Spring Executive Committee Meeting
April 17, 2015, via Conference Call

Topic: **Refining YALSA's Intended Impact Statement**

Background: **The Board's chat in April focused on drafting an intended impact
                   statement, and came up with the following wording: "The Young
                   Adult Library Services Association's target population is members.
                   Over the next three years YALSA will equip members with the
                   knowledge, skills and tools they need in order to successfully
                   implement YALSA's new vision for teen services in libraries, as
                   described in the Futures Report. By the end of three years, YALSA
                   members will leverage community partnerships, embrace leadership
                   roles, and build skills to serve all teens, especially those who need
                   them the most." The board agreed to leave the statement in draft
                   form for now, until the strategic planning consultants were brought
                   on board and engaged in the process. Vicki Emery feels that the draft
                   statement is too broad. She has provided the following information to
                   the Executive Committee.**

Action Required: Discussion

What is an Intended Impact Statement?

A statement or series of statements about what the organization is trying to **achieve** and will hold
itself **accountable** for within some manageable **period of time.**

> *Achieve:*
> Impact on a segment of community, a positive sustained change in people's lives.
>
> *Accountable:*
> Measurable, realistic, agency has reasonable control. Allows investors, partners, and you
> to know when, and how, the agency is successful.
>
> *Time Period:*
> Prevents "never ending" syndrome, affords analysis of what's working and not.

Identifies both the **benefits** the organization seeks to provide AND the **beneficiaries.**

 A *benefit* is an advantage; its effect is long lasting.

(From: http://www.communityaction.org/files/HigherGround/Intended_Impact_handout)

Bridgespan gives us a road map for achieving our goal of writing a good intended impact statement:

http://www.bridgespan.org/getmedia/b187783e-4daa-4b7b-b7ff-98e8c26246af/1-1-Process-Guide-Final.pdf.aspx

Basically there are three main steps with embedded smaller steps broken out. The smaller steps are where I believe we became bogged down in our March board call. I suggest that we follow each step outlined in their document and that we make decisions that target specific groups. We talked about that in the board call but I believe (and this is my opinion) that we are so used to being everything to everyone that it is extremely difficult (but ultimately not impossible) to limit ourselves to focusing on a specific group and a specific intended outcome. No matter what we decide to do this year, it has to be focused, measurable, and time-bound. So what do I think we should we do next?

I like what Maureen has posted to the Google doc. These are items from the Futures Report which we have repeatedly stated as what we need to tie our organization's future work to. We cannot focus on all of the items listed at one time. So we have to decide as a group what we can realistically accomplish. Also, there are more things we could pull out of the Futures Report that we may want to focus on. We need to then work through (in order, coming to a consensus) all of the questions in the Bridgespan document under "What is intended impact?" and more specifically on the three steps and related bullets under To create your intended impact, i.e., 1. **Define the outcomes**, 2. **Define the target population**, and 3. **Define the timeframe**. The hardest part is defining the outcomes.

We talked about target populations in our March board call but I am not sure it was productive. I think it might work better to carefully and methodically work through items in the Futures Report that we may want to focus on using the framework in the Bridgespan document. For example, using one of Maureen's suggestions, we may decide that we want to focus on:

- Strengthen their ability to communicate with others about the library's values in providing services for and with teens

We would then need to come to consensus on each of the questions under:

1. **Define the outcomes** your organization will be accountable for, using the following questions to stimulate your thinking:
    - What change do you hope to see in the target population due to your programs (e.g., new knowledge, increased skills, changed attitudes/behaviors, etc)? We need to do this even though we have not yet decided on our exact target population. No matter what our target population is, what change would we want to be able to document in our target population, no matter who it is?
    - What are you trying to maximize (or minimize)?

- How do you define short term success for your organization (in terms of progress toward your intended impact)?
- What are we willing to be held accountable for? Or what should we be held accountable for?
- What would we measure to know if we have succeeded?
- What won't we try to achieve in this time frame?
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2. **Define the target population** very specifically. We talked about members, non-members, all library staff who work with teens, teen librarians, all librarians, all library staff, administrators. I cannot remember where we ended up, but I think we said members. We may want to reconsider after going through the steps above in defining the outcomes. We need a group that we can reasonably reach to assess our impact. It is my feeling that we may not get it right the first time, but eventually we will.

3. **Define the timeframe** in which we will achieve these outcomes.

The Bridgespan document goes on to define **theory of change**. The April board call focused on creating a workable intended impact statement. After we have that finalized, we can then work through creating our YALSA Theory of Change and our Learning Agenda. Note at the bottom of the Bridgespan document:

"For now, **it is better to write a clear, focused intended impact and theory of change and have some disagreement among team members with the resulting document, than to write a vague or broad intended impact and theory of change that includes all points of view."** In my opinion, this is the hard part for us because I believe that, by our nature, librarians are all-inclusive. As a professional value, that is important. As an organizational value, that is important. We **can** be all things to all people,. . . but not all of the time. We will never have the capacity to do that, but we can continue to make a huge difference in the impact our organization has on the world, one small, focused piece at a time.