



GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the IFLA Management of Library Associations section virtual meeting *How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future*

Online consultation

with Google docs from 21-30 June 2017 in preparation of the MLAS Zoom discussion on

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Introduction

On 21-30 June 2017 and 3 July 2017 eight librarians participated in a virtual conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Together we represent 215 years of library experience.

Participants work all either full-time, part-time or voluntarily for library associations and have worked in the following types of libraries: Public, Special, Academic, Parliamentary and National. In addition, they have worked in the Ministry of Culture and in National centres for Libraries.

Participants have been involved for 141 years in IFLA.

A vision for libraries

Libraries enable literate, informed and participative societies. When we look at the future, according to the debates in Google and Zoom, this means that...not applicable, as no library cover drawn at virtual meeting.

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1. *Access to information*
2. *Literacy/Learning*
3. *Connecting people*
4. *Tradition/Preservation*
5. *Contribution to a better society*

Comments:

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1. *Support for different groups*
2. *Helping reduce inequalities*
3. *Foster integration*
4. *Managing media/content*
5. *Space for free access to information*

Comments:

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1. *Advocacy*
2. *Collaboration between libraries and with other services*
3. *Integration; and that for 24/7*
4. *Critical approach to own mission and activities*
5. *Integrate users in our offers (feedback possibilities, recommendations to others, anonymous statistics of user interests etc.)*

Comments:

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

1. *Doing everything (Makerspaces, activities etc.)*
2. *Focus on books and cataloguing*
3. *Care about their own specialities (thinking that every library and type is unique)*
4. *Libraries should remain a part of public service/sector, but without expanding activities on every current need that appears.*
- 5.

Comments:

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

1. *(Im-)migration*
2. *Poverty*
3. *Fast change of technology (digital revolution)*
4. *Climate change*
5. *Financial /Economic crisis and consequences for public funding of libraries*

Comments:

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

1. *unfavourable legal and regulatory frameworks*
2. *rapid technological changes*
3. *Proving the indispensability of their original contribution to society without thinking they are alone to do so*
4. *Keeping the knowledge of librarians and information specialists up to date*
5. *Cuts in government funding affecting libraries and culture in times of austerity*

Comments:

The TOP 5 of answers to questions 9-13 could not be discussed via Zoom, as it was timed out. The summary out of 9 answers is given here by the chair MLAS.

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1. *Contributing to the successful mixing of the experience of senior librarians with the new skills and imagination of new professionals*
2. *keeping up with technological changes*
3. *(Academic) libraries face strong competition in forms of information centres, publishing companies, internet...;*
4. *budget reductions*
5. *changes to profession: less qualified work will disappear - IT-skills are underdeveloped*

Comments:

The TOP 5 of answers to questions 9-13 could not be discussed via Zoom, as it was timed out. The summary out of 7 answers is given here by the chair MLAS.

How a united library field can make a difference

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

1. *(global, national, local) networking*
 2. *sharing strategies, sharing goals and efforts*
 3. *IFLA leadership*
 4. *Collaboration, i.e. one global system to catalogue (e.g. RDA)*
 5. *One virtual library for all the people on our world*
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Comments:

The TOP 5 of answers to questions 9-13 could not be discussed via Zoom, as it was timed out. The summary out of 8 answers is given here by the chair MLAS.

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

1. *use the potential of social media should be an issue for every librarian and information specialist*
2. *Libraries that, connected together, share values, goals, resources, work and successes*
3. *Joint projects under the IFLA leadership*
4. *Every institution and every employee is member of a library association - Every association is member of IFLA*
5. *In every town, region or village the libraries work together*

Comments:

The TOP 5 of answers to questions 9-13 could not be discussed via Zoom, as it was timed out. The summary out of 6 answers is given here by the chair MLAS.

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

1. *networking*
2. *supporting the core values e.g. supporting open access publishing*
3. *Cooperation between libraries + cooperation of libraries with other social and cultural institutions`*
4. *Joint projects in favour of access to information and culture*
5. *secure access to information for everyone*

Comments:

Here are the other answers: The reader, the user, the client - The society - The world. Supporting democracy and free speech. International exchange of experiences.

Answers to Questions 14-16:

Q14: What are the challenges to creating a more united library field?

1. *e.g. funding*
2. *Networking, sharing ever more*
4. *Different socio-economic contexts with different needs and priorities; generally speaking, absence of joint performance on global level (that's why we should appreciate IFLA activities more than we do).*
5. *the most efficient way to build identity (for everybody) : I' am not as... / the too much differentiated structure/funding bodies of the libraries / Mind set of librarians who have to preserve not to innovate*
6. *library hierarchies*

Q15: What are the opportunities you see to create a more united library field?

1. *e.g. IFLA events*
2. *Umbrella Associations where there are several associations in the field*
3. *National and international events*
4. *IFLA and other international library associations; national library associations, joint projects and activities.*
5. *If we can demonstrate that a united field helps to shape the future / that we have more power for lobbying, if we are united / Being member of a huge organization is a supporting value*
6. *Bib- and Bar camps, using more informal formats to make more participation possible*

Q16: What examples do you have of collaboration across countries, regions, or the globe?

1. *Joint accreditation of courses, reciprocity of qualifications, international campaigns such as support for SDG's , Marrakesh Treaty*
2. *Just as a new example: the Réseau Francophone numérique (RFN) and its brand new Bibliothèque francophone numérique : <http://rfnum-bibliotheque.org> ;-)*
3. *Webinars, bib camps*
4. *Cultural agreements (Croatia and surrounding countries); joint projects; IFLA/BSLA Program (workshops in Croatia); IFLA/ALP Project Regional Cooperation: Challenge and Opportunity.*
5. *Greenpeace / World Wildlife Fund / Red Cross / Transparency International / Integration of two Library Associations to one in Switzerland*

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in ZOOM on 3 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](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/>.