



## Developing Librarian In-Service Professional Development Programme: Lessons Learned

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### Abstract

Last year, 2014, the opening of the new building of the National Library of Latvia took place being crucial event that pointed out the role of contemporary library in knowledge society:

- resource for learning throughout all person's life;
- venue for self-development and informal education;
- venue and resource for conversation creating knowledge;
- structured group of professionals facilitating knowledge creation.

Before the opening of the new premises the National Library of Latvia, who also fulfills the functions of methodologic and training centre for in-service librarians of the country, initiated professional development programme development. Programme consisted of modules in Information Resource Management and Marketing and ICT skills development.

The programme and teaching/learning materials were designed within the EU lifelong learning programme supported project where modules for professional development of ICT skills and Information Resource Management and Marketing were created.

The formal education system nowadays is not able to immediately react to the changes in ICT and Information Resource Management skills needed in contemporary librarian professional life, therefore programme creation addressed EU priority "Encouragements of cooperation between Vocational Education and Training and the world of work": in-service non-formal education is able to respond to these changes more quickly.

The Integrated and Blended learning solutions are tested in the context of two mentioned programme modules and solutions for the training organization using developed materials are adapted to the current situation of in-service teaching / learning.

The presentation will focus on the feedback received from staff training administrators, trained trainers / teachers and as well – from the audience.

### 1. New National Library building

In 2014 the new building of the National Library of Latvia was inaugurated. It is among the greatest cultural projects of the 21st century in Latvia and as well – the first public cultural building constructed in the independence period after the fall of iron curtain and the Soviet Union.

The building was designed to be both a striking architectural symbol for Latvia and a multi-functional structure that meets the needs of a modern knowledge based society. This state-of-the-art structure provides free and easy access to all the library's services, while offering a stimulating setting for research, study and the exchange of ideas. Under one glass roof, the multi-functional facility houses over 1000 reading places, shelf space for the library's entire active collection (over 6 million items), extensive provision for research, a modern conference centre and exhibition area.[1]

Starting the work in the new building has been a challenge to hold on and develop new concepts of role of library as a crucial part of lifelong learning for all society: library and its collections traditionally is a resource for learning throughout all person's life; library is a venue for self-development and different [informal] educational activities – starting with exhibitions, public lectures, organized events and ending with both – organized courses in information literacy and occasional learning with subject librarian - consultant. And of course, library is not only collections or "space", this has always been structured group of professionals facilitating knowledge creation and helping their users – guiding them through the jungle of different information sources.

### 2. Librarian professional development

Librarian profession has changed immensely along with the huge change in world of information.



“Libraries are changing. Many changes are driven by technology, but others are responses to societal opportunities and governmental pressures or are a result of deliberate attempts to reposition library services in relation to those serving similar needs [2]”. One of the most crucial challenges of course is the work with the new ICT technologies – to understand and exploit them and to be able to teach their use to library clients.

The enormous speed in which technology develops is demanding corresponding changes in library professional, librarian qualification. Because of this character of the speed of changes is not possible to accordingly quickly modify the formal education system. Furthermore the absolute majority of working library professionals has already gone through the formal education stage. Therefore the greatest responsibility for qualification improvement and enhancement, librarian professional development lies with the system of non-formal in-service professional development providers. The National Library of Latvia as the central hub of library development and methodological centre for all libraries of the country is also functioning as registered non-formal training centre for working library professionals in all Latvia. Since 1990 it has actively participated in different projects ensuring life-long learning for persons working in libraries. In 2008 the National Library of Latvia was registered in the Register of Educational Institutions of Latvia and its Learning Centre serves as a provider of in-service professional development for both – National Library staff and employees of different libraries and education organizations of Latvia.

### **3. Project for professional development**

The EU Lifelong Learning Programme funded project “Effective Training Tools Application to Qualification Improvement in the Library Sector” (ETQI) was initiated in 2012 and was focusing on vocational education and training at the work place. During the project the training materials for librarian professional development in two thematic groups:

- Information Resource Management and Marketing
- and
- ICT skills

were developed; in ICT theme trainers’ training took place and in Information Resource theme specialists from two national libraries (Latvia and Lithuania) approved the developed material and used this for piloting trainings in proposed modules.

The project consortium consisted of five partners - two partners represented direct target groups of the project – library professionals: the National Library of Latvia and Martynas Mazvydas National Library of Lithuania has work and training experience with direct target groups. Other two partners represented educational and research field with main focus on digital libraries, database of libraries and thesaurus management. The high experience and knowledge of University of Borås was the main basis for project outcomes in Information Resource Management and Marketing. Fifth partner, Baltic Computer Academy, had high competence in ICT skills and knowledge development which especially was significant during the implementation of new technologies at new building of library in Latvia.

### **3. Questioning library staff about preferable teaching/learning methods**

At the start stage of the project employees of 2 national libraries participating in project consortium were questioned about areas in which they would like to increase their competences and the preferred study methods. The responses were analyzed by Prof. Elena Maceviciute from Swedish School of Library and Information Science.

Most Lithuanian respondents preferred equal amount of time working with trainer and without, Latvians would like to spend more time with trainers and only 30% working independently. On the other hand only a minority would prefer to work only with trainers or entirely independently in both groups.

Library professionals in both countries preferred to be divided into the groups according to the level of competence.

The most preferred study method in both libraries is Enriched lecture, which is followed by Practical classes in Latvia and Cooperative learning in Lithuania. Case/situation analysis and creativity workshops score roughly on the same level in both libraries, though Lithuanians favour Group work (that appears in the third place). Latvian library professionals place Cooperative learning last and see discussions and debates as a more acceptable learning methods, while Lithuanians do not rank it highly.



#### 4. Trainers from the employees: lessons learned

During the project the training material was developed in two thematic groups:

Following modules in the thematic group Information Resource Management and Marketing:

- Legal Issues in Digital Libraries
- Building Digital Collections
- Digitizing projects
- Open Access Resources
- User Behaviour and Information Activities
- Library Marketing in Modern Society
- Information Resource Management.

In thematic group ICT Skills training material was developed in following modules:

- Information Security for Libraries
- Modern Presentation Skills
- Data Base Creation and Data Analyses
- Graphic Design and Layout Basics
- Image Processing and Editing
- IT Tools for Project Management.

After the pilot projects trainers were questioned using qualitative methodology, method - focus group; partially structured interviews.

Most of the trainers acknowledged that the developed material that was created without their participation in developing process can be used as the material to start with but not as a core to the teaching within the programme; they need to develop their own concept of the teaching the course. Training Centre director in the interview mentioned that the biggest difficulties in acceptance of the training material were for the trainers that are established specialists – experts in the field they are starting to teach to their colleagues.

The main lesson learned for developers of librarian professional development programme however was the concept of librarian-trainer definition. Actually librarian in his/her everyday work already is the teacher for all kind of library users and clients and becoming a trainer is not a changing professional specifics, but – deepening and developing already existing qualities.

#### References

- [1] Read at <http://gaisma.lv/en/national-library>; 15. 04. 2015  
[2] Brophy, 2000, 2007