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### **Paper:**

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## Leading from the ranks

**W**Henever I talk about my participation in the pilot CILIP Leadership Programme, the first reaction from my colleagues and friends is along the lines of 'So are you going for a promotion / a new job then?' Of course I have updated my curriculum vitae to reflect my involvement in the programme, however making an immediate career move is not the primary reason for applying and taking part. My motivation for participating in the CILIP Leadership programme is to undertake leadership development for myself, analysing my own leadership approach and identifying areas where I can learn and demonstrate further leadership skills for my current role or in any future post.

*'Library leaders may or may not be managers or administrators; leadership can be exemplified through project planning, event coordination, or task force or committee work without a high rank or title.'*<sup>1</sup>

Participating in the programme, learning about leadership theories and styles, hearing about fellow information professionals' career journeys to leadership roles and networking with colleagues from a variety of sectors, I have had an opportunity to reflect on how I can advance my own experience of leadership, undertaking new roles and challenges to facilitate this progression.

### My development as a leader

At the first face-to-face workshop, held in July last year, we were asked the question 'What makes an effective leader?' Our answers were many and varied but I identified three which I recognised I could build on for my own development as a leader:

- An effective leader is mentoring at all levels

Over the past year, I have had the opportunity to mentor a newly-appointed professional colleague in my workplace. I have found this experience both enjoyable and rewarding, and so have now completed the training and successfully registered to become a CILIP Mentor. I am looking forward to supporting and

## CILIP Leadership Programme



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guiding colleagues from other sectors as they undertake CILIP professional registration.

- An effective leader is not afraid to take on new challenges

In 2015, I was invited to join the Local Organising Committee for the European Association for Health Information and Libraries for the EAHIL conference in 2018, which will be held in Cardiff. As part of this group, together with Kristine Chapman (Principal Librarian, National Museum Wales) and Sarah Bruch (Knowledge Services Manager, Prince Philip Hospital), we will be taking a lead role on social media and marketing work for the event. I have co-lead on award-winning library marketing projects within my own organisation, but this involvement for the EAHIL conference will be on a larger scale and allow me to work alongside and connect with health information professional colleagues from across the UK and Europe. An exciting challenge!

- An effective leader networks

Taking part in this leadership programme with colleagues from a wide variety of sectors and roles has reinforced how valuable it can be to network with information professionals from beyond Higher Education or my own subject area. During our February 2016 workshop, we undertook an

exercise which demonstrated this. All were challenged to write down two or three work problems or issues we had either experienced or were currently experiencing. In small groups, we passed these around so every group member could write down a suggestion to help towards a solution to the problem. A simple but powerful exercise, providing evidence of how advantageous it can be to network with others, discuss problems and collaboratively identify potential solutions. I have set myself a goal of continuing to network with librarian colleagues from all sectors and will be attending the CILIP conference in Brighton this year.

### Time for reflection

Over the last eight months, the CILIP Leadership Programme has galvanised me into action in achieving several professional goals I had identified for myself, including Chartership Revalidation and Mentorship. More importantly, it has provided me with the space and time to reflect on leadership and to identify, take on and learn from new leadership roles which will stand me in good stead whether I move on, move up or continue in the ranks.

*'Leadership is not the realm of the most senior staff nor the most experienced, nor the youngest, who are often viewed as the most innovative. The aim is to cultivate leadership at all levels and to recognise it in all types of individuals and roles.'*<sup>2</sup>

### References

- 1 Lowe-Wincentsen, D. & Crook, L. (eds.) *Mid-career library and information professionals: a leadership primer*, p. 50. Cambridge: Chandos, 2011.
- 2 Roberts, S. & Rowley, J. *Leadership: the challenge for the information professional*, p. 13. London: Facet, 2008.

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