



## GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

# Report of the Quebec (Canada) meeting How a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future – Ideas for actions

July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018



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## Introduction

On July 6<sup>th</sup> 2018, in Montreal (Canada), 14 librarians participated in a conversation about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. This meeting was hosted by three local associations : Association des Bibliothécaires du Québec Library Association (ABQLA), Association des bibliothèques publiques du Québec (ABPQ), and Association pour l'avancement des sciences et des techniques de la documentation (ASTED). Together all participants represent 210 years of library experience.

We built on the results from phase 1 of the conversation to gather ideas for actions for IFLA that help a united field tackle the challenges of the future. This is our contribution to **the largest ideas store of actions**.

## About the participants

Canada has two official languages: English and French. This meeting took place in Montreal, Quebec, where both languages coexist, and included both Anglophone and Francophone participants. Therefore, the meeting was hosted in both languages and participants were encouraged to speak in their language of preference. Facilitators were on hand to help translate or clarify information.

The participants in the workshop are divided by experience in the field in the following way:

Years of experience in libraries	Number of participants
1-10 years of experience	5
11-20 years of experience	5
21-30 years of experience	3
31+ years of experience	1

Each participant shared in which type of library they have most experience:

Years of experience in libraries	Number of participants
National Libraries	-
Academic and Research Libraries	5
Public Libraries	5
School Libraries	-
Special Libraries	1

Other Types of Libraries	-
Not a librarian	3

Participants in the “Not a librarian” category included library and information studies students, executives from professional organizations, and retired information professionals.

## Opportunities for the country and region

In phase 1 of IFLA’s global vision discussion, ten opportunities have been discovered for the library field. These opportunities are global. Regionally, nationally, and locally, there are differences in which opportunities take priority. In the meeting, we debated the top opportunities for Canada and North America.

### Priorities for the country

The participants identified the following top-3 among the opportunities for the country:

• <b>Opportunity 2</b>	We must update our traditional roles in the digital age
• <b>Opportunity 3</b>	We need to understand community needs better and design services for impact
• <b>Opportunity 6</b>	We need to ensure stakeholders understand our value and impact

Comments:

Some participants felt librarians are already working on opportunity 2 (not a new challenge) and therefore it was not a priority. Opportunity 6 was vehemently defended as stakeholders decide the amount funding libraries get and can be easily swayed by the argument that everything can be found online.

While it did not make the top 3 for the country, opportunity 7 (“We need to develop a spirit of collaboration”) also received many votes.

### Priorities for the region

The participants identified the following top-5 among the opportunities for the region:

• <b>Opportunity 1</b>	We must be champions of intellectual freedom
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• <b>Opportunity 2</b>	We must update our traditional roles in the digital age
• <b>Opportunity 3</b>	We need to understand community needs better and design services for impact
• <b>Opportunity 5</b>	We need more and better advocates at all levels
• <b>Opportunity 9</b>	We need to maximise access to the world's documentary heritage

Comments:

Opportunities 1 and 3 received the most votes. Opportunity 9 was the only one that received no votes for the country priorities.

## Ideas for action

To realise the opportunities for our country, we focused on creating ideas for actions. These ideas will be entered into the ideas store for action of IFLA. Our recommended actions for each of the top-3 opportunities and the specially highlighted opportunities 5 (advocacy) and 7 (collaboration) are:

### Ideas for action for opportunity 2: We must update our traditional roles in the digital age

The top-5 ideas for action we as librarians could consider to realise this opportunity in our country are:

1. Adapt graduate library and information studies programs to include technological skills

2. Strengthen outreach efforts to advertise tools and services already in existence

- Because they are intangible and not easily visible, virtual tools and services need to be more heavily marketed

3. Create a culture of life-long learning among librarians to ensure they remain ahead of technological change

4. Develop tools and apps for learning technology, both for staff and the public

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## 5. Make digital content attractive and involve the community as content creators

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Comments:

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Other ideas were:

- Ensure that any new content can be accessed anywhere and from any device
- Frame the librarian as a mediator between life-long learning and the community

One participant said, “Digital is a new way of thinking and we need to learn how to think digitally”. They also mentioned that this new way of thinking allows for a variety of sources of content, including the community itself.

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### Ideas for action for opportunity 3: We need to understand community needs better and design services for impact

The top-5 ideas for action we as librarians could consider to realise this opportunity in our country are:

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#### 1. Take the books (and other materials) out of the library

- E.g. senior residences, bibliobus, storytime in parks, distance borrowing, etc.
- “ACCESS is the keyword”

#### 2. Perform community analysis (focus groups, surveys, etc.)

- Ask what people **want**
- Ask what people **need**
- Balance preferences and priorities of the leaders of the community with those of the community itself

#### 3. Use available statistics to design services and programming

- Census data including: socioeconomic data, language information, etc.

#### 4. Adapt services to match the needs identified in actions 2 and 3

#### 5. Work with specialists in other fields to widen services

- E.g. Social workers, health professionals, etc.
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Comments:

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Regarding action 5, the group mentioned an initiative in Montreal North where the library will partner with a school of dentistry to offer dental services to patrons.

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## **Ideas for action for opportunity 6: We need to ensure stakeholders understand our value and impact**

The top-5 ideas for action we as librarians could consider to realise this opportunity in our country are:

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1. Hire professionals to advocate for libraries

- Pool resources to pay for lobbyists who have advocacy skills librarians may lack

2. Use storytelling techniques to highlight the benefits of libraries to stakeholders

- Use individual success stories to attach names and faces to the services and programs offered

3. Share user/use statistics to highlight the popularity and impact of library programs and services

- Libraries should also consider talking about cost/benefit ratios

4. Invite stakeholders to shadow librarians and other members of the institution to see value in action

5. N/A

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Comments:

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Because of time constraints the group did not have the opportunity to develop actions regarding social media.

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## **Ideas for action for opportunity 5: advocacy**

Five bold actions that are needed for us (as librarians) to improve advocacy for the library field in our country are:

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1. Put into action the [Declaration of Quebec Libraries](#)

2. Create a nation-wide event highlighting the importance and value of libraries

- E.g. Canadian Library Week
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3. Organize membership or visit drives to increase usage

4. Increase the visibility of libraries and librarians in the media by not only having them showcase programs or services but by inviting librarians as commentators, experts, etc.

5. Create national recognition programs for librarians such as:

- Librarian of the Year
- Order of Canada
- LJ Movers and Shakers
- Library night at Parliament

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Comments:

The group strongly felt that to be better advocates librarians need to become visible in the public sphere and in people's minds.

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### **Ideas for action for opportunity 7: collaboration**

Five bold actions that we (as librarians) could take to improve collaboration across the library field in our country are:

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1. Establish a national library association and annual conference

2. Create a set of national library policies and standards

3. Increase collaboration between library and information studies programs across Canada

- Include training for students thinking of serving different parts of the country/linguistic communities

4. Establish reciprocal agreements among all types of libraries allowing users to access resources across local, regional, and national boundaries

5. Use technology to facilitate collaboration and shared resources

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One bold action that we could take as librarians to improve collaboration within our region, is:

Take the focus off Canada and the United States so that all countries and languages in the region can have an equal chance to participate in collaboration initiatives and dialogue.

## Comments:

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This was the most discussed set of actions during our discussion meeting. Regarding action 1, it is important to mention that the Canadian Library Association (CLA) was dissolved in 2016. Since then, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations has been established but, as the name implies, it is a federation for association not individual members. While there are large library conferences in the country they are either library-type- or region-specific. The latter can make it difficult for librarians from other regions to attend. A national conference would ideally move around the country to give everyone a chance to attend and would allow for librarians from different types of libraries to interact and learn from each other.

Another interesting point from the discussion around action 1 was the need to establish a culture of investment in professional development not only on the part of the employers but also on the part of the librarians themselves.

Regarding the action for the region, the group highlighted the importance of sharing responsibility for documenting our heritage. The group also mentioned the possibility of negotiating as region to gain open access to academic publications like many European countries have done.

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## A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process in Montreal on July 6<sup>th</sup>, 2018. It is part of a global conversation initiated by IFLA on how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future, currently in phase 2.

Over the course of two years (2017-2018), IFLA will involve as many librarians and others as possible in this global conversation. Participants are encouraged to continue the conversation in their own networks and organization and share the results with IFLA. In the beginning of 2019, the results of all the workshops and online discussions will be presented to IFLA's GB, which in turn will use the ideas for actions to create concrete strategies, processes and work programmes for the future.

To learn more about the global conversation, and download supporting materials to support your own activities, visit <https://www.ifla.org/globalvision>.

Stay tuned for news about the IFLA Global Vision discussion following [#iflaGlobalVision](https://twitter.com/iflaGlobalVision) and make sure to cast your vote in August when the online voting platform is available on <https://www.ifla.org/globalvision>.