

LIBRARY AND SOCIETY: CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES



Eli Popova

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PREFACE

This collection presents current themes in the field of modern libraries and their users, united under a common title: “Library and Society: Contemporary Challenges.” The texts have already been published in different Bulgarian sources. They are now published in English in this edition with minor changes. The included publications present the author’s interest in contemporary problems and challenges facing the library community. The lecture format is intentional, as it gives the opportunity for the edition to be used for work with an audience of students. The lectures are accompanied by presentations in English that are not part of this collection. The topics of the lectures are as follows:

- Technology and the human factor in the formula for effectiveness of the modern library
 - The role of users in the preservation of cultural heritage
 - The attitude of libraries towards users determines the present and the future of the institution
 - The value of the library in the modern dimensions of the institution and its personnel
 - The library – a space for communication between people and cultures

The first two lectures, in terms of duration, can be combined into one 90-minute lecture. The rest have the same duration on their own.

The objective of the author is to present her ideas and share her thoughts about the current state of libraries with a wider and non-specialised audience. The contradiction in the state of libraries today in Bulgaria, and to some extent in the world – the discrepancy between the great importance of libraries in the age of knowledge society and their actual use in the physical and virtual environment – is interesting,

but it has not been studied and explained in sufficient detail. Attention to the library institution has been reduced; funding has decreased; various restrictions have been applied; interest in the library profession among young people has critically declined; library personnel around the world is ageing – these are only some of the acute problems of the library sector in Bulgaria, but also, to a different degree, in other countries around the world. The author upholds the position that libraries remain treasures unjustifiably underutilised by modern generations. For too many people subordinated to and obsessed with the technological acquisitions of the 21st century, they are an undiscovered and unappreciated source of knowledge and information.

The presented topics can be of interest to a diverse audience from academia and beyond.

Eli Popova

TECHNOLOGY AND THE HUMAN FACTOR IN THE FORMULA FOR EFFECTIVENESS OF THE MODERN LIBRARY

*The mind is capable of producing all sorts of technologies,
but it is the minds of others who decide whether a technology
should develop.*

*An infinite number of technologies are possible,
but few of them withstand the test of being consistent with human nature.*

Robert Wright, “Nonzero: the Logic of Human Destiny”

The fast technological development of the world and the qualitative changes in the way we live are an undeniable fact. Wikipedia defines the information society as a society “where the creation, distribution, use, integration and manipulation of information is an important economic, political and cultural activity.” Its main drivers are digital information and communication technologies, which have led to an information explosion and have changed profoundly all aspects of the social organisation, including the economy, education, health, military actions, government and democracy. The people who have the means to participate in this form of society are sometimes called digital citizens, defined by Karen Mossberger as “[T]hose who use the Internet regularly and effectively¹. This is one of the dozens of

¹ **Hilbert, M.** (2015). *Digital Technology and Social Change* Open Online Course At the University of California <https://youtube.com/watch?v=KKGedDCKa68&list=PLtjBSCvWCU3rNm46D3R85efM0hrzjuAIg> Freely Available at: <https://canvas.instructure.com/courses/949415>

labels that have been identified to suggest that people are entering a new phase of society².

How productivity changes in this new digital age is a matter of interest for scientists and experts from different spheres of public activity. How does technology affect the effectiveness of organisations and how is the optimal interaction between technology and the human factor achieved to maximise their objectives? These are important research questions for modern libraries as well, which can bring significant changes and increase the effectiveness of library services and products.

New research fields that explore the connections between the development of technologies and their impact on human nature are being established. Thirty years ago, James Flynn – Head of the Department of Political Science at the University of Otago, New Zealand, began studying archive data from IQ tests and made his discovery, known as “the Flynn effect.” The essence of this discovery is that “over the past century, the results have been increasing steadily almost everywhere.” Reflecting on the changes in the economy, technology and education, later on Flynn himself reached the conclusion that “[W]e are not more intelligent” than our predecessors, “but we have learned to apply our intelligence to a new set of tasks³.”

A psychologist from the University of California in Los Angeles – Patricia Greenfield – reached a similar conclusion. She attributes the Flynn effect to a series of factors ranging from urbanisation to greater “societal complexity,” with all of them being an integral part of the global transition from small, low-tech communities with an economy sufficient to meet only the most basic needs, to large-scale high-tech societies with a market economy⁴.”

² **Beniger**, James R. (1986). *The Control Revolution: Technological and Economic Origins of the Information Society*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.

³ **Kar**, Nikolas. *Pod povarhnošću. Kak internet vliyaе varhu cheteneto, misleneto i pametta*. Sofiya, Info Dar, 2010, s.169, 172.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 173.

The market approach directs the effectiveness of an organisation to the development of products and services satisfying in an optimal manner certain needs. Even the perfect product or service is doomed if there is no demand for it, if there are no entities with an identified need that the product or service is able to satisfy. On what does the relevance of library products and services to the real information needs of the community depend? How is the value of library services determined and to what extent is it dependent on the level of technological development and the quality of human resources? These are questions, whose answers should be sought in and supported by the results of specialised targeted studies and a theoretical understanding of the digital realities of the modern era.

The most common definition of effectiveness “shows the ratio of the achieved result to the objective. The effectiveness is linked to the appropriateness of actions. It gives an answer to the question whether the “right” things are being done. It does not take into account the costs (energy, labour, financial resources), but only the attainment of the objective. The higher the level of achievement of a goal, the more effective the actions and events are⁵.”

The definition of the term “technology” in the Webster Dictionary is: “The system through which society provides its members with what is necessary and desired”⁶. Analysing the relationship between “[T]echnology, society and historical change”, M. Castellis writes “...technology does not define society; nor does society dictate the course of technological change, as many factors, among which individual ingenuity and entrepreneurship, take part in the process of scientific discovery, technological innovation and social applications, so that the end result depends on a complex pattern of interactions. ...

⁵ **Wikipedia**. [viewed 13.05.2019]. Available from: <https://bg.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ефективност>

⁶ **D.B. Guaralnik**, *Webster's New World Dictionary of the American Language*, Second College Ed. (Cleveland: William Collins and World Publishing, 1976), 1460, cite in: **Visente, Kim**. *Choveshkiyat factor* : revolutsinizarasht nachina, po koyto horata zhiveyat s tehnologiite. Sofiya, Argo Publishing, 2005, s. 31.

Technology does not define society, it represents it. But society does not define technological innovation, it uses it.”⁷

In his book “The Human Factor,” Kim Vicente confidently argues: “Instead of thinking of Cyclope-like abstractions such as “technology without people” and “people without technology,”⁸ we can turn our attention to more important things, to the interaction between people and technology, which helps to meet human and societal needs.” Affirming “common sense” first and foremost, seeking a “humanitarian revolution in technology” and technology in service of people, he creates the term “humano-technology”. Quoting Wright who said that “to be successful, a technology needs to be designed in accordance with human nature,” Vicente goes further in the reasoning and points out that “a project has to stem from human and societal needs, has to pose a problem to which it is worth finding a solution and only then create such a technology that corresponds to the specific human factors.” True to his efforts to prove the correlation between the human factor and technology, the author presents and analyses two opposing views of the world: a humanitarian and a mechanistic perspective⁹. He believes that the sharp boundary between the two approaches and ways of thinking “actually prevents us from seeing the interactions between people and technology.” And in support of his leading thesis, he quoted the classic essay by C. P. Snow of 1959 “*The Two Cultures*,” where he found full support for his positions: “When these two ways of thinking are divided, then society is deprived of wisdom ... Such polarisation leads to a loss for all of us as people and as a society.”¹⁰

Other authors also unequivocally support the presence of the human factor in the technological paradigm of society, presenting the following components of the technology, which ensure the efficiency of the production processes:

⁷ **Kastels**, Manuel. *Informatsionnata epoha: iekonomika, obshtestvo i kultura*. T. 1 Vashod na mrezhovoto obshtestvo. Sofiya, IK “Lik”, 2004, s. 22.

⁸ **Visente**, Kim. *Choveshkiyat factor : revolutsinizirashst nachina, po koyto horata zhiveyat s tehnologiite*. Sofiya, Argo Publishing, 2005, s. 59.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 11.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 43 – 45.

SOCIAL FACTOR, which covers specialists with their professional knowledge;

INFORMATION FACTOR – the speed with which knowledge develops increases rapidly;

ORGANISATIONAL FACTOR – a complex approach to technology, which includes research, analysis, implementation, adaptation, modernisation and management of technologies, development of production algorithms and modeling of situations¹¹.

One more interesting aspect in the application of innovations, on which the understanding of the relationship between technology and the human factor is based, leads us to the story of innovation and computer technology: “Sometimes with innovations it is essential for them to happen in the right moment – when a great idea is born in a time when the technology for its realisation exists.”¹²

This presentation does not discuss technology as a “collection of distinct library operations” and the “methods and means for their implementation directed towards the production and storage of library production and the performance of library services,” which is another equally interesting topic,¹³ related to the introduction of a qualitatively different level in library activities, made possible and dominated by the new information and communication technologies.

To include technologies and the human factor in the effectiveness formula of the library institution, the essential concept of effectiveness has to be defined. A possible definition is: effectiveness is a way to do the right things, while efficacy is to do things the right way.”¹⁴

¹¹ **Dratskaya, M.E.** Vliyanie tehnologicheskikh paradig na deyatel'nost' bibliotek. V: *Nauch. i tehn. biblioteki*, 2013, №5, s. 27.

¹² **Ayzaksan, Uoltar.** *Inovatorite. Geniite, koito izobrethiha tsifrovoto badeshte.* Sofiya, Softpress, 2014, s. 47.

¹³ **Dratskaya, M.E.** Vliyanie tehnologicheskikh paradig na deyatel'nost' bibliotek. V: *Nauch. i tehn. biblioteki*, 2013, №5, s. 29.

¹⁴ **Popova, Eli.** *Potrebiteli i polzване na bibliotekite.* Sofiya, Univ. izdat., 2019, c. 262. Available and from: <http://hdl.handle.net/10506/1714>

Each library exists to perform certain tasks and to serve the needs of a particular community of users – real and potential. In the context of this topic, this means that the products and services of each library are targeted and oriented towards a combination of real and potential needs with concrete content and other parameters and that the effectiveness has its specific values and dimensions, namely, the extent to which the library covers and is able to respond to the information needs of clearly defined and limited actual groups of people.

The formula for library effectiveness is also defined by the ability of users to use the services and products of the library. Good knowledge of the users for whom the library works is a key aspect in the design of library services and products. The analysis of the environment in which the library functions is often underestimated and is not carried out regularly in many countries, including Bulgarian, unlike libraries in Russia, the USA, Germany, etc., for which conducting regular and varied surveys is an established practice. Such surveys give an accurate picture of the actual and potential information needs, of the particularities and abilities of consumers to enjoy traditional and innovative services. On the basis of such studies, user training programmes are formed, which indirectly lead to a new quality level of library services, as a new quality of users emerges.

The formation of innovative services concerns two sides of the presence of people with their multifaceted characteristics. Product and service creators apply the technology *accessible* to them, which can relate to the *widely applied* technology (comparative level) in the sector on at least three levels:

- Compare fully;

- Be lower than the respective benchmark level;

- Be higher than the respective benchmark level.

The definition of *accessible* technology consists of several components: an individual and a group level of knowledge for the specific organisation, i.e. organisational capacity, which is more than the simple sum of individual and group potential; degree or other quantita-

tive dimension of the availability of resource provision – financial, technical, organisational, material-technical, spatial, etc.

The second group of decisive human factors are the users and their characteristics. The knowledge and skills of the two groups are dynamic, they are subject to constant change, embedded in the requirements for the development of library staff or dictated by the need of people to have a productive daily experience in a digital environment.

The value of library products and services is measured in two directions. The first one is the relation between their technological level and the level of technological training of the user audiences; the second is the library's ability to provide training to increase the skill level of users, which would allow them to use the technologies available in the library.

The challenges facing libraries from a technological perspective are several:

- To implement increasingly advanced technologies in information and knowledge management;

- To increase the level of the human factor working in libraries;

- To ensure systematic work with user audiences to increase their knowledge and skills to use technology.

These challenges are consistent with European policies of the last decade, oriented towards new key competences of people to improve their quality of life.

In the context of the highlighted link in the development of technology and individual and societal needs, we consider the library space as a particularly suitable environment for demonstrating and implementing *humano-technology*.

With respect to the effectiveness inherent in the relation between technology and the human factor, I would like to introduce the term “usability.” In the context of the topic, the concept is explained as the optimal degree of usefulness of anything – process, product, service, activity, etc., considering the technological level achieved and corresponding to needs expressed in the public domain.

The study of the correct ratio between the introduction of new technologies and applications and their usability is part of the economic model of thinking in the presentation of the contemporary library of the information products market. The most important thing in this process is its dynamism and constant monitoring. For the different networks by type of libraries, the tracking indicators are different. The structuring of such surveys and research questions needs to take into account a series of characteristics for the specific library organisations – type, size, internal and external environment, professional and psychological criteria and many others, depending on the objectives and scale of the study. Of course, this means the inclusion of new activities in the library institution and the provision of respective human resources.

The link between the everyday needs of people for information, knowledge, communication, exchange of ideas, a social and inclusive environment, opportunities for professional realisation, requalification, etc. and the functions of the modern library is becoming increasingly clear.

Today, the effectiveness of the institutions is a key factor for their positive presence and visibility in public life. Effective is this service which corresponds to an identified need and is offered in such a way that people can use it to actually meet everyday needs. In this sense, technology – yes!, but such technologies with which professionals and users can work daily, operationally and effectively. The continuous development of the skills of both staff and users follows from technological development and service renewal. The implementation of unusable applications and technological solutions for the sake of implementing them leads to a lack or delay of results. The reasons for such low usability may be different – from unprepared personnel/user to an unnecessary complication of processes that have a simpler solution.

What is leading – the technology or the human factor? Looking for the answer, Kim Vicente writes about the engineering of the human factor – “that one of a kind area that designs technology to serve people, rather than expecting people to adapt to technology.”, as I pointed out earlier in the lecture. The requirement for “technology to

be adapted to human nature on a broad footing” he calls “a revolution of the human-oriented technologies”.¹⁵

Ten years ago, Nicholas Carr doubted that the computer system “Edexcel”¹⁶ would be able to successfully evaluate the essays of students in the UK. He was concerned that it was unlikely for the software to be able to “distinguish those rare cases where students who go beyond the established frameworks of writing, not because they are incompetent, but because they have a brilliant idea.” His answer was firmly negative: “I knew the answer: it would not succeed.”¹⁷ Carr sought support in the assertion of Joseph Weizenbaum that computers “follow rules, they do not make judgments.”¹⁸

The human factor brings subjectivity, emotional reactions, reliance on nuances in sensitivities and the specifics in the needs of people. In communication, including in the library space, demonstrating understanding, empathy and competence builds trust, helps to share the values of the institution and changes attitudes towards it. In a changing world, the contemporary library becomes a space for social and digital inclusion, to address demographic, social and behavioural problems, along with meeting information, educational and intellectual needs.

Can we trust Kubrick’s gloomy prophecy that “as we are increasingly relying on computers to make it easier for us to understand the world, our own intelligence is equated with artificial intelligence”¹⁹? Or, are we, instead, going to search in libraries for a combination between the level of technological capabilities and the qualities of the human factor in the name of more useful and widely-used effective libraries?

¹⁵ **Visente**, Kim. *Choveshkiyat factor* : revolutsinizarasht nachina, po koyto horata zhiveyat s tehnologiite. Sofiya, Argo Publishing, 2005, s. 11,13–14.

¹⁶ “Edexcel” is the largest educational testing company in the UK, offering in 2009 “automated assessment of exam essays based on artificial intelligence”.

¹⁷ **Kar**, Nikolas. *Pod povarhnoshta*. Kak internet vliyaе varhu cheteneto, misleneto i pametta. Sofiya, Info Dar, 2010, s. 257.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 257 – 258.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 259.

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THE ROLE OF USERS IN THE PRESERVATION OF CULTURAL HERITAGE

Introduction

The preservation and promotion of cultural heritage is part of the responsibilities of modern generations to carry universal values in time and space. The institutions of memory – libraries, museums and archives, perform their part of this task according to their resources, through the capabilities of the technologies introduced in them, and the user groups they serve.

Behind every step and action taken for the preservation of the cultural heritage there are people. These are real people living in a particular historical moment of the development of society, in a certain region of the world, with its traditions, culture and opportunities. In carrying out this mission for the generations to come, people build on the achievements of the past and head towards the future based on their judgement and attitude towards events, processes, monuments and artifacts. These attitudes carry the characteristics both of the objective worldview, reflected and validated in generally accepted definitions of culture and cultural values, and the subjective worldview, personal culture and intelligence of the participants in the processes at all levels.

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which is a founding document for policy-making and global action, article 27(1) states:

“everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits.”²⁰ The manifesto on digital libraries of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the organisation with global scope of responsibilities in the field of culture in the UN system – UNESCO, published in 2010, also asserts that “equal access to the cultural and scientific heritage of mankind is the right of every person”.²¹

UNESCO has created an international environment around the issues of education, science and culture. The preservation and promotion of the cultural heritage is a key activity that UNESCO has actively and continuously supported. In the context of sustainable development, the organisation develops documents and methodologies for the inclusion and assessment of culture as a strategic resource, as well as for the successful resolution of global problems and crises in the name of people, for the future of the world.

One of the last initiatives was held on 19 November 2019 – a forum of culture ministers at the UNESCO headquarters in Paris, France, where the cultural sector presented the indicators for culture 2030. This is a framework of thematic indicators aiming to measure and monitor the progress of culture in the national and local implementation of the sustainable development agenda objectives by 2030, both as a sector of activity and as impact on other sectors of life.²² The thematic framework has been developed in the course of two years with the participation of many experts and in partnership with a number of institutes.

UNESCO is at the foundation of the long-standing idea for a world digital library – a digital gateway to the world cultural her-

²⁰ **UN.** *Universal Declaration of Human Rights.* [viewed 28.01.2020] Available from: <https://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/>

²¹ **IFLA/UNESCO** *Manifest za digitalnite biblioteki* [viewed on 25.10.2019] Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/digital-libraries/documents/ifla-unesco-digital-libraries-manifesto-bg.pdf>

²² **UNESCO** *Thematic Indicators for Culture in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.* [viewed on 20.01.2020] Available from: <file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/activity-959-1.pdf>

itage, and has a key role in ensuring its successful implementation. The librarian of the U.S. Congress James H. Billington proposed the creation of a World Digital library (WDL) in June 2005. UNESCO welcomed the idea as a contribution to achieving the strategic objectives of the organisation, namely promoting knowledge societies and capacity building in developing countries; encouraging cultural diversity in the network; and enhancing the role of intercultural dialogue.

In 2007, a conference was held, in which UNESCO, IFLA, as well as individuals and institutions from more than forty countries took part. The success of the prototype was followed by a decision by several libraries to develop a public, freely available version of the World Digital Library to be launched in April 2009. More than 25 institutions provided content for the launch version of the site. UNESCO is fully committed to supporting the expansion and global reach of the World Digital Library. The organisation works with the Library of Congress to attract new partners to the project. Libraries, archives and other educational and cultural institutions from all over the world have joined the World Digital Library, which means that the cultural treasures that it holds will continue to grow in number and diversity.

The documents, recommendations and policies that the organisation adopts are developed by Member State experts and subsequently form the international environment and guidelines for the development of cultural activities. The experts involved in the work of the different committees and working groups are nominated by the states on the basis of their professional competencies and personal qualities. These are established, renowned and highly valued specialists with contributions to the creation, research and preservation of world, national and regional cultural heritage. Besides the undeniable qualities of professionals in the field of culture, these people have a sense of respect for the past – in terms of preserving everything valuable, created by previous generations and a responsibility to the future – for the transmission of cultural documents and artifacts, embodying universal values and spiritual energy for the next generations.

Every idea, even the best one, remains only an idea unless it is shared by people capable of realising it. For the realisation of every significant act they dedicate time and effort, build and improve knowledge in the relevant field, and expect adequate results; they build capacity to create again and again. The people creating cultural values and successful ideas for the preservation and promotion of cultural heritage are users, who have educated themselves through the study of cultural objects, history and processes.

In the “Framework Convention of the Council of Europe on the importance of cultural heritage for society”, adopted at a forum in 2005, it is defined as “a group of resources inherited from the past, which people identify, regardless of their ownership, as a reflection or expression of their constantly evolving values, beliefs, knowledge and traditions. It encompasses all aspects of the cultural environment resulting from the interaction between people and places over time.”²³

A series of documents of the European structures marks the place of culture in shaping communities and uniting people.²⁴

The designation of 2018 as European year of cultural heritage is a landmark decision of European politicians, which represents their high appreciation of the importance and impact of the cultural heritage on all areas of public life, on the present and future of people. This initiative is an expected result of the sustained attention given by European policies to the cultural heritage and its continuous promotion among European citizens with the aim of achieving togetherness in diversity and intercultural dialogue.

The European year of cultural heritage is the only thematic year ever organised by the European Commission. During this period,

²³ **Council of Europe.** *Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society.* [viewed 28.01.2020] Available from: <https://rm.coe.int/090000168071aabc>

²⁴ **Stanovishte na Evropeyskiya komitet na regionite ot 2018 g. – Kulturnoto nasledstvo kato strategicheski resurs za razvitiето nap o-sploteni i wiffy-chivi regioni v ES.** [viewed on 28.01.2020]. Available from: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/BG/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:52018IR0185&from=EN>

thousands of events were organised on a European, national, regional and local level, which aimed to “raise awareness of the social and economic benefits of the cultural heritage and promote Europe’s cultural richness and diversity.” The results of the Eurobarometer survey of September-October 2017 show that over 80% of European citizens believe that cultural heritage is important not only for them personally, but also for their region, country and for the European Union as a whole²⁵. Similar results point to a high percentage of cultural heritage users who have understood its impact on personal development, as well as its importance for the advancement of society.

The international library community communicated with the messages of the European Year of Cultural Heritage.

The main messages on which the 10 flagship initiatives launched by the European Commission in the year dedicated to preserving cultural heritage are the following:

Sharing the heritage. Sharing the heritage, history and values contributes to making European citizens feel closer together;

The heritage in school. Children discover European values and traditions;

Youth for heritage. Young people bring new life to heritage;

Heritage in transition. Providing industrial, religious and military spaces for restoring urban and rural areas;

Tourism and heritage. Promoting sustainability in cultural tourism;

Cherishing heritage. Developing quality standards for interventions in cultural heritage;

Heritage at risk. Fighting illicit trade in cultural goods and managing risks to heritage sites;

Skills for heritage. Improving education and training for traditional and new professions;

Heritage for all/all for heritage. Civic participation and social innovation;

²⁵ Fondatsiya “Evropa i svetat”. [viewed on 20.01.2020]. Available from: <http://evropaworld.eu/2018-evropejska-godina-na-kulturnoto-nasledstvo-2/>

Science for heritage. Research, innovation, science and technology for the benefit of heritage²⁶.

A detailed look at the meaning of these messages points to the participation of people of all ages and professional fields in the preservation of the cultural heritage and its active involvement in everyday life and in the answers to the challenges that the world faces. Providing wide and unrestricted access to the resources of institutions for memory is an important part of fulfilling these objectives. Every member of civil society holds a responsibility for the preservation of the works in the spiritual and material history of humanity.

Europeana is developing dynamically and improving the opportunities for getting to know more broadly European culture in the context of regional and national diversity and uniqueness. By getting to know the various cultures, people affirm their national identity, but they also achieve new qualities of becoming familiar with each other, creating opportunities for communication, achieving understanding and seeking a community.

In the normative documents governing the development of the portal, it is noted that the importance of cultural awareness is growing, which also affects the ways of teaching influenced by digital, social and civic factors²⁷. The incorporation of Europeana more actively in educational and training activities broadens common culture in terms of content, builds skills for processing information and forms literate users of cultural heritage.

Creativity, which is seen as one of the key competences of modern life, requires the formation of skills in people to handle creatively the cultural heritage in order to change the environment and their relations in the spirit of the eternal human values. The development of

²⁶ **European Commission.** *Culture. 10 European Initiatives.* [viewed on 20.01.2020] Available from: https://ec.europa.eu/culture/content/overview_en

²⁷ **Europeana for Education and Learning.** *Policy Recommendations.* Europeana Foundation, May 2015. [viewed on 20.01.2020] Available from: https://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Publications/Europeana%20for%20Education%20and%20Learning%20Policy%20Recommendations.pdf

an active attitude towards the preservation of cultural heritage begins with the formation of knowledge about it and skills for the evaluation and application of the acquired knowledge in practice. And this is possible if people develop as consumers of cultural values from early age. The integration of culture in the degrees of formal education, lifelong learning programmes and self-education are the right way to create educated and active users of cultural heritage, committed to protecting it.

The digital formats of cultural artifacts and documents are exchanged and shared constantly on Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Tumblr. The social networks and platforms for sharing – the new spaces for daily communication of modern people – are a place through which cultural values reach the widest audience. The dissemination of information about the cultural heritage takes this into account and adapts the new types of online consumer patterns. With the objective to attract young people to cultural values, the institutions aim to perform well in promoting cultural heritage also on the Web.

Governments and institutions include (or must include) the preservation of cultural heritage in their strategic and normative documents, policies, concepts and initiatives in different areas of public life.

The users of cultural heritage are people working in the institutions, organisations, governments, lawmakers and decision-makers taking decisions at all levels, users in the institutions of memory with presence in different spheres depending on age, professional realisation and interests. Representatives of different generations bear the scars of the impact of various factors on their upbringing, education and culture. The main objectives of the activities and initiatives for the preservation of cultural heritage in the name of the people, but also fully dependent on their attitude are:

CONSERVATION – for future generations, respectively the future users of cultural heritage. This goal is an important motivation for the preservation of the cultural heritage and for finding increasingly attractive technologies for its preservation and promotion.

ACCESS – for the contemporaries, the current users. The challenge to create the widest possible access to the cultural heritage remains great. It is related to different aspects: the dynamic development of technologies, the forms for sharing resources – the creation of platforms for access to knowledge, integration of resources and technologies, and even things that we still do not know today, but which will be a reality tomorrow. The aspiration and policies for ensuring access to the cultural treasure of mankind on the European continent or on a national level are requirements and expectations for new and innovative products and services by contemporaries.

PROMOTION – the space where the connection between the previous, current and future generations is made through the sharing of values. The promotion depends on the level of information culture in the different parts of the world – at a national and local level. The cultural heritage is the sustainable link between people in time and space. It is this value of the cultural heritage that is part of the relevance and importance of the topic today. People realise it and it is no coincidence that they put it among the priorities of international activities, and also it should be a priority for national policies. The impact of culture is universal, it does not concern only a specific area of social life. Economy, politics, sociology, ecology and other large-scale sectors experience a powerful influence from the state of culture.

Users of the institutions of memory in all epochs seek to meet their needs related to access to the knowledge and culture achieved at the time. This is the unspoken call of users: the institutions must protect the cultural achievements. Users urge their efforts in search for the best ways to preserve and protect the documentary and cultural heritage; in the discovery and offer of the most honorable forms of access to the cultural treasures of the past, with care and respect for the creators of spiritual works and recognition of their effort, talent and uniqueness.

The users of cultural and spiritual values are their creators, guardians and disseminators. From the past to today, the roles are increasingly differentiated and specialise in separate professional fields, but the developed attitude towards the cultural heritage remains and dominates, it determines, or should determine the behaviour of people, regardless of their place in the hierarchy of responsibilities for the preservation of the heritage.

Users in the digital age have many opportunities and channels to satisfy their information needs, including in the field of culture. If they are to be systematised in general terms, their needs have educational, research, self-educational, professional and personal characteristics. Within the framework of another differentiation, they can be mass, group (institutional, collective) and individual. As an example of the spillover effect of culture, and in particular the cultural heritage to other sectors of life, cultural tourism and studies of family memory through the use of the local history resources of libraries, museums and archives and studies of local history are developing actively.

Conclusion

To conclude, users are both creators and users of cultural heritage. They influence authorities and institutions at different levels and to a different extent. The documents – international, normative and strategic, provide as a result and end goal public benefit, change in the quality of life of people, some degree of importance for everyone's personal life.

Awareness of the strategies, policies and initiatives taking place is a precondition for the participation of users in the fulfilment of the important and responsible tasks they have in relation to future generations. Citizens' activity and control over the conservation of literary heritage is a powerful incentive in shaping good legislation and providing resources.

People help in the popularisation of literary heritage – local, national and world, entering into one or another role of their citizen's

activity and professional realisation. The participation of more and more people in projects and initiatives dedicated to the cultural heritage is determined by the maturity of civil society, by the activity and creativity of the user groups and personalities engaged in key places for the initiation and funding of activities. The educating of young people and children in human values is closely linked to the conservation and promotion of cultural heritage. The cultural heritage is transmission of values, teaching to respect and cherish the family memory and national culture, integration into European and universal human cultural values. *ALL PEOPLE* are related to the cultural heritage and to one degree or another, in one role or another, are its *creators, guardians and users*.

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THE ATTITUDE OF LIBRARIES TOWARDS USERS DETERMINES THE PRESENT AND THE FUTURE OF THE INSTITUTION

As part of a qualitatively new age of the development of human civilization, modern people live in the absolute dominance of information – as a daily need, a basic product, a precondition for professional and personal development, a way of being. This stage of social development has been underway for decades, already recognized (to the extent allowed by the unfamiliar dynamic and constant changes) in the theoretical directions of the sciences from the currently existing areas of research on society and technology. A large number of publications present summaries, concepts, trends of the Information and Network Society, the Knowledge Society. The “Internet of things” (IoT) is increasingly present in the everyday life and habits of people.

A number of organizations are providing staggering statistics about the pace at which information is growing and spreading. The World Economic Forum²⁸ reports provide curious users with astonishing data on the development of technologies applicable in different scientific fields, as well as hard-to-digest numbers that describe the growth of information in the modern world.

²⁸ **World Economic Forum.** *Top 10 Emerging Technologies 2019 Insight Report.* 9. DNA Data Storage Life’s information-Storage system is being adapted to handle massive amounts of information [viewed on 27.03.2019]. Available from: http://www3.weforum.org/docs/WEF_Top_10_Emerging_Technologies_2019_Report.pdf

What happens with modern people – with the users of information and knowledge? Why, despite the importance of libraries, which undoubtedly justifies the existence of the professional library community and helps a part of society to grow, they are not used to their fullest, are neglected by politicians, and are not recognized by the other part of society for whom they can also be useful? The user groups of generations *Z* and *Alpha* set their requirements and have expectations of the modern library. They need to communicate through the means, forms and channels of the technology in their everyday life. Libraries are becoming an accessible place to form and improve new competences for the citizens of the modern civilized world, regardless of their age, demographic, ethnic or social affiliation, or their financial capacity. The acquired technological skills through targeted training in libraries of users in need affect the understanding and behaviour of people, change or at least create the potential to change the quality of their lives, improve their communication skills and deepen the mutual understanding, which is an important step towards getting along. For these groups of real and potential users, who, for different reasons – social, economic and others, have limited access to modern information and communication tools, the library provides a suitable environment, equal access to technology, as well as the possibility of assistance and support from qualified personnel.

This is the truth. Nevertheless, libraries stand aside from the priorities of those in power, experience huge financial difficulties and lack of staffing potential, and the profession continues to be unattractive for young people. During advocacy campaigns in the public space one can hear testimonials and high regard for the institution as a contributor to the prosperity of the nation, but in many countries, including Bulgaria, after the events have passed, the undeservingly difficult everyday life of the majority of libraries continues. We live in a controversial time of turbulent technological development and limited resources, which we cannot disregard. This makes the neglect of libraries even more strange, as on one hand, they can be turned into technology and training centers for information management and

training of users to work with ICT, and on the other, they can reduce the financial burden in providing access to information and can help to optimise the use of resources.

The library undergoes quality, technological and organizational transformations that extend to a hitherto unknown capacity and diversity its role of an intermediary in the exchange of thoughts, ideas and practices, a supplier of information and its transformation into knowledge through which to achieve personal development, community advancement and progress in society. The technological transformations of the library institution should broaden and facilitate the processes of information exchange and communication that takes place in a dynamic digital environment. But the challenges of the new digital environment and the need for new legislative frameworks for information processes and market regulations do not always lead to results for the benefit of consumers. The European Union's recent efforts to reform the field of copyright have brought restrictions on users of information. The expectations of libraries focus on the balance between copyright protection on cultural and intellectual products and the opening up of lawful mechanisms to ensure that consumers have wide access to them. A variety of information channels enter the library space, intended as a public space for access to knowledge and information. This creates opportunities for enriching communication in the physical and virtual space and opens access to its own and accessible external resources.

Modern libraries actively contribute to the elimination of social inequality and the digital divide, uphold equal access and opportunities for education and work for people. Library initiatives and concepts for the modern library are linked to its contribution to addressing key societal needs – social inclusion, bridging the digital divide, lifelong learning²⁹, and are being introduced as long-term objectives

²⁹**Lifelong Learning Programme.** European Commission. Education and Training. *Supporting education and training in Europe and beyond* [viewed on 15.02.2019]. Available on: http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-programme_en; **Lifelong Learning Platform:** *European Civil Society for*

in the strategy documents of the global and European library community. For a short period of time live-long learning is transformed from an idea into a concept and a platform for education and training of European citizens to be successful in the contemporary working and lifestyle environment.

The library, perceived as the “third place” after home and work/school, develops as a space for social networking and joint activities in the community. Such an understanding of its role builds further the social function and responsibilities of the library, in particular the public library, which is accessible to all citizens. The “online library, as a “fourth place”, builds on digitalization and the capabilities of information and communication technologies. It is a place for collaboration and learning, accessible from all digital terminals – computers, tablets, mobile phones. It is not just a copy or a mirror of the physical library. It voluntarily differentiates itself from the public library to be able to offer access to other spaces. In this case, it is necessary to preserve the mission of public libraries, while introducing new fields and opportunities for Internet development and experimentation.”³⁰

Everything that is done in libraries is directed to their real and potential users. During its millennial history, the library has built a solid attitude towards its users. The contribution of Dr. Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan to the knowledge of libraries, with his five so-called “Laws” of library science, is significant. Created in 1931, they remain valid in the modern technological era, because they formulate briefly, but precisely and clearly the essence of the library service, express its philosophy, objectives and basic principles.

The five laws of Dr Ranganatan for library science state the following: *1. Books are for use. 2. For every reader – an appropriate book. 3. For every book – a suitable reader. 4. Save the time of the*

Education [viewed on 15.02.2019]. Available on: <http://illplatform.eu/>

³⁰ **Savova**, Yuliya. Razvitie na kontseptsiyata za bibliotekata kato “treto myašto” ili kak da razbirame bibliotekata kato “chetvarto myašto”. V: *Dinamichni biblioteki – doštap, razvitie, promyana*. Dokladi ot XXVI-ta Natsionalna konferentsiya na BBIA, Sofiya, 9 – 10 yuni 2016. Sofiya, 2016, s. 13.

reader! 5. *The library is an evolving organism.* The laws created by Dr Ranganathan also apply in the new information environment and retain their essence by formulating “a new meaning in an electronic environment.”³¹ The great library scientist Michael Gorman, author of works of fundamental importance for contemporary library science, gives his contribution to the modern sound of the five laws and counts them as part of the timeless values of libraries: 1. Libraries serve mankind. 2. Respect all forms through which knowledge is disseminated. 3. Use technology intelligently to expand services. 4. Protect the free access to knowledge. 5. Respect the past and create the future.³²

Gorman calls the library a “space for services”. In today’s society, dominated by the service economy, by the rapid expansion of the “platform of the Flat World”, the library institution offers its products and services in a dynamically expanding information market. The transition from the economy of production to the service economy is a completed fact. It is evidenced by numerous indicators in economic research and references to statistical data. *Almost three-quarters of America’s workforce is working in the service sector*, writes Gorman already at the start of the new century, beginning a discussion about the timeless library values in our age. More and more library organizations are described with economic terms and measures, their “cost-efficiency” and the correlation between “costs and benefits” are increasingly discussed. And if in the area of services *improvement and innovation... are usually achieved in two opposing ways – through technology and through human contact*, such comparisons are also starting to be made with respect to library services.³³

³¹ Cloonan, M., Dove, John. Ranganathan Online. In: *Library Journal*, 2005, vol. 130, issue 6, pp. 58-60. Available from: <http://www.libraryjournal.com/article/CA5112179.html>. Cite on: Yanakieva, Elena. Zakonite na bibliotekoznaniето ot sazdavane to im do dnes. V: *Biblioteka*, 2012, № 6 [viewed on 15.02.2018]. Available from: http://www.nationallibrary.bg/wp/wp-content/uploads/2016/12/Biblioteka_6_2012.pdf

³² Gorman, Maykal. *Nashite neprehodni tsennošti. Bibliotekite pez XXI vek.* Sofiya: Univ. izd. Sv. Kliment Ohridski, 2006, s. 35–36.

³³ *Ibid.*, 116.

The users in the conditions of rapid movement and changes are different generations with all the possible variety of educational levels and with different levels of information and digital culture. In libraries two mass streams meet and seek their optimal relevant and meaningful interaction: that of the constantly evolving information carriers and that of those searching information with endless combinations of characteristics.

International documents, debates and discussions

The International Organization of Library Federations (IFLA) gives recommendations and priorities for the development of libraries around the world. The world library community is always sympathetic to global problems in the world and takes into account trends in social development. The organization is consistent and creative in supporting global development initiatives in favor of the quality of life and opportunities for access to information of people:

2013

„At the crest of the waves or overtaken by the tide: let’s navigate through the changing information environment”. IFLA’s report on the main development guidelines, 2013. The document focuses on *the unprecedented amount of information and the speed at which it is created online* and systematizes discussions with relevant global experts and specialists of trends in the new information environment. The remarkable thing about the document is its dynamic nature. An online platform is being developed for the participation of information and library specialists in a wide global discussion.³⁴ The discussion is dedicated to the five most common trends in the global information environment: access to information, education, protection of personal information, public participation and technological transformations that the report identifies. The document does not predict the future existence of librar-

³⁴ **IFLA.** *Trend Report.* [viewed on 23.03.2015]. Available from: <http://trends.ifla.org>

ies, but it challenges the professional guild to propose ways of *developing libraries in order to continue to be relevant in the new information environment*. Five main trends have a strong impact on the information environment: *Trend 1: New technologies will simultaneously broaden and limit the scope of those with access to information; Trend 2: Online education will democratise education and bring about a transformation of the educational system world-wide; Trend 3: The boundaries of personal space and the protection of personal data will be redefined; Trend 4: Hyperconnected societies will listen to new voices and groups and will create opportunities and conditions for their activities; Trend 5: The global information economy will be transformed by new technologies. The proliferation of hyperconnected mobile devices, network sensors in software applications and infrastructure, three-dimensional printing and language translation technologies will transform the global information economy*³⁵.

Following the status of the predictions made in the quoted document 7 years ago and comparing them with the characteristics of the present confirm their correct direction. The problems outlined in the report concern changes in attitudes, the characteristics of modern generation, respectively they complement the specifics of the user groups of libraries. But besides the opinions and ideas of professionals, the assessment and expectations of consumers could be a good benchmark for the right actions and directions of development.

2015

In September 2015, UN Member States adopted Programme 2030 under the slogan “Transforming Our World”. The agenda of the global organization presents an inclusive integrated framework that

³⁵**Na grebena na valnite ili nastignati ot priliva:** Da se orientirame v promenyashitata se informatsionna sreda. Izvodi ot doklada na IFLA za osnovnite nasoki na razvitiie. – V: *BBLA online*, 2013, № 6, c. 4 – 13. Available from: https://trends.ifla.org/files/trends/assets/ifla-trend-report_bulgarian.pdf

contains 17 objectives and 169 sustainable development sub-goals³⁶. According to the position of IFLA, access to information is essential and is an important condition for achieving the sustainable development goals, and libraries are not only key partners of governments but are already contributing to progress towards the 17 goals³⁷. For each of them, IFLA develops guidelines for impact through libraries for the implementation of the programme. The Lyon Declaration is an advocacy document drafted by IFLA and its strategic partners during the period January – May 2014, used to exercise positive influence on the content of the United Nations Development Programme after 2015. It states that *public access to information helps people to make informed decisions, which can improve their lives. Communities which have access to timely and relevant information for all are in a more favourable position to eradicate poverty and inequality,... to provide quality education and support to human health, culture, research and innovation*³⁸.

The orientation of libraries towards achieving the objectives of the UN programme, presented in several documents, points to the interest of libraries in the fate of the world and the quality of life of people today. Through the brochure of IFLA, *320 000 public libraries and more than a million parliamentary, national, university, scientific and academic, school and specialised libraries ensure that the information, as well as the skills needed to absorb it, are accessible to everyone – this makes them vital institutions in the digital age. Libraries provide information and communication technology (ICT) infrastructure, help peo-*

³⁶ **UN.** *Transforming our world: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development* [viewed on 15.02.2019]. Available from: <https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/post2015/transformingourworld>; **UN.** *Sustainable Development Goals. 17 Goals to Transform Our World* [viewed on 15.02.2019]. Available from: <http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals/>

³⁷ **IFLA.** *Libraries, Development and the United Nations 2030 Agenda* [viewed on 23.03.2018]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/libraries-development>

³⁸ **IFLA.** *The Lyon Declaration* [viewed on 23.03.2018]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11146?og=7409>

ple to develop their capacity to effectively use information and store this information so that it can be made available to future generations. They are a proven and reliable network of institutions in different communities that reach effectively all sections of the population³⁹.

2018

The goals that the world library community sets for itself, and the values it promotes, are also reflected in the subsequent Global Vision Report (2018)⁴⁰. Let's track how the document is oriented towards the needs of people – the users of libraries in its individual components.

10. Highlights

1. We are dedicated to equal and free access to information and knowledge

This remains a repeated and continuously maintained position of the library sector with respect to the fundamental right of people to access information.⁴¹

2. We remain deeply committed to supporting literacy, training and reading

Literacy and reading are basic skills through which individuals can ensure their personal development and quality of life in the context of the information and knowledge society.

3. At the heart of our attention is the service to communities

³⁹ **Dostap i vazmozhnosti za vsichki.** Kak bibliotekite doprinasyat za izpalnenieto na Programa 2030 na OON [viewed on 15.02.2019]. Available from: <http://www.lib.bg/kampanii1/nbs2017/access-and-opportunity-for-all-Bulgarian.pdf>, c. 3.

⁴⁰ **IFLA Global Vision.** [viewed on 20.08.2018]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/node/11900>; Rezume na doklada za globalnata vizija: Top 10 aktsenti i vazmozhnosti. V: *BBLA online*, 2018, № 2, c. 8–9.

⁴¹ **UN. Universal Declaration of Human Rights** [viewed on 15.02.2019]. Available from: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

Each specific library provides space for its communities to meet efficiently professional and personal information needs; social contacts and personal development. If the constancy of change is emphasized continuously, then the information and library service needs to adapt to the community's changing characteristics. The library needs to allocate resources – financial and human, for continuous monitoring and research of users, their needs and the use of the library. Based on the results, library services are adjusted to the observed changes.

4. We fully embrace digital innovations

The use of the innovative services of libraries depends on the ability of the population to use them. The creation of technology-based products and services should be linked to digital literacy and culture training for community users, tailored to the existing age groups and levels of education and technological literacy in each library.

5. Our leaders realise the need for strong advocacy

Advocacy is an effective way to focus attention on libraries. But even the best advocacy campaign collapses if the people it targets have bad memories or negative experiences from using the library/libraries. So, above all, the professional standards of behavior, established, utilized and applied by library specialists, are the basis for the image and visibility of libraries. Serious, hard and continuous work remains to be done in this direction by the library community.

6. We believe that funding is one of the biggest challenges

The people on whom library funding depends are real or potential library users. Their experience in the use of library services has an impact on their attitudes towards the institution, on their assessment of its public benefit, cost-effectiveness and on the decisions regarding the library sector.

7. We recognize the need for cooperation and partnership building

The possible partners of libraries are also their potential or real users. They have families – children, parents, friends, acquaintances, with whom they exchange information about the benefits of the local library. These shared opinions are involved in the formation of atti-

tudes and respectively positive or negative opinions and willingness or lack of willingness for such a partnership.

8. We want to be less bureaucratic, more flexible and faster in responding to change

This point, as well as all commented so far, depend on the initiative and professionalism of the staff, their professional qualifications and personal qualities, their desire and opportunities for initiative and creativity.

9. We are the guardians of the memory of the world

This function needs new forms of promotion in each user group in an appropriate manner and with adequate and age-specific content. The educational system is the most appropriate place to launch an active campaign to uncover and consolidate the role, importance and capabilities of modern libraries to provide access to world knowledge, without boundaries in space and time. European policies promote the introduction of digitised cultural heritage stored in libraries in the learning processes, in the educational process at different levels.⁴²

10. Our young professionals are highly motivated and ready to lead

The hard-to-resolve, persistent over time problems, related to what libraries look like, how the profession is positioned among modern job opportunities for professional realization, how attractive it seems to young people and to what extent it meets their requirements for standard of living – these are factors that seriously undermine the feasibility of the objectives I have just described. Undoubted is the need to better promote the good practices of libraries; the need for more information in the public space about the usefulness of the institution also in the digital age, the interesting aspects of the library profession and the opportunities for development and growth in the professional sphere.

⁴² EC. Europeana Foundation. *Europeana for Education and Learning: Policy Recommendations.*, May 2015 [viewed on 20.08.2018]. Available from: http://pro.europeana.eu/files/Europeana_Professional/Publications/Europeana%20for%20Education%20and%20Learning%20Policy%20Recommendations.pdf

10 opportunities

1. We must be champions of intellectual freedom

These opportunities depend on the policies and the legal framework through which new and constantly changing phenomena are recorded in public life. The realization of this wonderful opportunity requires targeted advocacy campaigns and an actual impact on law-making. The creators of laws and politicians also are real or potential users of libraries. And the earlier comments also apply to them.

2. We must modernize our traditional role in the digital age

The adaptation of libraries and their ability to meet people's expectations depend on the laws and funding created by these same people. Targeted efforts and well-thought through actions at system level are needed to present the contemporary institution to audiences with different interests and characteristics, so as to reveal the multifaceted possibilities, the modern vision of the modern library and its real essential benefits for the quality of life of all consumer groups.

3. We need to understand better the needs of the community and develop effective services

The need for professionals who are continuously and professionally engaged in studying the library audience is already visibly outlined. For now, leaving the library space to study users and needs is an understood and regularly carried out activity only in a small part of the libraries around the world (e.g. promoted good practice of the Public Library in Denver, USA, project "Elvis left the building").

4. We need to keep abreast of the constant technological changes

This opportunity can ensure modern library education, continuing and upgrading vocational training, as well as continuous self-education; understood, well-thought through and successfully implemented educational goals from all participating sides. Single and episodic efforts do not have the necessary for the sector efficiency.

5. We need to carry out more and better advocacy at all levels

„Every librarian – an advocate!” This is feasible only with the adoption of the professional standards of conduct and code of ethics of the librarian, with the real internalization of the values of the professional community. The development of specialists in this model concerns all components of the library sector: education, vocational continuing education, professional realization, legislation, financing and employment-legal relations, etc.

6. We need to make every effort to ensure that the authorities understand our contribution and impact

The efforts are daily, by every specialist in a small and large library to every user – educated or not, digitally literate or not.

7. We must develop a spirit of cooperation

Cooperation begins with the smallest organizational structure and reaches the world library community. It requires ethics and morality in behavior, high professionalism and collegiality, loyalty to the institution and teamwork, vision for the future and perspectives, as well as the ability to achieve them.

8. We need to revise our current structures and patterns of behaviour

The international organisation has the capacity to develop professional standards of conduct that serve as a basis for detailing them for every country, every library and every position.

9. We need to maximise access to the world documentary heritage

Demonstrating the usefulness of this access for different groups of users around the world – penetration of cultures, mutual familiarization and understanding, education through shared histories, and the positive personal experience of those who create the legal and financial frameworks have an impact on the processes.

10. We need to provide young professionals with effective learning, development and leadership opportunities

The increase in the number of young participants in forums, discussions, opportunities for development and preparation for leader-

ship is the effective path for the future of the sector. The positive experience of young people with the use of modern libraries would attract them to the profession.

Working with consumers, daily advocacy, attracting users and training must be a priority in the activities of libraries. Only in targeted communication, research and in-depth connection with people can the interdependencies between their personal development, quality of life in communities and the state of libraries be understood.

National aspects of the topic

Surveys of library users

The role of users in the development of the library institution has not been sufficiently studied. Analysis of the environment in which the library operates is often underestimated and is not carried out periodically in many countries, including Bulgarian, unlike libraries in Russia, USA, Germany, etc., for which the conduct of regular and diverse studies is an established practice. On one hand, such research gives an accurate picture of the actual and potential information needs, the characteristics of users and their ability to use traditional and innovative services. Based on such studies, training programs for people using libraries are formed, which indirectly leads to a new quality level of library services, as a new quality of users emerges.

Regular research of users and their needs is an important prerequisite for the efficient channeling of resources and the economical, but effective and adequate use of libraries' capabilities. The systematic study of users aims to ensure the rational utilization of library resources – material, spatial, documentary, personnel and organizational, and leads to increased efficiency of the library service. At the same time, such initiatives on the part of the library are a reason for contacts with users; they inspire trust in people in the efforts of libraries to be useful exactly to them; show concern for their needs. This can actually change the attitude towards libraries.

The information on libraries' websites contains data that can be useful in building bridges between libraries and their users. The presence of the library institution in the virtual space in itself introduces libraries in the everyday life of people in a convenient for them way of modern communication and information search. With the involvement of libraries in social networks, the institution steps into the circle of friends of each person, an invitation for more sincerity and trust.

Surveys on library websites

The publication of surveys for library users on the websites of libraries is a positive and modern step bringing libraries closer to the requirements of their users. Usually these are short survey forms that seek an evaluation of the convenience or usefulness of a particular service/s; examine the attitudes of users towards the communication skills of the employees providing the services; study the attitudes of users towards the library as a whole, etc. Unfortunately, the final and processed results of such surveys and their analyses are not publicly available.

Transforming such surveys into a permanent section of the websites, the brief clarification of the objectives of the survey, the kind encouragement of users to express their opinion – important for the library team, would gradually create habits in users to be more proactive, more candid. Awareness of their ability to influence, respectively, would increase the value of the results and the effectiveness of the surveys.

Professionally conducted sociological studies in the field of cultural industries and the spiritual sphere, of culture and education, of book publishing and reading, specialized research in the library sector can give valuable information for the analysis of the evolution of library users. We will highlight some examples of such partnership initiatives over the last decade.

Research on readers' practices in Bulgaria

In 2014, a research team, part of the research program of Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski" implemented the project "Readers' practices in Bulgaria 2014"⁴³.

⁴³ **Kyosev**, Aleksandar. *Chitatelski praktiki v Balgariya 2014*. Prezentatsiya. [viewed

The interdisciplinary study covers some new highlights compared to previous studies. Firstly, following the change in the scope and forms of reading in the modern world, and in order to achieve comparability with international studies, the questionnaire contains indicators for:

1. “Narrow concept of reading”, i.e. the classical understanding of reading, such as reading books and

2. “Broad concept of reading”, i.e. reading the entire possible set of reading materials (newspapers, brochures, screen reading, textbooks, announcements, advertisements, etc.).

Secondly, some new problematic areas have been included, such as “changes in the way of reading during the biographical path, the psychological experience of reading, motivations and paths leading to the book.”

The survey gives a detailed socio-demographic profile of the reading audience with extremely interesting observations, data and conclusions drawn.

The conclusions for the use of Bulgarian libraries are the following:

„In contrast to 2009, when the study [recorded] a rather low share (16%) in the use of local libraries, in 2014 a return of Bulgarians to them was observed. Nearly 22% indicated that they were attending a community library or other local libraries. Other types of libraries are used by a limited range of readers. Particularly alarming is the low share of reading in school/university libraries (3%). It is noticeable that the National Library benefits from a higher proportion of readers than the school and university libraries combined. This means that an elitist group of avid readers is being formed, but educational institutions do not include or require the reading of books as a compulsory part of their training. The group most frequently using libraries is the one of avid reads, highly educated, university graduates with children between 14 and 18 years of age.“

The interdisciplinary project provides very important information about the motivation to use libraries, which could define the guidelines for action of libraries to attract users, as well as to serve as a basis for the formation of durable policies of libraries for the benefit of people.

„A strong motivating factor for more frequent library attendance” is access to new books, despite the emergence in recent decades of the view that books are in decline. Based on this, it is quite logical to conclude that long-term neglect of libraries and serious problems with the systematic replenishment of their funds is a valid reason for the declining use.

„Easier access to books, availability of more information editions and renewal of the reading rooms are among the other factors identified by the survey for attracting readers to libraries. An increase in mass access of households to the Internet is reported, which pushes this reason to visit the library back. It remains valid for smaller settlements. The use of libraries remains within the focus of attention of “avid readers”.

The condition of state and municipal policies regarding education, including the role of the book and reading, are defined as worrying. It is found that there is no understanding, conceptual vision and prepared strategy for the development of these processes. To the contrary, institutional units dealing with these activities have been closed down.

An “imperfection” is found in the legislative basis which gives the regulations and outlines the framework of “activities related to publishing, library work, teaching.” There is a need for better communication between the guilds which provide the “infrastructure, market, public and institutional basis for reading”. There is no common strategy for action and development and this is a huge weakness.

Global Libraries-Bulgaria Foundation (FGBB)

Let us seek confirmation of the views expressed so far also in the

results of a national study, initiated by the foundation “Global Libraries-Bulgaria” (FGBB) in 2017: “State of public libraries through the eyes of municipal administrations”⁴⁴, presented also on the pages of the BLIA online magazine.

The surveys were sent to 256 municipalities and 150 of them replied – 57%. Almost half of the municipalities in Bulgaria are not represented. The opinion of the local authorities in those who took part in the survey on what should be the priority for libraries is as follows:

- “Reading, literacy, access to information and learning;
- Culture, creativity and preservation of cultural heritage;
- Development of the local community by being an integral part of it;
- E-inclusion of citizens;
- Social inclusion of vulnerable groups;
- Welfare of the local community;
- Communication – the library is a good physical space for communications. “

From the answers it can be concluded that the municipalities have an understanding of some of the basic needs of the people in the community that the library has to satisfy. But the reactions of the respondents to the question: “Should the municipality commit to ensuring access to quality library services for its residents or not?” are confusing and baffling:

- “63.3% – categorically” yes “;
- 31.3% – rather “yes”;
- 2.7% – rather “no”;
- 2.7% – I cannot decide. “

If libraries are part of the institutions led by the municipality, with a mission to care for the people in them, where does the ambiguity in the responses of municipalities with respect to libraries come from? Only lack of personal capacity, a remnant of the policies

⁴⁴ **FGBB.** Sastoyanie na obshtestvenite biblioteki prez pogleda na obshtinskite administratsii. V: *BLIA online*, 2017, №6, s. 10 – 18.

of neglecting libraries or something else? What? In my opinion, part of the explanation is the absence of a clear statement of the library's rightful place by the library itself, but also by its users – lack of a relationship.

This breaking of the links is even more visible in the answers to the next question: “Are libraries included in the Municipal Development plan (MDP)?”:

- “65.3% – yes;
- 25.3% – no;
- 9.3% – I don't know. “

The conclusions of the survey authors are the following: “In the plans there are set goals for the improvement of the functioning of libraries, not so much for their long-term sustainable development:

- Increase of the library fund (31.6%);
- Organization of local cultural festivals and events (22.4%);
- Validation of libraries as modern information and communication centres (18.4%);
- Expansion of hardware and software platforms, provision of Internet access (17.3%);
- Renovation and modernization of the material and technical base (13.3%).

The survey found that “in only 10% of the municipalities the required by art. 49, subart. 1 of the Public Libraries Act (ZB) Municipal Commission for the development of library and information services for citizens was actually created.”

And what part of the citizens know about this law and its provisions? Which relating to citizens as people who use libraries means: how many of the users know about the provision in the law that protects their interests?

More disturbing data: “Only 8.7% of municipalities (which took part in the survey!) have fulfilled both conditions at the same time (they have included libraries in the municipal plan for development and have created a commission)”, i.e. have established specific directions for development and have provided a body to help and control

this development. And what could be the expectations of the users from the rest of the municipalities – 91.3%?

The research covers major problems related to the development and functioning of public libraries. It examines the attitude of the municipal administration to the role of libraries, library legislation, the financing of libraries. The study is particularly interesting and indicative, although it covers only one type of libraries – public. Most of all, it manifests a sharp need for advocacy at the local level, which, along with a series of requirements for the municipalities to care for and support libraries, should insist on the implementation of the laws of the state and attract people to take an active stance.

The study presents as “a real measure of the place of libraries in municipalities the frequency of involvement of municipal administrations with library problems”. And if we trace the data, 25% of the municipalities (which took part in the survey) think about libraries less than once every six months, and 17% think that libraries have no problems. The analysis of the sociological agency points to the following trend: the smaller the population in the municipality, the less often the municipal administration thinks of the library. The explanation can be found more in the lack of sufficient capacity to work with libraries than in the lack of interest in their existence and functioning.

Similarly, the municipalities with the smallest population assure that “the libraries in their territory have no problems”. But, unfortunately, such a conclusion may mean that libraries are not a cause of concern for municipalities and have made peace with a certain situation, and not that their problems are solved and they are in a flourishing state. Another dependence is also observed: “The municipalities with more libraries (over 20) more often pay attention to their problems”. Apparently, in the context of an albeit weak competitive environment or at least the possibility for comparisons, libraries more often have reasons to “worry” municipalities with their problems.

In summary, it can be concluded that although local authorities perceive as their commitment the provision of access to quality library services for the population, only in a small number of municipi-

palities this commitment is expressed in clearly formulated policies and mechanisms for work. In most municipal development plans, there are set development objectives related to ensuring technically the provision of library services, rather than providing long-term sustainable development goals for the benefit of local communities.

Professional standards of conduct

Standardization of behavior is necessary to the extent that it needs to provide algorithms of behavior to users, valid for the entire library community at different levels. The variety of users requires flexible behavior from specialists, according to the specifics of the age groups, the educational qualification of people, the skills and abilities to work with sources of varying degrees of difficulty, and other individual and group characteristics of users.

Often, attitudes of the profession and of libraries are formed on the basis of negative user experiences in the library space, caused by inadequate and unprofessional behavior of employees. In many cases such events put people off from using libraries at all, because they transfer their impressions of the behavior of specific librarians onto the whole profession.

The international organization of the world library community – IFLA, regional organizations, and national associations can draw up clear rules for behaviour towards users, compliance with which would be required of all guild members. They can also follow unified principles and values, leading to more concrete implementation from the international organization to the specific library. Probably some colleagues would consider the accumulation of regulations as excessive and would object to detailed rules with the argument that there are plenty of documents with values, rules and norms for librarians. The practice, however, shows that this is not the case. Unfortunately, there are numerous examples in different in size and type libraries of manifested condescending attitude and non-professional reactions in the sphere of services. Students in the discipline also have similar experiences as users and this undermines their attitude towards the profession and their desire to practise it. Advocacy campaigns and

other good in their nature initiatives may not achieve their goals if they encounter people who have undergone negative personal experience in libraries. The effects and impact of conflict situations in the area of library use affect the attitudes towards the library and the library institutions in general. It is therefore necessary to establish an organisational culture and to promote professional behaviour, which can eliminate contradictions in their infancy and remove the triggers for the outbreak of conflict. Of course, in every organization, for one reason or another, conditions for conflict develop and this in the science of conflict is also seen as necessity for the development of the organization. But for the good image of the library, high professional standards of conduct and communication in the field of services have to be upheld as part of the organizational culture, and the ability to cope with conflicts should be a systematically demonstrated part of an efficient management style.

Conclusion

In a series of strategic documents of international organisations, national long-term plans, guidelines and manifests of IFLA, published over the last decade, there are tasks to create and enhance the digital culture of the population, the users of information products. A large part of the world cannot rely yet exclusively on technology in solving their daily information and knowledge needs. This means that libraries in which there is a need for qualified professionals, as an intermediary between technology and “non-digital” people or those with a lower level of digital culture, are still prevalent. There are currently no statistics (neither international nor national) which could help us form a more detailed picture of the ratio in question. But studies in this direction and with different scopes are becoming increasingly needed. They would have a direct impact on the efficiency and profitability of modern libraries. The results of such studies would give useful insights into the “possible use” of innovative products and services – available services, as well as guidelines for the design and creation of new ones with a high degree of usefulness. On the other hand,

they would help library organizations to get rid of commitments and services with low efficiency and benefit for the communities served.

The relationship between the daily needs of people for information, knowledge, communication, exchange of ideas, a social and inclusive environment, opportunities for employment, retraining, etc. and the functions of the modern library is increasingly clear. At the same time, the use of libraries in many countries, including Bulgaria, is insufficient, remains far below the expected minimum and does not fit into the inspired predictions and strategies of professional organizations and the library guild. Some of the reasons can be found in habits, in outdated stereotypes about the supply of library services and products, in inadequate and poor application of new technologies in library services. Poor advertising and lack of systematic promotion of libraries and their capabilities, the unprofessional behaviour of a large part of library staff and a number of other facts comprise a long list of reasons for the condition of libraries and the low status of the profession.

Effective is this service, which responds to an identified need and is offered in such a way that specific people served by a particular library can use it to actually satisfy daily information needs. The continuous development of the skills both of staff members and of users follows, catches up with or overtakes technological development and the renewal of services, and the action that is decisive determines the quality of the services and the vision of the library. The self-targeted implementation of unusable for the moment applications and technological solutions leads to delays or inability to deliver results. The reasons for such low usability may be different – from unprepared personnel/user to unnecessary complication of processes that have a simpler solution.

People are at the heart of the creation, operation and development of libraries. In their role as real and potential users they are a key factor in shaping policies and designing services in the library sector. Each component of strategic, predictive, regulatory and guidance documents in its final objectives seeks the satisfaction and assessment of users. The attention to users must be constant, aligned with the new

realities and their requirements, because they set the correct directions for the future of the library institution.

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THE VALUE OF THE LIBRARY IN THE MODERN DIMENSIONS OF THE INSTITUTION AND ITS PERSONNEL

People with good self-esteem give good results.

THE NEW ONE MINUTE MANAGER/Ken Blanchard, Spencer Johnson

Books and reading have a leading place in human civilization. Progress takes place thanks to the constant assimilation, application and development of knowledge, achieved by each successive generation and preserved in the documentary heritage stored in the library. This is its mission and main *value* in its millennial history. In the library and through the library, through reading, the relationship between generations through space and time is established. The library, in its capacity of a public phenomenon, is subject to the laws, driving forces and defining characteristics of public paradigms, which define models in its technological and organizational existence as a public information institution. The term “library” retains its nature and mission, but is enriched, broadened and complemented under the influence of the changing world of books, documents, information, the exchange of spiritual and intellectual values, the evolving consumption of tangible and intangible products. The establishment of the public utility of the institution – individual and general, depends on a number of factors, with the specialists in the library being a leading one. The quality of their work is at the heart of the proper fulfillment of the institution’s functions, tasks and real value.

The twenty-first century will be a time of “unexpected and unpredictable dynamics”. Researchers link their expectations of the development of labour relations with the consequences of the implementation of the “sixth technological wave”, carrying a number of ultra-new technologies – nanotechnologies, biotechnologies, socio-organizational technologies, space technologies, a new version of information technologies and others, through which mankind paves the way to the new post-industrial socio-technological platform. The patterns of labour relations are undergoing a fundamental change, which will continue to grow and cover all of their components. The interactions “man-organization” acquire new forms, and the relative share of the so-called “tasks for improvement” increase qualitatively compared to “current tasks.” In the theory of strategic human resource development, the importance of people, with their full characteristics as personalities and professionals, has a leading place in relation to the success of organizations. “The initiation and development of the creative potential of an organization’s collaborators, regardless of the way they are integrated in the organization, becomes key organizational capital.”⁴⁵

In the theories of human resource management after the 80s of the 20th century, the role of man in labour activities brings qualitatively different new assessments. In the spirit of defining people as the leading capital for each organization, linking the value of the library institution with the development of the personnel sounds modern. The rationalization of the mechanisms and directions of this relation form a research problem with theoretical significance and practical application. The dependence of the prospects of the modern library, in its current variety dominated by technologies, on the potential and training of specialists who make its effective presence in the digital world possible and real, is not studied sufficiently. The extent of this dependence is decisive in relation to the usefulness of the library, i.e. in

⁴⁵ **Stefanov**, Nako. Trudovi otnosheniya i upravlenie na “organizatsionniya chovek” – vzaimodeystviya, tendentsii i perspektivi. V: *Upravlenie na choveshkite resursi*. Sofiya, NBU, 2014, s. 52–53.

relation to its value. As regards the practical benefit, clarity about the relation would enable staff development to be directed in an appropriate direction (common for the sector and specific to each library) in order to work more effectively to increase the value of the library. It follows that the value of the library encoded in the objectives, rules and processes of its use requires a complex combination of principles, methods and forms of communication between users and librarians. In these processes, there are both algorithms that are applicable to a larger number of activities and services performed by the library, and also a sufficient amount of unique in their course situational relations of realization of their value.

In full implementation of its main functions, the library realizes **value/ in the broad sense of the term:**

Informational function – it assists in the search, application and development of information in solving real problems of persons and society.

Educational function – it supports users within the framework of formal and non-formal education and self-education.

Recreational function – it has a wide and varied role in the efficient organization of leisure time, reading for fun and pleasure.

Cultural function – The library has its place in the establishment of a cultural model, in the achievement of certain standards and levels in the common culture of generations within a certain social paradigm.

The value of the modern library is found in the achievement of a richer palette of goals, including:

- Establishing partnerships;
- Forming sustainable communities;
- Building a positive image;
- Participating in the development of individuals, groups and communities;
- Developing innovative services and others.

*The value*⁴⁶ of the library (*in a narrow sense*) can be defined as the degree of usefulness of the services of a particular library, sufficient to meet the information needs of its specific users. The relevant library services, provided operationally and on time in the most valuable for users manner is the formula for the **value** of each library.

And this is the position of Stefano Parise – Director of the Milan System of Public Libraries and Vice President of the European Bureau of Library Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA) since 2018:

„Libraries in Europe play an important role in the transition from a predominantly analogue world to a digital environment in which the ways of accessing and sharing information and knowledge have changed dramatically (and will change again and again).

Libraries are a powerful tool for balancing opportunities and reducing inequality. Librarians, especially the well-trained and skilled among them, can contribute to the removal of digital barriers by simply providing tools and expert assistance for reasonable access to the Internet and to build an understanding of the digital world by offering opportunities to improve digital skills.

Such is the unprecedented value of our libraries. It is a product of our daily work and represents our role in today’s society. EBLIDA stands by each one of you to safeguard and add value to European libraries.”⁴⁷

Modern library activities are dominated by the new information and communication activities. The change leads to different patterns of work, behavior and customer services, and presence and visibility of libraries. The virtual environment is becoming an increasingly active space for the realisation of library services. The types of libraries – electronic, virtual, hybrid, as well as traditional, with incorporated new means for the formation and provision of services, develop by

⁴⁶ **Popova**, Eli. *Potrebiteli i polzvane na bibliotekite*. Sofiya, Univ. izdat. 2019.

⁴⁷ **Parizo**, Stefano. *Bibliotekite svalyat digitalnite barieri*. V: *BBLA online*, 2019, N 1, s.7 – 10, s.10.

complementing, expanding and adapting the value of the traditional library to the needs of modern users.

In a more general context, in the focus of attention is the modern understanding of the place of the contemporary library among public information systems. It fills with new content the professional training and behavior of library specialists and, what is especially important, builds readiness and proactiveness with regard to the changes.

The library institution stands high in the value system of the educated elite in all periods of human history. The educated citizens of the nation introduce and establish its prosperity as a value based on the universal human values. Their majority determines high standards of behavior and motivation in the personal realization and recognition of moral and ethical norms in the public environment. Reading is among the values of this social class and their dominance guarantees high assessment of education and culture. Its elevation to a public and individual value suggests the affirmation of valuable patterns of behaviour and interaction, which is a guarantee of public health (in the sense of a healthy social environment) and national prosperity. In this sense, the value created and disseminated by libraries acquires an even higher societal significance.

Reading in the modern environment is subject to qualitatively different circumstances, conditions, available channels, forms and formats of communication. The everyday life of people is dominated by the constant exchange of messages, absorption and interpretation of a huge volume of information with varied content, value and form. The role of libraries in the development of modern reader models at the moment is marked by development and change, but retains its essence and importance. Good practices around the world that still validate the library institution as adaptable to the changing society, preserving its values as an educational, cultural and information center give reasons for such a conclusion. Every reader has unique characteristics based on his/her social affiliation, educational level, personality traits and reading culture. Reading plays a decisive role in the adaptation of a person to a particular socio-cultural environment.

It is part of the educational and self-educational mechanisms for the introduction of certain norms of behavior in the individual values and motives for participation in public life. At the same time, as a result of the adopted social norms and experience, the individual exerts influence on the environment in which his/ her life takes place. A number of researchers⁴⁸ confirm that reading can be seen through different perspectives – as a social phenomenon and individual practices. Polly Mukanova introduces the notion of an institutional reader, which binds it with the development of the library phenomenon. A number of works of researchers of reading and the history of the book present the resulting links and influences between reading and the library; readers' practices are analysed. In the library, reading is an individual process that takes place in a consciously organized environment for public use of books/respectively library documents, in which there is an intermediary between the documents and users – the librarian.

As intermediaries, library specialists should know modern users in their multifaceted characteristics – general, group and individual, in order to adequately guide their efforts towards meeting the audiences' requirements and expectations of the library institution. Moreover, in the diversity and dynamism of today's world, people look for challenges. Attracting their attention by a millennial institution is difficult. A number of barriers must be overcome – distrust and neglect, a negative opinion about libraries as obsolete institutions, as conservative and dying shadows belonging to the past. The battle for affirmation and respectable presence in the digital world is a daily effort, dedication, professional work and constant proving of themselves in competition with newer and newer competitors in the information market. Overcoming difficulties of a different nature – financial, organisational, technological, personnel, which have persisted for already two decades not only in Bulgaria, but also in other more and less developed countries, requires a radical change in the behavior of

⁴⁸ **Mukanova**, Poli. *Cheteneto i chitalite v balgarskoto obshteštvo (1878-1944)*: Institutsiyata biblioteka. Disertatsionen trud, 2013, s.13.

those involved in the sector. The library needs appeal, attractiveness and advertising, it needs highlighting what only this institution is able to provide to society today or, in competition with other entities, can offer with better quality. The precise finding of the niche, the responsible “cultivation” and wide announcement of unique value is part of solving the problems and securing the prospects. Said out loud and defended with honor, professionally and persistently, the values of the library institution will secure the institution’s place in policies, in public circles, especially among the intellectual elite, among the variety of users. They will change the attitude towards the library profession, will increase its reputation and social status, will attract young people to the profession, and this will be a sign of a future.

Building knowledge and skills for the successful implementation of appropriate techniques for gaining the attention of the modern world is a matter of training, creating professional skills, expanding the understanding of the frameworks of professional activities and responsibilities.

Every library activity undergoes a transformation, is filled with new processes or existing ones are implemented in a different ways – technologically and/or organizationally, new, different from the existing operations are established and new technical cycles within the framework of the activity are formed. These changes affect the value of the final result created by the relevant structure in the library and the quality of its products and services reaching users. In his book on library values M. Gorman⁴⁹ describes excellently the course of the changes through enrichment and innovations introduced in specific constituent processes of the main library activities. Here are some examples to illustrate what he says:

The sourcing and organization of resources in every specific library is focused on providing documents and sources of information tailored to the particular characteristics and thematic profile of the

⁴⁹ **Gorman**, Maykal. *Nashite neprehodni tsennošti*. Bibliotekite prez XXI vek. Prev. ot angl. ez. Aleksandra Dipchikova. Sofiya, Univ. izd.-vo “Sv. Kliment Okhridski”, 2006.

audiences being served. Studies of the demographic characteristics of the territory and the community, which the library is designated to provide with library services, targeted observations of potential users, and tracking the needs of the actual and active users of the library direct the acquisition of library documents to consistency of the available sources in and through the library (own and external) with the identified actual and potential needs of the community served, i.e. they create conditions for the generation of value. The provision of remote access to library resources is a commitment of the modern library, related to the opportunities that technologies create. It is associated with changes in the interactions and the co-operation among libraries. The use of external for the specific library resources and the provision of access to them for users is part of the modern value of library services in the technological world. In the context of the relationship among the activities, the efforts to procure more resources by the departments or divisions for sourcing and organization of funds create value and competitive advantage in the field of services. Library services which expand the capabilities of the specific library by providing temporary or permanent access to resources not owned by the library used by the user include inter-library loan (ILL), international inter-library loan (IILL), electronic delivery of documents, access to databases and web-based services. The purpose of these services is to meet more fully the needs expressed by users in user surveys carried out by/in the library in a convenient for users time. The library institution provides for users not only the values created by its structures, but also develops activities for the outsourcing and temporary supplementing of the value of the service to meet their knowledge and information needs, at a convenient for them time, place and conditions. This fills the value of the institution with a new meaning, it integrates it in the new dimensions of human activity.

The management and presentation of the resources (catalogues and database system) of the library documents with the help of national and international standards, along with all the tasks related to

the management and organisation of the documentary flow, of information and knowledge, is directed towards the provision of facilitated multilevel access for library users. Design and implementation of online systems with integrated access to many different resources, shared databases in a regional, national and international context are the new resource advantages and technology-dominated ways to expand and modernise the use of libraries, broaden access and design innovative services. In the context of this discussion, these processes form an important part of the value related to the operability and the conditions for access to data about sources of information and knowledge.

The library and information services is this part of the library space – physical and/or virtual, in which the path of the products and service elements created by the internal departments of the library crosses the path of users with their explicit and hidden information needs. In other words, physical or virtual, this space is the place to use the products and services created by the library organizations, i.e. the realization of their value. In this space the efficiency of the functioning of the institution is realised. The service sphere is the intersection of utility that is formed by the results of internal library processes and activities and the verification of their adequacy and applicability to the needs expressed by the external to the library environment. Therefore, the services sphere can be defined as an emanation of library efficiency, as the culmination of the library value, created by all participating components: organisational, technological and human resources.

These examples illustrate their connection with users and utilisation, their targeting of users' convenience.

The value of the library is measurable as a public and personal value by many parameters, one of which is the capabilities of its team to achieve the best possible implementation (usability) of its services and activities. The use of the library is an expression of its public value and carries different dimensions depending on the behaviour of team members, which affects the quality of work, and respectively,

the performed services. The common characteristic of the serviced community, the specifics of the region and the features of the location from an information availability perspective, define the niche for library services and determine the adequate library values. Identification of the needs and orientation of services towards these needs is the path towards presentation and realization of the library value, expressed in the most accurately planned, organized and formulated library services in response to properly formulated tasks and objectives of the specific library.

According to the library's characteristics, user groups are formed for which the library creates value and takes responsibility for fulfilling part of their needs. The differentiation of the users of each individual institution is based on the totality of its potential users. The different types of libraries are of different importance in the different periods of personal development and carry a specific value for the leading objectives for the respective period. The benefits of library products and services are realised to a full degree in the course of the entire human life. The value of library products and services is measured in two directions. The first one: with the correlation between their level of technological development and the level of technological preparedness of the user audiences. The second direction, with the library's ability to provide training to improve users' abilities to use the technologies available in the library.

The value of the library service is expressed in the timely, operational, competent and professional assistance in the selection of sources suitable to satisfy the needs of the user. But reaching this goal is the result of the team effort of all members of the library organization.

An important element of the value of the library is the possibility and the actual creation of an information culture in modern users by developing their abilities to select independently and evaluate the information sources they need, to handle skillfully new technologies and applications, in this way gaining confidence in the use of electronic sources of information. The formation of such skills corresponds to

European and national policies for increasing the competences of citizens needed for their full realization and improvement of their quality of life – an up-to-date value related to actual needs.

Comparing potential and actual user groups with their specific needs and the services that the library provides aims to achieve an actual degree of relevance and the identification of measures for its increase. This is the meaningful part of the value.

The establishment of effective services triggers and requires widespread communication and emphasis on the results achieved to attract new users, i.e. through the presentation, description and explanation of the values offered by the library.

The identification of groups of users whose needs the library is not yet ready to meet creates work for the development of new services if they are not satisfied by another institution or library in the region, i.e. supplementing or creating new value.

Public libraries, according to their characteristics, operating principles and values orient the value they create towards the whole community.

*IFLA guidelines for public libraries*⁵⁰ is an important guide for the work of public libraries in the new conditions. The examples of services created by public libraries in countries with diverse populations are a clear example of the contributions of libraries to community-building and the integration of people. The library environment becomes a suitable and sought-after place for communication among individuals and groups, representatives of different cultures, ethnicities and peoples. The guide offers rich information about the formation and enhancement of the value of the public library in the modern conditions.

In the field of education systems mainly two types of libraries function: university/academic and school. ***University libraries create their value for a particular community and within universities.***

⁵⁰ IFLA. *Nasoki na IFLA za obshtešvenite biblioteki*. 2011. IFLA Publications, 147. [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: http://www.lib.bg/prevodil/Nasoki_na_IFLA_za%20OB.pdf

University libraries, also called *academic or higher-educational*, operate within the framework of a larger organization – the university, and their main functions and tasks are complementary to those of the leading organisation, but carry their specific values for the successful functioning and development of the respective educational institution and for higher education in the educational system as a whole. The university is defined as an incubator for the educated elite of the nation, a place for the creation of highly qualified specialists in the fields covered by the university specialties. The teaching staff is involved in the formation of adequate for the learning process sources of knowledge and information, and the library necessarily includes the editions in its resources, i.e. the university actively creates part of the values in the library service. The value that the library service creates is added to the objectives of the learning process. Traditional functions and tasks are preserved and further developed and complemented by the innovative services based on information and communication technologies (ICT).

The history of universities and university libraries, by itself, is a vivid proof of the value of libraries. Scholars and professors, famous names in world history, representatives of prestigious universities repeatedly and eloquently define the library as the heart of the university, without which it could not exist.

The service in the school library is subject to the principles enshrined in the *IFLA/Unesco Manifesto for school libraries*.⁵¹ The international library organization – IFLA, also develops and periodically updates recommendations for this large library network, which has a symbolic role in promoting reading and integration of the generations into libraries. The manuals oriented towards serving audiences of children and young people, the so-called teenagers, incorporate the link between the children and middle school departments of public libraries and school libraries. Specialized publications of IFLA for pub-

⁵¹ **Doncheva**, Aneta. *Vidove biblioteki pri promyana na paradigmata na biblioteknata teoriya i praktika*. Sofiya, Nats. bibl. “Sv. sv. Kiril i Metodiy”, 2015.

lic⁵², children's⁵³ and school libraries⁵⁴ are dedicated to the principles and objectives, types of services, and tasks of libraries, their responsibilities and role for the development and future of generations. The new revised and supplemented edition for children's libraries, entitled *IFLA Guidelines for library services for young people*⁵⁵ points to an update of the activities and services dedicated to modern generations, to the needs of young people for information, literacy and reading in a different and new public environment. Discussions are still underway globally, models and key areas and solutions are being sought for the active and useful presence of libraries in the everyday life of young people.

These founding documents define the principles, functions and tasks of school libraries that determine the formation and performance of services. Users of these services are all members of the school community – students, teachers, parents, administration. Each user group has its interests as readers and users. But the school library meets as a priority those needs that are related to ensuring the growth and development of adolescents. The library is an integral part of the school space and is called upon to contribute to the effectiveness of learning activities, to the quality of the educational process. The extracurricular activities of students take place in the library, which prepares some

⁵² **IFLA.** *Nasoki na IFLA za obshteštenite biblioteki.* 2011. IFLA Publications, 147. [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: http://www.lib.bg/prevodi1/Nasoki_na_IFLA_za%20OB.pdf

⁵³ **IFLA.** *Guidelines for Children's Library Services.* [Online]. [viewed 31.07.2017] Available from: http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/libraries-for-children-and-ya/publications/guidelines-for-childrens-libraries-services_background-en.pdf

⁵⁴ **IFLA** *School Library Guidelines*, 2nd Rev. Ed., 2015 [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/school-libraries-resource-centers/publications/ifla-school-library-guidelines.pdf>; **IFLA/UNESCO.** *School Library Manifesto*, 1999 [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/publications/ifaunesco-school-library-manifesto-1999>

⁵⁵ **IFLA.** *Guidelines for Library Services for Young Adults* (Revised). [viewed on 31.07.2017] Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/publications/guidelines-for-library-services-for-young-adults--revised>

of the lessons and provides services supporting, deepening and broadening students' knowledge. The needs of teachers with respect to the subjects that they teach, but also in relation to modernizing teaching methods and the approaches and forms of presenting lessons, are also in the focus of the library. The group of parents expects from the school library services that develop their understanding of the needs of their children in the specific periods of growth and development. The psychological and pedagogical resources, as well as their proper presentation and offer, adequate to the needs and abilities of the user groups is part of developing the image of the school library, as well as a sign of quality library service.

The ethics of school library service concern communication with a diverse and sensitive audience, require knowledge of psychology and justification of the implementation of one or another approach in the promotion of services; pedagogical knowledge in the creation of services, suitable for the age groups of the students.

Libraries part of different institutions and scientific institutes can be defined as **special**. The user groups in them are characterized by a high degree of professional training in the field in which the leading organization operates. The value of library services is formed by meeting professional needs with a variety of traditional and electronic sources, the importance of which is determined by the specifics in the development of the respective field of activity. But the role of the library is particularly important in building the information culture of the user.

The cooperation in library services between university libraries and public and school libraries consists of finding the right directions to ensure continuity of service for changing generations in accordance with trends and changes in the requirements for social development.

The ethics of service in university libraries are subject to the principles and accepted rules in other types of libraries – public, school. The additional feature concerns the development of systematicity in the use of the information products of the library, knowledge and adequate use of library services, together with the formation of high

information culture, which is especially important for the realization of specialists and highly educated people in the modern technological society.

The standards in the field of library, information and archival activities are important in describing, monitoring and updating the public values of these institutions. The usefulness of the implementation of library services, of the creation and distribution of library-information products varies in value in the constantly changing environment. In case of a change in the paradigm caused by technological renovation of the material world, qualitative changes in the processes, relationships, requirements, expectations and measures occur in all areas. The library sphere is transformed in parallel with the changes in its main components: documentary flow, users, means, channels and processes of information exchange and communication. The measurement of library efficiency is based on new forms, content and formats. And in order to be properly structured, adequately supplied with sufficient resources, accurately and completely presented, and quantitatively and qualitatively reflected, the activity in the library sphere needs new standards created with modern philosophical interpretations of information management and conceptual solutions for expression and visibility of the values of the library in the modern world. With regard to the precise formulation of the ratio of standards to library value, we can say that it is precisely the documents governing the institution in all its manifestations and responsibilities that set out the possibilities for creating, achieving and measuring real and adequate values that are important and socially significant in a particular time period. The standards direct efforts, resources and management to the correct for a given period of development direction for the realization of value.

Communication is a fundamental need and value for the person, which within the library sphere bears the specificity of its functions and characteristics. (The two terms *interaction and communication* are equally used.) The forms of virtual communication – electronic mail, teleconferences, audio, videoconferencing, text messaging,

Skype, social networks are equivalent in importance, attention and value in the implementation of library communication. New forms and objectives of communication enter in the communication between libraries and users.

Library coordination and cooperation are active processes in the contemporary area of providing library services for the population. No library can provide a fully-fledged service to modern users on its own. Therefore, sharing resources, coordinating responsibilities and library values, access conditions and opportunities are priority activities in the library sector. They are implemented at different levels: international, national, regional and local, in view of the specificities in demographic, social, economic, educational, and other characteristics of communities.

Institutions in a wide public network – educational, cultural, voluntary and business organizations are involved in project initiatives aiming to create qualitatively new resources, addressing current and future information needs. Libraries are active contributors in similar initiatives where they carry the specific values of the library service, encoded also in

Principles of Behavior and the Environment in service of users:

Providing a supportive environment for users;

Respect for the personality of users, their readers' interests and information needs;

Professional ethics in the area of library services – appropriate clothing, professional behavior, adequate to the generally accepted ethical norms of aesthetic appearance;

Organization of the workplace of the librarian;

A differentiated approach to consumers.

A number of library services are implemented and made possible thanks to library volunteers. This is an additional value of the library – to create and unite communities, to build empathy with regard to the problems of others and to support those in need of assistance.

The personnel of the modern library is one of the main factors in shaping its effectiveness. Scientific works about the organizations

indicate that “human capital is at the heart of its development and is an indicator of its success”.⁵⁶ The library is seen not only as a modern organization, but also has the qualities of a learning organization. The modern library expands its functions with respect to information management and knowledge:

Collects and systemizes knowledge and information;

Creates knowledge and information – information products and services;

Disseminates knowledge and information;

Forms abilities and skills for search for and absorption of knowledge and information.

A number of researchers “analyze the changing status of knowledge as a production factor <... > and demonstrate its growing importance for the creation of value (Bradley, Stephen, 1998] Porter, M. E., 1980, 1990; Drucker, P., 1990).” Regarding the business sphere, “innovation and knowledge accumulation are outlined as the main pillars creating value for the company.”⁵⁷ But, if we compare the driving processes in the development of modern libraries, the rule goes beyond traditional economic entities and is projected onto other sectors of public activity involving the library institution.

In the context of the described understanding of some of the elements creating the value of the library, we should present the development of staff as a component in its formation. The specialists working in the library sector are responsible for the image of the institution in the public environment and for the reputation of the library as part of public information systems. They work for this purposefully, through their participation in specially organized and planned events and initiatives, but also on a daily basis, in every meeting with a library user, directly and indirectly through all elements created for users and means of access to the value of the library. This confirms the need for

⁵⁶ **Bancheva**, Elmira, Maria Ivanova. *Choveshki kapital i parametri na “ucheshkata organizatsia” – teorii, evropeysui praktiki i programi za obuchenie*. V: *Upravlenie na choveshkite resursi*. Sofiya, NBU, 2014, s. 175.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 180.

professional behaviour standards to ensure the optimal manifestation and realization of library value. Moreover, modern guidelines for staff management guide the analyses and develop a critical approach to behavior, not to the individual. Professional conduct requires compliance with the moral and ethical norms adopted by the public environment as a standard, and manifestation of high responsibility, following the principles of library service and, of course, development and application of high professional competence in the effort to meet the information needs of users. Part of the good image of the library, of the factors that build the trust of the user in the institution, is to be constantly well-informed – the broad social culture and modern professional knowledge of the employees. The ability to communicate with users, the presence of a series of necessary, visible and impactful personal qualities also plays an important role in the daily efforts for a good image of the library.

The library organization has an interest in attracting and retaining valuable people and good specialists at work and in providing them with professional and organizational comfort. Such care by the management would ensure a higher degree of service quality and better presentation of the organization. The opportunities that the library can offer to its employees, on one hand, and the individual plans and personal motivational profiles of the employees, on the other, must find a place in the communication system of the organization, to be adequately, in principle, and hence, effectively introduced into the information flows occurring in the library.

The strategic plans for the development of libraries are closely related to the staffing of the planned activities in order to achieve the objectives and targets. The distribution of responsibilities of the available staff contains several very important actions in relation to the assessment of the professional training and personal qualities of specialists. Modern human resource management develops its activities in close connection with and dependence on the development of staff. An essential part of the new requirements for the behavior of people in their work is related to building organizational culture and

adequate organizational behavior. The level of inclusion in the values and guiding principles of the organization is decisive in terms of the professional development and career advancement of employees.

The digital society is characterised by the intellectualization of activities. The mission and tasks of the libraries in today's society, defined as information, information-network, and knowledge society are aimed at a new generation of users and a new quality of information needs. The change in the societal paradigm is accompanied by a new paradigm for libraries, which leads to essential technological, organizational and personnel transformations. New activities and new professional competencies enter libraries and fill their image as public information institutions with new requirements and expectations. The new requirements apply to all categories responsible for the creation and resilience of the values that the library creates and offers: to employees, young professionals, students, newcomers, employees with professional experience, executives, and library management.

The library has the characteristics of a “learning organization” in a complete form. In essence, its functions are fully related to knowledge management and information. The strategic plans and tasks of the institution, the implementation of its transformations rely on constant upgrade and further development of the knowledge and skills of the personnel, responsible for implementing changes.

In the discussed components defining the value of the library, there is a need to upgrade, update and expand professional knowledge and skills. Or, as Michael Armstrong believes (1993), “learning fills the void between what a person can do and what they should be able to do”⁵⁸.

The programmes for staff development through various forms of training are undoubtedly one of the pillars of library management for creating and increasing the value of activities and services. The institution's governance itself is in a constant process of renewal

⁵⁸ **Bancheva**, Elmira, Maria Ivanova. Choveshki kapital i parametri na “ucheshkata organizatsia” – teorii, evropeysui praktiki i programi za obuchenie. V: *Upravlenie na choveshkite resursi*. Sofiya, NBU, 2014, s.180.

and alignment with modern management practices, of accepting and adapting to modern leadership concepts. The library in the digital age maintains its place as an active player in the arena of information and communication centers and networks by mastering niches in information and knowledge management systems.

Every institution has a future if it creates value for society, services and products that are distinguished by high quality and high consumption in the information (in this case) market. Successful market presence means participation with competitive products and services. In today's economic realities and the globalization of markets, with the powerful invasion of developed, high-tech institutions on the information market, the challenges are difficult to predict. And yet, for libraries the opportunity that is based on the human factor remains: "For the organization that has the culture and motivation to invest in people, to manage its knowledge and on the basis of these resources to seek a competitive advantage, it is essential that it can actively participate in the learning, growth and development of its employees."⁵⁹

The organization in modern social practices is a basic model for the realization of work activities, the workplace of the 21st century. The specifics of every modern and learning organization, such as the library, contain principles and values in the implementation of division of labor, the delegation of responsibilities, specializations, as part of the organization of resources for the achievement of its objectives, effective leadership and teamwork; the phenomenon group or team – an additional and different level of value creation; team coordination and communication, etc., etc. The degree of absorption and realization of these elements form the quality of the image of the organization and its functioning.

The formation of an organizational culture is an essential part of staff development. It is a "system of common actions, values and beliefs which develop and are shared in the organization and which the

⁵⁹ Ibid.

members of the organization use as a guide in their conduct.”⁶⁰ The development of shared values and goals directs towards the adoption, development and realization of the values of the institution. Achieving full “organizational comfort” is a prerequisite for the active participation of staff in “many areas of organizational life”. The management policy in this direction is “the achievement of a higher level of self-governance and self-control, which would enable every member of the staff to take independently the correct decisions regarding the performance of his/her tasks. This predicts growth in the hierarchy for those who, on the basis of the expanded opportunities for participation in the life of the organization improve the results of their work. They are given additional opportunities for expression by delegating additional rights, but also responsibilities, which constitutes an element of the organizational culture.”⁶¹

Embracing the objectives of the library institution, the proper understanding and dedication to the values it brings, is one of the main tasks of human resources management policies and strategies. The development of a sustainable organizational culture is at the heart of the development of a motivated, actively working team of professionals. Because the value of the library depends on the attitude of the personnel towards the objectives and prestige of the institution. And as H. Hofstede says, “culture is somewhat like the color of your eyes: you can’t change it or hide it, and even though you can’t see it, it’s always visible to other people when you interact with them.”⁶² The good performance of work obligations is a function of the availability of organizational culture of the employees. In other words, accepting the common objectives of the organization, respectively of the library,

⁶⁰ **Panaiyotov**, Dmitar. *Organizatsionno povedenie. Novite paradigmi za choveshko razvitie*. Sofiya, NBU, 2013, s. 278..

⁶¹ **Radev**, Kiril. *Organizatsionno razvitie i optimizirane na choveshkiya faktor (tehniki i strategii za vliyanie)*. V: *Upravlenie na choveshkite resursi*. Sofiya, NBU, 2014, s. 374..

⁶² **Panaiyotov**, Dmitar. *Organizatsionno povedenie. Novite paradigmi za choveshko razvitie*. Sofiya, NBU, 2013, s. 55.

is a precondition for the development, application and enhancement of professional and personal qualities in its favor.

The professional development of employees is dominated by their responsibilities for achieving the goals of the organization. And they are related to the realization of value for the communities. Assuming that “training aims to enrich the knowledge, skills and attitudes of working people in order to improve work performance within the scope of the positions and the organisation as a whole,”⁶³ then the whole team of the library is included in the program for the development of personnel through various in their form, degree and expected results trainings related to the specific positions and their relation to the development of specific value for the library.

The role of the staff involved in the implementation of library activities can be defined in several directions: professionalism, attitudes and learning abilities, and personal qualities. The proper distribution of employees in the structural units, the assignment of tasks corresponding to their training and capabilities, objective assessment of their work participation and presentation are the mechanisms of the library management for the extraction of the best qualities of the team and the realization of the best execution of the activities.

The career growth of the employees in the library, based on their participation and contribution to the creation of the value of the specific institution is an uncontested incentive and mechanism for retaining people with potential and opportunities. Their sense of satisfaction with the recognition, with the demonstrated respect and the presence of prospects guarantee good motivation in the work performance and ambition for high performance and loyalty to the institution.

In this context, attracting talent brings a potential advantage for the institution and opportunities for the creation of specific value that is difficult to achieve by institutions with similar activities. Retaining

⁶³ **Bancheva**, Elmira, Maria Ivanova. Choveshki kapital i parametri na “ucheshkata organizatsia” – teorii, evropeysui praktiki i programi za obuchenie. V: *Upravlenie na choveshkite resursi*. Sofiya, NBU, 2014, s. 180.

talent is an effort that requires the members of the management team to have certain qualities and attitudes.

The creation of value for society and people on the part of the library institution is a dynamic process, which is increasingly influenced and determined by modern postulates in the development of human resources and organizational theories – organizational behavior, organizational culture, theory of organization. The involvement of the individual in the work process is related to bilateral requirements: to his/her professional training and personal qualities, on one hand, but also to his/her needs for professional expression and career in the organization, on the other. This makes the institution depended on the attitude, willingness and ability of employees to participate fully or not (i.e. only formally or obligatorily) in value-creating processes and activities. The deliberate development of personal potential for the benefit of the organization, respectively of the library institution, can be a result of healthy motivation, stable organizational culture, high and modern professional training. The personal qualities of the members of the team are also important. They can be in themselves a value for the institution in the eyes of the public, when they are well-known by the management and properly directed for a positive image and the reputation of the library. In the spirit of modern human factor assessments, in conclusion we can summarize that people are the biggest, most specific and unique value of the modern library.

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THE LIBRARY – A SPACE FOR COMMUNICATION BETWEEN PEOPLE AND CULTURES

*People who cannot understand each other
cannot exchange ideas, cannot communicate...*

Neil Gaiman

Introduction

The dynamic development of the information and network society (INS) imposes models of life and work that differ from the existing ones. In the processes for finding the right solutions in a world without borders, where the management of powerful migration flows and the integration of people in developed societies undermine perceptions of the success of their sustainability, the strategies and realities of the ongoing dialogue among people, communities and cultures has a critical place. The library does not exist separately and independently from society. It is a sensitive organism, which reflects every movement and change of the public space. In the entangled web of problems of modernity, the library institution seeks its niche for effective intervention, for proving its abilities, for building public trust in a world torn by contradictions, tensions, divisions and crises; in a time of wide-ranging technological transformations.

Defined as an institution of memory, as an educational, information and cultural centre for the dissemination of information and knowledge, the library is invariably present, recognised and respect-

ed, to varying degrees, by the governing levels as a factor for influencing societal processes, relationships, and the dynamics and directions of development. If we observe closely the reflections of the changes, turmoil, decisive and daily events in human history on the existence, development and presence of libraries, correlations and strong resonance are clearly distinguishable.

The modern library is defined as a contemporary institution with possibilities for influence over the culture and thinking of people, with an active place in the formation of their value system and their attitude to today's problems, integration processes and multicultural dialogue.

Current examples of the role of libraries as a mediator and factor in solving acute social problems in recent years are their services and partnerships in activities for the successful realisation of interpersonal and intercultural dialogue, for the integration of immigrants and minorities.

Prominent representatives of the international library community consider the changing image of libraries in the 21st century.⁶⁴ Michael Gorman presents the expanding functions of the library through the prism of its "intransitive values". His monograph has fundamental messages for the professional community, its role in the changing world and its responsibility for the library institution to fulfil effectively its role in the name of human values and the "human dimension" of every professional activity. The whole narrative is imbued with the thinking and high professionalism of a well-intentioned person, who defends the power of the library to unite people, build communities, create a better world of cultural dialogue and understanding.

The topic of the active involvement of the library institution in today's problems, as well as in the processes determining the future of the world, is not new to the professional community. As to the issue of establishing or lack of dialogue in the context of the crises in the

⁶⁴ **Gorman**, Maykal. *Nashite neprehodni tsennošti*. Bibliotekite prez XXI vek. Prev. ot angl. ez. Aleksandra Dipchikova. Sofiya, Univ. izd.-vo "Sv. Kliment Okhridski", 2006.

beginning of the 21st century, of their political, economic and social dimensions, the article of Alexander Dimchev – “The great movement of peoples. An attempt for reflection and influence”⁶⁵ – contains rich factual materials, human sensitivity and empathy, and a civic position. Commenting on the migration processes from the period after the Second World War and the last refugee wave, supported by factual research and analysis of modern political scientists and sociologists, the author searches for the place of libraries “which have proven their role in such moments.” Regardless of the humanitarian and democratic principles upheld by the international community in the face of the established organisations, including in the library and information field, the world remains divided “into rich and poor in terms of information resources and technology states “ (p. 19). Dimchev defines libraries as an “oases of knowledge and humanism (in relation to the different groups of people)”. Affirming the social role of the institution, confirmed by studies conducted in different parts of the world, the author summarised: “Their audience consists of every single one of us – the average person – the most important part of society – young people without significant income, students, poor people, outcasts, outsiders, minority groups...” (p. 21). In the conclusion of this article Dimchev lists several “basic tasks for our civilization,” which firmly place the library institution among the organisations with the opportunity to influence the success of “overcoming the prejudice in different groups of the population, staring intently at each other; and to help overcome technological inequality”, and other challenges, focused on “participating in the support and adaptation of migrants and reassuring people in relation to the so-called “great movement”” (p. 23).

Experts of other aspects of humanism, upon their contact with libraries, realise their abilities to influence problems of a different na-

⁶⁵ Dimchev, Aleksandar. “Velikoto preselenie na narodite”: Opit za razmislal i za vnushenie. V: *Dinamichni biblioteki – dostap, razvitie, promyana*. Dokladi ot XXVI-ta Natsionalna konferentsiya na BBIA, Sofiya, 9 – 10 juni 2016 g. Sofiya, BBIA, 2016, s. 15 – 24.

ture. Focusing on the target group of “socially marginalised people”, a challenge for the whole society, the sociologist Lyuba Devetakova asks the pertinent question: “If the public library is a public space accessible to everybody, where is the limit of patience and how moral is it to expel those people, for whom the only avenue for social activity is the library? It is obvious that, to a large extent, the problems creating such situations are beyond libraries and that the professional community needs additional support, but it is also important not to overlook the fact that the library, after all, has a socialising role for such types of users, to the extent that they see in it as an accessible place for social contacts.”⁶⁶

Entering into the complex field of modern social inequalities, tensions and divisions of people, Devetakova quotes Bouman, who offered a “possible solution,” captured “in the words of Pope Francis for the promotion of a culture of dialogue through education” and underlining the following: “Setting as an objective of education the creation of a culture of dialogue... unequivocally suggests that the problems that we face now will be with us for quite some time...” This strongly supported by the author position helps to understand and “outlines the possibility for modern libraries to occupy a very important place as educational institutions promoting this cultural dialogue.” The article places the emphasis on public libraries defined in international standards and normative documents as “a publicly available library that is open to the public and which serves the whole population” (ISO 2789:2015[International Library Statistics]).⁶⁷

Documents of the world organisation responsible for safeguarding peace and cooperation among people – the United Nations (UN), are at the heart of the principles and values that libraries uphold, protect and promote. A leading document, which I mentioned in another

⁶⁶ **Devetakova**, Lyuba. Sotsialnata rolya na savremennite obshtestveni biblioteki v globaliziraniya svyat. V: *Bibliotekite – natsionalna identichnost i mnogoobrazie*. Dokladi ot XXVII-ta Natsionalna konferentsiya na BBIA Sofiya, 8 – 9 yuni, 2017, s. 40 – 44, s. 42.

⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 41.

one of my lectures, is the Universal Declaration of Human Rights adopted on 10 December 1948⁶⁸.

The fundamental human right of access to information is enshrined in a number of essential documents of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) – “the largest, most exciting and unique think-tank of the library community”⁶⁹, which sets the targets and provides the recommendations and priorities for the development of libraries around the world. The 82nd World Congress of IFLA, held in the period between 13 and 18 August 2016 under the slogan “Relations, cooperation and communities” in Columbus, Ohio, USA has a direct relation to today’s problems. At the same time both a congress and a conference, the world forum offers a rich programme with a total of 228 events organised by the 44 sections of IFLA. Among the most widely discussed topics, after the concept of the “third place,” (the concept of the library as the “third place” after the home and work), adapting libraries to their new role, promoting reading and many others, follow the services for immigrants and refugees⁷⁰.

The world library community is always engaged with the problems and trends in public development. This is also confirmed by it joining Agenda 2030 “Transforming Our World,” adopted by UN Member States in September 2015. In a previous lecture I already mentioned this document and the involvement of libraries in the implementation of the agenda of the world organisation. All sustainable development goals have a direct or indirect relation to the progress of dialogue among the different communities in and through libraries. Here are some illustrative examples in support of what has been said,

⁶⁸ UN. *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. [Viewed 31.07.2017]. Available from: <http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/index.html>

⁶⁹ Popova, Anna. Nay-golemiyat, nay-valnuvasht i nesravnim mozachen trašt na bibliotechnata obshtnošt („Vrazki, satrudnichestvo i obshtnosti” – 82-ri kongres na IFLA, 13 – 18 avgust 2016 g., Kalambas, Okhayo, SASHT). V: *BBLA* online, 2016, №5, s. 23 – 27.

⁷⁰ Ibid.

taken from the brochure of IFLA – one of the documents prepared in support of the inclusion of libraries in Agenda 2030:

„Goal 1. End poverty in all its forms everywhere

By providing access to information and skills, libraries empower people to improve their lives and help governments, communities and other stakeholders and organisations to make informed decisions in the provision of services and support for the reduction of poverty and the improvement of people’s wellbeing everywhere.”⁷¹

- Libraries support the implementation of this objective through activities and services at several levels:
- Libraries provide information and resources that help people improve the quality of their lives. Depending on the specific needs, the users of libraries solve everyday problems or priority needs for the respective stage of their development.
- Libraries carry out trainings for acquiring new skills and key competences to help users with their educational needs and with succeeding in the search for a job.
- Libraries realise their effectiveness also on a political level: they support the process of combatting poverty by providing information; they support the decision-making process of governments and businesses in this area; they promote the development of a civil society and its efforts to tackle poverty.⁷²

The examples listed in the prepared by IFLA brochure in support of libraries are selected from the rich information and data that the organisation holds in support of its opinions. In the present case, they refer to: the city library of Ljubljana in relation to the information service of the library for job search, which has helped 1200 citizens to find a job (for homeless people and people on social benefits) (<http://eng.mklj.si/index.php/special-services/item/1140-the-employment-information-service>);

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² **Libraries can drive progress across the entire UN 2030 Agenda.** [viewed 31.07.2017]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/sdgs-insert.pdf>, p. 1.

E-library in Sri Lanka: a government-funded initiative for the increase in digital literacy and access to technologies for the poorest and those living in remote areas (<http://www.gatesfoundation.org/What-We-Do/Global-Development/Global-Libraries/Access-to-Learning-Award-ATLA>).⁷³

„Goal 4. Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

„In countries around the world, libraries have an important place in the work of schools, universities and colleges. Libraries support literacy programmes, provide a safe place to learn and provide researchers with the opportunity to use research and data to create new knowledge.”⁷⁴

IFLA determines directions for real support by libraries. Together with the more general and very important responsibility to provide public access to information and resources through which people can improve their quality of life, the efforts of specialised personnel are also focused on supporting competently and professionally early literacy and lifelong learning (HRM); students are provided with access to the necessary information and surveys from everywhere. Libraries unfold as “inclusive spaces,” where all interested people can gain access to “new knowledge and skills” without financial barriers.⁷⁵

One of the provided examples is from the City Library in Malmö, Sweden, which works to overcome the digital divide and promote social inclusion and sustainability. The library’s learning center offers “First Steps” courses, where digitally inexperienced people are learning to use the Internet. The library is visited by many immigrants, especially minors without accompanying adults, who improve their

⁷³ **Dostap i vazmozhnosti za vsichki.** Kak bibliotekite doprinasyat za izpalnenieto na Programa 2030 na OON. [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: <http://www.lib.bg/kampanii/1/nbs2017/access-and-opportunity-for-all-Bulgarian.pdf>

⁷⁴ Ibid., c. 8.

⁷⁵ **Libraries can drive progress across the entire UN 2030 Agenda.** [viewed 31.07.2017]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/sdgs-insert.pdf>, p. 1.

literacy and find support in preparing their homework (<http://malmo.se/larcentrum>)⁷⁶.

„Goal 8. Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Public access to information and communication technology (ICT) and training in libraries allows people to apply for jobs. Trained library staff help everyone with the online submission of documents, writing materials in support of applications and finding suitable work.”⁷⁷

The role of the library in achieving this goal is essential and already in many countries there are good practices. Libraries provide support not only through access to information, but also through training in the necessary skills to search and apply for jobs, and guidance in relation to new and better professions and retraining⁷⁸.

The example here is from the EU. “In EU countries, every year 250 000 citizens find jobs through public libraries. Public access to ICT and skills acquired in libraries help people to look for work by applying online” (<http://www.publiclibraries2020.eu/content/see-numbers>)⁷⁹.

„Goal 10. Reduce inequality within and among countries

Equality in access to information, freedom of expression, freedom of association and assembly, as well as privacy are at the heart of an individual’s independence. Libraries help to reduce inequalities by

⁷⁶ **Dostap i vazmozhnosti za vsichki.** Kak bibliotekite doprinasyat za izpalnienieto na Programa 2030 na OON. [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: <http://www.lib.bg/kampanii1/nbs2017/access-and-opportunity-for-all-Bulgarian.pdf>, c. 8.

⁷⁷ Ibid., p. 11.

⁷⁸ **Libraries can drive progress across the entire UN 2030 Agenda.** [viewed 31.07.2017]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/sdgs-insert.pdf>, p. 1

⁷⁹ **Access and Opportunity for All. How libraries contribute to the United Nations 2030 Agenda.** [viewed 31.07.2017]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/access-and-opportunity-for-all.pdf>, p. 11

providing safe places for meetings and events accessible to all people in urban and rural areas around the world.”⁸⁰

In providing real support for achieving this goal, libraries enter the field of social, political and economic inclusion in the name of the big challenge to achieve equal access to information. They create spaces – “neutral and attractive,” which provide access to learning opportunities for all, “including for marginalised groups such as migrants, refugees, minorities, indigenous peoples and people with disabilities.”⁸¹

The examples represent the international experience. “Libraries without borders” provide access to information and resources for refugee camps through “Boxes for Ideas.” People receive information via satellite internet connections and can use books. The “Boxes” are partly sponsored by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (<http://www.ideas-box.org>)⁸².

The world library organization – IFLA, creates founding documents that define the priorities of libraries according to the needs of the public and the progress of mankind. The priorities in specific periods are synchronised with emerging tendencies, challenges and difficulties. The manifestos of the organisation constitute a platform for the realisation of the social function of the library institution and a broad basis of principles for its approach to public dialogue. The endorsement of these documents by countries creates prerequisites for a change in national policies and professional standards in the name of achieving the set objectives and solving problems of high societal importance.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 13.

⁸¹ **Libraries can drive progress across the entire UN 2030 Agenda.** [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/sdgs-insert.pdf>, p. 1

⁸² **Access and Opportunity for All. How libraries contribute to the United Nations 2030 Agenda.** [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/topics/libraries-development/documents/access-and-opportunity-for-all.pdf>, s. 13

Public libraries are usually the widest library networks, through which the library is the closest to users and their needs. International documents directed to such infrastructure are indicative of the values of the institution, upheld and put forward in every programme, initiative and objective.

IFLA/UNESCO PUBLIC LIBRARY MANIFESTO, 1994

It highlights that “[T]he public library, the gateway to knowledge (locally), provides conditions for continuous learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of individuals and social groups. This manifesto declares the faith of UNESCO in the public library as a life blood for education, culture and information and as an essential factor in strengthening the peace and spiritual wellbeing of people.”⁸³This fundamental to their functioning document outlines main objectives, activities and services through which public libraries must provide equal and broad access to information. The manifesto provides guidelines and encourages the application of high standards in library services. In support of human values, the document declares: “freedom, prosperity and the development of society and the individual are basic human values. They will be achieved only by well-informed people and by their ability to exercise their democratic rights and play an active role in society. The constructive participation and development of society depend on good education, as well as on free and unrestricted access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

The document is dynamic. In view of the changes that have occurred at the beginning of the 21st century, the Public Libraries section

⁸³ **IFLA/UNESCO.** *Public Library Manifesto*, 1994. [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: <https://archive.ifla.org/VII/s8/unesco/eng> **IFLA.** *Nasoki na IFLA za obshteshtvenite biblioteki*. 2010. IFLA Publications, 147. [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: http://www.lib.bg/prevodi1/Nasoki_na_IFLA_za%20OB.pdf, p. 117; <https://www.ifla.org/files/assets/hq/publications/series/147-bg.pdf>

of IFLA published several additions to the Manifesto for updating services with the use of new technologies⁸⁴.

IFLA guidelines for public libraries is an extremely important manual for the work of public libraries in the new conditions. The examples of services that it provides, created by public libraries in countries with diverse populations, are particularly indicative of the contribution of libraries to community cohesion and the integration of people. They demonstrate the capacity of the library environment to become a suitable and sought-after place for communication between individuals and groups, representatives of different cultures, ethnicities and peoples. The guidelines state that public libraries “exist everywhere in the world.” In different parts of the world they function in a different social structure, in different cultures, which suggests different levels of development. These diverse conditions in which libraries perform their mission “inevitably create differences in the services offered and in the way they are provided.” But the manual is not designed to build walls and draw boundaries. To the contrary, it is intended to unite the library world, to look for the general objectives and characteristics which it formulates as follows: “the public library is the organisation, which is created, supported and financed by society through regional or national authorities or through some other form of public organisation. It provides access to knowledge, information, lifelong learning and creative works through a variety of resources and services and is generally available to all members of the public regardless of their race, nationality, age, gender, religion, language, special needs, economic or work status and educational level.”⁸⁵ The specification of functions and activities follow the principles of considering every member or group: “the contribution of the library must reflect the diversity of cultures represented in the community. It must provide materials in the languages spoken and read in the local community and maintain cultural traditions. The libraries should strive

⁸⁴ Ibid.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p. 119 – 121.

to hire staff who speak the languages of the communities served.”⁸⁶ Among the rich set of examples of good practices, particular attention deserve those from countries with multicultural populations and migrant and minority communities.

The organisation develops and updates regularly such manuals also for other types of libraries, particularly useful for the numerous links to good practices in countries around the world.

IFLA/UNESCO MANIFESTO FOR DIGITAL LIBRARIES⁸⁷

The leading message in the document focuses on “[O]vercoming the digital divide: let’s make the world cultural and scientific heritage accessible to all”.⁸⁸ The document assesses the “digital divide” in the modern world equivalent to the “information divide”.

As in other strategic documents, this manifesto is also looking for what brings people together. In the world of digital technology, “overcoming the digital divide” is defined as “a key factor in achieving the objectives set out in the United Nations Millennium Declaration.” The opportunities for free access to information resources and means of communication are considered important supporting factors in improving the quality of life of people, they are assessed as an effective means of good education, of achieving public health levels corresponding to the level of modern development; as a catalyst of cultural and economic development. The equitable distribution of information means a real opportunity for citizens from all social groups to participate in the learning and education processes throughout their lives. Particularly important in relation to the subject in question is the link between personal development and the social environment, which the manifesto affirms. The library space is saturated with multi-layered participation and correlation effects on public development.

⁸⁶ Ibid., 8.

⁸⁷ **IFLA/UNESCO.** *Manifesto for Digital Libraries*, 2010. [viewed on 28. 04.2017]. Available from: <http://www.ifla.org/publications/iflaunesco-manifesto-for-digital-libraries>).

⁸⁸ Ibid.

The provision of free access to information on world achievements for self-education and obtaining universal knowledge turns the library into a unique place for dialogue through time and space. The available potential in each person develops in the created by the library fertile environment and, through the constructive participation of the individual “in the development of his own social environment,” achieves advancement of the community as a whole. In accordance with human rights documents, the manifesto states: “Equal access to the cultural and scientific heritage of mankind is the right of every person and helps to promote learning and understand the richness and diversity of the world not only for today, but also for the next generations.” In its millennial history, as noted earlier, libraries disseminate and uphold universal human values and the principles of humanism, peace and understanding among people and cultures. They are invariably ambassadors of good in all periods, crossroads and crises through which mankind passes. Following its essential mission and characteristics in the new era, the library community notes in one of its manifestos: “Now libraries work in a digital format and their digital services open a new channel to the world of knowledge and information, linking cultures beyond geographical and social boundaries.”

European documents

I have also already talked about the fact that in European policies libraries have a key role to play in lifelong learning, where their possibilities are infinite and where there is no other such institution with real opportunities for a consistent, adequate and real impact on the growth of individuals and their intellectual, spiritual and behavioural development.

Prominent European intellectuals are part of the so-called “Comité des sages”.⁸⁹ They draw up a report that outlines prospects for

⁸⁹ **European Commission.** *Digital Agenda: “Comité des Sages” calls for a “New Renaissance” by bringing Europe’s cultural heritage online.* [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-11-17_en.htm ; **European Commission.** *Boosting cultural heritage online: the European Commission sets up a Reflection Group on digitization.* [viewed on 31.07.2017].

a future digital Europe. This important document puts forward recommendations for accelerating digitalisation, presents priorities for the integration of technological developments into the European scientific, cultural, educational and information space. The rapid and effective introduction of digital products in the field of information industries and tourism is linked to improvements in the quality of life of European citizens. Expanding the opportunities for access to the digitised cultural heritage of Europe and the world is seen in the framework of a mutually beneficial cooperation between copyright creators and owners on one hand, and the millions of consumers from Europe and the world on the other.

A core component of the Europe 2020 Strategy is the Programme in the field of digital technology in Europe⁹⁰. Not surprisingly, it is considered to be a key activity for digital Europe. The programme sets the framework for digitalisation and the preservation of the European cultural heritage, and stimulates the acceleration of the process.

The last decades have been a period of active establishment of digital libraries and provision of wide access to digitised objects from the collections of the European institutions of memory. Valuable documents and artifacts stored in libraries, museums, archives and other organisations and institutions with similar features and functionalities are transformed into digital formats and become available to a wide range of users. Digital portals build new bridges between cultures, erasing geographical boundaries and social and economic differences between people. These opportunities create preconditions for becoming familiar with each other, for gaining insights into the culture of others, lead to opportunities for goodwill, understanding and dialogue. The Digital Gateway Europeana brings together the resources

Available from: http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_IP-10-456_en.htm; **Digital Agenda**: Commission outlines action plan to boost Europe's prosperity and well-being. [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: http://ec.europa.eu/information_society/newsroom/cf/itemdetail.cfm?item_id=5826

⁹⁰**European Commission.** *Europe 2020 Strategy*. [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/europe-2020-strategy>.

of libraries, archives and museums from the Old Continent and plays a leading role in preserving the European cultural heritage and its online representation. Europeana is an accessible testament to the rich past of European peoples, but also an opportunity to build modern connections among the populations of European countries, it is the way for European citizens to each other, it is a powerful tool for intercultural dialogue among people, groups, communities through time and space, in the effort to overcome visible and invisible boundaries.

The digitalisation of cultural heritage in the European and in a global context enters the field of intercultural dialogue with a powerful positive charge. Getting to know the culture of others: of the neighbor, the opponent, the friend, the stranger, affects the flow and direction of emotions and attitudes. The contact with the cultural heritage is a path from history, through the present to the common future, in which a number of differences and contradictions find an explanation, and why not a solution.

In the dynamics of modern social development, the picture changes very quickly, unresolved problems overlap with the next wave of challenges. On the agenda, as a particularly important point remains the problem of digital inequality and the efforts of politicians, authorities and experts to seek a solution to the consequences of this division. The future development of the world and Europe requires the integration of all social groups into the technological model of work and life. The development of key competences and information literacy in the population is embedded in the policies of European institutions and governments of Member States for a reason. Today, inequality and the deepening of any division is a precondition for stopping progress and society's development. Technologies have become a qualitative step forward towards effective communication between citizens and the government. Mastering skills and abilities to use technological means and applications is a precondition for one's realisation and quality of life, including being part of the relations with the local and central administration in the context of electronic government.

In a number of publications, participation in the inclusion of

the population and in the successful realization of e-government is viewed as a niche for libraries. Additional factors influencing the so-called “electronic/digital exclusion” (e-exclusion) are the ageing population, minority groups, low social status, lack of internet access, etc. In this way, public libraries are one of the possible solutions to these identified problems⁹¹.

GOOD PRACTICES

The Netherlands

It is interesting to follow the e-Government platform in the Netherlands – a country with experience in working with immigrant flows and groups, which successfully integrates them into society, including with the help of the public library. The common framework for using the library shows interesting comparisons. One third of the country’s population – about 6 million people, regularly use the library. Four million of them, as regular visitors, have readers’ cards, and 2.2 million of them are 18 years old or younger. Every year the public libraries in the Netherlands have about 100 million visits: 70 million are on-site visits and 30 million are online visits, which are growing quickly. The numbers indicate that the library is an important institution for Dutch citizens. The www.oefenen.nl portal is used by various users of the libraries: immigrants, illiterate and Dutch people with low literacy level, but also by the digitally illiterate Dutch citizens and immigrants, thanks to the variety of topics with exercises available on the website⁹².

⁹¹ **Lozanova-Belcheva**, Elitsa. Vavezhdane na kursove po elektronno pravitelstvo v obuchenieto na bibliotechno-informatsionnite spetsialisti. V: *Godishnik na Sofiyskiya universitet “Sv. Kliment Okhridski”, Filosofski fakultet, Kniga Bibliotechno-informatsionni nauki*, 5, 2013, s. 86 [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: https://research.uni-sofia.bg/handle/10506/1092_2

⁹² **Lozanova-Belcheva**, Elitsa, Dimitar Ruskov. Obshtestvenite biblioteki i tyahnata posrednicheska rolya v elektronnoto pravitelstvo – dobri praktiki ot Balmariya i Holandiya. Doklad na mezhdunarodna videokonferentsiya “Komunikatsionni vazmozhnosit na modernite muzei, biblioteki i arhivi. Sofiya-Orel, 16-17

The public library of Amsterdam is constantly developing services to “help immigrants and Dutch citizens <...> who have problems with reading, writing, calculating and basic computer capabilities.” About 10 000 Amsterdam citizens are given free library cards in order to motivate them to come to the public library of Amsterdam to take advantage of the valuable information, especially on the site www.oe-fenen.nl. Employment agencies in the Netherlands are partners with local libraries in providing assistance for finding work, particularly with writing cover letters and CVs. Libraries are an effective institution in helping citizens to improve their computing capabilities so that they can use the services of e-government⁹³.

Libraries in the Netherlands have extensive experience with cultural diversity. In a successful partnership with a number of NGOs, they “understand the seriousness of the problem and are reviewing their policy in dealing with migrants, creating new better-working products and services.”⁹⁴ In their report: *Public libraries and their mediating role in e-government-good practices from Bulgaria and the Netherlands* Lozanova-Belcheva and Ruskov make a thorough review of state policy in recent years regarding the integration of migrants, paying particular attention to the rich practice, including projects, initiatives, activities and events, for these people in Dutch libraries.

In recent years, the cooperation between libraries and governmental and non-governmental organisations in solving problems re-

may 2017. V: *Kommunikativnye vozmozhnosti muzeyev, bibliotek i arhivov: sbornik materialov*. VIII-ih Mezhdunarodnih muzeynih chteniy “Sovremennye problemy muzeologii” (16 – 17 maya 2017 g., OGIK). Vyp. 6. / gl. red. N.A. Parshikov. – Elektron. tekstovye dan. (68 Mb). Orel: Orlovskiy gos. in-t kul'tury, 2017. – 1 elektron. opt. disk (CD-ROM). – Zagl. s etiketki diska. [viewed on 27.03.2018]. Available from: <https://yadi.sk/mail/?hash=sDhi80TwZIUYby4AagCbhVUhamB-jEBzFWsUSWmxgoJ8%3D>

⁹³ Ibid.

⁹⁴ **Ruskov**, Dimitar. Obshtshvenata biblioteka v Holandiya – inspratsiya za integratsiya. V: *Dinamichni biblioteki – doštap, razvitie, promyana*. Dokladi ot XXVI-ta Natsionalna konferentsiya na BBIA, Sofiya, 9 – 10 yuni 2016 g. Sofiya, BBIA, 2016, s. 114.

lated to the integration of immigrants into Dutch society has been broadened and deepened. A large number of projects for their integration, such as “Language for Life” (national), “Live and Learn” (in the city of Amsterdam), “Life and Education” (in the province of Utrecht), “Language Compass” (in the province of Helderland) and “Library and Basic Knowledge” (The Royal Library) are being considered. The public library creates services and products for the integration of different groups of immigrants: old, new, European, non-European, poorly and highly educated. Some of these are language courses and consultations with librarians on certain days of the week, including in the departments for work with immigrants. Two years ago Ruskov took part in the creation of a club for culture “Second Motherland” the Metropolitan Library of Amsterdam, “to lend a hand to this target group [of beginner immigrants], by bringing it together with the new immigrants, but also with Dutch citizens, who want to help immigrants and organize cultural events in a calm and informal setting to practice the Dutch language and communicate with each other.” The club was realised thanks to “winning a prize for library innovation in 2014, which is awarded once a year to a librarian from the Amsterdam Metropolitan Library for an original and innovative idea.”⁹⁵

AMERICAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

„The Aspen Institute Communications and Society Program, in partnership with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, created the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries to help advance the work that public libraries are doing to address community challenges and to support the transformation of communities and their public libraries in the digital age.” The Aspen Institute Communications and Society Program’s report draws attention to a new vision of public libraries in the United States in the hyper-connected environment and

⁹⁵ **Ruskov**, Dimitar. Klub za kultura “Vtora rodina” kam Stolichnata biblioteka na Amsterdam – uchilishte po integratsiya na stari i novi imigranti. V: *BBLA online*, 2016, № 4, s. 34–36.

dramatically changing world of the 21st century. (p. IV–V)

”This is a time of great opportunity for communities, institutions and individuals who are willing to champion new thinking and nurture new relationships. It is a time of particular opportunity for public libraries with their unique stature as trusted community hubs and repositories of knowledge and information (p. VIII).”

PEOPLE. The public library is a hub of civic engagement, fostering new relationships and strengthening the human capital of the community.

PLACE. The public library is a welcoming space for a wide range of purposes — reading, communicating, learning, playing, meeting and getting business done. Its design recognizes that people are not merely consumers of content but also creators and citizens. Its physical presence provides an anchor for economic development and neighborhood revitalization and helps to strengthen social bonds and community identity. The library is also a virtual space where individuals can gain access to information, resources and all the rich experiences the library offers. In the creative design of its physical and virtual spaces the public library defines what makes a great public space.

PLATFORM. The public library is user-centered. It provides opportunities for individuals and the community to gain access to a variety of tools and resources with which to discover and create new knowledge. The platform enables the curation and sharing of the community’s knowledge and innovation. A great library platform is a “third place” — an interactive entity that can facilitate many people operating individually and in groups — and supports the learning and civic needs of the community.”⁹⁶

BULGARIAN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

⁹⁶Garmer, Amy. *Rising to the challenge*. Re-Envisioning Public Libraries. A Report of the Aspen Institute Dialogue on Public Libraries. Washington, 2014. XII, 66 p., p. X).

The presence and role of public libraries in the modern Bulgarian society is regulated by the Public Libraries Act. In article 3 of the Act it is written that public libraries are institutions that ensure “the right of citizens to equal and free access to library and information services; <... > help in the development of civil and information society.”⁹⁷

The programme “Global Libraries-Bulgaria,” which was carried out in the period 2009–2013, played a key role in the inclusion of public libraries in Bulgaria in the information society⁹⁸. The activities within the framework of the programme contributed tangibly to providing equal opportunities for access to information and knowledge through public libraries to the inhabitants of the country’s medium-size and small towns from less developed regions. Their social function is carried out on a wider scale. The local libraries in every populated area assist users with using the Internet, with receiving qualified help from library specialists to use the services of e-government and a number of other innovative services, which facilitate the integration of all members of the community into the information society. Numerous examples of innovative services and projects of public libraries are presented at library forums, stored in the archives of the Foundation “Global Libraries – Bulgaria” and can be found on the website of the Foundation – which inherited and continued the

⁹⁷ **Repulika Balgariya.** Ministerstvo na kulturata. *Zakon za obshtestvenite biblioteki.* Obn. DV. br. 42 ot 5 Yuni 2009 g., izm. DV. br. 68 ot 2 Avgust 2013 g. [viewed on 31.07.2017]. Available from: <http://mc.government.bg/page.php?p=141&s=142&sp=0&t=0&z=0>

⁹⁸ The program is part of a global initiative of the same name, which has the potential to change people’s lives in the direction of inclusion in IS and realization of human potential in the technological environment. The program in Bulgaria enabled the installation of information and telecommunication equipment and internet access in 960 public libraries in towns and villages across the country. More than 3,000 librarians from more than 1,600 libraries were trained in working with computers and the Internet, providing modern library services, library management, communication and work with users and communities, advocacy and project writing. The continuation of the initiative through the activities of the Glob@l Libraries-Bulgaria Foundation provides project support to public libraries in the process of their modernization.

program as guarantor of its sustainable development.

The Metropolitan Library is the largest public library on the territory of the capital city. It functions and has to reaffirm its place daily in an environment full of highly competitive information structure and cultural organisations. In the gradual development of the library as a cultural and information centre over the years, attention has been drawn to the provision of space for intercultural dialogue. In the last two decades several library spaces based on language have been established: Spanish, Portuguese, English, German and Turkish sectors. In 2012, the embassies of the Nordic countries formed a Nordic corner and provided the library with books in Swedish, Danish, Norwegian and Finnish.”⁹⁹ In 2009 a “Center for Intercultural Dialogue” was established, which “unites the foreign language departments and the Korean corner opened in 2015 with the American and the Russian centres”¹⁰⁰. The library continuously expands the established partnerships with foreign cultural institutes, deepens contacts with embassies, NGOs, prominent public figures and experts. These broad contacts and fruitful professional communication contribute to the knowledge of foreign cultures, their transfer into the library space and influence on people’s worldviews!

To introduce the next aspect of the role of libraries in intercultural dialogue, I will take the title of an interview with Dr. Frank Zeliger, conducted by Anna Popova: “The fate of libraries is determined by the abilities of librarians”¹⁰¹. Library specialists are part of the population of each country and are subject to all of its individual, group, and other characteristics. On the other hand, in the definition of trends,

⁹⁹ **Georgieva**, Marieta. *Napravlenie* “Interkulturen dialog na Stolichna biblioteka – prostranstva za dostap do informatsiya i rabota po kulturno-obrazovatelni proekti. V: *Dinamichni biblioteki – dostap, razvitie, promyana*. Dokladi ot XX-VI-ta Natsionalna konferentsiya na BBIA, Sofiya, 9 – 10 yuni 2016 g. Sofiya, BBIA, 2016, s.130.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ **Popova**, Anna. *Sadbata na bibliotekite se opredelya ot sposobnostite na bibliotekarite*. Intervyu s d-r Frank Zelinger. V: *BBIA online*, 2016, № 2, s. 23 – 26..

finding the right solutions, shaping policies, setting priorities that promote the role of libraries and give visibility to their positive role in the implementation of the strategies driving modern society, an inter-state, interpersonal and intercultural dialogue takes place in the professional community. The library guild needs to set an example in the patterns of communication, reaching consensus, goodwill and understanding. Probably initiatives at international, regional and national level may also be considered in this regard. The world organisation and its forums were already mentioned. At the regional level, we will look into the one including Bulgaria, also because it covers a region that is burdened historically with a cloud of demographic, political and cultural problems, tensions and instances of divisions. The Balkan library community is succeeding in creating a new model of interactions and effective dialogue in favor of the development of the region. The project INELI – Balkans managed to unite the efforts of library specialists from Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Northern Macedonia, Kosovo, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Slovenia and Greece for the development of a sustainable network that would “promote cooperation and innovation, e-learning and experiments with new ideas.” INELI – Balkans is a regional continuation of the project INELI of the initiative “Global Libraries” part of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation” <...>. The exchange among library practitioners and leaders from all continents, comparing one’s progress with other areas of the world and completely different cultures, has become a huge incentive for all participants. By attracting the innovative potential available among library specialists from public libraries, INELI – Balkans aims to become an “incubator” of skills needed for library innovation and the transformation of the Balkans.”¹⁰² The Balkan network for cooperation and innovation in libraries is an example of successful “dialogue among professionals in modern libraries from different countries [which] reflects on

¹⁰² **Popova, Anna.** INELI – Balkans ili mreža za bibliotečni inovatsii i liderstvo na Balkanite. V: *BBLA online*, 2016, № 2, s. 29–31.

their work with consumers and provides the necessary atmosphere for intercultural dialogue”¹⁰³.

In the physical vision of the library modern people seek harmony with its cultural place and importance in the life of the community, with its spiritual dimensions and intellectual energy, enshrined in its intrinsic characteristics. The following description of the library, mentioned in the article “The library is a house of citizens,” sounds attractive and romantic: “The location is in the center of the city where the river flows into the sea. The building is impressive, as if it is born out of the water. The most characteristic feature of the building is its openness and 360 degrees connection with the city. The fully open façade deliberately connects the interior with the exterior, ensuring the integration of the building with the environment – the city life, the historical center, the industrial port, the bay and the horizon.”¹⁰⁴

In conclusion, a number of questions remain:

Is society ready to define clearly and support the new role of the contemporary library in this environment infused with problem?

Does the power elite possess enough confidence in the library institution today? Can it entrust the library with some of the burden of social and educational policies?

Do the authorities have the will to recognise libraries as a powerful factor for prosperity, for resolving complex situations and disentangling the “Gordian knot” of modernity, as a space for affirming positive attitudes and uniting communities?

The contemporary dialogue in the library space – physical and virtual, flows with a different level of activity and effectiveness due to different levels of achieved development and differences in culture. However, the dialogue is present, to varying degrees of understanding and synergies, in the attention of the respective levels. The opportunities for impact on people’s culture and thinking, the role in educating

¹⁰³ **Popova**, Anna. Balkanska mrežha za satrudničestvo i inovatsii v bibliotekite. V: *BBIA online*, 2016, № 6, s. 23–25.

¹⁰⁴ **Popova**, Anna. Bibliotekata e kashta na grazhdanite. V: *BBIA online*, 2016, № 4, s. 29–30.

the generations, based on the principles followed by the library, which also serve human progress, have been considered in the theory of various scientific fields and confirmed in library practices.

A suitable conclusion to the presented positions and evidence on the subject from a professional perspective can be the conclusion of the report of the Aspen Institute for Public Libraries: “Libraries are essential for success and progress in the digital age”. From a universal perspective, with emotion, trust and inspiration towards libraries, I would conclude with a quotation from the author of the “Babylonian library” Jorge Luis Borges: “I’ve always hoped that heaven is a library!”¹⁰⁵

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