How libraries for children and young adults are supporting development by providing access to information

*A Statement from the Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section (*CHILD*), International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA)*

Libraries for Children and Young Adults are essential for information and development. It is in childhood and youth that all kinds of literacy skills are best built. Early childhood literacy is important: the earlier a person starts to access information, the more efficient and life-long this access will be. Libraries for Children are the key to equal possibilities for all to access information.

Children's libraries equip children with lifelong learning and literacy skills, enabling them to participate and contribute to the community. The links between literacy and social and economic outcomes cannot be overemphasized. Children's libraries have a special responsibility to support the process of learning to read and to give children access to all media. They empower children and advocate for their freedom and safety. They encourage children to become confident and competent people. They give children their first experience of being a citizen in their own right.

Libraries for Children are essential for the respect of the United Nation's Convention on The Rights of the Child, which stresses the right of every child to the development of his or her full potential, the right to free and open access to information, materials and programs, under equal conditions for all, irrespective of age, race, sex, religious, national and cultural background, language, social status or personal skills and abilities.

> *"It is really the children who will claim the future, but we must ensure that they are given the supports and opportunities that will enable them to do so with hope and joy and a sense of their rightful entitlement"* **Virginia A. Walter** *(2013),* Who will serve the children: recruiting and educating future children's librarians

Libraries for children and young adults support development in infinite ways:

- Providing open access to a great variety of high quality, selected resources, information and tools, in all formats including digital
- Providing skilled professionals to assist young patrons, guide them, teach them to access and evaluate information
- Organizing a great variety of programmes and activities:
  - for children to familiarize with reading and information literacy;
  - for digital literacy;
  - sometimes together with parents or grandparents;
  - programmes to encourage young people's own creativity and productions (personal, artistic, scientific).
- Offering not only resources and guidance, but a welcoming safe place for girls and boys to do school work and therefore, supporting education and gender equality. Also, a place to meet and develop social links.
- Empowering parents and caregivers
- Engaging with the community, working in partnership with schools as well as NGOs working for development

Support in action

- Friends of African Village Libraries (FAVL) (small rural community libraries in Burkina Faso) have produced photo books and established a small media center in the town of Houndé, where a production team uses scanner and laser printers to produce pamphlet-style books in local languages. Both kinds of books, close to local realities are widely read by young people, developing their reading skills.(see: http://library.ifla.org/1053)

- Australia's Northern Territory Library programs support the early years literacy
  - Initiatives through the production of bilingual books for babies and through digital storytelling. Early childhood principles are used to engage families with technology to improve literacies across the generations
    (see: http://iflabangkok2013.tkpark.or.th/download/res14.pdf)

- Lyuben Karavelov Regional Library in Bulgaria: The library's 'Fun Financial Literacy' project combines financial literacy and mobile technology training to teach children and youth in Ruse (northeastern Bulgaria) to manage their money, spend it wisely and to save for the future. (see: http://eifl.net)

- Munich Public Library's programmes "Update –young and adult" for young adults, organizes events with partners from the city young scene, a Media Week "Idiot 2.0" offering workshops for school classes, young adults, parents and teaching staff on Web 2.0, the programmes "Fit for Facebook", "Cybermobbing","Computer games and moral principles", "Web makes politics" and others. To accompany this programmes, the library implemented the interactive exhibition "Parsnips out!" together with 20 partners as part of the campaign "Stand up against the Nazis!" (see: www.muenchner-stadtbibliothek.de)

- The network of community libraries « Lire en Afrique » in Senegal: in every town or village a library is created, « school results get better: better understanding of lessons, less year repetition, better results at exams ". (see: http://library.ifla.org/863)

- Tuy Village Libraries in Burkina Faso is teaching teenage girls in four rural communities to use smart phones to research the internet for health information. (see: http://eifl.net)

- Kenya National Library Service / Kibera Library's e-learning tablet computers project for slum school children uses ICT to equalize opportunities for children of poor families to interact with technology. By pre-loading tablet computers with educational content related to the school curriculum, the project also aims to support classroom teaching across all school subjects (language, science, mathematics, etc.) and to help children improve their marks. The project has inspired a love of reading among children, increased the numbers of young library users and contributed to improved school results. (see: http://library.ifla.org/862)

- Uganda Community Libraries Association is organizing health and technology camps for rural children in five communities. Through this project, 100 children have the opportunity to learn about nutrition and sensitive sexual health issues (see: http://eifl.net)

- Librarians from Brasov (Romania) put into practice a project for children's health education through sports, a new library service, free and useful. With the new sports equipment purchased thanks to funding and with support from coaches anew library service, the children learned and applied the information. For more about the health through exercise programme, see: IFLA Section CHILD *Newsletter*, June 2014

- The American programme "Man in the Moon for Male Caregivers" invites fathers to attend a 30 minute, age appropriate circle time. There they learn songs, how to share books, sign language, and even ways to exercise with their little ones to encourage language development. (see: IFLA Section CHILD *Newsletter*, June 2012)

- Alexandru D. Xenopol' Arad County Library in Romania works for civic participation: an intensive public library training programme teaches teenagers online information and media skills, building their confidence to use digital technology to produce and publish their own media. (see: http://eifl.net)

- Rijeka City Library (Croatia) conducts the BookBall project, in partnership with Football Club Rijeka, one of the most influential and popular Croatian football clubs. The project has helped break social stereotypes and prejudice and developed in young footballers positive attitudes towards educational projects. (see: IFLA Section CHILD *Newsletter*, June 2014)

- Community Information Centre Bhairahawa (Nepal) organizes the programme "Say no to drugs and violence", which uses dance competitions to create awareness among the young students against drugs and violence. (see: IFLA Section CHILD *Newsletter*, January 2014)

- Romania: well-trained librarians cooperated with teachers, schools, as well as with NGOs and other partners, such as TECHSOUP and Microsoft within the Global Libraries, to adapt library resources and IT tools to educational needs and to stimulate innovation. (see: http://digifolioen.weebly.com/, http://hourofcode.com/ro)

- Street Libraries of "ATD Quart Monde" bring books, art and ICT to disadvantaged children and their families, in poor areas of rich countries : more than 80 street libraries in France (see: http://www.atd-quartmonde.org/Les-bibliotheques-de-rue.html)

- "My Tree House" Green Children's Library for Kids in Singapore, is the first library in the world to be steered by green principles in all facets from design, infrastructure and use of sustainable materials, to collections and programming. It is built to encourage children to explore, discover and challenge their curiosity in learning about and caring for the environment. (see: IFLA Section CHILD *Newsletter*, June 2013)

- CLAC library in Yaoundé has implemented the online learning platform "Kahn Academy" and agreed with the Ministry of Education for a few hundred students to use it, with tutors. Assessment shows important positive impact in those students' results and capacities (see: article to be published at http://takamtikou.bnf.fr)

- The British programme "Bookstart" for early language development and literacy, and family literacy, has been adopted by libraries in many other countries (see: www.bookstart.org.uk, for the programme in Croatia: IFLA Section CHILD *Newsletter*, June 2013)

  IFLA Section CHILD *Newsletters* are available at: www.ifla.org/publications/libraries-for-children-and-young-adults-section-newsletter.

Recommendations

Support for library services for children is essential for development. This support should include the following:

- Securing not only funding for everyday activities but also long-term funding for children's libraries, including them as key factors in the national policy for development and in the local policy
- Building leadership
- Implementing staff training courses (initial and continuing education) that include ICT and information literacy
- Supporting associations and networks for children's librarians
- Funding library equipment in ICT and ICT training for staff