

Our approach on how prescriptive to be in our expectations of applicants’ managers – and what we asked in terms of evidence of their support – evolved during the lifetime of the Carnegie Library Lab. We initially asked very little of Heads of Service and nothing of line managers in terms of supporting applications. Later, we developed our ask of both these individuals to: ensure an initial depth of engagement with the applicant and project idea, to get a sense of support at different levels of the organisation, and to get a better sense of the support applicants would have to engage with the programme and develop their projects. In turn, this led us to consider whether and how any learning gained by the participant would be shared more widely within their team.

Things it might be helpful to consider in terms of soliciting wider support include:

- How best to communicate formal expectations around time and resource implications of participating in the programme.
- What felt proportionate in terms of the ask of senior management and line managers.
- What felt proportionate in terms of an appropriate format for the ask (eg. check boxes, signing a short supporting statement or drafting a short supporting statement in response to key questions).

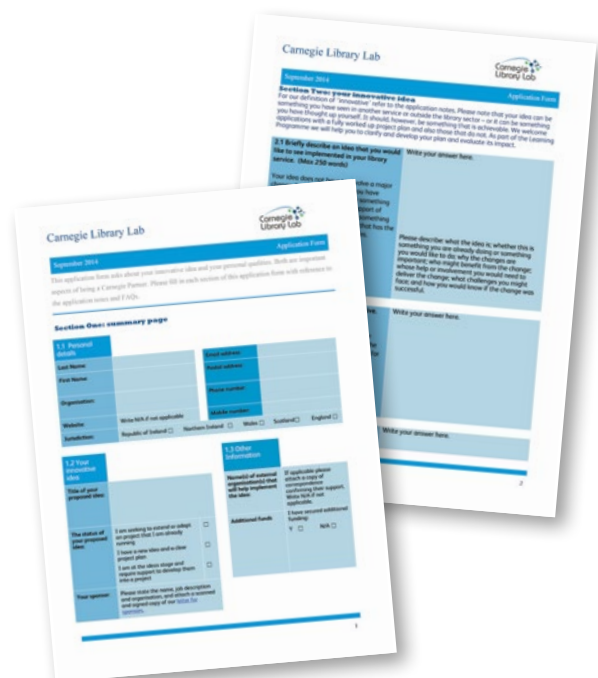


Transitions and changes

In the five-year period over which Carnegie Library Lab was run, two Partners left the sector and one Partner secured a role in a different service. Given the emphasis the programme placed on the individual participant, we looked at each case individually to assess whether it would be meaningful for a new person to join the programme. Where new participants joined us, we ensured one member of our team met with them, and where possible their manager, face to face.

Aspects it might be helpful to weigh up in terms of accepting a “new” participant on a programme like this could include:

- The balance of personal development and project delivery.
- How far along you are in programme and project delivery.
- What information is needed from a line manager and senior management in relation to a suggested candidate.
- Staff capacity to meet incoming participants and line managers.
- Staff capacity to support an incoming participant.



Key Considerations – Online Learning

“The online learning was the most valuable element of the programme for me.”

“The online materials were really useful – they made me think differently and gave me more self-confidence. I still check back on the materials from time to time.”

A bespoke online learning programme was curated by a learning and development expert from the library sector to address some of the key skills that stakeholders felt were crucial for the current and future public library service. As such, the chosen subjects supported broader professional and personal development as well as project delivery.

The subjects were:

- leadership and purpose, creativity and innovation;
- power and influence;
- transformation, change and transition;
- problems, systems and complexity; and
- continuing development.

Each of these online modules was broken down into average of five sections to enable Partners to engage with the material in bite-size portions. Partners were expected to dedicate around one hour per week of their own time to view the materials and make their own reflections. The online learning site included a forum for discussion with prompts and questions from a learning guide.

The themes that were addressed in the online learning were brought into the three face to face meetings (discussed in the next section).

It was clear from the external evaluation of Carnegie Library Lab that those who engaged most actively with the online materials not only got the most out of the materials but also from the programme as a whole.

The online learning has been adapted to create a self-facilitated course and is now freely available.⁷



Tone, content and structure

Carnegie Library Lab supported a small group of participants at a time. As such, we were keen to create an online learning experience that felt accessible and friendly rather than formal or intimidating. To help convey this tone, we made a conscious decision to draw on non-academic materials to demystify topics and ensure they appeared accessible and relevant.

We also asked the person who curated the online learning materials to act as a Learning Guide. In this role they led participants through the materials, only posting materials a portion at a time, to ensure that participants didn't feel overwhelmed or unsure of where to start. This approach also meant that there were key moments where the Learning Guide could check in with participants and ensure they were managing with the demands of the online materials and programme overall.

In terms of content, we were keen to ensure there was a 'library-ness' to how topics were explored. We were also keen to convey how the themes were relevant beyond the library sector

7 <https://www.cilip.org.uk/page/CarnegieLeadership>

and that participants weren't alone in trying to grapple with them. As such, all materials were drawn from sources from outside the sector, but carefully framed and curated in a way to make the connection and relevance to public libraries clear.

Having small cohorts worked well in terms of our ability to tailor the materials based both on feedback from the previous cohort and the nature or needs of the incoming cohort. For example, in Cohort 2 all the partners were female. The learning content was enhanced with even more material from a female perspective that led to lively discussions about the specific challenges of women in leadership roles. This continued in Cohort 3 (also an all female group).

Structuring content was challenging in so far as all of the material was valuable in supporting participants to deliver their projects. We recognised that it would be helpful to have all the information at the outset rather than throughout the programme. However, we were also conscious of not overwhelming participants and were unsure that an accelerator style learning experience would be appropriate for the programme. We tried to find a middle ground which front ended key material but spread them over the first nine months, with fewer activities in the later months. Again, the online material required a flexible but structured format to accommodate a range of learning styles.

In determining the nature of any online learning it might be helpful to consider:

- Thematically, what is most relevant for the participants/sector.
- Whether there are any priority materials in terms of helping participants kick start their project.
- How rigid you want to be with when, and in what sequence, participants engage with the materials.
- The key questions you want participants to reflect on and what you want them to think and do – and how you want them to feel – following a particular module.
- The best way of getting participants to engage with one another in relation to the materials.



Interaction

The online learning site included a closed forum for discussion with prompts and questions from a learning guide. This was perhaps the most challenging aspect of the programme overall in that its potential wasn't ever fully realised. Whilst participants posted responses to questions posed by the Learning Guide at the end of modules and engaged with one another's responses, the forum was rarely used aside from this more formal engagement.

Alternative options may have been to identify interactive digital platforms already used by participants in the latter cohort. (None were in use among the earlier cohorts.) In this instance we could have encouraged or facilitated peer engagement through those channels, rather than asking participants to do this through a standalone portal.

Things it might be helpful to consider if setting up an online forum could be:

- The purpose of an online forum and whether another channel could work as well.
- When and how to engage participants in how they would like to engage with each other outside of formal networking meetings.

The screenshot shows the CILIP website interface. At the top, there is a navigation menu with links for 'INDIVIDUALS', 'ORGANISATIONS', 'JOBS & CAREERS', 'EVENTS', 'NEWS', 'YOUR NETWORK', and 'ABOUT'. Below the menu is a large banner image with the text 'Stepping into Leadership' and the CILIP logo. The main content area is titled 'Stepping into Leadership' and contains the following text:

1. Thinking about Leadership

1.1 Introduction

For centuries people have speculated on and theorised about leaders and leadership. Are leaders born or made? What is effective leadership? Is it possible to learn to be a leader?

This module invites you to think about it for yourself, observe leadership around you and to start to formulate a picture of the leader you are now and the leader that you want to be in the future.

The module consists of 5 pages of content. Use the "Continue the course" links at the bottom of each page to work through the pages in order. To choose another module use the buttons at the bottom of the page.

Before we look at some of the main theories and models around leadership, please take a little time to reflect and make notes for yourself on the following questions.

Your first thoughts

Thinking about someone you have admired in a leadership role (someone you have met, not a distant or historical figure like Gandhi or Mandela).

Key Considerations – Network

“There have been many benefits to being a Carnegie Partner, but most notable has been the opportunity to meet people from other library sectors and hear about their projects and challenges.”

“Being part of a cohort has been invaluable in sharing experiences and support.”

“Being a Carnegie Partner has definitely helped me to expand my professional network. I have met Heads of Service that I would not usually have had the opportunity to speak to.”

During their time on Carnegie Library Lab, participants were brought together at three face-to-face meetings in different locations across the UK. They also had the opportunity to meet and participate at the annual Libraries Connected Chief Librarians’ Conference. Programme participants were encouraged to continue to communicate with one another independently via phone, email and physical visits.



Number and format of meetings

Carnegie Partners had three face-to-face meetings at the beginning, middle and end of an eighteen-month period. In terms of the network, bringing people together in person was invaluable in building a sense of togetherness and providing validation and support. It perhaps enabled Partners

to be more open and reflective than if they had met and interacted on a digital platform alone. In the words of one of the participants, “Hearing about their struggles made me realise that we are all in the same boat and it is all about learning and giving it a go”. Again, ensuring that evaluators and mentors could attend the initial face-to-face meeting for dedicated one-to-one slots with participants worked well in terms of kick-starting relationships across the board, and giving a sense of the wider programme.

The fact that there were only three meetings led to long gaps where Partners did not see one another. Given how energised and motivated participants felt after the meetings, more regular meetings could have been helpful. However, this had to be balanced by other considerations such as time (for their travel, as well as to attend the sessions) and the cost of the meetings.

In determining the number of face-to-face events to hold as part of a wider programme, it might be helpful to weigh up:

- What can only be achieved (or done well) in a face-to-face environment compared with a digital environment.
- When to hold events: if the emphasis of the meetings is primarily skills building then an accelerator type approach where meetings are front-ended could work well. If the meetings are about developing learning and re-establishing relationships at key points in a programme life cycle then perhaps spreading them across the programme would work well.
- Other opportunities available for participants to meet.
- The cost of these events in terms of finance but also to participants’ library services given the travel time required to attend a meeting.



Location of meetings

We made a conscious decision to hold meetings in public libraries across the UK that were inspiring or doing interesting work (such as Manchester, Newcastle and the British Library) but were also accessible for geographically dispersed participants. Given the programme focus on leadership and innovation, this arrangement gave participants the chance to see what different libraries were doing and to hear from inspiring Heads of Service or future leaders. We were also keen to move participants out their everyday contexts to try and create space for thinking laterally and focusing on the programme. Whilst this worked well, geography and running a UK-wide programme meant that some participants had to spend a significant amount of time travelling to and from a meeting. A key enabler for working in this way was having financial and logistical support available: Carnegie UK Trust staff could identify and book accommodation and travel, as well as cover the cost of it.



Things that it might be helpful to take into consideration in determining whether to hold events in different locations include:

- How important it is to get out of everyday context for the purpose of the programme aims.
- Staff capacity to support logistics such as travel.



Enhancing the Offer: Libraries Connected

Over a number of years the Carnegie UK Trust has supported the Chief Librarians Annual Seminar. In recognition of this, Libraries Connected made it possible for Carnegie Partners to attend the seminar. Whilst offering a place at the seminar was not part of the original programme offer, it brought significant added value for partners in terms of learning and networking with senior leaders in the sector, as well as also offering another opportunity for Programme participants to meet face-to-face.

Attending this seminar was not compulsory for participants – and, indeed, not all were able to participate. But those that did participate found it immensely valuable. It expanded participants' networks and horizons, increased their knowledge and provided insight into the bigger picture of the issues and concerns of Heads of Service, and the type of things that those operating at that level need to be aware of and consider. It provided a taste of what it means – and what it takes – to lead in the public library sector.



Connection

Whilst all cohorts got on with one another, some gelled more strongly than others. This may have been due to the topic areas that participants were working on; the stage of development that projects were at when the programme began; and the service or national level context in which participants were working. In their forthcoming analysis of the Trust's #NotWithoutMe programme, Revealing Reality has suggested that having largely similar expectations, objectives and a similar level of engagement can be helpful in enabling individuals to relate. However, a large part of relating is an organic process and one of the most difficult elements to control for.

Key Considerations – Mentoring

“My Carnegie mentor has been very influential in helping me to develop and think differently about the project...and has been able to introduce me to many contacts.”

“The ideas and sounding board provided by my mentor has been the single biggest influence on developing my ideas and thinking in the longer term... my mentor's enthusiasm, ideas, advice and contacts very much helped support the project and raised the quality of the end product.”

Each Carnegie Partner was paired with a mentor to support them to reflect and learn as they implemented their project and support their personal development more broadly. Mentors were nominated by the Advisory Group following the selection of the successful applicants. Mentors were selected on the basis of their expertise in a field that was relevant to the Carnegie Partner's project (eg. film or tech) and usually senior in their given field. They were not necessarily from the library sector and over half of our Carnegie Partners were supported by a mentor from outside the library sector. Where mentors were from outside the sector, in some instances this served as a way to advocate for public libraries, with mentors commenting that interaction with their mentee refreshed their understanding and vision of what public libraries are for and provide. Mentors were not paid for their time but were given an honorarium in recognition of the contribution they would make and to support them to travel to their mentee's project.

The expectation was that mentors and mentees would be in contact with one another once a month and that mentors would visit their mentees at least once during their time together.



Image of Cohort 3 Carnegie Partners and Mentors.



Identifying a mentor

Given the UK and Ireland-wide spread of participants, there was some debate over how important a role geography should play in identifying suitable mentors for Carnegie Partners. Whilst geographical proximity between mentor and mentee enabled more face-to-face meetings and supported the building of a relationship, the view we adopted was that geography was only one of a number of important factors to take into consideration when pairing individuals.

Factors taken into consideration included:

- personality;
- the skillsets of mentor and mentee;
- the fit in terms of the project;
- the relative experience of both mentor and mentee; and
- geography.



Relationship management

Where mentors regarded mentoring as important in developing their own role and Partners were proactive and comfortable in contacting mentors there was a good opportunity to develop a relationship. Likewise, where mentors could attend the first face-to-face event for the programme this helped not only establish relationships with their mentees but with one another and feel connected to the programme as a whole. However, time and external pressures meant that some mentors were unable to engage with participants as much as they would have liked to. Again, notwithstanding the expectations that were set out in the mentoring guidelines, it was clear that a number of participants (understandably) felt uncomfortable initiating contact with mentors who were regarded as “very senior and busy people”. In cases where participants didn’t hear back from mentors after initiating contact, they were often reluctant to trouble their mentor again.

One of the things the project team grappled with was how best to engage with mentors about their mentees – in order to support the mentee better or the mentor-mentee relationship.

Things to hold in balance include:

- Your desire to support with not wanting to seem like you are monitoring relationships.
- How far you want the mentor-mentee to be a safe space where anything (including the funder) could be discussed.



Key Considerations – Projects

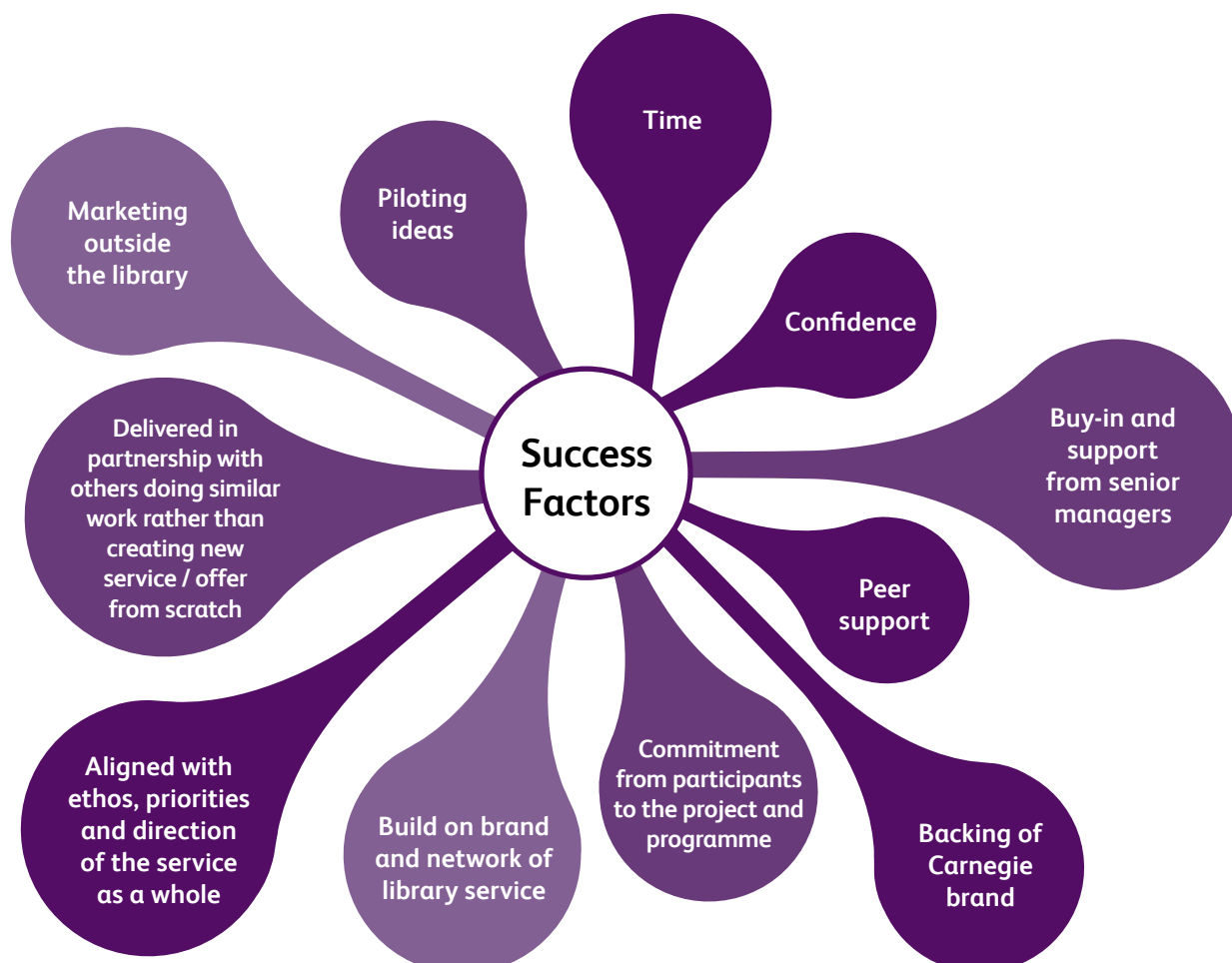
Project funding (£5,000-£15,000) was made available to Partners to implement an innovative idea in their library service. Ideas did not have to be innovative in relation to technology or in terms of being unique or the first initiative of its kind. However, ideas did have to be innovative in relation to the context of the applicant (individual library or service). All participants were given a development period to give time for ideas to be rethought and revised.

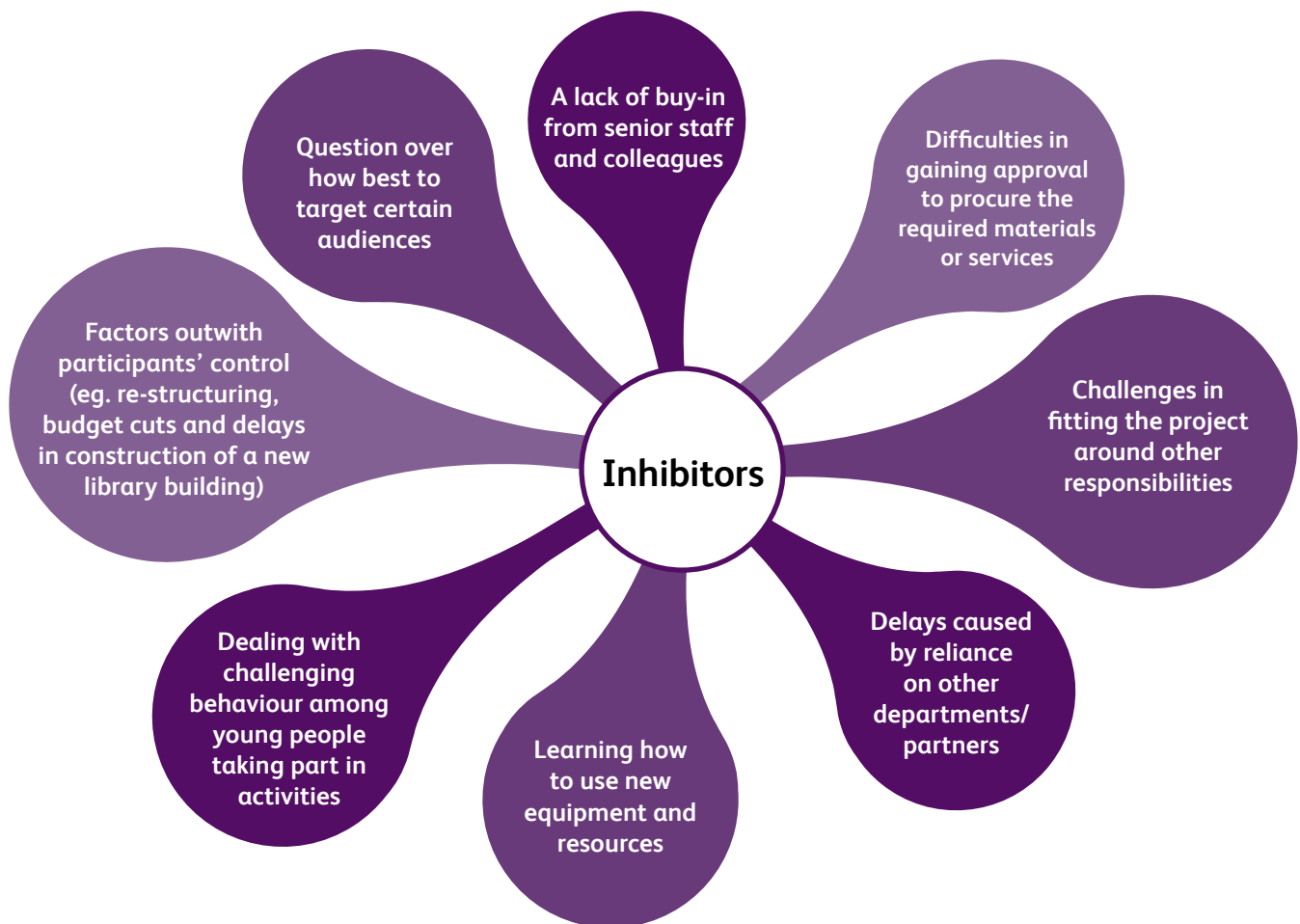
Overall, we found that being flexible and open to projects shifting in terms of delivery mechanisms and timeframe, or tweaking their objectives, helped participants. In particular, it helped ensure that projects could be altered to best fit their intended target group, incorporate advice from mentors, or to work within practical constraints. The external evaluation also showed that Carnegie

Partners were most successful, both in project delivery and learning gained, when their projects were modest in scale and achievable within the 18-month timescale. Further to this, there were some broader success factors when it came to what facilitated project development and delivery. Some participants also experienced some inhibitors to success. These did not occur across all projects.

Things to consider when planning the project offer could include:

- How flexible you are able to be if a project changes its delivery mechanisms, timeframe or objectives.
- Whether it would be beneficial to build in a development period into the programme.





Local library service buy-in

Advice and moral support from colleagues was key to the success of participants' projects and took different forms. In some cases, colleagues took over some substantive roles formally through staff back fill, to allow participants to focus on the project. In other cases, colleagues volunteered to carry out tasks on an ad hoc basis to give programme participants time and space to work on their project.

In almost all cases, support tied into how well the purpose and intended outcomes of the project had been articulated to colleagues. In particular, how far the purpose and outcomes were described in a way that chimed with colleagues' concerns and interests. For example, setting out exactly how the project would benefit or attract a particular sub-set of library users. Or how the project would benefit the library or would help the library deliver on its core mission or strategic plan. In some cases, this involved framing the way in which the project was part of "business

as usual" so it didn't feel like something separate. As one participant put it in relation to working with others more generally, "Being able to deliver a concise three-minute elevator pitch outlining the "why", "what" and "how" of the project was critical to securing... interest and support."

In relation to this, some things to consider could be:

- How far you feel it is appropriate or possible to ask for support from applicants' peers if they are not directly involved in the programme as a whole.
- How far you could support the dissemination of learning from other aspects of the programme among participants' peers so that peers feel more engaged with the programme as a whole and are directly benefiting from it.
- How far you feel you could enable participants to make the case for their project through skills training.



Building on strengths

A couple of projects had initially sought to build things separately from the library – such as websites that weren't integrated within the library website or marketing campaigns that didn't rely on the branding or existing social media presence of the library service. However, integrating projects into the existing offer and building on the reach and presence of the library service for communications ensured a more sustainable product and provided greater reach than standalone efforts might have done. Again, building on the strengths of partners and seeking expertise externally rather than trying to become expert in a subject or mode of delivery were essential to the success of some projects.

However, building on strengths doesn't preclude trying new things. In terms of marketing, one participant noted, "It is important to advertise outside and beyond the library. 50% of the participants heard about the coding sessions through posters in the town whilst 44% had heard about it from their parents."

In relation to this, something to consider could be:

- Whether there is a role for you or others involved in the programme to help participants identify the strengths and gaps in their organisation's comms.



Target audiences

Whilst the projects were all successful in their own right, sometimes a project did not reach its intended target audience. Whilst we gave time and space for applicants to engage with their intended audiences or users, additional learning modules on audience development or coproduction may have benefited some participants.

In relation to this, some things to consider could be:

- How far reaching a particular target audience is a success factor for your programme overall.
- Are there any mechanisms or learning opportunities you would like to put in place to support participants to reach their target audiences.



Brand

An unanticipated factor that participants felt contributed to the success of their projects was the credibility and visibility of the Carnegie brand. It enabled participants to engage with key stakeholders in the sector and secure some high profile mentors. It also supported some Carnegie Partners to secure buy-in and support from colleagues and partners.



Key take-aways

Overall

- “Plus-funding” programmes are resource intensive in terms of staff time and cost, but they are well worth running: where programme aims include capacity building, this type of programme can deliver a range of benefits for the beneficiaries in terms of skills and experience that small grants alone cannot.
- When designing programmes it is important to think about sustainability in broader terms than project sustainability: projects can be vehicles for forging partnerships, professional development and learning that all go on to bear fruit and render something more sustainable than the project itself. This is not to say project funding shouldn't be made available to the library sector nor that bids for funding should focus exclusively on non-project related sustainability. It is rather to say that it is important to invest in other forms of support that can contribute to sector development.
- If it is only possible to support small numbers of participants, try to have something that can be shared more widely in order to spread the benefit of the programme to a wider audience.
- Think carefully about the wider range of support a participant requires and whether there is anything you can do to secure and ensure this as either the programme provider or via the participant's manager.
- Iterate.
- Independent Trusts and Foundations are often in the best position to take risks and to enable others to take risks also.

1 Programme scope

Things it might be helpful to consider when developing a programme that involves both professional development and project development include:

- How far project and professional development are discrete or integrated offers.
- How far either project or professional development is more important in terms of the focus and structure of the programme.
- How best to communicate what the programme offers given how what part of the offer will be picked up on will be affected by the context and the expectations of a sector.



Participants and Potential

- No one kind of participant is 'better' than another, but the breadth of diversity within a smaller cohort can have pros and cons. In terms of any particular programme what is most important in terms of what participants get out of the programme and does this mean narrowing or broadening the bandwidth accordingly?
- What are the best ways of capturing attitude, openness to developing ideas and ways of working that are most relevant for the programme in the application process?



Funding

- What is the change you want to see and what are the best mechanisms to achieve this change?
- How experienced as a whole are the organisations/sectors you are seeking to work with in applying for funding?



Programme ethos: Learning versus delivery – and the question of support

- What feels proportionate for the amount of funding given.
- Whether to have a standardised system of checking in or if these would be tailored to individuals.
- Staff capacity to provide generic versus tailored support.
- Participants' personal preferences in terms of wanting to be challenged or encouraged.
- An individual participant's circumstances and context.
- How to find the right mix of support from different places – funder, mentor or line manager.
- The tone of any interaction to ensure it was true to being a “check in” so we could identify whether/how we could support individuals rather than a “check up” on progress.



Wider support

- How best to communicate formal expectations around time and resource implications of participating in the programme.
- What felt proportionate in terms of the ask of senior management and line managers.
- What felt proportionate in terms of an appropriate format for the ask (eg. check boxes, signing a short supporting statement or drafting a short supporting statement in response to key questions).



Transitions and changes

In situations where people move on it might be helpful to weigh up:

- The balance of personal development and project delivery.
- How far along you are in programme and project delivery.
- What information is needed from a line manager and senior management in relation to a suggested candidate.
- Staff capacity to meet incoming participants and line managers.
- Staff capacity to support an incoming participant.

2 Online learning

In determining the nature of the online learning it might be helpful to consider:

- Thematically, what is most relevant for the participants/sector.
- Whether there are any priority materials in terms of helping participants kick start their project.
- How rigid you want to be with when and in what sequence participants engage with the materials.
- The key questions you want participants to reflect on and what you want them to think and do – and how you want them to feel – following a particular module.
- The best way of getting participants to engage with one another in relation to the materials.

Things it might be helpful to consider when setting up an online forum could be:

- The purpose of an online forum and whether another channel could work as well.
- When and how to engage participants in how they would like to engage with each other outside of formal networking meetings.

3 Network



Number and format of meetings

In determining the number of face-to-face events to hold as part of a wider programme, it might be helpful to weigh up:

- What can only be achieved (or done well) in a face-to-face environment compared with a digital environment.
- When to hold events: if the emphasis of the meetings is primarily skills building then an accelerator type approach where meetings are front-ended could work well. If the meetings are about developing learning and re-establishing relationships at key points in a programme life cycle then perhaps spreading them across the programme would work well.

- Other opportunities available for participants to meet.
- The cost of these events in terms of finance but also to participants' library services given the travel time required to attend a meeting.



Location of meetings

Things that it might be helpful to take into consideration in determining whether to hold events in different locations include:

- How important it is to get out of everyday context for the purpose of the programme aims.
- What is staff capacity to support logistics such as travel.

4 Mentoring

When pairing mentors and mentees it can be helpful to consider:

- personality;
- the skillsets of mentor and mentee;
- the fit in terms of the project;
- the relative experience of both mentor and mentee; and
- geography.

In terms of relationship management, things to hold in balance include:

- Your desire to support with not wanting to seem like you are monitoring relationships.
- How far you want the mentor-mentee to be a safe space where anything (including the funder) could be discussed.

5 Projects

Things to consider when planning the project offer:

- How flexible you are able to be if a project changes its delivery mechanisms, timeframe or objectives.
- Whether it would be beneficial to build in a development period into the programme.



Local library service buy-in

In relation to local library-service buy-in, some things to consider could be:

- How far you feel it is appropriate or possible as a funder to ask for support from applicants' peers if they are not directly involved in the programme as a whole.
- How far you could support the dissemination of learning from other aspects of the programme among participants' peers so that peers feel more engaged with the programme as a whole and are directly benefiting from it.
- How far you feel you could enable participants to make the case for their project through skills training.

In relation to communications, something to consider could be:

- Whether there is a role for you or others involved in the programme to help participants identify the strengths and gaps in their organisation's comms.

In relation to target audiences for projects, some things to consider could be:

- How far reaching a particular target audience is a success factor for your programme overall.
- Are there any mechanisms or learning opportunities you would like to put in place to support participants to reach their target audiences.

The Carnegie UK Trust works to improve the lives of people throughout the UK and Ireland, by changing minds through influencing policy, and by changing lives through innovative practice and partnership work. The Carnegie UK Trust was established by Scots-American philanthropist Andrew Carnegie in 1913.

Andrew Carnegie House
Pittencrieff Street
Dunfermline
KY12 8AW

Tel: +44 (0)1383 721445
Email: info@carnegieuk.org
www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk

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