



GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the Library Service to People with Special Needs teleconference meeting *How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future*

Teleconference, June 14, 2017

Follow-up in subsequent weeks

Report submitted, July 19, 2017

Contributors

This report is created by: Nancy Bolt, Secretary, LSN

On the Teleconference:

- Misako Nomura, Chair
- Nancy Bolt, Secretary
- Knut Nygaard
- Anne Sieberns
- Helen Chan
- Sanja Bunic
- Heidi Carlsson Asplund
- Dolly Carnugui
- Ingrid Kallstrom

Following the online meeting, the results were summarized and sent to all members of the LSN Standing Committee. They were given the opportunity to submit a short statement on the future of libraries and to suggest revisions to the summary document.

Additional input to the questions was provided by:

- **Maela Rakočević Uvodić**
- **Dunja Gabriel**
- **Helle Arendrup Mortensen**
- **Gerhard Peschers**
- **Marie Noelle Andissac**
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Index

Contributors _____	1
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 _____	6
How should a united library field help meet the challenges identified (Q11)? _____	6
The characteristics of a united library field (Q12): _____	6
The focus of a united library field (Q13): _____	6
A global conversation _____	7

Introduction

On June 14, 2017, in by teleconference, nine librarians participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Following the teleconference, the results were shared with other members of the Section Standing Committee who could not participate in the teleconference. An additional 6 people contributed ideas after the teleconference. Together we represent 245 years of library experience.

We focused our discussion on a vision for library service to people with special needs. All of the participants, both online and via email were enthusiastic and passionate about the process.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the discussion of our group, this means that people with special needs fully participate in society, are welcome in libraries by trained and sensitive library staff, and have access to all library resources as well as special services to meet their unique accessibility need, with consideration for universal design and human rights.

The core values of libraries (Q4):

LIST ANSWERS Q4:

1. *Diversity and equality, for people with different background and different needs*
2. *Open to all, equal access to all to information and to knowledge*
3. *Inclusiveness, non-discrimination, and participation, inclusion of all people*
4. *Democracy, creating more reading, thinking, and expression*
5. *Easy access and as little fees as possible.*

Comments:

Other values mentioned, but not included in the top five, were: Innovation; work as a society changer; freedom; preservation and protection of cultural heritage; helping people grow through libraries; awareness and promotion; education and lifelong learning; respond to needs of society; intellectual freedom; and protection of privacy.

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

LIST ANSWERS Q5:

1. *Libraries take care that no one is left behind, social responsibility, improvement of quality of life.*
 2. *No fees*
 3. *Outreach services for people with disabilities*
 4. *Provide ICT for meeting needs of people with disabilities*
 5. *Easy access and as little fees as possible*
-

Comments:

Other comments made not included in the top five were: cataloguing of resources; provide media materials and resources; do a lot with a little; librarians are open minded and inclusive; and empowering people from all walks of life.

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

LIST ANSWERS Q6:

1. *Involve people with special needs in planning*
2. *Focus on universal design in facilities and services*
3. *Innovate programs to be responsive to information needs*
4. *Collaborate with partners in society and community*
5. *Accessible resources that inspire and help them to use their skills, help with resources*

Comments:

Other topics raised but not included in the top five were: Inclusion in library programs; gamification; work on attitudes and knowledge of librarians; education of people with special needs; staff training; funding; get out of the library to meet needs; hire people with disabilities for staff; raise public awareness of people with special needs; and improve institutional cooperation of experts who work with people with special needs.

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

LIST ANSWERS Q7:

1. *Stop being afraid to ask people with disabilities what they need*
2. *Stop negative attitudes towards people with disabilities*
3. *Less bureaucracy and less rules*
4. *Less segregated service for people with special needs, less solutions that lead to segregated service, less isolation for people with disabilities*
5. *Less inflexibility with persons who need help depending on a disability*

Comments:

Other comments made not included in the top five were: Stop being an island in society; stop doing that that others do better; waiting to take proactive role in meeting their needs; and stop being afraid of changes.

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8): We considered this from the point of view of people with disabilities.

LIST ANSWERS Q8:

1. *Lack of services and support for people with disabilities*
2. *Lack of information and materials in accessible formats*
3. *Attitudes of librarians and other users, stereotypes, and prejudice against them*
4. *Overcome their disabilities and feel confident about themselves so they can fend for themselves*
5. *Knowing what libraries can offer to people with disabilities, besides lending books*

Comments:

Other comments made but not included in the top five were: Lack of accessibility; get included in society; overcome fear to go to the library; staying current on the latest technology; and no one to ask.

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

LIST ANSWERS Q9:

1. *Lack of adequate education and training for library staff, staff skills*
2. *Convincing funders, administration, colleagues of the importance of serving people with special needs*
3. *Lack of funds for meeting their needs*
4. *Visibility of library services to people with disabilities*
5. *Government laws; copyright legislation*

Comments

Other comments not included in the top five above were: to be relevant, accurate, updated; every changing needs of people with disabilities; old facilities; and lack of librarians and staff to help; create a library in all its content so it can be understood and used by everybody; **and** stereotypes and prejudice towards people with disabilities

The main professional challenges (Q10):

LIST ANSWERS Q10:

1. *Lack of funds*
2. *Cooperating and collaborating with partners in society and community*
3. *Lack of time to learn about their needs and organize and improve services for them, lack of time to become skilled*
4. *Using universal design*
5. *Shortage of staff*

Comments:

Other comments not included in the top five: Understand user needs; lack of space; how to serve people with disabilities; training and motivating staff; keep up with developing world; flexibility to solve diverse needs; correct terminology keeps changing; and copyright.

How a united library field can make a difference

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

LIST ANSWERS Q11:

1. *Creating international standards, sharing examples of good practices, networking, share experiences and learn from each*
2. *National and international awareness campaigns to promote the vital role of libraries to enable access to information, knowledge, education, and social participation for all.*
3. *A stronger system of our working together; all library associations should recognize the issue of serving persons with disabilities and working toward the same goals to make steps forward, worldwide professionals ready to work together.*
4. *Cooperation of professional from other sectors including law, medicine, and education; collaboration and partnerships with stakeholders, policy makers, publishers*
5. *Presence of our sector in national and international organizations that formulate policies and provide programs*
6. *Keep fighting for laws that require accessibility*

Comments:

Other comments were made not included in the top five: Create a global mission and vision in serving people with disabilities; organize international forum to promote library services to people with special needs; acceptance that all people should receive quality library services, and no excuses

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

LIST ANSWERS Q12:

1. *Creating international standards, sharing examples of good practices, networking*
2. *Provision of accessible facilities and information resources, provision of accessible materials.*
3. *Respect for dignity and human rights of people with special needs.*
4. *Advocacy to promote the library services to people with disabilities*
5. *Connections and good relationships with different sectors*

Comments:

Other comments not included in the top five were: Trained staff; communications in different formats; well use of ICT; innovation, open minded, generosity, flexibility, and understanding; and perceptive and powerful, sharing experiences and knowledge.

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

LIST ANSWERS Q13:

1. *Advocacy on an international level*
 2. *Sharing and networking*
-

3. *Library staff as lifelong learners, willing to learn new things, skills, professional development forever*

4. *Active participation in achieving the UN 2030 SDGs and have our role recognized*

5. *Changing the society and giving people the same rights regardless of social, cultural, or economic status*

Comments:

Other comments not included in the top five were: Provision of guidelines and opportunities; professionalism; diversity; planning with people with disabilities “Nothing about us without us”; promote free, open, and equal access to information and literature, advocacy; inclusivity and equality; creating legal requirements for accessibility.

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in a teleconference with followup via email beginning on June 14. 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/>.

Appendix A

The year is 2022 and libraries have changed so much. Now the do...

- ...innovative library services, digitization of all library material, free access to different data bases (educational, scientific, and cultural.)
- ... not have hard time giving the same service to people with special needs because they have hired representatives of each group of people with special needs as advisors to improve their programs and services.
- ... a lot of programs and events. The opening hours have increased but meeting the staff face to face – especially librarians - have been reduced. Online services have been increased.
- ... show a strong commitment to human rights, social justice and equality for all. Libraries worldwide have taken all possible measures to ensure that they do not discriminate and that barriers to access to their holdings and services are removed. They promote and support the rights to information and cultural participation of all users by providing them with equal access to information, ICT and services.
- ... anything they can to make library patrons with disabilities thrive in their studies, their works and their lives. Libraries are part of people's living. Libraries meet their needs in different perspectives. There is a strong reason to believe that it is only through invaluable resources, professional services and 24/7 support from libraries can people with special needs become life-long learners who can face the unlimited challenges from the unexpected era.
- ... have really understood the power and meaning of Libraries. How the library can be a part of making an equal society, an including society by actively work to reach people “in/left beside or behind” the society. That can be People with special needs or unemployed, uneducated, poor people which society takes care of. With poor I mean economic, social- and mental poorness. This is a challenge for the libraries demanding special skills from the staff and also close cooperation with the social department, schools and other authorities. Now the libraries have all information in a format that can be understood by most people for example people with dyslexia. The library catalogue is also possible to use for most people. The library is a library for all. But that is easy to say but not easy done. All staff have now special skills about the target group mentioned on top and work for the including library. A Library that all people feel comfortable with to visit and use.
- ...provide accessible and equal library services for all including people with special needs under the right to access to information and knowledge based on the Convention on the Right of Persons with Disabilities. In order to ensure such services, librarians have to focus more on accessibility, knowledge and skills to meet the needs of people who are unable to access to conventional library services.
- ...for people in prison printed and digital media are accessible in appealing library spaces.