

REPORT OF A CONSULTANCY

Understanding Library Field Structures

by

David Baker Consulting

December 2024

Document Reference:	IFLA: Understanding Library Field Structures
Authors:	Ian Chowcat, David Baker, Lucy Ellis
Document Date:	20 December 2024
Date Last Amended:	20 December 2024
Confidential?	Y
Document Status:	FINAL
Document Version:	1.0

Contents

- PREFACE 2
- EXECUTIVE SUMMARY 3
- PROJECT BRIEF..... 5
- CONTEXT 5
- METHODOLOGY 6
- FINDINGS 6
 - The concept of a library field 6
 - Case studies 10
 - Towards a typology 11
 - The role of libraries in public benefit projects 13
 - Comparison with other sectors: education and health 14
- USING THE TYPOLOGY 17
- RECOMMENDATIONS 19
 - Annex A – Overall Model 20
 - Library Field Structures for Contributing to the Public Good 20
 - Annex B - Benchmarking Components 21
 - Annex C - Tender Purpose, Scope and Requirements 22
 - Annex D - Case Studies 23

PREFACE

Overall Aims and Context of the Project

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), as part of its partnership with Stichting IFLA Global Libraries, wishes to develop the potential for libraries of all kinds to contribute to systematic changes across a wide range of policy goals. To do so, libraries in a particular country or region need to act together in a *library field*.

This project aimed to test out the concept and its potential application by discovering real-world examples where library fields have formed the basis of public benefit projects. To do so, David Baker Consulting (DBC) set out to identify the key factors which make for successful library engagement. We believe that the range and seniority of the voices heard as part of our research, together with the extensive desk research and the interactive workshops give a high degree of confidence in our findings. It is hoped that this report will enable the use of library fields as a central concept in future development of libraries.

Acknowledgments

David Baker Consulting would like to thank all those who took part in the project, whether as workshop participants, interviewees, or IFLA staff involved in the validation panel. A special vote of thanks is due to Stephen Wyber for significant input at all stages of the work.

David Baker, Ian Chowcat, Lucy Ellis

4 December 2024

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The concept of a library field has mixed recognition among library practitioners; it is a complex idea. Libraries are of differing types, with varying links to public policy goals - for instance, a public library may differ from an academic library in its mission. Moreover, who is included in a library field may depend upon context - it may include funders (statutory and voluntary) and staff trainers, for example.
2. What public libraries have to offer projects is likely to differ from academic libraries, as well as libraries of other types, as is their capacity to deliver. Although the concept of a library field is useful, the offer of libraries to public benefit projects needs to be made more concrete and specific than any blanket use of that term. The library sector is multi-faced in nature, and the idea of a library field needs to be handled with care.
3. When IFLA is thinking in terms of a library field as a delivery partner in public benefit projects, in practical terms this means different types of libraries acting together as a library system to make distinctive contributions within an overarching framework.
4. The key finding, then, is that library fields need to be constructed and animated as partners in public benefit projects, with a defined offer and a structure that enables them to participate in projects at a systemic, often national, or regional, level. Given the factors identified below, however, it should also be possible to prepare for the implementation of a library field by developing the framework of key factors described in this report.
5. We identified five key factors which are normally all found in situations where library fields have come together successfully as public policy project partners, functionally and institutionally. The field typically:
 - advocates for the library role
 - has a trained and prepared workforce with the capacity to deliver
 - involves a government department or agency responsible for libraries
 - includes a national body that can represent libraries themselves, typically a national library or a library association
 - partners with one or more agencies from the third or private sector that can provide funding and other expertise.
6. In constructing library fields that can become public benefit project partners, attention needs to be paid to the extent to which each of these factors, or their functional equivalent, is present in a form appropriate to the given context.

7. Our core recommendations are as follows:

Adopt the overall model discussed and described in this report (Annex A)

- a. Develop a toolkit, based on our framework of questions (Annex B), to enable library practitioners to assess what needs to be done in specific contexts to develop the appropriate competences, functions, and structures to be public benefit project partners within a library field structure.
- b. Carry out an audit, through IFLA offices and based on the Federation's regions to assess the extent of preparedness for full implementation of a library field approach. This will require detailed working through of the issues and thinking involved in assessing local readiness and the steps needed to build the required structures for partnership working. The toolkit should be used as the basis of this work.
- c. Promote conversations between library advocates in different countries and regions to share ideas and practice.
- d. Develop varied library field project exemplars, working intensively in selected countries or regions to develop the library structures and enable active involvement as public benefit project partners. This should be built on the work already done in the BSLA project.
- e. Identify 'library field champions' - library or library-related professionals - who can exemplify in practice how to construct library field structures that can enable participation in public benefit project partnerships.
- f. Carry out one or more qualitative benchmarking exercises across identified or putative library fields against exemplars or comparators, to enhance and develop recommendations b-f, and especially in relation to point c.

PROJECT BRIEF

1. IFLA believes that the potential value that libraries can offer to societies is not always fully understood or utilized for the greater public good. The Federation, as a global advocate for libraries, has already done much good work in the area, notably through its Building Strong Library Associations programme. In its 2024-2029 Strategy it has set the recognition of libraries as valued partners as one of its three impact goals, alongside building the capacity of libraries to deliver meaningful change at all levels.¹
2. The perceived lack of understanding or utilization of the library field concept at both a regional and a global level poses a challenge to their sustainability, not least because of the many major issues facing societies, along with competing demands on sources of funding. There are many examples of highly valuable initiatives conducted at micro level, such as among a local grouping of libraries, but the aim is to promote understanding of what it takes for libraries to be partners for change at a macro, system-wide level.
3. IFLA therefore wishes to understand the conditions under which libraries could be considered as project partners where public benefits at a system-wide level are promoted. The underlying hypothesis is that this occurs when a library field is sufficiently coherent and structured for libraries to act together and to be responsible recipients of funding from public or other agencies aiming to promote the public good. Annex C replicates the original project brief.
4. The aim of this project was to:
 - test out the hypothesis against actual cases where libraries have been participants in system-wide public benefit initiatives
 - produce a typological model which can be used to assess the progress of library fields towards the ability to deliver on overall goals in such situations.
 - identify potential barriers to success.

CONTEXT

5. Libraries, like schools and hospitals, exist in most countries across the globe. There are nevertheless significant variations in how they are organised and structured, and with different degrees of coverage, whether in terms of content or delivery. Libraries can exist at national or community level, can be public, academic, private or may serve specialist needs (such as parliamentary or legal libraries). While they often attract public funding, this is not invariably the case.
6. Traditionally the core role of libraries has been to curate collections of books and other print materials and to provide services to their users, principally access to materials and information. Libraries have always been places to discover and use resources, increasingly through digital approaches. As a result, the role of libraries and librarians has already changed significantly and will continue to do so. Some activities have been superseded, others continue albeit in a changed form, while at the same time new technologies open up new opportunities for libraries to contribute to individual and social well-being. Libraries are often regarded as valued institutions, because of their

¹ <https://repository.ifla.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/c4471267-0bbe-4499-9ee1-293be9420bbd/content>

contents, their services, and their professional staff, but they face the continued challenge of adapting to an internet-enabled world.

METHODOLOGY

7. The approach adopted was designed to ensure that project findings are grounded in actual experience and reflect a diverse range of national contexts and library systems. To that end we undertook research to identify real-world examples of projects in which libraries have participated, and which have sought to deliver wider public benefit outcomes at the system level. These formed case studies (listed in Annex D) from which we inductively identified key features typifying successful library actions at this level.
8. To verify and develop these findings we conducted three workshops with library representatives from Africa, Asia and South America, and carried out a range of written interviews with librarians from around the world. Details are given in Annex E. We have also consulted with IFLA staff and tested our findings in a validation workshop convened by IFLA [details to follow when it has happened!]

FINDINGS

The concept of a library field

9. The guiding hypothesis was that ‘choices about [library] field structure might affect the ability to deliver public interest goals at scale’ (from the original Request for Proposals).
10. To test out this hypothesis we needed to
 - a. understand fully the concept of a library field
 - b. see how it resonated with library professionals in different contexts.
11. We explored these points through interviews and workshops. We started with the view that a ‘library field’ was simply an umbrella term designed to refer to libraries in all their types within a specific context, typically national, but sometimes, whether additionally or alternatively, at regional or trans-national level.
12. This implied that the question of libraries as partners in public benefit projects was to be posed at the level of a single library system which could be organized to optimally achieve the potential public benefit of libraries. The issue was therefore how best to structure and organize that system.

Half of the workshop participants recognised they were part of a library field, but half did not. At present it is a nascent and emerging concept.

(Data analysis report)

13. Our work has revealed that this is too simplistic a view. It obscures important distinctions within the library eco-system which may make a real difference in terms of library engagement with public benefit projects. It is questionable whether there is, or ever could be, an ideal model. Rather the concept of a library field is more likely to be an elastic one that can be adapted to suit specific purposes and particular contexts.

14. We found:

- a. The concept of a library field had mixed recognition among participants.

In our country, we call it the library sector /area Through our federation, we seek to integrate all types of libraries. Since most of them are public, fundraising projects ... encounter legal and bureaucratic obstacles.

(Interviewee)

From where I am standing, as a small territory, we don't have a library association let alone belong to a field.

(Interviewee)

- b. What counts as part of the library field might vary according to national (or regional) context, as institutional structures affect how the field might be regarded.
- c. We perceived a tendency for people to think of an ideal type or model of a library field, including key building blocks such as a sponsoring government ministry, a national library, and community-based public libraries.
- d. This does not fit with the diversity of types of libraries or library systems: for example, academic libraries might have different relationships with the government and indeed with national libraries than with public libraries; the same for specialist and private library types; and public libraries have differing relationships to national and local government structures.
- e. The distinction between public and academic libraries can be an important one, not least when it comes to considering public benefit projects. The two types of libraries serve distinct purposes and make their contribution to public benefit in different ways. Some factors that make one type attractive to potential partners might not apply to the other. For example, public libraries can be open to the general community in ways which might not be possible or desirable for an academic library.
- f. It is also important to acknowledge libraries of other types than public or academic. School libraries play an important role across the world, though existing in many different forms and often more aligned to the education system than to libraries more generally. Other libraries perform specialist functions, such as serving parliaments, the legal profession, specific sectors such as for instance health libraries do, or particular industries or companies. These all can be thought of as part of a library field in the abstract, but the extent to which these diverse libraries can be drawn actively into the construction of library field partnerships, and the relevance of doing so, will vary.

- g. For some purposes, the idea of a library field might include not only libraries but also significant actors in non-library institutions. These may impact on libraries but are not libraries themselves, such as funding agencies, and those who train library staff. Whether these are counted as being inside or external to the library field will vary depending on context and purpose.
- h. Relationships between libraries (including public, research, and school libraries), and governments vary considerably. Some governments provide funding, some might directly manage libraries, others get involved only in school libraries and not with the provision or running of public libraries.
- i. A library field can be transnational, where libraries in closely related countries work together, perhaps on specific projects. And national libraries and their staff can have a role in formulating transnational standards and practices.

A library field could have an impact in securing the ability of libraries to lend digital materials within the same framework that we can lend print materials. This is a question of transparent, fair, and sustainable collection development and copyright frameworks for digital resources.

(Interviewee)

- j. Similarly, in some countries, such as Australia and the USA, there might well be a sense of a library field at state rather than national level, where state-level governance is strong, including through the state library. Diversity between library systems and policies also appears to exist in some countries where regional diversity is strong.
- k. Library funding varies, and this may make a difference. Academic libraries are funded differently from public or community libraries, which may have private funding for public benefit from, for example, philanthropists, or a ruling family. The motive for private funding for libraries is not always solely for profit. When considering libraries as partners in public benefit projects, an important question will be the extent to which money is already being provided for the contribution, or whether additional funding is required, and from where.

There can indeed be political interference from external organizations who may partner with libraries, depending on what part of the world you are in.

A library field can be national or transnational. In either case, there is something here about the mission and role of a national library within a library field.

Libraries are vehicles of change. We are not doing the change, but we are the platform.

(Workshop participants - collated)

15. What emerges from this critique of the library field concept is that it is a complex idea which needs to be deployed with some care. In very many settings there may be little sense of libraries forming a single field, and it would be artificial to seek to impose this concept from outside. If the concept of a library field can invoke commonalities between libraries of diverse types it can also serve to obscure significant differences between them. If the idea serves to refer to everything to do with libraries in a particular national or regional context, it equally should not be taken to imply that the field is organised or structured to act in a coherent way as a single entity. Diversity seems to be of the very essence of library fields. At the same time, there is reason to think that the components of a library field share common interests and can allow groups to act together to work towards shared goals even though there may be some differences within if not between some of those components.

The definition [of a library field] is visionary and aspirational and helps identify what unites libraries across sectors and geographies. But I'm not sure how to implement a structure that allows for systemic engagement between diverse libraries. It's clear to me that this is a very important question to consider: Why aren't libraries funded as drivers of economic, educational, and social benefit/change and how to change that?

(Interviewee)

Is a library field a keeper of standards as an association is?

Language is a big factor and can be a problem. For instance, persons in the Latin-America division in IFLA are not in touch with the ones in the Caribbean. So the latter missed a lot of the opportunities because of the infrastructure and the language.

The concept of library field breaks down when looking at the work of the Association of Caribbean University and Research Institution Libraries (ACURIL).

It's regional and it's across four language groups and a library field is trying to do this public benefit work.

(Workshop participants - collated)

Case studies

16. A key part of our approach has been to work up a typological model from the empirical basis of case study projects where libraries have been engaged at a system-wide level as partners in projects of wider public benefit.
17. To identify such projects, we drew two key distinctions.
 - a. Projects must be aimed at delivering change at the systematic level, which means, in the main, at national or regional level. Many good initiatives take place which have purely local coverage and impact. These are often very worthwhile but were not within scope for this project.
 - b. Projects must go beyond core library activity and aim for a wider public benefit to which libraries can make a particular and distinctive contribution, delivering a benefit which is not in itself about libraries or library activity, although these will contribute towards achieving that outcome.
18. Identifiable examples of such projects are not very plentiful, suggesting there are significant factors which limit library participation in such projects - a point to which we return below. Nevertheless, a range of projects were identified, and these are summarized in the table in Annex D. The table includes fourteen projects of diverse types. Two are in high-income countries and one has international coverage, with the remainder being in mid- and low-income countries.
19. The projects covered a wide range of policy goals including:
 - access to government services
 - expanding government services into previously excluded communities
 - education and skills training
 - employability training and support
 - literacy training

- digital literacy training
- health information and training
- libraries as spaces for civic events
- libraries as refuges and safe spaces, eg in anti-trafficking initiatives and in disaster preparedness and relief
- campaigns against female genital mutilation (FGM) and child marriages
- promoting gender equality
- libraries as vehicles for social integration helping to rebuild shattered communities
- training of librarians to support communities
- promoting cultural heritage

20. Typically, data about such projects in the public domain is limited, hence we were unable to identify their impact, other than from statements made by project participants and sponsors. What is clear is that there is benefit in thinking as broadly as possible about the contribution libraries can make to wider public benefit projects, whether as spaces and community resources or as providers of information, as sources of skilled professionals whose skills can be extended, as advocates for public causes, and as providers of the social and cultural capital on which community cohesion can be built.

21. In most cases these projects are built around the participation of public libraries. This may obscure the way that academic and other types of libraries make their contribution to public benefit projects, helping universities and other institutions make specialist knowledge contributions and supporting research. In many ways this is what academic and other specialist libraries are for, in addition to ensuring students or professionals can access the resources they need.

Towards a typology

22. The typology is based on a diagnostic model that used information from the desk research, interviews, workshops, and case studies. This identified the fundamental causal factors that need to be incorporated. Every case was unique, and, as a result, the respective value of each factor in the resulting typology varies. On occasion, for context-specific reasons, a factor may be omitted altogether. The model does not assume that structures are permanent: factors such as funding partners are likely to change over time and in differing circumstances.

23. How ready are libraries in any system to step up as participants in projects of public benefit? The typology should be regarded as a readiness model that provides a list of factors which need to be considered if libraries are to play a project partner role.

24. In consequence, we constructed the typology (set out below) inductively, identifying common key factors from the case studies. However, their selection cannot take place in a vacuum², but needs to be within a prior theoretical framework identifying the class of cases to be studied: the inductive process takes place within this class and aims to

² Cf Alexander George and Andrew Bennett, *Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences* (MIT Press, 2005), especially pp. 240-248.

analyse the key variables that interact to create the cases that have been identified. Cases were identified which met the criteria of wider public benefit; but within this the typology identifies the structures typified in each case where library participation was enabled.

25. A public benefit project that involves libraries as partners typically involves:

- **Advocates for the added value libraries can bring:** the specific contribution libraries make to achieving the public policy goal is identified and advocates, and advocacy channels have been created
- **Library workforce:** preparation, training and development of the library workforce is included
- **Leadership:** most often a national government department or agency that can catalyse the formation of a library field, typically a government ministry that has libraries among its responsibilities, but it may be a government department which has other responsibilities which identifies libraries as partners in achieving wider policy goals. In cases where the government is unwilling to play this role, for various reasons, another national body may be needed to play the leadership role.
- **National representation of libraries:** often the national library or a national library-related agency will be involved. This can be the national library, or library association, or association of library professionals
- **Third party agency:** typically, from the third sector, an NGO, foundation or charity, but it could be from the private sector, such as a pharmaceutical company sponsoring health education. This is often important as a source of funding but can also provide the bridge between the library field and other sectors in working towards public benefit goals.

26. These are all variable factors that contribute toward the desired outcome of libraries as partners in public benefit projects; and they are derived from case studies largely involving public libraries rather than academic or more specialist libraries. Each element plays a functional role in constructing the library field, with the institutional actors needed to either provide funding, or to provide the leadership and governance structures which can bring partnerships together, the partnership management structure to make them work over time, and provide suitable vehicles of accountability as well as delivery for public or third-party funding. While each individual case is in one sense unique, it is likely that each will comprise some configuration of factors which covers each of these typical factors identified from the evidence so far.

Identifying the wider impact libraries can make towards policy goals is the most important element.

(Workshop participant)

The role of libraries in public benefit projects

27. The core public benefit initiatives in which library involvement is desirable can include

- education and literacy
- public health
- climate empowerment
- democratic engagement
- job-readiness
- promoting civil peace
- social integration

28. If the goal is to see more library involvement in such projects, the key issue is not advocating for libraries as such, for there is plenty of evidence of national and local government agencies and NGOs taking action to fund and promote the provision of libraries and the extension of their services. Rather, the question to ask is what *added value* can libraries offer to such public benefit initiatives. Libraries already offer public benefit in providing access to cultural resources such as books and archives, and to information, although in a digital world they are not alone in providing all of this.

29. What are the reasons why libraries have been or might be engaged in such initiatives? Based on the case studies we have identified, libraries can offer:

- access to government services
- education and skills access and training
- employability training and support
- centres to promote digital inclusion
- health information and training
- health testing centres
- centres for campaigns to reform practices that undermine education and gender equality
- partners in developing community cohesion
- spaces for civic events
- refuges and safe spaces eg in anti-trafficking initiatives and in disaster preparedness and relief
- support for social integration helping to rebuild shattered communities
- fostering of scientific research and both technological and creative innovation
- protecting, conserving, restoring and promoting cultural heritage

30. To add to this list of real-world examples our workshop participants and interviewees thought that libraries could also provide:

- specialist subject knowledge and resource finding
- buildings and spaces based in local communities
- information literacy skills
- access to resources in relevant languages
- communication networks

31. In summary, libraries as spaces, based in local communities, staffed with information professionals, can support a wide range of public benefit goals. Often, this will require extension of their core activity and necessitate partnerships, funding and training. That is why the factors we have identified in our typology are important, and the following functions need to be an integral part of the field structure:

- advocacy of what can be offered to public benefit initiatives
- representation at the appropriate level
- partnership provision at the necessary scale to be engaged in system-wide public projects
- demonstration of reliability and the capacity to deliver in any partnership working (Are the required skills available? Are the structures in place? How easy is it for a central agency or body to commit the field as a whole? Will there be effective follow-through?)

32. This, we suggest, is where the concept of a library field has salience, as something that needs to be constructed in an appropriate way to allow libraries to play a full and effective role in public benefit initiatives to add the value that only they offer. A well-constructed library field can provide the partnership structures libraries need and the functions that need to be delivered for them to be seen as project partners and for them to successfully play that role.

It is a lot of work to make non-library partners see libraries as partners, as possible places to reach people, places where information can be shared. It is constant, everyday struggle for libraries to show us as more than just places for book lending.

(Interviewee)

Comparison with other sectors: education and health

33. In the light of our work, IFLA is right to suspect that the value libraries can offer to public benefit initiatives is not often being realized. We have suggested the factors that need to combine to allow it to happen. Is the library sector alone in being in this position or do other sectors fare better without the same barriers to being public benefit partners?

34. Comparative analysis with both the education and health sectors is relevant. They possess factors comparable to libraries: they too provide spaces based in local communities (schools, colleges, universities, training institutes; hospitals, clinics, health centres, doctor's surgeries) staffed by professionals (teachers; doctors and nurses). Although there might be differences of scale, libraries tend to be funded by governmental agencies and by NGOs as do health and educational institutions. That is

because in each case the services they provide are recognised as constituent parts of the public good.

35. Nevertheless, when we look back at the IFLA example list of public benefit initiatives (education and literacy, public health, climate empowerment, democratic engagement, and job-readiness) we would readily expect either education or health, or both, to be engaged in public initiatives in such topics. Why is it harder to find many examples of library engagement in them?
36. As an example of the difference, we cite literacy campaigns. When it comes to child literacy there is an obvious link with schools: it is schools that have the responsibility to educate, literacy is a key foundational skill, and teachers are trained to educate children. When governments or other agencies such as NGOs are seeking partners in promoting child literacy one would expect schools to be the first partner they would seek, but also for libraries to be involved in various potential ways: as providers of books, as supports of reading, as venues for literacy education, as teachers of book-related skills, as safe places for reading.
37. In terms of adult literacy, the expectation might be that libraries could be more engaged, as adult education provision is likely to vary widely. Here libraries might play all the roles they potentially do in respect of child literacy but also could provide teaching of literacy skills and be more prominent as a site of learning, as well as a promoter of the benefits of literacy.
38. Two caveats: firstly, this division into child and adult literacy is a basic one, as there are many sub-divisions, such as special needs education, education of prisoners, literacy aimed at the specific needs of deprived or excluded communities, and so on. Nevertheless, it is a serviceable basic division. Secondly, one should respect the professionalism of both library and education staff and respect that librarians are not trained teachers and teachers are.
39. Nevertheless in 2016 a UNESCO report found that ‘although literacy is at the core of most library activities, too often local, regional and national literacy goals and efforts are not systematically connected to libraries. As a result, these efforts fail to benefit from working closely with institutions that often have the long-standing trust of communities and already provide useful literacy services to children, youth and adults’³ Has anything changed? This report identifies libraries as spaces which can be family-friendly and thus provide support for literacy for pre-school and out-of-school reading.
40. An instructive case study is the Room to Read initiative⁴, an NGO for child literacy and girls’ education across Asia and Africa. They partner with schools, and their approach to libraries is to establish school libraries. For example, in Cambodia they partner with the Ministry of Education, in Indonesia with primary schools, with schools in Jordan, teacher training in Laos, and primary schools in Pakistan. The importance given to school libraries shows that libraries have a role to play in literacy, and there might well be local reasons in the areas in which they operate which militate against involving community libraries as partners. School libraries are of course part of a broadly conceived library field but are also very much part of the education system, and the

³ UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning (2016), *Using libraries to support national literacy efforts*, <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000246778> (accessed 29 October 2024).

⁴ <https://www.roomtoread.org/>

approach of this initiative is to understand weaknesses in child literacy as part of the failings of education systems not providing enough primary schools and primary teachers.

41. And this is the key lesson we would draw: when it comes to literacy, teachers and schools are regarded as the natural key actors in addressing the issue. Moreover, schools tend to be more directly under the influence of governments, and to have a higher profile there. School libraries, where they exist, will likely be a key part of literacy initiatives, but mostly not community libraries outside the school system. This might be influenced by lack of such library provision, but even where libraries exist, they are regarded at best as passive partners, relevant because of their core business but not actively engaged as project partners and funding recipients. Librarians are not teachers and are seen as having a different role, often to do with library services traditionally conceived rather than as potential active agents of literacy. This then goes back to some of our core conclusions: the importance of advocacy for the library among other public agencies, and of workforce development as appropriate to expand the library role (which in turn requires funding support).
42. Similar considerations come into play when we think about health institutions. A wider range of institutions (and individual players) may be involved in providing health information and education, but while libraries may be seen as places to go to find out about health issues they again tend not to be seen as playing a more active role. Yet they can also be seen as community spaces where health advice and care can be offered, where health professionals can be based, and as alternative 'non-official' spaces which may be particularly suitable for offering support that goes against traditional values. The professionalisation of health care means it has often moved out of community environments into 'official' healthcare settings. This mitigates against other fields, such as libraries, playing more than a marginal role in public health initiatives. In addition, health care is typically set up not only to enable co-operation but also to receive public and third-party funding. On the other hand, for health institutions to play a role in broader initiatives requires a preparedness to advocate for their role: eg that children in hospital might receive literacy help. Again, the key for libraries seems to be to advocate for their potential contribution, and to be willing and capable of library staff to step outside their traditional roles.
43. A further consideration is worth bearing in mind. We have recognised that often governments or other agencies promote libraries because of the value they intrinsically bring, though the main focus of this report is on the potential role libraries can play as partners alongside other sectors in delivering public benefit goals. However, a further possibility is that those other sectors, such as education and health and others, could become partners in projects to promote libraries for the public benefits they bring, as platforms for social transformation. This indicates how rich the benefits to libraries of their stepping up to play a wider and more systematic role in partnerships could potentially be.

USING THE TYPOLOGY

44. Bearing in mind what has been said about both the nature of the library field and the proposed typology, we are not proposing that the latter can be used as some sort of maturity model for measuring the structure of library fields. Library fields are too complex to be captured by such a model, and any model must be sensitive to the wide variations in local context.
45. Instead, we propose that the model be used to prompt questions which need to be addressed in seeking understanding of what inhibits libraries, particularly public ones, becoming partners in public benefit projects at a systemic level, and the issues that need addressing to promote a greater number of such partnerships.
46. We envisage a hierarchy of challenges for those in the library sector which need to be addressed to achieve the goal of building successful partnerships:
- a. Does the library sector have within itself professionals or professional organizations who can advocate for a library contribution to public benefit goals, and possess (or have the capacity to develop) structures, with the vision to range over the full range of benefits libraries can bring?
 - b. Does the library workforce have the necessary skills and capacity to engage in partnership working where this would be new to them?
 - c. Has the contribution that libraries can make been identified? What is the unique selling point that libraries can offer?
 - d. Does the library workforce have the necessary skills and capacity to deliver the envisaged library contribution, or is training and development needed?
 - e. Are there enough workers to make partnership working a practical possibility? Will partnership working bring in benefits that make sacrificing some core activity a net gain if that is necessary? (Ideally, of course, partnerships should pay for expansion and additionality)
 - f. Is additional funding needed, and if so who in the library sector will be responsible for managing it, and do they have the capacity to do so?
 - g. Is there an animating force or agency with sufficient weight and standing that can marshal the sector together and ensure all the above issues are addressed?
47. In advocating for libraries as project partners, libraries need to ask what is holding them back from being a recognised agent of public delivery. They should seek to ensure that potential partners have:
- a. an understanding of what libraries have to offer to policy goals
 - b. simple ways of working with libraries
 - c. sufficient assurance that libraries will deliver
 - d. evidence of achievement

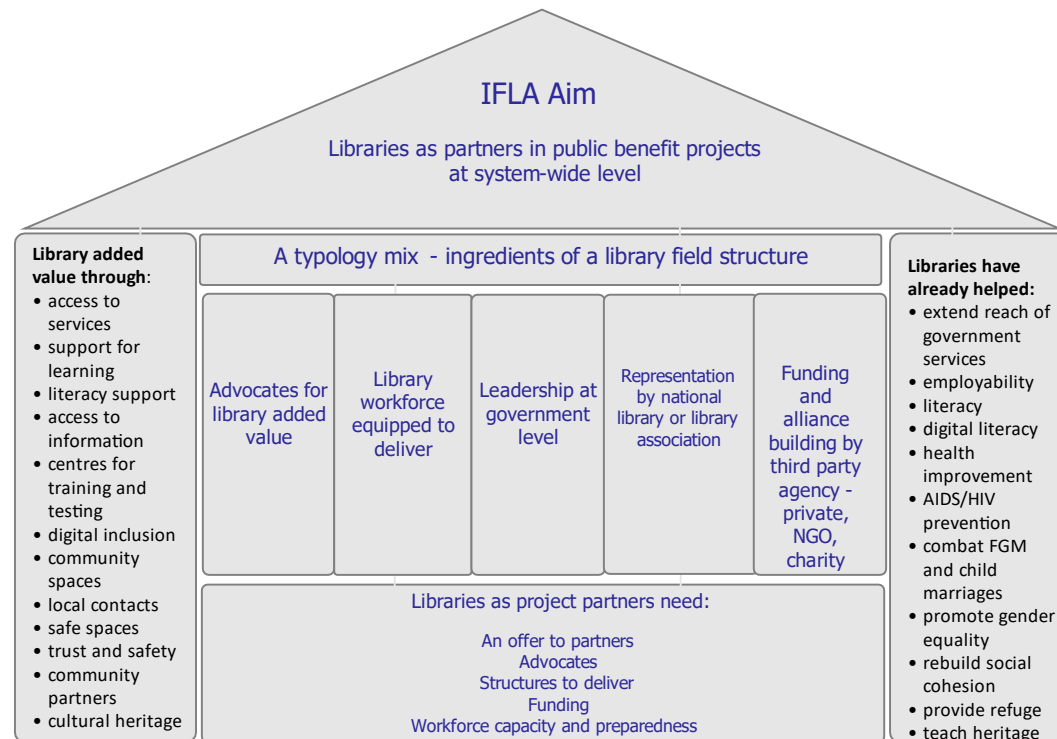
48. This in turn implies that libraries need to ensure they have the skills within their workforce, and the sheer workforce capacity, to deliver the potential that libraries can offer; they need to have the advocates in the appropriate places who can understand that potential and to insert it into policy debates and the formative periods of project partnerships; and they need to have the leadership that can bring together and sustain the partnerships that will form the field and that will provide a sustainable and reliable ally to other players in public benefit projects. The message of this report is that these are outcomes that can be achieved given the will to do so and some assistance from organizations such as IFLA.

RECOMMENDATIONS

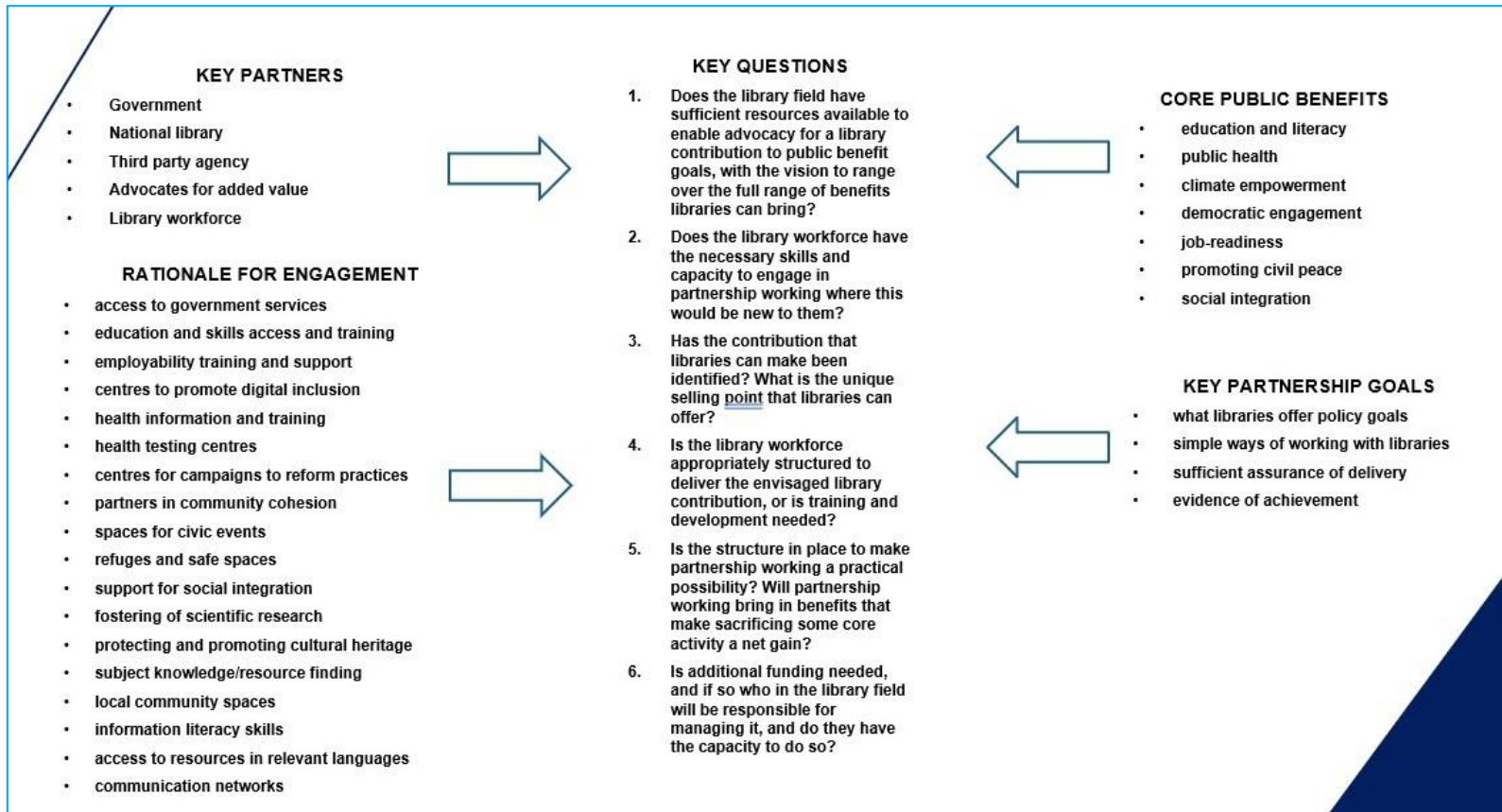
1. The typology we have proposed offers a list of ingredients which need to be assembled in appropriate ways according to local context and the potential opportunities for library involvement in partnerships that are at hand. A question for IFLA to consider is how this can be done. In addition, the lessons from existing and future project initiatives need to be learned and disseminated throughout the library world. We recommend that IFLA:
 - a. Adopt the overall model discussed and described in this report (Annex A).
 - b. Develop a more detailed toolkit, based on our framework of questions, to enable library practitioners working within a library field structure to assess what needs to be done in specific contexts to develop the appropriate competences and partnerships to be public benefit project partners.
 - c. Carry out an audit, through IFLA offices, based on the Federation's regions, to assess the extent of preparedness for full implementation of a library field approach. This will require detailed working through of the issues and thinking involved in assessing local readiness and the steps needed to build the required structures for partnership working. The toolkit should be used as the basis of this work.
 - d. Promote conversations between library advocates in different countries and regions to share ideas and practice.
 - e. Develop some varied library field project exemplars, working intensively in selected countries or regions to develop the library structures and step up to being active public benefit project partners. This should be built on the work already done in the BSLA project.
 - f. Identify 'library field champions', library or library-related professionals who can exemplify in practice how to construct library field structures that can participate in public benefit project partnerships.
 - g. Carry out one or more qualitative benchmarking exercises across identified or putative library fields against exemplars or comparators, to enhance and develop recommendations b-f (see Annex B).

Annex A – Overall Model

Library Field Structures for Contributing to the Public Good



Annex B - Benchmarking Components



Annex C - Tender Purpose, Scope and Requirements

The Request for Proposals specified the following Purpose, Scope and Requirements:

Purpose

- Provide a typology for understanding the readiness of national library fields to deliver systemic change in favour of the public benefit, including through funded projects
- Develop a report setting out these findings as a reference point for associations and others
- Identify where different national library fields fit into such a typology

Scope and requirements

The consultant will:

- Develop, on the basis of initial engagement with IFLA staff and desk-research, a draft typology of library field structures from the perspective of effective systemic public benefit project delivery.
- Engage with a range of library contacts in order to refine the model, identifying in particular characteristics of fields which are able to deliver public benefit projects at a systemic level.
- Develop a report on library systems and public benefit project delivery, for publication.
- Identify in which countries there are already library systems which favour systemic public benefit project delivery, as well as a basis for identifying what issues others may need to address in order to build readiness.
- Hold a validation workshop with IFLA staff and regional offices.

Annex D - Case Studies

Country	Title/description	Known partners	Key features
Colombia	<u>Mobile Libraries for Peace</u>	Ministry of Culture, Colombia National Library, the National Network of Public Libraries of Colombia, Libraries Without Borders NGO	Commissioning 20 mobile libraries in post-conflict transition zones, to bring government services to areas where previously they were excluded, and to promote civil peace and social integration through developing social and cultural capital
Jordan	Abdul Hameed Shoman Foundation	Arab Bank; partners with government ministries and wide range of scientific and cultural institutions	Runs a public library with a small number of branches, with very few other public libraries available. Fosters scientific research and innovation among children and youth, literary and artistic talent
Kenya	<u>Maktaba Mashinani Foundation</u> (NGO set up for this initiative)	Young African Leaders Initiative; other voluntary sector and private partners; rural schools	Building and update libraries and providing educational materials to develop literacy of young people in rural areas. Campaigns against factors that disrupt education including female genital mutilation, child marriages, and gender inequality.
Moldova	<u>Novateca</u>	IREX, Gates Foundation, USAID, with \$10.8m from local public and private sector	Over 1000 public libraries (80% of national total) modernised to become community development partners. Training for librarians to support innovation, library advocacy, and partnership building
Myanmar	Part of IREX <u>Libraries for Development</u> programme	IREX	Training of librarians to support communities using technology, especially women and girls. Plus libraries promoted as safe public spaces as part of anti-trafficking awareness
Namibia	Part of IREX <u>Libraries for Development</u> programme	Ministry of Education	Overhaul of library services to provide public services to rural communities, with three new regional libraries and professional development of staff
Netherlands	<u>Library and Basic Skills programme</u>	National Library of Netherlands; Dutch Tax Authority, Ministry of Internal Affairs	Developing libraries to become access points for digital government services, thus building an infrastructure to tackle digital exclusion of vulnerable groups

Philippines	<u>Library Renewal Partnership</u>	The Asia Society; Global Shapers Community (World Economic Forum); local publishers and bookstores; Synergeia foundation; 7 degrees of change foundation; local government; private donors	Building over 200 community education centres, supporting literacy and education and providing third spaces for community use including learning, civic events and disaster relief
Sri Lanka	<u>Skills Online Sri Lanka</u>	National Library; Vocational Training Authority of SL; Commonwealth of Learning	
Ukraine	Part of IREX <u>Libraries for Development programme</u>	\$15.8 million in co-funding from local government	Libraries developed to provide access to essential public services. Included training of both librarians and government officials
United Kingdom	<u>Health and Digital Literacy Partnership</u>	CILIP (UK Library and Information Association); Libraries Connected (public library association); Arts Council; National Health Service; other stakeholders including prison librarians	Five year partnership to build health and digital literacy skills
Uruguay	Part of IREX <u>Libraries for Development programme</u>	Multi-sector partnership including Uruguay government	Libraries becoming centres for digital inclusion through training and development of new services
Vietnam and Indonesia	<u>Words on Wheels</u>	Singapore International Foundation	Mobile libraries to provide educational opportunities
Worldwide	<u>Endangered Archives Programme</u>	British Library; Arcadia charitable foundation	Digitisation of archives at risk of loss and decay to promote cultural heritage and open access to knowledge

Zambia	<u>Lubuto Library Partners</u>	Masana wa Afrika Foundation; Templeton Charity Foundation; private companies including Johnson & Johnson; Gates Foundation; US government funding (part of DREAMS initiative); Zambian Ministry of Education; Zambia Library Service	A combination of library services and programmes supporting vulnerable children with HIV/AIDS education and prevention including on-site testing, preventing child marriage, and supporting education and social development. Trains library staff in outreach to reach vulnerable and marginalised young people and to link with other services.
---------------	--------------------------------	--	---

Annex E - List of workshop participants and interviewees

Name	Affiliation
WORKSHOPS	
Stephen Akintunde	Former University Librarian at the University of Jos; Systems Analyst at Nigeria’s Institute for Policy and Strategic Studies
Yamila Cortenova	National Congress Library of Argentina
Nkem Osuigwe	African Library and Information Associations and Institutions (AfLIA)
Shamin Renwick	Senior Librarian at The University of the West Indies (UWI), St Augustine Campus, Trinidad and Tobago
Lindi Nhlapo	Manager, Sub-Saharan Africa IFLA Regional Office; Head, Subject Branch – Science Library, Florida. UNISA
Michelle Lau	Manager, Asia-Oceania IFLA Regional Office; Manager at National Library Board based in Singapore
INTERVIEWS	
Jessica Dorr	Director of Boise Public Library, Idaho
Adriana Cybelle Ferrari	President, Brazilian Federation of Librarians’ Associations
Micheline Brûlé	Director, Federation of Documentary Circles; Information Coordinator, IFLA’s Management of Library Associations Section, Montreal
Trish Hepworth	Acting CEO, Australian Library & Information Association
Danielle Dufour-Coppolani	President Association Internationale Francophone des Bibliothécaires et Documentalistes (AIFBD)
Evgenia Vasilakaki	Digital Transformation & IT Programme Management Expertise European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Authority (EIOPA), Frankfurt, Germany; Previously at National Library of Greece
Tuuliki Tõiste	President of Estonian Librarians’ Association (ELA) Board