

***The public library: new
challenges and strategies in
the information society***

*Report
February 2003*

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1. INTRODUCTION

*Aims, methodology and
working group*

Aims

This report is the result of a process in which a number of different people and organisations have worked and participated. The aim of the report is to provide a strategic vision of the main aspects associated with the public library. The bases for strategic thought in the spheres considered to be of key importance in the new environment of the information society were established from the starting-point of a diagnosis and these bases provide the framework for proposals concerning the measures that should be taken for both the present and the future of the public library. The report covers the territorial area of Catalonia and its timeframe is the period 2003-2007.

The specific **aims** of the report are:

1

To describe the public library's sphere of action and how its traditional functions are adapting to those of the future so that the public library may continue to be a fundamental and easily-accessible cultural facility in our municipalities and cities.

2

To promote a planning process to define scenarios, models and strategies concerning the functions of the public library as a fundamental facility for the spread of the information society in the municipalities. Libraries are of key importance in the consolidation and development of the information society in local settings as has been demonstrated by the most active public libraries in the European Union, which have already convinced citizens and local politicians alike of their ability to provide efficient services which answer the needs of the information society. Our challenge is to ensure that the public library promotes this process at the local level.

3

To make knowledge an axis of the city's development. The future for municipalities and their inhabitants will depend on their capacity for 'generating 'knowledge'. We understand knowledge to be that body of information-related activities, access to and dissemination of information, innovation, culture, science and technology which ensures that cities and towns contribute specific and significant added value to the territorial networks of which they form part. This effort directed towards the creation of knowledge requires not only technological infrastructures, but also processes to create proactive citizens.

4

To propose strategies and actions up to 2007. The aim of the report is to provide a strategic vision of the various spheres associated with the public library and to suggest strategic recommendations and proposals for action in order to make library services a central issue on the agendas of municipal governments.

Methodology and organisation

- The report proposes and evaluates various actions which could be carried out by libraries conforming to an open and participative model. The process has three highly defined ‘moments’:
 - **An analysis of the dynamics affecting libraries** on the basis of the information collation on policy and planning actions which affect the launch of new services associated with the new technologies. At the same time bear in mind the educational, socio-economic and cultural factors which affect the development of libraries in the information society, it being necessary, furthermore, to define problems and opportunities and to recommend guidelines to promote the knowledge society.
 - **A participative process that is both coherent and interacts with the technical analysis.** This process must lead to the definition of the perceptions held by both private and public agents with respect to the future of libraries and their expectations. The process must be consensual and acceptable to the municipalities. It must have a regional perspective and involve all the social agents, administrations, professional staff and the general public.
 - **An integrated communication action** with two aims. The first, to provide the whole community associated with libraries and the information society with the same report-drafting methodology as an active tool for conceiving the public library of the 21st century, requiring the participation and commitment of all involved. The second, equally important, consists of a process of awareness-raising to make it possible to set out on the road towards the desired kind of library within a framework of agreement, economic sustainability and local commitment.
- **The studies.** The report’s starting point is the commissioning of a general framework about the new perspectives in the public services and four studies dealing with different situations and experiences, in the following areas:
 - "The context of local public administration: services". This general framework about public services identifies the tendencies in Europe concerning the management of public services.: quality management, users participation and so forth. It is becoming increasingly clear that the management method, its adaptation to demand and to real needs is as strategic as, or more strategic than, the service infrastructures themselves.
 - "Libraries and the information society: new tools and services". This covers the most noticeable tendencies to ward change in libraries within the framework of the information society and in the services provided as well as a perspective on where current transformations are leading. The development of TICs which are basic to the service and to relations with users are also analysed, as are the relations with other networks and areas such as cultural entities and groups etc., especially, relations with the education system with the development of new tools and services and the library’s function in the production of content.
 - "Public library spaces". The new model for library facilities implies new services and new uses for libraries which also affect the spatial layout of the facilities.
 - "Public library professional staff". This concerns the changing profiles and knowledge of library staff, the need of recycling and the constant adaptation of knowledge and skills in response to changes, the best work tools and systems, the provision of training in relation to the labour market and its interdependencies.
 - "The administration of the public library: management models and methods of financing". This concerns the relationship between the new technologies, new services and changes in administrative structures, organisational systems and library financing; the redesign of the library management model to involve social and economic agents and marketing services.
- **Interactive seminar.** The report, presented at Interacció 2002, is the culmination of the prior studies. The seminar, which took place as part of Interacció 2002, was the forum used to debate the report’s proposals and recommendations about actions and projects and was also the forum in which these proposals were

aired. Carles Obeso, Josep Llinars, Miquel Barceló and Sixte Moral took part in the seminar. The documents produced may be consulted at <<http://www.diba.es/cerc/interaccio2002/cat/default.htm>>.

- **Participation and communication process.** After the final drafting of the report a process of communication and participation on a wider level has been engaged, to include the representatives of the agents involved (municipal associations, political parties, publishing and cultural sectors, the Library Association, the Faculty of Librarianship and Documentation, the Professional Association of Cultural Administration, to name but a few) with the aim of involving them in the process of disseminating the report which is to guide government action over the coming years. It is the intention of the report to be open to the proposals and suggestions that arise during this process of communication and participation.

Working group

A work group was constituted to draft the report consisting of representatives of the public institutions in the sector and the report management and drafting team and was constituted as follows:

- **Management board:**
 - Fèlix Manito. Coordinator. Kreanta. Cultura, Comunicació, Coneixement SL.
 - Assumpta Bailac. Diputació de Barcelona (Barcelona Provincial Council) Library Services.
 - Marta Clari. Barcelona Libraries Consortium.
 - Ester Omella. Raporteur. Diputació de Barcelona Library Services
- **Drafting Team:**
 - "Current challenges in public services". Joan Subirats. Autonomous University of Barcelona.
 - "New tools and services". Mònica Medina". Barcelona Library Consortium.
 - "The public library premises". Jordi Permanyer. Diputació de Barcelona Library Services
 - "The public library professionals". Eulàlia Espinàs. Bertelsmann Foundation.
 - "Management models and methods of financing". Xavier Fina. ICC Investigació i Consulting Cultural.
- **Town council chairs for culture:**
 - Josep Altayó. Santa Perpètua de Mogoda Town Council.
 - Teresa Llorens. Vilanova Town Council.
 - Lluís Noguera. Granollers Town Council.
 - Àngels Seix. Sant Cugat del Vallès Town Council.
- **Other representatives:**
 - Adela d'Alòs. COBDC (Oficial College of Librarians and Documentalists of Catalonia).
 - Mercè Millan. Pompeu Fabra Library, Mataró.
 - Eduard Miralles. Barcelona Centre for Cultural Studies and Resources. Diputació de Barcelona.

2. Diagnosis

New horizons and strategic areas

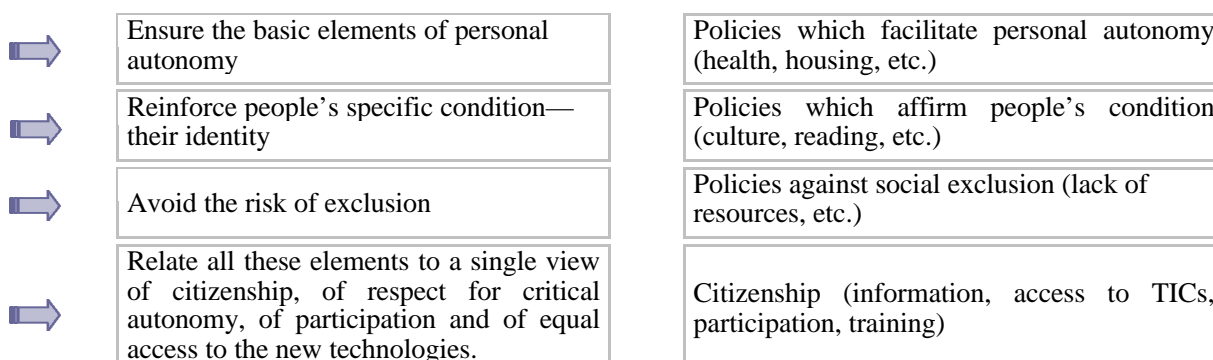
Introduction

In strategic planning, diagnosis of the situation is a key element. During the work process and in the conclusions drawn, **three thematic areas** were identified with regard to the public library, each of which is sufficiently important to be considered independently, namely: **the services and spaces, the staff and management**. Below, we present a diagnosis of the situation of the public library with regard to these three areas—the result of the participative process of the various agents involved. Some initial reflections concerning the current situation of administration are also incorporated. The diagnosis identifies the **critical themes** which become the basis of strategic thinking and of the measures later taken.

The new setting for public administration

- **Changes to the welfare model.** The changes that have occurred in public administration over recent years have led to a new setting for the public library. Over the closing years of the 20th century, the welfare model which had been the pillar of many states since the middle of the century was seen to be outdated or had undergone change. The construction of public services in modern advanced countries tried to guarantee access to services by all citizens in conditions of equality. These welfare policies led to a democratisation of the services and their benefits. This fact, like Fordism, is associated with the undifferentiated mass-production of services aimed at satisfying a demand which has also been conceived to be homogenous. Public administration created services and benefits on the basis of an ideal kind of citizen on whom was based a homogeneous model for universal access. The closing years of the 20th century saw a new model for public administration: the growth of social diversification and diversity of population in advanced countries, the capacity in the commercial field for the personalisation of products and for breaking the mould of homogeneity in supply and demand, people's greater demands with regard to public services and the conception of access as something basic, but insufficient. All these factors led to a new concept of quality which depends on the capacity of services to come closer to meeting personal needs and expectations. The public administration of public services must now respond to a demand that is not so much universal as heterogeneous, sectorial and flexible. Proximity has become an essential element of administration.
- **The debate about efficiency in the public sector.** This change of setting has been accompanied by an important debate about the efficiency of the public sector as it adopts a new vision, perhaps a more strategic one, which redefines the tasks that are the responsibility of the public sector as well as their administration. With regard to the provision of services, the former logic based on a single agent has been substituted by the introduction, in practice, of a multitude of agents of different kinds. The traditional assumption that a publicly provided service is better than a service that has not been publicly provided has been questioned. Specifically, the monopolistic method of administering the provision of public services has been abandoned in favour of a more pluralist approach which takes into account a large number of agents: public suppliers, private suppliers and even the family.
- **The new context for the provision of public services.** In the economic, social and technological spheres the changes are by no means insignificant. They include the increased flexibility in production processes, globalisation, the diversification of society and the social classes, new risks of exclusion, new paradigms of inequality, changes in the structure of the family, the introduction of TICs, etc. All these changes make obsolete the old logic of service provision articulated around another kind of social and economic structure that has now been superseded.
- **Changing demand.** It is a challenge for the public services to respond to the needs of a new kind of society which is much more differentiated and demanding, and which has different characteristics and requirements. Respect for personal autonomy, the levelling of conditions leading to inequality, and the recognition of ethnic, cultural and sexual difference, have led to a definitive reappraisal of the citizen who can now no longer be considered to be a homogeneous and undifferentiated being. In this context, public administration finds itself facing the challenge of designing services associated with welfare, not now as a consequence of citizens' global demands for access to basic services but to personal and community demands which require specific, not universal responses.

- Proximity strategy.** Welfare is not only perceived as a guarantee of the maintenance of social rights. Welfare has become a new way of seeing social relations as an integrating force involving social solidarity. Proximity has become the main strategy for adapting to demand in this context. The local sphere is strengthened in the context of globalisation. A distinction arises between state or autonomous community social policies and local ones: the former attempt to satisfy part of the demand from a more general and universalist standpoint on the basis of social rights recognised by law, while the latter is more specific and individual and is based on a more flexible design. Personal service policies are central to meeting demands and needs. They are now aimed at satisfying a new politico-cultural dimension of welfare: the development of communities encouraging integrating, participative social relations based on mutual respect in the territorial context.
- Personal service policies in the local context.** The changes described in public administration led to a new setting which took shape during the '90s and this involved new challenges which made it necessary to re-think public services and their administration on the basis of new elements. Social dynamics must be borne in mind. In the local context, the personal service policies arising from these criteria seek to:



- The four main components of a public service.** The complexity of public services must be borne in mind if the challenges that present themselves are to be met. Four major components of a public service can be identified and this helps to classify current demands and make initial plans for strategic actions.

 - Dimension 1: Public administration. The demands are such that greater transparency, openness, responsibility and citizen control are required.
 - Dimension 2: The provision of services. Services must be provided under the best conditions. This means improving services and also the channels of interrelation with the users in order to attend to their demands.
 - Dimension 3: The professional staff. It is clearly of great as value to be able to count on professionals who are responsible for services. Attention must be given to how this can be maintained. .
 - Dimension 4: The public space. This has become a key element for maintaining social integration in the community. It is within this dimension that a sense of belonging is created along with the foundations for collective responsibility for public affairs. The strategy for this point assumes the importance of the channels for citizen participation even if this leads to a co-management perspective.

The new setting for the public library

- **The stimulus of the new legal framework.** Public libraries in our country have undergone very important changes over recent years. The Catalan Library System Law passed in 1993¹ and especially the consensus that existed prior to its approval have stimulated the creation and improvement of public reading services in Catalonia. The number of public libraries is growing and, more importantly, the level of service is being improved and this service is being used more frequently. Library accessibility has been and continues to be one of the main keys to success in this service.
- **IFLA/UNESCO guidelines.** The new IFLA/UNESCO guidelines² for public libraries establish very clear parameters concerning their main spheres of action, to whom their services should be directed and how the space and services should be organised.
 - Spheres of action: access to information: support for training; encouragement of reading/cultural development; support for personal development: services for children and young people and a space for social interaction.
 - Access: library services are provided on the basis of equality of access for everyone.
 - The space: to the extent that there is an increase in the provision of services offered and accessed remotely, the physical space grows in importance as a place for meeting and social interaction for the community.
 - The importance of management
- **The information society and libraries.** In the era of the information society, libraries must incorporate information and communication technologies and they must be able to provide services which modern society demands and expects. According to the definition of the *UNESCO Manifesto* (1994) ,³ the public library is a local information centre which provides all kinds of knowledge and information to its users. The functions of the public library must be catered for by the library's digital dimension, above all because the main aim of all information policies is to facilitate access to information for all citizens.
- **Information, culture and learning.** The public library operates around three axes: information, culture and learning. These three axes do not relate to each other in a hierarchical manner but neither do they constitute parallel and independent lines. There are a number of intersections between information, culture and learning and the importance of these depends on the definition of certain models and their degree of development. The concept of a library that serves as the basis of diagnosis and consequent strategies is, therefore, the result of a balance between the three axes: the library as a producer, supplier and democratiser of information, the library as a place of learning and knowledge and the library as a nearby and accessible cultural space.

¹ "Llei 4/1993, de 18 de març, del sistema bibliotecari de Catalunya" ("Law 4/1993, of 18 March, of the Catalan Library System"). DOGC, núm. 1727 (29 de març de 1993). p. 2.217–2.222.

² *The public library service: IFLA/UNESCO guidelines for development* Prepared by a working group chaired by Philip Gill on behalf of the Section of Public Libraries. München: K.G. Saur, 2001. 116 p. (IFLA publications; 97)

³ *UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994*. This manifesto is available at: <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/unesco/eng.htm>.

The strategic spheres

Sphere 1. Services and spaces: diversification

- **Changes in the provision of services.** Catalan public libraries have increased and diversified their provision of services over the last five years. In addition to traditional services such as consultation and the loan of books, information and training services have been incorporated as well as special services such as support for cultural activities and home loan delivery for people with restricted mobility.
- **Incorporation of information and communication technologies.** Most libraries have introduced new information and communication technologies. The result of this process is that today, most Catalan public libraries have computerised their documental resources and these may now be consulted via the Internet. Many libraries have their own Web sites and electronic collections, and, furthermore, provide free Internet access, network contents with local digitised publications and user training. Some libraries have started to provide innovative virtual services such as a virtual reference service or virtual library for certain kinds of user.
- **New services, new spaces.** New needs and demands have arisen around public libraries' axes of intervention and these translate directly to the public library spaces. The introduction of new media, especially the Internet, has an effect on the building's spatial distribution. Similarly, other spaces are required for studying, meetings, self-access and continuing training. The public library's function as a cultural agent has also led to the generalised incorporation of multi-purpose library spaces for activities.
- **Spatial organisation of the public library.** The spaces within the public library are being reorganised to bring libraries into line with the new model. The idea of the library as a place only for study and consultation is therefore being reassessed. The spaces created in each new library building are more diaphanous and pleasant for users and they are divided into areas which make it easier for them to have a more diversified use.
 - *Reception and promotion area.* A communication and information space where users are initially received and where the loan service is located for the whole library and to which is connected the more informal spaces such as the magazine section.
 - *General area.* An area subdivided into two main areas: one devoted to the documental resources available for loan and one devoted to the information service. This latter area also houses the music and image section.
 - *Children's area.* An area acoustically isolated from the rest of the building and which is increasingly being differentiated into two separate areas in order to help develop two specific aims of this area: a section devoted to learning with documental resources covering the various school subjects and another devoted to works of the imagination and fiction, where stories and informal reading play a major role.
 - *Internal services.* Libraries now usually have, not just a store room, but suitable work spaces including a manager's office and a space for the technical processing of new documents.
 - *Multi-purpose space.* This space enables the library to carry out the various activities it hosts. The lack of such a space is one of the most notable deficiencies of most libraries in terms of complementary spaces..
 - *Work spaces* for collective use.
- **Organisation of the collection.** The collection is organised by subjects, regardless of media and follows the organisation of the spaces described previously. Without denying the need for a public library to have a collection which is of general appeal, the library's specialised information is of increasing importance in function of the nature of the surrounding area. On the basis of this, we consider two significant changes: firstly, the prioritisation of the greater and better display of resources with free access and secondly, the strengthening of thematic interest groups. The organisation of the collection reinforces the interest groups in such a way that it creates spaces dedicated to a particular topic.
- **Libraries and the urban setting.** Throughout this period, there has been a movement away from the use of any available spaces as libraries to the construction of purpose-built premises in combination with the re-use of buildings of historical or heritage interest. The library building is becoming identified as a public

space rather than being considered a neutral space in the urban fabric of the city. Concurrently libraries are ceasing to be considered as a library-as-warehouse.

Sphere 2. Professional staff: a profession undergoing change.

- **The people involved in the services.** Organisations which offer a product which is, in large measure, a service rely heavily on people. The satisfaction of library users depends, not only on the space and the resources, but also on the people working there.
- **The librarian's profession.** For the purposes of this report, librarians are considered to be those people working in the library even if their specialist or professional training has been in another discipline. This is what citizens perceive and this is our starting point too. The report attempts to demonstrate how, in parallel to important changes in citizens' perception of services and the introduction of new technologies, important changes are taking place in staff profiles.
- **Human resources and basic services for the community.** The growing importance being attributed to libraries is such that greater demands are being made with respect to quality, for example, the request for longer opening hours to better coincide with citizens' leisure hours. This fact determines even more the thorough-going review of the human resources situation in the public library and the make-up of staff, their stability, training, attitudes and, above all their respect for the user in order to guarantee a final service which is the right one.
- **The library and staff under the umbrella of the administration.** The fact that public libraries have developed mainly under the umbrella of the public administration has had an effect on the service and staff.
 - It has guaranteed continuity and at the same time citizen's equality of rights with respect to access to information.
 - It has created teams of professionals that conform to the characteristics and regulations of the administration. More direct involvement has been a problem for the management of the centres even when making the most elementary decisions to make the service coherent to users.
 - Posts have been filled in accordance with administrative levels. Over the years, the administration has established structures in accordance with academic qualifications.
 - Two significant problems have arisen. Difficulties regarding staff stability and coherence and the need to have ready access to multidisciplinary staff.
- **Staffing levels.** International recommendations, applicable according to the size of towns or cities, indicate that libraries should have one full-time member of staff for every 2,500 inhabitants. In Spain, population levels determine human resources levels: cities with populations greater than 500,000 have an average of 7.8 staff per library while municipalities with populations between 2,000 and 5,000 have an average of 1.8. In the Barcelona province according to the latest data, the average is 4.7 per library.
- **The confusion between labour rights and the service principle.** The fact that, in many libraries, the staff working hours coincide with the hours the library is open to the public means that there is a limitation on the kind of tasks they can carry out (any kind of activity outside the library such as meetings, training or other activities are impossible during working hours). At the same time, there is often a confusion between labour rights and the service principle that leads to strong resistance to proposals such as that of extending the library's opening hours or providing services on Sundays. If demand exists, and a good level of sustainable use is predicted, a way must be found to strengthen the service and give it a new projection.
- **Tasks and functions.** While it is true to say that a library's tasks and functions are largely determined by the fact that it belongs to a network or works in isolation, it can be stated that, in general, most of the following positions are occupied in most libraries:
 - **Management:** undertaken by a trained librarian. The main task is to ensure the smooth running of the organisation, global planning for the service, facilities, economic administration, organisation and administration of the library's human resources and relations with other institutions. Other more technical tasks might also be assumed such as collection development, for example.
 - **Implementation team:** consisting of librarians and/or library auxiliary staff. In the case of small libraries they tend to be made up by managers working alone. The main tasks of these teams are those proper to the profession: the organisation of services, the selection and acquisition of documents, attention to users, the organisation of activities, promotion, statistics etc. Thanks to networking, tasks such as cataloguing and classification have, in large measure, been reduced, freeing staff to devote more time to users and the final service.

- **Technical and/or administrative support staff:** In libraries with a large number of staff, there are usually specialists in various branches of the profession who carry out support tasks (administration, computing, cultural promotion and so forth). They also often carry out tasks concerning the maintenance of the collection such as the physical processing of documents amongst other tasks. For the most part, libraries have support staff in areas such as access control, loading and unloading material, correspondence, photocopying and so forth. In addition to this, they all have staff whose task it is to maintain the building and the facilities as well as for cleaning. In most cases, this is organised through contracts with the municipal administration.
- **Administrative needs in the new centres.** The creation of new, larger facilities with new service perspectives has created the need for clarity and skill in library management.
- **Selection, a key process.** It is necessary to consider the way library staff are chosen. (1) Advertising: the ways in which a vacant post is announced often has more to do with internal administrative systems than with truly open advertising. (2) Citizen perception: Citizens have little knowledge about the profession and the tasks carried out in libraries. They consider the work has many inconveniences such as the working hours (Saturdays, late evenings) and difficulties getting to the place of work etc. (3) The appointment process: through administrative career internal appointment, associated with the promotion process, or through open examinations focussed on technical and highly-specific knowledge, far removed from the actual task required.
- **Academic studies and qualifications.** Although librarianship qualifications have a long tradition in Catalonia, not everyone who works in a public library has internationally recognised professional academic qualifications. University studies as such are relatively recent in Spain and generally throughout the territory. Over recent years these qualifications have ceased to be considered a three-year university degree course and are now considered a five-year degree course. The possibility also exists of studying a second course in documentation once studies have been completed in any other degree course. Doctoral degree courses are also organised.
- **From regulated training to the work place.** The academic training required to work in a public library varies according to the region of Spain in question. It can be stated that the administration in Catalonia is one of those in which libraries may not be managed by staff without the requisite academic training in librarianship. The Library System Law of Catalonia (1993) allows for an auxiliary technician to manage a branch library. In the State Public Libraries (one in each provincial capital) management is by a degree holder who has studied any subject in a 3- or 5-year degree course and who has also passed specific civil service examinations and may be assisted by a number of support staff called 'library assistants'. Few municipal advertisements for assistant librarians recognise the value of the work to be carried out. In some cases, only certification of secondary school education is required.
- **Continuing learning.** Attention must be paid to staff's continuing learning. For some time now the learning process has been generalised and there is a good supply to which professionals give ample support. In this profession, it is quite normal for people to compensate for an initial lack of academic qualifications by means of training courses devoted to their academic and technological development

Sphere 3. **Management: planning, organisation and communication**

- **Planning of library facilities.** The public library planning process has been characterised by a number of different factors::
 - *The Library System Law* of Catalonia (1993) makes it compulsory for municipalities with a population over 5,000 to provide a public library in accordance with the criteria set forth in the

- Base Law on Local Administration⁴ and bases the policy of the creation of reading facilities on the ‘. “Map of the Public Library Services of Catalonia”
- **The importance of the regional setting.** Despite this shortage, at a regional level planning studies and associated investment programmes have been carried out and this has been the case in the province of Barcelona. The library parameters and the functional programmes drawn up by the Diputació de Barcelona Library Service⁵ have been especially important over recent years and have become the norm for all new projects undertaken in the province of Barcelona. The functional programmes are adjusted to the standards and needs of each district. Taken as a whole, they are clearly of key importance as a defining and consensual element between the various parties involved (politicians, technicians, architects, librarians, etc.).
 - **Centralised planning.** One of the drawbacks encountered by the cultural sector is the difficulty of working according to standardised and homogeneous models which do not respond to local idiosyncrasies. At the present time, libraries’ fundamental administrative referent is still not entirely their local settings but the body of criteria common to the libraries network. In this regard, the role of the Diputació de Barcelona Library Service, and more recently, the Barcelona Consortium of Libraries, has been essential: Their expertise and strategic abilities have given the entire library sector a global coherence, better techniques and a central reference point while at the same time establishing a leadership that has, perhaps, hampered the role of the municipalities despite the fact that public libraries are increasingly seen as municipal facilities and form part of the cultural policies of each and every municipal council.
 - **Standardisation: strengths and weaknesses.** The fact that libraries have had to fulfil a clearly-defined brief and that they have been considered the most fundamental cultural facility has led to an excessive rigidity and uniformity which have hindered strategic planning. Even though central planning accepts the need for libraries to be more individual, this should not be considered the main motor of change but rather as the consequence of a wider-ranging objective: to respond adequately to the needs of a given situation.
- **The organisation and administration of the facilities.** The library facilities organisation and administration diagnosis includes the following:
 - **Cohabitation rather than cooperation between administrations.** In Catalonia, the actions of the various administrations have been concurrent in the sphere of public libraries. With regard to staff, this has led to, at least, the following problems: (1) staff grievances concerning unequal treatment; (2) little coordination regarding global plans (3) a feeling of dependence by staff on the contracting institution rather than on the institution of the library as such, leading sometimes to tensions between and confrontation of interests.
 - **The network: a hierarchical and specialised organisation, in different states of consolidation.** Existing library networks are different from what would ideally be a network (characterised by the existence of multiple referents and with multi-directional relation) insofar as they have a fundamental (or unique) referent and relations which tend to emanate from, or be directed to, the same node. The importance of Town Councils should not be forgotten in the administration of public libraries. In networking, we must distinguish two levels of relations which are in a different situations with regard to their consolidation:
 - Work amongst equals, including (1) other libraries (this is the most consolidated area due to the efforts of the Diputació de Barcelona Library Service and the Barcelona Consortium of Libraries. Library networks in these territories have a formal relationship framework which makes it possible to maintain permanent contact with the other centres); (2) other active agents in the sphere of information, learning and culture (where contacts are still at an early stage and very specific).

⁴ “Llei 8/1987, de 15 d’abril, municipal i de règim local de Catalunya”(“Law 8/1987, of 15 Abril, Catalan Local and Municipal Administration ”). *DOGC* No. 832 (27 Abril 1987), pp. 1563-1592.

⁵ “Paràmetres bàsics de biblioteca pública”(“Basic standards for public libraries”). In: Bailac, Assumpta (coordinator) (2002). *La biblioteca pública a la província de Barcelona: un treball en xarxa*. Barcelona: Diputació de Barcelona, Servei de Biblioteques. p. 67.

- Work with the immediate surrounding area which depends on the characteristics which define it—the situation each territory finds itself in—or, in other words, those agents present there. There is also room for improvement in these relations.
- **User participation.** Within this general framework there is a certain isolation and note should be made of the progressive opening that has been seen towards the agents closest to users. One of the results of this process has been the constitution of the locally-based Reading Commissions which have made it possible for library users to participate directly in their activities. This is a necessary initiative which responds to the citizens' demands, but in practice it is insufficient.
- **The diversity of structures and the complexity of facility management.** The administration of library facilities has become more complex for a variety of reasons:
 - Very varied staff structure.
 - Larger libraries need to be managed by a more complex combination of staff.
 - New local management models: The start of local library networks, in many cases based on the establishment of a central urban library, requires a detailed consideration of the right relationship between the services, the collection and the spaces included in the different kinds of library. The next step is the definition of an integrated network management system which goes beyond the individual management of each facility.
 - The commencement of libraries' cohabitation with other information services in the same building which requires greater prior planning in order to create synergies and economies of scale in the management and the definition of joint services, but which complicates their management
- **Publicly financing, expense structure and type of management.** Public libraries are publicly funded. This funding comes from a number of sources: town councils, provincial councils, and the government of Catalonia. For their part, the libraries devote most of their outlay on paying staff, then on maintenance and acquiring the collection. Budgeted expenses for activities are very little. A closer examination enables a first conclusion to be drawn with regard to administration: there is little outsourcing and what outsourcing there is, incipient. The main burden is direct administration. In terms of perspectives, the conclusion is clear: there must be an increase in outsourcing to provide an answer to services that are ever more varied, specialised, complex, and, in many cases, of relatively short duration. The challenge is, therefore, to have the operational and financial resources necessary to enable this outsourcing.
- **Evaluation systems.** A clear expression of the current administrative model is to be found in the evaluation systems. Libraries are the area of culture that has the longest tradition of systematising data and drawing up evaluation indicators. Nevertheless, these indicators are not limited to their own aims but rather, are indicators which make it possible to compare the various libraries on the basis that they all have the same aims. Comparability is obviously important and these indicators are of great usefulness. As a first generation of indicators, this is valid in the same way that homogenisation and standardisation are, possibly, prior conditions for the definition of specific strategies. Evaluation can not be considered, neither exclusively nor fundamentally, a question associated with users, loans or documents. Strategic management involves objective-related evaluation.
- **Communication.** In this management diagnosis we should close with a specific section devoted to underlining the theme of communication, under three headings:
 - **Image.** The dissemination of the public libraries' image has undergone exponential growth. Thanks to the fact that the task has been very well defined right from the start (backed up by a law), the function of the library has been widely disseminated and recognised. Today, everyone knows of the existence of libraries and their main functions. Libraries are one of the most commonly recognised cultural facilities and one of the ones most demanded by citizens who have been appraised of their importance. Throughout this communicative task, the Diputació de Barcelona Library Service, and more recently, the Barcelona Consortium of Libraries, have played a very prominent role. The indicators available to libraries verify the panorama that has been described. The number of visitors and users of the loan service and the Internet are growing year after year and doing so quickly.

- **Local knowledge.** If libraries' communication and image enjoy good health, when analysis is more specific (knowledge about the libraries in a specific municipality), the degree of knowledge about them diminishes notably.
- **Marketing.** Leaving aside this widespread recognition, a closer focus does not reveal communication and marketing strategies associated with specific libraries and services. The tendency here should be to diversify the supply in the shape of new products and services and to segment users according to type in accordance with their demands and needs.

3. Bases for strategic thinking

*Services, Premises,
Professional staff
and Management*

Public administration in context

- **Public services and social change.** Given the scenario already described, it is clear that public administration is facing new challenges. In order to face up to them properly, strategic vision is needed. Public services have their *raison d'être* as services to society. Given this starting-point, it is clear that as society changes, so too must the services and, by extension, the way they are managed. It is a commonplace that social change is happening at a dizzying rate and often public bodies are not flexible enough to adapt swiftly to the new circumstances. It is on these areas of divergence, sometimes more temporary than others, that strategic thinking needs to be focussed.
- **A new social scenario, a new paradigm and new challenges.** If we take society as it was in the mid-20th century as a starting-point, social diversification has become, today, a self-evident fact. This is the result not only of increasing heterogeneity, but also of personal and social awareness of difference. A new social landscape is imposing itself, that makes the public measures of the past obsolete. From this point of view, the natural tendency is to ask how and to what extent public services must change in order to respond to these new demands on the part of society. Now, the strategic proposal at this point is to rediscover the inherent logic of public services and change the objective under consideration: instead of thinking what services we want, we should be asking ourselves what sort of society we want. The focus of attention, therefore, shifts and the point of view changes, on the basis that services should be the “output” that is the necessary response to the “input” that is society, through the mechanism of public management. The basis of strategic thinking must therefore be articulated around a change of paradigm.
- **The strategic aim: rethinking policy.** The challenge of such a diversified society is how to maintain the sense of community, of belonging and of responsibility, respecting difference.
 - **The public.** There is no doubt that what has to provide a common point of reference for such diverse people and situations must be a common feeling of identity, that maintains the tensions between personal autonomy, the will to avoid inequality and discrimination, and the right to be different. This must be the field of action of public services: it must be the stage for, and at the same the first and last aim of, planning and management. Individuals and social relations must be the focus of attention: the citizen is not merely a producer with political and social rights. Individuals are citizens from the political, economic, social and cultural points of view.
 - **Policy.** In this context, the strategic design of administrative actions must necessarily allow the incorporation of an element, policy, that was forgotten in the mid-century context. It is clear, therefore, that at this time and without the introduction of certain values and a degree of strategic design, public management becomes self-referential. It is necessary, therefore, to incorporate policy and people. And when we refer to policy, we do so recovering and re-inventing new meanings, that are currently impaired; we refer to a policy that (1) allows the creation of identity and a sense of belonging to society; (2) is in the service of society and hence becomes the framework for responses to the problems and opportunities generated by social change. From this point of view, policy has a key role in the redistribution of costs and incomes that any profound change will bring about. Thus we must ensure that policy generates the conditions that offer people the greatest real possibilities for using their freedom. Equality becomes the aim of policy and of society.
- **The library: public space, collective responsibility.** Throughout this context, libraries become a key element because of (1) their capacity to serve the community, contributing identity and relationship in a public space in which people can connect and relate with one another and (2) provide ever-better access to culture. Hence, the library, far from losing importance in the world of the new technologies, as some have suggested, strengthens and enriches its role to the extent that it contributes to strengthening the affirmation of people's identities and condition, and to the extent that it has capacity for inculcating a critical autonomy. Libraries can be instruments in policies to counter social exclusion and, above all, provide a key space for the public: they are the community's public spaces. In this context, the challenge is to continue to generate value while understanding that the library is now no longer merely the competency of public authorities, but rather a collective responsibility.

Services and premises

- **The information society: opportunity and challenge.** The era of electronic information is well under way. It has brought with it dizzying changes, opened up new possibilities and generated new needs and expectations amongst the public, but at the same time it has brought about new shortfalls. Not all citizens have the same opportunities to access information; simultaneously, the great ease of distribution and access to information has brought about a new functional illiteracy: that which affects people who do not know how to use the Internet. That is why it is so important for the libraries to provide training. The introduction of electronic information systems and services marks the beginning of a series of changes in and challenges to the traditional library services. In this context, what is known as “computer literacy” is one of the services that has spread most in recent years. The information society poses a new strategic challenge for libraries to offer access to information for all, free of charge, hence improving citizens’ quality of life and their exercise of democracy, as well as to offer suitable training opportunities.
- **From physical to virtual service.** The information society represents a new scenario in which the “atom”, something tangible, becomes relatively less important in comparison with the “bit”, in comparison, that is, to information and above all to services. As we have seen, this fact has direct effects on the libraries, which have to consider how to go beyond information management as it has been done up till now, increasing the range of media in which information is stored, working in a network, ensuring that users are equipped to access all the information and generating innovative services adapted to the needs of an ever-wider range of users. In other words, to understand the library as a service and not merely as a space. The library must offer its services both physically and on line; it must have a double dimension, both physical and virtual.
- **A diverse, multicultural society.** The public library must be prepared to redefine its functions and redesign its services in order to respond to the needs of a multicultural and diverse society and cooperate with actions for social cohesion.
- **Integration into the community.** The public library must work to establish long-term alliances with other institutions in the community it serves. Suitable information services must be provided to meet local information needs. One of the fundamental principles underlying the planning of the library service must be to make it suited to prevailing needs, taking account of the need to design *à la carte* services, personalised services and services for particular sectors, as well as the need to offer the public library service outside the physical constraints of the library itself. In the final analysis, mechanisms must be found to answer certain local demands, but to do so from the point of view of the city as a whole. The possibilities for interaction offered by information technology—and hence the possibility of enriching the interactive process between user and library—must not be overlooked, in order to suit services to specific demands.
- **The promotion of culture and reading.** Social changes and the library’s new educational role create the need for fora shared with other professionals involved with books: publishers, booksellers, teachers, writers, educators, etc. Such contact should lead to joint actions, involving the public administrations and the various professional sectors, in order to promote reading with real and effective campaigns.
- **Guaranteeing rights and resources.** Libraries must ensure a balance between the rights of the creators of information and the rights of citizens to access it. The political framework must ensure that libraries are sufficiently equipped to be able to offer all citizens the maximum access to information resources, independently of their financial and educational status. Library collections are a key aspect of this. The libraries must have sufficient, suitable documental resources. Furthermore, a sufficient level of resources must be available to maintain the services over the long term.
- **The municipal information centre.** The public administrations must understand the public libraries as a municipal information centre which offers access to information and knowledge, giving them an essential and privileged role. The libraries of the future must become a central, basic cultural facility, the place where information becomes knowledge and which serves as the coordinating backbone for the municipality’s different information services.
- **The presence of the TIC in the libraries** makes it necessary to integrate them into the design and configuration of the facilities, making them better suited to adapt to technological change. It is therefore necessary to continue to think in terms of very flexible buildings in order to incorporate these changes.

The professional staff

- **Change in the service, change in management, changes in professional staff.** The changes that organisations, particularly service organisations, are undergoing at the moment, are generating a set of forces that are driving the transformation of the professional librarian. The change in the public library's specific strategic aims can be summarised by the fact that the institution is ceasing to be centred on the product (the sources of information) and is being centred on the citizens, in support and dissemination services and the provision of access to information for citizens. This change affects everyone who works there, but it particularly affects the managers or head librarian, who become managers of services rather than managers of documents. All together, it is provoking an interesting debate about whether professional library staff should specialise in other areas, which may be useful to them in the performance of the tasks that are entrusted to them.
- **Professional teams: new tendencies and new profiles.** The tendency must be for public libraries to have ever more diversified teams of staff and offer ever more diversified services, while establishing an equally-flexible new form of management that allows them to adapt to the new demands of society.
 - **Multifunctionalism and jobs.** The current tendencies in the design and structuring of the workplace recommend multifunctionalism and the avoidance of excessive specialisation, with the consequent routine and reduction of workers' motivation. In this regard, public libraries are well positioned. The multiplicity of requirements and services are such that library staff have to cover a variety of fields and functions.
 - **Training: diversified and continuing.** IFLA recommendations consider it necessary to have several levels of training in one library. The present evolution of libraries is orienting this view towards a wider range of possibilities, profiles and requirements. In general, there is a tendency to form teams that incorporate specialists in various fields and external partners.
 - **Professional profiles and management: specialisation or diversification? Knowledge or attitude?** A debate is currently in progress regarding the capacity and skills of those trained in library studies to cope with the management of libraries, insofar as such studies are more focussed on technical issues than on those of management and administration. A debate is in progress about professional profiles: in the library service there is an awareness that valuing the abilities and attitudes of the "candidates" is investment in the future. All in all, it implies a more global focus for professional profiles, which are seen as closely linked to the organisation's strategic lines, which define the team's tasks, abilities and training process.
 - **Professional competence.** Rather than by academic qualifications and administrative grade categories, professional profiles and jobs are defined on the basis of the so-called "competence model". This model takes account of the following: (1) linking the management of human resources to the characteristics of the organisation and its lines of strategy; (2) reinforcing those abilities, aptitudes and behaviours that are most akin to the organisation and its strategy for the future; (3) generating an interrelationship between all the aspects that make up the management of human resources: (selection process, structuring of the team, learning on the basis of the institution's development and strategy, monitoring, control and assessment process) and (4) orienting the necessary training to the workers' requirements in accordance with the tasks they are to perform.
- **Technology, professional staff, services and users.** A tendency can be observed to diversify professional profiles so that staff will be able to respond effectively to the needs of users who differ in age, gender and place of origin. With the development of the new technologies library staff are recovering, to some extent, their former mediating role as experts in research and access to information. To achieve this, staff need ongoing recycling in all those aspects related with the use, structuring and dissemination of the resources offered by the Internet.

Management

- **Library model, management model: the strategic planning of library services.** When the library goes beyond the model of operation that consists almost exclusively of information management to one that seeks to strike a balance between three axes (information, learning, culture), strategic management becomes a necessity. Change in the library model and change in the management model are two aspects of the same process. The new management model must take account of the needs that arise when new services are offered and must be based on a personnel structure involving multi-skilled staff.
- **Organisational culture and resistance to change.** The library manages information, and this is the backbone of its work. To do so, it is organised on the basis of a management that is specialised in information handling. This management can hardly act as a driving force for change if such change reduces its role in its field of specialisation. The importance of, and the need for, a new library model must be transmitted, through positive discourse, right from the planning stage. Hence, a process for change must be defined that takes account of these relationships: the library model, strategic planning relating to the district to be served and organisational culture: none of these elements can change without the other two changing also.
- **Autonomy.** If the present management model is based precisely on centralised management, the new model must tend towards autonomous management. Planning must be based on the setting of specific objectives for each library, designed to meet the real needs of those they serve. Only if public libraries are granted a certain degree of management autonomy will it be possible to implement the proposed new services. They must become, to a greater extent, agents, which are coordinated and related to one another by their own *modus operandi*.
- **Resources.** It is a fact that resources are needed if libraries are not to abandon their present role but rather extend their fields of influence, if the services they offer are to meet the challenges posed by the new technological paradigm. It seems commonly accepted that there is a need to establish relations with economic and social agents that will allow cost-saving and financing mechanisms to be created (sponsorship might be an example), improved management and an approach that would allow charges to be made for certain services.
- **The library service and the local environ.** In order to meet the new challenges facing the public library, and in order for the library service to meet the needs of the community of which it forms part, more and more municipalities are having to undertake planning processes that take account of the new library model that combines various elements: (1) *Central location:* there is, and there will continue to be, a commitment to large central libraries in large and conspicuous centrally-located buildings, with good communications; (2) *Networking* at local level, in which the net spreads outward from the central library to the branch libraries, that bring the library service close to the citizens; (3) *Off-premises library services.* The library needs to have a permanent off-site presence; (4) *More integration of the various facilities* and services offered in the same building: adult education, cultural dissemination, archives, etc. and (5) *More on-line services.* Taken together these measures will turn public libraries into meeting-points and community centres.
- **The role of the municipal councils.** The library as a neighbourhood cultural centre is only possible if city councils play a greater role in the definition and management of projects. The library is a central feature of local cultural policy; hence, the strategies it adopts must fit in with municipal cultural policies.
- **Flexibility.** This is an absolutely necessary condition which synthesises the import of all the others. The concept that best describes our current situation is complexity. In view of this complexity, there is no future for rigid solutions which, in the final analysis, are an expression of simplicity. This need for flexibility must be understood by supralocal administrations when it comes to the application of the rules and standards for services, which are applied in a generic manner. Municipal councils must also be flexible, as it is they who must find the place for participation by libraries in civic cultural debate, moulding it to their specific needs. And in the last instance, flexibility must be practiced by libraries and library staff. As they perform their duties, they must be able to cope with a concept of the library that is more integrated into the district it serves and plays an important role in strategic planning. As the need for such flexibility comes upon us, and in accordance with the needs of each library, there needs to be debate about the professional profiles of all library staff.

4. Lines of strategy, aims and actions

LINE 1. THE LIBRARY, CULTURAL CENTRE OF THE COMMUNITY

The library ought to be the cultural centre of the community, a meeting-place where culture and leisure are promoted.

Aim 1. Increase the accessibility of spaces and services.

- As a public space, the library must be oriented towards users' needs with a view to improving the accessibility of spaces and services. There needs to be an in-depth review of factors such as **the length and times of opening hours, the conditions for access to the various services and the loan systems**.
- The public library of the future **must not be limited in time or space**, offering its services any time, anywhere. Through the use of points of access to the network (electronic information kiosks) located in easily-accessible places, libraries can offer their services, publicise new features, and provide access to municipal information and the Internet.
- Particularly in large population centres, the public library has to be able to offer the maximum possible number of services **24 hours a day, on a self-service basis**. Drop-boxes for document return need to be generalised and automated lending machines installed in central libraries. Services should be launched such as the lending of some part of the stock through machines similar to those used by video clubs, or the online reference and information service.

Aim 2. Reinforce the quantity and quality of the collection

- The library's collection is becoming ever more important. A good collection is one that is sufficient and suited to the users' needs. Resources devoted to acquisition need to be increased.
- **New strategies for the configuration of the stock** will be implemented, regarding both the quantity and quality of the collection, such as the type of media used (CDs, videos, DVDs, games or databases).
- The traditional organisation of public libraries must be looked at again. The collection will be organised more in terms of **variable centres of interest and in function of the needs** of the population. Some of these centres of interest will be permanent or semi-permanent and others more temporary.
- There needs to be **greater flexibility of spaces and furnishings**, with a need for material to be exhibited in a very visually-attractive way.

Aim 3. Define new spaces for new uses

- As regards the physical spaces, there needs to be a definition of the content of the **vestibule and reception area**, making it something more than simply the place where lending services are centralised and where introductory information is available. It must become **the library's agora and show-room**, where the following services can be found: city information centre; public activities information centre; a place for meeting and exchange, etc. There will also be a central point at which payment can be made for those services for which a charge is made.
- Close to the vestibule will be the **more social areas** (bar, shop, restaurant...) and those spaces that will need to function while the rest of the library is closed (e.g., multi-media spaces, study areas and multi-purpose spaces).
- The presence of these noisier areas **makes it necessary to design spaces that are more reserved and silent**. These quiet areas need not necessarily be coextensive with areas for formal consultation.
- There must be provision for the **various needs and how they will coexist**. This fact calls for the definition of spaces in terms of the most suitable building materials, in spite of the increase in cost this might imply.
- We believe that the production of some services may be centralised, a fact that would directly translate into **the need to increase internal spaces**, particularly in the central libraries of local networks.

- The **copying service** that libraries usually offer ought to go one step further to offer other services such as binding, printing, label-printing, scanner, digital camera, etc.

Aim 4. Promote the use of the public library by young people

- New solutions must be sought for the fact that, throughout Europe, **there is a very low level of active library use by young people**. An answer needs to be found to the following question: should specific spaces apart from the library be created, or, alternatively, should such spaces be designed (probably with the participation of young people) within the library itself?
- The trend seems to be towards a clear differentiation of the remote service for young people, but a complete separation of the physical space is not regarded as the optimum solution. Everything points towards a **differentiated space**, close to the spaces for music, Internet and games and the informal spaces, with an **aesthetic that is visually attractive and inventive, with a view to creating a setting in which this section of the population can participate**.

Aim 5. Cooperating with social cohesion policies

- The public library must cooperate in social cohesion policies by providing information about the resources available, **promoting the value of citizenship**, making the library's spaces available to the public and offering facilities for better learning of the languages used in this country.

LINE 2. THE LIBRARY, PROMOTER OF THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

The library must become one of the key institutions for promoting the knowledge society in a democratic way at the local and global levels.

One of the fundamental aims of a library is, and must continue to be, to provide the public with access to the media and channels containing information of all types. To achieve this, services must be offered not only in physical space, but also virtually. It is here that great opportunities are open to the public library.

Aim 1. Offer virtual services and position the traditional on-line services

The library, in the context of the Information Society, must extend and redefine what it offers, creating new virtual services and positioning the traditional on-line services.

- The public library must provide the infrastructure and equipment needed to enable citizens to access the new technologies. Basically it is essential to provide **terminals for access to the Internet and other electronic resources**.

The following list, which does not pretend to be exhaustive, indicates some of the key services for the present and immediate future of public libraries:

- **Library Web site.** The library (or the network of libraries) must have its own Web site to provide updated information about the library and the services it offers, a contact e-mail address and a link to the catalogue. The library Web sites act as portals to new virtual services such as: home loan services; electronic newsletters containing news and information about new services; bulletin boards; specific portals for specialised library resources; virtual loans; access to databases of local information; services for special groups of users: children, young people, older people, students, shopkeepers, businesspeople, ...
- **Virtual reference services.** The arrival of the new technologies has made it very simple to offer information services, which until now involved a personal visit or the use of the telephone, virtually via the World-Wide Web (using forms), with e-mail-based conferencing systems.
- **The value of on-line catalogues.** On-line catalogues, consultable via the Web, facilitate consultation and promote the availability of library resources to any user anywhere. Such catalogues are the first step towards developing new services based on the latest technologies, for example: *alert services* (using e-mail or mobile phone text messaging (SMS) to advise users that the resource they reserved has become available, that their loan is overdue, etc.); WAP (the rapid spread of mobile telephony, as well as new applications for connection to the Internet offer libraries a great range of possibilities, such as catalogue access).
- **Personalised services.** As well as creating electronic directories and guides with information for specialised groups of users, libraries' Web interfaces allow for the creation of personalised intranets, personalised interfaces to the library Web site, personalised digital libraries, etc.
- **Advice and recommendations.** To the experience of library staff can now be added the new possibilities that technology offers: public libraries can create virtual advice services such as lists of recommended authors, reading guides, debates on books, chats, reviews of books by the users themselves, etc.

Aim 2. Develop the library as a reference centre for life-long learning resource and support for educational processes

- The public library must be a **doorway to learning** for the great majority of its users, creating new points of access to knowledge, home learning and continuing training. Insofar as **training becomes a strategic question**, with key importance for our immediate future, libraries will become key facilities for the provision not merely of information, but also of education.
- Given their educational role, public libraries must provide a suitable infrastructure that will facilitate continuing learning throughout life and **support for all levels of formal education**. They must have sufficient multimedia resources (as well as other types of documents such as books, periodicals, etc.) for home learning.

- Libraries must participate as **active agents to avoid the digital divide**, promoting actions that will enable the information society to be a collective project in which there is a place for everybody. The first step is to ensure that users are trained in the use of these technologies: it is necessary to provide the space, equipment and specialised staff to enable people to learn how to use the new digital media. The introduction of TICs should favour the introduction of made-to-measure training models suited to the diverse needs of users and designed for specific groups.

Aim 3. Promote libraries as nodes of the knowledge network

- In view of everything that has been discussed, libraries must configure themselves as nodes of the knowledge network: the **points of reference and interchange with a broader knowledge network** that integrates a variety of knowledge-related facilities and institutions.
- **Develop the library as a gateway to the Open Administration.** It is necessary to facilitate the location of spaces for access to and communication with the local administration in the library. The local administration must regard the library as the municipal information centre from which access is provided to information and knowledge, endowing them with an essential and privileged role.
- From the library, users must be able to access information about the place where they live, communicate with local authority officers, draw up their own information or help in the provision of local information or other services. In this way, the public library becomes a **public information agency**, with news, both general and of interest to particular groups, which will eventually acquire the role of a multimedia workshop.
- Insofar as the local library takes on the role as the primary source for local information, it will be enabled also to act as a **resource centre for the other public libraries**. As well as being a provider of local information, the library will become a coordinator and producer of it. The physical spaces of the public libraries must enable this differentiating factor to be stressed.
- The library must become a **content publisher** on the basis of various mechanisms, such as: the creation of e-journals, bulletins and other services produced by the library itself; subject-specific guides and digital dossiers; content digitalisation, particularly of local collections; the creation of databases, etc. Content publication must go beyond merely bibliographical information. It should include codes of best practice for schools, businesses, etc., and contribute to the production and dissemination of municipal content (regulations, minutes of council meetings and municipal budgets, for example).
- Libraries must provide the resources for the **dissemination of scientific and technological culture**, as well as for the swift location of questions of a more specific nature, establishing relations with research and knowledge centres.
- The libraries must be active agents in cooperative programmes for the promotion of reading. Libraries' collections and activities are two essential elements for the implementation of this function.

LINE 3. LIBRARY STAFF, THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND CHANGE IN THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The motive force provided by library staff is one of the key lines of strategy to stimulate change in the public library as an organisation. The role of professional staff, their training and continual recycling, their cohesive attitude, their cooperation with other institutions and their commitment to service: these are the key elements if we are to steer the public library as an organisation towards a more efficient, more dynamic model, more integrated into the community it is to serve.

Aim 1. Develop different professional profiles

- The **new libraries** and **new services** call for different professional profiles. Management of the library calls for management skills. The new service and the technological setting call for technical abilities ranging from system librarian to information-providing and prescriptor librarian.
- Within this framework the **key factors for establishing future plans** are: (1) management leadership; (2) commitment to the principle of service, working under the principle of responsibility as a privilege and not as a burden; (3) integration in the community and "in the world", reinforcing the fundamental role of professional library staff as a link between citizens and local agents; (4) observation of social needs and the adoption of appropriate action in consequence of them (5) incorporation and adoption of changes in circumstances.
- **Library management** has a key role with respect to the rest of the team, as a driving force behind change, stimulating processes of improvement and the constant innovations that any service requires, generating the necessary *esprit de corps* to achieve this and bolster possible initiatives. The **library manager must be identified as the person in the municipality who is synonymous with the library**. Management leadership needs to be reinforced as a key factor to implement the institutional and relational task and insertion into the community, as well as constituting a cultural referent in the municipality. Within the library structure, management must comply with a professional profile with management and administrative skills.
- **Regularise the selection process for technical library assistants, with an appreciation of the functions they are to carry out**. The functions of technical library assistants must be defined for the local administration as a whole and requirements must be established that will be applicable to all public libraries.
- It is vital to achieve a **more interdisciplinary team**, with a broader and more flexible personal profile, in order to have available more resources linked to particular services or groups of users, based on **cooperation between experts** in various fields and from other institutions.
- Putting the **professional competence model** into practice is somewhat complex, since it requires specific modifications to the organisation. External advisors are often brought in, although the financial cost of this is substantial. Since more and more institutions are putting it into practice, advantage should be taken of the experience gained by those that have begun to do so.

Aim 2. Deepen relations between the training process and the labour market

- A match has to be established between the fundamental knowledge acquired in **formal training and the needs of the labour market** in the immediate environment. Some steps towards this would be: links between the university and the world of work (work experience and grants with related aims, participation in projects, direct experience of the professional world, cooperation between staff working in the service and teachers, free choice credits linked to the professional world,...); training syllabus in accordance with real needs in the workplace; continuing professional training in keeping with the institutions' strategic plans; exchange of staff between libraries and benchmarking between libraries.

- Processes of **continuing training** must be established for current staff, to enable them to cope with the new needs that are constantly arising and motivate their link between the workplace and the institution. It is necessary to go beyond the rigid training dynamic based on courses in favour of other resources adapted to staff's real needs and requirements.

LINE 4. IMPLEMENT THE NEW MANAGEMENT MODEL

When the library goes beyond the model that is practically limited to the management of information and adopts a model that seeks a balance between three axes (information, learning, culture), strategic management becomes a necessity. The change in the library model and the change in the management model are two aspects of the same process. The new management model must be cognizant of the needs that arise in function of the new services that are offered and must be based on a personnel structure suited to multifaceted professional profiles.

Aim 1. Enhance strategic territorial planning

- Each library must be planned in accordance with the specific characteristics of the district it serves. In this way, **each library has its own differentiated profile**, not because of a generic desire for individuality, but because it must **meet the needs and suit the characteristics of the district it serves**. Planning is needed, and this means defining explicit aims and implementing a series of projects and actions to put them into practice. While each library implements a specific strategic plan, these plans must in turn be integrated into the wider framework of overall strategic cultural planning of the city or municipality.
- **Develop the Library Master Plan as a tool for strategic planning.** The development of the Library Master Plan in the municipality must allow for the definition of specific aims for each library, aims that will meet the needs of the district it serves. The drawing up of the Plan will help to configure and better define the model adopted by the local library network.

Aim 2. Promote “library network” models at a local level

- **The local network model must be implemented in municipalities with more than 30,000 inhabitants.** There should be a differentiation of functions, services and collections between the various facilities, on the basis of close local networking. Nonetheless, the greater complexity in the treatment and dissemination of information and the need for the production of information, require that the production of some services be centralised even though they are offered on a decentralised basis.
- The local networking model must make possible **a document collection policy for the municipality**, in accordance with the information and reading needs of its citizens and the aims/services and programmes defined for the library. Differentiated collection policies need to be established for the central urban library and the branch libraries.
- The network must be made up of various agents in accordance with the two main aims set forth by the strategic plan: **to make the library into a neighbourhood cultural facility and a cultural facility for the whole district.** Hence, to attain these objectives, libraries need to network not only amongst *equals* (the other libraries), but also with the other agents that are present in each of the fields in which libraries work (local information services, training centres, cultural facilities, etc.).

Aim 3. Modify the basis of the organisational model

- Progress must be made towards a **new organisational model** characterised by a management administration model, heavily based on **innovation** (understood as the constant review of annual objectives, and of the services offered to users) and with a clear tendency towards **descentralisation**, though without renouncing the advantages that accrue from centralised planning.
- Evaluation is the last key element: the management model must lead towards the carrying out of an **evaluation in terms of the specific objectives** of each library. In order to make this possible it is necessary to: (1) design indicators (of impact, effectiveness, efficiency and quality) for each of the objectives defined beforehand; (2) quarterly and annual evaluation.

- The public library must allow for horizontal and not pyramidal structures in the day-to-day management of facilities and services. It is necessary to **seek mechanisms through which users can make suggestions and proposals** that could improve management, a channel of communication and participation.
- It is becoming necessary to change traditional structures in order to achieve **greater flexibility and make it possible to adapt the service to the dynamics of its environment**. This exchange must bring about positive changes in the structure of the team, in its way of working, in the way its members relate to one another, in cooperation between experts in different fields and with other institutions, etc. The support of the institutions involved is needed, both for management and the results obtained, and for the preparation and implementation of plans, or the strengthening of the library's involvement in the district it serves.
- In the end, each library needs to adopt a **specific communication plan**. The services offered are little known to most of the public as a whole, even to those who are themselves library users. Libraries have to think how they can attract users: diversifying what is available, segmenting users by type; providing facilities for non-users, etc. The library needs to "move" to where the potential users are. The Plan must take account of specific individual circumstances and incorporate the use of new technologies.

Aim 4. Finding new complementary sources of financing

- **Effective management, productivity and cost-reduction** are the result of the proper application of strategic planning. It is a question of analysing in detail where cost reductions can be made (eliminating all superfluous expenses) and instigating a gradual cost-reduction process. Productivity will be improved through the greater effectiveness and efficiency that result from good planning and improved management.
- **Charges to members of the public** for certain services may constitute a **new source of income**. It is a question of charging for those services that a library can offer with high added value, services such as low-level subject searches, consulting services, training courses or the home loan service, as well as services that complement the core library services.
- **Exceptional income** can be sought through the establishment of a whole series of closely-related **peripheral services**, that can be implemented within the library itself. Such services can be offered as concessions or directly. A copying centre and a bar would be two examples.
- **Sponsorship** should be understood as something to be applied in very specific cases. Hence, minor sponsorships could be considered for certain new services or products that the library might offer, simultaneously helping to consolidate a brand image for these products or services.
- **Get the best offers with the library ticket**. Come to agreements with other cultural agents under which users can obtain "other" advantages and the library benefits from such agreements with those offering services and activities.

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