

KNOWLEDGE CAFÉ 2019

CHANGE LITERACY: DIGITAL, COLLABORATIVE, CREATIVE

Summary of the 2019 World Library and Information Congress Knowledge Café Program
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Sponsored by: Continuous Professional Development and Workplace Learning
Knowledge Management
Library and Research Services for Parliaments
Compiled by [Monica Ertel](#)

The 7th Knowledge Café was held at the 2019 WLIC in Athens, Greece. Approximately 150 information professionals attended this meeting to share and learn from their colleagues on a number of interesting table topics. Participants represented a diverse number of countries including Russia, Sweden, Norway, Ghana, Canada, Singapore, Germany, United States, Kenya, Japan, Uganda, Australia, Brazil, Greece and many others. Public, school, university, parliamentary and special libraries were among the organizations of the participants. The goal of this program was to provide an opportunity for IFLA colleagues to discover, share and takeaway new ideas.

Change is the currency of our libraries, communities, parliaments, organizations, and world. Whether it involves digital transformation, collaborating with traditional or non-traditional agencies, or creating new and exciting engagement opportunities, change is at the heart of our activities. Learning, growing, developing and succeeding in the face of change are our challenges.

Summaries of the table topics are included below.

Table topics:

1. Developing New Communication Tools: Keeping Up with Advances in Technology
2. Outreach and Collaboration with Non-Library Agencies
3. How Library Spaces Affect Learning
4. Creative Uses of Social Media in Libraries
5. Change Management Techniques for Staff and Users
6. Digital Transformation: Adapting to Changing Client Needs
7. Developing Library Leaders of the Future
8. Improving Performance Through Mentoring and Coaching
9. Focus on What the Library Does versus What it Has
10. Learning, Training and Finding the Gaps
11. Managing Staff in Tough and Uncertain Times
12. Succession Planning and Getting the Right Skills

I. DEVELOPING NEW COMMUNICATION TOOLS: KEEPING UP WITH ADVANCES IN TECHNOLOGY

Rapporteur: [Heather Lank](#) (Library of Parliament, Canada)

Facilitator: [Janice de Oliveira E Silva Silveira](#) (Chamber of Deputies Library, Brazil)

All libraries are dealing with rapidly changing technologies and are adapting to the changing needs and expectations of clients, from parliamentarians to air traffic controllers to students to the broader public of all ages. Several themes emerged in the discussions:

- Resources are limited and IT departments are stretched. Therefore, libraries must look for cost-effective ways of proceeding, whether they develop resources in-house or buy off-the-shelf products
- Cyber-security concerns may lead to a preference for in-house development in some libraries, but increasingly flexible and secure off-the-shelf products, including cloud-based products, can make them attractive because of their cost-effectiveness. There is no need to reinvent the wheel
- Searchable, on-line catalogues are being made available, and some libraries give PINs to users so they can borrow books
- Libraries are moving away from creating printed materials and moving to digital formats that are accessible on mobile phones, tablets, laptops etc.
- Many users don't have or take the time to read long documents, so infographics are becoming popular
- As society becomes more visual, there is an increased focus on producing visual products, such as short videos on parliaments, budgets, and how to access databases
- Some libraries are developing games to engage children, such as one that can be used on their iPads to learn how to search at the library
- Children are also engaged by watching videos of other children talking about their favourite book
- Many libraries are developing their own apps and clients are using them to access library resources from a distance on their mobile devices
- Other libraries are using widely available apps such as WhatsApp
- Some use Wiki software to work collaboratively
- Some parliamentary libraries are using VR (virtual reality) technology to engage users with Parliament (e.g., virtual visits)
- Rules around the use of social media vary. Some libraries actively use social media channels for official communications while others prohibit their use
- Since many libraries upload a great deal of information, it is important for websites to be user-friendly and updated on a regular basis
- Technological changes should be made step-by-step with proper consultation with stakeholders about what they need and want
- Communication with clients needs to be ongoing, and there must be training on the new tools to ensure they will be used.

In summary:

- Libraries need to communicate with their clients and choose the right tools at the right time for the right clients.

2. OUTREACH AND COLLABORATION WITH NON-LIBRARY AGENCIES

Rapporteur: [Donna Scheeder](#) (Past President, IFLA; Library Strategies International, USA)

Facilitator: [Jane Dysart](#) (Dysart Jones Canada)

The table had a diverse group of people which resulted in the sharing of several examples.

The first involved an African Training Agency for librarians which partnered with the Gates Foundation. Several countries were chosen and an off-line digital library of training materials was created. The training library signed Memorandums of Understanding with participating institutions.

Another example involved the partnering of IBM with libraries to develop training courses for the community. IBM approached the libraries.

Hungary built a collaboration between libraries and health agencies to get health information to communities.

Discussion took place on how to develop relationships that may lead to collaborations. Librarians need to:

- Go to meetings outside the library
- Identify other organizations and support their issues
- Work with partners who bring their own audience to joint programs
- Identify organizations with similar missions
- Parliamentary and other government libraries should partner with public libraries
- Establish programs based on specific populations like children and find other organizations that also serve them
- Look for opportunities for information exchange
- Open data provides an opportunity for partnering with academic libraries

3. HOW LIBRARY SPACES AFFECT LEARNING

Rapporteur: [Svetlana Gorokhova](#) (All Russia State Library for Foreign Literature, Russia)

Facilitator: [Ewa Stenberg](#) (Malmo University, Sweden)

Space is essential for learning as it shapes the process and creates atmosphere. University libraries are looking for grants to reshape their spaces to make them suitable for active learning. For example, classes for 40 students with a huge white board can be moved around to divide spaces into smaller ones

- It is important to create various zones in the library to keep noise levels down because this can interfere with learning
- It is important to locate furniture in the right place. Students prefer to face the entrance plus flooring should be sound absorbing so that walking on it will be quiet
- It is important to create co-working spaces as this facilitates teamwork and teaches students to respect the needs of others

- It is essential to have a constant conversation with the users about the space; to have their feedback, analyze it and follow this direction
- To address noise in the Library from other users interfering with learning process (especially in small libraries limited in space) the following measures were suggested: strict rules of behavior in the library, sound absorbing panels or book shelves for division of the space or earphones or earplugs
- Creation of numerous study rooms are essential for students. Macao University has fifty study rooms
- On campus and in university cities, 24 hours open library space is a great idea
- One participant shared that they turned part of closed book storage into a learning space
- It is important to provide facilities for food and drinks. Every learning cluster should be equipped with café or snack area
- One parliament library created VIP zones for senators to revive learning habits and placed newspaper stands in the corridors of parliament
- Use all possible surfaces for exhibitions to trigger interest and initiate leaning
- Use furniture to guide people through the library. This is less comfortable for crowded areas and more comfortable for deep learning process
- It is essential to have feedback from users

4. CREATIVE USES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN LIBRARIES

Rapporteur: [Tina Haglund](#) (Helsingborg City Library, Sweden)

Facilitator: [Julian Sempere](#) (Universite Paris-Saclay, France)

Different tools are used in different parts of the world. Wechat has about 8 million users in China. In parts of Africa, WhatsApp is used frequently and others use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and the library web page

What they have in common is that they are available for all kinds of platforms. Groups are using it to support chat, voice, photo, video and text messages.

The group discussed several questions and issues followed by suggested solutions.

- How to reach your followers
- How to keep their interest
- How to keep channels alive and active
- What is being posted and where is this being posted
- Differences between internal and external communication
- How to respond to questions from your followers

The following suggestions were offered to the above questions.

- Repost material and events in different channels and groups. Use automated pushes to spread information
- Use quizzes, humor, hashtags, livestreaming, relevant user surveys
- Have relevant information on your platforms and keep it updated. If you can't do that, reduce the number of platforms. It is important to keep them refreshed and updated.

- Many participants use Facebook to spread official information
- Online chat is being used in some organizations to answer questions
- Slack is another good way to share information and ideas
- Goodreads and Gleph can be used to share book reviews and tips
- Create an Idea Store to share good ideas

5. CHANGE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES FOR STAFF AND USERS

Rapporteur: Mary Ellen Davis (ACRL/ALA American Library Association, USA)

Discussion Leader: Karin Finer (European Parliamentary Research Service, Belgium)

The Discussion Leader gave an introduction to change management. She shared that “Only certainty is that change will happen” (Charles Darwin)

Change is the creation of a new system. Kotter's 8 Steps process has several stages. Steps 1- 3 involve creating a climate for change (communicate and introduce the change). Steps 4-6 are about enabling and engaging organizations and steps 7-8 emphasize implementing and sustaining change.

- Change is a process. It has a start, middle, and end. Change will not go quickly.
- Some say to incorporate change in daily work rather than identify it as another big change management project.
- If one uses a model, it is easy to follow but the negative is that it can be too rigid.
- Internal and external change are different. Internal change might be developing new ideas (bottom up). External (or imposed) change may mean someone else is making the change for you. This outside circumstance could be political change, technological change, etc.
- Change should be based on analysis. It is important to sell the need to change and involve staff in process.
- There are different sides to change: Rational (thinking, analyzing, theoretical approach) and emotional (feeling, grief).
- It is important to manage communication, manage resistance, and manage the transition from inception to the end.
- Do not manipulate. Be truthful. Tell people even if it hurts. Walk the talk. Be involved .
- Create trust. Work for trust.
- Communicate and involve people.
- Find informal leaders who are popular with staff and who are enthusiastic about the idea
- Listen to people’s concerns; do not dismiss them.
- Another participant shared some information about William Bridges, an American author, speaker, and organizational consultant, who had change theories. He emphasized the importance of understanding transitions as a key for organizations to succeed in making

changes. He said transition is the psychological process of adapting to change. From Bridges [website](#):

- Change is situational. It is the external event that is taking place, a new strategy, a change in leadership, a merger or a new product. The organization focuses on the outcome that the change will produce, which is generally in response to external events. It can happen very quickly.
- Transition is the inner psychological process that people go through as they internalize and come to terms with the new situation that the change brings about. The starting point for dealing with transition is not the outcome but the endings that people have in leaving the old situation behind. Getting people through transition is essential if the change is actually to work as planned.

It was noted that 70% of change management projects fail in private companies due to lack of communication, etc.

Change issues that participants had experienced included:

- Downsizing
- Workforce skills (gap between what organization shall be and what you can do with the organization's staff)
- Changing workspaces to open floor plans
- Or changing from an open floor plan to offices and the competition for office space that ensued
- Switching from manual to computer system
- Collaborating to build a learning system with another university, where another language was spoken
- Introducing technology to members of Parliament, who were resistant. Here the group noted it was important to show benefits for the Parliament members and demonstrate how it can show case their ideas and make the decision-makers look good. This is a challenge with the digital divide among members. Some will use it and some will not.
- Switching content from print assets to digital when library users still want to read the print, not a screen.
- Bosses who do not want any feedback or ideas from others.

Change can be creative process.

Some of the causes for resistance to change could include self-Interest, insecurity, and fear of losing their jobs.

When dealing with resistant staff the group had a number of suggestions including:

- Demonstrating and showing new systems was more effective than just talking or writing papers about the change.
- Change up staff. Send them to new workshops and conferences and meet more people. Help them put their context in perspective.
- Communicate authentically. Otherwise, staff will say Management lied and then trust is lost.
- Expect that resistance to change is part of every change: offices, systems, technology are all examples
- Communication, trust, openness, patience, values are needed for a project.
- If staff are resistant, try changing their roles. That is sometimes helpful.

- Some participants reported that new staff could embrace the change more easily than longer-term staff who may be more rigid in the way they approach work. A suggestion was that when everyone was trained, the new staff and longer-term staff helped each other.
- Staff meetings are needed to help assure everyone they are working as a team and everyone has opportunity for input.
- It was also noted that when merging teams, it helps when there is an enthusiastic staff member. Having managers informally identify them and their enthusiasm can spread to those more skeptical.

It was suggested that the IFLA booth was a good resource to get more info about IFLA's Idea Store to share ideas, advice.

6. DIGITAL TRANSFORMATION: ADAPTING TO CHANGING CLIENT NEEDS

Rapporteur: [Wilda Newman](#) (Knowledge Associates Resources, LLC. USA)

Facilitator: [Liz Turner](#) (TPG Global, USA)

Listen to the Children! This was another successful KM Cafe in 2019 with lots of Congress attendees and even more conversation and discussion.

The discussion began with the question: "What are you curious about in your library relative to this topic?"

Participants from many countries replied: "Future use." "How to meet client needs - offer opportunities but keep a balance so people are still part of the library; not empty rooms," "Most contact is electronic, less face-to-face & difficult," especially for reference questions where more questioning conversation is needed to understand the needs of the patron.

The question was also asked about the impact of digitization. A parliamentary librarian shared that there would be changes to Parliament & also to the public equally, but most specifically to Ministers of Parliament.

There is also concern about digitization taking clients away from libraries. In addition, younger users now want things to move faster. Their needs are changing from the older users. Younger users tend to be more technologically literate. The group also discussed if the library staff is technologically literate. Some said yes, others said no. Training is an important component. Some of these libraries have excellent seminars for training using their own programs.

One participant was a consultant and was asked how she advised and helped the library. The consultant advised to review their working situations, including organizational structure. Typically, training needs come out of that review, along with steps the organization needs to take regarding digitization. It is important to look at needs for training in advance of changes, as well as with the progression of change.

Another participant explained that not all surprises are negative. For example, they have seen an increase in use of services with digitization. It has led to schools and women's groups coming in for library usage and information.

When asked, “How do you decide how and what to digitize, and how do you know if it is the right thing to do?” One participant recommended looking at needs now and needs in the future and also through data collected across the library relative to client usage and needs.

There was also a discussion on what tools were being used in digitization processes. One response indicated the ‘new tools’ seem to change every two months and while it can be fun to experiment with these, it also can be complicated.

Zoom was sometimes used for communications in several ways, e.g. as a part of reference services, allowing face-to-face communication and bridging the gap somewhat for physical presence. It also allows sharing of their notes and their screen.

Some considered Trello a useful tool. Other tools included dSPACE and CDSware, as free digital library software. Asana, a commercial product, was also identified.

Discussion of software tools led to a discussion of how so much of this was manual in the past and is now available digitally. Students expect everything in their hand, in their pocket. Libraries can identify usage changes with some of these systems so use can be determined with the technology. Surveys can also be used. A benefit from this is anticipating needs.

What about your collections, digital or not? Some participants suggested archival or personal collections that are donated could be candidates for digitizing and offering basic tools like office tools, music, and movies can be made available. One participant discussed how her organization is introducing ‘jam’bands in monthly podcasts.

When the question turned to staff skills, a participant used an example from the workplace where unskilled staff seemed to be being ‘trained’ and gaining knowledge mysteriously. When asked how they had come to use some of the newer apps and tools the colleague said, “Oh, I ask my children. They show me!”

This brought our session to an end and once more demonstrated how data transforms information and sometimes information is imparted by children that already know, to those who are not yet there.

7. DEVELOPING LIBRARY LEADERS FOR THE FUTURE

Rapporteur: Steffen Wawra (University of Passau, Germany)

Facilitator: Sandy Hirsh (San Jose State University, USA)

The transformation in library and information services demands strong leadership. There is enthusiasm for implementing new systems, but we have many changes in the technology (e.g., Big Data). We have to deal with that and their implications to the profession and professional skills. The development of soft and hard skills is important.

We are much closer to the science and our customers than ever before. A deep collaboration within the scientific community is very important to describe the real needs of our customers.

What about hierarchy? We have to think differently about hierarchy. We need to learn how to follow first the people and then expect that people follow you. An exchange between leaders is required to explain future scenarios.

Finally, LIS schools should identify these new skills to be prepared for the change!

Many ideas and issues were discussed in this session including the following:

- How we can identify the leaders in the future? What strategies can be used to develop leadership within the libraries to make them ready for the future? It is important to learn from previous generations of leaders, identify the next leaders, and make leaders strong to address new challenges.
- More 'position-based leadership' is needed in the future but people of all levels should be encouraged to implement change in the organizations – "Everybody is a Leader." Participants of the discussion described the aims of the '[Center for Creative Leadership in the Middle East](#)' which shows how individuals can better themselves and lead others; how interdependent teams collaborate to realize organizational goals and build sustainable performance culture; and how communities thrive, enable lives and advance futures.
- Empathy is one of the most compelling qualities of leadership. Empathy not only allows one to understand the employees and the customers better, but empathy enables leaders to address issues faster and with more precision. It also makes them more flexible to respond to an ever-changing professional library environment.
- The culture of communication is very important for leaders. Communication is a core leadership function. Effective communication and effective leadership are closely intertwined. Leaders need to be skilled communicators in countless relationships at the organizational level. Processes should be kept open and transparent. Leaders should say what they mean.
- Seeking to lead, leaders must invest in solving questions like their own purpose, ethics, principles and motivation. They have to maximize their capacities and answer the question: What next?

8. IMPROVING PERFORMANCE THROUGH MENTORING AND COACHING

Rapporteur: [Sonia Bebbington](#) (Library of Parliament, Canada)

Facilitator: [Catharina Isberg](#) (Helsingborg City Libraries, Sweden)

The topic of 'Improving Performance through Mentoring and Coaching' was engaging and resulted in interesting discussions. The differences between mentoring and coaching were discussed, and participants recognized the need for each approach at different times, although there seemed to be a preference for the longer-term developmental benefits of coaching. Formal and informal programs were described, including organic mentor-mentee relationships, an action learning group focused on peer-coaching, and brief descriptions of coaching methods such as [STAR](#) and [GROW](#). One delegate recognized that a barrier to establishing mentoring and coaching relationships could be that they require a lot of commitment and this can be perceived as a drain on the time and energy of participating staff. The benefits and support must be clear.

The concept of shorter-term coaching relationships based on specific tasks or issues was also mentioned and this included a 'reverse coaching' program whereby incoming (usually though not exclusively younger) staff coached established (usually though not exclusively older) staff on new technologies and techniques. This model was noted to have real potential by a delegate from an area where digital connectivity is challenging, and digital technologies have not been as thoroughly

adopted by the established workplace. It was acknowledged throughout that organizational openness and support for mentoring and coaching is critical to success, and that the relationship requires a lot of commitment, reflection and work on both sides.

Some highlights of the discussion included the following:

- It is important to make the distinction between mentoring and coaching: mentoring typically involves one member of staff (or member of another organization) sharing their experience with the mentee; coaching is more open and involves a dialogue with open questions so that the coachee may determine direction for themselves
- Management culture is an important consideration. Is it all based on direction, or is the workplace open to openness – questioning, trial and error, etc.?
- Delegates indicated that informal mentoring occurs naturally. One delegate wondered if it should be formalised. However that brings with it some logistics that could kill the spontaneity of the relationships currently forming
- The mentor and mentee should not be too close in the same organization if the program is formalised
- One delegate talked about library and research staff being assigned a ‘buddy’ to new parliamentarians. It may be hard to call them mentors or coaches because of the power dynamic, but serves as part of a useful orientation program. Buddy systems can also be used to orient new staff, though this is of shorter duration
- Some delegates prefer that the relationships build around tasks rather than position. There needs to be openness to new models and methods. This can be challenging in some environments, including parliamentary institutions
- One delegate talked about a peer-coaching program in their workplace called ‘action learning’ – a shared program between five organizations. Benefits of this model are that there are groups with one person from each of the five organizations, to encourage openness, and that the questioning comes from a peer group, removed from the workplace hierarchy. Some staff respond better to the peer interaction than to the sense of hierarchy and authority that a workplace could introduce
- Another idea was ‘reverse coaching’ where incoming staff coach existing staff on new techniques, practices, technologies. It was noted that this requires management to walk the talk. If they are open to mentoring and coaching but only from them TO other people, this model puts them in the coachee position and leads by example in terms of accepting coaching and mentoring. This could lead to culture change
- In addition, the idea of task based mentoring – e.g. skills like presentations and public speaking – from one staff member who is good at that skill to anyone interested can be helpful
- Management itself should be looked at as a coaching and mentoring activity
- It is a normal instinct to build silos and to insulate, especially in lean times. It can be hard to get managers and staff to be more open, with legitimate reason: coaching other teams can be seen as a drain on current resources. The culture needs to be ready and the relationships need to be equitable
- One delegate talked about collaborative teams as a way to start the culture
- One delegate talked about new employees. Asking them to take their first weeks in observation and then writing what they perceive about the workplace has been insightful
- Another delegate shared an experience in developing nations where connectivity is poor and the digital divide is real. Because of the historical lack of connectivity, older parliament staff and members are not convinced about the power and usefulness of technology. Smartphones have made the digital situation better, but again, the more tenured staff may not have had the opportunity to learn tech all the way from desktops through to phones, so show-and-tell sessions with digitally savvy staff and their devices have been useful

- A caution is the power relationship in coaching and mentoring and a real keenness to ensure that coaching and mentoring is not a colonizing kind of relationship – supporting independence; empowering for a long-term result
- It is important to acknowledge that the relationship is hard work on both sides, and demands a lot of reflection and self-awareness
- It is also important that managers are asked how comfortable they are with the relationship. If they prefer a directive and transactional approach rather than a development relationship, they might not be right to participate
- There was a reminder of the CPDWL coaching session that took place at the Athens conference and that CPDWL has a webinar on coaching available from their [section's site](#).

9. FOCUS ON WHAT THE LIBRARY DOES VERSUS WHAT IT HAS

Rapporteur: [Marie-Estelle Crehalet](#) (CentralSupélec, France)

Facilitator: [Rajen Munoo](#) (Singapore Management University, Singapore)

A traditional view of the library is that we buy books and put them on the shelves. Impressions are that the library does great things but that we are very secretive and people do not understand what we do. Users can sometimes be very closed-minded and do not see the value libraries can provide.

The Library of the Hellenic Parliament is focusing on what they do and not on what they hold. They are looking at things such as how to organize the library according to the services they offer.

In China, there are questions about whether digital books are more important than print books. Using both, libraries help students to organize their information.

A participant shared that in some frustrating instances, librarians may not always be seen as professionals despite their education and experience. One participant said that students and young professors do not use the reference desk. They go on the internet instead. Another shared their frustration about how it is difficult to show their value when there is not direct interaction with the librarians.

Communication and networking are very important. You should always ask your users what they expect from the library. After a workshop in Greece, a communication campaign was launched – “We Say Yes to Books!” The purpose was to provide educational programs and exhibitions about what libraries can provide. It resulted in increased use of the library. It is important that libraries have a strong communication plan to describe their services and what they can offer to the community.

In Hungary, one library provides services for the LGBT community. The library has built a small collection of materials around this. Sometimes it is difficult to get support for programs because of competing interests but it is important to explain the purpose and benefits of the program.

How do we demonstrate our value? Participants shared the following ideas and experiences.

- Involve users in discussions on general topics to encourage learning
- Use social networks to highlight library programs and services
- When possible, have book fairs to give away older materials
- Promote ourselves. Sometimes the first time is the most difficult!
- Students are happy when they get a good answer
- Use statistics to show what the library does

- Know your community. Make sure your library is inclusive

10. LEARNING, TRAINING AND FINDING THE GAPS

Rapporteur: [Almuth Gastinger](#) (NTNU University Library, Norway)

Facilitator: [Gillian Hallam](#) (Retired Professor, FAILA, Australia)

The discussion started by pointing out that the title of the discussion should rather be 'Finding the gaps, learning and training.' Because one needs to find the gaps first and then start with the learning and training afterwards.

The participants discussed the following:

- When looking for the gaps, there will be personal/individual gaps and institutional/organisational gaps
- One approach for finding individual gaps: ask yourself about what you are not comfortable with
- Sometimes one finds gaps when interacting with users
- Check out what is happening in other parts of the world to find gaps
- One should use appropriate tools to identify gaps
- It is important to take ownership of continuing professional development (Continuing Professional Development – CPD)
- Check out what learning opportunities or training sessions are offered by your institution, your library association, or online (conferences, seminars, webinars, etc.)
- There are many possibilities for CPD: internal knowledge cafés (knowledge sharing/transfer), regularly meeting/seminars to share knowledge and exchange experiences (i.e. reporting from conferences), job shadowing or working in other departments of the library or information institution for a shorter time, conferences
- Conferences are very good for CPD, but very often, there is NO time afterwards to share the knowledge gained or to reflect
- Another barrier for CPD is the mind-set of some library workers. Several participants shared that they have colleagues who are only doing the job in order to have a salary and are not interested in CPD at all
- It is important to align one's own CPD with library strategies/goals
- The library should have both elderly and younger staff, so that there are different skills and experiences
- The participants also mentioned some skills needed – presentation skills, pedagogical skills, and digital literacy skills. In addition, they stressed that it is important to train professors and teaching staff in digital literacy, not only students

11. MANAGING STAFF IN TOUGH AND UNCERTAIN TIMES

Rapporteur: [Karin Zaal](#) (House of Representatives of the States General, Netherlands)

Facilitator: [Maggie Farrell](#) (University of Nevada, Las Vegas USA)

This session was a ‘feast of recognition’ for almost all of the participants. We discussed the question ‘What is the biggest challenge in your library’? It became clear that we all face numerous challenges and the list of issues seemed non-exhaustive. The most recognisable and shared challenges were:

- How do we make durable changes and how do we motivate staff to embrace the changes that are necessary? Many librarians (but certainly not all!) seem to be reluctant to change, but there is an absolute need to keep up with new technologies
- How do we motivate our staff to keep learning, especially since the career opportunities for librarians are limited? And often enough, the limited available funds for education and training pose a problem
- How can we keep our team emotionally balanced in these difficult times where roles and rules are changing rapidly? Sometimes conflicts occur because people have different interests. We do not seem to have many opportunities to motivate our staff
- What is the clear role of the librarian compared with the role of an archivist? In some countries, librarians are doing the work of archivists as well, but these are considered to be two different roles in the perspective of some participants
- Ideally, a librarian needs to get away from his or her desk, engage, and connect with people. Especially with people who otherwise do not come to the library
- A challenge is co-working with other departments in the organisation, especially the IT-department
- To improve trust from your clients and to show your staff that changes are needed, you can have an appreciative enquiry to get more information on the needs of (potential) clients
- Many in the group experienced a lack of funding for training. Advice: ask twice the amount you need because you will get half. In addition, one should think of the possibility of online learning or working with inside trainers. All participants stressed that the focus should be on learning
- To keep the staff emotionally balanced in times of change, the advice is to keep telling each other what you want and what you do not want. The system should be sensitive to prevent conflicts. And most of all: do not accept chitchat!
- Try to establish a good working mode for co-working with the IT-department. IT people provide technical solutions, but do not really talk to librarians about their needs. We need to improve communication between IT staff and librarians. It is important they understand each other’s needs and expectations
- Conclusion: a lot needs to be done, but the need for change both in knowledge as well as competence of our staff is clear to all. It is very important to share our best practices and learn from each other. This session helped with that

A good slogan to remember is: ‘Working is learning and learning is working!’

12. SUCCESSION PLANNING AND GETTING THE RIGHT SKILLS

Rapporteur: Mary Augusta Thomas (Retired Deputy Director, Smithsonian Libraries USA)

Facilitator: Ida Kelemen (Hungarian National Assembly, Hungary)

Participants were eager to share their experiences with succession planning. Some were planning to leave their positions and some were many years away from it or managing departments with turnover. The identification of potential leaders is challenging for every kind of institution. Parliamentary Libraries often have well defined political appointment procedures, while others try to

identify who is an emerging leader through their work on a team. The participants shared their concern that developing the star performers might be prejudicial to the rest of the library. At least one institution has a formal plan for upward mobility that begins with an application for a leadership program. Completion of the program enters the employees into a pool for consideration when vacancies occur.

Other strategies include sending trainees to upper level meetings so they develop skill at working up. One of the clearest models designated staff with potential who were given professional coaching for a year. They then spent two years gaining experience through shadowing and overlapping positions. Expectations are very high of anyone with the training. The table also talked about what happens when you invest and the staff member leaves.

The conversation also focused on the concern of overlap of a senior manager and the new manager or director. This can be good or bad and can lead to confusion as to who has authority. Participants identified a key role of a manager as anticipating the need for a successor, all the time not just when there is an imminent vacancy. Knowledge transfer to staff must be ongoing but can be difficult to work into other priorities. Increasing the general awareness of issues permits more staff to be considered for development and succession. Including staff in decision processes and in developing skills in managing meetings and developing concepts or improvements is a positive step.

For several institutions, sending staff to IFLA and National meetings is a growth and development strategy. The group stressed the need to identify those who take responsibility for their own development to be leaders. Managers need to encourage self-education for succession, staff need to be ready for promotion. The participants all agreed that both people are really managing the success of the organization, jointly.

The facilitator concluded by giving those at the table handouts for further discussion. Each person at the table participated eagerly as this seems to be a matter of general concern.



Maggie Farrell “Managing staff in tough and uncertain times”



Mary Augusta Thomas “Succession planning and getting the right skills”



Wilda Newman and Liz Turner:
“Digital Transformation: Adapting to changing client needs”



Gillian Hallam: “Learning, training and finding the gaps”



Ewa Stenberg: “How library spaces affect learning”



Catharina Isberg: “Improving performance through mentoring and coaching”



Interested participants