GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the IFLA Academic and Research Libraries Standing Committee

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

Background

IFLA is facilitating a Global Vision discussion through a series of high-level meetings and workshops in different parts of the world following the kick-off event in Athens, Greece in April 2017. The Academic and Research Libraries (ARL) Standing Committee was represented by Vicki McDonald and Andreas Degkwitz. It was a great experience. For the first time in the history of IFLA, we were brought together with every IFLA Section and SIG head to strategize on the future/role of libraries across the globe.

Future-oriented conversations will continue to take place during the year both Face-to-face and online. The Global Vision discussion website has more details. The conversation will continue on Twitter and Instagram using the #iflaGlobalVision hashtag.

Introduction

In June 2017, members of the IFLA Academic and Research Libraries Standing Committee were invited to respond to a survey for the IFLA Global Vision. The questions used at the Session in Athens were used for the Survey. Following that survey, the responses were shared with ARL Standing Committee members – both current and incoming – and asked to respond to a second survey. This report reflects the responses received from the second survey.

There were a total of 14 respondents, representing 140+ years' experience in libraries (based on a response of >20 years' experience).

A vision on libraries

What are the core values of libraries:

1. *Access to information*
2. *Intellectual freedom and freedom of information*
3. *Lifelong learning*
4. *Diversity and inclusiveness*
5. *Preserving for the future*

Comments: Partnering, openness, innovation

What are libraries are exceptionally good at:

1. *Organising information knowledge*
2. *Providing access to information and knowledge*

3.	*Providing opportunities for transformation*
4.	*Innovation and creativity*
5.	*Providing safe spaces*

Comments:

What should libraries should do MORE of:

1.	*Positioning libraries for collaboration and partnership*
2.	*Supporting open access*
3.	*Providing access to information and the internet*
4.	*Advocacy*
5.	*Skills development for staff, including education*

Comments: there was a strong theme of how libraries position themselves within their institutions, with partners – and the need for radical innovation in partnerships

What should libraries should do LESS of:

1.	*cataloguing*
2.	*working with out-dated systems (including library management systems)*
3.	*trying to do everything themselves*
4.	
5.	

Comments: There was a strong theme of libraries not continuing activities because they always have – they should look for opportunities to outsource, review the need for activities, asking if the activities are "still relevant"

What are the main challenges to society:

1.	*Education – access for all and quality*
2.	*Climate change - access to food, water*
3.	*Diversity of wealth*
4.	*Access to information and technology*
5.	*Human rights*

Comments:

What are the main challenges to libraries:

1. Demonstrating value
2. Funding
3. Reskilling staff
4. Adapting to technology
5. Understanding and meeting client expectations

Comments:

What are the main professional challenges:

1. Responding to technological change
2. Staff – recruitment, skilling, new competencies
3. Being creative – thinking differently
4. Adapting to new roles and expectations
5.

Comments:

How can a united library field meet the challenges above?:

1. collaboration
2. setting standards and identifying (and sharing) best practices
3. sharing expertise – through conferences, staff exchanges, communication
4. facilitating access to information and education
5.

Comments: There was a strong theme of collaboration in many responses: sharing expertise and resources, defining mutual strategies, pursuing joint activities.

The characteristics of a united library field are:

1. Cooperation and collaboration
2. Shared values
3. Professionalism
4. Respect and inclusion
5. Communication

Comments:

The foci of a united library field are:

1. *Collaboration*
2. *Commitment*
3. *Open – commitment to open platforms, publishing, etc.*
4. *Freedom of information & Access to information*
5. *Focus on value and relevance*

Comments: