GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the Standing Committee of IFLA Section on Library and Research Services for Parliaments meeting
How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future

6 July 2017

Contributors

This report is created by: Karin Finer, Secretary IFLAPARL

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Karin Finer, Lillian Gassie, Steve Wise, Ellie Valentine, Gert-Jan Lodder, Ida Kelemen, Adama Kone, Chama Mpundy Mfula, Sonia L'Heureux, Hiroyuki Okuyama, Paola Mandillo, Christine Wellems

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Introduction

On 6 July 2017, 12 librarians participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Together we represent 257 years of library experience.

The participants consisted of members of the Standing Committee of IFLA Library and Research Services for Parliaments Section. The discussions and answers reflect a general, as well as a parliamentary perspective.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates, the participants expressed the following views on the future of libraries;

In the year 2027, libraries are..

- consulted/partners on important issues affecting literacy, information access, education, etc;
- ...still here, still used, still relevant;
- a safe space to discover connect and inspire;
- in a leadership role for innovation, justice, and advancement of society;
- the institutions that guarantee access to the information society for all;
- independent institutions supporting and ensuring democracy, equal rights and access;
- interconnected and transformed with ICT tools to meet new clients needs;
- promoting reading culture, especially through Literacy programmes for all ages in relevant format and medium;
- institutions which guarantee the access for information and knowledge to all;
- institutions that will play an important role to promote objective and authoritative information in the face of the growing phenomenon of fake news and misleading information and to protect cultural heritage.

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1. objective and authoritative information
2. equal access to information
3. community / service focus
4. responsive to user needs
5. integrity and trust

Comments:

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1. Providing access to information and knowledge
2. Organising and managing information
3. Outreach to clients, adapting to clients' needs
4. Providing a social hub & bringing people together
5. Educating and training

Comments:

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1. Outreach to community
2. Training and motivate staff
3. Experiment with technology
4. Develop new skills in staff
5. Be innovative

Comments:

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

1. Resisting and fearing change
2. Maintaining redundant services
3. Doing what others do better
4. Be passive / navel-gazing
5. Second-guessing users' needs / expectations

Comments:

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

1. Human crisis (war, poverty etc)
2. Failure of democracy (corruption, misinformation, etc)
3. Lack of equality (gender, digital, uneven access to opportunities etc)
4. The digital divide, lack of education
5. Terrorism, nationalism, radicalism

Comments:

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

1. Keeping up with changing requirements
2. Finding unique role that adds value, staying relevant
3. Decreased funding levels, low level of political support
4. Misinformation, inaccurate or deliberately misleading information, 'fake' news, etc.
5. Changing political environment

Comments:

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1. New services require new staff skills - training
2. ICT/Digital capacity
3. Visibility of profession
4. Flexibility and necessity to adapt
5. Doing more with less

Comments:

How a united library field can make a difference

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

1. Common vision / IFLA
2. Global networking
3. Increased engagement in society
4. Standards and guidelines with scalability
5. Advocacy on all levels

Comments:

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

1. Strategic
2. Collaborative
3. Engaged
4. Shared knowledge and experience
5. Open

Comments:

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

1. Promotion of the value of libraries and librarians
2. Advocacy – role and necessity of independent libraries
3. Maintaining equal access to information
4. Protect democracy
5. Trust and integrity

Comments:

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, via online conversation on 6 July 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 and make sure to cast your vote in August when the online voting platform is available on https://globalvision.ifla.org/.