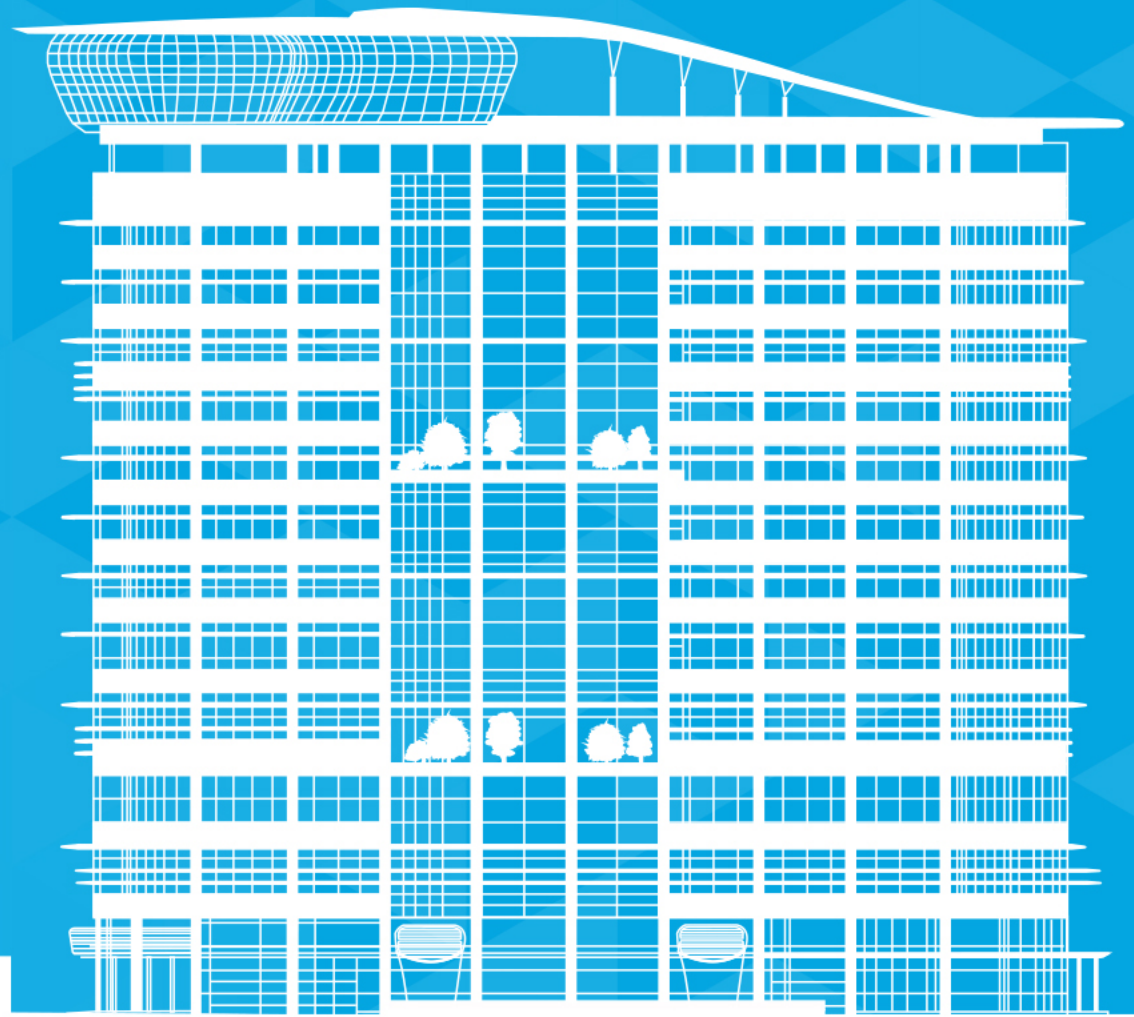
JOB REDESIGN: Building staff capabilities for libraries of the future

Zubaidah Mohsen
National Library Board (NLB) Singapore
APLIC
1 Aug 2018



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THE OBJECTIVE

To build a responsive **future ready workforce in public libraries** to deliver the goals of Libraries of the Future (LoTF) Masterplan

IMPETUS FOR JOB REDESIGN

LoTF Masterplan

2016 - 2021

=

To Remain Relevant

The Libraries of the Future Masterplan (LoTF)

Extending the library's reach through the
Remaking of spaces *and*
Increasing mindshare through digital services

1. **Upgrade physical library spaces** to enhance the library experience and support new ways of thinking and learning.

2. **Upgrade digital infrastructure** to build technological capacity and improve access.

OUTCOME

A Nation of Readers empowered with knowledge facilitated through relevant and adaptable library services and spaces, powered by technology and a future ready workforce

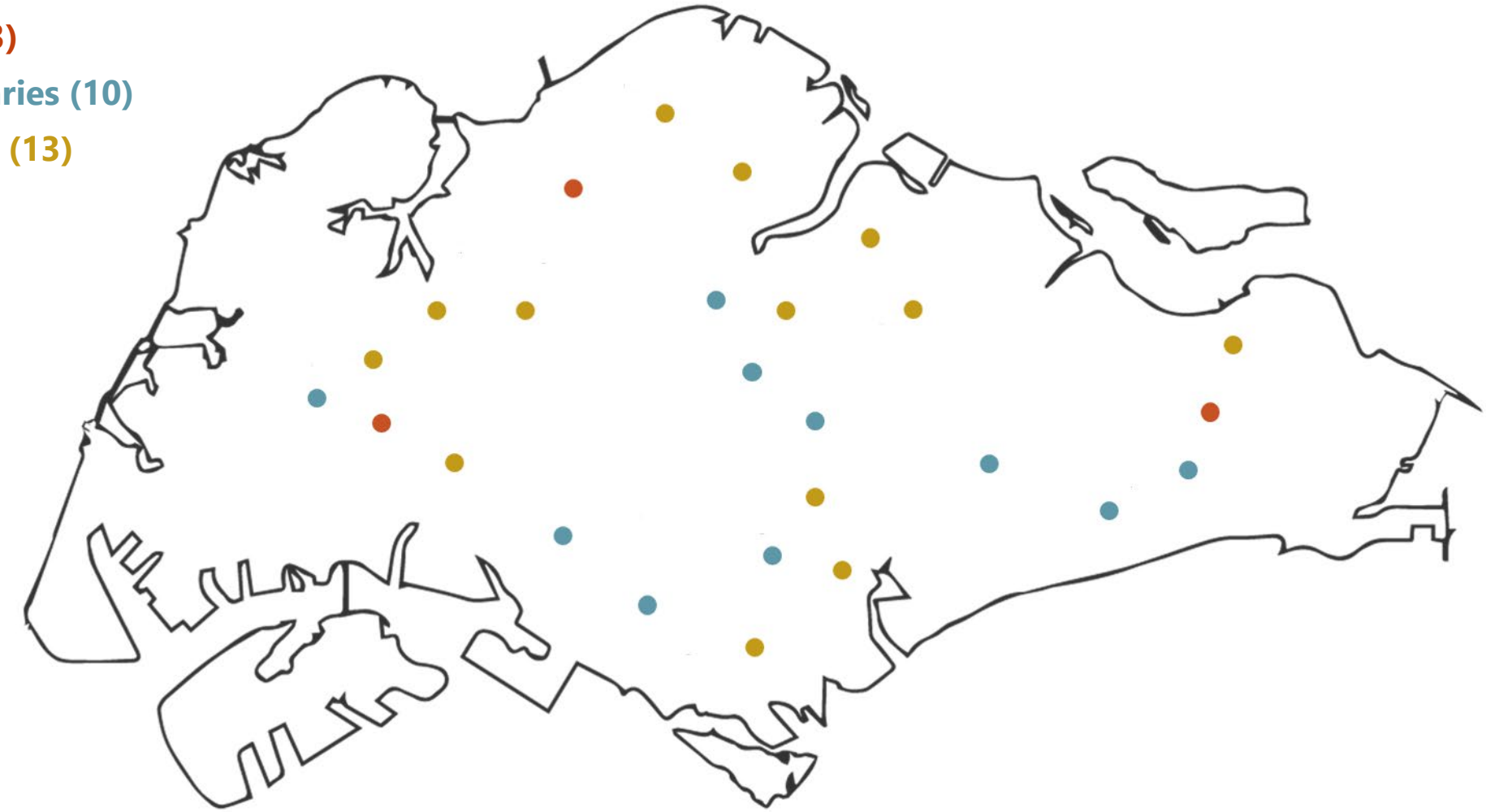
NETWORK OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SINGAPORE

Regional Libraries (3)

Standalone Libraries (10)

Mall Libraries (13)

26



Total visitorship (FY17)
23.7m
Total loans (FY17)
29.2m

NETWORK OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SINGAPORE

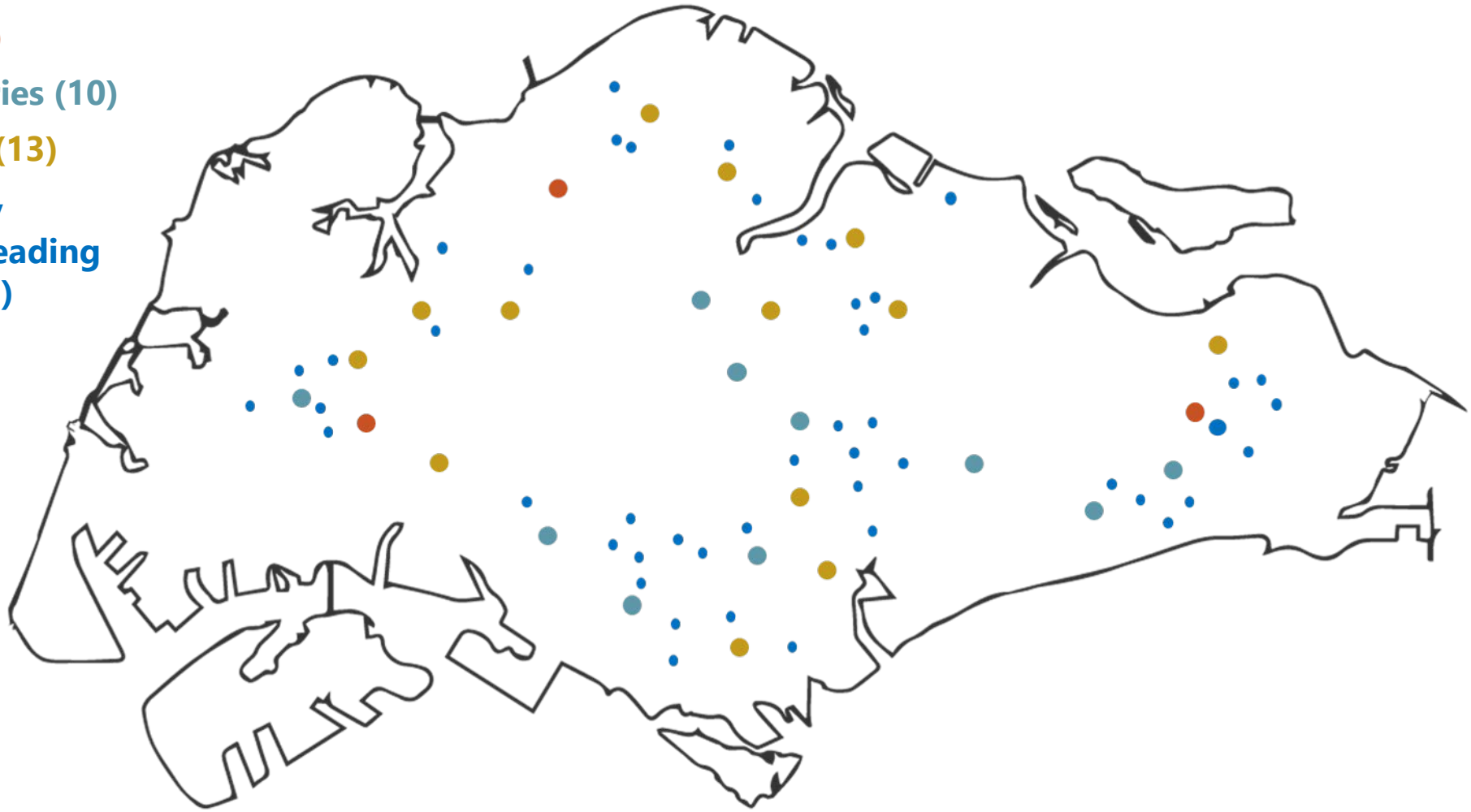
Regional Libraries (3)

Standalone Libraries (10)

Mall Libraries (13)

Community Libraries/Reading Corners (47)

73



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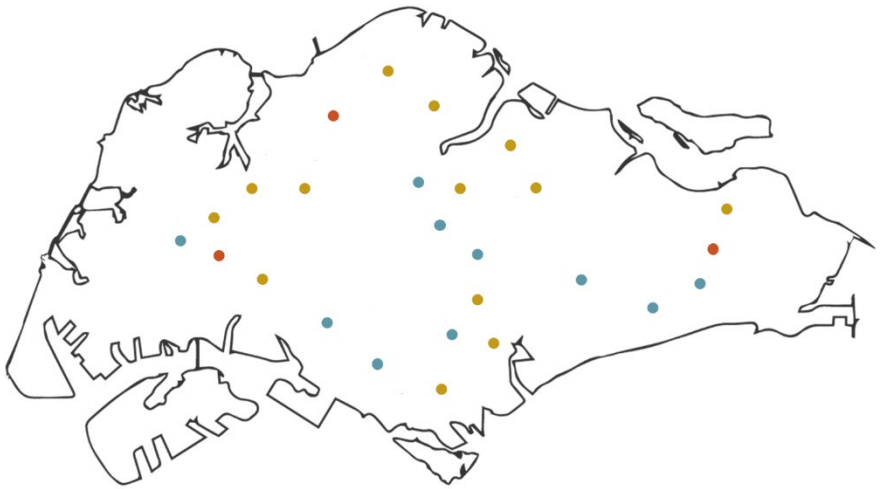
PUBLIC LIBRARY STRUCTURE



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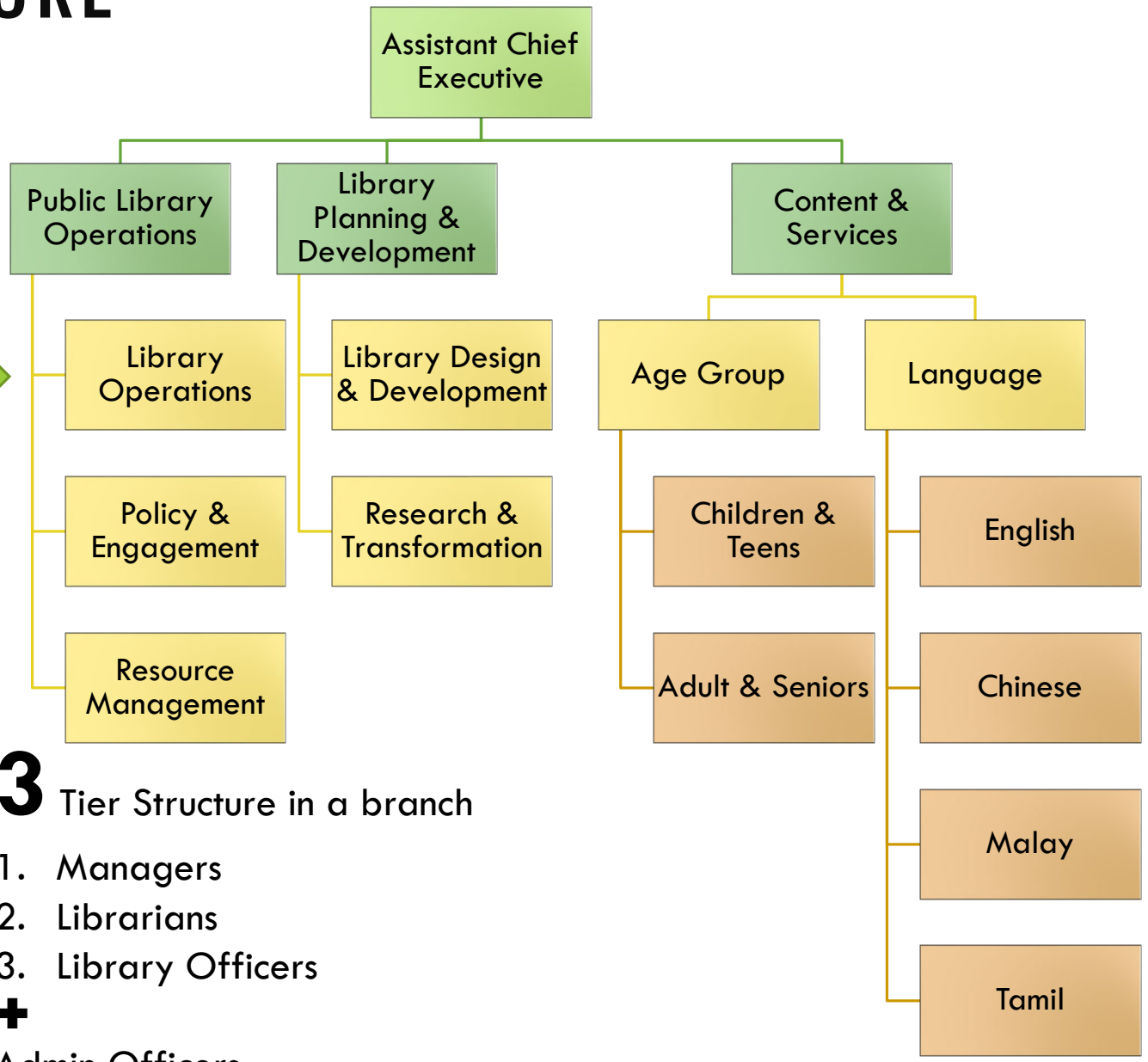
Regional Libraries (3)

Standalone Libraries (10)

Mall Libraries (13)

One network. One focus.



3 Tier Structure in a branch

1. Managers
2. Librarians
3. Library Officers

+

Admin Officers

JOB REDESIGN for Library Officers of public libraries [Para Professionals]

4 TYPES OF CHANGES IN JOB REDESIGN

Skill-mix change	Job widening	Job deepening	New role creation
• moving tasks up or down an existing hierarchy	• expanding the job scope of a role by bringing together functions which may have been done by different individuals in the past	• giving a role more significant and substantial responsibilities, greater autonomy or opportunity for development	• combining new and existing roles and functions in innovative ways

JOB REDESIGN JOURNEY: FROM CURRENT TO FUTURE

1. Preparing our staff to deliver the higher value added services
2. Upskilling our staff to take on new areas of work that is necessary to achieve our outcomes

To fulfil the Masterplans & Roadmaps

LO job scope

Operations & transactions

Mass Engagement

New Upskill LO job

Operations & transactions

+

Storytelling

Promotion of collections through thematic displays

Facilitate programmes

Upskill Librarian's job

Curation of content

Business and Data analysis

Community and Volunteer management

Developing and delivering targeted content and services

Thought Leadership

Automation & DIY processes

- Auto sorter
- Self service lockers
- Improve way finding
- Counter-less libraries

Customer service shift from transactional to relational, with increased engagement and services.

PRE-IMPLEMENTATION

- Commissioned a Time-log study
- Short-term trial: 4 LOs
- Survey of interest areas: Children Services and Services to Seniors
- Focus group sessions
- Chat with staff of pilot branches
- Feedback from training

CHANGE MANAGEMENT & COMMUNICATION

Feb 2016
- Comms
- Small-scale trial

Jul 2016
Training of pilot batch

Aug-Oct 2016
Pilot at 2 branches

Jan 2018
Implement

Communicating Changes

- Townhalls
- Region Walkabouts
- Branch Visits
  - Broad LoTF vision and outcomes
  - Need for change
  - Changes in individual roles

Engaging Staff

- Focus Groups
- Surveys
- Meetings
- Mentorship
  - communicate plans
  - poll ideas and feedback
  - pilot and review

Review and full implementation

- Reviews of pilot run
- Chat session
- Survey to validate
  - Balance load: Ops vs Service
  - SOP & good practices
  - Adapting to staff capability

SEEDING A CULTURE

Spark Interest

- Professional Sharing
- B.L.A.S.T! or Bold Act of Self Learning
- Battle of the book lovers

Build Content Knowledge

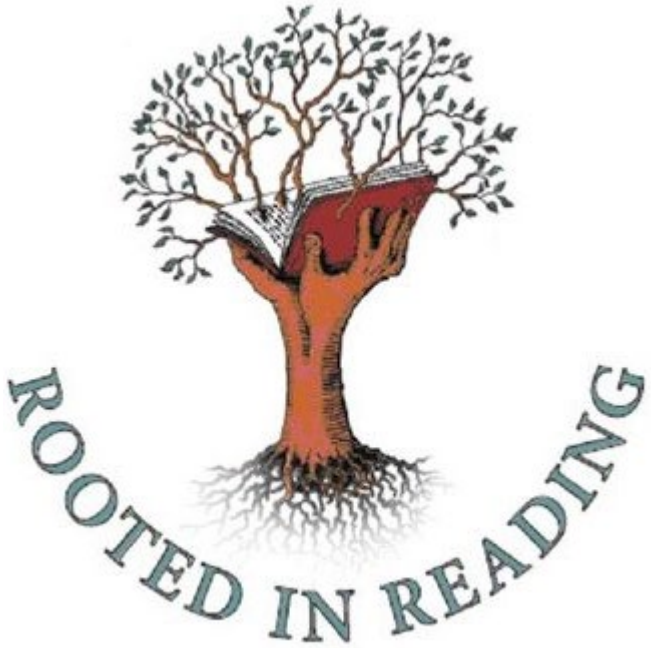
- 100 MUST READ titles
- Book Chat

Nurture Confidence

- Guidance by librarians
- Prepare & Practice
- Co-conduct
- Peer coaching

Motivate Continuous Learning

- External speakers
- Courses:
  - special needs, managing volunteers, merchandising



Source of image: @rootedinreading Twitter account - a reading promotion project developed in Lincolnshire by CfBT

SPARKING INTEREST

Battle of the Book Lovers (BOBL)
30 Nov 2015

100 MUST-READ Titles

Job Redesign Training

For internal reference only

18 Jul 2016

SPARKI

11 **Last Stop on Market Street**
Matt de le Pana
JP DEL

12 **Make Way for Ducklings**
Robert McCloskey
JP MAC

13 **Miss Nelson is Missing**
Harry Allard
JP ALL

14 **Pete the Cat and His Four Groovy Buttons**
Eric Litwin
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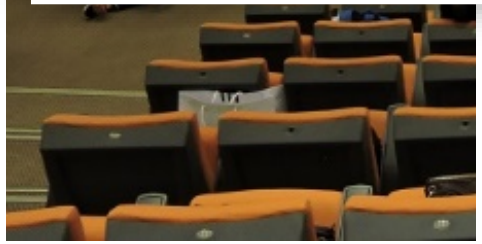
B.L.A.S.T!
Bold Acts of Self-training



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- A refresher of training content
- Talking points or catalyst for discussion at branches

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TRAINING: JULY 2016 – SEPTEMBER 2017

3-day in-house workshop

3 months practicum after training

3 months extension if necessary

Mentored by Librarians

Area	Description
Storytelling	• What is storytelling? • How to choose stories • Types and techniques of storytelling • Typical session
Book Displays	• Different channels of book displays
Class Visits and Tours	• Why conduct visits? • Managing different age groups • Different types of visits
Collection Recommendation	• Overview of library collection • Must-know authors • Must-know titles • Reading materials

Supplemented by mentoring and self-learning

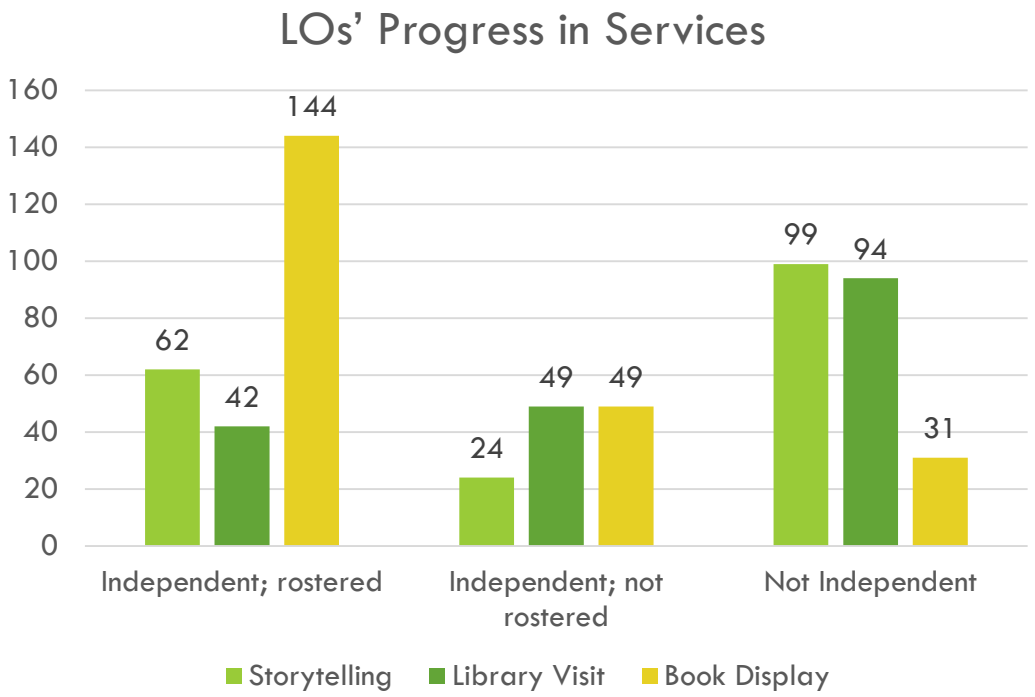
TRAINING: JULY 2016 – SEPTEMBER 2017

191
Total Number of staff
(Excl Molly, EP, OC)

185
Number of staff trained

Practicum
97 (53%) Completed
69 (37%) Started
19 (10%) Not started

6
Number of staff did not complete training
(Maternity, Medical leave, New staff)



SNAPSHOT OF TIMELINE

Jul 2016

- Training in children's content began
- Training for mentors began

Nov 2016

- Seniors content was incorporated

Jul 2017

- End of training phase (scheduled)

Sep 2017

- 2 additional rounds of training in Aug and Sep

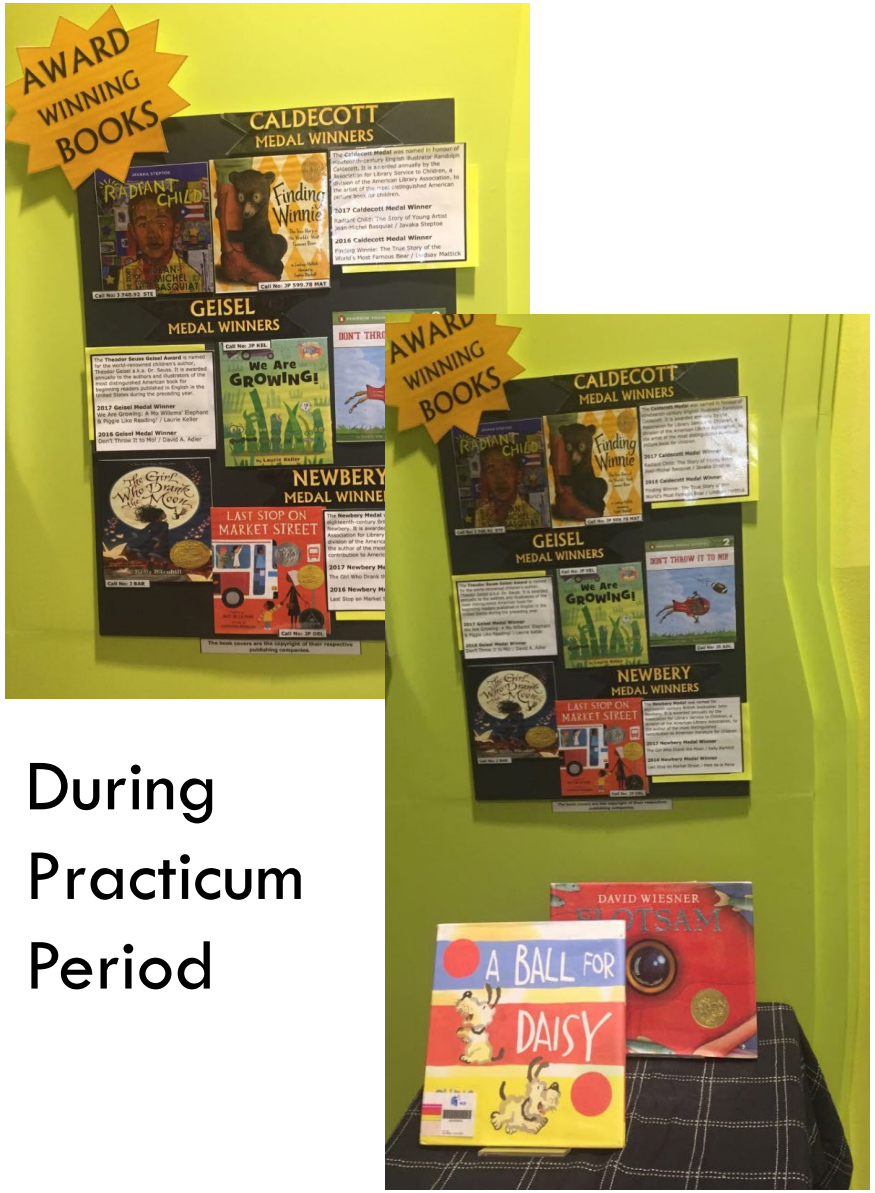
Streamlining of structure for Librarians

IMPLEMENTATION

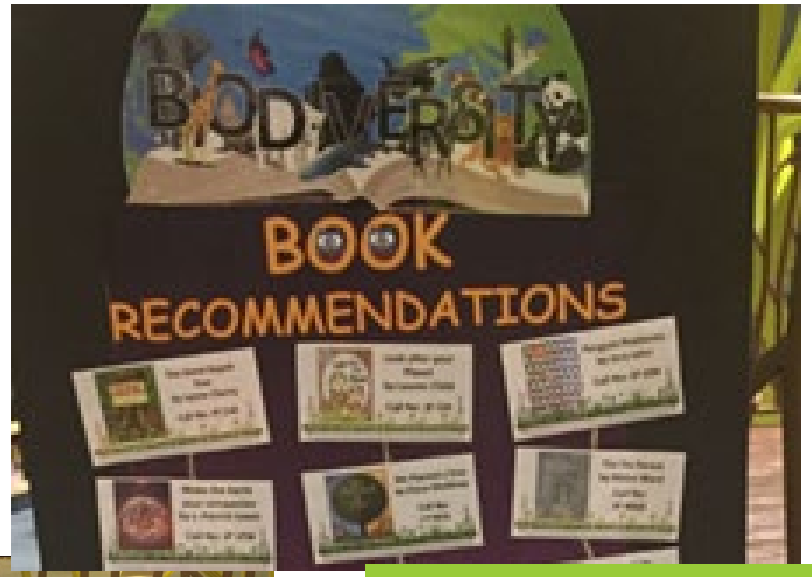
Jan-Mar 2018

- **Combined Services** Begins In Jan 2018
- LOs to take on storytelling sessions at libraries in phased approach from Jan to Mar

SHOWCASE OF LOS' CONTENT WORK . . .



During Practicum Period



Behind the scene ☺

Library Tour

. . . LEADING VISITS

LOOK AT HOW WELL THE LOS HAVE DONE!

CHECK-IN & REVIEW

- 2 more rounds of Time-log study to compare, 6 months apart (May and Nov 17)
- Survey of LOs
- Focus group sessions
- Continue to monitor the situation and make changes when necessary
- Provision of training e.g. advanced storytelling, handling of patrons with special needs, volunteer management
- A continuous process

FROM CUSTOMERS

Positive Feedback

- Staff are knowledgeable about collections and their whereabouts
- Need not wait for counter to open as phone lines available
- Staff are always available and responsive

Constructive Feedback

- Prefer staff rather than phone line
- Staff sometimes do not pick up phone calls or line is engaged

Negative Feedback

- Received written feedback on 15/08 saying, “The idea of a “faceless” customer service is not a good one! In fact it is bad! No one at the desk for 4 hours! The library comes across as lazy.”

FROM STAFF

BENEFITS/IMPROVEMENT OF COUNTERLESS

- **Patrons are more independent**
- **More time for other duties**
- **More engagement with patron/Provides a personal touch**

CHALLENGES OF COUNTERLESS

Operation difficulties

- No queue system. Need to attend to more than 1 patron at one time
- Go in and out of workroom to attend to patron
- Need to access LMS to help patron

Patrons cannot find help

- Unhappy/ impatient patrons. Knock on sorting room door
- Patron tend to crowd around staff/ chase after staff when they see one
- JRL: Phone keeps ringing. Patrons queue up to call staff at counter

Difficulty with seniors

(more prevalent at 2 branches - TP & JRL)

- Seniors want a physical counter where they can get immediate answers
- Seniors cannot self-help. Not IT savvy
- Helping seniors over the phone is difficult

EASE OF TRANSITION INTO COUNTERLESS

Possible inferences from ratings by staff:

- Bigger libraries have greater difficulty
- Libraries which are reopened as counterless have more time to adjust
- PRPL and SBPL have younger community who are more ready for DIY services

FROM STAFF

ON TRAINING AND MENTORING ARRANGEMENT

- **Greater awareness and/or better knowledge/understanding of new job scope and the related resources, skills**
- **More confident**
- **The mentor is helpful**

ON WHAT WOULD HELP IN PREPARING THEM IN TAKING ON NEW DUTIES

- **Mentor should give mentee time to learn and adapt for storytelling**
- **Establish a SOP/ timeline from training to roll out. Avoid rushing in with the new duties**
- A buddy system for LOs to help one another
- Branch sharing for storytelling
- More hands-on

Mindset

- Open mindset and positive learning attitude. Seek help from mentors and colleagues
- Learn continuously and learn from mistake

Manpower & workload

- Do not reduce manpower as counterless does not mean less work, only different types of duties.
- Reduce back room duties eg. processing weeding, discard

Q8) OTHER COMMENTS

New Job Scope

LOs might feel very overwhelmed with the new scope as well as doing their normal operational scope.

Even though the counter duties have been reduced, library officers are still occupied with the operational duties, handle dispute cases, complaints, incidents and other ad-hoc duties.

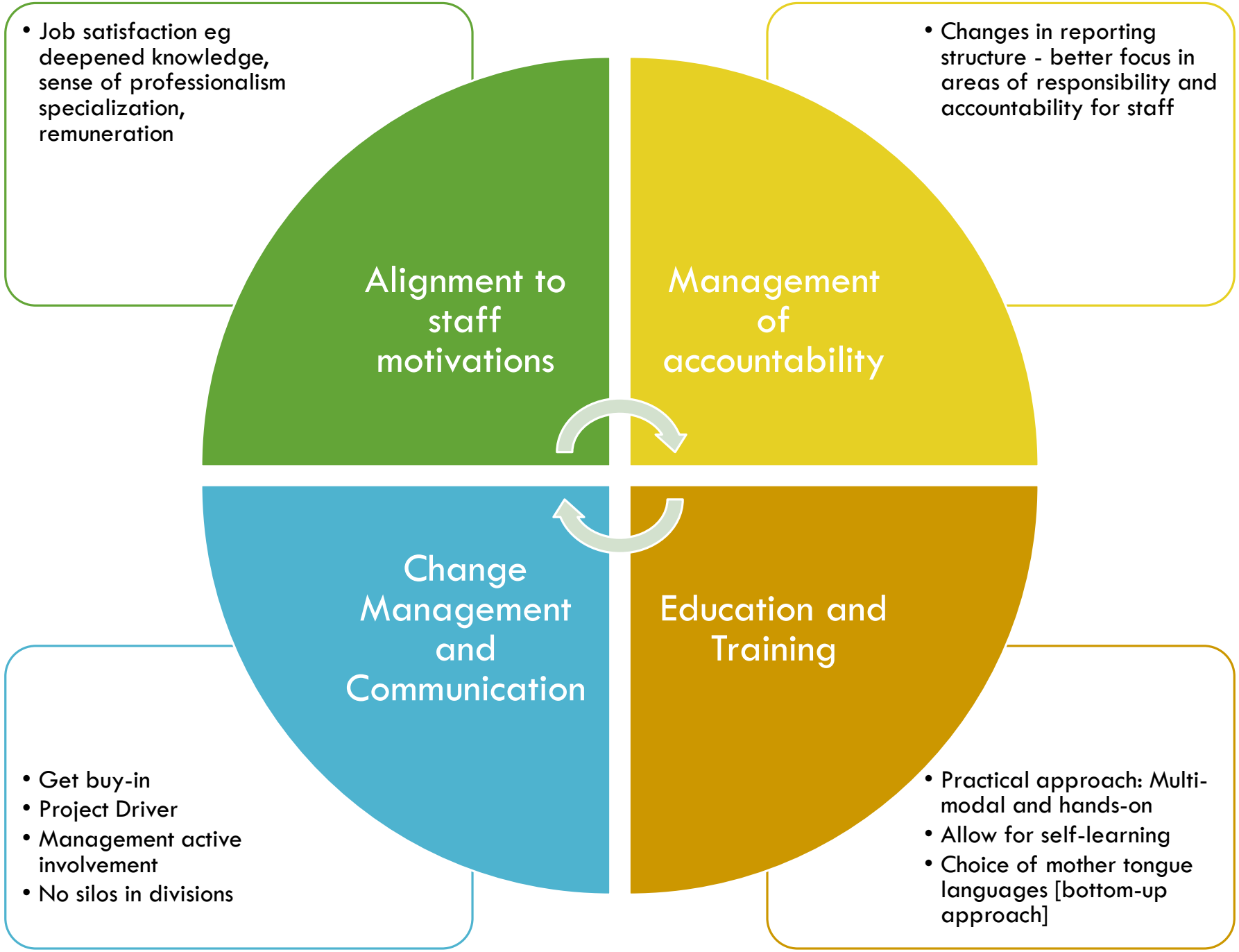
Storytelling

good exposure for staff

…optional for library officers to choose

Librarians can also continue conducting the STs (storytelling)

LEARNING POINTS



CONCLUSION

- A continuous journey. Move on to the next phase of Librarians' Job Redesign
- Continue to streamline operations/work processes and DIY services so that we could further enhance staff's capability and content knowledge
- NLB has a role to play in promoting and supporting the national agenda of building A Smart Nation. Our programmes and services would have to be extended to promote digital readiness and support the development of future skills.

Thank you

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