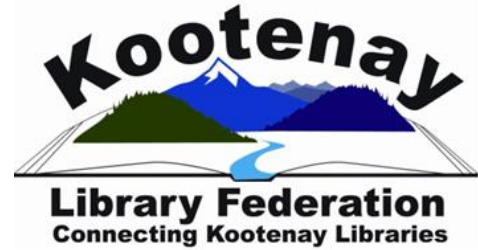


Our vision statement:

***Collaborating to support
outstanding library services.***



2020 Provincial Grant Report

Introduction

The Kootenay Library Federation began operating in 2004 and received formal, governmental recognition in 2006.

There were three predecessor organizations to the Kootenay Library Federation. In 1974 the Kootenay Library System Society was formed representing citizens from Castlegar, Creston, Cranbrook, Elkford, Fernie, Grand Forks, Greenwood, Invermere, Kimberley, Midway, Nelson, Rossland, Salmo and Trail. Their purpose was to promote integrated and equal access to library services throughout their communities. The Society operated a bookmobile during this time and hosted a number of conferences for members. The Society lacked financial support to continue, and from it, two smaller organizations were formed between 1978-1979.

The East Kootenay Library Association (EKLA) served the communities east of, and including, Cranbrook. The West Kootenay Library Association (WKLA) was formed to serve the towns west of, and including, Creston. The new associations were comprised of local librarians and usually a board member from each library. The two associations met separately and regularly, cooperating to save money and resources whenever possible.

In 1996, the Library Act was revised and included a provision for regional library districts and federations. The members of WKLA and EKLA recognized a library federation was their future and began working towards merging the two associations.

The Federation can be described as an umbrella organization that serves to support the twenty independent member libraries in the east, central, and boundary regions of the Kootenays. The majority of the member libraries are rural and somewhat isolated from one another, particularly in the snowy winter months. The KLF service area encompasses a mountainous area of 49,647 square kms with 186,907 people and a population density of just below 4 people per km.

Grouped according to their size, the KLF member libraries include:

- populations above 10,000: Castlegar, Cranbrook, Creston, Penticton, and Nelson
- populations between 3000-10,000: Beaver Valley, Fernie, Grand Forks, Invermere, Kimberley, Rossland, Sparwood, and Trail
- populations below 3,000: Elkford, Greenwood, Kaslo, Midway, Nakusp, Radium Hot Springs, and Salmo

Governance

In addition to the 20 person Board, the KLF has an Executive Committee with seven members who meet five times a year. To ensure balanced representation from the twenty member libraries, the Executive Committee includes at least one Officer or Director from each size library (small, medium, large), and each geographic region (East, West, Boundary).

The KLF began 2020 with three active Committees: Advocacy, Finance, and Governance. The Library Director Advisory Group is represented on each committee and their contributions continue to be an essential aspect to our efforts in achieving our strategic goals and operational outcomes. These committees were quiet due to COVID and will resume their work in 2021.

KLF Strategic Plan

As a refresher, our four objectives are:

1. We will seek opportunities to increase funding for the KLF, which will benefit member libraries.
2. We will work to enhance advocacy for the KLF and member libraries.
3. The KLF will enhance communication to increase engagement and commitment.
4. The KLF will work to enhance opportunities for collaboration.

The KLF is mid-way through our five-year strategic plan (2019-2023) and COVID completely brought this work to a stand-still. Understandably, KLF Board appointees needed to focus on their member libraries, community and personal needs.

KLF Grant Letter Outcomes:

The KLF grant award letter dated March 31, 2020 communicated grant funds were to be used towards the following four outcomes:

1. Improved regional and local shared services delivery.
2. Improved access to ProD learning opportunities for library staff and trustees.
3. Service expansion beyond community borders.
4. Support, where possible, the provincial strategic direction.

Improved regional and local shared services delivery

Two Kootenay-wide online book clubs launched in 2020. At the beginning of the pandemic, Melodie Rae Storey from the Nelson Public Library decided that her in-person programming needed to be moved online. From there she extrapolated if one library was offering online programming, what difference did it make where the attendees were located? She quickly thought of the group potential for hooking big-name authors through KLF sponsorship.

The Kootenay Teen Book Club held its first meeting in July, and met a total of five times in 2020. A committee of 4 library staff from different member libraries work together to select books and authors. The KLF makes the arrangements with the authors and funds the book purchases and author fees. Teens representing between 9 and 13 different communities participate, often with their parents, in addition to librarians from 5 different member libraries. A list of visiting authors include Susan Nielsen, Susan Juby, Kenneth Oppel, and Jennifer Nielsen. Scheduled authors for early 2020 include Gordon Korman, Tasha Spillet and Brittany Cavallaro. Average teen attendance at each monthly club meeting is 23.

Read Local, a book club for adults throughout the Kootenays and Boundary, was proposed by Heather Goldick of the Nelson Public Library. Heather and adult service librarian colleagues take turns hosting the monthly club. This format allows local authors from different communities to be profiled. Read Local launched in September and to date, authors from Nelson, Castlegar and Cranbrook have been guests. The Cranbrook author was Mike Selby. Mike works as the Programs & Community Outreach Librarian at the Cranbrook Library and is author of *Freedom Libraries: The Untold Story of Libraries for African Americans in the South*. Four authors, ranging from the communities of Kimberley to Grand Forks, have been scheduled for the 2021 book club meetings. On average, adults representing 9 different communities participate, along with librarians from member libraries. The KLF funds the book purchases and author visit honourariums. Average attendance at each adult monthly club meeting is 10.

Improved access to professional development learning opportunities for library staff and trustees

Four Library Directors were approved to participate in the *Future Focussed Library Leaders – Personal Learning Grant* program. This opportunity was made possible through a partnership between Public Libraries Branch and ABCPLD. I promoted this grant heavily with a number of KLF Library Directors, and sought the names of consultants if they were interested in pursuing the personal coaching option.

For the second year, the KLF has purchased access to the Homeless Training Institute. In addition to the core training, they offer monthly webinars on various topics, including How to Deal with Problem Behaviours Related to COVID-19, Body Odour: The Most Dreaded Conversation, Managing Front-line Staff Who Work with Homeless Individuals, Advanced Body Language and Skills, and Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault Issues (in libraries). Library staff attend the webinars regularly throughout the year.

In-person learning is generally the preferred model, however with COVID-19 the only option for learning was online. This encouraged the KLF to test participation uptake by offering online learning regularly throughout the year.

The following table best illustrates the various learning opportunities that were made available to Trustees, Library Directors and library staff at KLF member libraries.

	Library staff	Library Directors	KLF Board	# of Attendees
January	LibraryAware introductory training	LibraryAware introductory training		11
May	Customer Service training, “3Rs” and “Moments of Power	Governance webinar with BCLTA and Customer Service training, “3Rs” and “Moments of Power	Governance webinar with BCLTA	56
September		Feedback, Evaluation and Development for Staff with Kim Bater (2 sessions)	Feedback, Evaluation and Development for Library Directors with Kim Bater	21
October	Deer in the Headlights: Anxiety Free Reader’s Advisory	Deer in the Headlights: Anxiety Free Reader’s Advisory and Q & A with employment lawyer Colin Edstrom	Q & A with employment lawyer Colin Edstrom	24
November		Privacy Compliance for Public Libraries with Nate Russell (Courthouse Libraries)	Privacy Compliance for Public Libraries with Nate Russell (Courthouse Libraries)	16
December	ILL/ILC panel discussion	ILL/ILC panel discussion		14

Surveys to collect feedback from each session are sent to participants and through this, new topics are added to the list of future sessions.

Service expansion beyond community borders

The KLF is committed to exploring, developing and implementing library services, programs and learning opportunities, particularly if they can be done through provincial collaboration resulting in equitable access. The current group of Federation Managers communicates regularly and actively transforms ideas into projects where collectively we can expand our services beyond the borders of our member library communities and federations.

The KLF explored eligibility for the Connectivity Top-up Fund or the Strategic Network Hardware Fund through the BC Libraries Coop. It was hoped the Federation could project manage service improvements such as a regional consortium to improve connectivity. This was unsuccessful. However, numerous KLF member libraries have individually benefited from these funds.

With the other BC library Federations, the KLF is supporting the offering of an EDI workshop offered by AMSSA: *Safe Harbour – Respect for All*. This workshop is freely available to Board members, library staff and Library Directors, with thanks for a grant from the Public Libraries Branch.

In the Fall of 2020, the KLF contracted with the Selkirk College Continuing Education department to develop a Library Technology Topics online course. The administrative work for this course was completed in 2020 and it will be offered in March and April 2021. To recover costs, the course is open to any library staff in BC for a sliding scale fee. Library staff in the KLF can take the course for free. Course topics are being crowdsourced via a survey, using the SOLS technology competencies index.

The KLF become a volunteer coordinator for the Canadian Children's Book Centre. Book Week is scheduled for May 2021 and it has been over ten years since the Kootenay region was offered touring authors. Promoting this required communication and coordination with schools throughout the KLF region, and will result in an increase of literacy opportunities for children.

Support, where possible, the provincial strategic direction

Priority 1 – Improving Access for British Columbians

The KLF encouraged and supported Library Directors in their work to utilize the Public Libraries Branch Technology Grant in concert with the two grant funds from the BC Libraries Coop. Meetings with the Connectivity Consultant were facilitated. The combination of three funding streams will contribute to the upgrading of technology and other relevant changes.

Priority 2 – Building Capacity

Much progress has been made, both provincially and within the KLF, to support the capacity building of all library staff, Directors and Board members. This is partially due to the work done by ABCPLD and BCLTA. The levels of collaboration between the various groups in the BC library ecosystem is encouraging and will only increase. The KLF is mindful to complement what is offered by other groups, and has begun to focus on learning opportunities for front line staff. Incorporating Library Director input on what is needed will contribute to the continued success of these efforts.

Priority 3 – Enhancing Citizen Engagement

By sourcing, evaluating, and managing database subscriptions for member libraries, the KLF is supporting the provincial government's priority of enhancing citizen engagement. Online database subscriptions rose in patron value during the pandemic, connecting, distracting, and entertaining citizens during a time of sudden social withdrawal.

Priority 4 – Enhancing Governance

The KLF immediately coordinated and funded Zoom licenses for member libraries. This ensured Board meetings could continue, ensuring governance responsibilities were sustained. This action supports the government's priority of enhancing governance.

Impact and Response to COVID-19 Pandemic

The pandemic created an opportunity for the KLF to find new ways of demonstrating its' value to member libraries. By immediately facilitating weekly conversations for the Library Directors, the KLF provided support, cohesiveness and a confidential place where Directors could ask for help, express frustration and commiserate, problem solve, and share operational decisions. One Library Director has kindly said "COVID has been the making of the KLF." In September, the weekly meetings became monthly events. Compared to the 2x/year LDAG meetings before COVID, the chance to meet more frequently has been appreciated and become necessary. These meetings are a complement to valuable ABCPLD meetings attended by LDAG members. The KLF's Spring AGM and regular business meeting were held online using Zoom. Online polls were used to conduct new nominations, vote for Executive Committee membership and conduct typical AGM business. We demonstrated to other libraries that "business could go on."

With funds not used for in-person meeting expenses, the KLF Board approved the re-allocation of funds towards e-book purchases for member libraries.

The KLF quickly coordinated and funded Zoom licenses for all member libraries. This ensured Board meetings could continue, and when libraries were ready, they could offer online programming to their patrons. Some libraries require two licences due to scheduling conflicts between programming and business.

In response to libraries closing temporarily, the KLF coordinated access to an employment lawyer. Initially, group Q&A sessions were held with pandemic related questions about layoffs with regards to employment standards and collective agreements. It quickly became clear this was a much-needed resource to both Boards and Library Directors. The lawyer has remained as a KLF funded resource for continuing employment matters.

Unfortunately, the planned KLF Rural Libraries Conference had to be postponed. This was done in consultation and with the support of Public Libraries Branch.

Along with other Federation Managers, the KLF has benefitted from improved communications with Public Libraries Branch, ABCPLD, the Coop, and BCLTA. Awareness of other groups' activities and plans ensures support in the form of referrals can be provided. A side benefit of the improved communications is role clarification amongst the groups, allowing for an improved support network for library Board members and Library Directors.

To increase a sense of connection, regular learning opportunities were offered to library staff, Library Directors and Board members.

Despite efforts and participation, both Board members and Library Directors miss the connections and inspiration they receive from in-person meetings. We are looking forward to resuming them in 2022.

Conclusion:

The KLF sincerely endorses and implements the priorities held by the Public Libraries Branch, implementing these in our work with the 20 member libraries. Throughout the changes the pandemic has brought us in 2020, we were able to honour the priorities in our grant letter – albeit differently than planned. We appreciate and thank the Ministries of Education and Municipal Affairs for their continued financial support.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Melanie Reaveley".

Melanie Reaveley, MLIS
Executive Director,
Kootenay Library Federation
director@klf.bclibrary.ca
250-608-4490