

BILL & MELINDA GATES fo

INNOVATING TOGETHER

LENEVE JAMIESON reports back on the final International Network of Emerging Library Innovators meeting held by the Global Libraries arm of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

INELI-Oceania offers emerging library innovators from the Oceania region the opportunity to connect with each other and explore new ideas, experiment with new services and learn from one another. These innovators have done amazing things with few resources and many challenges.

INELI-Oceania has fostered these successes since it began in July 2014 as the first of seven International Network of Emerging Library Innovators (INELI) regional programs. Its aim was to create a mentoring network of library leaders and innovators in Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific and to foster collaboration and partnerships among stakeholders in the region. The first program had 16 participants from the Oceania region and was built around a suite of online learning modules, participation in professional development teams and face to face meetings. The second cohort of 18 participants began in 2016 and will conclude in June 2018 with a final convening in Fiji to wrap up the program.

INELI itself was established in 2011 by the Global Libraries arm of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Since



2015, there have been a number of meetings in Seattle hosted by the Gates Foundation which have been attended by representatives of all seven regional programs around the world - Oceania, India, ASEAN, the Balkans, Middle East and North Africa, Ibero-America (Spain, Portugal and South America) and Sub Saharan Africa. From 28 February to 2 March a final INELI meeting was held in Seattle. It was the culmination of six years of shared learning and endeavour in public library leadership and innovation. The participants from INELI-Oceania at the meeting were: Atlanta Meyer (INELI Innovator), Allison Dobbie (Chairperson, INELI Steering Committee) and myself, Leneve Jamieson (Program Manager, INELI-Oceania).

The 2018 INELI meeting had three broad goals: learning, linking and 'open space' for participants to structure their own meetings for deeper learning and collaboration and for the innovators to plan for the future of the global network. Sixty participants were tasked with presenting and discussing the most important success components of each regional INELI, as well as its challenges, its future opportunities and sustainability approaches. With pre-reading on network leadership and collaboration, the program leaders and the selected innovators from all the INELIs launched early on Day 1 into a series of six-minute presentations covering these topics.

Limited to 20 slides at 20 seconds each, the presentations were tightly programmed and a lot of fun. There was a vivid



overview of different contexts, with shared challenges and experiences on display. And there was a clear recognition of a shift in thinking from 'me' to 'we' alongside a growing sense of self-confidence in the innovators. A highlight was when the brave Colombians put video clips into some of their 20-second slides, showing vividly their passion and the strength of their librarian/community relationships while also giving themselves some timing challenges. They handled it with style.

Atlanta learned so much from the other INELI innovators' presentations. 'They were all different' she said, 'but they all included one common factor - this program has changed our lives.' In a room full of librarians from around the world with an abundance of enthusiasm, positive energy and shared knowledge and experiences, the attendees presented as a strongly-bonded group - a group that sees itself as the future leaders of the library field. The INELI program has offered them tools, knowledge and skills as well as the confidence to step up and take charge.

The presentation story by the INELI-Oceania team acknowledged many of the same successes as our international colleagues, with particular emphasis on the amazing things our Pacific innovators have done with few resources and many challenges - infrastructure issues, health, social and educational barriers and the impacts of climate change. We gave significant focus to the forthcoming South Pacific Libraries Summit on 1



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June. Its purpose is to advocate the role of public libraries and librarians in society and to inspire a vision and agreement for collaborative and sustainable development of public library services in the region. As the INELI-Oceania program comes to a conclusion, we want to leave a memorable legacy in this small corner of the world by bringing together a large group of people to participate in an Advocacy Day (31 May) and a Summit Day (1 June). We hope that the Summit will build awareness of and support for the role that libraries can play in helping to achieve the UN 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. We will be seeking commitment to a joint Call to Action for public library development and collaboration in the South Pacific. We plan that the outcomes achieved will also go forward as a contribution to the [ALIA Asia-Pacific Sustainable Development Goals Summit](#) on 29 July 2018. 

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