

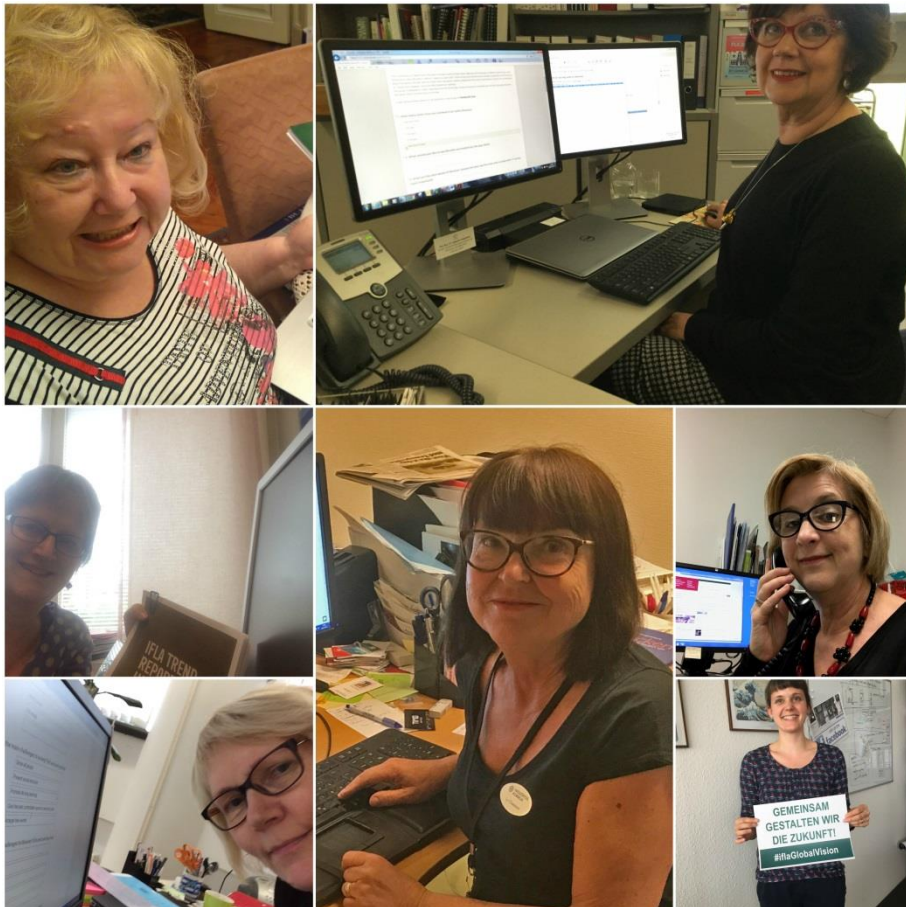


GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the Public Libraries Section meeting

How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future

5-12 June 2017 (online survey)



Contributors

This report is created by:

Marian Morgan Bindon (Australia)

Lo Claesson (Sweden)

Annie Dourlent (France)

Sarah Dudek (Germany)

Montserrat Espuga (Spain)

Leikny Indergaard (Norway)

Pirkko Lindberg (Finland)

Anette Mjorberg (Sweden)

Torbjörn Nilsson (Sweden)

Jan Richards (Australia)

Ljiljana Sabljak (Croatia)

Raymond Santiago (USA)

Josephine Siegrist (Switzerland)

Jane Wee (Singapore)

Index

| | |
|--|---|
| Contributors | 2 |
| Index | 2 |
| Introduction | 3 |
| A vision for libraries | 3 |
| The core values of libraries (Q4): | 3 |
| Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5): | 3 |
| Libraries should do more of (Q6): | 4 |
| Libraries should do less of (Q7): | 4 |
| Challenges and solutions | 4 |
| The main challenges to society (Q8): | 4 |
| The main challenges to libraries (Q9): | 5 |
| The main professional challenges (Q10): | 5 |
| How a united library field can make a difference | 5 |
| How should a united library field help meet the challenges identified (Q11)? | 5 |
| The characteristics of a united library field (Q12): | 6 |
| The focus of a united library field (Q13): | 6 |
| A global conversation | 6 |

Introduction

Between 5-12 June 2017, 14 librarians participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Together we represent in excess of 360 years of library experience.

All participants were members of IFLAs Public Libraries Standing Committee and are drawn from 11 countries across 4 continents.

The survey was conducted using Survey Monkey with the answers collated and scored to arrive at the agreed top 5. Answers were surprisingly uniform regardless of the location of the respondent, all of whom work in the public library sector.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to members of the Public Libraries Standing Committee libraries will be:

- *Really* inclusive
- Still relevant for society
- Adapting to new challenges
- Constantly re-defining their role

The core values of libraries (Q4):

-
1. Social inclusion
 2. Free and open access to information
 3. A force for democracy
 4. Centre for life-long learning
 5. Promoting reading and literacy
-

Comments:

'In Finland we have the Council for Public Libraries which has no bureaucracy - It's easy to discuss and arrange meetings. We have 2 annual meetings a year and we discuss and agree library matters together. It has representatives from all the big libraries and also from small ones. We have also a common Strategy for Public Libraries.

We also have the Library Act. It gives us the mandate to maintain and develop good libraries.'
(Finland)

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

-
1. Providing access to information
 2. Providing a welcoming, non-judgemental, equitable environment
-

-
3. Guiding and supporting a literate society
 4. Customer service
 5. Delivering diverse and creative programs for specific target groups.
-

Comments:

'Le Havre (Normandie): - a brand new main library - a strong political will to develop literacy and access to books, culture & information in libraries but also social facilities'. (France)

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

-
1. Partner with others to maximise opportunities
 2. Advocacy
 3. Engage more with technology
 4. Curate information
 5. Engage more with the local community.
-

Comments:

'Inclusion a keyword in the kanini, KRUT and Learning center processes. Kanini is the new Children apartment - Learning center is a digital learningspot - KRUT is under Construction, a spot and a method for bringing in the Young adults to the library'. (Sweden)

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

-
1. Technical services processes
 2. Being insular and underplaying their role in society
 3. Maintaining redundant services
 4. Being bound by rules and regulations
 5. Second guessing our user's needs.
-

Comments:

'The City of Sydney Library has recently made national headlines by deciding to do away with Library fines. The media interest has been intense'. (Australia)

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

-
1. Impact of technology on society and the digital divide
 2. Poverty and inequality
 3. Increased nationalism and conservatism
 4. Demographic shifts including immigration
-

5. Environmental sustainability

Comments:

'Zagreb City libraries are providing few projects and programs for all citizens, specially for those with special needs and disabilities. One of well-known is a project for homeless people. You can find about it on: <http://beskucnik.kgz.hr/>' (Croatia)

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

1. Adapt fast to change through innovative and relevant programs
 2. Decreasing funding
 3. Remaining relevant in the digital environment
 4. Ensuring that information remains open and accessible
 5. The Library remains a place of social inclusion
-

Comments:

'I would like to mention the 'sprachraum' ('language space') of Cologne Public Library. It is an example how libraries responded to the challenge of large numbers of refugees coming to Europe 2015 up to now. It is an example for community engagement since the library brings together local volunteers and refugees.' (Germany)

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1. Providing a meaningful and attractive work environment
 2. Effectively working with the community
 3. Keeping up to date with technology
 4. Developing partnerships with other agencies and overcoming professional jealousies
 5. Moving beyond the book
-

Comments:

'After 4 years as a Public Library Director I have been working with the challenges of a re-organization where the staff could choice team after what field they were most interest off, not depending of which kind of library they worked in. The challenge of starting more and spread programs for the visitors and not only authors. Starting the first self-service library in one of the branches. All these projects go towards building a new modern library.' (Sweden)

How a united library field can make a difference

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

1. Working collaboratively across sectors
 2. Advocating regionally, nationally and internationally about the role of libraries in building strong societies
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3. Lobby for change in LIS education
 4. Develop and maintain universal minimum standards
 5. Maximise use of technology to address issues of isolation
-

Comments:

'A large libraries network in the outskirts of Paris: Plaine commune In an area with lots of people from migrant background, people from different nationalities, cultures & languages Intercultural work Staff training has been done on a large scale to share the goals and missions of the libraries and the professional skills ' (France).

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

-
1. Networked
 2. Engaged
 3. Diverse
 4. Common goals and values
 5. Innovative
-

Comments:

The [Australian Public Library Alliance](#) (APLA) is the peak body for public libraries in Australia. The committee comprises the chair of every state-based public library association, a senior representative from the ACT, Northern Territory and Tasmanian library services, and expert members. APLA represents 94% of all the 1500 public libraries across Australia. APLA has overcome sectional interests to present a united front for the advocacy and development of public libraries in Australia'. (Australia)

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

-
1. International networks within and beyond sectors
 2. Initiatives that engage the profession and are tailored to recognise cultural and demographic differences
 3. Advocacy
 4. Shared goals and outcomes
 5. A single voice and message
-

Comments:

A global conversation

This report is created as an interactive process, online 5-12 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/>.