

# **Programs, Partnerships & Placemaking: A Community Development Framework for the Community-Centred Library**



**Margery C. Ramsay Scholarship Report  
2010  
By Catherine Killmier**

## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank and acknowledge the generous support of the Library Board of Victoria, the State Library of Victoria, and Whitehorse Manningham Regional Library Corporation.

I would also like to thank the staff and libraries that hosted my study tour for generously sharing their time, resources, and knowledge of community-led library practices and models:

Diana Guinn – Vancouver Public Library  
Pilar Martinez – Edmonton Public Library  
Melanie St-Onge – Edmonton Public Library  
Andre Gagnon – Regina Public Library  
Wendy Sinclair – Regina Public Library  
Magdalena Vanderkooey – Toronto Public Library  
Tracey Jones – Halifax Public Library  
Ken Williment – Halifax Public Library  
Anne Murphy – Mississauga Public Library  
Eric Stackhouse – Pictou-Antigonish Public Library  
Trecia Schell – Pictou-Antigonish Public Library  
Dana Kitzes – Project for Public Spaces  
Cynthia Nikitin – Project for Public Spaces

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## Introduction

Public libraries are extremely important to the communities they serve. They provide free access to information and technology, they create better informed communities, they promote lifelong learning and literacy in the community, and they build connections between individuals and groups (State Library of Victoria, 2005). Public libraries are increasingly seen as community hubs where people of different ages, cultures, and backgrounds can meet in a safe environment to exchange ideas and information. They build social capital by bringing people together from across the social strata, forging greater understanding of other perspectives and cultures, offering a safe space that embraces diversity, and providing connection into the community for people who are otherwise excluded (State Library of Victoria, 2005).

The community development aspect of public libraries is a vital function. Libraries engage with their communities through providing programs, often in partnership with other organisations, in safe, welcoming spaces. These themes, Programs, Partnerships and Placemaking, provide an entry to explore how libraries connect with the communities they serve. Public libraries provide a myriad of programs for their communities for all ages and stages of life. They forge partnerships with other community organisations to deliver some of these programs, and are increasingly seen as a community “Place”. Libraries offer people a “third place”, separate from home or work, and are anchors of community life, facilitating creative interactions between people (Oldenberg, 1991). The library as Place ties in with the concept of Placemaking, which is an increasingly important concept for libraries, to ensure they remain destinations of choice. Placemaking capitalises on a local community’s assets, inspiration, and potential, ultimately creating good public spaces that promote people’s health, happiness, and wellbeing (Project for Public Spaces, 2012). Placemaking involves a collaborative community process where stakeholders work with local communities to revitalise public spaces, and can be seen as a community development approach to the concept of Place.

In 2008, a consortia of four Canadian public libraries collaborated on the Working Together Project to develop a Community-Led Libraries Toolkit. The libraries involved in the project were the Vancouver Public Library, the Regina Public Library, the Toronto Public Library, and the Halifax Public Library. These libraries developed a community-led model for service delivery that focuses on working collaboratively with the community to build relationships and partnerships to better understand the community's needs. This approach ensures that socially excluded community members, as well as socially mainstream community members, are represented in library planning, service delivery and policy development. In 2010, the Edmonton Public Library also developed a Community-Led Service Philosophy Toolkit, due to the success of the Working Together Project. While researching libraries and community, it became apparent that a number of Canadian libraries have also embraced the concept of Placemaking, and have undertaken Placemaking training with the Project for Public Spaces in New York. To investigate how public libraries are using these concepts, a study tour was undertaken to Vancouver, Edmonton, Regina, Toronto, Mississauga, Halifax, Pictou-Antigonish, and New York as part of the State Library of Victoria's Ramsay Scholarship.



The purpose of the study tour was to view the community-led model in action and undertake Placemaking training. The learning from the tour was then synthesised into a community development framework and toolkit for use by Whitehorse Manningham Libraries at the new Doncaster Library, which is located in the Manningham City Square (MC<sup>2</sup>) Community Hub. The MC<sup>2</sup> building co-locates a number of cultural, social and community facilities and services to meet the growing needs of the community (Manningham City Council, 2012). These include:

- A state-of-the-art library
- An art gallery
- Café facilities
- Doncare (Social Support Services)
- Chinese Community Social Services
- Manningham Community Health Services
- Interact Australia (Disability Services)
- YMCA
- Family services, childcare, maternal and child health, and preschool facilities
- Underground car parking for up to 200 cars and 190 surface parking spaces
- Civic Forecourt and landscaped outdoor spaces
- Transport hub with bus interchange and shared bicycle/pedestrian facilities

The community development framework will be useful when creating programs in partnership with the other organisations located in the MC<sup>2</sup> Community Hub, and in identifying new opportunities for community collaboration, engagement, and development. This framework could also be useful for other public libraries that are interested in using community development principles to engage their communities. (See Appendix A: Projects, Partnerships and Placemaking: A Community Development Framework and Toolkit).

## Background

Libraries and community development are a natural fit, and libraries are increasingly recognising the importance of using community development principles to engage with their communities. A number of reports and projects have been undertaken to explore these concepts. Since the emergence of new technologies, public libraries have been reassessing their place in society and how they can remain relevant to the communities they serve. The UK Council for Museums, Archives and Libraries produced recommendations for public libraries based on an eighteen-month research project into public libraries and social inclusion (Muddiman Durrani, Dutch et. al., 2000). The report, titled *Open to All? The Public Library and Social Exclusion*, outlines the problems facing public libraries, and how they can best serve excluded communities and social groups. The findings suggest that although public libraries are updating their policies, services and procedures, they are not necessarily focusing on socially excluded groups and communities who still face barriers to library use. Although there have been attempts to address these barriers, more work needs to be done in the area of inclusion because libraries traditionally have priorities and resourcing strategies that work in favour of existing library users.

The UK report states that public libraries need to change from passive organisations that provide access to materials and resources, to proactive organisations with a concern for social justice. They need to adopt an interventionist and educational focus to tackle social exclusion. Public libraries need to be more responsive to socially excluded groups by adopting resourcing strategies that prioritise the needs of excluded communities, by training staff to encompass a more socially responsive and educative approach, and by developing community-based approaches to library services through consultation and partnership with local communities. The report concludes that at present, public libraries are only superficially “open to all”, but if they transform the way they operate, they have the potential to play a major role in tackling social exclusion. This report informs the Working Together Project and resulting community-led toolkit.

The State Library of Victoria (SLV) has commissioned a number of reports about libraries and community. In 2005, the SLV commissioned the *Libraries Building Communities* report to outline the impact public libraries have on their communities. The study shows that public libraries make vital contributions to their communities through providing free access to computer and information technology resources, creating better informed communities, promoting lifelong learning and literacy, and by building connections between individuals, groups and the government. The report finds that although public libraries are valued by the community, they could assume a greater role in community strengthening. The report also discusses how public libraries can promote greater social inclusion and provides examples of innovative Victorian public library programs and services. The report concludes by stating that public libraries need to work in partnership with other community, government, and business stakeholders to tackle the problems they face, and optimise the benefits they can offer to their communities.

The SLV followed up the 2005 report with further qualitative research into five sectors of the community that were identified as “hard to reach” for public libraries. The follow up report titled *Connecting with the Community* (2008) outlines research undertaken with socially excluded groups such as Indigenous Australians, disadvantaged young people, Horn of Africa communities, low-income families, and vulnerable learners.

In order to quantify the value public libraries bring to their communities, the SLV produced *Dollars, Sense and Public Libraries* (2011) which outlines the socio-economic value of Victorian public libraries. The report found that for every dollar spent on public libraries, the community receives at least three point six times as much value in return. Public library users acknowledged that if the same services were provided by a commercial provider, the cost would be ten times the present cost per capita spent on library funding. The report also found that around half of all Victorians are public library members and that they value their local library as a safe, welcoming space, promoting lifelong learning and literacy. The report concludes that public library services are valued by the communities they serve and provide excellent

return on investment for local and state government, but that they require continued funding to meet population growth and evolving community needs.

The research into libraries and community inspired the study tour to investigate the Working Together Project and to explore how Placemaking principles can be used by public libraries. It also informs the resulting Projects, Partnerships and Placemaking Community Development Framework and toolkit. (See Appendix A).

## **A Community-Led Service Model: The Working Together Project**

The Working Together Project (2008) was initiated by the Vancouver Public Library to explore issues of social inclusion and barriers to public library use. The project was run over four years with funding from the Office of Human Resources and Social Development Canada. A tender was put out to Canadian public libraries and the Halifax Public Library, the Toronto Public Library and the Regina Public Library were chosen to participate in the project. The four library services collaborated to develop a community-led toolkit for use by Canadian Public Libraries.

Each library service employed Community Development Librarians to consult with the community to discover how public libraries were perceived. The Community Development Librarians discovered that although libraries think of themselves as welcoming, many people still feel unwelcome, and believe that the library is not a place for them. Often these are the very people that could benefit the most from the resources the library has to offer.

The project also identified barriers to library use such as the impact of fines and rules, and the increasing focus on information technology, which excludes many users. The project identified that current library models do not work for many socially excluded people and that a new, community-led model that focuses on people rather than policies and procedures is required. This model would transform the way public libraries operate, and would ultimately benefit all sectors of the community.

The Community-Led Libraries toolkit developed by the Working Together Project includes the following tools:

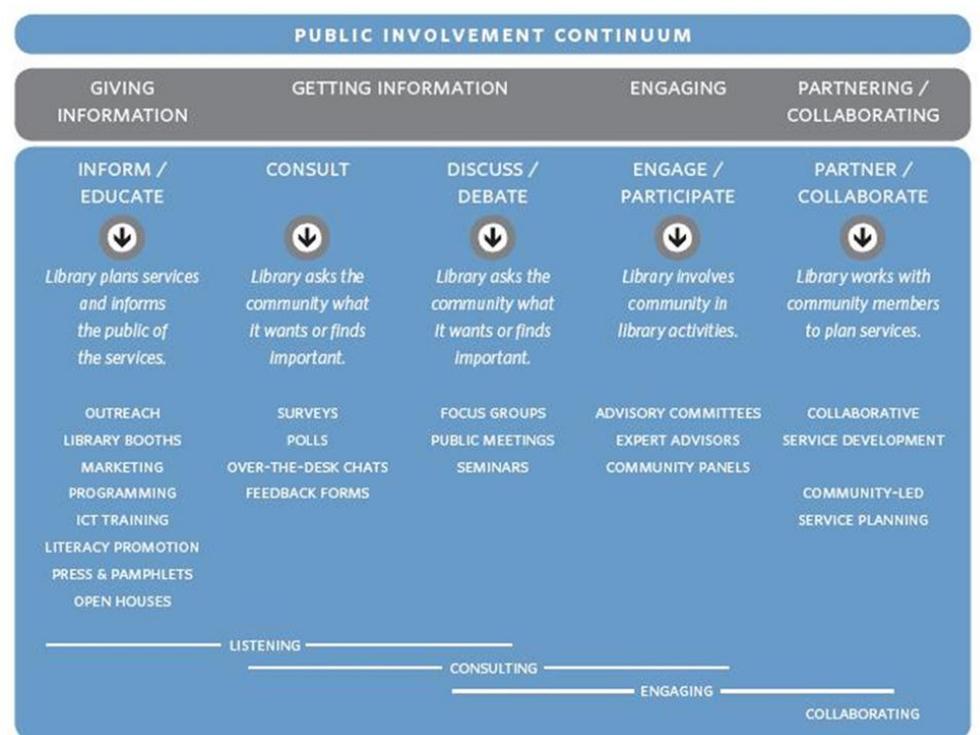
- Community Entry
- Community Mapping
- Relationship Building
- Partnerships
- Program Planning
- Computer Training
- Collection Development
- Customer Service
- Policy Development
- Staff Development
- Service Evaluation

## **Community Development in a Library Context**

Community development in a library context encompasses a philosophical and practical shift from being a service provider for our communities to being a partner with our communities in service development and provision. It focusses on a shift away from passive consultation to actively engage the community in service prioritisation and planning. The Community-Led Service Planning Model advocates a community engagement shift from traditional library outreach activities that inform and educate the community, to active partnerships and collaboration with the community. This emphasises the community as expert in what they want and need rather than library staff, and shifts the emphasis from our staff to our communities as the key initiators and drivers of service innovation and enhancement.

The Working Together Project developed a Public Involvement Continuum for use by libraries. It is useful tool for thinking about the amount of involvement the community has in service planning and delivery. The Public Involvement Continuum moves from

traditional outreach activities such as informing and educating the community through to consulting, discussing, engaging, and finally partnering and collaborating with the community. This continuum is featured in the Programs, Partnerships and Placemaking Community Development Framework and Toolkit. (See Appendix A).



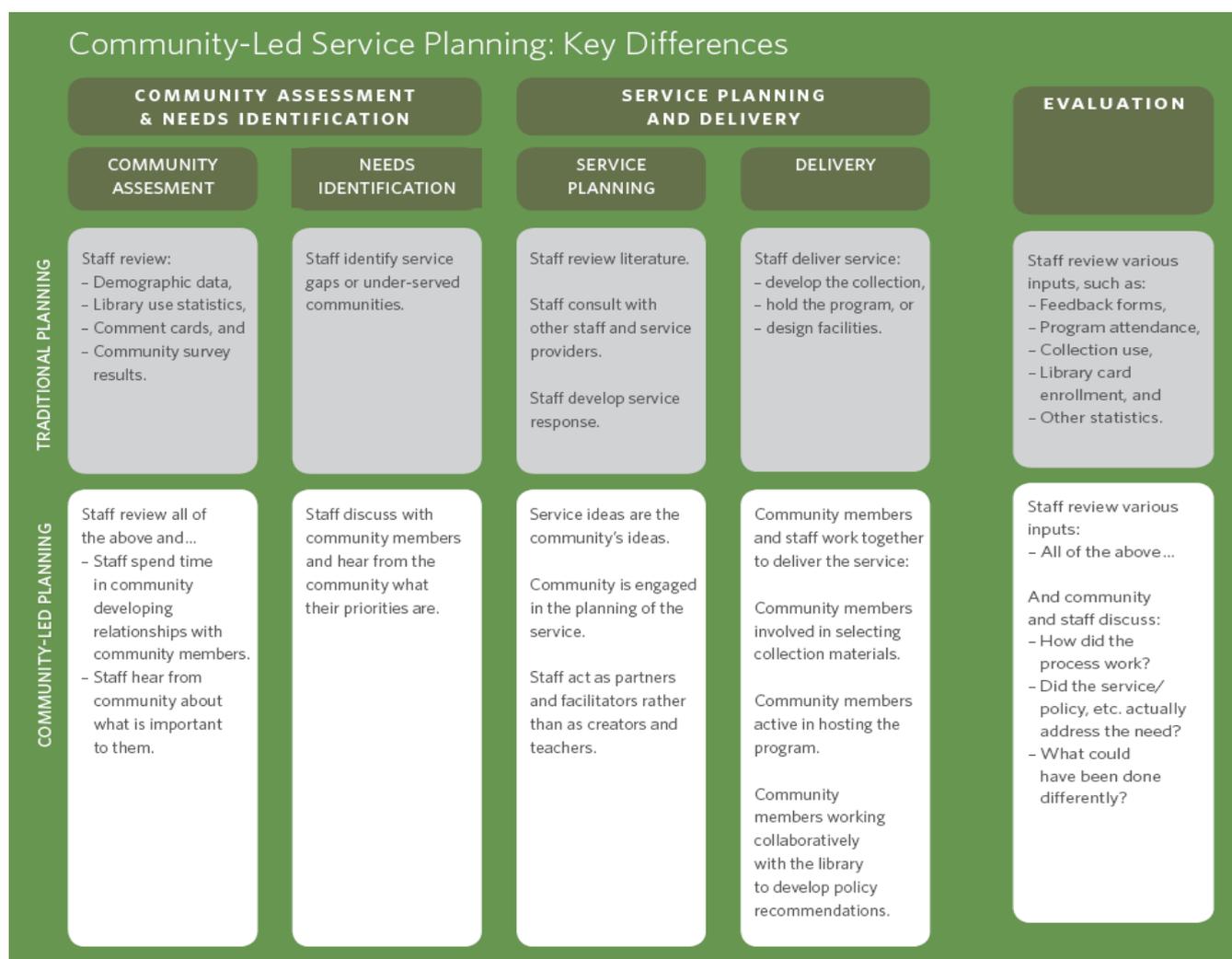
Source: Working Together Project (2008)

## Community-Led Service Planning

The Working Together Project created a model that outlines the differences between traditional library planning and community-led library planning. It shifts the emphasis away from library staff as experts on what the community needs to asking the community about their needs and aspirations, and involving them in the planning process. It is about building relationships with local communities and service providers to better understand how libraries can work with communities. It also identifies barriers to library use such as fines and rules, access to buildings and services, library jargon, feeling unwelcome, or feeling that the library has nothing to

offer them. By building relationships with local communities and being visible in the community, libraries can begin to break down some of these barriers to library usage.

The Community-Led Service Planning model involves community assessment and needs identification, service planning and delivery, and evaluation. It is an extension of traditional library planning methods to include community development tools.



Source: Working Together Project (2008)

## Community-Led Library Visits

### Vancouver Public Library

The Vancouver Public Library (VPL) has twenty-two branches across the city, some in areas of very high need. It is a culturally and linguistically diverse city with 52% of residents speaking a language other than English (Statistics Canada, 2011). There is also a large homeless population in Vancouver, as the climate is more temperate than other areas of Canada.

To address some of these social issues, VPL implemented the Community-Led Service Planning model across the library service, after participating in the Working Together Project. They employed Community Development Librarians and appointed a community-led service committee to disseminate the model and embed the philosophy across the region. The community-led committee provides an advisory role on library policies and procedures to ensure that they do not provide barriers to library usage by marginalised or socially excluded community members.



The Central Library building has nine floors, seven of which are occupied by the library. Libraries in Canada are often havens for homeless people who are seeking respite from extreme weather.

VPL involve the community in planning for collections, services, and programs. They seek community input through advisory groups who are involved in redesigning library spaces, selecting collection materials, and addressing barriers to usage such as

finer and rigid rules. They also build relationships with marginalised community members such as homeless people or sex workers, through partnerships with community service providers. These community members often feel intimidated by entering a library so VPL arranged after hours visits where marginalised groups can attend the library, gain membership without having to provide an address, and share their stories.

VPL also has the Carnegie Branch that is operated in partnership with the Vancouver Community Services Justice Department and serves marginalised communities. Carnegie Library patrons do not need to provide an address to join and are not charged fines for overdue items. The Carnegie Branch is located with other service providers that offer free meals and showers, as well as free learning, literacy, health, and social programs to homeless people and the low-income community.

Facilities in the centre include:

- Carnegie Library
- Cafeteria
- Computer room
- Seniors' lounge
- Adult learning and literacy centre
- Art and recreation programs
- Weight room
- Oppenheimer Park Facility
- Gallery
- Pool Room
- Games Room
- Street Program
- Homeless Outreach Services

The Carnegie Library and Community Centre is an excellent example of community partnerships working to assist marginalised communities overcome social exclusion.

## Edmonton Public Library

The Edmonton Public Library (EPL) has seventeen branches across the city, and serves a large number of multicultural communities. EPL was not part of the Working Together Project, but created their own Community-Led Service Philosophy Toolkit (2010) after the success of the Working Together Project. The toolkit outlines how each position within the library can contribute to a community-led service philosophy, from senior managers to library assistants. It also outlines ways to start community development work in a library setting, how to build relationships with individuals, groups, and other service providers, and the importance of communication and evaluation.



Left: The recently built Lois Hole Library, which was designed as a green building.

Right: The Abbottsfield Library. Many libraries in Canada feature fish tanks and open fire places.

EPL appointed Community Development Librarians to work in each branch to explore issues of social exclusion and barriers to library usage. All library staff are empowered to waive fines and fees for patrons in an effort to minimise some of these barriers. The Community Development Librarians deliver traditional library programs and develop innovative partnerships with community service providers. They have both formal written partnerships and informal verbal partnerships that are managed by each branch.

Library staff deliver programs such as early literacy, computer training, or job seeking, both in the library and out in the community. EPL also provide teen mentoring programs for at risk youth and reading buddy programs for children to promote literacy. EPL run an innovative program in partnership with a local women's prison, where women who have children can read stories and have them taped, so that their children can hear the stories read by their mothers at home. They also run programs in a local men's prison such as book groups and discussion circles. These programs help with community reintegration once inmates are released from prison, as they already have ties to the library and think of it as a welcoming, non-judgemental place.

### Regina Public Library

The Regina Public Library (RPL) has nine branches across the city, and serves a large indigenous population. RPL was part of the Working Together Project and appointed Community Development Librarians for the duration of the project, but did not continue with the model once the funding finished. Although the project was successful, RPL were unable to continue with the community-led approach to service delivery due to lack of ongoing funding and support for the model. RPL still work with their community and conduct community consultation, but have not implemented the community-led approach to service delivery across the library service. They conduct a wide range of literacy and learning programs including storytimes, study skills, writing workshops, and job seeking skills.



Connaught Library



Sherwood Village Library

Many of the library buildings in Canada were built during the mid-20<sup>th</sup> century and are being refurbished.

Many libraries also feature community art installations.

RPL also undertook Placemaking training with the Project for Public Spaces, but were unable to implement the Placemaking principles at the time of the study tour due to lack of funding and support. This highlights the need for ongoing support from the library service to implement both the community-led approach to service delivery and Placemaking principles.

### **Toronto Public Library**

The Toronto Public Library (TPL) has ninety-eight branches across the city and is the world's largest urban public library system. TPL serves a diverse population with areas of very high need. TPL were part of the Working Together Project and appointed a Community Development Coordinator to work with Community Development Librarians across the region. They have successfully implemented the Community-Led Service Planning model throughout the library service. TPL make extensive use of community mapping due to the diverse demographics and large geographic area they service. They have a planning department with mapping software that can map the different branch service areas. Community mapping is done by the individual branch teams, who brainstorm community assets and place dots on the maps to indicate community organisations, service providers, and community assets. The teams then discuss how to build relationships with the community and develop programs and partnerships with service providers.



St. James Town Library recently served as a community refuge, partnering with service providers to set up a Red Cross station and emergency accommodation in the building, after public housing in the area burnt down.

TPL have partnerships with a number of community service providers including homeless shelters, migrant and refugee services, neighbourhood action networks, education providers, and youth organisations. Some libraries have a settlement worker stationed at the branch to help new immigrants integrate into the community and provide advice on housing, employment, language learning, and schools.

TPL deliver a wide range of programs and events both in the library and in community settings, including readers and writers in residence, entrepreneurs in residence, lectures on popular topics, health and wellbeing seminars, youth mentoring programs, and classes and workshops on a myriad of topics.



The refurbished Cedarbrae Library features an interactive children's area and comfortable reading spaces.

TPL are currently involved in a youth-led initiative with the City of Toronto and other funding partners to build a youth space at the Malvern Branch. The SPOT (Success Power Opportunity Teamwork) will be a multi-media youth centre with a performance space, recording studio, programs space, youth lounge, and outdoor multi-purpose plaza with a reading area. Local youth are involved in the decision making process throughout the design and building of the SPOT, and it is governed by a board of directors comprised of Malvern youth and volunteer board members. The youth who use the centre will have a say in how the space is used and what programs and events are run. The SPOT is an example of an extremely successful, community-led, collaborative project that is being developed to meet the needs of at risk youth in the local community. Local youth chose the name of the centre and will choose the furniture, layout, design and use of the space.

## Halifax Public Library

The Halifax Public Library (HPL) has fourteen branches across the region, some in rural areas of Nova Scotia. HPL was part of the Working Together Project and has successfully implemented the Community-Led Service Planning model across the library service. HPL employed a Community Development Coordinator to work with the Library Branch Managers and deliver a program of staff training in how to use the model. The model is now embedded in all areas of library service operation, and staff have ownership over the process. Extensive staff training and support were integral to the successful integration of the community-led service model across the organisation.

HPL use community mapping to identify opportunities to build relationships and partnerships with the community. They approach community service providers to connect with hard to reach communities and ask them about their needs and aspirations. HPL deliver a wide range of programs and events that are developed in consultation with the community. These include reading, writing, and literacy programs, art, craft and musical programs, local history and genealogy programs, educational, environmental, and social programs, health and wellness programs, employment and financial programs, children's, teens, and parenting programs, and computer classes. Many of these programs and events are run in partnership with educational institutions, cultural institutions, and community service providers. HPL is an excellent example of the successful integration of the Community-Led Service Planning model across the library service, to foster social inclusion and community capacity building.



The Spring Garden Road Memorial Library was built in the 1950s to honour Halifax's war casualties.  
A new Halifax Central Library will be built nearby after extensive community consultation.

## **Placemaking**

The Project for Public Spaces (PPS) is a not-for-profit planning, design and educational organisation dedicated to promoting the concept of Placemaking. Placemaking promotes health, happiness, and wellbeing through capitalising on a community's assets to create good public spaces. Placemaking is a collaborative community process where stakeholders work with local communities to revitalise existing public spaces, or plan new community places.

### **The Power of 10**

PPS created the “Power of Ten”, which is a concept used to start the Placemaking process. It involves the idea that any great place needs to offer at least ten different things to do or reasons to be there, regardless of whether it is a small or large space. These can include a place to sit, books to read, art to view, music to hear, food to eat, a class to attend, or people to meet. The “Power of Ten” is a simple tool to begin thinking about what draws people to visit a place, and what entices them to stay.

### **The 11 Principles of Placemaking**

PPS created the Eleven Principles of Placemaking to help transform public spaces into vibrant community places. These principles are:

1. The community is the expert
2. Create a place not a design
3. Look for partners
4. You can see a lot just by observing
5. Have a vision
6. Start with petunias: lighter, quicker, cheaper
7. Triangulate
8. They always say “it can't be done”
9. Form supports function
10. Money is not the issue
11. You are never finished

The Power of 10 and the 11 Principles of Placemaking demonstrate that the Placemaking process does not have to be difficult or expensive. It involves observing how people currently use a space and consulting them about their experiences. It can be as simple as adding comfortable furniture to make indoor or outdoor reading areas, or using pot plants to brighten up an area. It is about ensuring people have multiple things to do in a space that will keep them returning. Placemaking supports the concept of the library as the community lounge room and the anchor of community life.

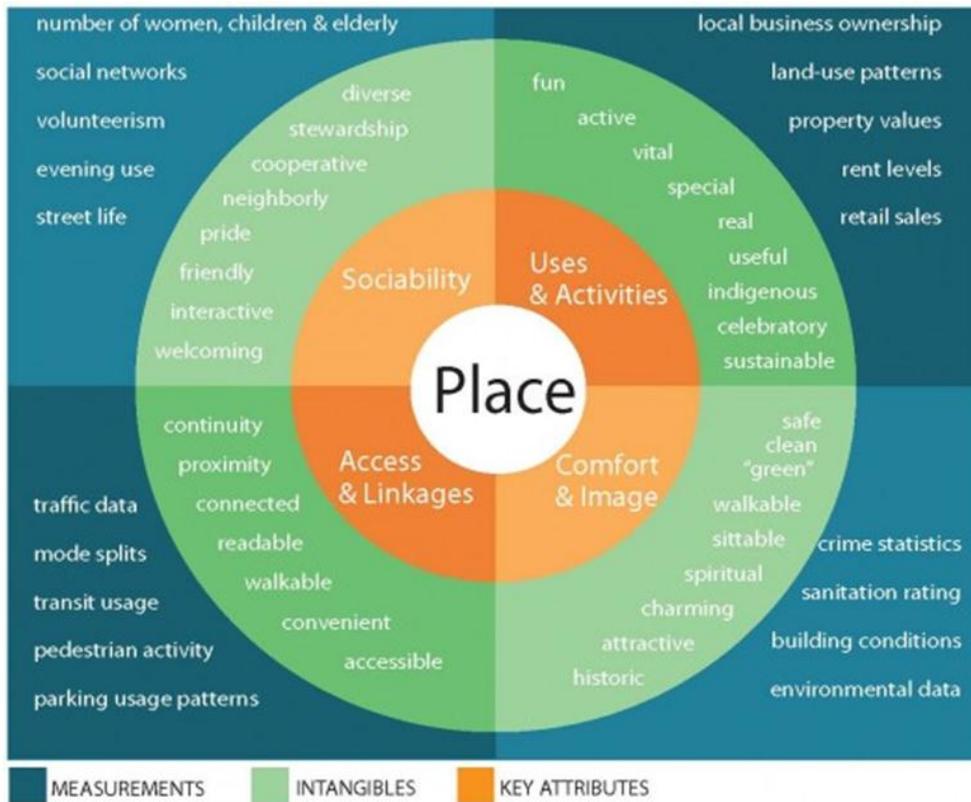
### **The Place Diagram**

PPS designed the Place Diagram as a tool to assess the success of a place. The diagram outlines the key attributes of a place that make it functional and attractive to the community. The four key attributes are uses and activities, comfort and image, access and linkages, and sociability. These are measured by both intangible and tangible data.

The four key attributes can be measured by observing how the community behave in a space and what activities they engage in while there. It involves looking at an area critically, with the perspective of someone who is visiting for the first time. Each of the measurements in each category should be reviewed in existing spaces, and considered when planning new spaces. Community consultation should be undertaken using the key attributes to gauge how the community view the space. This can be done through interviews, focus groups, or surveys to identify what is working well, what could be improved, and what the community want or need out of the space.

These Placemaking tools can be used by communities and stakeholders to revitalise an existing space or to create a vibrant new place. The Place Diagram is featured in the Programs, Partnerships and Placemaking Community Development Framework and Toolkit. (See Appendix A).

## The Place Diagram



Source: Project for Public Spaces [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)

PPS has expanded upon its Placemaking tools through a number of publications. *The Great Neighborhood Book* (2007) outlines the importance of neighbourhoods in cities, towns, and suburbs. It states that neighbourhoods are where people's daily lives unfold and where communities can come together to tackle problems. It also outlines strategies for implementing PPS' Placemaking tools in local neighbourhoods. Real life examples are given through the addition of case studies and successful neighbourhood Placemaking examples. Public libraries are a vital neighbourhood asset and an anchor for the community.

The *How to Turn a Place Around* (2010) handbook is an overview of PPS' Placemaking training workshop. It lists the principles of creating great places with examples, and goes through tools to evaluate public spaces. It also discusses how to improve places through implementing Placemaking strategies. It outlines data collection techniques on how people use a space through behaviour and activity

mapping, counting and tracking people's movements, and surveys or interviews. The handbook emphasises that the focus should be on the importance of people rather than buildings or institutions, as the key to turning a space into a place.

Placemaking is a community-led concept for creating great public spaces that can be adapted for use by libraries. PPS has worked with a number of public libraries on revitalisation projects and new library design projects, including the Regina Public Library (who had not incorporated Placemaking principles at the time of the study tour), the Mississauga Public Library, the Pictou-Antigonish Public Library, and the New York Public Library.

### **Mississauga Public Library**

Mississauga is a city located on the shores of Lake Ontario in the western part of the Greater Toronto Area. The Mississauga Public Library (MPL) worked with PPS and utilised Placemaking principles to revitalise their libraries and civic precinct. Through a series of community consultations, PPS assisted MPL to identify a number of ways the Central Library could be revitalised and turned into a community destination. The City Hall Square and Central Library Square were combined to create one large space, with the library opening onto the redesigned area, with the outside space functioning as an extension to the library. This created space for outdoor reading rooms, children's spaces, performance areas, games areas, and spaces for meetings, movies, markets and storytelling. The area also includes gardens, an outdoor skating rink, and recreation areas including a teahouse and water feature. The concept of bringing the outside in and the inside out is one of PPS' Placemaking principles for revitalising a public space.

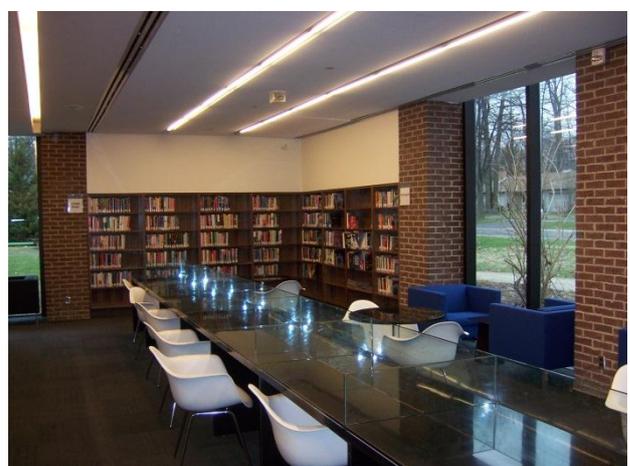
Placemaking enabled the Mississauga Central Library and Civic Precinct to develop into a vital community destination with year-round programs, people-friendly settings, and social and economic rejuvenation. This is an example of PPS' Place Diagram revitalising the space through increasing uses and activities, comfort and image, access and linkages, and sociability, which are central to the Placemaking concept.

PPS held a number of workshops with library staff across MPL to create a Placemaking vision for the library service. Staff were encouraged to use the Power of 10, the 11 Principles of Placemaking, and the Place Diagram to identify the key features of each library area that would draw the community to the space and encourage them to stay. These included library programs, comfortable seating, natural light, other community services, and food and beverages. Many of MPL's libraries were refurbished using Placemaking principles.



Above: The refurbished Central Library (left) with comfortable furniture and indoor plants designed to create a welcoming space, and the Courtney Park Library (right) that also functions as a secondary school library.

Below: The recently refurbished Port Credit Library (left) and the Lorne Park Library (right) feature fun, interactive children's spaces and lots of reading or studying space.



## Pictou-Antigonish Library

The Pictou-Antigonish Library's People's Place Project (2010) used Placemaking principles to design a new library for the town of Antigonish in rural Nova Scotia. Staff from the Pictou-Antigonish Library (PAR) undertook Placemaking training with PPS, and were committed to using the principles in the design of their new library. The project was called "The People's Place" after the original library that was founded in the area during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The original library began as a community collaboration between the church and local university, with the aim of giving people the opportunity to educate themselves. The library became known as "The People's School" and then "The People's Library", which was the inspiration for the name "People's Place", and a reminder of the important function libraries play in community education.



The People's Place Library features local community art throughout the building and lots of reading, meeting, or study spaces. Source: [www.peoplesplace.ca/](http://www.peoplesplace.ca/)

The Building Committee for the People's Place project held extensive formal and informal community consultations called "Placemaking Sessions" across the County. The feedback gathered from the community and the ideas generated in the sessions were incorporated into the plans for the new library. The community articulated that they wanted an environmentally sustainable building, with local public artworks incorporated into the design, facilities for adult learning and literacy classes, community health services, a community kitchen, and community meeting spaces. The People's Place project managed to incorporate all of the ideas from the community Placemaking Sessions, which gave the community a sense of ownership from the beginning.



The People's Place Library runs learning and literacy programs for all ages.

Source: [www.peoplesplace.ca/](http://www.peoplesplace.ca/)

The People's Place Library hosts a Community Access Program, which provides free computer training for the community by volunteers, who are usually youth interns. They also run an Adopt-A-Library Literacy Program, which is a partnership with the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to promote literacy among young people to prevent crime. The library hosts an Adult Learning Association that runs literacy and learning classes, and Health Connections, which is an outreach service from the local hospital. Local not-for-profit community groups can use the multipurpose meeting spaces in the library at no cost and the space has become a community-gathering place. Although the library was not complete at the time of the study tour, it has since opened and is a successful example of community-led Placemaking principles in action.



The People's Place Library.

Source: [www.peoplesplace.ca/](http://www.peoplesplace.ca/)

## New York Public Library

PPS worked with the New York Public Library (NYPL) to revitalise Bryant Park and extend the library outside the building. The result was an outdoor reading room, cafe, restaurant, markets, fashion shows, concerts, movie screenings, a carousel, chess and backgammon boards, chairs, tables, and plenty of meeting spaces. There is a myriad of things to do, places to sit, food to eat, and things to see, in and around the NYPL. The majestic library lions adorn the front of the building, while Bryant Park acts as an informal back yard. It is a successful example of Placemaking in action through access and linkages, comfort and image, uses and activities, and sociability.



The New York Public Library – Placemaking in action.

Source: [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)

## **Conclusion: The Community-Centred Library**

Libraries are integral to the communities they serve. They are important community anchors that provide safe, welcoming destinations for all. Libraries can challenge issues such as social exclusion by being responsive to marginalised as well as mainstream communities. Community-centred libraries are focused on people rather than processes, as people are the reason libraries exist. Community programs, partnerships, and Placemaking are important ways to engage with communities to ensure libraries remain relevant both now and in the future.

The study tour provided access to a rich array of innovative initiatives, planning frameworks, and models of community-centred library practice. Elements of this work, together with training undertaken with the Project for Public Spaces in New York, have led to the development of a Community Development Framework and Toolkit as a resource for Australian public libraries. The Framework and Toolkit utilises an Action Research Approach and includes tools to guide users through the process of developing a more community-centred library.

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## **Appendix A:**

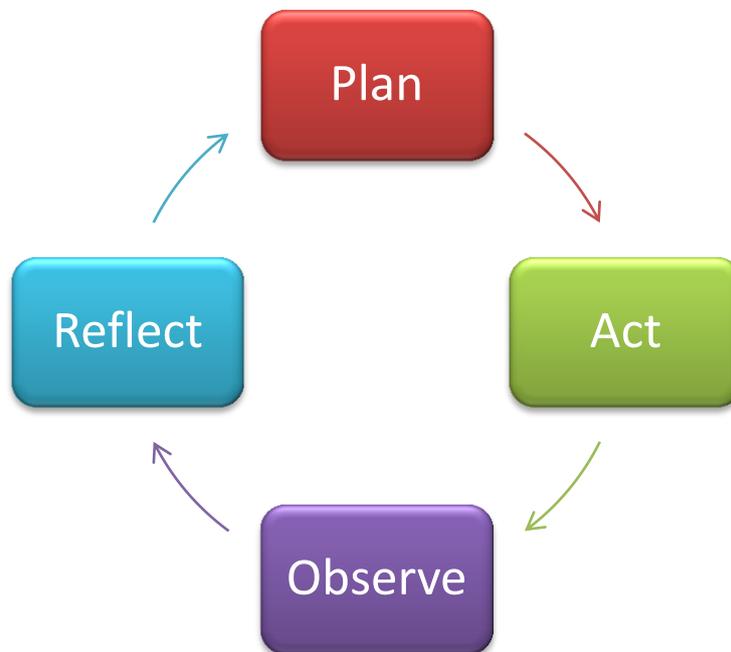
### **Programs, Partnerships & Placemaking: A Community Development Framework & Toolkit**

This framework and toolkit were developed as a result of undertaking a study tour of Libraries in Canada and attending Placemaking training in New York through the State Library of Victoria's Margery C. Ramsay Scholarship. The study tour provided the opportunity to access a variety of toolkits, frameworks, and examples of best practice, and elements of these have been adapted and applied within an Action Research Model.

# Programs, Partnerships & Placemaking: A Community Development Framework & Toolkit



## Action Research Model



This Community Development Framework and Toolkit is based on an Action Research Model. Action research is a cyclical process of planning, acting, observing, reflecting and then re-planning in light of the knowledge gained through the cycle (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2005). It is an ongoing process that uses information gleaned from the community during each cycle to shape future service planning.

The action research model allows a library service to refine its programs and services after reflection on community feedback. It is the basis for the community development framework to ensure ongoing service evaluation that meets the needs, wants, and aspirations of the community.

The planning phase of the model involves community mapping, while the acting phase involves actively engaging with the community. The observing phase involves both qualitative and quantitative evaluation, while the reflecting phase involves revising and replanning to ensure the process is community-centred.



## Plan

- Community Asset Mapping
  - Internal: Region Wide/Branch
  - External: Geographical/Functional

Asset mapping is an important community development planning tool. It involves identifying the organisations and services located in a specific area and assists with identifying potential community partners. Asset mapping can identify both the geographical features of an area as well as the social and economic features. It is an asset based approach to community development that capitalises on a community's strengths rather than weaknesses, and is a way to build social capital and community capacity (Asset-Based Community Development Institute, 2012).

Asset maps can be both internal and external. It is important to conduct an internal asset map to capitalise on the strengths of an organisation. Internal asset mapping can be conducted across a whole library region, or concentrate on a specific library branch. It involves identifying what the library has to offer the community including current programs, services, and facilities, and is a base upon which to build future community relationships, library services, and community partnerships.

External asset mapping can focus on a geographical community or a functional community. A geographical community is a community based on a place or location, while a functional community is a group based on a common element providing a sense of identity (Ife & Tesoriero, 2006). A geographical asset map can concentrate on a whole library region, or focus on the area serviced by a specific library branch. It is a map of the local community groups, service providers, businesses, institutions, and community spaces in that geographical area. A functional asset map focuses on a specific group within a community, such as youth, older adults, or CALD communities, and the groups, service providers, institutions, and businesses that serve those community members. As community organisations can change over time, it is important to regularly revise and revisit a community asset map. This is built into the framework through the action research model.

# Internal Library Asset Map

- Identify library's assets
- Document these assets
- List the ways in which these assets can be shared with the surrounding community

**Personnel (Skills,  
Interests, Abilities)**

**Space and Facilities**

**Library Materials  
and Equipment**

**Current  
Programs/Services**

**Current Community  
Networks**

**Other**

Adapted from [www.urbanlibraries.org](http://www.urbanlibraries.org)

## External Community Asset Map

- Geographical (location)
- Functional (youth, CALD, older adults, non-library users, etc.)

### Community Groups

### Local Businesses

### Community Meeting Spaces

### Community

### Social and Economic Conditions

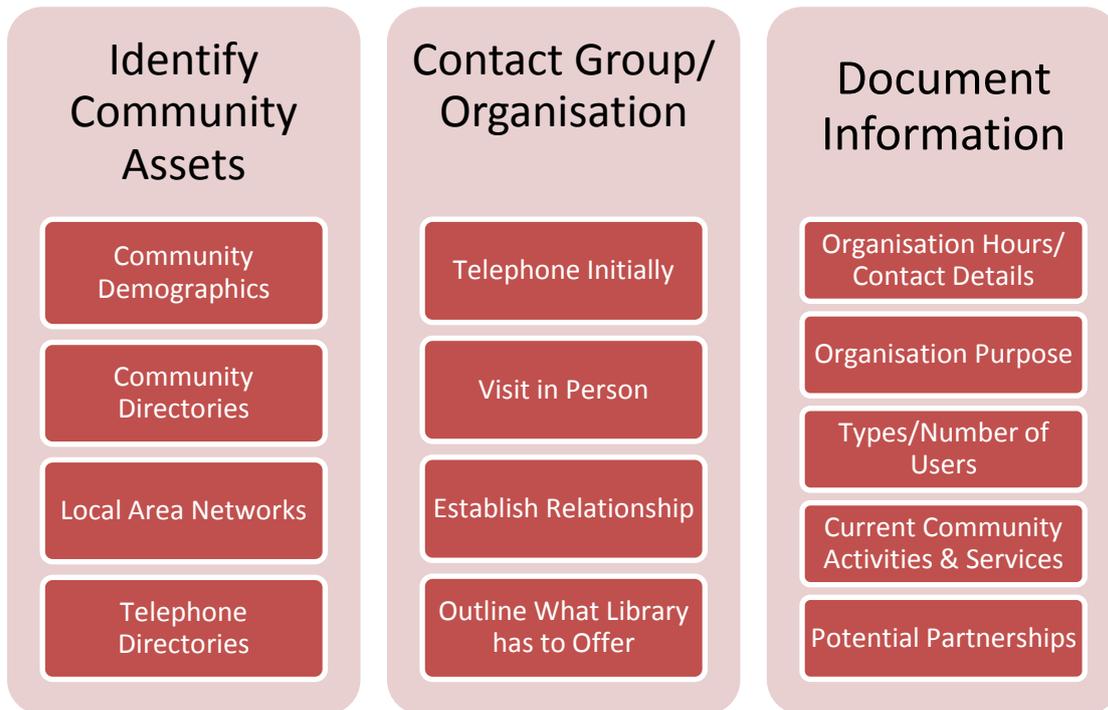
### Associations and Institutions

### Community Stories and Narratives

Adapted from [www.urbanlibraries.org](http://www.urbanlibraries.org)



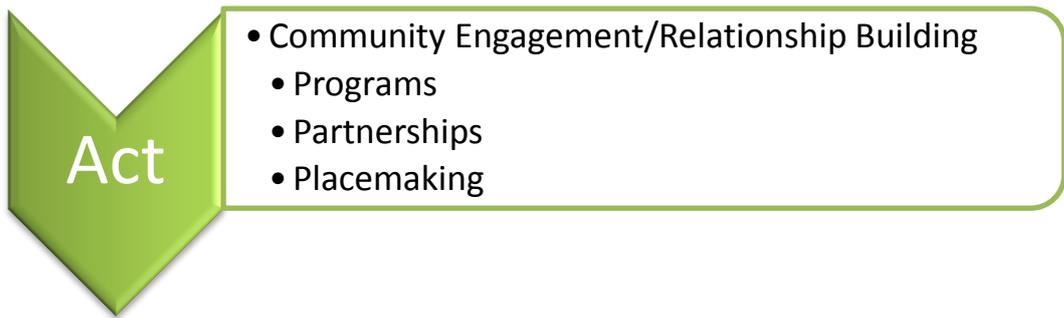
Source: Asset-Based Community Development Institute [www.abcdinstitute.org](http://www.abcdinstitute.org)



The Information collected can be stored in a Community Information database and used to plan responsive library services. It should be updated regularly as groups change, relationships develop and as part of the action research model.

**Example List of Community Organisations/Groups/Associations to Contact:**

- |                                 |                       |                              |
|---------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| Animal Care Groups              | Local Government      | Pre-Schools                  |
| Business Organisations          | Men's groups          | Kindergartens                |
| Charitable Groups               | Mentoring Groups      | Schools                      |
| Civic Events Groups             | Mutual Support Groups | Tafes                        |
| Community Health Providers      | Neighbourhood Groups  | Universities                 |
| Cultural Groups                 | Parenting Groups      | Police Departments           |
| Disability/Special Needs Groups | Recreation Groups     | Hospitals                    |
| Education Groups                | Religious Groups      | Social Service Agencies      |
| Environmental Groups            | Service Clubs         | Non for Profit Organisations |
| Family Support Groups           | Seniors Groups        | Museums                      |
| Health Advocacy Groups          | Social Groups         | Fire Departments             |
| Fitness Groups                  | Veteran's Groups      | Local Media                  |
| Heritage Groups                 | Women's Groups        | Local Prisons                |
| Hobby and Collectors Groups     | Youth groups          |                              |



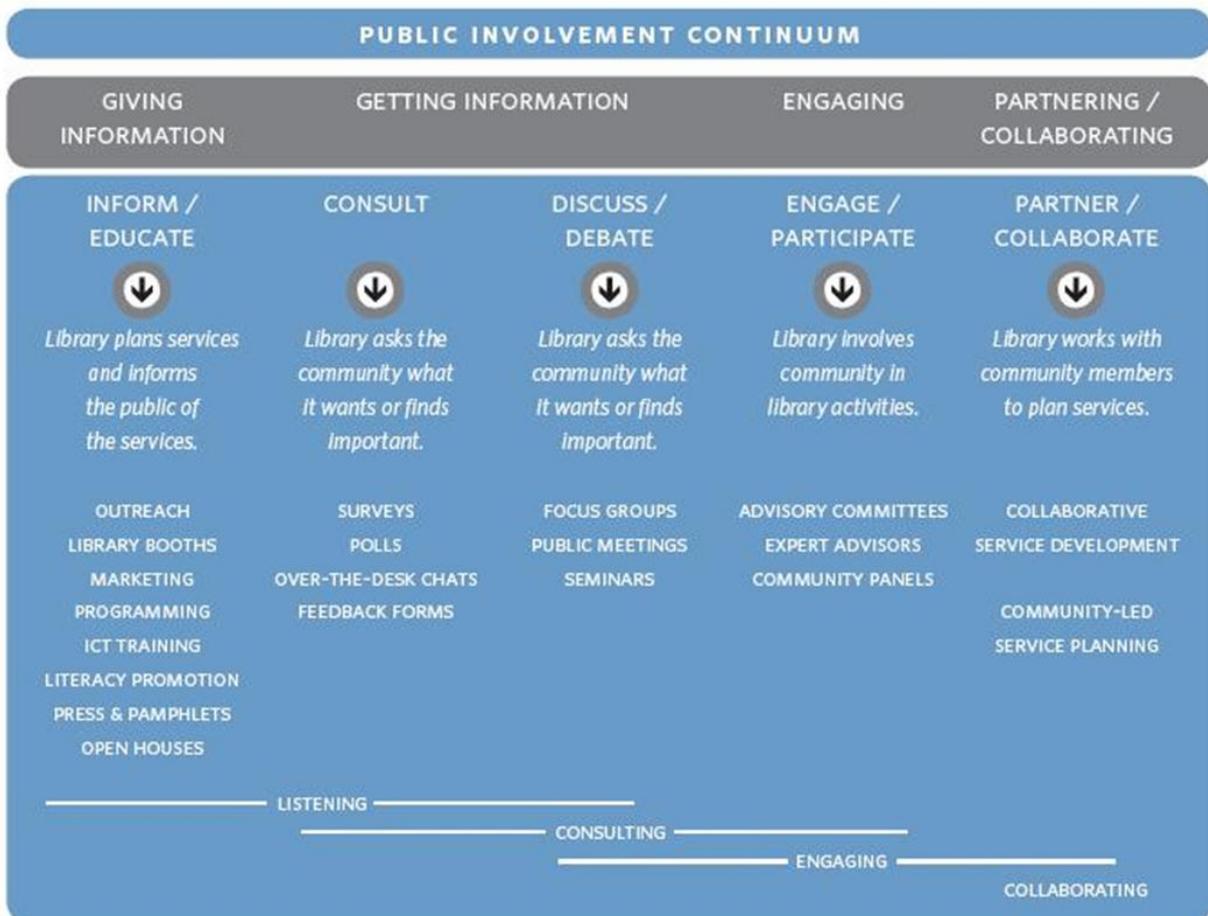
Community engagement is a vital part of community development. It is a way for libraries to build relationships with communities through communication, consultation, and collaboration to ensure they remain relevant to the communities they serve. The ultimate aim of community engagement is to involve the community in service planning and delivery. The International Association for Public Participation in Australasia has developed a Public Participation Spectrum to measure the impact of community engagement techniques. Most community engagement falls into the inform, consult, involve, or collaborate categories, with little falling into the empower category. The aim of the community development framework is to work towards participatory, collaborative engagement.

## Public Participation Spectrum

<b>Inform</b>	One-way communication providing balanced and objective information to assist understanding about something that is going to happen or has happened.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Marketing</li> <li>• Promotions</li> <li>• Outreach</li> </ul>
<b>Consult</b>	Two-way communications designed to obtain public feedback about ideas on rationale, alternatives, and proposals to inform decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Surveys</li> <li>• Feedback forms</li> <li>• Social media</li> </ul>
<b>Involve</b>	Participatory process designed to help identify issues and views to ensure that concerns and aspirations are understood and considered prior to decision-making.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Focus groups</li> <li>• Advisory committees</li> <li>• Community workshops</li> </ul>
<b>Collaborate</b>	Working together to develop understanding of all issues and interests to work out alternatives and identify preferred solutions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partnerships</li> <li>• Community-led service planning</li> </ul>
<b>Empower</b>	Providing opportunities and resources for communities to contribute to solutions by valuing local talents and skills and acknowledging their capacity to be decision makers in their own lives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Final decision-making placed in the hands of the public.</li> </ul>

Adapted from [www.iap2.org.au](http://www.iap2.org.au)

A good example of community engagement can be found in the Working Together Project (a partnership project involving four libraries in Canada), as described in detail in the Projects, Partnerships and Placemaking Report. The Working Together Project developed a public involvement continuum specific to libraries. Their aim was to encourage libraries to move away from the traditional position of the library determining what the community needs and how it will respond, towards a community-led model of service delivery. Traditionally libraries have informed and educated the community about library services, and the Working Together Project challenges libraries to move towards a more participatory and collaborative approach, where the community is involved in planning programs and services that meet their needs. This is particularly important for marginalised and socially excluded community members, who often do not feel that the library has anything to offer them. It is about engaging the community and building relationships to develop responsive programs, partnerships, and library spaces.



Source: Working Together Project [www.librariesincommunities.ca](http://www.librariesincommunities.ca)

## Programs & Partnerships

Libraries deliver an array of important programs and collections to the community that educate, inform, and entertain. Community development techniques offer additional tools to engage hard to reach and marginalised community members who often feel unwelcome, or that the library has nothing to offer them. Community asset mapping provides the tools to identify these community members, who are often reachable through community service providers. The process of building relationships with communities and service providers often initiates new library programs, or more collaborative approaches to collection development, as communities articulate a need that the library can respond to proactively. Frequently these programs grow out of partnerships with other community service providers that foster community knowledge and resource sharing.

Partnerships can be formal with written agreements and memorandums of understanding, or informal verbal agreements. When entering into a partnership, it is important to clearly outline the purpose, objectives, partnership parameters, and responsibilities of each organisation, including a regular meeting schedule to communicate, review and evaluate the partnership. Partnerships can change over time and this needs to be factored into any agreement. Changes can include staff turnover, changes in resources, or programs, and the partnership agreement should be flexible enough to accommodate these events. Partnerships can also be long or short term, depending on the project or program being delivered. Partnerships, like other community engagement techniques, are about relationship building.

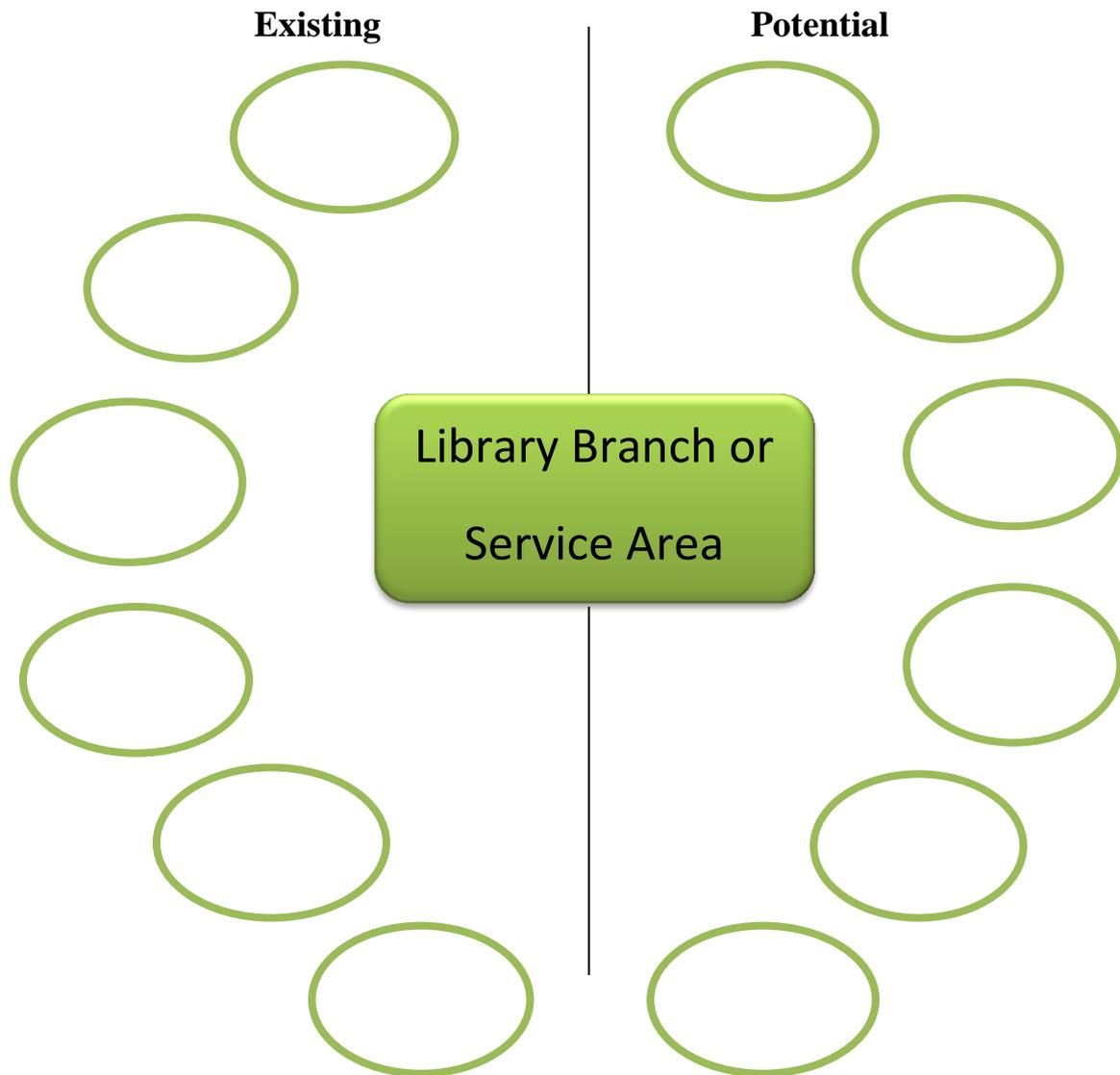
Factors for Successful Partnerships:

- A shared vision, goals and objectives
- Clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Strong commitment to the vision and goals
- Detailed action plans
- Effective communication processes
- Adequate resources
- A commitment to evaluation and adaptation

Source: Frank & Smith (2006), *Community Development and Partnerships*

# Community Partnerships

Use this tool to illustrate current and potential community partnerships.



Adapted from [www.urbanlibraries.org](http://www.urbanlibraries.org)

# Placemaking

Placemaking is a community-based approach to public spaces. It involves turning a place into a destination that people want to visit. Placemaking ties in with the concept of the library as a “third place”, where the community gathers outside of home or work. Ideally, Placemaking involves the community in the planning, design, and management of a public space by consulting the people who use the space about their needs and aspirations. This is then articulated into a vision for the space.

The Power of 10 is a simple concept developed by the Project for Public Spaces (PPS) to begin the Placemaking process. It involves identifying 10 things to do or 10 reasons to be in a particular place. These can include places to sit, programs to attend, people to meet, information to find, books to borrow, or food to consume. Each place will have its own unique activities that are interesting enough to engage the community and keep them returning. The Power of 10 is a simple way to begin looking at why people choose to come to a particular place and how to make it more inviting. It is about observing and then revitalising the space for the community.

PPS have worked with a number of libraries to develop vibrant community places that bring people together. They have developed a list of what makes a library a great community destination. According to PPS, Great Libraries:

1. Offer a Broad Mix of Community Services
2. Foster Communication
3. Showcase History and Information
4. Build Capacity for Local Businesses
5. Become Public Gathering Places
6. Boost Local Retail and Public Markets
7. Offer Easy Access
8. Make the Surrounding Area Come Alive
9. Feature Multiple Attractions and Destinations
10. Are Designed to Support Function
11. Provide a Variety of Amenities
12. Change with the Calendar
13. Depend on Wise Management
14. Catalyse Community Revitalisation

Source: Project for Public Spaces [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)

# The Place Diagram



Source: Project for Public Spaces [www.pps.org](http://www.pps.org)

The Place Diagram outlines the 4 key attributes of a successful place: uses and activities, comfort and image, access and linkages, and sociability. It also looks at intangible qualities and measurements associated with each attribute.

The Place Diagram is a useful tool for observing how the community relates to a space and which areas could be improved. It can be adapted for use by large or small libraries to evaluate the library building and its surrounds. Placemaking is as much about the exterior of the building and its accessibility as the interior space. It involves making the space vibrant and welcoming with multiple things for people to do while they are there. Placemaking doesn't have to be expensive, as small changes can yield large results. These can be as simple as rearranging furniture to make an inviting reading area or adding outdoor furniture or plants to make the entrance more welcoming. Observing how the community uses the space and engaging them in improvements are key features of Placemaking.



## Observe

- Evaluation
  - Quantitative
  - Qualitative

Evaluation is an important part of the community development framework. It allows libraries to measure the success of a program or event using evidence-based quantitative and qualitative data. The community-led approach to evaluation is a collaborative effort between the library, community partners, and community members. It measures the longer term impact of the program on the community as well as the short term statistical data. It is concerned with the skills, knowledge, and perspectives of the participants involved in the program to gauge whether the library is meeting the needs of the community. It is an ongoing, participatory process. The aims of evaluation using an action research model include:

- Engaging the community in the research process to better understand and take action on issues important to them
- Document and amplify people's experiences, concerns, and interests
- Learn about and improve a specific initiative, service, or collection
- Make decisions about priorities, strategies, and allocation of resources
- Develop broader knowledge useful to the field of community engagement and development in libraries

Source: Green & Kleiner (2011). *Action Research and Evaluation in Community Development*

A logic model can be used to evaluate the impact of library programs and services on the community. The Edmonton Public Library (EPL) has developed a basic logic model to measure the quantitative and qualitative outcomes of programs as part of their Community-Led Service Philosophy Toolkit. This model outlines the relationship between resources, actions, and results. It looks at how library resources and activities are linked to short term outcomes and longer term impacts upon the community. It looks at what worked, what didn't work, and what could be improved. It values community stories of empowerment as much as statistical data.

# Evaluation Model



Resources	Activities	Outputs	Outcomes	Impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time</li> <li>• Program supplies</li> <li>• Travel</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• MCHC new parents group visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number of people visited</li> <li>• Number of new library members</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build relationships</li> <li>• Library becomes “place” for new parents</li> <li>• Increased attendance at storytimes</li> <li>• Child develops early literacy skills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child has skills to do well at school</li> <li>• Parents are connected to other people</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time</li> <li>• Program supplies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct computer training at library</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number attending</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendees develop new skills</li> <li>• Information literacy increased</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individual empowered to use the internet for job skills, information, networking etc.</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Staff time</li> <li>• Program supplies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monthly bookgroup and afternoon tea for housebound seniors at the library held in partnership with local Council (who provide transport)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Number attending</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build relationships</li> <li>• Encourage social connections</li> <li>• Promote talking books and home library services to attendees and local Council</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social inclusion for isolated older adults</li> <li>• Attendees feel part of the community and mix with different ages</li> </ul>

Source: EPL Community-Led Service Philosophy Toolkit [www.epl.ca](http://www.epl.ca)



The reflective phase of the action research model involves reviewing the program, partnership, or Placemaking process that was undertaken and reflecting on the knowledge gained through that process. This includes the benefits to the participants, the wider community, the partner organisations, and the library service. It involves looking at what worked, what didn't work, how the process could be improved, and planning for the next cycle based on the information gained through the process. It also involves sharing the lessons learned and the knowledge gained both within the library service and with the wider library community.

The reflective phase may involve refining an existing program based on observations made during the planning, acting, and observing cycles, or developing a new program based on the knowledge gained about the community. It is a dynamic process of refinement and revitalisation to ensure the library remains responsive to the community's needs, wants, and aspirations. It involves reviewing the community mapping process, the level of community engagement achieved, and the evaluation process to ensure it is community-centred.

Reflective practice is an important cyclical process of continuous learning achieved through experience, and the conscious application of the knowledge gained through the cycle. The process leads back to the planning stage of the action research model to ensure the continuous improvement and refinement of library programs and services. It is a critical part of the learning process to ensure the library remains responsive and relevant to the communities it serves.

