

Britt-Marie Häggström

EBLIDA & DIK-association

Sweden

Presentation

Britt-Marie Häggström was elected president of EBLIDA in 1999. Previously, Britt-Marie was a member of the EBLIDA Executive Committee for four years and has been a member of the IFLA standing committee for public libraries for the past six years. She has been president of the DIK Association, a Swedish trade union and professional organisation with 17,000 members for librarians, museum curators, archivists, logopedists and information officers, since 1984. In addition, Britt-Marie has been responsible for major projects, such as organising 1500 library units in Sweden to become centres for public information, prior to the referendum on Swedish membership of the EU, supervised by the Swedish department of foreign affairs. Britt-Marie lectures widely throughout Europe on the role of the libraries and has published papers on the freedom of information, the changing role of the librarian.

A strong belief in the library profession

Let me first say that I do strongly believe in the future of librarianship. All professionals working with collecting, storing and retrieving information are of high value in what we call the knowledge or information society. By high value I mean reputation and salaries for the professionals. One major problem is that sometimes those who need the profession not always connect the profession of a librarian and for that matter an archivist with their need to retrieve and collect and value information.

It is a slight fear for me that universities, communities will be unable to pay proper and higher salaries for librarians now when their competencies are of high value for private enterprises, but the future of the profession is light.

The librarians plays an important role in the information society.

To be expanded

A presentation of EBLIDA

EBLIDA European Bureau of Libraries, Information and Documentation Associations was founded in 1992. It means that we are celebrating our tenth anniversary next year. EBLIDA was founded because there was a bad need for the library community to have a voice in the European society. A clear voice to argue advocate and lobby for libraries right to give their customers high quality services.

EBLIDA is an independent non-governmental non-commercial umbrella organisation of national library, information, documentation and archive associations in Europe. The major objectives of EBLIDA are to act as a lobby organisation promoting the interests of the library and information community at European level, to provide members with up-to-date information on European developments including directives, legislation and initiatives of interest to the library and cultural heritage community and to strengthen co-operation between members throughout Europe.

The lobby activities started with the database directive followed by the lending right directive and then the copyright directive. EBLIDA has 39 full members and some two hundred associated members all over Europe.

EBLIDA pays a special attention to what happens in this area in the candidate countries.

EBLIDA has hosted a number of EU projects concerning copyright, ECUP, ECUP+, CECUP and been an active partner in TECUP. All these projects concerning copyright in the digital era and libraries and archives right to maintain freedom and free flow of information.

ECUP started by creating awareness about the problems with digitisation of material back in 1997 ECUP was followed by ECUP + merely dealing with licensing material.

CECUP was to create awareness in the candidate countries and TECUP to create a common view and understanding. Between authors publishers and librarians.

Among these projects EBLIDA is working to strengthen the position of libraries and archives in the information /knowledge society.

Information or knowledge society role of libraries & archives

The pace of change is quickening in economic, technological, social and cultural environments throughout the world. Global markets, new technologies, diversifying family patterns and increasing geographic mobility require new skills, knowledge and flexibility.

The Lisbon Summit of the European Council (March 2000) and the commission Memorandum lifelong learning concluded that the challenge of change could be successfully met by continual, lifelong learning. The Presidency conclusions state that at the beginning of the twenty first century "lifelong learning is an essential policy for the development of citizenship, social cohesion and employment".

Lifelong learning is seen by national Governments and transnational or international bodies such as the EU, OECD and UNESCO, as necessary for the economic, democratic and social well being and development of societies, organisations and individuals.

The term "lifelong learning" in the sense of "life-wide learning". This latter concept underlines the fact that learning takes place in a variety of different environments which are all equally important and interconnected.

If everyone is to participate in lifelong learning, regardless of age, location, gender and employment status, then structures of entitlement and opportunity need to be developed by Governments working in partnership with a range of players, including libraries and archives

The learning structures of today are inherited from an industrial society where clearly specified pieces of knowledge were needed for different functions at different levels. As a consequence people were sorted mechanically into the next step in the education system or the working place. This society is now in the disappearing . In the future we must create a lifelong learning system where the needs of society, working life and individuals are weaved together, and where general knowledge and social competence and the ability to learn are more important than acquiring specific skills.

Lifelong learning is defined as all purposeful learning activities whether formal, non-formal or informal. A knowledge society should provide rich opportunities for learning in different contexts which are independent of where one is in the lifespan. Lifelong learning has to be based on an analysis of peoples total access to knowledge and learning, within the whole range of different contexts - formal learning at school and at the university, non-formal learning in the evening class, in the residential college, at the workplace, in the librarians and in the archiven. Lifelong learning not only contributes to economic development, full employment and the modernising of the labour market, it also enables individuals and groups to participate in democratic, civil and cultural life, to combat racism to enjoy diversity and to build social cohesion.

A human right

The "Learning Divide" is increasingly disadvantaging significant groups of people, including those in part time or casual employment, the unemployed, older people and those with disabilities, caring responsibilities, poor initial education or low incomes. On the other side of the divide, those with qualifications who continue to update their skills are increasingly able to participate in and benefit from the changing economic environment.

Those vulnerable to exclusion are doubly disadvantaged. They have fewer opportunities to gain access to relevant opportunities and the non-formal learning that they may participate in is not recognised or is under valued. As a consequence the talents and potential contributions of many citizens are wasted.

restricted to an instrument to raise the competence of the workforce and stimulate economic growth in the EU.

Lifelong learning is just as important to provide a bridge to cross the educational divide; to create active citizenship; and develop an integrated Europe with solid democracies. Including the new democracies of Eastern and Central Europe.

Borders and walls should be torn down, between formal and non-formal education, and between initial schooling and adult education.

The individual must be able to experience work and periods of education and other forms of learning during different phases of life. There should be time and economic support for those who need it.

In lifelong learning, real competence is valued as well as formal qualifications. The learner must be able to move more freely between different education providers, formal or non-formal, self study and flexible learning. Education in more formal contexts should be co-ordinated with informal everyday learning and non-formal learning opportunities, including new technology.

The responsibility for making integration a reality lies with the formal education system but also with politicians, social partners libraries & archive and the non-formal education providers.

The right to lifelong learning must be included in the Charter of Fundamental Rights and the aim should be to create an inclusive educational culture for all European citizens at all stages of their lives.

Politically literate citizens will require not only the knowledge and understanding of human rights, but also opportunities to participate and to effect changes. Learning active citizenship has two inter-related and equally important components, namely a structural/political one and a cultural/personal one; in other words cognitive and affective elements.

Adult learners are a very heterogeneous group and their needs should be met individually; therefore there should be a choice of methods and forms as well as themes and subjects of learning. An important area for libraries and archives.

In non formal education new methods such as projects, flexible learning, distance learning and IT are frequently used. There are many forms of informal adult education - evening classes, weekend courses, seminars, shorter or longer periods at residential colleges to suit different people at different times.

In addition to traditional subjects like languages, music and art, non-formal education is specially relevant to providing access to new and comprehensive areas of knowledge such as human rights, environmental protection, health care, social policy and consumer rights. Non-formal learning has proved to be most valuable in broadening interest in participation in democratic society at local, national and European levels and in the cultural life of society.

Non-formal education also plays a vital role in improving the employability of those who are marginalized or risk social exclusion - by adopting new approaches and removing barriers to ensure access to lifelong learning opportunities, with the new technology.

Role of libraries in lifelong learning

EBLIDA believes that libraries have a fundamental role to play in the development of strategies for lifelong learning. EBLIDA is disappointed to note that libraries are mentioned only once in the Commission Memorandum on Lifelong Learning, along with shopping malls and bus stations. This overlooks the key function of libraries, which is not just as a service *place*, but as an active partner offering access, professional guidance and training to global resources in a local setting.

The notion of lifelong learning implies the ability to search for information and knowledge actively and independently. The classroom and the traditional textbook must therefore be supplemented by archives, libraries and museums; institutions offering a broad choice of different media and professional guidance in information search.

This process follows two stages; the first is access. Libraries provide access to a vast range of global resources, traditional and electronic media, many unaffordable to private individuals. Users require new skills in order to access this information. Most users have some idea how to use a book e.g. table of contents, index, etc. Many are not familiar with how to use a PC or how to find their way around the hundreds of interfaces to databases, encyclopaedias, newspapers, etc. The information professional can provide guidance and training in the use of new resources.

The second stage is to identify the right information, evaluation. In the traditional world, material published by a reputable publisher gave an indication of quality, authenticity, etc. Librarians in turn selected the most appropriate, quality material for their specific user groups. So users could be assured of the quality of the selected material on the library shelves. Direct access to resources on the Internet provides access to much more information, but without the traditional benchmarks of quality, authenticity or permanence

Libraries have an active role to play in key messages from the Memorandum:eg.

Key message 5 - guidance and information

- local accessibility
- brokerage in the information labyrinth

Key message 6 - bring learning closer to home

- potential of ICT in reaching isolated localities
- lifelong learning as the driver for local and regional regeneration

learning centres in everyday locations

Information professionals provide expert guidance in identifying and evaluating quality resources, enabling users to maximise their use of the new global networks. Otherwise, these new resources remain at best under-utilised and at worst, the user gives up their search for information in frustration and is inhibited from further use of electronic resources.

Nacka 2001-05 -03

Britt Marie Häggström
President DIK & EBLIDA