



IFLA Metropolitan Libraries Section

<http://www.ifla.org/metropolitan-libraries>

IFLA MetLib Standing Committee

Business Meeting

On Sunday, 20th August 2023 13:30-15:30 h in Rotterdam, Room Rotterdam A and over Zoom

1. Welcome to the new members of the SC, attendance, general introductions, apologies

Our new members are: Jasmina Nimkov (Belgrade, Serbia), Marie Oestergaard (Aarhus, Denmark); Siobhan Reardon (USA), Tommi Laitio (USA), Lucia Werder (Bremen, Germany – 2nd term)

Attendance: Carolyn Anthony, Chair (Public Library Association, USA); Nick Buron, Information Coordinator (NY, USA); Pablo Bruno D'Amico (Buenos Aires, Argentina); Carme Galve Montore (Barcelona, Spain); Ivancica Dukec Kero (Zagreb, Croatia); Marie Oestergaard (Aarhus, Denmark); Siobhan Reardon (USA); John Spears (Buffalo, USA); Neeza Singh (Chandigarh, India); Mathilde Servet (Paris, France); Tommi Laitio (USA), Ton van Vlimmeren (Utrecht, Netherlands); Katri Vanttinen (Helsinki, Finland); Flippie Van der Walt (Cape Town, South Africa); Lucia Werder, Secretary (Bremen, Germany)

Apologies: Eman Alshamari (Qatar); Brian Bannon (NY, USA); Suzie Gately (Newcastle, Australia); Moe Hosseini-Ara (Toronto, Canada)

Observers: Jane Cowell, (Chair, Public Libraries Section), David Leonard, Director of the Boston Public Library (U.S.), Megan Price (IFLA), Leslie Weir (Chair, IFLA Prof Div A, President-elect

The SC meeting was called to order at 13:30 p.m. MEZ

2. Short introduction of all participating SC members

All attending members introduced themselves shortly.

3. Adoption of the agenda

Carolyn added the following topics: Webinar as a part of the UN's Urban October celebration and selection of workgroups including planning program for WLIC 2024.

4. Approval of the Minutes from June 15th 2023

The Minutes of the meeting of June were confirmed with one change: dates for the MetLib Conference in Buenos Aires have to be updated: correct is October 2 – 4 not October 1 – 4.

5. Thank you to departing members

Carolyn thanked the departing members Eman Alshamari, Chao Chen, Jonas Fansa, Ton Van Vlimmeren for their engagement.

6. New (old) Officers for MetLib after election

Carolyn (Chair), Nick (Information coordinator), Lucia (Secretary)

7. (Two) Goals for MetLib for 2023 – 2024/2025, including indication of work groups/ who wants to work on what going forward

Our new goal is: **Libraries as agents of urban development and catalysts for civic engagement**

This includes the role of libraries regarding SDGs especially reducing inequality, peace/justice and goal 11 (Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable); Carolyn referred to some reports around the topic and SDG goals, that are especially relevant for libraries like e.g. goal 4 (Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all).

Siobhan introduced the role of training the library staff regarding disaster management and the changing role of libraries regarding the urban development.

Tommi offered that the learning circle might also be engaged on that topic. He added that especially the focus on the friction and tension between ecological and social goals could be a great conversation for people around the world.

Carme added the aspects of the manifesto of the school libraries in combination with the development of 15 minutes cities.

Carolyn summarizes that partnerships are also an important part in this. Marie said that it is important to emphasize the point why partnerships are important for the partners.

Katri suggested concentrating on the friction between ecological and social goals.

Therefore the goal: Civic engagement was also discussed, but finally this is already included in the overall goal above.

Carolyn gave a short insight on the Satellite Conference on the topic of "Realising the Opportunity: Libraries in Sustainable Development" and thanked Nigel Brown from the IHS for hosting and co-organizing the Satellite Conference.

The around 50 participants have been a good mix of architects, urban planners and persons from the library field.

8. MetLib Conference in Buenos Aires October 2 – 4

Pablo gave an update from the planning committee:

The Buenos Aires 2023 Metlib Conference will take place from October 2 to 4 at the Argentinean Library of Congress cultural venue, organized locally by ABGRA the Argentinean Librarians Association, and also the support from the IFLA Latin American regional office.

The planning committee has confirmed an agenda with 3 main conference speakers, 4 thematic panels, 2 workshops, and 2 unconference sessions. All this will be bilingual, in

English and Spanish. Remarks from IFLA's president-elect for the opening ceremony are confirmed.

In the afternoons, several cultural visits are planned, including libraries and other cultural venues. The participants will start with the host library, and they will visit several types of libraries including one at the official city networks of libraries that houses Jorge Luis Borges's personal collection and office.

There will be offered one lunch on the first day, a farewell dinner on the last day, and a Tango concert / Cultural Gala at the National Congress Palace on the second day.

So far we have around 70 registrations, about half of them from Argentina and half from foreign countries, with 20 more coming that will be scholarships grants paid from the host library to national professionals from all provinces. The venue's maximum capacity is 120, and registrations are still open until September 4th or until the maximum capacity is reached, whatever happens first.

A special reception will happen on Sunday, October 1st at 5 PM local time for the Metlib Section Committee members, and the Metlib Learning Circle members that will attend in person, along with the local organization committee, this will be at Palacio Barolo, a short walk from the host library, in a classical art nouveau landmark building.

Pablo hopes to see many colleagues from around the world, and have a great cultural exchange and professional development experience.

Pablo said special thanks to the support to everyone from the International Committee, including our Section's Chair and the previous Metlib conference hosts, the NYPL team, and everyone working at the association and the host library and IFLA regional office to make this happen. Pablo invited everyone warmly to join the conference.

9. Location and Timing for MetLib Conference 2024 (Auckland is proposed)

John talked to two colleagues, the head of the library is interested, but it is not fixed.

In the future, we must plan conferences as hybrid meetings according to the IFLA conference guidelines, maybe with more prerecorded sessions.

Everybody should also think about venues for 2025.

Katri shared the experiences of Helsinki that organized 2 conferences in a row with one shared day, that was complicated in organization but very effective for the participants as it was one week. Partnerships with other organizations could also be helpful for justifying the travel and there should be reduced fees or scholarships grants for colleagues from the urban south to bring together as many people as possible.

Addition by Carolyn: Auckland later indicated that it will not be able to host MetLib in 2024, but is still interested, perhaps in 2025. Jane Cowell, Chair of the Public Libraries Section, approached MetLib about possibly joining their section for a shared conference in Madrid in May, 2024. Barcelona, with the 2023 PLOTY winner also expressed interest in hosting MetLib and/or Public Libraries Section for the 2024 Conference. Carme is in Barcelona and is

enthusiastic about this possibility. Mathilde Servet says that Paris is also interested in hosting a conference. We will look into options.

10. MetLib Learning Circle and it's future

Tommi gives a review on the Learning Circle: 17 persons signed up, around a dozen was very active, there have been 7 meetings until November last year. The learning circle prepared a workshop for the upcoming MetLib Conference.

A personal meeting at the start would be better to connect in the beginning.

Tommi would go on with leading a learning circle with another person, participation for as many peoples should be possible all around the world for a second round, at the moment the Learning Circle is dominated by the people from North America and Europa.

Neeza said that it was a great experience and she hopes it will be continued so other people around the world get the opportunity to get involved.

Tommi suggests to create a Learning Circle with a new group and to put out a new call, maybe with start in November. Carolyn suggests that we should ask directors to think about people to be nominate from the MetLib libraries.

Pablo added some information on experiences on peer library networks, he has experience in organizing the networks, international and locally. Pablo offers his support for the learning circle after the conference. Maybe also for colleagues that are not fluent in English.

11. Other items for discussion & Committee members

Suggestion of Stephen Wyber (IFLA): hosting a webinar re the ideas brought forward at MetLib's Satellite conference on "Realising the Opportunity: Libraries in Sustainable Development" as a part of the UN's Urban October celebration

The idea is to take clips from the Conference in Buenos Aires, the Satellite Conference in Rotterdam and announcing that theme to the library world.

Counting Opinions contacted Carolyn, she asks if there is interest in collecting data by Counting Opinion (for a fee). That conversation is to be continued, but we need different data than in the past. Maybe the Library Map of the World has filled this generalized need?

John argued that we should first ask what story we want to tell and afterwards to think about what data should be collected therefore.

12. Next Meeting:

Buenos Aires, business meeting October 3th 8 am local time Buenos Aires, UTC -3, Calendar invitation will be send with a link to participate online.

Carolyn will set up a calendar for meetings following, last time the meetings were scheduled on Thursday mornings at 9 am EST.

Selection of workgroups / 3 people each working group:

There are 6 different groups, everyone of the MetLib SC should be engaged in 2 working groups

1. Working group for the goal "Libraries as agents of urban development and catalysts for civic engagement": After the discussion it sounds like everyone thought that broad work on the goal should be the responsibility of the Committee as a whole.

2. Group for preparing MetLib conference 2024:

3. Urban cities 2023 webinar, this includes capacities with the technical aspects: Carme
4. Public Library Guidelines has 4 volunteer who will work with the Public Libraries Section: Flippie, John, Katri, Neeza
5. PLOTY: Flippie, Mathilde, Carme
6. Program for WLIC 2024 in Dubai related to our new goal (see workgroup 1): John and Jasmina have volunteered to organize
7. MetLib Learning Circle: Tommi, Neeza, Mathilde, Marie, and Brian

Please give feedback to Carolyn in which workgroups you would like to be involved in. If there is no feedback or if too many people want to work in the same groups, Carolyn will decide.

There was a discussion about Dubai as venue for WLIC 2024. Several members expressed serious concerns about free expression during the WLIC and concerns about having the possibility of free discussions of all topics during WLIC in Dubai.

13. Adjourn

The meeting adjourned at 15.25 p.m. (MEZ).

Respectfully submitted,
Lucia Werder
Secretary, Metropolitan Libraries Section