

INELI-Oceania – FINAL REPORT TO FUNDERS AND STAKEHOLDERS

Introduction

The highly rewarding four-year journey that has constituted the INELI-Oceania program concluded in June 2018 when twenty-six innovators from the two cohorts came together with program mentors and Steering Committee members in Pacific Harbour, Fiji, for a final Convening. Over three days participants had many opportunities to share the highlights of their individual journeys and to have a greater insight of their Pacific colleagues through visiting libraries in Suva.

Following the Convening a highly successful Pacific Libraries Summit was held over two days. The Summit brought together key regional stakeholders, library practitioners and INELI-Oceania innovators to advocate for the role of public libraries and librarians in society and to inspire a vision and agreement for collaborative and sustainable development of public library services in the Pacific. A key outcome of the Summit was a Statement of Intent to strengthen the impact and capacity of Pacific libraries to better support the needs of their communities through collaboration, networking and advocacy.

As the INELI-Oceania program draws to a close the original INELI-Oceania vision of collaboration and partnership is being further developed by the emerging initiative that is the Pacific Libraries Network.

The vision for INELI-Oceania

When the program was established in 2013, the vision for INELI-Oceania was that it would create a regional network of emerging leaders, foster collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders in the region and pilot a regional adaptation of the Global Libraries INELI (International Network of Emerging Library Innovators) program that had been operating internationally since 2011.

The aim of the Oceania program was to address a number of issues:

- An absence of leadership training opportunities in the South Pacific
- Very limited opportunities for regional cooperation across libraries and library organisations in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific
- A lack of awareness in Australian and New Zealand library networks of library development issues in the South Pacific

How it began

As the program concludes on a high note, it is timely to acknowledge the tremendous support that it has received since its inception. A generous grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation was combined with a four-year funding commitment from local partners in Australia and New Zealand – the National Library of Australia (NLA), the National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ), National and State Libraries of Australasia (NSLA), the State Library of Queensland (SLQ) and the Public Library Victoria Network (PLVN). In-kind support from other partners Yarra Plenty Regional Library Service, Auckland Libraries, the National Archives of Fiji and the library associations of Australia and New Zealand (ALIA and LIANZA) has also been vital in delivering a positive outcome.

With the transfer of the grantee role from Yarra Plenty Regional Library to the Australian Library and Information Association in March 2015, the original program objectives remained:

1. Identify, nurture and develop innovative emerging library leaders in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific through an online learning program and network opportunities.
2. Foster partnerships and collaboration of stakeholders in the region
3. Adapt Global Libraries to a regional context

Who was involved?

Over the four-year period, two cohorts of emerging leaders have benefited from the program. The first cohort began with sixteen participants in July 2014 and concluded at the Auckland Convening in July 2016, as the second cohort of eighteen commenced. Bringing the new innovators, sponsors, mentors and Steering Committee members together with the Cohort 1 graduates provided an excellent opportunity for networking and collaboration. The success of this event provided the model for the final Convening in Fiji.

Reviewing the past four years, the program has seen the following groups of people participate in the program in different capacities. The names and positions of all associated with INELI Oceania can be found in Appendix 1.

Innovators

Across the two programs, twelve participants were selected from Australia, twelve from New Zealand and nine from Pacific countries. The inclusion of people of Maori and Aboriginal Australian background was considered in the selection process for both cohorts. Three of the successful New Zealand applicants are Maori, two New Zealanders are of Pasifika background and one Australian is of aboriginal descent. The successful Pacific participants came from Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Timor-Leste and Vanuatu.

Mentors

Senior leaders with extensive leadership experience in the profession were chosen to guide the innovators and to support them through monthly discussions based around the module topics. For this purpose, the innovators were organized into Professional Development Teams of four or five.

Sponsors

Each of the innovators from the Pacific countries nominated a sponsor to support them at their first Convening and to act as on-the-ground support in their workplaces throughout the two years.

Steering Committee

Program governance was overseen by the nine members of the INELI-Oceania Steering Committee, also long-standing leaders in the profession. They represented organisations funding and supporting the program. Chaired by Allison Dobbie, formerly Manager of Auckland Libraries, the Committee comprised representatives of NSLA, NLA, NLNZ, PLVN, ALIA, LIANZA and the National Archives of Fiji.

Program Manager

The Program Manager oversaw the innovator learning experience, fostered the learning community, liaised with the Global Libraries INELI program consultants as required, worked with the evaluation consultant, monitored innovator feedback and made program adjustments, acted as secretariat to the Steering Committee and administered all aspects of program reporting and finances. The role expanded to accommodate project management for the Pacific Libraries Summit.

About the program

INELI-Oceania delivered two 2-year courses through a suite of online-learning modules, face-to-face meetings and Convenings. The modules, undertaken over 10 – 15 weeks, were mounted on a

Moodle platform. They covered the following topics: *Innovation, Risk Management, Change Management, Communication Skills, Conflict Management, Using Data and Advocacy*. These were supplemented with *Delivering presentations* as a shorter commencement module and, following the recent Convening, a newer module on Partnerships developed for another regional INELI program has been reconfigured and offered as a self-paced learning experience.

The learning methodologies employed in each module were a blend of readings; individual, paired and group assignments; online quizzes and forum discussions. The Program Manager ensured in preparing the modules that any group interactions maximised networking opportunities, so that all participants experienced working with different colleagues, across cultures and across countries.

The online learning experience was supported by monthly Zoom conversations with mentors in Professional Development Teams, a learning enhancement that had not been a feature of the GL INELI program. The value of these conversations with mentors was frequently mentioned in feedback by innovators in both cohorts.

With the Cohort 1 program, innovator feedback was closely monitored for any suggestions for program changes which could potentially be incorporated into the design and schedule of the program for Cohort 2. A continuous improvement approach was a genuine consideration, given the adaptations which had been part of the original design and the ‘pilot’ nature of the program.

Evaluation process

The first outcome for the program related to the development of core leadership competencies: working effectively in teams; leading and developing others; influencing effectively; enhancing business acumen; demonstrating confidence and leading change. This was formally assessed in two ways:

1. Through an internal survey based on innovator self-assessment over time (Cohort 2)
2. Through an evaluation methodology based on the idea of learning and sense-making as an iterative and ongoing process. This was undertaken by the external consultancy, Complexability Pty Ltd

1. Internal survey

The results of the innovator self-rating of competencies are shown below. The weighted average in June 2018 following the Convening shows clear improvement in every area of measurement, particularly in comparison with starting point in 2016.

Competency	July 2016	February 2018	June 2018
Ability to work in teams	4.00	4.33	4.6
Ability to develop others	3.58	4.0	4.6
Ability to lead change	3.5	4.17	4.7
Ability to take risks	3.25	4.00	4.5
Ability to resolve conflict	3.08	3.75	4.45
Ability to advocate for your library/ an aspect of the library	3.25	4.08	4.73
Understanding of innovation	3.33	4.42	4.7
Ability to innovate in your library	3.08	4.08	4.6
Your business acumen	2.83	3.75	4.1
Self confidence	2.83	3.56	4.27

Open comments from both the innovators and their managers reinforce the data shown in the table. There are many further comments like the two below.

INELI transformed my understanding of my professional potential. It gave me concrete skills to use and with which to understand others in my work environment. (Innovator)

In the last 2 years L has gained both confidence and a professionally supportive network. Her diplomacy skills, always a strength, have developed even further. Also, in this time L has been able to play an integral role in supporting staff through the death of 2 colleagues; she stepped-up to a strategic senior leadership role; worked with the local community and council on a new library development in challenging circumstances; and has taken on a second leadership role with the aim of supporting her colleagues. This current role involves working with a challenging group of youth that necessitates almost daily contact with support services, the police, and school principals. L has grown immensely with this program. She has come to appreciate that problems can be solved in a wide variety of ways; that she herself has the skills to influence strategically, and that speaking up and making decisions are important. (Innovator's Manager)

2. External evaluation

The formal evaluation of the INELI program, undertaken by Laurel Sutton of Complexability Pty Ltd, had a significant focus on the development of innovator competencies. 'Adapting INELI to a regional context' was one of the key program objectives (Objective 3), and the program's evaluation seen as its primary outcome.

The particular evaluation methodology had been specially commissioned by the INELI-Oceania Establishment Committee. It used a unique process of data capture and was built around the participants' narratives of experience and the manner in which, over time, new insights would emerge. The approach views learning as an iterative process and the development of competencies as a continuing journey.

As such, the Final Evaluation Report from the consultant is a core measure of the program's success. It is based on almost 500 innovator narratives, a substantial body of data. It is attached as Appendix 2.

As well as the formal assessment of the program, the number of innovators who have been successful in recruitment to more senior positions is a further testament to the program. A number of them gave strong attribution for their success to the INELI program, citing a direct relationship between the INELI program, the growth in their knowledge and enhanced confidence in their leadership abilities. Examples are:

- One innovator from Cohort 1 was successful in 2016 in moving into a 12-month lead role in a significant change project involving the amalgamation of two councils. She has subsequently become Manager of the Libraries Network for the City of Sydney (municipality).
- A second innovator has recently moved from a middle management role in a Victorian public library to the lead role in a large regional city library in Queensland
- A third was successful in gaining a quite different management role in a council restructure.

Why was it successful?

INELI-Oceania has clearly been a successful and valued program. In considering the reasons for this, there is not one critical success factor that can be said to have made the difference but rather an amalgam of many factors.

The following are identified as key elements in delivering on the program's success.

1. An engaged Steering Committee – monthly meetings saw a 90% attendance rate
2. The quality and commitment of the mentors
3. Implementing professional development teams which met monthly via Zoom – these were further opportunities for the innovators to build relationship, discuss topics of mutual interest and learn about each other. It was a factor which enabled the innovators to build confidence in the integrity of others and lead to openness in sharing
4. Maintaining the continued interest and engagement of innovators' managers through regular progress reports from the Program Manager. Encouragement was also given to the innovators to keep their managers informed
5. Immediacy of response at point of need from June Garcia (Emeritus consultant) and Sandra Nelson (Moodle platform and content expert)
6. The quality of the learning modules – well-targeted and well-structured content, a variety of learning methodologies catering well to differing learning styles; cultural difference elements
7. The formal evaluation methodology and the introduction of journal writing. This reinforced the idea of self-reflection and learning as an iterative process. This was upheld in particular by a module that introduced the importance of having a 'growth mindset'
8. The encouragement of risk-taking and the associated concept of 'successful failure'. This latter element was particularly appealing to many innovators.

Where to from here?

The success of the Pacific Libraries Summit mentioned in the introduction will be built on at a convening to be held in Brisbane in mid-September. Key people will be brought together to harness the energy and the commitments from the Summit to develop a Strategic Action Plan to deliver on the Statement of Intent. The leadership is to be transferred from the INELI-Oceania Executive Committee. The existing network will be maintained through the Pacific Libraries Network Facebook page and posting on the role of libraries in the South Pacific. A listserv of all participants at the Summit has been set up and hosted by the National Library of Australia to share information. The network will be expanded to those who could not attend as well as other interested people.

A Pacific Libraries Network Compact has been developed to capture the discussions and process of the Pacific Libraries Summit and to be a reference document for further discussions. It is available on the Pacific Libraries Network website <https://www.inelioceania summit.net/>

The conclusion of the INELI-Oceania program leaves a significant gap in public library leadership development in the region. This has been the only regional program ever offered for public librarians in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific. Some Australian States offer leadership programs but there is no national program. LIANZA offers leadership programs but not specifically for public librarians. The opportunities for development of public librarians in the South Pacific are very limited.

Conclusion

As the INELI-Oceania program comes to an end, we are very optimistic about the future of libraries in the Pacific. The enthusiasm and commitment of all those who attended the Summit marks a new beginning for collaboration and cooperation between libraries of the Pacific and with other Pacific agencies. The Summit agreed the following purpose: *Strengthen the impact of Pacific libraries to better support the needs of Pacific communities through collaborative networking and advocacy.* As our foundation supporters we invite you to become part of this exciting opportunity to make a difference to economic, social, community and environmental wellbeing through enabling libraries as strong partners in sustainable development.

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