GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the Indigenous Matters Section

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

7 July – 18 August 2017

Submitted to globalvision@ifla.org 15 September 2017

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Introduction

This report forms part of the Indigenous Matters Section report and accompanies the report from the Te Rōpū Whakahau (indigenous association of New Zealand) submitted on 20 July 2017. There are a total of two reports from the Indigenous Matters Section. The Indigenous Matters Section is a newly formed section, and the first face to face meeting of the Standing Committee is scheduled for WLIC 2017 in Poland. From 7 July to 18 August 2017, an online survey was created to enable global participation of indigenous library professionals in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future.

The composition of participants ranged from special, school, tertiary, and public librarians.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates that support indigenous communities around the world, this means that:

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1. *Access to information.*
2. *Cultural and heritage revitalisation and preservation.*
3. *Supporting empowered citizenship.*
4. *Provision of quality collections, expertise and services.*
5. *Opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy, and creativity.*

Comments:

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1. *Access to information.*
2. *Working with other information services to support and deliver for lifelong learning.*
3. *Collection development.*
4. *Reactive rather than responsive to user needs.*
5. *Providing a sanctuary for those in need.*

Comments:

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1. *Outreach activities, early involvement with families.*
2. *Effective cultural responsiveness and inclusion strategies for all peoples.*
3. *Attract and retain Library talent that represents diverse communities.*
4. *Co-collaboration with users.*
5. *Digital navigation and support.*

Comments:

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

1. *Generalised services to cater for diverse communities and individuals.*
2. *Manual transactions and processes, focus on collections rather than connections.*
3. *Ineffective management styles and leadership.*
4. *Decisions and activities that support big name publishers and monopolies.*
5. *Overloading Library professionals with particular skills, such as indigenous knowledge, language and networks without due reward and recognition.*

Comments:

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

1. *Climate change.*
2. *Diaspora.*
3. *Digital divide; speed of technological change.*
4. *Poverty.*
5. *Legitimate sources of information; quality and factual information.*

Comments:

The main challenges to libraries (Q9)

1. *Retaining a localised focus amidst national and global influences.*
2. *Effective leadership.*
3. *Change resilience.*

| 4. | *Being seen as relevant and delivering value for money.* |
| 5. | *Being a trusted and respected partner with indigenous communities.* |

Comments:

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1.	*Finding a work environment where people support, respect and recognise indigenous knowledge and how it applies to libraries.*
2.	*Not enough career progression opportunities. Managers tend to stay in jobs for a long time which prohibits innovation and growth.*
3.	*Overwork due to small number of staff who have specialist indigenous knowledge and skills.*
4.	*Finding a local context to engage meaningfully with indigenous communities and support a process of co-collaboration which requires time, resources and trust.*
5.	*Sustainable process for continuous improvement – to learn and unlearn as communities change.*

Comments:

How a united library field can make a difference

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

1.	*Shared economic leverage for purchasing to enable all countries to have the resources they need to meet the needs of their communities.*
2.	*Quality assessment.*
3.	*Agreed global methods to share content and improve metadata creation and processing across borders.*
4.	*Advocacy for better work conditions, career progression and remuneration.*
5.	*Understand, promote and value the cultures and languages of indigenous peoples.*

Comments:

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

| 1. | *Social networked connectivity for co-collaboration.* |
| 2. | *User centric service, environment, and engagement development and delivery practices.* |

3.	*Committed to continuous improvement.*

4.	*Shared resources and experience.*

5.	*Diverse, respectful, and enriched.*

Comments:

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

1.	*People first. Libraries exist for people and the intergenerational transfer of wealth and knowledge by people for the people.*

2.	*Open access and open source.*

3.	*Opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy, and creativity.*

4.	*Social responsibility and the essential value of libraries for individuals and communities.*

5.	*Global collaboration, connection and resource sharing.*

Comments:

A global conversation

This report is created from an online survey to Indigenous Matters members from around the world, from 7 July to 18 August 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.

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GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of Te Rōpū Whakahau

Māori National Association of New Zealand meeting

(part of the Indigenous Matters Section Report)

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

9 May – 11 July 2017

Submitted to globalvision@ifla.org 20 July 2017

Contributors

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Introduction

This report forms part of the Indigenous Matters Section report and should be included as a distinct indigenous perspective from Māori (indigenous people of New Zealand). From 9-12 May 2017, in Rotorua, New Zealand, over 50 Māori librarians gathered for their annual conference, as part of this event, each had the opportunity to participate in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. The event was further followed up in June through to July to capture responses. Together we represent 2,620 years of library experience.

The composition of participants ranged from special, school, tertiary, and public librarians. As is consistent with Māori perspectives on repositories and what is defined as a library from an indigenous perspective, participants also included people who work or are affiliated in archives, museums, galleries, and local marae (traditional structures of Māori society).

General observations indicated apathy towards 'more' library industry survey and 'questioning' in terms of whether an indigenous voice would actually be heard within a highly westernised federation. This is based on experience and challenges currently faced by members locally, regionally, nationally and internationally. Despite this, participants were open to contributing ideas as part of the Indigenous Matters Section.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates in New Zealand, this means that

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1.	*People first, hāpori (community), manaakitanga (hospitality), spiritual, democratic engagement and participation*
2.	*Consultation with tangata whenua (indigenous peoples) is common*
3.	*No privileges e.g. white privilege, gender privilege, acceptance, diversity, transparency*
4.	*Equitable, free access to information*
5.	*Opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy, and creativity*

Comments:

It's important to recognise relevance of any library can be achieved by ensuring it is representative and meets a broad range of needs within the community it serves. Often, indigenous needs are not provided for in terms of staff and organisation capability, which is reflected in the services, collection, activities, signage, communication, and library design. This has potential to create more barriers to equitable access to information.

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1.	*Thinking they know what they are doing*
2.	*Working with other information services to support and deliver for lifelong learning*
3.	*Conventional thinking*

4.	*Lack of respect regarding their indigenous communities, and what is reflected in collections*
5.	*Collecting and advocating for information to be available for people who might not access that information easily without libraries*

Comments:

It is evident that libraries have potential that has yet to be realised in services and collections provided to communities that include indigenous peoples. Librarians' of indigenous descent value libraries and what they can offer, but this is often at risk due to western conventional thinking, or a cultural responsiveness approach that seeks to minimise indigenous perspectives through the articulation of meeting multicultural needs. This has been a common approach, yet an indigenous approach which asserts to enhance other cultures is better achieved by enhancing the indigenous culture in the first instance.

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1.	*Ensure memorandum of partnerships with indigenous peoples are a priority*
2.	*Effective cultural responsiveness strategies for all peoples*
3.	*Provide relevant spaces for communities and individuals*
4.	*Collect resources that fit the communities they serve*
5.	*Partner with others in creating seamless and connected access to the documented/recorded history of regional, national organisations and communities*

Comments:

There was a strong theme of people versus collections. People included staff, attracting, retaining and building talent within a library, thus better serving the community at large. People also included, the community and ensuring that library staff are actively seen and involved in the community around them. The collection is important, but it is the transmission of information between people be that in-person or via digital means that adds value to the engagement.

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

1.	*The status quo*
2.	*Manual transactions and processes*
3.	*Ineffective management styles and leadership*
4.	*Feeling the need to have the latest technology*
5.	*Creating barriers*

Comments:

In addition, there was genuine concern about restructuring, rewriting job descriptions, and other associated change programmes that when analysed could be to the detriment of what is in the best interest of communities and collection expertise. For example, personality differences have influenced appointments or re-appointments, and resulted in a decline in staff expertise, that has been generalised to serve a general type of library user. This is a service model that could be provided by another business and not necessarily a library. It's a risk to the profession and perhaps indicative of changing user needs.

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

1. *Assimilation and not valuing diversity*
2. *Education paradigms – if we do the same thing and it doesn't work, why do we keep on doing it*
3. *Ensuring hard to reach and disengaged people and groups have reasons and opportunities to use library services*
4. *Creating workforces that reflect and celebrate the diversity of the communities they serve*
5. *Neoliberalism*

Comments:

The feedback highlighted state of the world challenges, such as poverty, clean drinking water, climate change, inequality of wages, Governments, education, lack of moral standards, intolerance, rising violence.

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

1. *Aging workforce*
2. *Indigenous peoples should be an opportunity but its currently a world challenge to even recognise who they are, let alone know who they are and yet libraries are housed on their land*
3. *Remuneration packages low*
4. *Being seen as relevant and delivering value for money*
5. *Keeping, creating and delivering professional or innovative services*

Comments:

Feedback also highlighted the challenges of succession planning and employability to ensure future sustainability through positive stories, communications, and promotions. This result suggested there are more negative promotions, which impacts the future of the library field, and attracting future talent to the profession and see this as a profession that offers quality employment.

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1. *Career pathways*
2. *Learning and development for indigenous practitioners*
3. *Recognition of indigenous and or cultural responsibilities*
4. *No resource to build capability in te ao Māori (indigenous world view)*
5. *Apathy from colleagues who do not have same level of cultural/indigenous skillset*

Comments:

How a united library field can make a difference

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

1.	*Acknowledge that libraries are not just the western style methodology libraries*
2.	*Be an example of humanitarian tolerance and inclusion*
3.	*Create areas work/projects where related library services can specialise*
4.	*Identifying and making it easy for citizens and communities to make seamless transitions between related library services*
5.	*Understand, promote and value the cultures and languages of indigenous peoples*

Comments:

A united library field that incorporates working through an indigenous lens would provide strengthened leadership around culture, knowledge and information, and seeds the foundation to attract and include tribal repositories and archives. It's critical to recognise that any expectation that tribal repositories and archives will automatically want to participate must be tempered with an understanding of how indigenous communities are recognised, involved and included in their home countries at all levels of society. Inside this scenario, there might be challenges, however the opportunity for the library field to make a difference is significant.

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

1.	*There is a strong indigenous voice that is heard and understood*
2.	*Clear purpose*
3.	*Big challenges are broken into a modular plan that can be achieved piece by piece*
4.	*We are mature enough to deliver services to communities, how the communities want them. We listen to our communities and work with them, not tell them what we think they need*
5.	*We are diverse, we are global*

Comments:

Characteristics also included, finding common ground but not at the expense of losing the voices and perspectives of others. Recognition that there are many voices, not one voice within the sector or institution.

1. *People first. Libraries exist for people and the intergenerational transfer of wealth and knowledge by people for the people*

2. *Appropriate access to information with a library service available at every age and stage of a persons' life*

3. *Opportunities for lifelong learning, literacy, and creativity*

4. *Equitable engagement and participation*

5. *Global collaboration, connection and resource sharing*

Comments:

A global conversation

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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.

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