

LoT Co-Lab Session 1

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0:00:00.0 Speaker 1: It's good to see everyone. Thank y'all for joining us.

0:00:01.8 Tom Llewellyn: Welcome in. The other pitch I just wanted to give, related to Canvas is that we are starting to put up the discussion questions for each one of these sessions. And so if there are questions you have related to the topics of each training ahead of time, that will help our presenters as well. So please do jump in there and engage in the chat and so we can start those conversations so we can get off on a good start in these sessions. Also, since we have a moment, and I was gonna say something at the end, but instead I will say something right now. So Shareable's involved in a lot of different projects, and one of them that is just coming out today is we have collaborated on the production of a new animated short video, short film about the history and challenges and current potential for rural electric cooperatives.

0:00:56.6 Tom Llewellyn: If you don't know about rural electric cooperatives across the United States, there's 42 million, people who own, their member owners. Of their electric utilities. They have governance rights over their electric utilities. It's one of the largest cooperative sectors in the United States. And for the past four years, Shareable has been working with a group of about, 18, 20 other organizations to support the just transition of these electric cooperatives to clean and renewable energy. Co-ops, they have some of the highest energy prices. Nine out of the 15 most fossil fuel polluting, energy sources in the United States are electric cooperatives, and they serve 92% of the federally recognized persistent poverty counties in the US as well. So you have people with the least amount of means, paying the highest amount for electricity and bearing the brunt of some of the worst environmental pollution from that electricity production. Just in the last couple of years, our campaign has been successful at getting almost \$11 billion in the Inflation Reduction Act to support that transition of these co-ops, which is very... It's a historic reinvestment in this infrastructure. And today I'm actually in San Antonio, Texas, where we are premiering this new film Power to the People. The story of rural electric cooperatives.

0:02:21.0 Bill Barberg: And I've often used the electric cooperatives as an example of a really successful business model over the decades that instead of just saying, we're gonna give some subsidies that will allow rural people to pay money to the big monopoly corporates so they can get electricity, they establish the cooperative movement to be able to give them support. They did get government subsidies, but it was government subsidies to create a co-op, which then became a long-term economically viable economic engine for those communities, rather than federal money that would go to the local rural people to pay to large corporations that could raise their rates mercilessly because they would always be sucking more federal money into their pockets. And so it's cool to see taking that to the next level of supporting them in going green. So it's cool on multiple and multiple levels.

0:03:21.1 Tom Llewellyn: All right. Thanks for adding that in, Bill. Appreciate it. And with that, we have our presenter, Amanda, you've made it in.

0:03:26.5 Amanda Miller: Thank you guys so much for joining in today. And thank you guys. I'm so sorry for inconvenience and thanks for selling, y'all. But I'm Amanda Miller. I am the executive director of the South King Tool Libraries. We do call ourselves Skittle. So if I say that it's not necessarily the candy that I'm talking about, you can see from these pictures I have spawned my mini mes, my tiny humans here. They're my reason, they're my purpose and the future is why I do things, because it's an inevitability. There's a lot of opportunities. I am humbled to be honored. Just

this last week, I was chosen as the hometown hero for the city of Federal Way. And I've been acknowledged by peers and community groups. I am president of the Optimist International, a Federal Way, a international organization that supports women and girls in their education.

0:04:24.1 Amanda Miller: And I run a school of 600 PTA, I do a lot of other things in the community, advise the superintendent, work with people of a lot of different backgrounds, do environmental consultation. I spent a decade in supply chain logistics, ran a distribution center for Honda Motorcycles and power equipment for 11 years, which is very eye-opening to the experience of that world. So yeah, I just wanna dive in 'cause I'm excited to share with you guys. And I don't even know how many people do we have. We have 61 people, which is amazing. I'm not that important. I'm just a... I'm a conduit. I'm a vessel here. So you can write my name down, you can write that down. Whatever you wanna do with that. I use she, her pronouns. And I grew up in Southern Virginia, a real place called the Great Dismal Swamp.

0:05:19.5 Amanda Miller: Not entirely relevant unless you PLA that two truths and a lie game with me. And then that's really difficult. But yes, that is my son that is not OSHA certified. He is not supposed to be, he's supposed to be have a helmet or probably not be a baby strapped in my chest while drilling. I tried to lead by example for these guys though. And I have done a couple things that I'm pretty proud of as far as in the realm of tool libraries, lending organizations. I joined the board that was a steering committee at the time to help start a tool library in South King County, we're in Washington state, of course, and if you don't know much about King County, it's the place where Seattle is, but it's also an extremely diverse area that is represented underutilized and amazingly diverse culturally, socioeconomically. South King County, especially.

0:06:08.2 Amanda Miller: My family made the journey to live in Federal Way. And I had only just heard rumors of tool libraries. And when I joined the board, I wasn't sure what I was really getting into. Needless to say, in 2019, I became the executive director of the South King Tool Library and helped finish building this building, the big blue box there out of recycled shipping containers. We had a vision, we had a mission to get a tool library into the region, and we did it. We built that building. It took way longer than you would think. Do not recommend, thank you. Building outta shipping containers necessarily they have pros and cons, don't get me wrong, but it was not as easy as the engineers designed it to be, of course. So when we decided to try to start another tool library, we weren't sure what that would look like. It turned out that it was going to be in a mall.

0:06:57.7 Amanda Miller: So I have two divergently, they could not be more [laughter] opposite examples of tool libraries and how they can be resources. Now, we say tool libraries, but what we mean by that also is we lend a lot of different things. Tools are everything from chainsaws to sewing machines, dehydrators, paper making kits, crickets, lawnmowers, all that good stuff. We do talk a lot about, well, tools... We're really a library of things. And I was happy also to connect with Tom and the Shareable group because I worked under the several grants that brought us to the iteration of a tool library incubator program. And so we were trying to figure out how to replicate. I've been asked what scale is for tool libraries and programs and, my focus has always been community at the center. It was difficult to say who should run a tool library other than the people that it will serve.

0:08:01.6 Amanda Miller: And I think that's something that I wanna talk to you about in a little while. I'm framing this conversation for folks that are starting out from wherever they are, whenever they are, but have not started a tool library. And I am by no means the master of all things tool library. I would consider myself a subject matter expert, which is weird to say, life is weird and

that's what happens. Yeah, I'm proud of these organizations, proud of this organization and where we've gone with it, running both of these locations amongst many other things. Our tenets of primary principles, you can say our sharing, training and empowerment, and all of the grammar folks out there would be very curious to say, why not empowering? Why would you do that? It could be so nice and succinct, but we were really intentional about choosing those three tenets.

0:08:57.6 Amanda Miller: And that's because empowerment is not something that is going to be transactional sharing. You have this one, you can share something simply training, you can attend and have training and it can live and breathe and be something with you. Empowerment is something that is not a very tangible measurement, and we're pretty proud. And in, like I said, intentional about that being a center focus for us. So we do all these different programs. We started doing repair cafes before we even started tool lending because again, life is weird and we weren't sure how to get going. We didn't have a host to build with, we didn't have all the structures in place, but we knew we needed to start somewhere. And if I can leave you with anything today, if you have to leave right now, then start somewhere is the only thing that I would make sure that you heard.

0:09:55.9 Amanda Miller: But I wanted to just highlight these different programs, these different ideas that we've done because I didn't invent those. I, again, not the singular mind. This is something that has evolved in our community. We partnered with a lot of great organizations, a lot of great collaboration facilitated this, including governments. We have worked under every level of government with grants, contracts for service. And the region that we live in is fairly conducive to this type of effort. So we had really great partner organizations that inspired us and collaborated with us.

0:10:33.2 Amanda Miller: Just a couple background context, but today, we'll be talking about engaging your community and the community at large. So I'm just gonna run through, we'll do a little icebreaker since we have 60 folks, I probably won't have everyone share in their icebreaker. But then I, again, in my, I don't know, seven years or so with the organization being on the board, and now as executive director, whenever I don't know where to start, I always go back to the W's.

0:11:04.9 Amanda Miller: You can't go wrong with trying to figure out the who, whats when, where, whys and hows of a project, of an aspiration, of a dream here. That's how I broken up this session to get you your mind in the right framework.

0:11:18.2 Amanda Miller: First things first, like I said, it's not about me. This is about you. And if you could, if you are available to do this, I want you to do two things. Perhaps if you can get a piece of paper and split it into four sections, then do that. Split it into just four sections, just like any blank piece of paper like this. And just split it into four sections. Don't worry if it's not perfect, if it's not huge, you can get four sticky notes, whatever you need. But do that. And then also, if you have a second, put into the chat.

0:11:49.0 Amanda Miller: If you were a superhero, what would your superpower be? This is an exercise that I do with actually in inequity work and environmental justice to get a frame for folks in their power. Power is an interesting thing. You get into tools and you talk a lot about power. And you start to realize when you work in community, what the power dynamics are that are at play, whether you like it or not, or whether you are party to it or not. If you take a minute, a lot of... X-Men is one of my favorite, but I am a nerd amongst many other things. But think of what superpower you would choose. Would you wanna predict the future? Would you wanna have super

strength? Would you wanna transform into any object yourself? Yeah, there's an endless supply. Oh yeah, that's a good one. Ability to speak and understand all languages. That's a good one. Clap. Hold on. [laughter] Teleportation. That's a good one. Speed, alchemy. Ooh, that's awesome. Clone myself in more than one place. Me too. Totally time travel. Ooh, calming. I love it. Time travel. Yes. Understanding others' motivations. Lord, don't we all want that too? Flying. Cool. This is very specific, manifesting on a horizontal surface. Is it two dimensional transformation? Is that cool? Awesome.

0:13:26.0 Amanda Miller: Oh, abundant man. There you go, Tom. Nice. Oh, I love that. Talk to plants. Probably pretty close to that actually. [laughter] All right, you guys, your imagination can run with this. I have kids. My kids are really inspiring to me. If you've not had the pleasure of having kids and you wonder maybe why people do it, I don't know. I know that they're constantly teaching you things and especially things about superheroes, but they are endlessly creative and most of them are not too scary in their interests. But it made me start to think about what happens if you have super speed? Would your clothes catch on fire? Do you guys see the Flash? And you guys close caught on fire a couple times? What about if you fly? There's laws. My husband is a big nerd for Star Wars and Star Trek, and I try not to science it because it ruins it.

0:14:21.3 Amanda Miller: At least bugs in your teeth would be a problem for anybody that's flying. You'd have to get a face shield, all these things. And if you x-ray vision, or even if you could read minds or understand things beyond what we can already as humans, what would that tell you? Would you wanna know? Would you wanna be privy to all that information? It's a lot of responsibility. So in that, thinking about your power, your privileges, the position that you are in... Internet, [laughter] the fact that we have technology and access to programs like this, or running water, of course, simple things that we have that we don't really understand what the power and the privilege is and how we can use those for good, of course, but also how it can be a debilitating factor for us as well. It's gonna limit us in our ability to understand and relate to folks that may not have that power.

0:15:22.1 Amanda Miller: So as you're traveling through this journey that you're on right now to serve your community and engage meaningfully, I think keep that in mind. Go back to that. How is this power dynamic going to be? Shaping the conversation, shaping the approach that I'm taking, shaping the group that I've formed, or the people that we're serving, or as many communities that we connect with. There are very intelligent people that have a lot of different experiences and we can learn so much from them, but we also must take into consideration the fact that we can progress, we can do more, we can do better. And questioning everything is something that I say all the time. Not great when you have kids also. Super fun when they're like you, that they are giving that right back to you. Thank you guys for giving, participating in that exercise. And it kind goes into what we're talking about here today too, with the who, what, when, where, why, and how.

0:16:25.9 Amanda Miller: Those are common questions. Again, like thinking my 10-year-old, all of those questions and those being the W's, the primary ones that we think of, I think they're out order for what... Especially what we're talking about today. But in general, what I struggle with, if I'm considering a question or a problem, what order am I gonna do these in? So do I do the, how and why first? Or do I do the, what and where first? And there's many schools of thought on the correct approach to this, even the correct order for this. But I like to think of it like this. There's a lot of why, involved in every aspect of how and who and when, and all these different components of the decisions that you're going to make along the way. So I've reorganized them for today's

meetings. Why first, what, when, where, who, how?

0:17:22.0 Amanda Miller: And that's doesn't really, it's not very relative, except that you're going to eventually get to the how, with the information that you get along the way. And the most important piece that we are gonna talk about right now is the why, not sure if you all are familiar with the principles of Ikigai. I studied Japanese architecture and gardens and in college and Chinese archeology. Again, you don't wanna play two truths and a lie with me. It's a weird time. But the principles that come along with Ikigai, of course, are something that we can all relate to. We wanna do what we love. We want to, you're here. So I assume you probably wanna help the world. And you have skills, you're good at things, whether you see it or not, whether... And have a full inventory of what those are. And inevitably, we have to be paid. We have to live in this society. Now that does not necessarily mean money because life is weird. And your capital, your time capital, your investment in yourself, your social capital, all these things are cumulative. And that is a form of payment. The way that we create the framework of what we're doing, I want you to ask yourself why. Why are you here today? Why are you doing what you wanna do? Why are you setting out or why do you run a tool library?

0:18:49.0 Amanda Miller: I think I set it up so that there's a breakout session next. And I did not give you guys any warning whatsoever, so we might, we're good to go. [laughter] Okay. Might need a second, but I put some suggestions down. Environmental, most of us, I've talked to tool libraries around the world and the environmental awareness, community awareness, cost, community resilience, my future humans, your future humans, all these things can be a big why. And you don't have to necessarily have it all hammered out. Just the first thing that comes to mind or what your strongest desire is. We can go to a breakout session and maybe have a sharing of what your why is for you, what your why is today. And you might wanna write that at the top of your paper too. And if you don't have your why today, if you didn't get a chance to share or you didn't get to connect with everybody, the reason for doing this is mostly just to frame the rest of the session too.

0:19:46.9 Amanda Miller: Because if you don't know your why, then you can run around for quite a while in making decisions. It helps to clarify your decisions, helps to give you priorities and the things that you're making. So your why might change. Your why might be something that you discover along the journey too. There's no need to... There's no right answer. There's even no wrong answer. There's even no judgment in what your answer possibly is. Thank you. The next thing that I wanted to talk about is just the breadth of the different types of tool libraries, the different types of libraries of things that exist in the community, in the world, and those that don't exist. What kinds of things, programs, resources, structures, do you have, maybe concrete, maybe established, maybe you see this as a huge need and that is what you're doing.

0:20:37.7 Amanda Miller: So the what's are the next things that you can consider and think about as you are developing your idea. If you have those really concretely already established, or if you're really open, I would... If you're right at the beginning of developing your structure, your organization, then you're gonna need to maybe have some flexibility in that. And that can be based on what is the need and what you get. Feedback is actually the need. We don't wanna do the thing where we're implanting something that we think is the best thing, but we don't have the insight to get to know what might be better is another easy lift here with when will you have time? You are here right now. Do you have to do everything? Probably not, hopefully not. It's a good idea. You won't. When are you gonna start? Do you have a timeframe in mind? Do you have parameters already established for yourself? The smaller the box you start out with, then the more finite you

have that the larger the box, the more maybe questions and problems you might run into because it's too much, too fast.

0:22:00.2 Amanda Miller: There was a really interesting conversation I had one time about mission creep and I've had several conversations since then about that. And I think it's a really fascinating concept to question and poke at myself when I'm starting new endeavors or when I have conversations about my time, [laughter] or the things that are important to me, thinking and taking inventory. This is just, this is the pre-work to what we're really getting after here. So I'm not gonna waste more time.

0:22:30.8 Amanda Miller: See, can we go forward? There we go. And then the where, right, physical space, where are finding your boundaries, as it were. There was something I saw recently, of course on a Instagram or something along those lines where it was an ant with a circle drawn around it and it wouldn't go out of the circle. And it was imaginary borders that we have. And there's economic theories and concepts that talk about borders and what it is to have borders to things. But what are your, where are you, where are you physically? The people that you have complimentary programs, what is around you? Who are the people you wanna connect with? Where are they? Since we're focusing on where, but where are those people? Are there universities? Are there like-minded groups around you? And where does it make sense to begin? There's working in supply chain logistics for me was very insightful.

0:23:30.9 Amanda Miller: Everyone got to know supply chain logistics during the pandemic when we ran out of toilet paper amongst other things. And there's a never ending puzzle pieces that we could put together for this structure of where does thing... Where do things come from and where their flexibility is. Can you tell me where the pen that you're writing with the origin, where you got it, but then where did that come from? And then how did that get to you? How does that translate into your goals, your mission and vision? So where is pretty important, even in environmental work, besides the fact that you are physically maybe in a space and confined by borders of sorts, but what are the parameters you're setting for a where too?

0:24:24.3 Amanda Miller: I was gonna do another breakout, but I think I'm gonna wait because really this is a personal exercise for you all to do now or later or over and over again. And this is something that if you're writing it down right now, if things are coming to mind, or really if they're not, 'cause I just won't stop talking and then that's fine too. You can come back to this later. It's very simple principles of the W's to visit for help, helping you to make decisions. Another the biggest other W, I think, when it comes to making decisions and starting and engaging folks is the who. And that's really the nexus of this session. We're talking about our community and engagement and how we get folks to engage and seeing who is present. Who are your supporters, who are your inspiration? Who serves as your neighbors, whether you know them, you've ever spoken to them or not, they're part of your social network.

0:25:29.7 Amanda Miller: And understanding or getting to know or relating to those different entities can help frame and be a huge proponent to your success or failure and your capacity to adapt. Knowing the partners in your community, knowing the leadership, knowing how you are going to talk to folks that maybe don't agree with you on every level of politics or purpose or mission and vision. Understanding that the who people bring everything that they have ever done with them when they come to you and they're talking to you on any given day, and they might be having a really bad day and they might be going through a lot. How are you going to talk to all of

these people? Who are the people that need the things that you are going to bring to your community? Bring and serve in your community, how this shapes... And if you don't have this in mind, then there's a huge gap that you will run into.

0:26:42.3 Amanda Miller: And I'm spending a lot of time very intentionally slowly talking about this because I want it to really resonate and be a, I dunno, something that you value or take and understand because you are starting on a new journey today. Whether you are starting a tool library or not, today is a new journey. Today is a day. You're gonna have to figure out how to talk to all sorts of different people and engage with them. So understanding the who is terribly important. Let's see. Ah, yeah, this is a good one. There's also, who is missing? Who is not at the table, who is not in leadership, who is not reflected in the partners you've established, the supports that you've created? Who are the people that don't have a voice, don't have the representation. This is silly, but the PTA you guys, I'm old now, but I remember the PTA growing up, Parent Teacher Association.

0:27:53.4 Amanda Miller: Super cute. When I joined in my kids' school, I was really excited. But also, I'm not that mom. The organization was actually renamed PTSA, Parent Teacher Student Association because the students understood that they needed to have a seat at the table too. And eventually it got big enough where everyone understood this. And again, if you can't relate to it, it's fine. But there's so many folks that are missing from our tables, missing from leadership, from the decision making, from a presence that you would inherently have if you just hosted things on the internet. No offense to at all. But if you just have digital connections with people, then you are gonna miss out on the people that maybe don't have that ability or that advantage or just didn't see the event or couldn't get to it somehow weren't already in that circle. So understanding and questioning who is missing?

0:28:51.6 Amanda Miller: Who are we not seeing come to our events and come to our programs who's not participating in conversations? One more breakout. I think I do wanna do one now. I know it's hard to try to get everybody, so maybe if you talked at the last one, you let someone else talk at this one, don't feel the pressure, but let's do five minutes and just especially talking about the whos and who we feel like, we are able to connect with in our community really easily. And who maybe it's a challenge to connect with because that if you don't understand your shortcomings, if you don't understand the problems that you're going to encounter, who's not participating in conversations, then you might not be doing all the work that you could do. So take five minutes and we will go to a breakout real quick and talk about the whos, everyone's gonna have a full report at the end of this.

0:29:50.2 Amanda Miller: We're gonna, it's a test. You must come up with the no, there's no not the best answers. All right. Are we back, Bobby? Mostly. Okay. All right. No time to waste here. The next step is how is what... We all wanna know? We all wanna know the hows. There's websites dedicated just for how to start libraries of things, how to start tool libraries, how to start in your community, libraries of things. But I bring to you, you wanna take a picture of this, a screenshot. This'll be shared with you later, but some of the how's that you wanna consider as you are starting out a new even program, how are you going to react to the failures, the funding, shortcomings or sustainability questions or successes?

0:30:42.5 Amanda Miller: How do you celebrate those? How are you gonna convince people to join you? Elevator speeches and two minute videos are terribly popular in our culture right now, but how do you make them impactful? How do you make them meaningful? And how are you gonna

promote your ideas? What makes your idea so good? Relating to people is another question. There was a great tip from a library friend of mine that said, did you know that with the AI you can convert things to a fourth grade reading level? And thinking about classes and workshops that I'm writing descriptions for, maybe for a grant or for approval with a collaborator. Folks that wanna understand what the class is about, having it written in very simple language helps prevent idioms, metaphors, things that they might not understand if English is their second language or if you're translating it into a different language.

0:31:45.0 Amanda Miller: What that could be. The intentionality of the hows are terribly important, but deciding what governing principles you have with regard to, yes, Hemingways is a great app, but how you decide to present this information, how you respond to questions as an organization when you grow, that is a big question. And problem with the more people you bring on, the more opportunities you have. And when you try to get people engaged, when you try to find the right people, find the missing link. You have to do that in work to see what you are missing. The who is also extends into yourself. Who are you to bring this to the community as a steward, as a leader. So having to do the work on yourself and introspectively, for folks to relate to it, for you to understand, you're the idea person and not the organization, a structure person.

0:32:49.6 Amanda Miller: It's a deep conversation to have even on your own. This is a great quote that I harken back to you all the time. It was originated with the disability rights movement is prevalent. But something just keep in mind when framing decisions and framing your context equitably is really making sure you are not doing a, saviorism doing something that is going to be without the engagement and investment of people. The biggest way to alienate people is to tell them what they need. Can tell you that from having children again, they will tell you what they want and if you tell them what they need, they completely disagree. But on an adult level, it is, one of the biggest missteps that we make. Generationally as a white, maybe neurodivergent person, I have to question myself constantly to make sure that I am doing the right thing with people and not for them, especially in the work.

0:33:53.1 Amanda Miller: So engagement, you've really been working on this the whole time. We've been talking about this the whole time because you have to have the framework to create meaningful engagement. You engage by doing all of these things. You create the foundation, the structure. There's a reason that nonprofits, books, and websites and years of study are dedicated to organizational development. And business models range widely for our programs on a international scale. Also, when you're recruiting your leadership, it's important to have them also join in and do this work. It's not easy. And while you do wanna have talented leaders, key leaders, filling gaps that you need, making sure everyone is on the same page is terribly important. We talk about needs assessment. The Shareable survey that we've done has been really helpful for that. That's one way you can do passive surveys. You can creatively partner, make more partnerships that are meaningful.

0:34:58.0 Amanda Miller: But asking for help and starting somewhere, going to where people are and meeting them is a meaningful way to engage. Being intentional, mindful, all these lovely L-Y words being accessible. What does that mean? We work to be a barrier list model at the tool at the South King tool library. There are barriers that we do not know exist and that haven't even been put up yet. So constantly going back and iterating on that. So always go back to Maya Angelou's wonderful quote, "Doing the best you can until you know better. And then when you do, when you know better, do better." So working to engage with everyone, finding leadership in the spaces that

you want to connect with. Organizations that are already maybe working with people in that meaningful way. 'Cause you are not gonna be able to do everything. You do not have the connection to cultures that are beyond your breadth.

0:35:56.3 Amanda Miller: And you can have a terrible misstep by trying to, again, make that assumption or not take that into consideration. You're gonna have reluctant people too. You're going to have questions and framing how you react to those will can be your death or success. And you can also do that with programs that create those pathways for people to engage with you. Because if you don't know where people are, then you don't know how to get to them. That's really all I have for you today. This was about you [laughter] and your start, your beginning, your community. I can't tell you how to engage with your community. I was jokingly saying, Tom, this is a blank presentation that I get to give because, I don't know most of you on this call and I don't think I'll probably get to talk to all of you, but you have to do the work now and you have so much that you can take reference from and within yourself to help you guide that.

0:36:58.1 Amanda Miller: I have some really cool books here that I would suggest to anybody that's starting in this work, starting in this realm. And there's many more that can help lead you that. But don't let the fact that you haven't checked a box or read a book or done this be a mitigation to you starting. You've already started. If you wrote the paper, if you did anything at all today, you thought about any of these questions, you did it. So you've started, you have a pathway forward because you have some framework of an idea and it's already be in progress. So what's the next step? What are you gonna do next? All right. Yeah, those there questions. I know failed at getting question time in before 2 o'clock, but I can stay here and yeah. Thank you guys again for your time.

0:37:52.0 Tom Llewellyn: Yeah. So thank you so much for starting us off with really those key questions. Where to begin, what are those questions to ask yourself and your group? 'Cause hopefully you're doing this with other folks than beyond just yourself. We have another session next week where we will be going right into the actual maintenance of an acquisition of items. But between now and then, I wanna invite people to pose any questions coming outta the session that you have as you were doing your, Four Corners work and documenting some of that stuff for yourself. Feel free to post it in the discussion forum for this first session. And if you want any feedback on that, I'm sure, Amanda, you'll be willing to hop in and support and other folks that have been running live rays of things are in a great position to do so as well. Do wanna make sure we honor everybody's time. And with that said, so if you need to hop off, please feel free to jump off. But Amanda, you also said you'd be willing to stick on for a few minutes and let's just try to keep it to a handful of questions, 10 minutes max for those that wanna stay on and ask you any questions.

[background conversation]

0:39:00.8 Amanda Miller: Definitely. Especially if I did not make any sense at some points. Like I said, I am a neurodivergent person and sometimes it makes sense to me, but what the heck am I talking about? Yeah, thank you guys. Oh, my goodness. I'm trying to read the chat too. Question here. Yep. Thank you.

[overlapping conversation]

0:39:18.9 Tom Llewellyn: Bring that in, Bobby. Yep. I also was gonna say that we are gonna be putting this slide deck onto Canvas and we'll be posting the recording of this session most likely

tomorrow. And then the transcript from this, from the session a couple days later.

0:39:38.6 Amanda Miller: Ooh. Book list. I got you. [laughter] Yeah. Does your course have a reading required, reading already, Tom, do we have... [laughter]

0:39:55.0 Tom Llewellyn: We don't, but I think starting a reading thread, a discussion thread for resources would be great.

0:40:01.5 Amanda Miller: Absolutely.

0:40:03.3 Speaker 5: Amanda, you mentioned needs assessments and needs surveys. The thing that you've done up there in South King.

0:40:10.5 Amanda Miller: Yeah, so we have done a few different things. We do take a lot from data that's collected by different institutions and communities, but we've just done casual surveys talking to folks as they're bringing things back, as they're participating in other programs. We'll do have a debrief after and almost always will write reports detailing, pros and cons and information about, what went wrong, what went right, what we could do differently next time. But those, all of those things compound on it. How did you hear about us is a question that you can ask in about, that took me like three seconds to get out that way. Tells you some pathways, how people are engaging. I had 540 people drive through our... For our recycling event that happened on the 24th. That's 540 people that drove past the tool library. We opened in the mall in October because that was a decision that was made by community members in Auburn.

0:41:13.9 Amanda Miller: But there's reported 6 million visitors to that mall every year, which is wild. Not all malls are doing okay. But they have built in foot traffic. There are people that are connecting that, every single time we are there. What I've never heard of a tool library. This is brand new idea. We have a gigantic eight foot by eight foot box light in front of our gate to draw people's attention. And then we put a sign into the mall too that just says, what is a tool library? 'Cause that's a million people. The needs assessments that we do come from surveys that are live on our website. What classes, workshops do you wanna have? Also, again, after checkout we have a survey folks can answer, helps give us feedback and can help us report for data on metrics for grants. And then we also do transactional emails with our checkouts and asking folks to share their projects, pictures, pros and cons about tools or what they were working on. Yeah, that's trying to not do all the work ourselves by taking data from other projects like Tom or even the city's needs surveys when they do their comprehensive plans helps to guide what the need is, even working with haulers like waste management to understand what people want to have in the communities. Yeah. Thanks.

0:42:39.8 Speaker 5: Yeah. Thank you.

0:42:47.3 Amanda Miller: I have questions...

0:42:47.3 Tom Llewellyn: Yeah, Tricia, if you wanna come off mic, feel free to.

0:42:50.8 Tricia Stapleton: Yeah. Thanks so much. I have a question because in talking to some of the community members here where I am that the thread that seems to be among everyone is, oh no, we can't do this because people will either bring the stuff back trashed or won't bring it back at all. And I'm just curious if that is actually something that's like super prevalent or it's just a one-off

thing because it was universal in this assumption that was going to be the case, but it's not an assumption I share, so I just wanted to check. Thank you.

0:43:34.3 Amanda Miller: I see people shaking their heads and [laughter] I see. Yeah, it's a prevalent question [laughter] it's something that people ask all the time. So I keep well in my pocket after being open for a year. I looked and compared we have a less than 2% incidence of non-return. That's how I phrase it. And that's what I say, things die. We are a testament to planned obsolescence. We are an exercise in terminality. We are a testament to manufacturing shortcomings. It's gonna die. How it dies when it dies, it would be great. There are a lot of organizations, there are several tool libraries that have been partnered with tool manufacturers. And it's interesting because they... I feel like I haven't talked to them too much, but I'm like, Do they ask you like, how's it going with that cold chainsaw? Do they talk to you about that kind of thing?

0:44:27.9 Amanda Miller: Working in manufacturing or with manufacturers, they don't care that much, but I whispered that they don't really care much honestly. They would sooner drill holes into the engine blocks and have you recycle the metal than to put things into the full use of their potentials, maximizing their time. Things are gonna happen. We have a more altruistic investment in our neighbors. Coming back, can I say this all the time? With all their fingers and toes attached? 'Cause it gets people's attention because you could go into Home Depot and buy the absolutely wrong thing for the project that you're working on, your physical ability or the circumstances beyond your control. How does Home Depot make sure they are getting the things back. They're not getting the things back. They're making sure that they're making the money that they have to make and that's a system that we've created. So if we wanna reimagine this system that's broken because we have this linear economy to create a more sustainable circular economy, we need to have things like this. So anyway, does anyone else want to answer? Because I've been talking for a while.

0:45:39.9 Tom Llewellyn: Yeah. I'm just gonna just hop on that real quick and say, when I was doing research before co-founding the tool library in Asheville, I went around and talked to a number of different existing tool libraries. And one of them was in Oakland, California, which is tied to the public library system. And so basically anybody who has a library card and can demonstrate that they live within the city of Oakland is able to become a member and there's no other barriers to joining. So 300,000 potential members for their tool library. And I asked them about that exact question, what happens with loss and damage? How do you account for that? And they told me, this was back in 2013, I wanna say that per year on average, they had about \$4000 worth of lost and broken tools. But because they did collect late fees for checkouts, they had over \$12,000 of income from the late fees, which more than made up for any loss in damage that they had. And it was just a part of the cycle.

0:46:49.1 Kate Hersey: Yeah. I was similarly going to say you build that depreciation into your model, whether it's repair and bringing tools back in, using donated tools in terms of replacements, theft is actually really minimal. And if you can create wording and communication where you're really not coming at people about, hey, we need this back. And you're saying, we wanna make sure we get this back for the next person on our community. And you come at it with making sure that we don't really care. We understand that projects take longer than you were planning. We've had things come back five years after they were checked out because we just put out a blast to people and said, Hey, we found that this was still out a is this accurate? Because there will also be inaccuracies in your inventory as things are coming in and out. And everything came back and they

said, I totally forgot I had this in my thing.

0:47:45.8 Kate Hersey: We changed our email address, what have you. And all those tools came back with a beautiful donation on top of it. So I think it's just knowing that you're building this larger community and prepping for those materials to go. And more often than not, the issues don't come from the users themselves, apart from ongoing repair needs and maintenance needs with the tools. But the theft has traditionally within at least tool libraries, been from outside communities breaking into a more retail access piece. So when there's been big loss in this field, that's where it's been. It's been from an outside group or individual versus from within the user base.

0:48:35.7 Tom Llewellyn: And this has been a perfect... Well, I was gonna say this has been a perfect transition to our session next week where we'll be really getting into these questions that Jason will be leading. Any last things before we we close out?

0:48:49.1 Amanda Miller: I was just gonna say, Kate, exactly right. You create a network of trust within these things. And we've talked about this as a... I've talked about this a lot with other organizations and groups, but what, how you create that is, again, being intentional about that and being accessible and equitable is pretty darn important for my organization and for a lot of us. Because the requirements and the barriers that people have to creating that, that's probably a whole nother total session. But again, getting this framework, this balance, this jump off point where you have those values established can only make you succeed when it comes to the programs that you establish and creating the policies that you have. Yeah, it's wonderful. Yep. To be part of this community too. 'Cause we we're all about sharing and so then we all end up like sharing these ideas and sharing perspectives and sharing successes and failures. So yeah. Thank you guys for...

0:49:52.5 Tom Llewellyn: And I'm not sure if there, yeah, I'm just saying just [0:49:52.6] question I don't know if there is an aggregated data about that loss and damage, but that's something we could do a micro poll in this collab just to get some base data a to move off of. But as you've heard, it's, it tends to be very minimal in the grand scheme of things. Alright, we're gonna close this session out. We've got another session that we're working on actually that a bunch of people are sticking around here that we're moving on. We've got the fellows that are going through this program. So I wanna make sure we jump over to that session. And for everyone that joined us, thank you again for coming to this first session. It was great to have you. Thanks for sticking around for this extra bonus 15 minute time and please do continue this conversation on Canvas and we'll see you next week.

0:50:35.8 Speaker 8: Thank you.

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