GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the Library Buildings and Equipment Section Standing Committee meeting held in Wroclaw August 19, 2017

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

August 19, 2017

Contributors

This report was created by:

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The approach taken by our Library Buildings and Equipment Section was to build upon the results of the Global Vision survey completed by 6 of our members via online survey.

Their original, thoughtful input was discussed further during our first Standing Committee meeting held in Wroclaw. The SC improved upon the results, then voted as a group using the Survey Monkey tool.

We feel very proud of this iterative approach as it truly represents the overall input of the Library Buildings and Equipment Standing Committee/Corresponding Members.

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Introduction

On 19 August 2017, in Wroclaw, Poland, 16 librarians and design professionals participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Together we represent hundreds of years of library experience and planning and design expertise. Our Standing Committee and Corresponding Members are a diverse mix of librarians from around the world (academic, national libraries, public libraries), architects and design professionals from Germany, Spain and the USA, and librarians from the private sector who provide a range of consulting services to the library community. Our section completed the survey from the perspective of the built environment.

A vision for libraries

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1. Equity.
2. Support learning, literacy and universal access to education.
3. Access to information.
4. Space: virtual and physical
5. ~~Safeguarding the cultural heritage.~~

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1. Locating and providing access to information.

2. Providing a variety of spaces to study, collaborate and connect.

3. Listening to experience relating to design (listening to customer needs).

4. Trying to improve the spaces we have.

5. Making people feel welcome.

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1. Become stronger advocates.
2. Create physical spaces that support changing user needs and provide true stewardship of facilities.

3. Market more effectively.

4. Develop our services and premises with innovative design.

5. Become completely client focused.

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

1. Be insular. Talk only to ourselves.

2. Disown the brand of "library".

3. Focus on collections.

4. Emphasize physical collections and advocate for the primacy of the "book".

5. Focus on unnecessary rules and regulations and tight security.

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8)

1. Global climate change and natural disasters.

2. Diversity and inequality. Access to basic services worldwide.

3. Ensure everyone economic, educational, health and social opportunities.

4. Fake news and distrust in media politicians. Sources for correct/unbiased information.

5. Global rise of identity politics.

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

1. Financial support to provide adequate services, spaces and buildings.

2. Telling the "library story" in a way that is compelling and persuasive in an era when key individuals and stakeholder groups are asking the question, "Why do we need libraries?"

3. Digital disruption and our ability to adapt. Changing use of services and expectations by library users.

4. Increasing perception of the online information environment as a viable replacement for legacy technologies (eg. Books) and institutions (eg. libraries). "All information Is free on the Internet."

5. Inability to measure and describe impact.

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1. Understanding client needs in a changing environment

2. Broadening the roles and therefore the credentials required for professional contribution and success.

3. Lack of diversity in the profession.

4. Opportunities to gain the skills needed for success.

5. Buildings that are easy to maintain.

How a united library field can make a difference

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

1. Learn from others- model approaches and exemplars.

2. Advocacy. Build strong associations at the national and international level. Inform legislators and key funders of the contributions libraries have made and can continue to make, to the success of individuals in society.

3. Research. Collaborative research into strategic areas. Increase collaboration

4. United we stand, divided we fall. One voice on advocacy, vision, collaboration and consistency of message.

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

1. Advocacy.

2. Leadership.

3. Education.

4. Preservation and transmission of cultural heritage worldwide.

5. Promote the profession as a viable and attractive employment option for the best and brightest.

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in Wroclaw, Poland on August 19, 2017 by the Standing Committee and corresponding members of the Library buildings and equipment section. 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 and make sure to cast your vote in August when the online voting platform is available on

https:// globalvision.ifla.org.