

DEMOCRACY WORKSHOP

9/11/2022 Brussels – PL2030 – Lisbon Libraries Network

1) Presentation

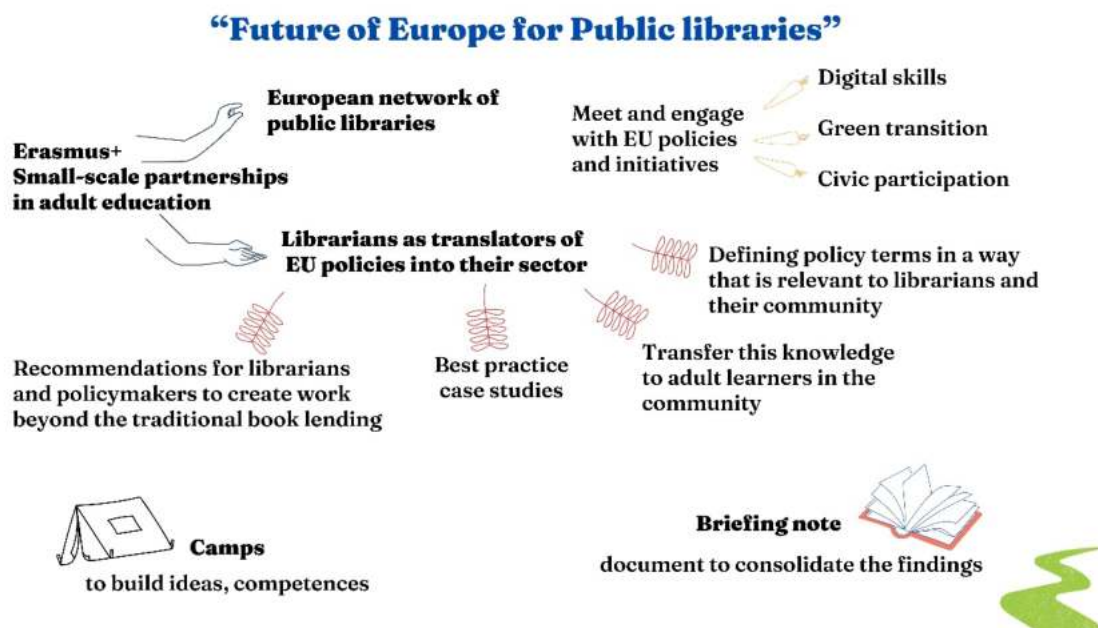
Short round of presentation: name, profession, one mistake or lesson learned recently

2) Context

What we investigate: Democracy

Summary of the FEPL Project

Ideas for our positioning: Power charring, Rough Guide to Citizen Engagement in Public Libraries




3) “Present Action” Exercise

Present Actions

WHAT DO LIBRARIES and LIBRARIANS DO to promote democratic values/societal changes?



What works best?
Solutions/Lessons learned 



What didn't work?
Errors

What did you want to change and have not succeeded?

What do Libraries and Librarians do to promote democratic values/societal changes?

- Library councils on strategy, advocacy and communication
- Democratization of knowledge
- Reaching unreachable audiences
- Plurality, not neutrality: avoid neutrality, talk about plurality (diversity of opinions, but also other aspects of plurality)
- Information/welcome sessions for refugees (Ukraine, etc)
- Peaceful school: educate people to solve issues with respect for each other
- Libraries as ARENAS where citizens and politicians meet; starting point: local topics; starting with the concerns of citizens themselves, not address "political topics" – get the community perspective
- Debates for groups of children – help children exercise these "debating skills"

What didn't work?

- Cultural changes are hard
- Expecting that participants have all the competencies
- Inform the community about buildings, activities and services
- Empowerment of people to have debating skills is maybe more important than organizing a debate
- By asking communities about their needs for a new library, they also give input for a better community in general

What works best?

- Collaboration of school to school programs
- Targeted training
- Debates

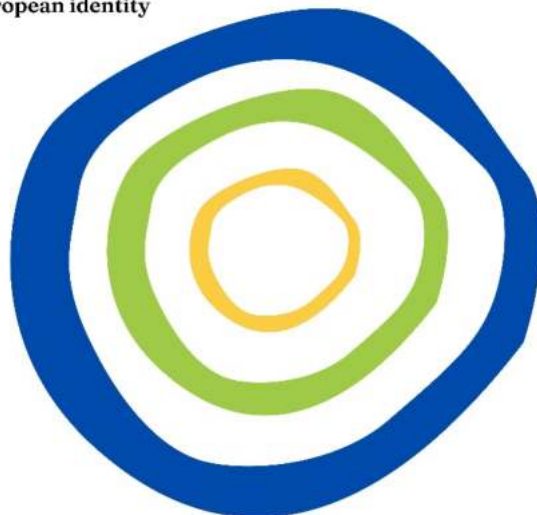
- Simple rules
- Get groups to see something non-commercial
- Reliable info thru experts
- Start with a small step, get people to listen
- Teen conversation cafes
- Start with non-controversial topics
- Libraries have to be reliable but reach out for expert knowledge
- Spaces for dialogue / Avenue of exchange:
Democratic values + social changes
Talks around common table focused on small issues with the aim to encourage listening + paraphrasing
Youth council: sitting council of youth representatives that gets counseled + can submit issues to the local council
Interval dialogues: round tables, music remixes, poetry, political comics, info-lit for vocational school learners
- Health Ireland: health literacy program trough books + events, workshops, lectures with health experts
- Well informed community about buildings, activities and services

4) “What do we see coming” exercise – 2 groups

[ITONICS Explorer](#) | [ITONICS Showroom](#) - [Trend Radar](#)

WHAT DO WE SEE COMING?

Globaly and also in regard of community development, democratic participation, and European identity



- INFORMATION (deciding on what is truthful)
- PUBLIC HEALTH
- IMAGEM OF THE LIBRARY as a reliable place

- CHANGING THE IMAGE OF LIBRARIES (both for librarians and for citizens) AS PLACES WHERE YOU CAN PARTICIPATE
- FIGHT CLIMATE CHANGE: circular economy solutions, library as an example
- FIGHT POLITICAL MANIPULATION
- FIGHT GENERATIONAL GAPS / DIGITAL GAPS between citizens (segregation)
- YOUNG PEOPLE: often changing profession
- HOW WILL LIBRARIES COPE WITH PLURALITY?
- REFERENCES: “Reconstructing Democracy - How Citizens Are Building from the Ground Up” (2020) Charles Taylor, Patrizia Nanz, Madeleine Beaubien Taylor
- <https://participedia.net/>

5) Opposite Thinking Exercise + Must-Haves exercise

Based on Board of Innovation resources
www.boardofinnovation.com

Opposite Thinking


**WHAT DO WE FEEL WE WILL NEED TO DO IN THE FUTURE
to promote democratic values or societal changes?**

 <p>Describe the project/idea/concept</p> <p>Example 1 Product : A chair with 4 legs Example 2 project : LGBT reading group</p>	 <p>Describe the opposite of the project/idea/concept</p> <p>Example 1: A chair with no legs Example 2 : LGBT non-reading group</p>	 <p>Describe a new service improved out of the opposite</p> <p>Example 1: chair hanging from the ceiling Example 2: A group that gathers around to talk, interpret, share experiences</p>
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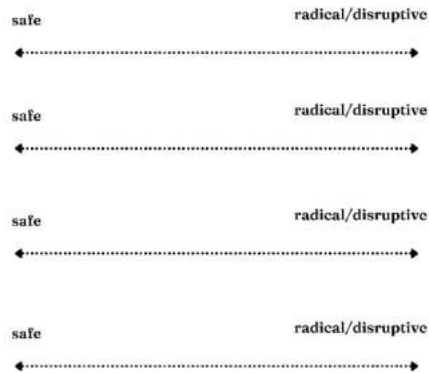
Must-haves

WHAT WILL WE NEED to make it happen?

 Service/
project/idea/concept

 Radical or disruptive?
Plot the idea on this axis

Must-haves 



GROUP A

Opposite thinking: Ideas, Projects, Concepts	Must-Haves
Service for young people around Climate change cluster	Disruptive. Access to experts for the auditing libraries (do you want to promote climate change?)
Training services for librarians to learn skills about relating with communities with real life experiences; get more open minded and try different things and learnings.	Safe. Lighthouse libraries. National level
All free of charge services	Between safe and radical. Advocacy for DATA. Other benefits. Impact studies.
Ebook lending (also connected to the sustainability issues: libraries wouldn't need to buy so many printed copies of a book (best seller, for example); reduction of paper	Business model (examples from Finland and Denmark) at a European level
Improve accessibility of services	Expert and Citizens surveys with local community
Meetings between librarians and the communities to understand what they want to know and then question the politicians / decision-makers on these subjects	Outreach for the community and close contacts with the decision-makers. Break the ice with "colder" municipalities.
Use new platforms of social media to communicate	

Group B

Opposite thinking: Ideas, Projects, Concepts	Must-Haves
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<p>“Democracy Developers”: people + staff in libraries who work to develop democracy activities and services, and inform other staff members with occasional outside support</p>	<p>Safe: New skills for employees to be “democracy developers” / “Community librarians” Policy / regulatory framework allowing flexibility Budgets</p>
<p>The opposite of this would be: a library with only collection, no contact with a public librarian</p>	
<p>Service improvement: Changing the perception of libraries to not only be about cataloging Result: 3 library projects</p>	
<p>Project 1: Collection pro not in branches</p>	
<p>Project 2: libraries with services + community outreach attitude</p>	
<p>Project 3: library of emotions with wellbeing librarians</p>	

References/Ideas for inspiration:

The first thing that power destroys is our ability to desire change.

Paul B. Preciado

The question must come from the field.

Rita Segato

The space of chaos is a more unpredictable space, a more difficult space, it is a more complex space. And I think what best represents the space of chaos is the street.

María Galindo

Who told you to ignore the street?

Luís António Simas

A person is walking through their neighborhood and suddenly notices something that should be improved. If there is a place in the community that allows this person to present this idea, share it with others, gather with neighbors (known or unknown others), and work to achieve this envisioned change, it's a new road that opens up. Suddenly the city becomes something modifiable and re-appropriable.

Marcos García

The Conference of the Future of Europe 2021/22

Anti-poverty strategy	Child and Youth Guarantee	Minimum income	Equality of rights, including health
Decent social housing	Transparency of EU action, including trade negotiations		
Support throughout the lifecycle to increase demographics	Anti-discrimination in the labour market (social partners should be closely associated)		Media literacy and awareness about disinformation and fake news (school trainings)
Encourage interactions between migrants and EU citizens			New citizens' participation mechanisms
Citizens' assemblies: on the basis of legally binding EU law, periodical, random selection of participants (with representativeness criteria)		Cooperation between EU legislators and civil society organisations / between decision-makers and citizens	
Improving EU contact points local level / "Houses of Europe": to provide resources, information and advice, engage in debates to help spread citizens' views			Development of EU decision-making process: increase involvement at local, regional and national level.

The Conference of the Future of Europe 2021/22

40 members + Multilingual Digital Platform

Working groups:

- Climate change and the environment
- Health
- A stronger economy, social justice and jobs
- EU in the world
- Values and rights, rule of law, security
- Digital transformation
- European democracy
- Migration
- Education, culture, youth and sports

