



*Inspire together
& expand horizons*

2022 Provincial Operating Grant Report

Introduction

In service to its twenty member libraries in the east, central and boundary regions of the Kootenays, the KLF is often described as an umbrella organization that exists to offer support and connection for Trustees, Library Directors, staff and library services. The majority of the member libraries are rural and somewhat isolated from one another, particularly during winter months. The KLF service area encompasses a mountainous area of 49,647 square kms with approximately 188,333 people and a population density of just below 3 people per km.

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

- populations above 10,000: Castlegar, Cranbrook, Creston, Nelson and Penticton
- populations between 3,000-10,000: 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 Executive Committee meets five times a year. To ensure balanced representation from the twenty member libraries, the Executive Committee includes at least one Board member from each size library (small, medium, large), and each geographic region (East, West, Boundary).

The Library Director Advisory Group is represented with a non-voting position on the Executive Committee and joins each meeting. Saara Itkonen of the Creston Valley Library is the LDAG Chair and participated in meetings throughout the year.

KLF Strategic Plan

The objectives within our 2019-2023 plan serve as goalposts to guide and frame the Federation's work in 2022. Lingering effects of pandemic weariness continue, as well the need to adapt to larger social changes. One of these changes is the lack of volunteers. The objectives of our current strategic plan reflect an exciting brainstorming session with a number of specific actions whose relevance has changed. In late 2023/early 2024 when we begin work on a new strategic plan, we plan to develop a

framework strategic plan, which will allow the KLF to respond to the changing needs of the member libraries.

The ED and Board successfully maintained communication, engagement and commitment amongst the member libraries. We are successful in finding and implementing regular opportunities for collaboration.

KLF Grant Letter Outcomes:

The KLF grant award letter dated June 30, 2022 communicated that our operating grant funds were to facilitate:

1. Improved regional and local shared services delivery,
2. Improved access to professional learning opportunities for the library community, and
3. Service expansion beyond community borders.

With these three goals in mind, and coupled with the CRRG grant funds also received in 2022, the KLF is supporting member libraries through projects that aim to strengthen capacity and support recovery by:

- Ensuring people have access to more barrier-free, inclusive, and welcoming spaces,
- Preparing community libraries to be ready for emergencies through management and response plans. In turn, this will support citizens to respond to and recover from emergencies themselves, and
- Recognize that participation in training builds the capacity and resilience of Trustees and library staff, enabling both Trustees and library staff to maintain library services that support their community members.

Improved regional and local shared services delivery

Kootenay Libraries Accessibility Committee

To honour the Accessible BC Act, eighteen of the 20 member libraries have formed an Accessibility Committee with the KLF offering administrative support. The purpose of the Committee is to create an Accessibility Plan template for participating libraries. The Committee includes 4 members with disabilities and 3 volunteer community members. The Committee will hold it's first meeting in March 2023.

Employment lawyer access

Providing access to a fully-funded employment lawyer began with the pandemic, and access to this support is appreciated by the KLF member libraries. Boards and Library Directors consulted the lawyer about many topics over 2022. Common questions included employer duty to accommodate responsibilities, casual employment, employee privacy, exemptions of the Employment Standards Act, paid sick leave, temporary employment and vaccine policies.

Kootenay Libraries Programming

The KLF continued to offer a handful of online library programs for all member library patrons. Each library received ready-made and customizable promotional materials. Library staff volunteered to host or facilitate the programs, based on their interest in the topic. Speakers and authors included Metis poet Gregory Scofield, author Iona Wishaw of the Lane Winslow murder mystery series,

Wildlife biologist Dave Quinn, and climate activist Dr. Kyle Merritt. Dr. Merritt's talk was part of the BCLA Climate Action Week provincial program, where libraries raised awareness of climate change.

Read Local Book Club

The Read Local Book Club was conceived as a way to help libraries provide programming during the pandemic, connect readers from across the Kootenays as well as promote local authors (whose ability to do book tours and promotions were curtailed by the pandemic). With the return to in-person library programming, the Read Local Book Club wrapped up in early 2022.

Kootenay Teen Book Club

In early 2022, the KTBC organizers chose to pivot the program to include a recorded video element with the author, which is later shared with teen patrons. This ensures the teens can still connect with the authors, even if they do not attend the meetings. Four author interviews were held in 2022 and [can be found on YouTube](#).

Kootenay Teen Newspaper

Launched in September 2020, Kootenay Teen News continues as a library-published teen newspaper, aiming to be a community engagement tool and to provide a platform for fostering local youth voices. The purpose of this initiative is to connect a community of inquisitive and expressive teens, support media literacy, and increase the relevancy of library services among the teen population.

The five issues published in 2022 [can be read here](#).

The Editor of the newspaper, Melodie Rae Storey from the Nelson Public Library, secured a grant from the Columbia Basin Trust to provide a paid internship to youth creators/writers/thinkers who are Black/African Descent as a way to uncover and honour Black presence in the Kootenays. The newspaper will set them up with a mentorship with Kootenays artist Shayna Jones who will walk them through a research, exploration, creation process centered on the stories of Black life discovered through the Basin – past and present. The youth will then have the opportunity to publish their findings in the newspaper.

Improved access to professional learning opportunities for the library community

Response to KLF sponsored online learning continues to be muted, with several member libraries utilizing their CRRG funds for in-person training opportunities.

This also holds true for Trustees, who currently have limited interest and low participation rates with online training. In person training is entirely different - seventeen Trustees participated in a BCLTA governance workshop in Nelson on May 1/22. The session "(Re)Connecting: Sharing and celebrating effective public library governance" was ably and energetically led by Babs Kelly of BCLTA. The participating Trustees were a wonderful combination of new and experienced.

Library Directors and staff have communicated their interest in maintaining the Homeless Training Institute subscription as it combines core training with monthly webinars. The monthly webinars cover topics relevant to behaviour commonly experienced in public libraries and offer staff support in responding and coping.

As many member libraries hire students to run their annual Summer Reading Club program, SRC specific training was offered in June 2022 to 14 participants. The KLF appreciates Laura Zaytsoff (Children's, Youth, and Outreach Librarian at Castlegar & District Public Library) and Saara Itkonen (Library Director, Creston Valley Public Library) who lead the training.

Eventually, the screen saturation experienced as a result of the pandemic will dissipate. Recognizing this, the six BC Library Federations are preparing to meet the onboarding and continual learning needs public library staff need. Combining a portion of our respective CRRG funds, the Federations are collaborating to offer a suite of Core Skills Training courses and ongoing learning opportunities for the BC library community.

Service expansion beyond community borders

With a grant received by Public Libraries Branch, the KLF project managed the revision of the Privacy Guidelines for Public Libraries. The updated privacy guidelines and recommended training with a privacy lawyer will be of value to all BC public libraries.

The BC Library Federation Managers continue to meet regularly with the goal of piloting and implementing collaborative library services, programs and learning opportunities for all our member libraries.

By pooling together some of our CRRG funds, we are collaborating to offer onboarding training for all library staff, and virtual programming for the patrons of our member libraries. The Federation Managers continue our shared commitment to expand services beyond the borders of our member library communities and across federations. For more information on these two initiatives, please refer to the KLF's CRRG Progress Report.

Conclusion:

In 2022 the KLF returned to in person meetings. Our AGM and Spring meetings were held in Nelson, and our Fall meeting was in Cranbrook. Library Board members expressed the pandemic and KLF Zoom meetings left them feeling disconnected. The feeling of being connected to other library Trustees has returned, along with opportunities for networking, over the course of a day of meetings.

Monthly LDAG meetings continue as they provide an opportunity to connect and group problem solve.

The KLF thanks the Public Libraries Branch and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs for their continued financial support. The priorities of the Public Library Branch are shared by the KLF.

Respectfully submitted by



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