

# Research Library Impact Framework Initiative



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## Purpose

The [Research Library Impact Framework \(RLIF\) initiative](#) was established in response to the need for guidance to align assessment and research projects undertaken by research libraries in order to reveal and communicate their impact in their communities. The RLIF provided scaffolding for organizing, implementing, and communicating the results of research library assessment projects in order to create a culture of assessment, and to orient research libraries to potential tools and methods by sharing the results of completed projects.

## Four Goals for Initiative

1. Fostering a culture of assessment through methodologically sound research projects.
2. Involving teams' participation in conducting in-depth investigations into five research question areas.
3. Gauging how well this research effectively provides the ARL community with an understanding of the impact of library services.
4. Building collaborative library research partnerships.

## Five Research Questions

1. (How) do library collections play a role in attracting and retaining top researchers and faculty to the institution?
2. (How) do library spaces facilitate innovative research, creative thinking and problem solving?
3. (How) do the library's special collections specifically support and promote teaching, learning and research?
4. (How) does the library contribute to equitable student outcomes and an inclusive learning environment?
5. (How) does the library help to increase research productivity and impact?

## 18 Teams Completed

**Pilot Project:** an original, formal research project or

**Practice Brief:** a case study intended to improve library assessment work

## Team Research Methods & Tools

A variety of methods and tools were used, including:

### Qualitative & Quantitative Methods Tools

- |                              |                  |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| • Design thinking            | • InCites        |
| • Ethnographic observation   | • LibWizard      |
| • Focus groups               | • OCLC WorldCat  |
| • Literature reviews         | • Qualtrics      |
| • Participatory design       | • REDCap survey  |
| • Semi-structured interviews | • Scopus         |
| • Spatial analysis           | • Tableau        |
| • Student self-assessment    | • Unpaywall      |
| • Surveys                    | • Web of Science |
| • Usage data                 | • Zotero         |

## Training For & By Project Teams

**Qualitative Research Series** (Margaret Roller, consultant)

- Focus Group Method
- In-depth Interview Method
- Qualitative Data Analysis
- Reporting Qualitative Research

**Quantitative Research Series** (Kevin Fomalont, consultant)

- Web Survey Design
- Visualization in Tableau
- Quantitative Analysis In Survey Research
- Survey Reporting and Its Application

**Library Space Design** (University of Florida Team)

**Getting Started with Project Outcome in Academic Libraries** (Iowa State University Team and ACRL)

[Research and Assessment Cycle Toolkit](#) (Megan Oakleaf, Syracuse University; Emily Daly, Duke University; Becky Croxton, The University of North Carolina at Charlotte)

## Evaluation of Motivations & Experiences

Two online surveys and 26 in-depth interviews were conducted to gather feedback about participants' motivations, expectations, and experiences.

**Deans/Directors Survey Highlights (N=16, 6 respondents):**

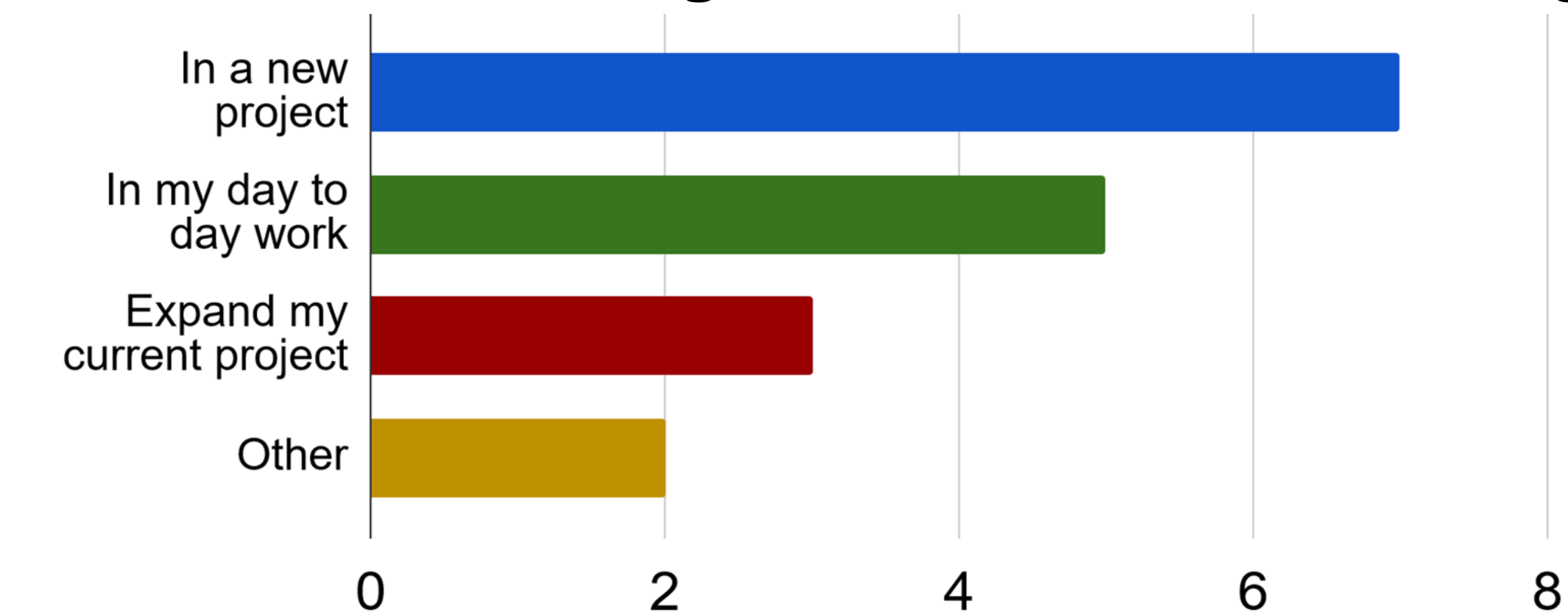
Individual examples of changes resulting from participation in RLIF:

- Higher visibility of library's expertise
- More staff are now engaged in assessment
- Greater ability to tell evidenced based stories
- Incorporation of DEIA in assessment practices

**Team Members Survey Highlights (N=78, 13 respondents):**

- Motivated to participate by relevance of research question
- Received right level of support from ARL and VPOs
- Use skills and knowledge in new projects, day-to-day work activity, and/or expand current project or practice brief

**Team Members Using New Skills and Knowledge**



**Team Members Interviews Highlights (N=78, 26 participants):**

- Positive experience of ARL support
- High relevance and potential impact of research questions
- Provide more training in advance
- Support more collaboration across libraries

## Lessons Learned

- An organization/association level research agenda is valuable.
- Centralized communication fosters a culture of accountability.
- Collaboration is critical for developing a supportive research community.
- Successful projects are embedded in supportive communities.
- Matching the appropriate qualitative, quantitative, or mixed methodologies to a research project is critical.
- Providing training on appropriate methodologies early in the process ensures successful outcomes.
- Disseminating information about project results must have a clear communication plan.

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