The IFLA Sister Libraries programme - evaluating the development of an international network.

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Objectives for my session

• To briefly outline the development timeline of the Sister Libraries programme.
• To describe the ongoing evaluation research and discuss the concept of ‘community of practice.’
• To report on progress and a change of strategy by the C & YA Standing Committee.
• To invite you to reflect on how your community can help to further develop this international programme.
IFLA Sister Libraries programme – developmental timeline

2009 - idea suggested at IFLA in Milan and launched in November that year

2010 - C & YA Standing Committee members volunteer as godmother mentors and Sister Library registration starts


2012 - first evaluation report at IFLA in Helsinki.

2013 journal article published in *New Review of Children's Literature and Librarianship*

2014 - C & YA Standing Committee review progress and adopt new communication strategy
Sister Libraries

... a programme for children’s libraries to build a partnership, exchange views and experiences, collaborate and develop joint programs for children’s and YA's reading.

Embodies the spirit of IFLA

Links to key IFLA initiatives
Twinning support is a primary principle of UNESCO, not only because it has a direct impact on the education and literacy of each society, but also because it has great influence on the cultural, social and economic life.
What is evaluation research and why do it?

• Often used to judge systems and services - not the approach in this programme.
• Should enhance knowledge and decision making - lead to practical applications.
• Taking a longitudinal view as a ‘community of practice’ develops.
• Practitioners showing goodwill and professional generosity.
Methodology - data collection strategies

Qualitative data gathered

- Conversations with six godmothers in 2011 and 2012
- Email questionnaires sent to English speaking Sister Library participants 2012

Evidence gathered from the Sister Library blog

New approach - evidence gathered from regular email contact and Facebook
Sister Libraries as a ‘Community of Practice’

Communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly. (Wenger, 2006)
Why focus on community of practice?

Value and benefits:

- help with challenges
- access to expertise
- confidence
- fun with colleagues
- meaningful work
- personal development
- professional identity
Progress report – change of strategy

New approach:

• Godmother mentors to stand down
• Communication channels
  • focus on social media using Facebook
  • regular email messages via Co-ordinator
• Opportunity for researcher to have ongoing contact
A positive future for Sister Libraries – but the community must help

• Sustainability - growing the international network
  • more Sister Libraries encouraged to join
  • increased contact and knowledge sharing through use of social media

• Promoting awareness of the programme with other sections of IFLA
• Promoting awareness of the programme in countries around the world – my challenge to all of you in the audience!
Thank you for listening.
Any questions or comments please?

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