

# Global Libraries Program

## Summary of Stakeholder Engagement Survey Results

BILL & MELINDA  
GATES *foundation*

**January 2013**

# Purpose of Survey

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- To understand needs, opportunities and roles for libraries in the future (5+ years from today), the survey solicited input from a broad sample of library stakeholders. Three primary questions were explored in the survey:
  - What will be the role of libraries in the future when most information in the world can be accessed via a device?
  - What attributes should libraries have to be successful in this future?
  - How can Gates Foundation support and funding most effectively help libraries develop these attributes?
- Survey results will also inform areas for additional learning and exploration in Phase 2 of the stakeholder engagement project.

# Survey Methodology

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- Web-based survey sent to members of library support organizations including: ALA, ULC, COSLA, WebJunction, and Lyrasis, as well as to more than ten well-respected bloggers in the public library community (Appendix A).
- Analysis conducted on 3,195 completed surveys
  - Responses filtered by those affiliated with libraries and those not affiliated;
  - Responses of those affiliated with libraries > 6+ years compared to those <5 years;
  - Responses to open-ended questions were analyzed by key words and phrases and then grouped under common themes;
  - Responses compared to one another to identify reinforcing themes as well as contradictions or discrepancies.

# Findings--Highlights

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- Respondent Profile (based on 3195 completed surveys)
  - Nearly all (87%) affiliated with the library field with a tenure of 6+ years
  - Vast majority (87%) from the United States
- Role of library in future
  - Help navigate and curate information (most frequently mentioned)
  - Trained librarians (most important)
- Most important attributes of future libraries (rank ordered)
  - Trained librarians
  - Visionary, effective leadership
- Recommended funding priorities (rank ordered & frequency)
  - Collaborative efforts between/among libraries to test innovative new services and share results with field
  - Training and skills development for library workers

# Findings--Highlights cont'd

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- If only one recommendation for funding priority
  - Training for staff (leadership, advocacy, technology and general)
  - Marketing and advocacy efforts
  - Innovative practices (services)
  - Collaborative efforts and shared resources
  
- Differences based on respondents demographics:
  - No significant differences responses from respondents affiliated with the library field based on length of tenure.
  - Small differences when comparing answers of respondents affiliated with the library field to those not affiliated with the library field:
    - Those affiliated with the library field identified opportunity for Gates Foundation to support collaborative efforts and testing innovative and promising library services as “**very important**” whereas those not affiliated with the library field did not.
    - Those affiliated with the library field were much more likely to rate **all** characteristics listed in the survey as “**important**” to “**very important**” to the success of a library. Respondents not affiliated with the library field spread their responses more evenly across the scale.

# Respondent Demographics

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- 87% of respondents are formally associated with a library or the library field (e.g. library staff, library trustee, staff of a library support organization, etc.).
- 87% of respondents are from the United States.
- 13% of respondents outside of the US and reside in the following countries:
  - Canada, United Kingdom and Australia/New Zealand = 9%
  - 71 additional countries = 4%

## Respondent Demographics cont'd

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- Types of affiliation with library field

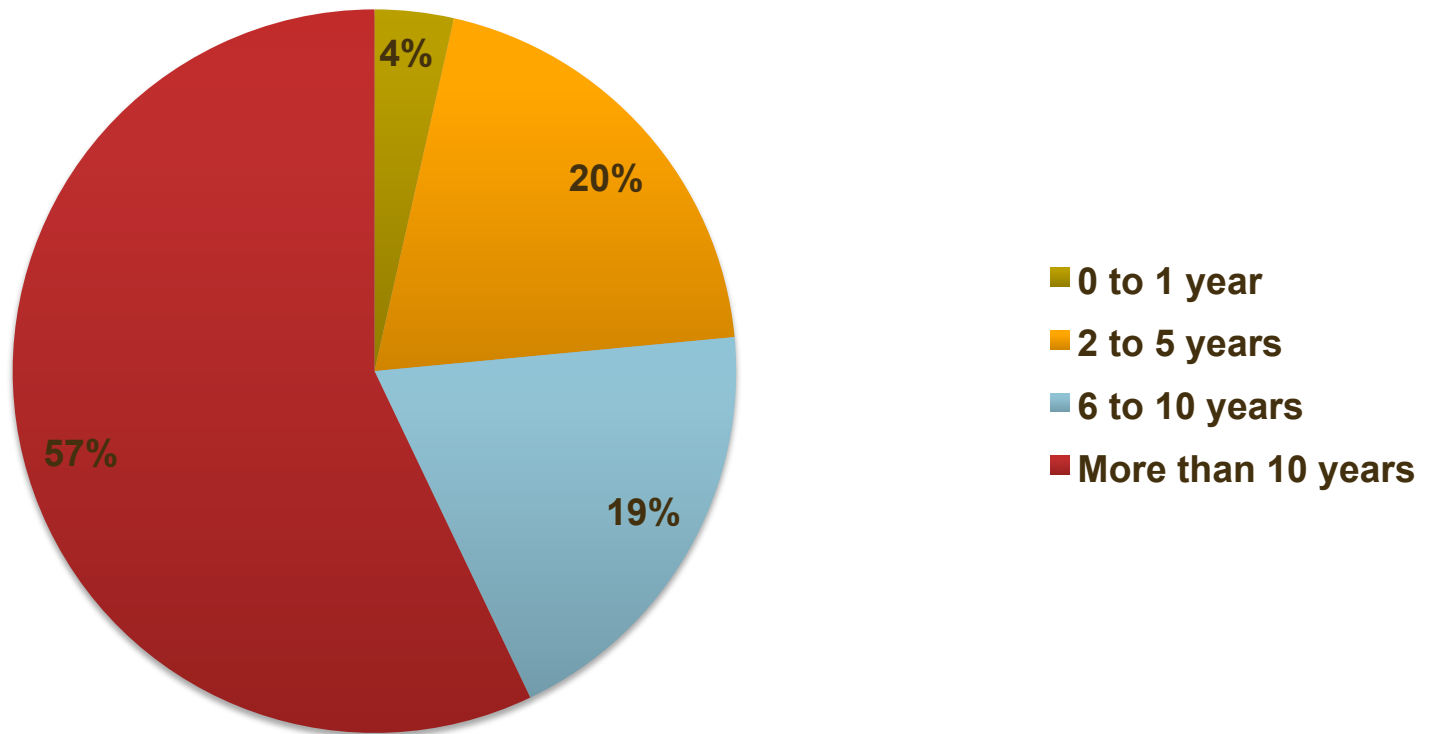
*Note: Percentages add up to more than 100% because a respondent could mark more than one way he/she is affiliated with a library.*

- 87% work in a public library;
- 15% are academic librarians;
- 8% work for a library support organization (i.e. a state library, state library association, ALA, PLA, IFLA, etc.);
- 6% are library trustees;
- 3% are either retired librarians or are studying to be librarians;
- 2% are members of a Friends of the Library organization.

# Demographic Information of Survey Respondents

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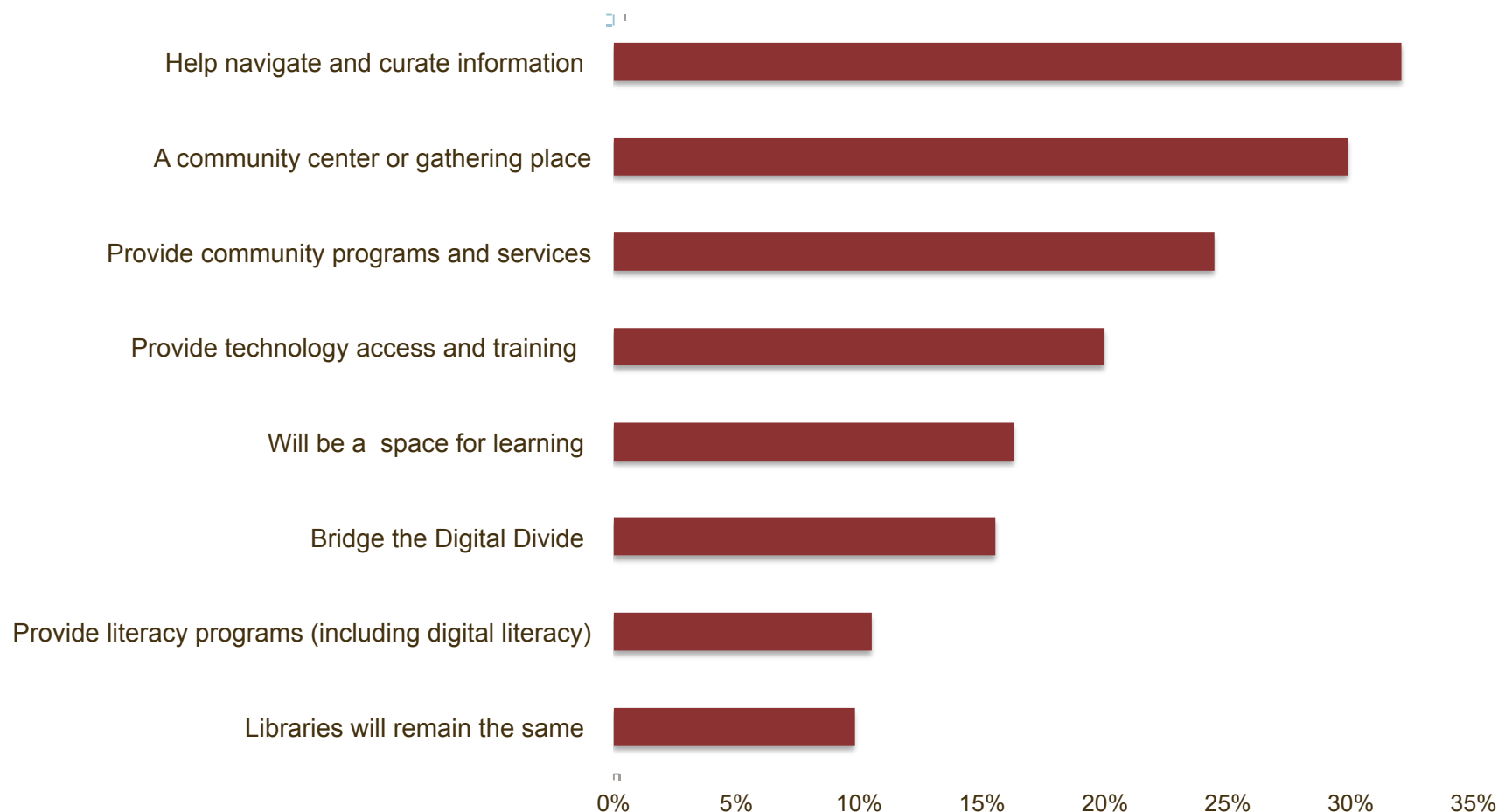
The chart below illustrates how long respondents have been associated with either a library or the library field, with 76% being in the field six years or longer.





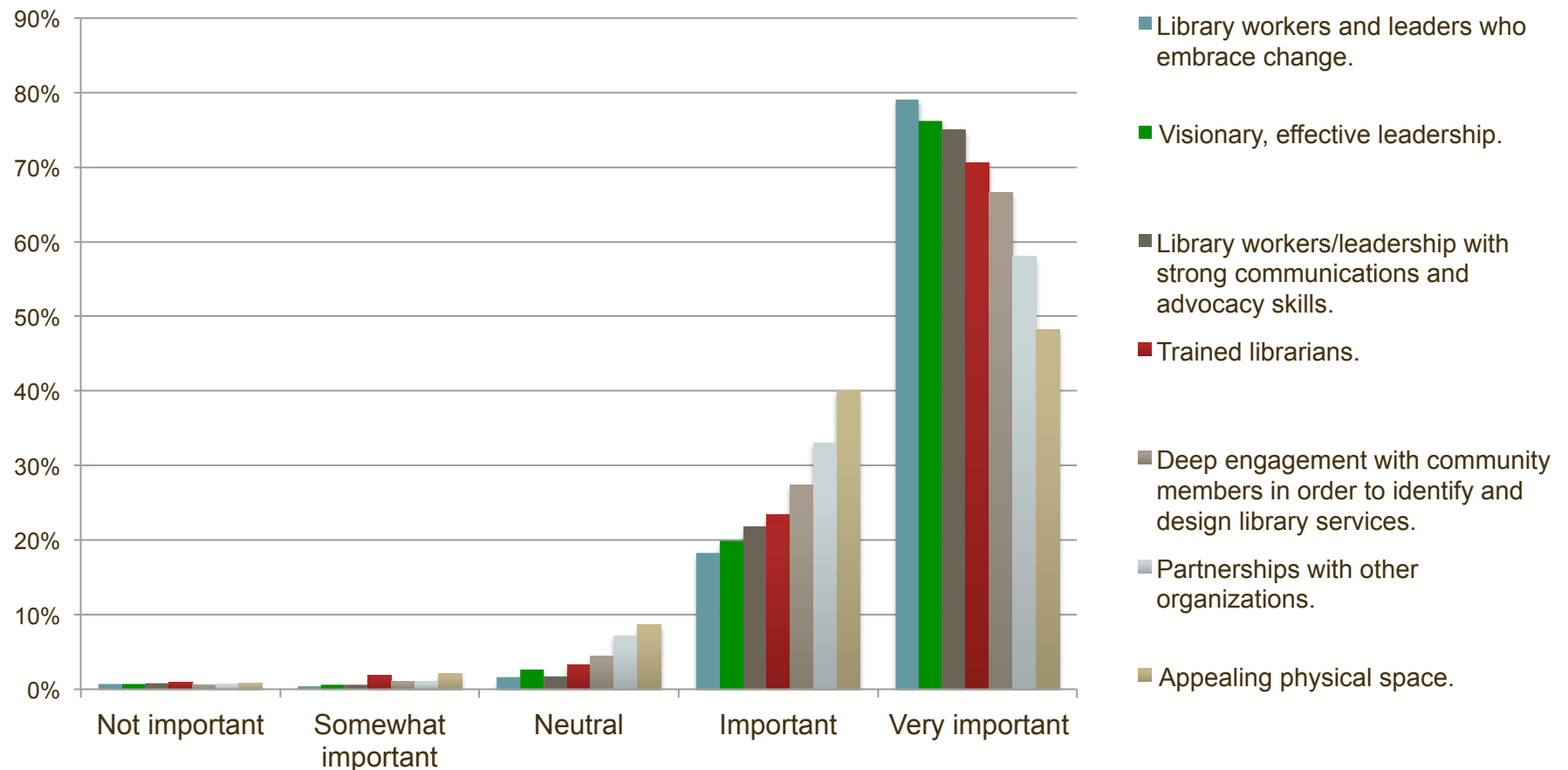
# What is the role of the the public library in the future when most information in the world can be accessed by a device and how will it be different from the role of the public library now?

A total of 2,283 people or a little over 70% of all survey respondents answered this question. Below are the most frequently cited answer themes.



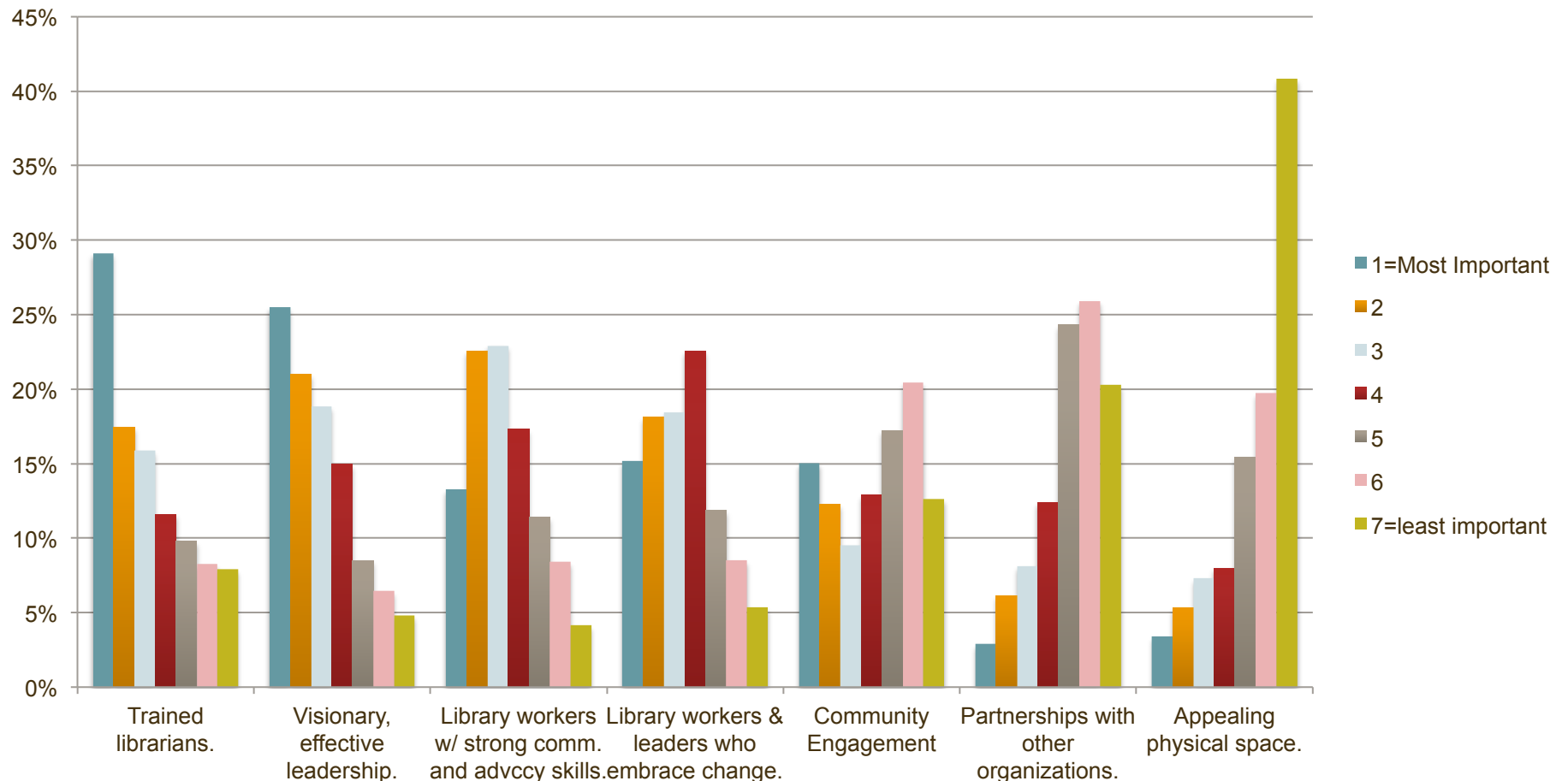
# How important are characteristics (listed below) to the success of a future library?

- Most characteristics were rated as “**very important**” or “**important**” to the success of future libraries, yet:
  - **Library workers and leaders who embrace change** and **visionary, effective leadership** were rated most frequently as being “**very important**” by respondents;
  - Appealing physical space and partnerships with other organizations were rated as relatively “less important” than other characteristics;
  - About 9% of respondents wrote in the “other” category with the majority reinforcing the importance of training.



## Rank order each characteristic in terms of how important it is to the success of the future library.

- When forced to **rank order** the importance of each characteristic, priorities changed slightly from previous question:
  - Trained librarians** moved up to the top from 4<sup>th</sup> and **workers who embrace change** dropped from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup>
  - Appealing physical space** continued to lag as “least important”

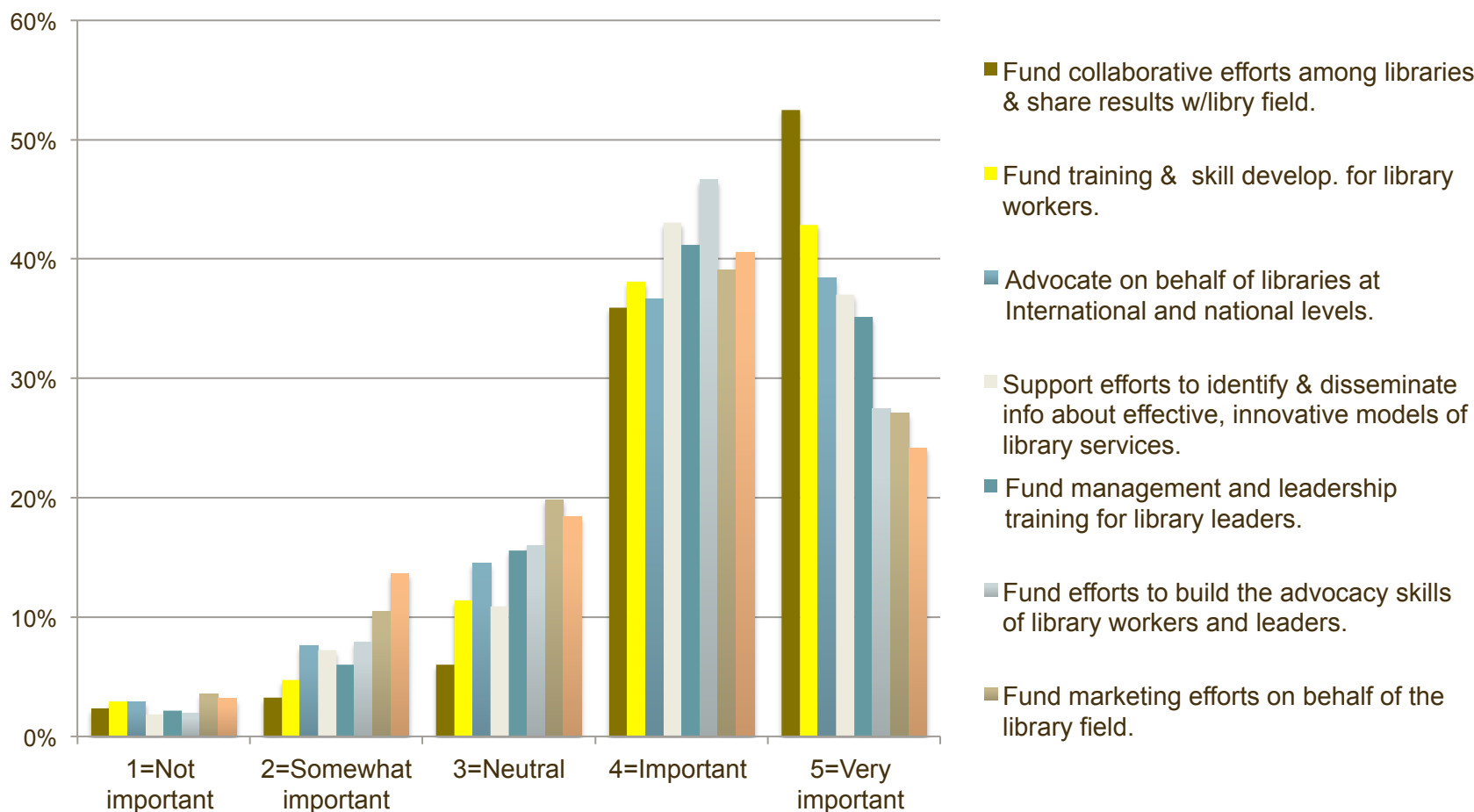


# Comparison of Responses

How important is each characteristic for a library's success in the future? <i>(Listed in order of how frequently each characteristic was listed as "very important to important.")</i>	Rank-order each characteristic in terms of its importance to a library's success in the future.
1. Library workers and leaders who embrace change.	1. Trained librarians.
2. Visionary, effective leadership.	2. Visionary, effective leadership.
3. Library workers & leaders with strong communications and advocacy skills.	3. Library workers & leaders with strong communications and advocacy skills.
4. Trained librarians.	4. Library workers and leaders who embrace change.
5. Community engagement.	5. Community engagement.
6. Partnerships with other organizations.	6. Partnerships with other organizations.
7. Appealing physical space.	7. Appealing physical space.

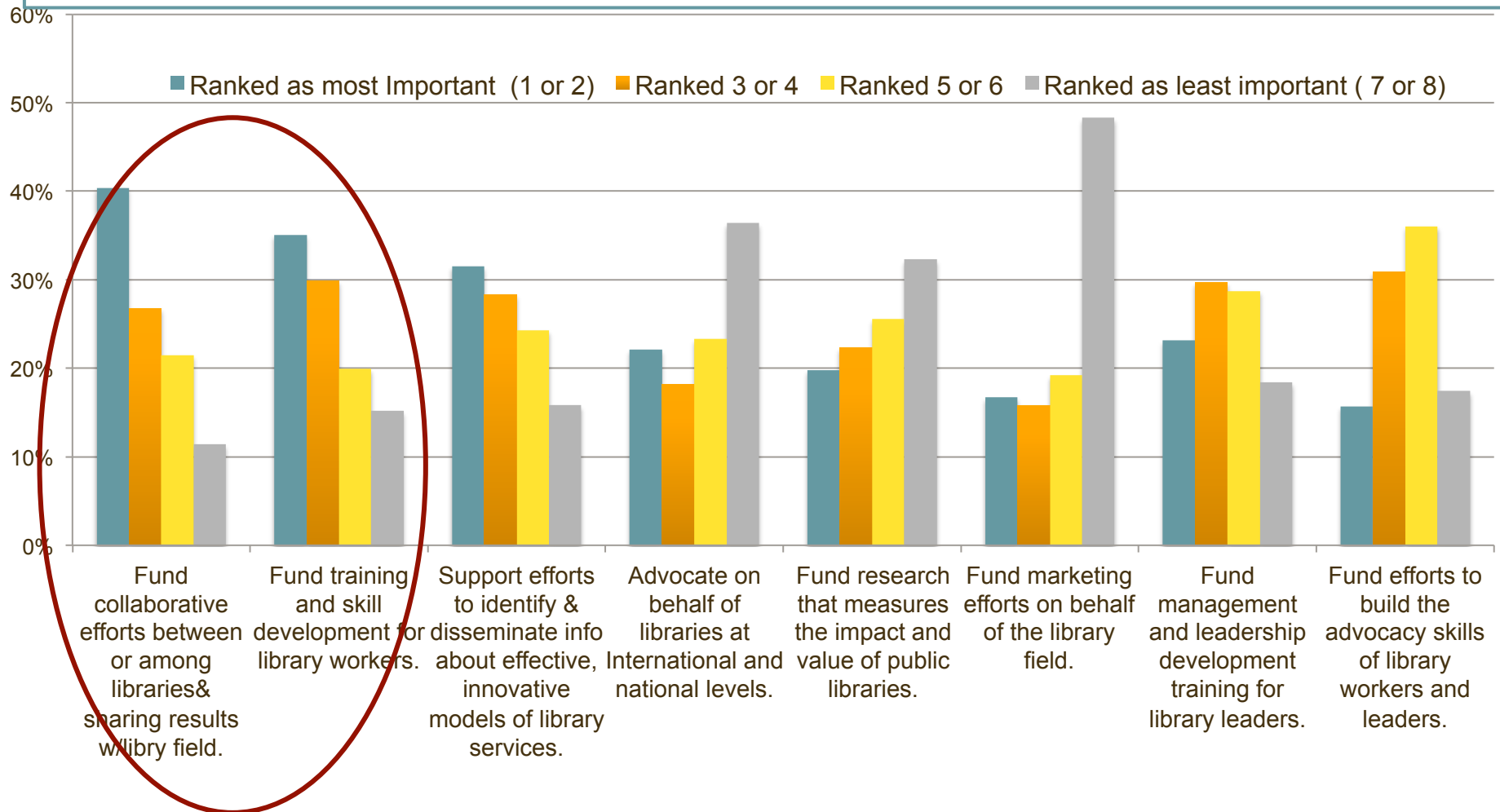
# Where should the Gates Foundation direct its future support?

- Most funding options were rated as “**very important**” or “**important**” to the success of future libraries, yet:
  - Funding **collaborative efforts** was rated much more frequently than all other options as being “very important” followed by funding **training and skill development for library workers**.
  - Approximately 7% of respondents offered additional suggestions in the “other” category with **funding technology** being the most frequently cited recommendation.



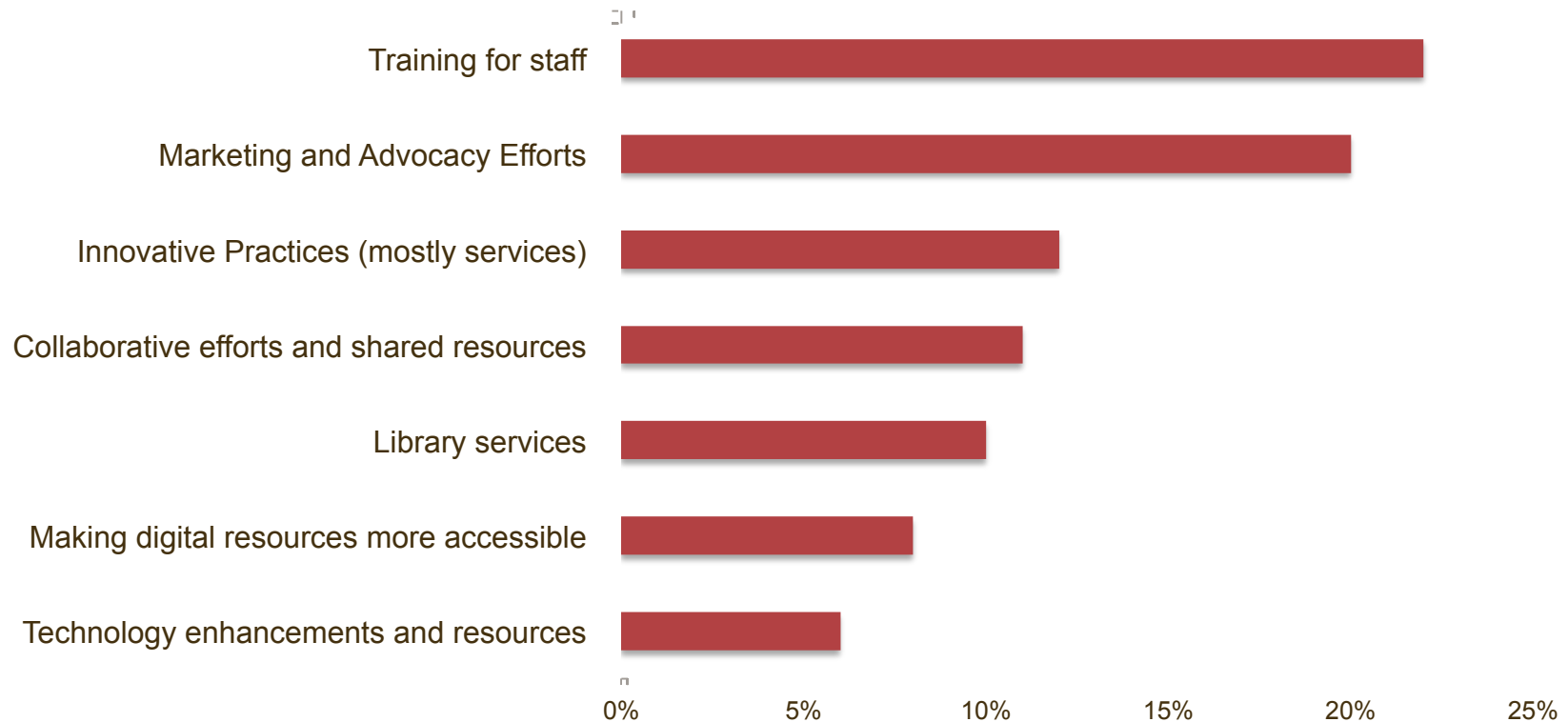
# Rank order recommendations for Gates Foundation future support

- When required to **rank order** their recommendations, there was no change from the previous question with funding for collaborative efforts and funding training and skill development for library workers remaining the top two recommendations.



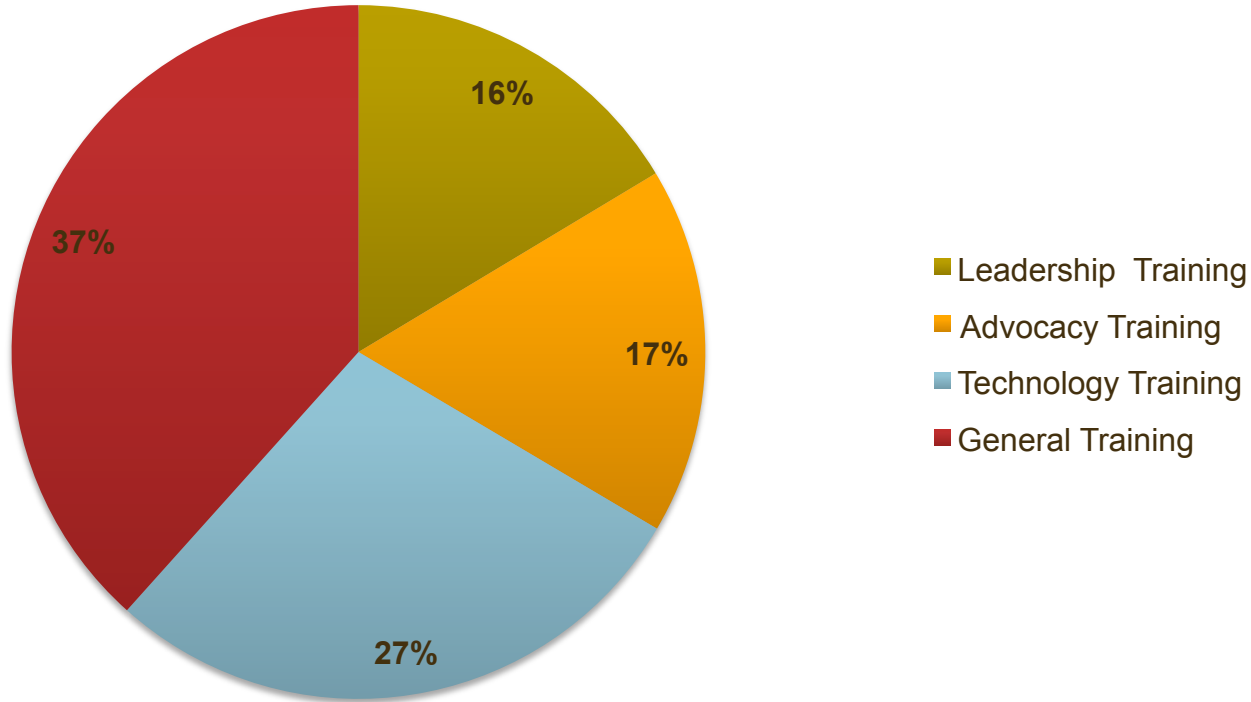
# If ONLY ONE recommendation to Gates for future library funding, what would it be?

- Responses varied from previous questions:
- **Training for staff** cited most frequently.
- **Funding for collaborative efforts** dropped to fourth from first place.
- **Advocacy** and **marketing efforts** both mentioned frequently in response to this question, though did not rank high on the list of funding priorities in the previous questions.



## What type of training for library workers do respondents recommend the Foundation consider supporting?

- Training for library leaders and workers was cited most frequently when asked to identify ONLY ONE area for Foundation support. Specific recommendations as to the type of training needed is summarized below:





# **Comparison of responses and areas of commonalities and differences...**

# What will be the role of the public library and how will it be different from the role of the public library now?

- It is interesting to note that a community center or gathering place was mentioned by a number of respondents as an important role of the future library. We can assume that this would require an appealing physical space, however, this characteristic was ranked as the *least important* when respondents rank ordered the characteristics that will enable a successful library of the future.

Most important characteristic for libraries' success in the future. (Listed in order of importance)	Role of the public library in the future (Listed in order of number of times mentioned)
Trained librarians	Help navigate and curate information
Visionary, effective leadership	A community center or gathering space
Engagement with community members to design and delivery library services	Provider of community programs and services
Library workers & leaders who embrace change	Provider of technology access and training
Library workers w/ strong communication and advocacy skills	Space for learning
Partnerships with other organizations	Bridging the Digital Divide
Appealing physical space	Provider of literacy program (including digital literacy)
	Libraries will remain the same

# Characteristics enabling the success of libraries versus what respondents think the Gates Foundation should support

- Funding collaborative efforts *among libraries* is cited as the the most important activity the Gates Foundation should support but partnerships with *other organizations* is considered as one of the least important characteristics needed for libraries' success.

Most important characteristic for libraries' success in the future. (Listed in order of importance)	Most important activity the Gates Foundation should support to help libraries succeed in the future. (Listed in order of importance)
Trained librarians	Fund collaborative efforts between or among libraries& sharing results w/library field
Visionary, effective leadership	Fund training and skill development for library workers
Engagement with community members to design and delivery library services	Support efforts to identify & disseminate info about effective, innovative models of library service
Library workers & leaders who embrace change	Advocate on behalf of libraries at International and national levels
Library workers w/ strong communication and advocacy skills	Fund research that measures the impact and value of public libraries
Partnerships with other organizations	Fund marketing efforts on behalf of the library field
Appealing physical space	Fund management and leadership development training for library leaders
	Fund efforts to build the advocacy skills of library workers and leaders

## Appendix A: List of Bloggers that Distributed the Survey Link

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Name of Blogger	Address of Site
Andy Poll	<a href="http://agnosticmaybe.wordpress.com/">http://agnosticmaybe.wordpress.com/</a>
Bobbi Newman	<a href="http://librarianbyday.net">http://librarianbyday.net</a>
Brian Herzog	<a href="http://www.swissarmylibrarian.net/">http://www.swissarmylibrarian.net/</a>
Brian Mathews	<a href="http://dbi.lishost.org/blog/">http://dbi.lishost.org/blog/</a>
David Lee King	<a href="http://www.davidleeking.com">http://www.davidleeking.com</a>
David Rothman	<a href="http://librarycity.org">http://librarycity.org</a>
Ellyssa Kroski	<a href="http://oedb.org/">http://oedb.org/</a>
Jessamyn West	<a href="http://www.librarian.net">www.librarian.net</a>
Kathy Petlewski	<a href="http://kpetlewski.wordpress.com/">http://kpetlewski.wordpress.com/</a>
Laurel Tarulli	<a href="http://laureltarulli.wordpress.com/">http://laureltarulli.wordpress.com/</a>
Richard Kong	<a href="http://www.richardkong.com/about/">http://www.richardkong.com/about/</a>
Rita Meade	<a href="http://www.screwydecimal.com/">http://www.screwydecimal.com/</a>
Sarah Houghton	<a href="http://librarianinblack.net/librarianinblack/">http://librarianinblack.net/librarianinblack/</a>
Steve Matthews	<a href="http://21stcenturylibrary.com/">http://21stcenturylibrary.com/</a>