



GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN SECTION (LAC) meeting *How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future*

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Introduction

In June 2017, we conducted a survey among the members of the Standing Committee of the Latin America and the Caribbean Section, to debate about the IFLA GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION program through the following steps:

- (1) Letters and explanatory documentation about the proposal of IFLA's GLOBAL VISION were sent to all members, using the IFLA-LAC-SC list.
- (2) Preparing a survey in GOOGLE DOCS entitled - FORMULARIO 1 - ¡JUNTOS CREAMOS EL FUTURO! #iflaGlobalVision – containing the 18 questions received from Global Vision <GlobalVision@ifla.org> already translated into Spanish. All the IFLA LAC SC members (elected, ex officio and corresponding) were invited to participate in the survey to indicate their expectations, knowledge and suggestions using free text. We received 15 answers.
- (3) The analysis and compilation of the answers to FORMULARIO 1 produced a list of viable alternatives for each question. These alternatives were included in a new worksheet in GOOGLE DOCS - FORMULARIO 2 - ¡JUNTOS CREAMOS EL FUTURO! #iflaGlobalVision, but only with questions from No. 4 onwards . Again, all the IFLA LAC SC members (elected, ex officio and corresponding) were invited to participate in the survey which contained only what were considered the top five most important alternatives. We received 17 answers.
- (4) We held a 90-minutes meeting using the ZOOM software provided by IFLA HQ, There were 12 participant members, from 9 countries. We informed about the activities that took place in Athens, clarified questions about the IFLA GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION program, and gave explanations concerning the expectations about the participation of each of the members in the IFLA sections.
- (5) Final compilation of the results from FORMULARIO 2 and report of the alternatives that ranked in the top five places, including the number of votes received by each of them. When two or more alternatives were tied all of them are listed, even if it resulted in more than five alternatives per question.
- (6) Translation into English and preparation of this final report.

PARTICIPANTS EXPERIENCE - (Q1 - Q3)

Type of library (Q1):	No. of librarians
Academic or university	5
Academic and teaching	2
University and specialized	3
University, specialized and other	2
University and public	1
Public and national	1
National	1

Time worked in libraries (Q2):	No. of librarians
10 to 19 years	4
20 to 29 years	5
30 to 39 years	2
40 years and more	4

Time in IFLA (Q3) :	No. of librarians
less than 5 years	6
6 to 10 years	4
11 to 20 years	4
more than 20 years	1

Note. Questions Q1 to Q3 were asked only in the FORM 1, not in FORM 2, and there were only 15 answers.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates in IFLA LAC SC, this means that:

Libraries facilitate free access to information, advocate for libraries and users, must give up the passivity and work strongly for quality education, literacy, and are part of the educational, cultural and decision-making scenario. To make this vision reality, librarians must create collaborative spaces and professional exchanges virtually and in person.

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1. Facilitate free access to information	14
2. Promoting education and culture and disseminating knowledge	13
3. Promote collaboration and cooperation	9
4. Supporting the needs of the community and citizenship	9
5. Train users and provide information services	8
6. Preserve documents on different formats	7
7. Defend freedom of expression and respect for privacy	7
8. Proveer información de calidad	7
9. Reduce inequality and promote equal rights	7

Comments:

Respondents addressed many issues related to the role of libraries in society, and mentioned things such as equity, freedom, defense of people's rights.

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1. Free access to information and knowledge	13
2. They offer services according to the needs of the users	11
3. Manage the organization of information	9
4. Favor human development and social integration	9
5. They are a place of creation and dissemination of knowledge	9
6. They have a social function	9
7. Information literacy	8
8. Give information to society	8
9. Preservation and conservation of information	7

Comments:

It seems that this question was understood as being very similar to the previous one, and the discussion on this topic was directed to clarify the idea. Probably the translation did not help to understand the difference between questions 4 and 5 and instead of emphasizing what libraries are good at, some of the participants gave suggestions on what libraries should be doing.

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1. Advocate for libraries and users	15
2. Establishment of government policies and decision-making	13
3. Creation of more services according to the needs of the community	11
4. Promote culture and preservation of people's memory	10
5. Promote culture and preservation of people's memory	10
6. Social and political responsibility	10
7. Research	8

Comments:

This question gave the participants the opportunity to express a wide range of ideas, from support to decision-makers, to improving scientific research. Looks like many of the participants were “influenced” by the recent Advocacy Program and the statements resulted from it.

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

1. Passivity	13
2. Act as solitary islands	13
3. Resistance to change	12
4. Administrative transactions	7
5. Do not deal with issues that others can do better	6
6. Techniques by themselves	5

Comments:

Many of the answers to this question were related to the need for librarians to be more active and to work in more collaborative programs and services, what we think we do now; but according to the answers it seems that they address more the issue on how society see us (librarians), not on how libraries should do their work.

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

1. Quality education and literacy	14
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2. Poverty and economic crises	11
3. Access to true, reliable and neutral information	10
4. Accelerated development of ICTs	9
5. Equal access to knowledge and information	9
6. Effective and real democracy	8

Comments:

In this question the participants were not sure if the issues were related to challenges to society in general, as the answers show: social and economical crises, literacy, and so on. Or if the issues were related to the challenges to providing information for development or for future times. The answers show a mix of both.

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

1. Incorporate in the educational, cultural and decision-making scenario	13
2. Develop advocacy projects	12
3. Working in multi and interdisciplinary teams	10
4. Have enthusiastic professionals, committed to society and updated	10
5. Contribute to the inclusion and integration of all community citizens	9
6. Adapt to political, social and technological changes	9
7. Development of information skills	7

Comments:

In this question we see that respondents discussed almost the same issues addressed in question Q6. That means, that the challenges in this Q9 were related to the ideas already expressed on Q6 on what libraries should be doing more.

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1. New skills and updating in technologies	13
2. Empowerment of the profession and better wages	12
3. Strengthen and enrich professional training (leadership and criticism	10
4. Working in inter and multidisciplinary environments	10
5. Ensure that libraries have adequate technical and technological tools	9
6. Development of Advocacy projects and strategies to achieve open access to information	9
7. To be recognized by society	7

Comments:

Some participants discussed challenges to their personal development and others those to the LIS profession and its contribution to society. The range of answers was very specific and related to each participant's background.

How a united library field can make a difference

How should a united library field help meet the challenges identified (Q11)?

1. With planning and development of library networks, as well as solid cooperation structures	15
2. Becoming partners with decision-makers responsible for national policies of sustainable development and education	12
3. Participating in discussions promoted by other sectors dealing with the same challenges	9
4. Identifying and training leader librarians	9
5. Engaging in team work	7
6. Sharing resources	7
7. With the joint effort of librarians from the various sectors	7

Comments:

The concept of "united library field" needs to be clarified, as not all the participants understood the idea. Nonetheless, they valued the importance of working together or united in order to face the challenges mentioned.

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

1. To have a clear mission and vision and a shared philosophy of service	11
2. Possibility of professional cooperation and sharing of experiences	10
3. Having strong professional associations and mechanisms for library cooperation	10
4. A culture of participation and engagement	9
5. Availability of leader librarians	9

Comments:

This question was better understood and the answers show that there are many good ideas to develop the profession and the Library associations, as well as to develop leadership skills among the professionals

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

1. Mutual cooperation	13
2. Leadership	13
3. The design of a common and operative strategic plan	12
4. Ability to respond to local and international information needs	10
5. Ensure user satisfaction	8

Comments:

In this question almost the same answers to the previous one (Q12) were given, the idea was to focus on the main or core point for achieving a united library field, and again the answers show that cooperation and leadership are the most important.

Opportunities to create a more united library field (Q14):

1. The creation of collaborative spaces and professional exchange virtually and in person	12
2. Open and collaborative disposition and cooperation	12
3. Building strategic alliances	11
4. Bringing together for collaborating new and expert members, and introducing them to established activities and projects	10
5. The development of information policies	9
6. International projects and programs	9
7. Librarianship meetings and events	9

Comments:

Again in these answers, participants repeat many of the characteristics listed on Q12, and emphasize the idea of cooperation and the creation of a space for discussion and collaboration.

Specific suggestion

Specific projects of collaboration across countries, regions, or the globe (Q15):

1. IFLA Projects: BSLA, annual Congress	16
2. IFLA LAC Projects: copyright, SDO	15
3. Librarians consortia for the acquisition of information resources (CONRICYT)	8
4. Libraries Transform (ALA)	7
5. OCLC, centralized cataloguing (OCLC)	7

Comments:

Different examples were mentioned, some of them promoted by IFLA where many of the participants have had an active role.

Types of projects of collaboration across countries, regions, or the globe (Q15A)

1. National and international professional events	13
2. Training courses and library visits in our country	9
3. Developing research topics about the profession	9
4. Library networks, consortia	8
5. Professional networks	8

Comments:

In this case, participants mentioned more professional events and it appeared a new idea such as cooperation for library visits and training courses.

For continuing this conversation in LAC country (Q16):

1. Encourage the participation of associations, library schools, and governments	13
2. Using social networks	11
3. Organizing discussion forums at the institutional, local, and national levels, in person and online	11
4. Developing projects with themes, institutions and interdisciplinary associations	9
5. Focus groups	8
6. Bringing together in one library sector all the library systems operating in the country	8
7. Better integration of leader institutions in information science	8

Comments:

Some of the ideas discussed by participants were related to the involvement of more stakeholders to the field, like LIS students, LIS Schools, other related disciplines and so on. Other participants related this question to the use ICTs for communication.

For continuing this conversation with LAC wider professional community (Q17)

1. Invite all associations to help this conversation going through social networks	12
2. Create cooperation networks in the various sectors	10
3. With webinars, and in-person courses	10
4. In work meetings for the specific library groups (school, public, etc. libraries)	9
5. Organize seminar and events, in order to mobilize the professional sector	9

Comments:

Similarly, as in the previous one, participants suggested the use of ICTs facilities for communication as well as in-face seminars and events.

Inclusion of all voices in the conversation (Q18):

1. Empowering programs and collaborative work should be continued in all sectors	14
2. Using social networks	11
3. Applying an online survey to all the members who participated in the workshops	9
4. Elaborate a document with recommendations or a list similar to the ten Commandments	9
5. Developing a professional work strategy that involves all the association members in the country	9
6. Organizing video conferences with groups no larger than 10 persons	9

Comments:

For this question a wide range of responses were received, particularly some related to the need of leadership and concrete actions that librarians should assume. Also the preparation of some ad-hoc documents was suggested

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in IFLA LAC SC on JUNE 2017. It is part of a global conversation initiated by IFLA on how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future.

Over the course of two years (2017-2018), IFLA will involve as many librarians and others as possible in this global conversation. Participants are encouraged to continue the conversation in their own networks and organization and share the results with IFLA. At the end of 2017, the first results of all the workshops and online discussions will be turned into a *Global Vision Report*, which in turn will be adapted into concrete strategies, processes and work programmes in 2018.

To learn more about the global conversation, and download supporting materials to support your own activities, visit globalvision.ifla.org.

Stay tuned for news about the IFLA Global Vision discussion following [#iflaGlobalVision](https://twitter.com/iflaGlobalVision) and make sure to cast your vote in August when the online voting platform is available on <https://globalvision.ifla.org/>.