



## **Building library staff capacity to advocate successfully leads to sustainable libraries**

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#### **Section 1: Introduction & Abstract**

*Successful advocacy is critical to public libraries' ability to address the needs of their community. Public libraries must advocate for funding and supportive policies to grow and sustain important services that meet evolving community needs. Training library staff how to advocate is vital in libraries' efforts to convince governments to change policies and commit sustained funding.*

*The authors of this paper represent grantees of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's public libraries initiatives, implementing programs in Chile, Latvia, Romania, and the United States. The grantees are:*

- *In Chile, the Directorate of Libraries, Archives, and Museums (DIBAM), which is under the Ministry of Education. The program is called BiblioRedes.*
- *In Latvia, the Ministry of Culture. The program is called Father's Third Son (3td).*
- *In Romania, International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX), an international nongovernmental organization.*
- *In the United States, the Public Library Association (PLA), a division of the American Library Association (ALA).*

As grantees, we support library staff to improve lives through increased access to computers and the Internet in public libraries. We train library staff to advocate to their local and national governments for funding to sustain access and policies that support public libraries and, more specifically, access to computers and the Internet in public libraries. We also provide library staff with the skills to enhance the value of libraries in their communities in order to increase library usage and build broad-based citizen support for library staff advocacy efforts targeted at decision makers. Although our programs focus on computers and Internet access in libraries, we believe that the advocacy is critical to the library's overall strength and that the training we conduct supports the library's development.

Based on our experiences, we find that the training will have the greatest impact if it builds library staff knowledge and skills using several key principles as follows.

### ***Training Content***

Based on our experience, advocacy training for library staff should build knowledge and skills in the following areas to be most effective.

- **Impact:** Library staff should understand and be able to demonstrate the impact libraries have on individuals and their community as well as libraries' contribution to government priorities to convince government and the community to support their library
- **Communication and Messaging:** Library staff should be able to develop messages relevant to their target audiences and learn how to communicate those messages to the public, media, and government officials
- **Networking:** Library staff should be able to identify the key stakeholders in their community and to build alliances with community members, community leaders, and government
- **Attitude and Self-Confidence:** Often library staff have some or all of these skills, but lack the self-confidence or attitude to put them into practice. Building confidence and improving attitudes is an important element to the training

### ***Principles***

We recommend that advocacy training for library staff follow these principles to have the greatest impact on library staff behavior.

- **Training Methodology:** Adult learning methodology that is interactive and allows participants to learn from each other is most effective
- **Trainers:** Trainers who represent diverse professional backgrounds bring expertise from their disciplines to the library field thereby broadening library staff perspective on different approaches to sustaining their library
- **Training Participants:** Including other members of the community gains support for library staff in implementing advocacy initiatives and builds skills of other members of the community to be advocates for the library
- **Output:** Participants should develop concrete outputs so they are able to put their newly acquired knowledge and skills into practice during the training and are prepared to act once they return to their communities

Training is only one element of our advocacy initiatives. As context for our training programs, this paper explains what our programs plan to achieve through our advocacy initiatives and the advocacy strategies we implement to achieve our goals. We explain the role that training plays in our

advocacy efforts, complementing other strategies by building the skills of library staff to advocate in their local communities. Our training programs share the commonalities listed above, but are also unique to our countries' circumstances and our programs. Finally, we provide specific examples of the ways in which our organizations apply the commonalities in each of our countries' contexts.

## **Section 2: Background**

This section explains what library staff can achieve through advocacy; whose attitudes, actions, and opinions library staff need to influence through their advocacy activities; and what advocacy strategies, in addition to training, we, in partnership with library staff, undertake. The purpose of this background is to provide the context in which we conduct advocacy training and to explain how advocacy training complements our other activities.

### ***Purpose of Advocacy***

Public libraries play an important role in improving the lives of the people in the communities they serve by providing public access to computers and the Internet. To improve and sustain services that are relevant to the community, libraries need government and community support and funding. That support usually does not come automatically. In many communities, library's budgets are constantly being cut. If Library staff demonstrate the library's value to the community and local decision-makers, they can gain the necessary support to sustain the valuable services that they provide to improve individuals lives. Through advocacy, library staff can attract new users and supporters; strengthen the role and status of libraries in their community; and communicate the value of the library to decision-makers. The goal is that increased use, support, and improved status will translate into more and better resources for public libraries. Advocacy is vital to building the partnerships and momentum needed to sustain libraries and motivate communities to use and support their libraries.

### ***Advocacy Targets***

Creating and maintaining support for libraries involves advocating to three different audiences with unique messages targeted at each audience.

**Users.** This group includes existing library users, non-users, and potential users. The main goal in targeting this group is to motivate existing users and attract new library users to achieve stronger public library support from local communities.

**Libraries.** This group includes library directors, library trustees/boards, and current and future library staff. The main goal in targeting this group is to change attitudes and actions and raise the confidence of library staff about their role in the community, which in turn helps public libraries improve their status. In particular, library staff should understand and be able to use computers in their daily work as well as to promote the benefits of computer and Internet usage in their local communities.

**Authorities, opinion leaders, and policy makers.** This group includes national, regional, and local government authorities, members of parliament, community leaders (such as local business leaders, NGOs, or foundations), and media. The main goal in targeting this group is to build stronger and understanding of the role and impact of libraries and build continuous support and funding.

Through active dialogue, library staff can influence local government authorities who finance public libraries, government officials responsible for the development and sustainability of the library system, nongovernment organizations (NGOs) representatives, and opinion leaders to attract new library supporters.

### ***Advocacy Strategies***

Advocacy encompasses the strategies and actions to elevate to decision makers the value of libraries, raise the profile of libraries with influential stakeholders, and influence decision-making. Libraries must implement various advocacy strategies to achieve their goals. The authors of this paper represent different organizations supporting library systems, such as government ministries, nongovernmental organizations, and library associations. We engage in various advocacy strategies to build support for public libraries. One strategy that we have used in each of our countries is to train library staff to advocate. Training library staff complements our other advocacy strategies as we often advocate at the national level and library staff can advocate in their local communities. Many library staff are not familiar or comfortable with advocating and, therefore, training is necessary to build their skills, knowledge, and confidence. The training assists the library staff to develop their own advocacy strategies targeted at local communities and government officials.

The strategies that we implement in addition to training include:

**Policy campaigns.** Government policies or laws often regulate library administration, facilities, services, and funding as well as broadband availability. We advocate to amend laws or policies to support the modernization of the library. For example, in Latvia, Father's Third Son (3td), advocates to amend the library law to ensure funding for Internet connectivity costs in all public libraries. In Chile, BiblioRedes produced and distributed dossiers with information to educate newly elected mayors about their public libraries and BiblioRedes' services with the aim of obtaining their commitment to increase libraries budgets.

**Outreach campaigns.** These campaigns target specific audiences with tailored messages to attract the support of lawmakers and other officials or draw-in users who have not been to the library. Outreach campaigns include an actionable message, with the expectation that target audiences will act shortly after the campaign ends. In Latvia, 3td organized a wide-scale outreach in which 3td staff and library supporters communicated intensively with local government about the role libraries play in community and individual development to build local government support for computers and Internet access in libraries. In Chile, BiblioRedes aired a radio show once a week on a national radio station that also had online broadcasting. Each radio show was centered on a specific topics related to libraries and the use of technology. The show featured guest speakers, and radio listeners called in with questions and comments that were aired live. The library staff distributed the shows to their local radio stations and used the radio's website during the community computer training to promote BiblioRedes and libraries.

**Marketing campaigns.** Libraries can use marketing campaigns to publicize widely the library services and value. For example, in Chile, BiblioRedes marketed their new IT services to people generally excluded from IT access and training due to economic conditions and/or geographic isolation. For Mother's Day, they provided children an invitation to give their Mothers to accompany them to the library to receive IT training. In Latvia, 3td markets the benefits, available resources, and content

provided by public libraries, particularly to socially marginalized groups. It also markets to the public the fact that public libraries have well-prepared specialists and library staff to assist the public.

**Branding.** Brand names, slogans, and logos raise the profile of library services and conjure a consistent, positive image to their targets. In Chile, BiblioRedes used the slogan “Internet and Training, Free at Your Public Library”. In Romania, participants in IREX’s advocacy training brainstormed to find a name and logo for IREX’s program that will increase access to computers and the Internet in public libraries. Participants discussed the impact of the chosen name on users and non-users and agreed upon *Biblionet*, which the program adopted.

### **Section 3: Advocacy Training Purpose**

If library staff skills, knowledge, and confidence are improved, they will be able to advocate more effectively for their libraries. This section discusses what we plan to achieve by training library staff and others in advocacy; the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that we intend to change through the training; how these changes can impact library staff behavior; and how those behavior changes impact the community and can result in increased funding and support for libraries.

The goal of our training activities is to improve participants’ skills, knowledge, and confidence to advocate for sustainable support of innovative, expanded library services, particularly access to computers and the Internet. In addition to this main goal, our programs have differing objectives that vary by country, including:

- Create and promote meaningful and innovative services for their community
- Identify potential supporters, community partners, and target audiences to increase funding for innovation and sustainability of library services
- Determine what the target audience currently thinks about the library and library funding and what the library wants the target audience to think about the library
- Create tailored messages for and improve communication with local government authorities
- Create tailored messages for and improve communication with the media
- Turn passive community and local authority support into active support
- Motivate existing users and attract new library users
- Institute the habit of sharing best advocacy practices among libraries
- Create, maintain, and expand public library networks
- Build public speaking capacity
- Develop library staff capacity to create an advocacy plan, including identifying specific advocacy strategies on how to achieve stated goals, and determine how to measure progress and success towards such goals
- Change library staff view of their own leadership skills; improve library staff self-confidence and skills as strong community leaders

Through our training efforts, participants understand that advocacy is a means to an end. Advocacy is a powerful tool for library staff to promote and develop change in their libraries and create and

sustain support for public libraries. By advocating, library staff will help their libraries, themselves, and the community, and enhance their role in community development.

Training provides participants with the skills to lead changes in their libraries. As a result of training, library staff are able to incorporate advocacy into their ongoing day-to-day activities. They recognize that advocacy is not just a one-time activity or special project, but rather that it becomes infused in how they do their everyday work. Library advocates most commonly used one-to-one conversations and presentations about the library to communicate messages to target audiences. In Romania, participants used their skills and knowledge to persuade mayors to expand library services, such as free printing for students and teachers and convincing mayors not to use library staff for other jobs in the city hall. In the US, more than half of PLA's participants reported that their staff and Board of Trustees are using key messages they developed as a result of the training with target audiences.

In the training, participants learn to actively share their experiences and knowledge about librarianship, innovative services, and user support, thereby strengthening the library system. In Chile, due to the advocacy skills that library staff incorporated into their work, they run successful volunteer programs at their libraries. Some libraries received budgetary support from local authorities to pay for volunteers' transport costs or hire volunteers as library staff. Another approach library staff use to share their experience is to model their new advocacy skills for other staff, thereby extending the reach of training more fully in the organization.

Training also improves the image of library staff and libraries in the community. As participants gain new knowledge and skills and change their attitude towards advocacy, they speak up for themselves and their libraries. Participants create news services and thereby change users' commonly held belief that the library is only a place for children to borrow books for school. Library staff help patrons use new services and realize the benefits of a new and modern public library. In Romania, library staff assist students with finding scholarships, work with local nongovernmental organizations to provide training to farmers, provide afterschool support for children to do homework, and assist adults to search for jobs, register for driving licenses, and sell and buy products online.

Participants become stronger community leaders and are able to consolidate the status of their libraries as knowledge, information, recreation, and community gathering centers, as centers where the entire community can find, use, create, and share information. As stronger community leaders, Chilean library staff use their new skills and knowledge to organize events such as cultural activities or diploma award ceremonies for information technology (IT). Library staff invite authorities and community members to these events, which the local media often cover.

Once skills and confidence are improved, participants are able to advocate for the value that library services provide to the community and the need for increased funding from the community or local government authorities to support those services. Through training, participants realize that obtaining and maintaining sustainable funding for the library is the responsibility of the library director, the board, and members of the staff; however, the library director must be the leader in this initiative. Participants understand, recognize, and embrace the notion that they are the primary advocates for the library, and being a library advocate is easier than they anticipate. Many of the participants have the latent skills; we help activate and refine the skills they already have.

As participants' behavior changes, libraries become recognized community cultural centers and users become involved as active members who also advocate for the library to local, regional, and national government officials. As a result of training, participants have stronger communication with local government leaders responsible for funding libraries. In the United States, in March 2009, six months after the advocacy training, almost all of the libraries (98% of 718 libraries) reported that they had met the first phase requirement to obtain matching funds from their local government. More than half (53%) reported that they had already met the match for the second phase of their grant, well ahead of the September 30, 2009 deadline. Participants are able to influence library budget decisions and local government authorities value library service and its importance in community development. They obtain additional funding for their libraries as well as sustain existing funding for library services. Finally, participants are able to advocate to include new library services in national policies and laws.

#### **Section 4: Training Content**

Our trainings have four topics in common that we feel are critical to include to ensure that participants can become successful library advocates. In this section, we will discuss each of these topics: the use of impact data in advocacy efforts, developing communication skills and knowledge of creating messages, building a network of supporters, and improving attitudes and self-confidence.

##### ***Impact***

Understanding and conveying the impact that a library has on its community is an important skill in advocating for the library. Local governments use this information to make decisions about the level of funding they provide to libraries for on-going operations and improving their services to the community.

A first, important step in understanding impact is collecting data. In our countries, prior to our programs, libraries did not focus on collecting data on the impact that library services have on a community. In some of our countries, many of the training participants had not thought of the diverse ways in which libraries change lives. Through training, participants learn the value of collecting relevant data that relates to the impact that the libraries' valuable social services has on the community, such as improving education, developing workforce and employability skills, and providing social communication.

After learning how to collect data, participants then learn how to use that data. Participants translate the data into a persuasive "story" about their library, articulating more effectively how the community benefits from the services and programs that the library provides to the community. Stories need to combine quantitative, qualitative, and anecdotal evidence to be compelling. Research in the US indicates that the public responds most favorably to stories that tell how public libraries transform lives. Data and evidence of the use of those valuable services, the impact they have on peoples' lives, and the stories describing that impact are powerful tools for changing attitudes and actions towards libraries.

In the US, PLA's advocacy training includes a module that informs participants of the results of research PLA conducted through the Online Community Library Center (OCLC) on the public's perception of libraries entitled, *From Awareness to Funding: a Study of Library Support in America*.

PLA then trains participants to use this research in their advocacy efforts. They help participants understand that the OCLC research demonstrates that people's perceptions are changing to reflect the information, entertainment, and education environments and that different target groups value different things about the library. The OCLC research also indicates that people who believe that library staff are "passionate" will be supportive of their library. This is an important fact for the participants to know, as they often undervalue the contribution and impact that they personally make to the positive perception of the library.

In Chile, BiblioRedes created several information systems that allow it to aggregate and disaggregate impact data at the library, municipal district, regional, and national level. As part of its advocacy training, BiblioRedes trains library staff to collect and provide this data to BiblioRedes. BiblioRedes developed several publications with this impact data that they distributed to all libraries and local governments. In their advocacy training, BiblioRedes works with participants to develop strategies to use the publications and data to demonstrate to local governments that libraries are entities in their communities worthy of investment. Specifically, they train the participants to use the data to demonstrate the costs and benefits of the different services offered to the community and present this information to their local governments. As a result, local governments have provided additional funding to expand or remodel library buildings or increase library staff salaries.

In Latvia, 3td worked with the national statistics authority to ensure that all important library metrics are collected annually and are available for use not only for library staff but also for local governments and other stakeholders. 3td trains library staff to use a web tool that allows them to easily input impact data. 3td also educates training participants the ways in which government uses impact data for budgetary decision-making and, therefore, why it is important use it in their advocacy efforts. As a result of the training and web tools, more and more library staff are using data collected in their library for advocacy, strategy development, and budget planning.

Library services are particularly important in rural areas in Chile, Latvia, and Romania, where libraries are often the only place for public access to the Internet and the only social or cultural institution in the community. In rural contexts, impact data can play a particularly important role in preventing libraries from being forgotten. In Chile, a study by the Under Secretary of Telecommunications conducted in 2005, reported that in one out of three municipal districts, the public library is the only place with public access to the Internet. BiblioRedes shares this information in its trainings so participants become more confident in the important role they play in their communities. As libraries become stronger institutions and library staff are aware of their role as leaders in the social, economic and cultural development of their communities, they are able to strengthen their work with existing users and attract new users. Local governments value the public access opportunity the library provides as it benefits voters and potential voters. As a result, local government is more willing to invest in public libraries.

### ***Communications and Messaging***

We use communication training to help participants understand that a community must hear from library leaders to understand how to support the library. The participants need to know that they are respected members of the community and the community members will listen to what they say. Participants learn that every person can be an effective communicator, that communication is both

verbal and non-verbal, and that they must practice presentation skills regularly. Participants also learn the role media plays in advocacy and how to choose, develop relationships with, and work with different types of media. Finally, participants learn to identify their different audiences and develop and deliver clear, specific messages targeted to those audiences, which is a critical skill in effective communications.

In the US, PLA's advocacy training includes several inter-related modules that focus on communication. Participants learn to develop and practice with their peers a 'parking lot speech', a speech short enough to be conveyed in a few minute parking lot chat, regarding the library's need for ongoing sustainable funding. PLA also teaches participants how to enhance their personal style, including communication, dress, and presentation basics, to maximize their effectiveness. PLA expects participants to model behavior for their staff by implementing their parking lot speech and teaching staff and trustees key messages to deliver. As a result of library staff and trustees delivering the key messages to patrons and members of the community, PLA anticipates that the community will better understand the need for continued and increased funding for the library.

In Romania, IREX emphasizes the need to have a clear strategy to develop and maintain partnerships with the media to meet advocacy goals. IREX focuses on developing library staff's communication and media relations skills and applying these skills to advocacy. IREX trains participants to write a press release, present the library as a trustworthy institution in the media, and create bonds with the media to get coverage of library issues.

3td in Latvia and BiblioRedes in Chile develop messages targeted to different audiences that they share with library staff during training. Both programs encourage participants to use these messages in their own advocacy efforts, modifying them to be locally relevant, to attract new users, and to attract the attention of local authorities, local media, and the community. BiblioRedes also worked with library staff through role-play exercises so that participants could create their own messages and identify an objective, target audiences, and goal for the message. They also trained participants to write a press release. 3td has seen an increase in media coverage on library issues, demonstrating that library staff are becoming more active in promoting their library through media.

### ***Networking***

Long-term sustainability of library investments is dependent on developing a broad base of support in the community. Therefore, library staff need to build relationships and partnerships with local nongovernmental organizations and government entities. Library staff are often comfortable with the users that come into the library and that they know. However, through training, we help them to understand the importance of getting out of the library to take the library's story to a broader range of community members who may not use the library and yet could be supporters. Library staff also need to build relationships with each other to share best practices, ideas, lessons learned, and experiences.

In the US, PLA's training includes information on developing community partners and relationships. PLA helps training participants understand that building new relationships and continuing to nurture their existing relationships is an effective tactic to boost their fundraising efforts. They want the participants to develop the willingness, knowledge, and confidence to proactively seek new

community supporters for the library, revitalize existing ones, and understand and commit to the “care and feeding” of these relationships for long-term sustainability. PLA helps participants understand that there are many groups in their local community that they can recruit as library supporters, that organizations that work together are stronger than those who work separately, and that together they can help increase a library’s public funding.

In Chile, BiblioRedes trained library staff to map current and potential stakeholders in the community in order, to identify those stakeholders specific areas of interests, and to plan targeted strategies and activities. Partnerships and networking have been a successful way to get the library recognized and valued in their communities. Library staff have networked within their community to attract users to attend computer training, and they have partnered with neighborhood associations, local offices of government services, police and fire departments, and micro entrepreneurs to promote such training services as web page development. In the six years BiblioRedes has been operating in libraries, more than 350,000 people have received training at public libraries throughout Chile and more than 6,000 web pages have been created by library users.

Latvia has a strong library network that includes structured cooperation between the 864 public libraries. There are 28 district libraries with staff who provide methodological guidance to other library staff in their district. As a part of this work, the district staff network the library staff on issues that affect their every day work. Before 3td’s training, library staff were already very active in networking with their library colleagues; however, the training encourages participants to network more intensively and in more diverse, creative ways. In the training, 3td trains participants in project management skills in a participatory way that engages participants in developing an idea and creating a plan to work together to implement it. In addition, 3td encourages participants to identify local community and government leaders and privates companies who could benefit from cooperation with libraries to provide training and other services to staff and clients.

### ***Attitude and Self-Confidence***

Each of our programs has invested significantly in improving library staff attitudes and building their self-confidence. Lack of confidence can prevent them from reaching out to important stakeholders, such as local government officials and community leaders. Through training, library staff can understand that they have sought-after skills and are able to provide valuable services to their community, improving their confidence to advocate for their libraries. If library staff value their libraries as educational, social, economic, and cultural development centers and place value in their work, a well-planned advocacy effort has greater chances of being successful.

In Chile, BiblioRedes addresses the issue of self-confidence through developing public speaking skills. BiblioRedes also trains participants to become local trainers and works with them to develop training strategies. This activity has built participants’ confidence in being local IT leaders. Since 2003, BiblioRedes has held an annual libraries conference, in which one of the activities is to have a panel of library staff share best practices and lessons learned on a variety of topics. In the first couple of years, BiblioRedes found it difficult to recruit library staff to be a part of the panel. This year, due to the increased confidence and skills in public speaking, they turned down library staff because so many were interested.

Another proof of their developing skills and change of attitude and behavior occurred during 2008, when DIBAM implemented a reading promotion program that involved delivering a set of books for disadvantaged families in each municipal district. In this activity, which is a Presidential mandate, library staff used all their advocacy skills to obtain the support of local government and the community. During the first stage, library staff distributed more than 100,000 sets of books. Each library used the opportunity to gain recognition from and improve their status with local governments and community members, as library staff appeared in local and regional media, highlighting their work.

In Latvia, during 3td's training on marketing and public relations' campaigns, they encourage library staff to view themselves as professional knowledge workers. 3td believes it is critically important that library staff have computer skills equivalent to their users and, therefore, provides extensive computer and Internet training to staff. 3td has also trained library staff in specific skills that local authorities and leaders are unfamiliar with, such as e-signature, thus boosting library staff confidence in their technical ability and making them more enthusiastic about the work they do for their communities. Finally, 3td holds a workshop for library staff entitled "How to be happy in the time of change", facilitated by professional psychologists and driven by the belief that people are more effective in their jobs if they are happy in life. This workshop and other face-to-face group training help library staff to feel that they are not alone, that they share similar problems and can learn from each other.

At the start of the PLA trainings in the US, 50 percent of the participants did not feel prepared to advocate for their library. As a result of the conference training, 98 percent reported being excited about advocating in support of their library, 99 percent believed that they can influence their community to support their library, and 98 percent were more confident in their abilities to advocate on behalf of their library.

## **Section 5: Training Principles**

Our trainings have four principles in common that, according to our experience, if put into practice will significantly enhance participants ability to become successful library advocates. In this section, we discuss each of those principles: using participatory methodology that engages participants in peer-to-peer learning, engaging trainers from the library community and from other professions, training library staff as well as other key stakeholders, and ensuring that the training results in a concrete output.

### ***Training Methodology***

Our training methodologies are designed to reinforce the content of the training. We include practical examples of how new skills can be applied and provide training participants with the opportunity to share their experience and knowledge with their peers. Peer-to-peer learning and active participation encourages self-confidence and networking. Applying new learnings through such activities as role-playing and creating an advocacy plans ensures that participants understand and have the skills and confidence to advocate for their libraries when they leave the training.

In the US, PLA's training includes twelve interactive work sessions. Each work session has specific learning outcomes, and the work sessions interconnect and build upon each other. Each session supports one or more parts of the advocacy work plan. PLA structured the training so that by the end of the event, all participants leave with an advocacy work plan. The intent is that they leave the event with a tangible document that serves as their work plan that they then implement upon their return home.

PLA's training sessions begins with a motivational speaker who's message resonates with the library community. Participants then go to their homeroom and plan their conference experience with their team (if they are attending the training with others from their library or community) with the guidance of a homeroom facilitator. The educational modules are facilitated work sessions that encourage peer-to-peer learning and dissemination of best practices as participants develop their advocacy plans. Participants share successful funding stories, ideas on overcoming obstacles and challenges, and help identify new community partners. By sharing information about their local situation with their peers, participants realize that others face the same challenges they do; they are able to identify new strategies to apply to their specific situation or issue; they can develop a support network to turn to; and they gain confidence in their own abilities and tactics.

In Chile and Latvia, prior to 3td and BiblioRedes programs, training for library staff did not use participatory, interactive methodology. 3td incorporates advocacy elements and issues in every training delivered to library staff. An example is the course *Innovation in Libraries* that includes topics such as creativity and motivation, project management, realization of creative ideas, communication within a creative process, and library marketing and communication. 3td designed the training so that participants work in teams and everybody is engaged in creative knowledge sharing. One of the main differences between the training library staff received before and 3td's training is that 3td's training focuses on practical tasks, such as the team-based development of an innovative library service and innovative communication strategy for libraries. Only after discussion of the newly developed ideas do trainers share the theory underlying the innovative process.

Before the BiblioRedes program began in Chile, training activities for library staff were scarce due to lack of funding. Those that took place were conducted in a traditional environment, centered on the trainer and the content. Therefore, when BiblioRedes implemented its integrated training program that was based on hands-on experience, collaborative learning, and applying strategies geared to promote learning among adult learners, library staff were enthusiastic and participated actively in the training sessions. During the training, learning is a process shared between participants and trainer. Facilitators do not just guide participants through the training process but rather participants experience and discuss the training issues with their peers. This leads to participants being more active participants.

BiblioRedes also uses role-playing activities and asks participants to show what they know. Trainers ask participants demonstrate new skills by giving presentations in front of their peers and trainer, which builds their self-confidence. Peer learning is encouraged by having participants work in small groups on topics such as planning advocacy activities, developing ideas for effective messaging, or attracting more library users. Participants provide feedback to each other and learn how to take and use constructive criticism.

In Romania, the IREX advocacy team designed and delivered its advocacy training course to address participants' needs. After an initial networking and public relations course, IREX surveyed participating library staff about their information and knowledge needs. None of the participants had been exposed to communication or advocacy training. IREX used collection of existing networking, advocacy, and public relations materials that use participatory methodology to develop their training curriculum. IREX decided to organize advocacy training sessions for county and rural library staff to start creating an advocacy core group. Those library staff with a little more knowledge of the topic acted as a resource for their peers and engaged them in interactive, creative, and highly participatory activities like role playing, designing of power maps, and training games.

### ***Trainers***

In our countries, trainers for library staff usually come from the library profession or academia. We found that trainers from different backgrounds and with unique professional expertise can help library staff expand their knowledge, supplementing the expertise participants already had as library staff. Collaborating with journalists, marketing specialists, motivational speakers, communication experts, representatives of different government services, and professional trainers to design training or train trainers or library staff can broaden library staff's perspective on the skills they need to advocate. Trainers with different types of expertise come with a fresh perspective on libraries and share knowledge and experience developed in other professional arenas that are also applicable to libraries.

Advocacy training for the BiblioRedes program is a collaborative effort among the Marketing and Communications, Operations, Studies, and Training Departments because BiblioRedes sees that effective advocacy strategies benefit from different areas of knowledge and expertise. BiblioRedes also works with different partners who have collaborated in designing and/or training the BiblioRedes team on specific topics for the advocacy training. In a model based on a train-the-trainer approach, the Marketing and Communications Department, in collaboration with other areas of the BiblioRedes Program, trains BiblioRedes regional training teams and who are responsible for training, working with, and supporting libraries. The Training Department designs, revises, and distributes the training materials to regional trainers, who then use the materials to conduct training for library staff in each region.

BiblioRedes also established a methodology of peer training in which it identifies experts and leaders amongst the BiblioRedes' regional trainers and library staff. The Training Department works directly with these trainers and staff, providing support and pedagogical strategies so that they can conduct and lead training sessions for their peers. This approach has been successful because trainers find it helpful to work with peers who have higher levels of advocacy competency.

In Latvia, the trainers represent different organizations, such as the Creative Economy Institute, the Association of Adult Education, and the School of Business and Finance. The trainers also have different backgrounds and education, in fields such as communication, marketing, sociology, pedagogy, psychology, philosophy, business and management, and economics. All the trainers also have previous training experience in courses like project management, critical thinking for development, innovation development, communication, and marketing. A consortium of companies and organizations developed the training content and methodology.

In the US, the PLA looked for professional trainers with communications and advocacy expertise. PLA went through a rigorous hiring process to determine who best suited its needs. PLA wanted trainers who had sophisticated knowledge of adult learning methodology coupled with deep communications and advocacy expertise. PLA's trainers are really facilitators. The trainers do not deliver a scripted lecture, but rather facilitate participant conversation and learning. PLA developed detailed learning objectives, core messages, and activities. In addition, PLA identified what participants currently know and what they should know. PLA's curriculum team developed the training materials; however, the facilitators have given the curriculum team input to refine the materials. The curriculum team consisted of communications professionals, an instructional design expert with knowledge and experience in the library field, and staff from an evaluation firm with expertise in impact and outcomes based evaluation.

### ***Training Participants***

Having local government officials, library board members, or other library supporters join training for library staff in advocacy creates strong support for the library staff to improve their advocacy skills. It also builds relationships amongst these stakeholders who are key to a library's efforts to advocate successfully for increased funding and more community support.

At the inception of its project, the PLA determined that to increase public library funding and ensure the sustainability of public libraries, it needed to include more people in the advocacy process. PLA believes that library leaders, including staff and board members, are critical stakeholders who need to be engaged in library advocacy. However, PLA also saw this training as an opportunity to engage others in the building of a library advocacy team. PLA determined that the ideal participant group consists of library staff accompanied by someone from the board of directors and an additional community member. PLA wanted the library staff to develop an advocacy team who could help secure funding for computers and the Internet in libraries. PLA saw the trustee and the community supporter as key individuals who could be motivated to use their relationships with community leaders in securing sustainable library funding. PLA feels that it is important for each of these stakeholders to fully understand the role they could play in their community to support the library and to equip them with the skills and messages they would need to do so.

PLA developed training modules that all participants take part in as well as modules that are targeted to each type of individuals' role at the event, such as library staff, trustee, or community supporter. PLA expects that the training team who developed the library's advocacy plan will be the same team that then implements the plan after the training. The shared training experience serves as a bonding experience giving the participants a better and deeper understanding and appreciation of the valuable roles that each participant performs.

In Romania, most of IREX's advocacy trainings were for library staff. However, IREX held one training that also included local government officials. Having officials present allowed library staff to test messages targeted at local government officials in a friendly environment. For local officials, the training was an opportunity to understand and better appreciate the services that library staff provide for the community. Local government representatives included mayors, accountants, and social workers. The accountants explained budgeting processes and constraints on government

funding, and social workers discussed the importance of libraries being open to all community members and providing a place for debates and meetings.

In Latvia, 3td has trained all librarians and library-based training center managers. The sustainability of the training center is partly the manager's responsibility; therefore, 3td believes that it is vital to teach basic advocacy skills for this group.

### **Outputs**

We find that training participants are more likely to be active immediately following the training if they develop specific outputs in the training. This approach also allows them to put their newly acquired knowledge and skills into action during the training.

In Latvia, participants leave the training with posters and descriptions of innovative ideas and solutions for library staff that library staff are sharing within the library community. Immediately after the training, participants have products that they can use in their daily library work that they developed with others and that library staff and trainers representing diverse fields have approved. Library staff leave the training with enthusiasm and an understanding that innovation is within their reach. Evidence shows that library staff are implementing ideas that they developed during training. At this stage of the project, 3td is developing an online tool for library staff that will allow them to share their best practices and knowledge more easily and in more qualitative ways, which in turn will foster deeper networking and will make the library system stronger.

In Romania, at the end of the end of the advocacy trainings, each county and rural library has an advocacy plan addressing a concrete issue in their community. The range of issues include setting up a branch in a local hospital, finding new space for the library, obtaining funding for new furniture, as well as larger issues such as having librarians legally classified as public servants. Each participant left the course with a plan containing issues in their community that would benefit from advocacy that includes an advocacy goal, advocacy objectives, activities, resources, timeline, individuals responsible for activities, and expected results. Before the training, participants' had little impact on decision-makers and the community. After the training, participants influence mayors' decisions, which has resulted in library staff obtaining adequate library space, improving library services, and solving community issues.

The training modules created by PLA in the US focus on helping participants develop an advocacy work plan. Leaving with a tangible work product gives participants a map of how to proceed upon returning to the library. Participants feel more confident in their ability to be successful advocates because they are leaving with a tool that they can immediately put in to action. PLA also created a social networking site where the training participants can track and edit their advocacy work plans, establish forums, ask questions, share ideas and success stories, and continue to engage in conversation with training facilitators and speakers. PLA continues to gather data from the training participants, and thus far, data indicate that the training participants continue to implement their advocacy plan.

In Chile, BiblioRedes focuses on having participants develop an integrated plan for their libraries. In addition to advocacy goals, BiblioRedes asks participants to develop IT training and access goals. Therefore, rather than library staff developing separate IT and advocacy plans, BiblioRedes asks

participants to develop a general plan of activities that incorporates all library activities. This activity allows participant to see that they should plan their advocacy activities along with the rest of the library's activities. Each BiblioRedes regional trainer conducts follow-up activities on their visits to libraries and library staff are expected to report on the status of their activities at the next training cycle in front of their peers and trainer.

## **Section 6: Conclusion**

Advocacy training is a critical means to build library staff ability to sustain the evolving services that they develop to meet community needs. Library staff often have advocacy skills but need their skills strengthened and need to gain confidence to use those skills. Advocacy training helps them to understand the need to demonstrate the impact that their library has on the community; strengthens their ability to communicate that impact through tailored messages to the community, government officials, and community leaders; builds their ability to reach out to diverse stakeholders to strengthen support for the library; and builds the confidence they need. Through advocacy training, library staff will be able to create sustainable library services that improve health, education, workforce skills, and employability, and build businesses that government supports and adequately funds.

Advocacy training also improves library staff's planning skills, as they learn how to set goals and objectives for future library services and advance the status of the library in the community; how to create, maintain and expand personal and professional advocacy networks; and how to use advocacy skills to the benefit of the library and the community. Library staff learn to serve as resource persons for grassroots groups and community initiatives. Therefore, the library becomes more and more of a community center, where the library staff can provide various types of information and services and improve their status in the community.

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