DEMOCRACY WORKSHOP


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

“Future of Europe for Public libraries”

- European network of public libraries
- Meet and engage with EU policies and initiatives
- Digital skills
- Green transition
- Civic participation
- Defining policy terms in a way that is relevant to librarians and their community
- Transfer this knowledge to adult learners in the community

Recommendations for librarians and policymakers to create work beyond the traditional book lending

Rest practice case studies

Briefing note
document to consolidate the findings

3) “Present Action” Exercise
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; stating 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

4. INFORMATION (deciding on what is truthful)
4. PUBLIC HEALTH
4. 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?
- https://participedia.net/

5) Opposite Thinking Exercise + Must-Haves exercise

Opposite Thinking

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

Describe the project/idea/concept
Example 1: A chair with 4 legs
Example 2: An LGBT reading group

Describe the opposite of the project/idea/concept
Example 1: A chair without legs
Example 2: An LGBT non-reading group

Describe a new service improved out of the opposite
Example 1: A chair hanging from the ceiling
Example 2: A group that gathers around a talk, share experiences
**GROUP A**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposite thinking: Ideas, Projects, Concepts</th>
<th>Must-Haves</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Service for young people around Climate change cluster</td>
<td>Disruptive. Access to experts for the auditing libraries (do you want to promote climate change?)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Safe. Lighthouse libraries. National level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All free of charge services</td>
<td>Between safe and radical. Advocacy for DATA. Other benefits. Impact studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ebook lending (also connected to the sustainability issues: libraries wouldn’t need to by so many printed copies of a book (best seller, for example); reduction of paper</td>
<td>Business model (examples from Finland and Denmark) at a European level</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve accessibility of services</td>
<td>Expert and Citizens surveys with local community</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meetings between librarians and the communities to understand what they want to know and then question the politicians / decision-makers on these subjects</td>
<td>Outreach for the community and close contacts with the decision-makers. Break the ice with “colder” municipalities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use new platforms of social media to communicate</td>
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**Group B**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Opposite thinking: Ideas, Projects, Concepts</th>
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</thead>
</table>
“Democracy Developers”: people + staff in libraries who work to develop democracy activities and services, and inform other staff members with occasional outside support

The opposite of this would be: a library with only collection, no contact with a public librarian

Service improvement: Changing the perception of libraries to not only be about cataloging

Result: 3 library projects

Project 1: Collection pro not in branches

Project 2: libraries with services + community outreach attitude

Project 3: library of emotions with wellbeing librarians

Safe: New skills for employees to be “democracy developers” / “Community librarians”

Policy / regulatory framework allowing flexibility

Budgets

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 Garcia

The Conference of the Future of Europe 2021/22

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