



## The Role of Libraries in Lifelong Learning

### Final report of the IFLA project under the Section for Public Libraries

Edited by Britt Marie Häggström

#### Introduction

The fifth UNESCO/CONFINTEA meeting took place in Hamburg in 1997. The Hamburg declaration was adopted and stated that "UNESCO should strengthen libraries, museums heritage and cultural institutions as learning places and partners in the lifelong learning process and modern citizenship" It was felt that IFLA should take a more active role in strengthening the libraries role and to live up to what is stated in the IFLA UNESCO Public Library Manifesto. *"The public library, the local gateway to knowledge provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups."*

The Hamburg declaration became the starting point for the project on The Role of Public Libraries in lifelong learning.

The project started in 2000 and ended by the IFLA Berlin Conference in 2003.

I hand over this report to the IFLA governing board hoping that the recommendations given and the examples of good practise will be carried forward by IFLA in close cooperation with UNESCO and in accordance with the theme for Kay Raserokas, president of IFLA, Libraries for lifelong literacy.

Document adopted by the IFLA Section for Public Libraries, Mid Term Meeting in Ljusdal Sweden, March 2004.

Baerum April

Torny Kjekstad  
Chair IFLA /Section for Public Libraries & IFLA / Professional Board

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## **Definition of life long learning**

Lifelong learning or learning from cradle to grave does not have the same connotation as recurrent education within the educational system. Lifelong learning reflects a more holistic view on education and recognises learning in and from many different environments. Lifelong learning is related to recurrent training available within the framework of the formal education system, but it is not the same thing. Lifelong and life-wide learning is a concept with broader scope and consequences.

Among other things, lifelong learning dissolves boundaries between traditional policy sectors. Educational policy, labour market policy, industrial policy, regional policy, industrial policy, social policy and cultural policy, are all affected by lifelong learning and they all have a common responsibility for lifelong and life-wide learning. Lifelong learning can be defined as all purposeful learning activity undertaken on an ongoing basis with the aim of improving knowledge, skills and competence. It contains various forms of education and training, formal, non-formal and informal, e.g. the traditional school system from primary to tertiary level, free adult education, informal search and training, individually, in a group setting or within the framework of social movements.

All these forms of education and training relies on working methods developing the individual's ability to search for information and develop knowledge actively and independently. Libraries have the potential to make a difference between a traditional system of formal education and a broader system of learning. Libraries are socially inclusive places, offering a broad choice of different media and professional guidance in information search. In my view, they must therefore supplement the classroom and the traditional textbook.

### **Public libraries and lifelong learning**

In a society of lifelong learning public libraries will be nodes connecting the local learning setting – whether it is of a formal or informal kind – with the global resources of information and knowledge, public libraries can therefore play a role of fundamental importance in the development of future systems of lifelong learning. The development of the information and communication technology (ICT) has already laid the basis for the creation of information Networks, giving users even of small local public libraries access to the world wide sources of information. As mentioned before, public libraries offer guidance and training in how to search and use this information and rate the quality of information sources. Thus, public libraries can be said to qualify as important prerequisites for an informed democratic knowledge society.

In this situation public libraries and professional librarians will have to change and adapt to new demands, professional tasks and working conditions. Libraries should always be directed towards the empowerment of the users. A climate should be created in which even the shyest person feels able to ask for help without being judged inadequate. **We need more research and knowledge about how libraries and the professional profiles of librarians should be designed in order to improve their preparation to meet the new needs and demands directed towards them.**

Libraries have developed in concert with their local and national history. Political, economic and social circumstances create, shape and develop libraries. Among libraries we can find diversity and difference. The most modern and well-equipped library is not necessarily the most developed in the art of stimulating popular participation and democracy. Good examples can be found all over the world.

### **EU Memorandum on lifelong Learning**

The European Commissions memorandum on lifelong learning was a new initiative, although ideas about the related concept – “recurrent training” – can be traced back to political discussions during the 1960s. Already at that time, the idea was that learning should be driven by the individual's own initiative and focus on personal needs, these thoughts were visionary at the time. However, they remained at a rather vague conceptual level and were never transformed into general strategies possible to implement. Instead, recurrent training resulted in a number of specific educational training programmes during the 60s and 70s. At the end of the 1980s and the beginning of the 1990s the idea of lifelong learning resurfaced, e.g. when the International Commission on Education for the 21<sup>st</sup> Century presented its report – *Learning: the treasure within* – to UNESCO in 1996. In the introduction the former president of the European commission, Jacques Delors, wrote:

“Our century has been much of sound and fury as of social and economic progress that in any case has not been equally shared. It is the view of the Commission that while education is an ongoing process of improving knowledge and skills, it is also – perhaps primarily – an exceptional means of bringing about personal development and building relationships Following the European Council in Lisbon in March 2000, the European Commission produced a Memorandum on lifelong learning, with the aim of developing a coherent overall

strategy for Lifelong Learning in Europe. The purpose of the Memorandum, was made official in October 2000 and followed up under the Swedish EU presidency, was to launch a European-wide debate on a comprehensive strategy for implementing lifelong learning at individual and institutional levels. The Commission therefore initiated a wide Consultation process, and the outcome of this process was used to prepare an action plan, specifying policy objectives, concrete initiatives and benchmarks for implementing lifelong learning in Europe.

Lifelong learning is according the Memorandum the common umbrella under which all kinds of teaching and learning should be brought together. Implementing actions and policies to support and enhance lifelong learning will be based on shared responsibility and partnership – between Member States and the European Commission, between the Social Partners, between business and training institutions, and between different branches of education and training. It will also necessitate the merging of education and training structures, and the development of integrated policies and coherent strategies at government level. At the heart of the Memorandum are six key messages.

New basic skills for all, with the objective to guarantee universal and continuing access to learning for gaining and renewing the skills needed for sustained participation in the knowledge society. Five new basic skills were specifically mentioned at Lisbon – IT skills, foreign languages, technological culture, entrepreneurship and social skills.  
Raising levels of investment in Human Resources.

Innovation in teaching and learning, with the objective to develop effective teaching and learning methods and contexts for the continuum of lifelong learning.  
Valuing learning, with the objective to improve the ways in which learning participation and outcomes are understood and appreciated, particularly non-formal and informal learning.  
Rethinking guidance and counselling, with the objective to ensure that everyone can easily access good quality information and advice about learning opportunities.  
Bringing learning closer to home.

It is easy to see a fundamental function for libraries in relation to these six messages. The memorandum though overlooked that libraries are not just service places ,but active partners in the educational process. In the original Memorandum libraries were only mentioned once under key-message : *examples of everyday locations where people gather ..like train stations,parks,health centers and workplace canteens.*  
The Resolution on EU Lifelong learning was adopted by the European Council June 27 2002.after a wide Consultation process. The Libraries position was improved.

Extracts from the communication  
Information, guidance and counselling  
Primarily involves facilitating access to learning opportunities, creating a learning culture and partnership working.  
*ICT based services in partnership with other local level services e.g. libraries may serve as accesspoints*

Bringing together learners and learning opportunities  
Encouraging and supporting learning communities, cities, regions and setting up local learning centres.

*Memberstates are invited to use the resources of schools, adult education and higher education institutions and other public facilities such as libraries as multipurpose centres for lifelong learning.*

Even though the project was not s focused on the Memorandum but the memorandum became a reason for the European library community to take active part in the discussions . This situation was also helpful for the project.

The project would examine and give good examples on librariy activities like:

The use of public libraries in work related education and further education.

Public libraries' co-operation and communication with the local society, e.g. different educational institutions, local trade and industry and health and environmental authorities.

The role played by public libraries in the defence and promotion of democratic participation, free access to information and freedom of speech.

Pedagogical methods and strategies developed and adapted to adult education and groups with special needs, e.g. persons with disabilities, the gender perspective.

The professional profile of the librarian, regarding for example skills in information search, pedagogy, didactics and ICT.

The function of public libraries in the preservation and public presentation of cultural heritage, e.g. oral tradition and native language.

The creation of electronic networks between public libraries and research libraries, school libraries and special libraries.

The development of networks between public libraries and educational institutions and organisations.

The use of information- and communication technology (ITC) in the libraries work with lifelong learning.

Collection management, e.g. the balance between books, newspapers, electronic media and audio-visual media.

The shape and design of readingrooms, work places, etc.

The relations between the interior design and inner structure of public libraries and an environment conducive to learning and education.

### **Activities relevant to the project but related to the Memorandum**

Representatives for the Swedish library community stressed the importance of the libraries in lifelong learning at an international conference on lifelong learning in Eskilstuna, Sweden, in April 2001.

The DIK Association, the Swedish Library Association and Malmö City Library arranged a seminar on the topic of public libraries being the principal gateways for access to EU information. Representatives for the library communities in the Nordic countries, the Baltic countries and Slovenia participated in the seminar. Libraries playing an active role in the democratic society.

EBLIDA – European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations – .adopted a statement on the role of libraries in lifelong learning at its Council on 11 May 2001. This statement was sent to the Committee of the Regions EU. The statement stresses that the notion of lifelong learning implies the ability to search for information and knowledge actively and independently. It also focus the libraries role in giving access to information and the librarians role to provide expert guidance in identifying and evaluating quality resources, enabling users to maximise their use of the new global networks where the information often lacks the traditional benchmarks of quality, authenticity or permanence.

The statement was sent to all European ministers of Culture and Education and to relevant Commissioners

The EBLIDA statement was sent to those members of the UNESCO/ALADIN (Access to Library and Database Information Network) aiming to be a part of the library community. 2001 the DIK Association arranged a seminar on the archives, libraries and museums roles in lifelong learning in Stockholm. Ministry of Culture.

A statement on the Memorandum and the role of libraries was sent to Swedish members of the Committee of the Regions, EU.

The Norwegian Library Association did send a statement on the Memorandum to the Norwegian Ministry of Education.

### **Description of the project**

**The aim of the IFLA project “The role of Public Libraries in lifelong learning” is to explore the possibilities for public libraries to play a more active role in lifelong learning and to establish tools for libraries and librarians to become active partners in educational systems.**

Members of the section active in the project: Britt Marie Häggström ,Sweden project co ordinator 2000 –2002,Assumpta Bailac,Spain 2000 –2002,Barbara Clubb,CanadaClara Budnik, Chile, Jarmila Burgetova, Czech Republic,Kerstin Hassner, Sweden,Torny Kjekstad,Norway,chair of the section 2003- and Gunilla Konradsson –Mortin, Sweden 2003 -.

### **Focus for the project:**

Geographical focus: South America and Eastern Europe. Good practise examples were to be collected from this part of the world. A questionnaire was sent out to participants in the meeting for Spanish speaking librarians in Antigua in 2001. Few examples were found but the speakers at the Berlin workshop gave many examples from these parts of the world.

Research project has not been worked through.Universities in Canada and The University of Uppsala, Lund and Umeå and the University College of Borås have been contacted ,but nobody have shown interest to make the research. The aim of the research project was to search through literature and relevant organisations responsible for adult education to find examples of co operation between adult education and libraries. .

The Library at University College of Borås have made the bibliography supplements to the report.

Libraries visible in the next Confintea meeting. The Midterm Confintea meeting took place in Bangkok, Thailand September 10 –12 2003. A paper was given by Britt Marie Häggström on libraries and lifelong learning

### **Policy Documents**

UNESCO Public Library manifesto 1996

EU Manifesto on Lifelong Learning 2000

EU Communication on the Manifesto on Lifelong learning.2001-2002

## Activities within the project

Connection with the working Group on IFLA/UNESCOs guidelines for Public Libraries

Connection and discussions with the UNET project (Hassner)

Connection with the ALP Core program under the third priority Libraries and literacy.

Partner in The Pulman project DGM (digital guidelines manual) on Public libraries services supporting education in adult life. The Pulman project is closed in 2003. Report on <http://www.pulmanweb.org> (Häggström)

Participation and query to the Conference for Spanish speaking librarians 2001 in Antigua South America (Bailac)

Participation the Citizens Assembly Brussels December 2002 .(Häggström)

Paper to the Danish Library Associations meeting in Odense 2002 (Häggström)

Paper and participation in the ABF (French Library Association) annual meeting 2002 (Häggström)

Paper and participation in the Confintea mid term meeting in Bangkok, Thailand September 6 –11 2003 <http://www.Unesco.org>. (Häggström)

Report to the Standing Committees mid term meeting in Prague Czech Republic 2001 Singapore 2002 and Bologna 2003. Written reports - available by request.

Presentations and discussions at the Sections open session at the IFLA meeting in Boston and Glasgow.

A full day workshop at the IFLA Congress in Berlin 2003.

### **Title of the workshop:**

#### **Inspiring learning in Public Libraries.**

Papers were given by: Robert Wedgeworth President Pro Literacy World-wide Syracuse USA

Literacy as a Public Library Core Program: IFLAS contribution to the UN Decade of literacy.

Ruth Ornholt, head of County Library, Hordaland County Library Bergen, Norge, "Social inclusion and Lifelong Learning in Public Libraries

Simona Resman Head Librarian The Oton Zupanic Public Library Ljubljans Slovenia "To start The Lifelong Learning Process

Barbro Thomas replacing Britt Mari Pelling The Royal Library Stockholm Sweden Library co operation in Central America a Royal library and SIDA joint project.

Britt Marie Häggström President DIK association Nacka Sweden  
"Lifelong learning let your library be your partner."

## Topics discussed at the workshop.

- The use of public libraries in work related education and further education.
- Public libraries' co-operation and communication with the local society, e.g. different educational institutions, local trade and industry and health and environmental authorities.
- The role played by public libraries in the defence and promotion of democratic participation, free access to information and freedom of speech.
- Pedagogical methods and strategies developed and adapted to adult education and groups with special needs, e.g. persons with disabilities, the gender perspective.
- The professional profile of the librarian, regarding for example skills in information search, pedagogy, didactics and ICT.
- The function of public libraries in the preservation and public presentation of cultural heritage, e.g. oral tradition and native language.
- The creation of electronic networks between public libraries and research libraries, school libraries and special libraries.
- The development of networks between public libraries and educational institutions and organisations.
- The use of information- and communication technology (ITC) in the libraries work with lifelong learning.
- Collection management, e.g. the balance between books, newspapers, electronic media and audio-visual media.
- The shape and design of readingrooms, work places, etc.
- The relations between the interior design and inner structure of public libraries and an environment conducive to learning and education

Summing up by Barbara Clubb ex. Chair of the section

## Articles

Struggle for a position article in Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France February 2002(Häggström)

Article Sources of knowledge, spaces for learning in The New review of Libraries and Lifelong learning in February 2002(Häggström)

## And :

The University College of Borås have updated the bibliography

Good practice examples are provided by members of the Section

## [Questionnaire to the Antiqua meeting](#)

**El Servicio de la Biblioteca Pública: Pautas para su Desarrollo  
Documento de trabajo de junio 2000:**

<http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/proj/Lifelong-LearningReport2-s.pdf>

## Comments

The project has not followed the first outline .

The development of lifelong learning have taken different ways. In many countries, still too few, libraries have become active partners in the learning process.

Some facts on libraries There are 267 219 Public Libraries in the world:

There are 797 public libraries in Africa.

37 063 in Asia

20 081 In North America

3942 In South America and

205 336 in Europe.

They have more than 16 billion books, 2.5 million CDs 200.000 workstation for users and 100 000 Internet connections.

1.647 204 billion registered users and nearly 400 000 Library staff to meet the users needs.

1.648

(The figures are based on UNESCO 1999 Statistical Yearbook and Libecon 2000)

These figures were presented at the IFLA meeting on World Summit in the Information Society Geneva 2003.

This is a powerful resource but....

still in the educational organisations lifelong learning is defined as adult education and education takes place at school ,learning centres or by distance learning.

The situation is improving but there is still a long way to solemnly establish libraries as a forceful tool in the lifelong learning process.

This project might help to show the diversity, difficulties and possibilities for libraries in this process.

## General Recommendations

The recommendations from the project are in these fields:

- Library and educational policy
- Co-operation between the library community and the educational community.
- The need of change in public libraries. E.g. to be more open for co- operation and initiate new methods of working.
- The need of change regarding professional profiles.

The recommendations will be disseminated to national governments, library associations through the IFLA Section for Managing Library Associations and institutions and educational organisations and institutions.

## Recommendations to IFLA

### ***To intensify co-operation with UNESCO in the field of learning from cradle to grave.***

IFLA should make sure that the educational section of UNESCO and the Section for Public Libraries join forces. The two sections discuss the same subjects with the same commitment but at separate meetings.

The last Confintea Midterm review meeting had the following subjects for discussion.:

Improving the conditions and quality of adult learning.

Higher education institutions. Lifelong learning higher education and active citizenship

Literacy

Gender

ICT

Museums, libraries and cultural heritage

Indigenous people

Refugees and migrants

Persons with disabilities

Poverty

Democracy

The same topics had been discussed two weeks earlier at the IFLA Congress in Berlin with library people.

IFLA should take active part in fighting literacy during thr literacyvdecade till 2013.

How : By using the same methodes as in the IFLA process on WSIS.

Librarians participating in the regional Confintea meeting and to make sure that in every national delegation at the next CONFINTEA meeting in 2007 there is a librarian.

Nacka April 2004-04-13

Britt Marie Häggström

Project co ordinator.

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## **Part Two**

**Examples of good practice:** <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/proj/Good-practice.pdf>

**Bibliography 1999-2002:** <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/proj/Bibliography1999-2002.pdf>

**Bibliography 2003/February 2004:** <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/proj/Bibliography2003-2004.pdf>

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