

## PUBLIC LIBRARY INTERLINK

### PROVINCIAL LIBRARY GRANTS REPORT 2020

#### INTRODUCTION

Public Library InterLINK (InterLINK) was established April 1<sup>st</sup>, 1994, growing from the foundations of the Greater Vancouver Library Federation, which operated from 1975-1994. InterLINK is a successful federation of eighteen public libraries, operating in accordance with the Library Act of British Columbia and governed by a Board of Directors. InterLINK's member libraries include those in Metro Vancouver, in the Fraser Valley, along Highway 99 north to Lillooet and on the Sunshine Coast. InterLINK's service area is home to approximately two-thirds of the population of BC.

#### INTERLINK STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK

2020 was the first year that InterLINK operated under the *Strategic Framework* (attached) that was developed in 2019. The framework, which will be reviewed annually, maintains the vision, mission and values of the Federation's 2016-2019 *Strategic Plan* and sets out broad strategic directions in support of member libraries. The framework differs from a traditional strategic plan in that it allows a greater degree of flexibility in pursuing specific actions in support of the strategic directions. In reflecting over the past year, the Board was very prescient in purposefully stating that InterLINK would always strive to be flexible in order to best service its membership. As the pandemic stretched through the summer and into the fall and winter, flexibility was not only a desired quality, but a prerequisite and necessity for both the Federation and the member libraries.

The framework, supported by annual operations plan (attached) is approved by the Board. The Executive Director reports on the operations plan progress at each Board meeting, and the progress comprises a major portion of the Executive Director's annual evaluation.

#### MISSION AND VALUES

**InterLINK's Vision:** *Vibrant communities supported by strong public libraries*

**InterLINK's Mission:** *Supporting public libraries through resource sharing and collaborative programs*

**InterLINK's Values:**

- **Collaboration** – *We believe that working together increases the reach and effectiveness of libraries.*
- **Equality** – *We believe that member libraries have equal voice in the decision-making process at the InterLINK table.*
- **Innovation** – *We encourage creativity, experimentation and the generation of new ideas.*
- **Stewardship** – *We manage our resources in a manner that brings maximum benefit to member libraries.*
- **Accountability** – *We are open, transparent and committed to demonstrating our impact to members and funders.*

#### Strategic Direction - Enhancing Patron Experience

##### 2020 Activities:

- Support member libraries and Outlook Online (OLOL) Administration with 2020 service enhancements.
- Continue to engage with member libraries and Illume Administration on investigating NCIP costs
- Support Illume Administration with promotion of new brand and service enhancements
- Engage with broader library community regarding the elimination of ILL fees

## Report on 2020 Activities:

Supporting a strong resource sharing network for member libraries and across the province is a key activity for Public Library InterLINK. 2020 marked the fifth year of InterLINK's commitment to providing the financial support for Canadian hosting of the SHARE-it resource sharing software.

InterLINK provides the infrastructure to support in-person, non-resident borrowing. The borrowing of physical materials was severely curtailed by the onset of the pandemic. Member libraries closed in mid-March. When services were reintroduced, it was primarily in the form of curbside pick up of holds. This activity did not include a high level of non-resident borrowing as people were staying close to home and using their local library.

As a point of comparison, in 2019, non-residents borrowed 3,150,271 items from member libraries. In 2020, that number was 1,514,950, or 51.9% fewer loans. Interestingly, the percentage of total circulation by non-residents remained steady, at just over 11% each year.

InterLINK resumed one day per week delivery at the end of May and gradually increased the number of days to a 3-day delivery schedule in September. Currently, delivery is offered 9 days for each 2-week period.

InterLINK continues to provide opportunities for member libraries to share best practices regarding resource sharing. In 2020, InterLINK hosted a meeting of federation ILL contacts that allowed participants the opportunity to share what was happening in their library and to learn what was working during a very uncertain time.

Most of the initiatives regarding the improvement of the ILL system were put on hold by the pandemic. It is anticipated that this work will be revisited, albeit on a slower schedule, starting in 2021.

## Outcomes:

- InterLINK's investment in ILL infrastructure continues to provide benefit to libraries across the province in both the public and post-secondary library sectors.
- Service complies with privacy legislation
- Library users have access to collections at libraries other than their "home" library, greatly increasing their ability to borrow materials relevant to their needs.

## Key Partnerships:

InterLINK continues to work closely with member libraries, the Libraries Branch, the BC Electronic Library Network (Illume Administration Centre), the BC Libraries Cooperative and the post-secondary library sector to improve resource sharing and work towards seamless service.

## Strategic Direction - Building Member Library Capacity

### 2020 Activities:

- Manage 2020 LLEAD activities
- Schedule spring and fall offerings of coaching workshops for member libraries
- Work with Mark Colgate and his team on delivery of online customer service sessions
- Work with mental wellness working group on an InterLINK sponsored mental wellness session at the BCLA conference and/or a standalone InterLINK session
- Work to develop next steps and implement recommendations arising from the *Libraries and the Climate Crisis* event (delayed until 2021)
- Poll member libraries regarding other potential staff development sessions
- Offer Board development session, based on Board Self Evaluation result.
- Offer AAG development sessions based on AAG feedback
- Manage centrally located collection of restricted audiobooks for member library outreach departments

- Manage provision of physical copies of NNELS titles for all BC libraries
- Manage 2020 patron card order including all federations
- Review 2019 world languages project/Manage 2020 world languages project
- Poll member libraries regarding other potential consortial purchasing opportunities
- Manage year one of 2020-2025 NewToBC program

## Report on 2020 Activities:

### Program: LLEAD

InterLINK began offering the LLEAD program in 2016. The InterLINK Board approved direct funding support for the first two cohorts of the program. In 2019, the program transitioned to new facilitators. While no direct support was provided to the program for the third cohort, the Board did approve considerable in-kind support, in the form of the continued involvement from the InterLINK Executive Director as the program organizer. This was in recognition of the ongoing impact of the program on InterLINK member libraries.

The intent of the LLEAD program is to identify, develop and encourage staff from member libraries who are recognized as having potential to become leaders within their organizations. Nominations from across the province and from outside the public library sector are encouraged.

#### Background:

LLEAD participants are expected to practice and improve skills that are directly transferable to the library environment in organizational leadership, teamwork, finance, human resources management, and advocacy. At the end of the yearlong program, successful LLEAD participants will demonstrate the resilience, self-awareness and abilities to influence strategic outcomes at the organizational and community level.

#### Program Components

- Leadership Development Institute - a five-day intensive institute based on current research and focused on transformational leadership with emphasis on organizational, strategic and personal leadership.
- Wise Counsel – Facilitated discussions utilizing this “liberating structure” technique where members can explore issues they are experiencing and receive constructive feedback from their LLEAD colleagues.
- Mentorship – participants work with a mentor from outside their organization. Mentors are at the Director or Deputy Director level and could be from outside the Federation.
- Coaching – coaches are participant’s supervisors or another appropriate person from within the participant’s organization.
- Organizational Projects – a major project approved by the sponsoring library is presented at the end of the formal LLEAD program. These projects may be of an extended nature that would continue past the duration of the program.

The third (2019-2020) LLEAD cohort was the largest yet, with 21 emerging library leaders. 14 of whom were from InterLINK libraries, 5 from other BC public libraries and 2 from academic libraries in the Metro Vancouver region. The Leadership Development Institute was held in November 2019. Bi-monthly meetings were scheduled to take place throughout 2020 with a "graduation" celebration scheduled for December 2020.

The 2019-2020 LLEAD cohort was significant for a number of reasons. Rebecca Jones (Dysart-Jones) took on the roll as the driving force behind the program. Rebecca is one of the best-known and most highly respected consultants in North America, and had been co-facilitator for the first two cohorts. In addition, Dr. Shailoo Bedi joined as co-facilitator and mentor. Shailoo has a dual appointment as Director, Academic Commons and Strategic Assessment with the University of Victoria libraries as well

as Director, Office of Student Academic Success for the university. Rebecca and Shailoo reworked the program curriculum, updating the learnings to ensure maximum relevance to the needs of today's information professionals. The curriculum was centred on Henry Mintzberg's five managerial mindsets:

- 1) Reflective Mind-Set: Managing Self
- 2) Action Mind-Set: Managing Change
- 3) Collaborative Mind-Set: Managing Relationships
- 4) Worldly Mind-Set: Managing Context
- 5) Analytical Mind-Set: Managing Organizations

The cohort was able to hold one meeting after the intensive before the world changed in March. As with everything else in the past year, LLEAD had to adapt to the challenges of a global pandemic. The result, however, was a much more responsive and impactful program. LLEAD pivoted from in-person full-day sessions every two months to morning sessions every second week. The extra sessions provided not only the impetus for very close connections to be made among cohort members, but also the opportunity to add new areas of focus to the development sessions. In addition to sessions on governance, project management, managing change, human resources, finances, and other "management" topics, emerging topics such as leading through uncertain times, living one's values and challenging established worldviews were added. The final two-day virtual intensive and graduation focused on topics related to equity, diversity and inclusion. We look forward to exploring these and other important topics (such as reconciliation) with the fourth cohort.

Feedback from sponsoring libraries and cohort three members was extremely positive:

From a sponsor:

- *I will confess that as a sponsor, I was worried that our candidates would not get the full experience this year. It quickly became clear after watching a few of the presentations that this cohort had not only the most unique LLEAD experience but perhaps the best.*

From members of the third cohort:

- *LLEAD has had an incredible impact on both my personal and professional life. The curriculum stretched my skills and helped me implement practices in my work that I feel have made me a more effective leader. Beyond that, especially during the pandemic, having access to our group to turn to for support and guidance was, and continues to be, a lifesaver. I especially found our sessions that involved the wise crowd technique incredibly constructive – both as the person bringing forward a problem and contributing as part of the crowd – it helped me build confidence in my abilities and instincts as a coach, and helped me practice giving and receiving feedback. I really appreciate LLEAD for helping me make a practice of continual learning and self-reflection. I am so grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of this cohort!*
- *LLEAD provided me with an invaluable professional development opportunity to become more knowledgeable and confident in my role as a leader. The curriculum supported my growth over the year of the program, and the environment of trust, sharing, and mutual support was fantastic. I will be using the resources and network I've gained through LLEAD for many years to come.*
- *The LLEAD program helped me identify values that I have unconsciously been working within. LLEAD sessions gave us the opportunity to hear from library leaders about how their values intersect with their leadership, providing inspiring examples. I have really valued the exposure LLEAD has given me to the wider context for my work. Having an awareness of what is happening in the wider context is critical so my organisation can hit the ground running when we are tasked with implementing something new, or make informed decisions. LLEAD has illuminated for me the ways that library leaders think about and stay abreast of the wider context for their work.*

- *LLEAD and its uniquely styled curriculum enables participants to develop the skills, resilience and critical thinking required of senior managers that wish to lead impactfully. The program directors and mentors enrich the future of the profession by choosing topics that are relevant and thought provoking.*

#### Outcomes:

- Libraries across BC have access to a program that encourages senior staff to aspire to leadership roles within the library.
- LLEAD members gain greater knowledge for and appreciation of the skills required to serve in a senior leadership role and can apply that knowledge in their organization, or in subsequent leadership positions.
- Libraries have access to a cohort of suitable applicants for senior management positions, reducing the need for expensive searches when positions become available.
- Of the 51 members of the first three LLEAD cohorts, half have moved into positions of greater responsibility.

#### Program: Coaching for Library Managers

Libraries are challenged to deliver high-level service in an always changing, increasingly complex environment. In order to do so, library managers must be effective leaders of staff and develop appropriate skills for working with those who report to them. Coaching is one of these skills. In 2016 InterLINK began working with facilitators Alison Lee and Simon Goland to offer two-day *Coaching for Library Managers* sessions for library staff. Registration for the coaching sessions is limited to 18, as the session is developed for intensive, small group interaction. Pre-work is assigned to registrants and sessions are scheduled one month apart with practice, led by the facilitators, required between the two sessions. In 2018, the program was refreshed and is now offered as two sessions: *Coaching Fundamentals* (2 days) and *Advanced Coaching* (1.5 days).

In 2020, the *Coaching Fundamentals* course pivoted to being offered online. The course was offered in the fall. This will continue to be the format for the courses into 2021. One major advantage of this change is that the courses will be much more accessible to staff in libraries beyond InterLINK.

Participant feedback continues to be extremely positive. Comments from participants:

- *Amazingly useful. Looking forward to practicing further and becoming better at utilizing the tools.*
- *Helpful with reflecting on assumptions and figuring out fact versus pre-judging.*
- *This is lifelong learning, and something that is crucial and useful forever.*

#### Outcomes:

- Attendees report increased self-confidence.
- Attendees report more positive work relationships.
- Attendees report increased goal setting and action towards achieving goals.
- Attendees feel they contribute more effectively to the library.
- Attendees feel that they communicate more effectively.

#### Program: Customer Service Training

In late 2017, InterLINK investigated the suitability of the 3Rs of Service Excellence: Be Reliable, Be Responsive and Build Relationships program developed by Dr. Mark Colgate from the University of Victoria's Gustavson School of Business.

Throughout 2018 and 2019 InterLINK worked with Dr. Colgate and the Gustavson School to develop a program tailored to the province's public libraries. Feedback focused on "culture change" and the need for courses to be available online in order to reach as many staff members as possible. In response to

this feedback, the Gustavson School developed two online courses: *Ace the 3Rs* and *Moments of Power*. A working group from InterLINK member libraries worked with Gustavson to customize the course content for use by library staff.

The two online courses launched in January 2020. As of December 31, 257 staff members had completed the *Ace the 3Rs* course and 209 completed *Moments of Power*. These totals include 25 staff members from libraries outside of InterLINK.

#### Outcomes:

- Libraries who send staff to the courses have a "shared language" regarding customer service that makes measurement and reporting more straightforward and increases ability to share information and compare.
- Staff that attend report that concepts used in training (3Rs, Moments of Power) have positively impacted their customer service delivery.
- Online courses will permit member libraries to incorporate material into staff onboarding, furthering the culture change.

#### Program: Mental Wellness Working Group

Mental health is an issue that impacts every workplace in Canada. As the nature of library work adapts to changing service demands, staff are challenged to adjust to meet those demands. That can result in a number of "stressors" that affect an employee's mental well being. Additional stress can also come from dealing with patrons with their own mental health or addiction challenges.

In 2020, InterLINK worked on continuing the momentum in this area after sponsoring a session titled, *How to Implement a Workplace Mental Health Program in Your Library*, at the 2019 BC Library Conference. Member library contacts continued to contribute to the curated list of mental wellness resources that resides on the InterLINK website.

In addition, a session for the 2020 conference was planned but postponed as the conference was forced to cancel due to the pandemic. InterLINK worked with the Association of BC Public Library Directors, the BC Library Association and the BC Libraries Cooperative to organize a virtual session with a representative from the Canadian Mental Health Association and library staff working to meet the mental wellness needs of their colleagues. The session was presented in November and 190 staff across the province took part.

#### Outcomes:

- Member libraries and their staff will have a starting point for locating mental wellness resources.
- Member libraries will be able to share best practices and learn from each other.
- Over time, the impact of mental wellness stressors will be reduced.

#### Program: Youth Services Committee Workshops

InterLINK's Youth Services Committee (YSC) has existed since the Federation was established and is an excellent example of how sharing information regarding best practices and programs leads to ongoing collaboration. As detailed in the YSC's terms of reference, the Committee is responsible for facilitating federation-wide sharing of program ideas, author visits, and children and teen services resources. The YSC also organizes staff development opportunities that focus on children's and teen services.

In 2020, the YSC focused on providing support to youth services staff that had to pivot to providing services during the pandemic. Much of the work of the committee was delayed as so many of its members were laid off for a portion of the year. Author visits were transitioned to virtual platforms. In addition, the committee organized a virtual *Parent-Child Mother Goose Program* in November plus a workshop titled *How to Run a Zoom Babytime*, that was presented in December.

### Outcomes:

- Youth services staff develop skills that increase their effectiveness.
- Member libraries have access to resources created by the YSC.
- Youth services staff from InterLINK member libraries have the opportunity to learn from each other and improve programming in their library.
- Cooperating on author readings and collaborative programs allows member libraries to stretch budgets in these areas and participate in programming that might not otherwise be available.

InterLINK libraries were polled to determine other staff development needs. The responses revealed that due to the uncertainty revolving around the pandemic, libraries were taking a cautious approach and did not feel adding other staff development opportunities was advisable.

In late 2020, InterLINK became a member of the Homelessness Services Association of BC (HSABC). This gave all member libraries access to the deep catalogue of staff development sessions available through the HSABC.

### Program: Board Development

Since the InterLINK Board redeveloped its governance manual, it has focused on how to best to fulfill its governance role, how to measure the Board's effectiveness and how the Board can support each other in developing that effectiveness. The Board implemented, and continues to refine, a board self-evaluation process and a board skills matrix exercise.

In 2020 the Board focused on developing greater awareness of reconciliation and how a federated board such as InterLINK's could support other boards. With guidance from Vancouver Public Library Board appointee Harlan Pruden and facilitation from Harlan and North Vancouver District appointee Barb Lawrie, the InterLINK Board hosted a "ReconciliACTION" workshop in November. Feedback was very positive and Harlan is bringing that session to other libraries through the BCLTA, where he is now a board member.

### Outcomes:

- InterLINK Board members have a better understanding of reconciliation and the work necessary to work towards it.
- Other boards have access to the session and will be able to increase their understanding.

The AAG did not host a specific development session during 2020 but did invite representatives from Metro Vancouver to attend a meeting and share an update on bargaining, especially as impacted by the pandemic.

### Program: Audiobooks

The consortial purchase of audiobooks for restricted collections (outreach departments) for use by member libraries is one of InterLINK's longest standing consortial programs. In 2020, 840 titles were purchased, adding 1930 (1844 Mp3 – 86 digital) copies to the collections of member libraries.

In addition, InterLINK continues to support the NNELS service. InterLINK and NNELS have collaborated on the conversion of titles from InterLINK's audiobook collection (in cassette format) to Mp3 for inclusion in the NNELS catalogue. To date, 282 titles have been converted. InterLINK also has taken on the role of creating "hard copies" (on CD) of NNELS titles for libraries across BC whose clients request them. In 2020, 55 CDs were created and shipped to requesting libraries.

As of December 31, 2020, the audiobook collections held 13,680 titles (29,548 volumes) and 1413 patrons were registered for the service. Circulation for 2020 was 32,617.

In addition, InterLINK fulfilled 33 interlibrary loan requests from libraries outside of InterLINK for items from the audiobook collection.



From the son of a patron:

- *Thank you so much for all the help and support you extended to mum by providing audiobooks as she experienced rapid vision loss. We are so grateful for the services you provide and for making this very stressful and lonely time so much easier. Keep up the great work helping those who need this type of support at a most difficult time.*

In addition to its consortial purchasing aspects, the audiobook program remains an excellent example of collaboration across the Federation. A committee comprised of outreach staff from member libraries and InterLINK Program Coordinator Candice Stenstrom collaborate on collection development while InterLINK provides processing of the materials and maintains the catalogue for access to materials. The committee cooperated to effectively pivot the service in face of the pandemic, establishing a direct mailing program to outreach patrons requesting materials.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Participating libraries realize cost savings by purchasing materials (including cataloguing and processing) on a consortial basis. Participating libraries were able to repurpose resources for other priorities.
- Libraries are able to provide clients with hard copies of NNELS titles.
- Patrons experiencing vision loss continued to have access to materials, ameliorating some of the negative impact of the pandemic.

#### **Program: Consortial Purchasing of Patron Library Cards**

In 2020, nine InterLINK member libraries participated in the consortial purchase of patron cards, organized by InterLINK's Program Coordinator Candice Stenstrom. In addition, libraries across BC were invited to participate. Castlegar, Creston and Chetwynd Public Library took advantage of the opportunity. InterLINK worked again with Canadian supplier Dynamic Imaging on this consortial project. 104,000 standard cards were ordered at a cost of 19.32 cents per card. In addition, 39,000 key fob cards were ordered at a cost of 36.75 cents per card. Despite a price increase that reflected the difficulty the vendor had in obtaining materials, libraries were very pleased with the consortial arrangement.

By collaborating on this purchase all participating libraries realized savings in the cost of cards over ordering on their own. Dynamic Imaging maintains a pricing agreement for one-off orders that any BC library can access at any time (as opposed to joining InterLINK's once per year order). Smaller libraries on the other hand, realized savings that are much larger as a percentage of what they would pay ordering on their own. If a small library orders their cards independently, the price would have been 58 and 89 cents per card, respectively, for standard and fob cards. By participating in the consortial order, libraries can save between 59 and 67%.

In addition, the cost savings noted are on the product alone and do not reflect the staff savings realized by participating libraries by having InterLINK coordinate the purchase.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Participating libraries realize cost savings of up to 67% by purchasing cards on a consortial basis.
- Participating libraries were able to repurpose resources for other priorities.
- Smaller InterLINK libraries are able to benefit from participating in programs that provide economies of scale.

#### **Program: World Languages Collection Development**

In 2020, InterLINK continued to facilitate and manage a consortial purchase of selected shelf-ready world languages materials for participating libraries.

InterLINK contracted with Library Services Centre for the 2020 World Languages project.

Four InterLINK libraries participated, providing an overall budget of \$37,549 for the 2020 program.



In total, approximately 1200 items in eight languages were added to the world languages collections in the participating libraries.

While participating libraries realize savings on cataloguing and processing of world language materials, the most important aspect of the program is that it allows libraries without the capacity to process materials in languages other than English and the ability to have world language material collections fully accessible in their catalogues. These libraries also realize savings on staff time by having InterLINK coordinate the purchase.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Participating libraries realize cost savings by purchasing materials (including cataloguing and processing) on a consortial basis.
- Participating libraries were able to respond to community needs regarding world language collections in a timelier fashion.
- Participating libraries were able to repurpose resources for other priorities.

#### **Program: NewToBC**

NewToBC is a library settlement initiative that works with InterLINK libraries and other settlement service provider organizations to support the settlement and integration of newcomer immigrants in the Vancouver, Coast and Mountains region of British Columbia.

2020 saw the end of one contribution agreement and the beginning of another. The 2020-2025 contribution agreement is the first InterLINK has been awarded that will span 5 years, which is a testament to the quality of the program and its impact. Like other programs, 2020 saw the need to pivot NewToBC to a virtual platform. This move has been very successful and makes the goal of expanding the program beyond InterLINK's boundaries closer to being realized.

Key aspects of the NewToBC program in 2020:

NewToBC Website & Social Media Presence:

Launched in July 2013, the NewToBC website ([www.newtobc.ca](http://www.newtobc.ca)) serves as both a tool for library staff and staff at settlement service provider organizations as well as a key source of information for newcomer immigrants and refugees as they settle and integrate into their new communities.

In 2020, 26,819 unique users visited the website. Since the beginning of the current Contribution Agreement, the website has been visited by over 107,000 unique users.

NewToBC makes extensive use of social media to share information and connect with project stakeholders including newcomers, library staff, and staff at settlement service provider organizations.

In 2020, NewToBC's social media presence continued to grow, with over 14,000 new Facebook "likes" and nearly 2400 new Twitter followers. As of December 31, 2020, NewToBC had nearly 46,000 Facebook "likes" (far more than any library system in British Columbia).

Library Champions Project:

The Library Champions Project is an expansive volunteer community engagement initiative. Through the Library Champions Project, NewToBC recruits, trains, equips, and supports newcomer Library Champions who are then deployed into their communities to share information about public libraries and to spread awareness about settlement services with other newcomers.

Since its launch, over 1,500 Library Champions have received training (189 in 2020). In turn, those Champions have contacted over 87,000 newcomers to introduce library services.

The impact of the Library Champions Project is reflected in the following quotes from clients who participated in cycles of the project in 2020:

- *I learned so much about the library, did not expect all these services and programs for newcomers, but much more than that- I feel now that I have friends in Canada.*
- *The part I like the most is that I had a chance to share a similar goal of living in the place with people of different cultural backgrounds. The journey of settling in is not like what they say on the internet. In this project I met interesting people from different backgrounds, and they encouraged me.*
- *Everyone in this project is a hidden gem. I was so happy that this project allowed us to stay connected in the time of isolation. We someday should meet in person. I wouldn't believe that virtually we can bond so beautifully. This platform got us altogether, we are helping each other and other newcomers. I am really happy. This is my trusted friends circle.*
- *I like our meetings. Waited for our meeting weekly and loved it. Lockdown was so hard for me. Volunteering for me was very helpful. I wanted to help others and I got a chance. Would be so lovely to meet all of you in person at some time. The atmosphere you created here in these sessions was amazing. You made me relax. I felt confident how to approach other people. I am so thankful for this opportunity.*
- *The sessions of library champions are very helpful and unforgettable for me, especially in this special year. I'm grateful to you for your kindness and patience. It was a pleasure to meet you and other good ladies during the past three months. I will continue to recommend the library's information and resources to others in the future.*

#### Outcomes:

- Newcomers' settlement and integration into their communities is facilitated.
- Newcomers have better access to information about settlement services and library services.
- Library staff has increased understanding of the multicultural aspects of their communities.
- Outreach beyond individual newcomer groups takes place.
- Library staff has an increased understanding of the needs of newcomers.
- Library staff has an increased capacity to provide appropriate information, referrals and outreach to newcomers in the library.
- Knowledge transfer, sharing of best practices and relationship building occurs between library staff and settlement agencies.
- Library staff and settlement agencies have an increased understanding of each other's areas of expertise and how they can mutually meet the needs of newcomers.

#### Key Partnerships:

InterLINK's key partners in NewToBC are member libraries and Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada. NewToBC libraries continue to develop new relationships and build on existing relationships between libraries and immigrant service organizations in their communities. These organizations include, but are not restricted to, Immigrant Services Society of BC, MOSAIC, S.U.C.C.E.S.S., Neighbourhood Houses, public schools and post-secondary institutions.

#### Program: Books for Babies

The IslandLink Library Federation organizes this annual program. Board books, CDs and a carrying bag are part of a consortial purchase for libraries that offer a Books for Babies program. A number of InterLINK libraries take part, and InterLINK provides logistical assistance through shipping of the bags to all participating libraries in British Columbia.

#### Key Partnerships:

InterLINK's consortial purchasing projects and collaborative programs illustrate the partnership that exists among 18 diverse and independent public libraries and the ability for those partners to work towards consensus in order to provide benefit to all member libraries. While these programs are developed by InterLINK in response to Federation needs, they could be extended to any public library in

the province. The Books for Babies program is an excellent example of how federations cooperate to extend programs across the province.

### **Strategic Direction - Increasing Awareness of the Impact of Public Libraries**

#### **2020 Activities:**

- Support advocacy efforts of the Library Partners Advisory Group
- Continue to move forward on next steps with regard to Data Review Working Group recommendations, as approved.
- Engage working group and member libraries to develop and implement recommendations arising from Connectivity Study
- Plan and deliver Library Day at the Fair at PNE

#### **Report on 2020 Activities:**

##### **Program: Library Partners Advisory Group**

An ongoing priority for InterLINK is to foster closer connections to other provincial organizations that share with InterLINK the goal of a strong, resilient library sector. While working more closely with the Library Partners Advisory Group was highlighted in the 2020 Operations Plan, this also extends to focusing on more effective relationships with the Public Libraries Branch and the other library federations.

#### **Outcomes:**

- Better coordination and more access to staff development opportunities for all libraries.
- Better coordination and more access to cost saving consortial purchasing opportunities for all libraries.
- Library sector is better prepared to effectively act cooperatively.

##### **Program: Data Review Working Group**

In 2019, the InterLINK Administrators' Advisory Group established a Data Review Working Group to develop recommendations to the Libraries Branch regarding possible improvements to the Annual Survey. These recommendations were presented to the Branch in early 2020 and informed the Branch's own Annual Survey review process. The result was a modified annual survey for 2020 that streamlined the questions and reduced the workload for libraries.

#### **Outcomes:**

- InterLINK libraries report better satisfaction with the survey and amount of data collected.
- InterLINK participation on review process provides an example of effective federation support for provincial public library community.

##### **Program: Connectivity**

In 2019, the InterLINK Administrators' Advisory Group established a Connectivity Working Group to develop recommendations regarding how best the Federation could support member libraries regarding the state of connectivity across the Federation. This led to InterLINK contracting with the BC Libraries Cooperative to undertake an in depth analysis of the state of connectivity at InterLINK libraries and make recommendations. In 2020, the Ministry of Education provided funding to the Coop to work with libraries across the province on improving connectivity. InterLINK continues to engage with the Coop on this work.

#### **Outcomes:**

- InterLINK libraries have a point of comparison for connectivity issues.
- Member libraries have access to Coop funding and support.

### **Program: Library Day**

- Due to the cancellation of the PNE, the 2020 Library Day was also cancelled.

### **ALIGNMENT WITH MINISTRY PRIORITIES FOR FEDERATIONS**

The strong relationship that Public Library InterLINK maintains with the Libraries Branch is demonstrated throughout this report. InterLINK is committed to improving the services it provides and working with its partners across the province to extend those services beyond InterLINK's service area. This is demonstrated by InterLINK working with the Branch to support the ability of non-InterLINK library staff to attend the LLEAD program. In addition, the closer relationship developed among the province's federations has expanded the staff development offerings and consortial purchasing programs initiated by InterLINK to the member libraries of those federations.

The commitment of the InterLINK Board to deepening its knowledge and work around reconciliation is another example. The workshop "ReconciliACTION," presented in 2020 will now be part of the BC Library Association's reconciliation work. The Board's commitment to governance excellence, as evidenced by its annual self-evaluation and skills matrix exercises, reflects the Branch's emphasis on this work.

### **SUMMARY**

The work of the Federation continues to emphasize its role as one of utility and support. In 2020, Public Library InterLINK continued to deliver programs and services of value to members and demonstrated the Federation's commitment to its partnership with the Public Libraries Branch and the province's other library federations, along with other provincial library organizations. InterLINK continues to focus on its key mission of supporting resource sharing both within the federation and across the province, and offering staff development opportunities that build capacity and support libraries in their pursuit of excellent service to their communities.

Public Library InterLINK would like to take this opportunity to thank the Ministry of Education and the Minister for the financial support received from the Province in 2020.