



**Enlightenment
Consulting Group, LLC**
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A catalyst for transformation.

Phase One Report: Discovery

Cleveland Public Library | September 2013

OVERVIEW

The Cleveland Public Library has set out on a course to change how the public interacts with the library by becoming partners with the communities where each branch is located in fighting to reduce community deficits. In order to work in unison with the community, the Director has suggested that the library staff can serve as **drum majors for change** across the City of Cleveland. Serving in the role of drum majors, library personnel and community partners can co-design programs and services that can both minimize community deficits and build solid long lasting 'bridges' of relationships that will sustain community successes.

The Enlightenment Consulting Group, LLC (ECG) team set out to accomplish two strategic goals for this project that will support CPL in creating community change.

The first goal is to integrate the most creative and concrete thinking of relevant constituents to create a Community Ambassador model that will promote authentic community engagement in unison with the CPL drum majors at the individual community branches.

The second goal is to develop a robust model for an infrastructure that will sustain the Community Ambassador model in the pilot communities that is built upon staff and community voice.

As the ECG team began to engage with CPL staff during the first phase of work, **a third critical goal area emerged**: supporting staff as they begin to undertake and engage in the transformation process and transition to the role of drum major for community change in support of CPL's most recent strategic plan that cements the vision for 2019.

As the engagement with staff through scheduled retreats moved forward, similar concerns among them were raised that made this third goal so fundamental to the overall success of the project. Concerns arose regarding the process of redefining community engagement in a way that staff would be expected to support.

How and why would this transition be supported in practice and policy by members of the Board and senior leadership?

Would there be effective and adequate professional development opportunities that would support them?

And, what steps would be taken to eliminate perceived misalignment between the new community deficit approach and continuous improvement policies and practices that currently exist in day-to-day operations?

The remainder of this first interim project report will outline some of the initial findings and recommendations that are the outcome of the initial work ECG conducted with staff and key community informants that make up the Discovery Phase of the project on behalf of the CPL Board. The conclusion of the report will address key elements and decisions that are needed to successfully integrate the larger community into the discussions that will produce a robust model for ongoing community engagement at the branch level.

"Even if you are on the right track, you'll get run over if you just sit there"
- Will Rogers

DISCOVERY PHASE

In this Phase ECG set out to address the following objectives:

- Identify and engage with key individuals and those who could contribute to the design of an effective model of community engagement.
- Understand and promote the vision to the entire project, specifically its lack of dependence on the levy process and the ongoing nature of authentic community engagement.
- Discover the dreams of key staff and relevant constituents relative to what CPL “could become”.
- Identify possible barriers to achieving the three project goals.

Multiple strategies were utilized in the initial phases of engagement to meet the specified goals and objectives. The findings from the initial strategic efforts have the power to enhance the overall thinking relative to the most effective approaches for moving forward. The following section will outline the three strategic approaches that were used in this phase and summarize the highlights of the efforts and key findings. The final section of this report will discuss the implications of the data collected and provide recommendations from the ECG team for moving forward that addresses resident and CPL staff concerns.

Enlightenment Consulting Group, LLC designed an Appreciative Inquiry (AI) approach to ensure the Cleveland Public Library leadership, staff and stakeholders were authentically engaged in this transformative process. This process was utilized with Senior Leadership in eight hours of interactive discussions around Polarity Asset Mapping centered on interdependent poles related to transformational and transactional leadership strategies. This frame presents a rich and promising arena in which to apply Polarity Thinking (PT) principle—on the leadership and staff levels. Thus far, CPL management has been introduced to the concepts underlying PT and has been able to identify some prominent values. Additionally, the recognition and management of ongoing polarities within the organization will become a priority at all levels. The leadership staff was introduced to the concept of Appreciative Inquiry, at the conclusion of the two-day polarity management process. The non-leadership-level staff was also introduced to the concepts of Appreciative Inquiry. **As a result, the staff was asked to write down innovative and transformational programs, initiatives and concepts. At the end of this process, participants were asked to prioritize the ideas.**

PRIMARY THEME FROM LEADERSHIP RETREAT

The major theme that emerged was that residents could be collaborative partners with the capacity to address community issues in tandem with the library. For example, ideas ranged from developing a council of elders to patrons co-designing library experiences spaces and programs. In addition, the opportunity to understand the value and application of Polarity Mapping was modeled for staff using key elements of The Polarity Approach for Continuity and Transformation process (PACT). PACT is an effective tool for staff and organizations to use that identifies areas to focus on while paying attention to both threats and opportunities. This allows team leaders and staff to effectively navigate and develop an approach to systems change that is necessitated by the new strategic plan that CPL has adopted.

BRANCH LEVEL SESSIONS

Members of the library branch staff participated in a four-hour Appreciative Inquiry session. The session introduced most of the staff to the TEDTALK given by Director Thomas. Ensuring consistency and building off of the learning assets of the Leadership staff's two-day session, library staff was provided with an understanding of the outcomes from those sessions. This provided the foundation (DEFINITION and DISCOVERY) for the staff to begin understanding how they could build a transformational future that included the use of a resident-centered model similar to the Central Promise Ambassadors. The staff participated in group-learning experiences. They were assigned to be thinkers in the role of the DREAMERS and DESIGNERS as is consistent with the use of Appreciative Inquiry. **The goal of this step was to provide an opportunity for staff to practice critical aspects of transformational thinking.**

EMERGENT THEMES FROM STAFF SESSIONS

Many suggested programs and initiatives emerged in dialogue with the CPL staff. Most of which reference the use of a resident centered model (ambassadors) that could promote the library and act as cheerleaders for the system. It was suggested that this additional support could enhance library programs. However, there was no immediate recognition relative to determining how library resources could readily support the community challenges that remain when the library staff returns to their own neighborhoods at the end of the day, such as chronic poverty or other issues.

While the staff did not immediately cultivate many ideas, they appeared very prepared to continue thinking of creative approaches that would enhance the quality of the neighborhood beyond addressing community deficits by seeking more program participation from residents. Asset maps of current relationships for the branches were also supplied to the team, which were useful in identifying current partnerships and similarities and differences in programs offered across the branches.

COMMUNITY AND BRANCH MANAGER SURVEY DATA

The community survey tool was used to learn and engage stakeholders, gain an understanding of the perception of the library, highlight community challenges, and introduce the goals of the project to key informants. Informants were identified through current library partners. The Branch Manager survey tool was used to learn of their work and their own perception of community challenges, key stakeholders and partnerships to address those challenges.

Key themes that emerged included:

- The relevance of a robust investment in human and social capital including opportunities to build the capacity of community stakeholders.
- The necessity to identify and address the natural ripples that accompany systems change strategies and to utilize effective strategies that promote the successful integration of a community engagement model.
- **The possibility to categorize programs and services utilized in the CPL system that are poised to address community deficits and the opportunity to incorporate some of these ideas system-wide.**

The categories that emerged include:

- Social (e.g. council of elders, resident leadership training, convener, starbucks-like)
- Educational (e.g. technology training classes Microsoft suite)
- Economics (e.g. one-to-one job training, training center, social entrepreneurship around technology coding, etc)
- Health and Wellness (e.g. meeting people where they are, yoga classes, gardening classes)

RECOMMENDATIONS TO ADDRESS EFFECTIVE SUSTAINABILITY PRACTICES

In order to assure the CPL model develops successfully and with adequate community input, the ECG team recommends that sufficient attention be paid to the creation of strategies that address the issues and opportunities that arose in the first phase of this work. Efforts have been taken to both categorize the focus areas and provide a rationale to support addressing each critical issue in the next section of this report.

EXPAND COMMUNICATION AND ACTION

The opportunity to increase communication through more inclusive practices and feedback loops that have action outcomes between leadership and staff will increase buy-in, trust and increased productivity that can support sustainable change. In Phase 2, the Director will work closely with the ECG team to engage the leadership staff in robust discussions to ascertain their input on strategies to assist staff and community members in understanding the intent of the CPL system to address community deficits as outlined in the recent strategic plan.

RESOURCES AND LIMITATIONS

- Finalize the level of financial resources the library is currently prepared to commit for training library staff, new hires, and ongoing training for branches and staff. The training should be framed and continued as transformational thinking and action that supports the strategic plan.
- Staffing and Union Concerns will need to be addressed and policy changes recommended and approved.

UNION POLICIES AND BRANCH MANAGER PRACTICES

Staff policies related to union practices (do's and don'ts with staff) will require developing new practices that allow the staff to better participate (library hours, attending community meetings etc) as team members (Drum Majors for Change). Other aspects to be addressed in order to assure the viability of the Community Ambassador model involve the inclusion of community members in decision making, the opportunity to free up time for staff to engage with the community, and the identification of systems that will promote co-designed strategies that involve staff and residents.

HUMAN RESOURCES SUPPORT

Efforts to fit the Community Ambassadors into the existing CPL infrastructure will require a recognition of staff limitations based on an appropriate determination of the capacity of current staff and exploration of the benefits of securing new staff that have the skill and capacity to build community relationships to engage communities on a more in-depth scale. Strategies that support team building across the system and with community residents will also be explored. In addition, efforts will be made to better understand current CPL policies related to volunteers that may impact the structure of the proposed Drum Major Model. Appropriate recommendations will be made for policies that will support the implementation of the model in the next phase of this project.

DEFINING OUR MESSAGE

Provide stakeholders (organizations and residents) with a clear understanding of the commitment to being engaged in the communities differently. (One action step will be Drum Majors for Change-including ambassador model). **Indicate the goal and collaborative interest in building the People's University, but the first step is to 'support the people where they are' by addressing community deficits using a resident centered model.**

NEXT STEPS- PHASE 2- THE DESIGN PHASE

Develop strategy for community conversations and identify topics for discussion

Define a two-tiered process for community conversations that provides opportunity to discuss and secure feedback regarding the creation of a sustainable model of innovative library services responsive to the needs of individual Cleveland neighborhoods. A preliminary strategy that allows for input during our conversations in this year coupled with a more in-depth strategic approach that includes the Drum Majors for Change model may increase stakeholders' and community input and buy-in preceding this current process for spring of 2014.

Initiate the community survey as an additional step to secure additional community member input in the development of the Community Ambassador Model

It is anticipated that this survey will target residents for their input on ways that CPL can address community deficits and engage them in the development of programs and strategies that will minimize disparities in each community. The survey will also help identify residents who desire to support the ongoing efforts of the Cleveland Public Library and ECG in the development of the Community Ambassador Model. The target is to engage at least 60 residents from each of the three target neighborhoods through the efforts of community leaders and advocates who can assist in reaching the population as well as working with CPL staff within the branches to assist in the administration of the survey.

Select an appropriate model that meets the needs of CPL leadership in the development of the Community Ambassador model.

ECG proposes three preliminary models that allow varying degrees of autonomy for CPL in the implementation of the Community Ambassador model. It will be necessary to identify a specific approach that staff and community residents can then integrate their best thinking to develop and pilot the model in the specified communities in Phase 2 of this project.

MODEL ONE	MODEL TWO	MODEL THREE
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CPL Owner• Embedded in library structure• Viewed by community as CPL• CAN STILL BE COLLABORATIVE IN NATURE: partnerships that co-design and address community deficits• More opportunity to expand model and adjust according to need. Range from community deficits to building the People's University both top down and bottom up	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Co-owner/Co-design• Shared Priorities (shared focus regarding control of priority issues. (May lose focus on CPL KEY interest)• Shared financial accountability: who is the fiscal agent?• Need to identify a partner that aligns with transformational vision and belief.• Reduced opportunity to adjust and be flexible.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Invest in existing MODELS• Reduced control over primary resident focus• Viewed as collaborative by organizations• Reduced financial responsibility• Diminished presence that is driven by CPL• Difficult to plan short term and long term goals.

In addition ECG proposes that the Cleveland Public Library system adopt a fellowship model to engage community residents and prepare them to serve as effective “Drum Majors” at each of the pilot branches. After 3-5 years of implementation and evaluation the strategy can be expanded across the system. The basics of the Urban Fellowship model are:

<u>5 Core Resident Drum Majors</u> 18 month Urban Fellowship	Rationale
<p>6 month integration</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Training 2. Coaching (ongoing) 3. Define purpose and role 4. Aligns with CPL strategic plan 5. Community Input <p>12 month project initiatives</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Aligns with CPL and Partners 2. Measurable 3. Address Community Challenges 4. Builds the People’s University 5. Peer education 6. Peer intervention 	<p>Provides CPL branches more connectors to support both branch and community needs</p> <p>Increase social networks addressing community challenges</p> <p>Increase library’s capacity to impact social, health and wellness, economic and educational outcomes of community and library participants.</p> <p>Relevant- ongoing pulse of community needs more “cheerleaders”</p>

Chronological Decision Tree to support next steps and anticipated time frames

In order to successfully engage the community in the design of the Community Ambassador model as a strategy to promote effective community engagement at the neighborhood level and to increase the impact of CPL in partnering with the community to reduce community deficits, critical decisions must be made along the way. **It is important that at the point when the residents are brought into the Design Phase 2, the Library staff and system have prioritized their commitment to the effort and that there is an adequate plan to engage staff in the development of the model on an ongoing basis.**

In closing, the ECG team recommends the following decisions be addressed as the engagement strategies with the community continue to move forward as planned:

1. Finalize CPL’s financial resources to build and sustain residential Drum Major model.
2. Determine the best model for CPL vision for 2019.
3. Develop effective communication plans and action steps and materials to both community stakeholders and staff.
4. Complete the above task prior to engaging communities.
5. Identify what neighborhood we enter first.
6. Conduct first community conversation.