

Interdisciplinary cooperation among law and public librarians in partnership with some other institutions in Split

Edita Bačić

Faculty of Law University of Split

Split, Croatia

edita@pravst.hr



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Abstract:

Regardless of the technological progress in the area of digital environment, human resources remain a crucial factor for sustainable development of library services. There is a permanent need for trained professionals which are able to fulfill library's vision and goals. Training and practical learning should be available for all of the expert employees, not only those with highest levels of formal education. A multidisciplinary approach to librarianship, continuously updating the knowledge acquired through exchange of good practices, learning from the older and more experienced, mutual help and professional solidarity help the librarians and libraries to keep pace with time and needs of their founders and citizens.

Regional centre for interlibrarian cooperation and practical learning, which is meant to be located in Split, a local and regional center, will hopefully enable libraries employees to acquire additional skills through workshops and lectures held by colleagues from Croatia and abroad. Regional centre is a cooperation project between City Library, Faculty of Law Split and the University library of Split, which intends to offer specialized skills, library material and access to academic community. This type of investment in knowledge will undoubtedly positively reflect on competitiveness of local and regional libraries, with an indirect positive effect on the local community.

Key words: Practical knowledge for librarians and users ; Regional centre for library cooperation and partnership

Introduction

According to the latest trends in the international library practice (Statement of *EBLIDA* and Statement of *IFLA* on Libraries and Development¹) it is evident that future of libraries should not depend only on economic indicators, it is necessary to think about public interest of our

¹ IFLA Statement on Libraries and Development. Available at: <http://www.ifla.org/publications/ifla-statement-on-libraries-and-development> (14.05.2016.)

profession which is possible through life long learning concept². Libraries are part of a multistakeholder society and able to work alongside others. That is the main reason why we as law librarians decided to develop a wide range of partnerships with aim to provide access to justice in our local community. Together with colleagues from public and university libraries we created a project entitled *Center for interlibrary cooperation and development of local practice*. Project is based on inter-institutional cooperation between Law library, University library and Public library in Split with intention to support access to legal informations and official publications in our local community. Law librarians like to help people who want to use legal resources in print or e-version and also to support access to justice for all. Long term opportunities for public libraries to fulfill its educational, civil and social mission with staff that can effectively manage with change and thus implement the vision and goals of the profession in accordance with needs of all users of local and wider community. UNESCO therefore encourages national and local governments to support and actively engage in the development of public libraries. The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users³. How to do it in the tourist - oriented environment, and with what kind of strategy?

There are two reasons that may encourage employees and decision makers to think in direction like we suggested: mutual competition or cooperation. In addition to good startup results with competition usually you have bad sides harmful to the library collective:

- Solving problems only by partial approach
- Rivalries
- Satisfying the individual interests

On the other hand professional solidarity helps librarians and library to keep pace with all interested parties and the needs of its founders and citizens without major investments because every form of cooperation regularly includes:

- Exchange of good practice
- Learning from senior and more experienced colleagues
- Mutual assistance

International experience

International library practice abounds with various examples of simple learning through practice that regularly takes place in many libraries, whether it's about a very developed areas such as in University of Oxford to the not very rich academic community on the African continent. Here is an example well-known Oxford Library Bodleian Library that within the Department for the development of library staff develop and implement their own educational programs for their employees, but some of the workshops are also open to all other library

² Horvat, Aleksandra. Cjeloživotno učenje knjižničara: stanje i mogućnosti // Cjeloživotno učenje knjižničara: ishodi učenja i fleksibilnost / urednice Aleksandra Horvat, Dijana Machala. Zagreb : Nacionalna i sveučilišna knjižnica , 2009. Str. 21-36

³ See more about that: IFLA / UNESCO Public libraries Manifesto.

Available at: <http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s8/unesco/eng.htm> (14.05.2016.)

professionals working within the Oxford University system. In addition to traditional training concerning regular library management support staff are offered and special workshops financial management, project development and writing of financial statements⁴. There is also an interesting study made at two university libraries in Nigeria⁵ based on comparison of results of their educational programs. Programs that were more oriented to the training and upgrading of the skills by senior colleagues and experienced librarians were generally evaluated by participants as appropriate to their urgency and direct assistance in their daily work.

Center for interlibrary cooperation and development of local practice in Split: what is possible to expect?

Expected advantages from all involved parties:

City Library: high number of good information professionals and very good reputation in the local community, high number of users

Faculty of Law Split: specialized law knowledge

University library: variety of specialized staff

The common interest for all libraries:

- access to various funds
- exchange of experience and technical assistance
- impact on several levels
- possible joint ventures

Expected impacts for all involved parties:

- As institutions serving the public interest, different types of libraries working together will be able to ensure wider community support.
- Working together with Tourist board of Split they will provide information to citizens and tourists from the various countries in cooperation with consulates.
- Working together with different kind of libraries public librarians will be able to provide information about our community in the wider context / Historical and Law information together.
- Cultural tourism and inter-connectivity in the region of Mediterranean environment of increased emigrations will have opportunity in this context to develop together without negative connotations.

⁴ Bodleian Libraries University of Oxford. Library Staff development & training. Available at: http://www.bodleian.ox.ac.uk/staff_training (14.05.2016.)

⁵ Adeniji, M.A.; Babalola, G.A.; Adeniji, Moses A.: "Workers Training Programmes in Two University Libraries in Nigeria" // *Library Philosophy and Practice (e-journal)*, 2012. Paper 769. Available at: <http://digitalcommons.unl.edu/libphilprac/769> (14.05.2016.)

Conclusion

The experience of everyday practice direct us towards increasingly complex and demanding needs of the users of library services. Of course, this fact imposes the need for better and more complete education of librarians. A joint project of the City Library, Law School and the University Library in Split as part of the Regional Centre can encourage librarians in small communities and local communities for further education and enable them to constantly update the acquired knowledge, sharing best practices and learning from the senior professionals and more experienced colleagues. Regional center for inter-library cooperation and learning through practice, which would serve as a regional, county center, would allow all employees of the library to have practical knowledge, especially for public librarians. Through workshops, seminars and lectures by experts from the country and from abroad all kind of librarians will be in position to be informed about good practice and modern trends relevant for tasks to be fulfilled in their libraries. Investing in knowledge undoubtedly would be reflected in the benefit of all citizens and increase the competitiveness of local and regional libraries.

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