

## IFLA Annual Congress Cape Town 15-21 August 2015

### Learning across boundaries: a workshop

At the World Library and Information Congress in Cape Town the IFLA Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning and Public Libraries Sections joined together to present *Learning across boundaries: a workshop* (Session number 092).

Each of our four speakers provided a number of questions to be discussed after their presentation. This is the feedback from those questions.

#### ***Sustainable and effective professional development for diverse libraries: Current status and best practice presented by Dr Nicole Johnston***

##### **Nicole asked**

*Think of a particularly effective professional development experience you've had. What made it memorable to you? How did it change your perspective or professional practice?*

##### **You answered**

- Sharing with colleagues post conference
- Mentors to maximise conference experience
- Time away from work to focus and reflect
- Team people with similar experience and challenges/ Interacting with peers.
- Reflection assignments
- Librarians work on community needs
- Trainer, audio-visual material, practical course, face to face
- Networking opportunities – teaching leads to networking
- From manual to digital systems there are many changes. You have to learn many new things
- Sometimes your job does limit your ability to train others even though peer training can be very helpful.
- Hands-on and active learning (e.g., lab experience) rather than lecture or “death by power point” is the most effective. Presenting is a powerful form of professional development.
- Participant- based training should stress diversity and inclusion.
- ‘Think globally but act locally’
- Experiences with foreign support like Gates Foundation or Carnegie leadership programme.
- Online learning and tutorials

##### **Nicole asked**

*What is the biggest problem you face in developing professionally? Is it logistical? Conceptual? What has made professional development challenging for you?*

##### **You answered**

- Time – scheduling of on-line/face to face.
- Go away to make separation between work and conference.
- Logistics around distance/cost.
- Lack of money for training resources.
- Sharing/transfer of skills doesn't always happen.

- Webinars good but time zones are problematic.
- Work collaboratively through technology
- Lacking understanding of what's needed
- Online opportunities at home
- Cultural differences
- Small groups social media
- Attitude – out of the comfort zone
- CPD organizations are disappearing
- Status of librarians - local government officials do not always want to support them
- Some librarians (older) not interested in learning new technologies or skills
- Need more post-graduate courses for librarians
- Youth do not see Library Science as a career; libraries are not represented at career fairs.
- No one person in the organization is responsible for delivering CPD.
- The language barrier at international conferences where often English is the primary language can be a problem.
- Other concerns include release time and the impact being gone may have on other back at the home institution.
- Additional barriers include distance, lack of time (to take even on-line courses), distractions when participating in a webinar or other on-line course at work, and the lack of adequate time to process new information or try new skills when back in the workplace
- Development has to be continuous.
- Prepare yourself mentally
- Own motivation: you have to create the opportunities for yourself.
- Mentor might be helpful.
- Stop thinking in boxes.

**Nicole asked**

*What is one change that you could make in your professional life to improve your professional development? What is one thing that you can do to take charge of your own situation?*

**You answered**

- Stick to the commitment – push the importance
- Take opportunities to engage in on-line training and encourage staff to do so
- Collaboration, be more curious
- Improve language skills
- Management should free up time/opportunities
- More skill development opportunities
- Showing companies what value it would give
- Attitude changes – more time to motivate your employees to learn new things
- Map out an annual personal training and development plan.
- Conduct research to find webinars to “sell” to my boss.
- Utilize any available “train-the-trainer” opportunities.
- Make technology my friend more than my enemy.
- Effect the team and colleagues to use the possibilities of learning

**Nicole asked**

*What responsibilities do you think professional associations have in producing professional development opportunities? What responsibilities should be borne by individual professionals?*

**You answered**

- Manage Funds, use them to deliver low cost opportunities taking into account the logistics

of travel

- Provision of a toolkit with members taking responsibility to use it
- Our role is to be active members of our section
- 2 way communication asking/telling what's needed.
- They should be more active as people don't have time to look for more places? Emailing personally, specifically reminding people of what they are interested in
- The professional associations should provide accredited training programmes.
- They should share expertise and environment and bring the members with comparable needs and problems together.
- Most of the associations are voluntary run so individuals are again limited in time and money

***Building librarians' capacity to use ICT in services that meet community needs in Africa***  
**presented by Ramune Petuchovaite**

**Ramune asked:**

*How to ensure continuous capacity building focused on service innovation for public librarians working in low resource environments?*

**You answered:**

- Peer to peer
- Fundraising/partnering
- Discussing challenges
- Sponsorship local government
- Keeping statistics, telling stories, demonstrating success to funders
- Using ICT to train librarians and then the community
- Staff can be frightened, need to overcome this fear.
- 1to1 best way forward
- Don't want a situation to innovate for innovation sake
- Involve users in decision making – make them your advocates 'unlikely' champions
- Sustainability important.
- More training
- Motivation is the biggest thing
- Librarians have to come up with cheap ideas
- Many librarians work alone, arrange so they can network more
- Small resources can do a lot to lift motivation
- Influence to the top – decision makers don't use libraries
- The organization has an infrastructure but administrative municipal regulations prevent them from using for example ICT functions (for example Facebook).
- The library ICT department needs the power to follow their own demands.

**Ramune asked:**

*Can international cooperation between public libraries, library authorities and associations support ongoing public library innovation – in both developing and developed countries?*

**You answered:**

- Online courses

- Supported by peer to peer
- Level needs to be raised
- Professional obligation to help/mentor/support
- Staff working with developing countries
- Sharing information via blogs
- Library visits within the community
- Develop an eBay marketplace for library skills
- Yes, IFLA meaningful gives inspiration. Best practices
- They can do guidelines, programs, sponsoring; suggestions
- Yes! It's a process to get through for international partners. Learning will be on both sides: ICT development for developing countries as well how to deal with limitations for developed countries

**Ramune asked:**

*What kind of management practices contribute to creativity and innovation in public libraries?*

**You answered:**

- Management should listen, identify issues, delegate responsibility
- Good food/good coffee
- Supportive
- Accept failure
- Open-minded
- Encourage risk taking
- Everybody involved for greater ownership
- Involve clients
- One project – one manager
- Management should be open, communicate, job training; freedom to express yourselves, open working culture, informal staff should be taking care of...
- Hierarchical structures suppress innovation
- Managers that motivate and give positive feedback
- Managers who encourage staff to learn new skills and support the development of new skills
- Managers with a passion for the job and who want to create a safe platform for staff development
- Managers that implement innovation driven by user demands
- Managers who listen
- Sometimes it's the personality (openness to new ideas, tolerance for risk, issues of micromanagement that become a barrier
- Start small and build on successes!
- Staff exchanges (within the same library or across libraries) can be powerful development tools and ways to encourage creativity and innovation.
- Mainly for public libraries politics is a critical topic

**Ramune asked:**

*How to build public library management capacity to create an environment supporting open collaboration and innovation?*

**You answered:**

- Public/private partnerships
- 'out of the Box' Wednesdays – work on a project of choice and report back
- Mentoring

- Opportunities for getting inspiration
- Having dialogue with staff
- Provide feedback
- There is often no link between academic and public libraries even though they may both face similar issues/challenges.
- There is a real need to transfer academic knowledge to public libraries
- The local library association needs a stronger role to bridge the international gap as well as the gap between scientific and public libraries.

***Make them stay: keeping young librarians in the profession*** presented by Britta Biedermann

**Britta asked:**

*What kind of librarians do we need to educate for a global world?*

**You answered:**

- Qualified and internationalised – does not mean standardisation.
- Keep your culture
- We can give something to one another
- Dynamic, flexible, open-minded, good communication skills
- Asking users with special needs
- Open-minded and raised in a diverse culture
- Awareness of global issues
- Willingness to serve customers
- New language skills
- They should be modern, aware of new technology, Open minded, should be aware of what's happening in the world; pedagogical skills; customer friendly, extroverted
- Flexible!
- Change is a constant
- Cooperative on all levels
- Broader skillset
- Broad exposure to all facets of librarianship
- 'Hip and vibrant'
- Open for innovations
- Project working skills
- Customer involving
- Empowering and capacity building
- Integration of migrants

**Britta asked:**

*The labour market constantly changing. What kind of future skills (soft and hard skills) are going to be needed in libraries?*

**You answered:**

- Technical skills open-mindedness, reflect, question ourselves

- Training and awareness
- Advocacy, leadership
- People who like to work with people
- Adaptability
- Information seeking/research skills
- Cultural awareness
- Awareness of western bias in tools
- Openness to ideas/resources
- Understanding of communities we serve
- Attuned to issues
- Using data to understand our customers
- IT skills, marketing (because people have still an old fashioned sight of libraries, good language, management skills)
- 'Hip and vibrant'
- For young people today library work is more a job than a profession

**Britta asked:**

*This project's main problem was to find a library willing to take an intern although there is no salary required. What requirements have to be met for a library to take an intern?*

**You answered:**

- The library must make time
- Some people from the outside can be seen as a threat as they question what they are doing. They must be willing to be questioned
- It must be a win-win situation
- Getting funding and passion to the right place
- Does your corporate policies allow
- Inters to come up with a plan – having a specific project for them
- Professional jealousies
- Information from host institutions
- Insurance
- Benefits for the library
- Professional obligation
- Language skills, time, personal trainer; management's attitude and time to take on the interns
- Positive and open attitude of management and staff to having an intern
- Initial success leads to more success
- Need to have confidence in the screening process to ensure a good fit
- LOTS of communication from both parties regarding expectations
- The amount of change going on in the host institution can positively or negatively impact the intern experience
- It needs a structure and rules for all three parties: the sending library, the intern and the hosting library

**Britta asked:**

*In future, will the education of librarians increasingly be internationalized (and standardized)?*

**You answered:**

- Maybe on-line education library education

- Standardisation of qualifications
- Digital software
- Will or should?
- Maybe include international librarianship in curriculum
- Passport to the world
- Encourage people to enrol in LIS courses
- Maybe in Europe (EU) not internationally
- Honouring credentials across countries—this is currently inconsistent
- Implement a standardized curriculum across countries
- Add an international component to the MLIS curriculum
- Would be good but language is a challenge

***Improving public library services for people with sight loss in the UK through staff development and reader engagement presented by Mark Freeman***

**Mark asked:**

*How should we best identify the needs of customers or potential users of your service who have specific challenges such as sight loss?*

**You answered:**

- Talking when we see them, become their friends, anywhere you meet them
- Information to aged care
- Cooperation with specialised agencies
- Talk to customers – technical needs and identify social needs and support organisations
- Important to understand reasons for specific needs
- Contacts in the community; go out of the library and tell people about our services; make institutions aware and inform them of library services'; personal contacts, national programs and training
- Seek referrals from other agencies
- Public libraries in South Africa provide some materials but the handicapped customers didn't use the public libraries because they have special libraries for their needs
- Physically handicapped need remodelling libraries (barrier free)

**Mark asked:**

*How do we develop the skills of our workforce in providing an equitable service for people with very specific needs?*

**You answered:**

- Technologies
- Programs not only technical
- Standards for people with disability
- Legislative requirements
- Listen to members and what they actually want
- Workshops in partnership with appropriate organisations
- Awareness, basic training in library schools about these services; someone (a staff member) taking responsibility for these services in the library

- Take advantage of existing training materials.
- Staff members need to assist in actively identifying special user's needs.
- Offer diversity and inclusion training for staff that includes a focus on special needs patrons.
- The participants described that deaf is a serious problem
- Dealing with handicaps is usually not a part on any sensitivity training

**Mark asked:**

*How do we ensure that we meet the challenges of an equitable service for all?*

**You answered:**

- Technologies
- Programs not only technical
- Lines of communication open between parties
- Feedback from users
- Audit by external organisations
- Personal services, to remember that we also have these customers
- Training the staff (for example sign language)
- Technical support provided by the library like braille

**Mark asked:**

*What effect do you think currently changing digital technologies have on the way we train our staff and deliver our services? How do you think we will need to work in the future?*

**You answered:**

- A lot of tasks will be replaced by automation, make time to discuss with people
- Talk to parents and school
- Go outside the library
- Be more visible in the city and talk about the services we provide
- The needs of users will change rapidly and also the tools will change.
- Offer training across boundaries
- Collections available on line
- Offer additional services including outreach.
- It's the most important thing. Librarians must work together to develop their IT Skills; education must be going all the time. We work more and more with digital resources and librarians should be aware of that not just books anymore
- An increase in the availability of on-line training is helpful
- Need to include interactive role-playing.
- Libraries need to increase their adaptive technology and train ALL staff members on how to use the technology!
- The staff will need ongoing computer literacy training.
- Knowledge of various languages will be useful.