



## Guideline 2

### Libraries and the Lifelong Learning Landscape

**Contents**

- 1. Current Assessment ..... 3
- 2. Conclusions and recommendations..... 7
- 3. Good Practice ..... 8
- 4. References..... 11

## 1. Current Assessment

This is the second in a series of six guidelines highlighting effective policy provisions for public libraries in lifelong learning, drawing attention and linking to established and emerging good practice in the provision of services for learning. This section looks at the place of libraries in the lifelong learning landscape, considers some of the issues and provides examples of good practice.

The lifelong learning landscape is complex and fast changing. Demand is increasing steadily, whether for leisure or career development, formal or informal learning. Current economic conditions (increased unemployment) are likely to increase the demand to upgrade knowledge and skills and to engage in leisure learning, especially if affordable.

However there is no supply side shortage of learning provision in Europe in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Learners can choose from offers from schools, colleges, universities, private companies, the workplace, television, the internet – and libraries. Traditional 'bricks and mortar' institutions are expanding their learning offer to new clients and online providers – local or global – are increasing their market share. Add to this two trends in technology – Web 2.0 with the growth of user-generated content and social networks for learning, and increasingly sophisticated and affordable mobile personally owned devices – and it is clear that the learning landscape is crowded, competitive and changing fast. Anywhere, anytime learning using personally owned devices like mobile phones and netbooks is fast becoming a reality in many countries.

It is therefore important for library managers to appreciate the environment in which they operate, learn from examples of good practice, and assess the opportunities for partnership as well as possible threats from competitors.

The concept of Lifelong Learning is based on the notion of education as a holistic process. The IFLA report [\*The Role of Libraries in Lifelong Learning\*](#) uses the expression "from cradle to the grave". This concept dissolves the borders between various types of policies and providers and it includes various forms of education and vocational training, formal and informal. This report supports enhancement of the role of public libraries in lifelong learning at various levels. Yet, the most significant point made is how it considers the need to develop several factors (structural, functional and organizational) to transform public libraries into "environments conducive to learning and education" (p.8).

The Eurostat 2005 survey on lifelong learning in Europe described four non-exclusive forms of informal learning:

- Self studying by making use of printed material (e.g. professional books, magazines and the like);
- Computer based learning/training; online internet based web education;
- Studying by making use of educational broadcasting or offline computer based material (audio or videotapes);
- Visiting facilities aimed at transmitting educational content (libraries, learning centres etc.).

In some countries government policy developments tend to increase opportunities for co-operation. For example, in Finland the national core curriculum covering compulsory education (7-18) recognises the role of libraries and informal learning, making co-operation more likely. However co-operation can also be inhibited by the way libraries and schools are managed by government. Libraries tend to be funded under a different ministry, usually the ministry of culture, than schools, under the ministry of education, and other organisations. Responsibility for lifelong learning can be spread across a number of ministries (as in Greece). So, for example, in the Czech Republic co-operation of schools and libraries is based on ad hoc co-operation depending on local initiatives, in the absence of structural links at ministry level where responsibilities are divided between the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs and the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports Education. Finland appears to be unique in allowing libraries to bid jointly with schools for Ministry of Education funding for projects.

In many countries there is no specific legislation that encourages and enables co-operation between schools and libraries or no specific law even to guarantee the existence of libraries. Hungary is one exception to this, having a Strategy for IT in Education under the Ministry of Education with the goal of enhancing co-operation between public libraries and other educational institutions in order to teach customers the usage of information resources. Another is Denmark, where a Library Act sets out a framework for the 'networking hybrid library' for the Information Society. Finland's Library Act defines the library as a basic municipal service; its Library Strategy 2010 details information services for pupils and all citizens and the Library Development Program 2006-2010 clarifies the future role of the library as key to making the provinces attractive and preventing marginalisation and polarisation of the population.

The traditional concept of a library as a place where books are lent or read militates against a wider view of the modern library as a place of discovery and learning working in partnership with other agencies. In Romania however the 2002 libraries law lays down the responsibility of libraries for ensuring access to information and lifelong education and personal development of users, thus enabling a wider definition of what a library is for and services it should provide. In Slovenia a seven-point vision for libraries – with a strong emphasis on learning and personal development – helped reshape the role and function of libraries in the new learning society. Likewise the traditional concept of the school as the only place of learning is challenged when legislation specifically calls upon schools to collaborate with other institutions and provide extra-curricular activities, also as in Romania.

Technological developments are causing a fundamental rethink about what libraries and schools are for. As broadband and the internet become widespread and affordable, and as content and services online become more sophisticated, the location of learning becomes less important than in the past. Policies are beginning to recognise this: the school can be a library and the library a school – and the home both. Libraries are changing in countries like Finland and Denmark from more or less enclosed institutions to open-access 'living-rooms', open learning centres, a ubiquitous library, thanks to technology.

Providing a common internet service for both schools and libraries increases the chances of co-operation. This is the case in Finland, Greece, Hungary, Italy, UK (where all schools and 134 public libraries in Northern Ireland are interconnected), and Latvia (where 65 percent of schools are incorporated into a shared secure system with local governments and libraries). Italy has created an integrated national library system to which school libraries are connected seamlessly; in this way school libraries can interact with public and private libraries. In Hungary public libraries can work as a network through web-based services and be connected to homes and schools.

When libraries, together with archives and museums, digitise well-chosen resources, in co-operation with potential end-users like schools, and make them available online, there is often increased co-operation. It is important to ensure easy discoverability of the resources through appropriate tagging and possibly an online catalogue. With funding from the Soros Foundation, Latvia has created an 'electronic library of literature' and digitisation is taking place in almost all other European countries as well. The Europeana and EuropeanaLocal projects are EU-projects concerning the digitisation of cultural heritage, including that held by national, public and university libraries are digitalised through these projects.

The use of research to understand the role that libraries can play in supporting lifelong learning appears to take place only in the United Kingdom but there it provides a strong and systematic framework for identifying and providing services in conjunction with other providers that support learning at all ages. Few countries appear to have in place formal

targets for learner support or evaluation processes to assess whether they have been met. The absence of a national evaluation framework in Greece for example appears to be hampering development and co-operation between ministries and agencies. An exception is Finland where Helsinki City Library uses the Balanced Scorecard to assess the impact of its work. Among the targets are improving co-operation with schools, improving information society skills and individual internet training

Policy issues related to learner support focus on the role of e-learning in developing the competences of the population, including children in primary school and on e-safety (safe and responsible internet use). Libraries in Finland have a long tradition of responsibility for supporting lifelong learning and they are an integral part of the local community. Since the municipality is autonomous and can draw up their own curriculum for basic education (based on the national core curriculum), libraries play a key role in providing learning services, particularly reading promotion and information literacy promotion.

**E-safety** is of growing importance in schools and every country faces a collective debate to get the balance right between safeguarding and protecting children and educating them and allowing them freedom of access to information. The role of libraries can be crucial in working with schools and parents to provide a supportive learning environment in which children develop media literacy skills and responsible behaviours. However, this appears to be rarely covered in libraries specifically, although it may appear in media literacy courses.

In countries with a national curriculum, cooperation can be inhibited if learning is described in great detail, with targets, that only fully trained teachers understand and can deliver; such curricula often leave little or no time for more exploratory forms of learning that libraries can support. In such situations, library staff needs to be familiar with the national curriculum and liaise with local schools. Only if libraries can assist in this process will schools be really interested in co-operation; Hungary offers an example of this where, thanks to a virtual learning environment (Sulinet) and good online content, students can engage in anytime, anywhere learning. Schools tend also to have tight timetables with little flexibility; in such situations formally scheduled regular library classes – as in Oulu, Finland, for example – ensure that vague desires for co-operation to support learners become embedded practice.

With the help of mobile services, small communities, schools and homes can have access to different library services and various programmes, for example art events, exhibitions or information campaigns. Technological innovations such as broadband or wireless networks or Geographical Information Systems will open up completely new perspectives.

## 2. Conclusions and recommendations

If libraries really want to efficiently complement and enrich learning, they need to work to motivate people to go to learn to libraries starting from primary school children through to elderly people. Such an approach can only be implemented successfully in close cooperation with policymakers, local educational agencies and non-profit organisations, schools, etc. Libraries can support the informal and non-formal lifelong learning of citizens by developing into open learning centres.

Public Libraries should be *Learning Environments* but, for that purpose, they need to enlarge their horizons beyond the usual perspectives of the traditional types of learning experiences for example by investing in services and activities that imply the involvement of users in learning areas based in “learning by doing”, which are part of non-formal and informal learning processes. This approach does not however exclude the traditional role of public libraries as supporters of formal education.

Issues that frequently occur in school policy, and where there is potential for partnerships with libraries to pay dividends, include the following:

- Personalisation, using technology to tailor public services more to individual needs, including support for learners with special needs, diversifying the learning offer and learning approaches
- Increasing public accountability for the performance of teachers, children and the school
- Curricula more based on skills and competence development than the acquisition of knowledge
- Accreditation of learning and the development of e-portfolios that recognise achievement in and out of school
- Dissolving barriers between school and the community: increasing emphasis on home-school partnerships, informal learning and extending the role of the school and the school day.

### 3. Good Practice

#### Co-operation with schools

Homework Cafés are a national endeavour in **Denmark** and it is supported by the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media. In the main library and 5 branch libraries in Aarhus, Denmark, the cafés are organised in co-operation with local schools and volunteers. Homework Cafés work effectively targeting mainly fugitives and immigrants helping them with their homework and conversation training which also contribute to their positive opinion and attitude towards the society they live in.

<http://www.finno.dk/education-en/school-homework-cafes>

In a partnership between three libraries and 14 schools in Aura and Pöytyä, **Finland**, 30 percent of the salary of a 'tipster' or 'book talker' was funded by the schools. Classes have their own regular library hour every two weeks giving every pupil the opportunity to loan books; other activities like reading competitions and annual information retrieval lessons strengthen the relationship from which both sides benefit.

In **Bulgaria**, learning support activities in support of the school curriculum are organized by librarians in collaboration with different institutional bodies such as schools, kindergartens, chitalishte, NGOs, local educational and cultural organizations etc. Learning materials are prepared by librarians themselves with the expert help of their partners.

The "[Young People's Enterprise](#)" project led by the Yorkshire Museums, Libraries and Archives Council (YMLAC) demonstrated that School Library Services have an important role to play in supporting the development of Citizenship, Creativity and Enterprise Education skills in young people.

All **UK** secondary schools are to be extended schools from 2010 with opening hours from 0800 to 1800 Monday to Friday. The core offer includes a varied menu of activities, swift referral for parents to information and advice, links into the community and childcare. The concept requires schools to work in partnership with other organizations, including libraries, to achieve this.

#### Co-operation with commercial companies

At the Meetingpoint@lasipalatsi, in Helsinki City Library, **Finland** (<http://www.lib.hel.fi/en-GB/kohtaamispaikka/>), there are scheduled classes, bookable multimedia computers, 'walk-in' computers in the lobby, a bookable video editing workstation, 12 laptops (in two units of 6 each) for classes in various locations, and a bookable 'laptop doctor' service where the 'laptop doctors' fix customer laptop software problems and give advice on hardware problems. Media days are organised at various libraries where staff show and advise in the use of Web 2.0 content to the public. There are also scheduled information

hours on various topics (from Skype usage to Vista basics). Facilities include Helsinki job recruitment services, partially integrated into the library's services. Many of the activities are arranged in co operation with municipal institutions, citizen's groups, educational institutions and commercial companies.

### **Co-operation with local citizens' groups**

The purpose of the Netti-Nysse internet-bus run by Tampere City Library, **Finland** (<http://www.tampere.fi/kirjasto/nettinysse/>) is to lower the threshold of the information society by providing access and training for all. The outreach service supplements the library branches and encourages residents of Tampere to start using computers and the Internet and to give them the initial instruction necessary to do so. Any group of people who want to learn to use the computer and the Internet – groups of neighbours, clubs, societies for example – can book the Netti-Nysse and have it come to their own neighbourhood.

In **Bulgaria** the majority of public libraries are part of 'chitalishte', a Bulgarian institution, which can be described as a community club with various cultural and educational activities. They appeared during the Bulgarian Revival in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Nowadays the chitalishte is an independent body with the status of a non-governmental organisation.

### **Co-operation with adult learning centres**

The library and the adult education centre in Linz, **Austria**, are one organisational unit in one building: the 'Wissensturm' (tower of knowledge). The Library and Education Center Linz focuses on learning management and the concept of the Teaching Library. The Library also provides job and learning coaching with professional trainers (12 hours per week), media packages for schools, special guidance for schools and teaching hours for schools.

In **Romania**, the Education Week – Your Opportunities Festival, is an initiative of Popular Association of German Universities in partnership with the Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education and Research, the National Council for Adult Training and National Association of Public Libraries and Librarians in Romania. The central activities of the festival are to promote continuing education. Also, the event aims to promote an active partnership between the various providers of educational activities and governmental organisation, locally and nationally.

In Würzburg, **Germany** the public library together with folk high schools offers internet courses and courses in job applications.

<http://www.stadtbuecherei-wuerzburg.de/stadtbuecherei/abteilungen/studio/20504.Lernwerkstatt.html>

### **Co-operation with other public services**

In the **UK**, the Year of Reading has a targeted approach to encourage reading for enjoyment in priority groups including men and boys especially white working class, offenders and new migrants. The Extended Bookstart programme provides free packs for all families with children aged 8 months, 18 months and 3 years, delivered by library services in partnership with early years and health services.

### **Co-operation with arts and cultural organisations**

In **Austria** there is a storybook-cinema for early years practitioners, concerts and performances, film screenings, exhibitions, open and informal learning with PC tools, PC games, study circles, creative workshops, blogging etc. They are generally organised in cooperation with institutes for arts and culture, theatre groups and learning trainers.

'Creators of the **Bulgarian** Revival' is a summer workshop for amateur photographers. Training is by a professional photographer who introduces the theory and practice of making pictures and a set of special computer programs like Photoshop, etc.

The **UK** government's 10-year Children's Plan 'Building Brighter Futures' includes a five-hour cultural offer, both in and out of school, for every child aged 0-19 and their families. Ten 'Find Your Talent' (the cultural offer) pathfinders are exploring different models of a cultural offer over the next three years. Partnerships are at the heart of this offer with libraries working in an integrated fashion with a range of other cultural providers, schools, children's centres and so on.

### **Co-operation with organisations for those with special needs**

Study circles at the Public Library of Izola in **Slovenia** offer storytelling for users with special needs and activities that widen intercultural dialogue – an informal way of learning in the framework of Lifelong Learning activities. Target groups are young parents, users with special needs (aged, visually impaired). They operate in cooperation with kindergartens, primary schools, vocational schools, homes for old-age pensioners, day care and work centres, Slovenian Red Cross, cultural societies.

Former **EU-projects** like CALIMERA, PULMAN, PuLLS and Tune have contributed to focusing on the place of libraries in the lifelong learning landscape.

Key competences for lifelong learning are described in the Recommendation of the European Parliament:

<http://eurlex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:394:0010:0018:en:PDF>

In the future, learning will move increasingly from the classroom and into the learner's environments, both real and virtual. The eMapps project ([www.emapps.com](http://www.emapps.com)) financed by the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme identified libraries as alternative creative learning places for school children. The project showed that games can be used to boost learning.

#### **Co-operation with language and cultural centres**

In 'Europeans in conversation' meetings in Bulgaria, an initiative related to the European Day of Languages, participants 'borrow' not a book but a live partner to talk with in one of the official European languages. The 'live books' are people of different ages and occupations who are native speakers of one of the official European Union languages. Partners include Goethe Institute Bulgaria, Alliance Francaise, French Culture Institute, British Council, English Academy, Maestro Scuola, Polish Culture Institute.

#### **4. References**

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2004) – The Role of Libraries in Lifelong Learning. <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/proj/Lifelong-LearningReport.pdf>

Livingstone, S. and Bober, M. (2005) *UK children go online: Final report of key project findings*. London: LSE Report, April 2005. [www.children-go-online.net](http://www.children-go-online.net).

Somekh, B., C. Lewin, Mavers, D. et al. (2002). *ImpaCT2 Final Report Part 3: Learning with ICT: Pupils' and Teachers' Perspectives*. London, DfES

Valentine, T., Milton, J., Lipnevich, A. A., & Beder, H. (2005). The role of cognitive engagement in adult literacy learning. In R. J. Hill & R. Kiely (Eds.) *Proceedings of the 46th Annual Adult Education Research Conference* (pp. 517-518). Athens, GA: University of Georgia.