



**Luckily,
there is
the library!**

The Way Forward
For
Public Libraries
2021–2025

Working within our values in a changing world

The Way Forward For Public Libraries 2016–2020 document defined the common values of libraries. Our value base has remained the same, but our operational environment has changed in many ways.

The Way Forward For Public Libraries 2021–2025 focuses on the changes around us, highlighting those operational methods that

will allow us to continue to provide equal, high-quality and modern services for all citizens.

We will pay attention to social change and global challenges in our operations. Our networking method will allow us to support the entire library network and share information and know-how across municipal borders.

Council for Public Libraries (CPL)

The Council for Public Libraries is a council based on regional representation. The council has permanent representatives from the libraries of Espoo, Helsinki, Hämeenlinna, Joensuu, Jyväskylä, Kajaani, Kokkola, Kouvola, Kuopio, Lahti, Lappeenranta, Mikkeli, Oulu, Pori, Porvoo, Rovaniemi, Seinäjoki, Tampere, Turku, Vaasa, and Vantaa. In addition to the permanent members, the libraries managing regional development duties select regional representatives. The region's libraries must be heard with regards to this selection. Linguistic equality should also be considered when choosing the regional representatives.

CPL coordinates the national cooperation of public libraries

and represents public libraries in matters related to the operations and development of the national library network. It also compiles commentary and statements on topical matters related to the library field.

According to law, municipalities are responsible for organising library operations, but the professionalism and influential reach of libraries are, first and foremost, the result of libraries' expertise and networking operations. With this publication, the Council for Public Libraries wishes to promote the equality of citizens as library service users.

Working group of the Way Forward For Public Libraries document

In spring 2018, the Council for Public Libraries decided that the Way Forward For Public Libraries 2016–2020 document had to be updated. The working group's appointment was decided by the CPL's executive committee, and the Council was included in the process through a survey and workshops.

Working group members:

Marita Ahola, Director of Culture and the City Library,
City of Vaasa

Aija Laine, Special Planning Officer,
National Development Services,
Helsinki City Library

Virpi Launonen, Director of Life-long Learning and Participation,
Mikkeli Regional Library → 2019

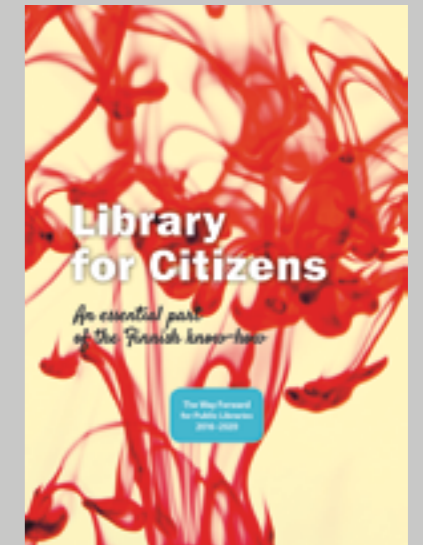
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Oulu City Library

Nina Sipola, Chief Librarian,
Rovaniemi City Library

Satu Soppela-Hyle, Library and Cultural Director,
City of Harjavalta

Katri Vanttinen, Director of Library Services,
Helsinki City Library



The Way Forward For Public Libraries 2016–2020 established operational methods for libraries, which are still relevant today. We recommend reading the old version alongside this newer document.
www.kirjastot.fi/neuvosto/suunta

Our library services are built on a solid base

Public Libraries Act

Libraries promote

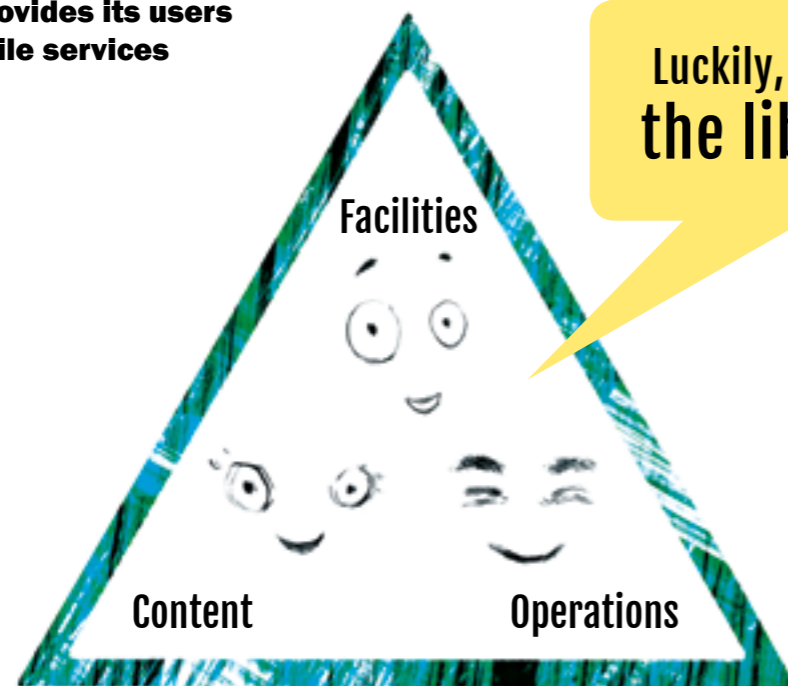
1. equal opportunities for everyone to access education and culture;
2. availability and use of information;
3. reading culture and versatile literacy skills;
4. opportunities for lifelong learning and competence development; and
5. active citizenship, democracy and freedom of expression.

In addition to the law, public library operations are defined by common values, which were established in the Way Forward For Public Libraries 2016–2020 document.

Values of public libraries

- Equality
- Responsibility
- Community
- Courage
- Freedom of speech

A library provides its users with versatile services



Our operational environment is changing

The operational environment of libraries has seen many changes in recent years. Global phenomena and unpredictable changes shape the operations of both individuals and organisations. As the library looks to the future, they should consider the effect of these various

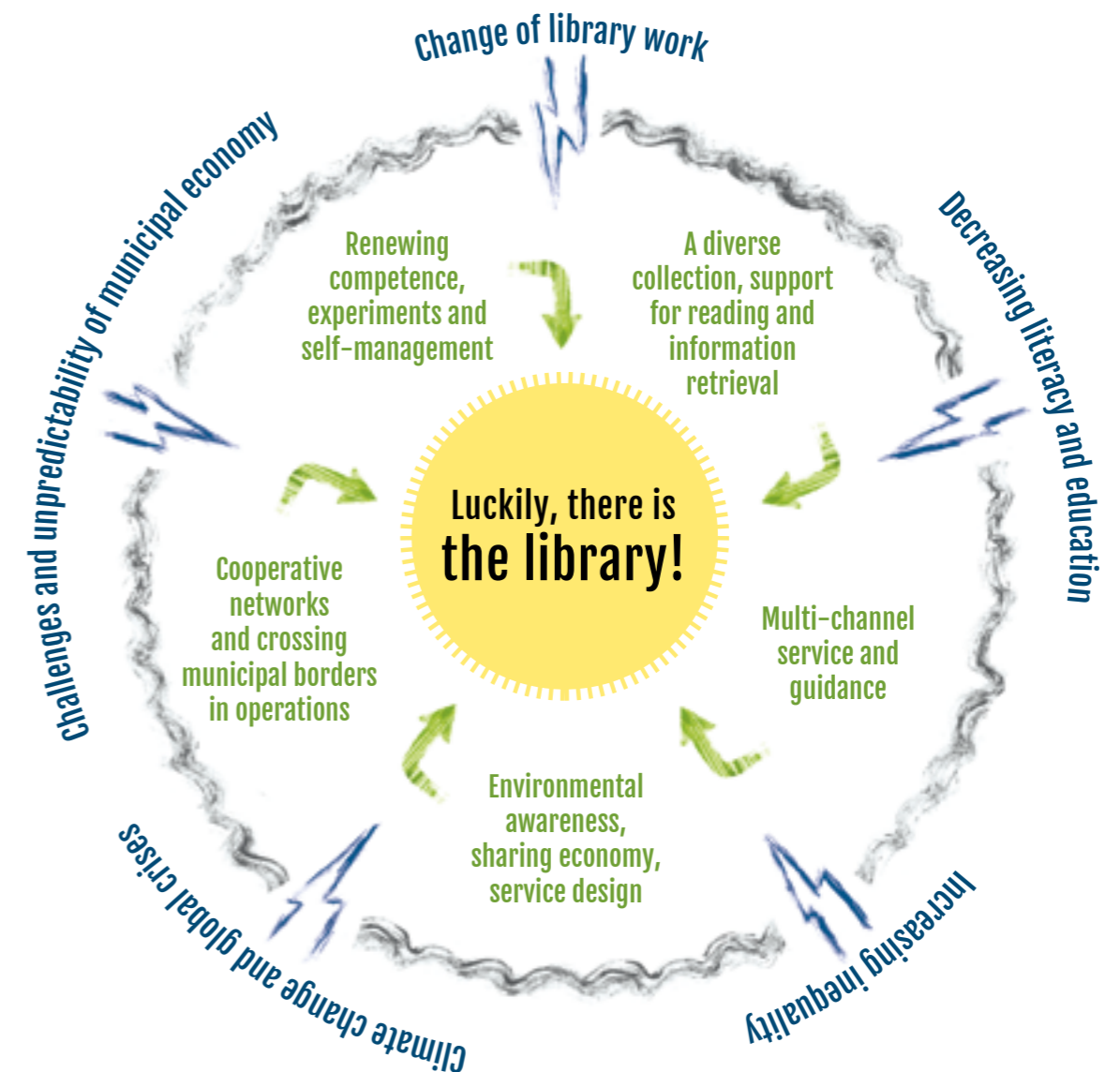
phenomena on planning the services.

Libraries will stand by their values even as the world changes.

We have highlighted some phenomena from among the changes taking place in our environment that will have a significant effect on

library operations in the near future. Such phenomena include the change of library work, decreasing literacy and education, increasing inequality, climate change and global crises, as well as the challenges and unpredictability of municipal economy.

The library will face these phenomena occurring in its environment by developing its operations and staff competence



We are preparing for changes in the library profession

Services are becoming digital.

The library will offer modern, digital services that meet the users' needs, and guides in using them. We can be reached through various channels.

Networking is becoming more important in library work.

In order to provide up-to-date online services, we will work together with other libraries and various municipal operators. We will also be able to utilise national competence and services in local operations.

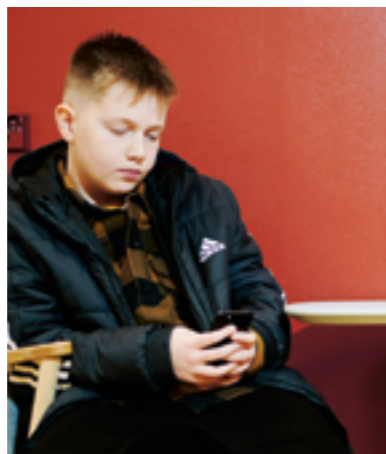
Pedagogic competence is needed.

The digitising environment requires new competence, both from us and our users. Our goal is to help the user to have the skills to do things by themselves.

The job descriptions of library professions will change.

Formal education provides the basis for library work, and renewing competence is a sign of a professional. Libraries must invest in experiments and self-management. When services are designed together through collaborative networks, the user will benefit the most. The library field should be in constant dialogue with the field's educational organisations, and the Council for Public Libraries will be an active participant in these discussions.

The library will provide modern services and guidance for using them.



Renewing competence is a key part of the job.



We will work together with others actively and extensively.



We safeguard literacy and education

The decline of reading as a hobby and the growing gap in reading skills must be prevented. The library's work for encouraging people to read is crucial in all age and culture groups. An up-to-date and diverse collection is the basis of this work. We work actively online, at events and outside the library itself. We are a professional partner in encouraging people to read.

Demands for information literacy will grow. Library will help its users to act as active citizens. Multi-literacy, media education and information retrieval skills are part of libraries' strategy and action plan, and they are also a part of the staff's competence development and the library's customer services.

The offerings of information content is constantly evolving. Libraries support continuous learning by providing information, facilities and tools. When new channels and operational environments emerge next to the traditional books and media, recognising high-quality, reliable content requires competence. The library reacts to social phenomena. The library's ability to assess information can be trusted.

We are actively present online and outside library facilities.



We also want to offer citizens digital content equally.



Access to content will become more unequal. Media paywalls will grow more common, and libraries' chances of offering materials online will decrease. Together, we aim to influence legislation and contract negotiations to ensure equal access to digital media across the country. At the same time, we will keep our competence up to date so that we can utilise online resources extensively and will also be able to guide our users in the use of online resources.



The library inspires people to read and supports the continuous learning of citizens.



We prevent inequality

An equal service, regardless of geography and culture, is our goal. The backgrounds and needs of users will become more diverse, and uniform culture will erode. Libraries must develop new, flexible service models that reach all population groups. The significance of outreach and mobile services will grow. Knowledge-based management, research and reviews are needed for the basis of decision-making.



The municipal economy is getting tighter and resources scarcer. Listening to the users and sincere dialogue with them help with decision-making. Reviewing the needs of different areas and groups within a municipality will help design services that suit the different population groups.



The library is a municipal service that decreases inequality.

The societal role of libraries will grow stronger. The library is part of municipal services, which is why its role is explored together with other municipal operators. Supporting participation, local democracy and including users and decision-makers in planning library services are part of library work.

We lead by knowledge, taking into account the regional and cultural differences.



We identify global crises and react to them

The need for information on climate change is growing. Libraries will react to this by highlighting researched information. Expert partners help libraries discover information sources. By working together as a network, we can produce topical events.



The library is an environmentally aware institution. Assessing the operations, reviewing the field's sustainable development documents and committing to responsible actions are part of library's strategy. We actively offer our partners the chance to use the library as a distribution point of information, services and commodities.



Unpredictable crises are to be included in predictions. Considering what could prevent the library from implementing its strategy will be included in libraries' strategy work. Critical resources must be identified and it must be considered how familiar methods could be replaced. The flexible solutions applied during the pandemic are a great mirror; what was done, why and how? We prepare for changes so that library services can also be offered in unexpected circumstances.

Knowledge-based decision making helps to prepare for unpredictable phenomena.

The library works in environmentally sustainable ways and supports sharing economy.





**The library is a well-being
service that is accessible in all
life situations.**

Council for Public Libraries
www.kirjastot.fi/neuvosto

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