



NORWEGIAN MINISTRY OF CULTURE

Summary in English: Report No. 23 (2008–2009) to the Storting

Libraries

Knowledge Commons, Meeting Place and Cultural Arena
in a Digital Age





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Norway – general facts

Population: 4 858 200 (2010)

Area: 384 802 sq km

GDP per capita: NOK 498 750 (2010)

Government: Constitutional monarchy with a parliamentary system of governance. State power is formally distributed between three institutions: The Storting (the legislative power), the Government (the executive power), and the Courts (the judicial power).

Political parties: Representative democracy and a multi-dimensional party system. The present coalition government consists of the Labour Party, the Centre Party and the Socialist Left Party.

Local government: Norway is divided into 19 counties and 430 municipalities. The powers of the counties and municipal councils for self-government have been delegated from the State, and are set out in legislation. The State is directly represented at a local level through the County Governors' Offices.

Preface

This is a translation of a summarised version of Report No. 23 (2008–2009) to the Storting, *Libraries. Knowledge Commons, Meeting Place and Cultural Arena in a Digital Age*. The report was submitted to the Storting on 17 April 2009. The original report was divided into an introductory part, a part providing background and a part for measures. This version does not include the background portion. Instead, the authors opted to focus on the objectives and measures in the report, to clarify the Government's policy in the library field going forward. The report recommends a number of specific initiatives related to the four guiding perspectives in the report: *The digital perspective, Collaboration and division of responsibility, The library as a meeting place and arena of learning and culture and Library services for all*.

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Libraries

Knowledge Commons, Meeting Place and Cultural Arena in a Digital Age

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1 Background

The core values and legitimacy of libraries are built on the idea that knowledge and education should be accessible by all, regardless of social, economic and geographical barriers. This applies to all kinds of libraries: academic and research libraries, public libraries and school libraries. Libraries are to give individuals opportunities for learning and personal development throughout their lives. Academic and research libraries are to help educational institutions to reach their goals in terms of teaching and research.

Libraries are entrusted by the community with managing important parts of the physical and digital knowledge and information resources in society. They manage a key part of the cultural and knowledge commons, are to create broad access to the sources of information and facilitate their use. On the one hand, libraries are to preserve and manage sources independently of quickly shifting technologies and other changes, and on the other hand they are to keep their services up to date and evolve in step with developments and needs in society.

The public libraries are important, free-standing cultural arenas and bearers of shared fundamental values. A visit to the library may offer a wide array of experiences, where the deliberate search for specific sources of information go hand in hand with the chance encounter with the unex-

pected, whether it is of a cultural or social nature or involves knowledge. In this way a visit to the library can stimulate the imagination and set in motion creative processes. This is vital not least in view of the fact that children and adolescents are among the most active users of the library.

Academic and research libraries have a special mission as managers of specialist and academic documentation and literature, both in Norwegian and in other languages, within the various disciplines. At the same time they are to be facilitated, physical arenas of learning that provide access to necessary aids, information, sources of knowledge, equipment and information expertise. Academic and research libraries also serve a democratic role by making knowledge freely available to students and they aid in knowledge becoming a factor of development *inter alia* by organising knowledge and by developing a critical sense in the students.

Public libraries in particular are essential mediators of linguistic and literary forms of expression in today's society. One of the characteristics of public libraries is that they play a special role in disseminating imaginative fiction. For that reason they are vital in efforts to strengthen and spread Norwegian literature and literary culture and are crucial partners in efforts to improve the teaching of reading. The public libraries are natural, obvious

players in «The Cultural Rucksack» efforts in all municipalities, both as arenas for disseminating literature and as developers of various offerings.

The libraries are to disseminate information and knowledge about cultural and other social conditions, thereby helping to foster democracy and freedom of expression. Also inherent in this is a duty to create understanding and respect for cultural diversity, whether this diversity results from ethnic, religious, social or geographical circumstances.

Furthermore, libraries are to enable all inhabitants to choose an active life based on their talents and interests. Access to relevant information and knowledge is a fundamental precondition for individuals to be participants in a living democracy and active participants in the community. By providing access to technology, guidance and training, libraries can help to boost digital skills.

Libraries are cultural and social institutions that not only organise collections of carriers of information, whether they be books or other mate-

rial, physical as well as digital. Libraries must also be physical meeting places and arenas for learning that preserve cultural and demographic diversity and that disseminate knowledge and mediate culture on the library premises.

Libraries are also institutions where social processes arise among people connected with mediation of culture, knowledge and learning. Here the librarian plays a key role as intermediary, guide and interlocutor. The libraries are thus a locus in society where meeting places can be developed across various social groups. These are important factors for strengthening democracy, freedom of expression, integration, inclusion and quality of life in society.

As an institution type, libraries have a facilitating mission to ensure that information and knowledge is accessible by all and in many different languages. Viewed in this way it may be said that the social role of libraries is where cultural policy, educational policy and a policy to strengthen democracy intersect.

2 Objectives

An overriding objective of cultural policy is to ensure that all have access to art and cultural experiences and opportunities to express themselves through art and culture, independent of geography or economic and social divisions. The Government will realise the Cultural Endeavour through an escalation of cultural initiatives to one per cent of the National Budget by 2014. The Government will also highlight the multicultural perspective in all areas of cultural life and help to create better meeting places. Norway is to be an inclusive society where everyone, regardless of economic and social background, has equal rights, duties and conditions for participating in society and the labour force. The Government will also focus on knowledge and education.

Libraries are meeting places and arenas that can help to attain the overriding objectives of the Government's cultural and knowledge policy. Libraries help to strengthen democracy and freedom of expression by

- guaranteeing knowledge and information to all
- mediating and managing Norwegian literature and literary culture
- mediating knowledge about culture and various social conditions
- contributing to a love of reading and reading proficiency
- providing access to technology
- being a meeting place and social arena for many different groups

The main purpose of this report is to develop robust and adaptable libraries that can offer all inhabitants better library services. This is an important task that in particular involves strengthening and refining a public meeting place for mediating culture and knowledge, founded on democracy and freedom of expression.

The challenge in libraries shows a need for an overarching policy that can help the libraries implement solutions and build structures that are robust enough to meet the challenges of tomorrow. It is important that libraries work as much as possible in the same direction and employ solutions that give users high-quality library services. There is a need for clearer objectives and require-

ments, a better division of responsibility and a programme of initiatives to achieve such an outcome.

The Government will achieve this by:

- accelerating the collaboration between libraries and encourage coordination and joint operation of library services locally and regionally
- developing national coordination of the archive, library and museum sector
- cultivating new skills at libraries
- enhancing digital shared services for libraries and developing the libraries' competencies in providing services in the digital knowledge commons
- developing public libraries as a meeting place, cultural arena and social actor
- promoting the public libraries as arenas of learning and in particular developing the libraries as arenas for the love of reading and reading proficiency
- improving and developing school libraries
- developing library services for particular groups.

A fundamental perspective in this report is that the digital evolution will have a boundary-shattering impact on library services going forward. At the same time as this report a white paper was also submitted concerning digitisation and digital dissemination of sources of culture and knowledge in the field of culture. These two reports will overlap to some degree.

In the current library landscape the responsibility for library services is clearly divided among the central government, county authority and municipal authority. Although this division of tasks will not be altered in the coming years, the Ministry will, in consultation with other relevant ministries, consider whether closer coordination or merger of library tasks at the National Library and the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority may be useful – or whether a solution may be to transfer library tasks from the Authority to the National Library. Otherwise, the main mechanism will be that municipal authorities and county authorities will continue to be responsible for public libraries, but that the municipal authorities should collaborate more on library services. In this

report a proposal is made to try out a more flexible organisation of library services at a local and regional level, and try out collaboration models, for example according to the host municipality model.

To bolster the collaboration and interaction between administrative levels, a proposal is made to establish a voluntary scheme of cooperation agreements between the central government and the county authorities. These cooperation agreements are to be tools for implementing national policy and national initiative programmes and to encourage county and municipal action plans in the library field.

In the report notice is given that the Act relating to public libraries is to be revised. The qualifications for professionally trained chief librarians and the dispensation scheme are discussed and various alternatives elucidated. There is a recommendation to remove the statutory requirement for a county library in each county and, instead, the legislation will emphasise the tasks to be performed at the county level. The purpose of these changes is to facilitate a more flexible organisation of library services and to encourage collaboration on personnel resources and expertise across municipal boundaries.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and Ministry of Education and Research will launch an effort to harmonise legislation in the entire library field in order to bolster

interlibrary loan cooperation and the exchange of resources between libraries. Common guidelines for interlibrary loan cooperation are being revised and the Ministry will consider laying down regulations for interlibrary loan cooperation and registration pursuant to Section 3 of the Act relating to public libraries. The Copyright Act is under revision, and the Ministry will also begin work to revise the Legal Deposit Libraries Act.

In addition to encouraging organisational development of library services at a local and regional level, the central government's focus in the library field going forward will include several specific initiatives, in addition to the measures notified in the white paper on digitalisation. Both the Sami and Nynorsk perspectives are to be included in the initiatives.

An expanded definition of the library is that it is an institution which on the basis of collections of documents – digital or physical – initiates and organises social processes, primarily cultural processes relating to learning and mediation of culture. Thus, *the social library* accommodates a further understanding of what a library is and captures the core of what a library has always done, while the concept also identifies a mission that is becoming increasingly important for libraries in the digital society – to bolster the social functions of the library, the cultural perspective and the library as a public meeting place for all.

3 Measures and strategies

3.1 The knowledge commons in a digital age

In many ways the digital perspective will be a crosswise and overarching perspective that engages all types of libraries and that will characterise all development of library services in the years to come.

At the same time as this report, a report was also submitted on the digital preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage. The white paper on digitisation is an overarching report that outlines a national strategy for efforts to preserve, make accessible and disseminate the collections in the cultural area by using digital information and communications technology. The white papers on libraries and digitisation are to complement each other, though it will be difficult to make a sharp distinction between them. For that reason, the two reports will overlap to some degree.

An important goal is to lay the groundwork for a service for joint searches of library catalogues and a service of user-initiated interlibrary loan being realised within a reasonable period. In 2008 the National Library and the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority started the project *Biblioteksøk* (Library Search) which will at first replace *Samkatalogen* (the Norwegian union catalogue of monographs) but that will eventually be enlarged into a service of user-initiated interlibrary loans. The creation of *Biblioteksøk* will be an important precondition for also developing search capabilities across the archive, library and museum sector. The National Library will have the primary responsibility for utilising expertise, technology and resources for developing *Biblioteksøk*. There will be a need to encourage players to upgrade technological infrastructure so that they can participate in such a service.

The report also points out that metadata and catalogue data of good quality are essential for offering a service like *Biblioteksøk*. The National Library will also continue work on simplifying work on the Norwegian National Bibliography. The objective should be that each document is catalogued once and for metadata to be able to be used easily by other institutions.

To be able to provide differentiated access to digital material depending on the status of the individual users, adequate access systems are necessary. Such authorisation solutions for libraries need to be based on the services already established through Feide in the university and university college sector and MinSide, which has been established by the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform.

The issue of digitisation is discussed thoroughly in the white paper on digitisation. This report discusses in depth the National Library's digitisation programme, which is a systematic effort to digitise Norwegian published content on a large scale. The initiative is seen in the context of efforts internationally, and some other digitisation initiatives in the archive, library and museum sector in Norway are discussed.

Digitisation is very cost-intensive, and it will also be very expensive to maintain and operate the digitised material. There are also prolonged operating expenses connected with long-term digital storage. The costs of making protected material digitally accessible are also an important part of the calculation. These issues are discussed at an overarching level in this report.

The National Library is collaborating in various ways with copyright holder organisations to find ways to release protected material. Through the High North pilot project, general digital access has been given to around 1,400 books and journal articles. Under the new project Bokhylla.no, the plan is to digitise and make available literature from the three decades the 1790s, 1890s and 1990s. Some of this material is still copyright-protected. The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs has appointed a working group tasked with examining payment models and a specific payment solution to provide open access to the material.

Depending on how the project Bokhylla.no evolves, it may eventually be a model for an extended collective licence for digital material. Such licences can be further developed in a collaboration between collection managers and collection owners, eventually encompassing other kinds of material.

The work on national licences is to continue. This effort must be part of a paramount strategy for making accessible digital material in a cultural and knowledge perspective. For that reason, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Research, assess how the work on national licence is to be pursued further.

Another key aspect of making digitally published material accessible is the work on licensing and consortium agreements. These are agreements on access to various databases and journals in electronic format, which the academic and research library sector is particularly dependent on. To a large extent this will involve relatively specialised foreign academic and scientific literature, but may also pertain to access to general digital sources that the ordinary public library user will need. The report points out that it will not be economically profitable to amass expertise in licensing and consortium agreements in individual institutions in the library sector in Norway. The Ministry will assess how the work on licensing and consortium agreements is to be pursued. Closer collaboration on consortium agreements in the Nordic countries and in Europe should also be pursued.

The report also points out that although too few articles are currently published in open institutional archives, the institutions in the university and university college sector are working to require that staff publish in them. The Ministry of Education and Research has now begun to examine how work on Open Access can be bolstered in Norway. The Ministry of Education and Research has asked the Research Council of Norway and the Norwegian Association of Higher Education Institutions for input on how this might happen. The Ministry of Education and Research will consider which clarifications in principle need to be made and the actions that can encourage greater use of Open Access.

A greater degree of digitisation opens up a greater need for digital dissemination services. Services that are developed in the large collection-housing institutions with state support need to be financed by grants to these institutions. With regard to other kinds of digital services developed and operated in major public libraries, for example, it will be necessary to further assess organisation and funding. Examples of such services are *Ønskebok.no* and others. For that reason the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will have various models evaluated for organising and funding such digital services.

Otherwise the Ministry will follow up Arts Council Norway's efforts to make the purchasing for music media-independent.

Measures:

- *Biblioteksøk*: In close collaboration with other players involved the National Library will realise *Biblioteksøk* on the basis of modernisation needs of the Norwegian union catalogue of monographs and a service of user-initiated interlibrary loan. There will be a need to encourage the public libraries to upgrade technological infrastructure so that they can participate in such a service.
- *The Norwegian National Bibliography*: The National Library will simplify its work on the Norwegian National Bibliography. The objective should be that each document is catalogued once and for metadata to be able to be used easily by other institutions.
- *Purchasing the release of copyrighted material*: The National Library will clarify copyright and privacy issues so that as much of the digitised material as possible can be made accessible. The *Bokhylla.no* project can eventually be the model for an extended collective licence for digital material.
- *National licences*: The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will, in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and other players involved, assess how the work on national licence is to be pursued further.
- *Consortium agreements*: The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will assess how the work on licensing and consortium agreements is to be pursued, and especially consider Nordic and pan-European collaboration.
- *Digital services*: The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will have various models evaluated for organising and funding such digital services.
- *Purchasing scheme for music*: The Ministry will follow up Arts Council Norway's efforts to make the purchasing for music media-independent.

3.2 Collaboration and division of responsibility

Resource sharing and interlibrary loan collaboration are the backbone of the national library network. The report provides a detailed account of this collaboration and the scope of resource sharing among types of libraries. It is an established

goal to find mechanisms that can bolster resource sharing and the collaboration among libraries, not least with a view to the coming expected increase in physical interlibrary loans when *Biblioteksøk* is introduced. The Ministry proposes abolishing the grant to the interlibrary loan service at the Oslo Public Library and instead using the funds to bolster interlibrary loan collaboration in other ways, such as transport schemes and other mechanisms that can strengthen resource sharing. Further development of the National Library's depository library will be an important measure. Alternative means of delivering library materials, such as «Book in Shop» should also be considered.

The report considers a proposal in the library review for a common Library Act for public and academic libraries, to strengthen seamless services in the library network. The Ministry will not propose a common Library Act, but will rather work to harmonise the legislation and the regulations in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and Research.

As part of this process the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will also consider adjustments in the Act relating to public libraries.

The report discusses in detail the numerous challenges especially in the public library sector. Public and county libraries have special challenges relating to expectations of better library services, while a number of public libraries are struggling to maintain a sufficiently high level, professionally as well as in terms of staffing. There is reason to be concerned about the quality of the services offered by many public libraries today. Numerous municipal authorities currently have difficulty obtaining a professionally trained chief librarian, and many municipalities have fewer than one full-time equivalent in the library. In many places the public libraries do not have enough resources to offer satisfactory services.

There is a need in the public libraries to build up new expertise in a number of areas, particularly leadership development and digital skills. In the future, these challenges will require closer collaboration on library services across municipal boundaries. In such a coordination perspective the future of the services now performed by county libraries is also discussed.

In the coming years all kinds of libraries will have to navigate in a landscape that will be characterised by strong elements of traditional library services combined with an increasing use of digital technology. In such a varied landscape it is crucial to encourage experimentation and testing of new ways of creating good library services. It would be

a serious mistake to attempt to stake out standardised solutions when developments and trends call for dynamism, creativity and flexibility. Libraries that include traditional characteristics and combine them with the digital potential are in some contexts referred to «hybrid libraries». Regardless of what the library of the future is called, it will have to evolve in a «hybrid» direction.

Although the municipal authorities are responsible for public libraries, the report discusses possible instruments for encouraging a more flexible and appropriate organisation of library services across existing municipal boundaries. In the future, the public libraries will have a clearer need for developing the overall library services. They need to be based on both the classical library functions and the digital potential. Guiding these developments will be the needs of the users for libraries as service providers.

The report discusses in detail measures that can bolster organisational solutions based on collaboration and interaction in the library sector, locally and regionally. These include specific partnerships for operating libraries or closer collaboration on key development issues for libraries, such as skills development, specialisation and sharing responsibilities for library services. Going forward the Ministry will help to speed up collaboration among libraries and encourage coordination of library services regionally and locally. The objective is to try out various organisational models and make room for creative and flexible experimentation based for example on the host municipality model, which the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority has recently initiated a study of.

The report points out that public libraries differ widely, and that efforts have varied to develop the library sector in individual counties. Current statutory requirements that each county authority have a county library are discussed, and it is concluded that in the coming revision of the Libraries Act, this requirement should be removed and that the text of the Act should emphasise the tasks to be performed at a county level and not the institution that is to perform them.

To strengthen the collaboration between the central government and county authorities on library development, the Ministry is proposing an arrangement of voluntary collaboration agreements. The purpose is to anchor national objectives regionally and locally, channel central government initiatives more efficiently and in a more targeted manner and encourage county and municipal library plans.

The report also discusses the current qualifications requirements in the Libraries Act and the need for a skills boost in the entire library sector. The conclusion is that the dispensation scheme is static and not very future-oriented. Various alternatives are discussed. The Ministry will return to the question of whether the qualifications requirement and dispensation scheme will be preserved in the coming revision of the Libraries Act.

Otherwise, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research will jointly assess what measures are necessary for bolstering and developing the overall skills in the library sector. A draft has been prepared of a framework programme for developing skills that may form a solid basis for further policy. The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research will also consider in detail the need for re-evaluating first degree programmes in library science.

Responsibility at the national level for coordinating and developing the library field between the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research, between the various levels of public administration and across the archive, library and museum sector is also a key part of the collaboration and coordination perspective. The report reviews the evaluation of the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority and it is discussed how to strengthen the potential of a greater cross-sectoral collaboration.

The report maintains that in the future as well it will be necessary to provide for better coordination and collaboration internally in the library network, support development efforts in public libraries and think shared solutions and collaboration across the archive, library and museum sectors. There is a need to review the guidelines of the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority to clarify the institution's responsibilities and tasks. A key aim will be to clarify the boundaries between the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority and the collection-housing institutions in the archive, library and museum (ALM) field. In consultation with relevant ministries and institution boards, the Ministry will assess whether a closer collaboration or merger of library tasks at the National Library and the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority may be appropriate – or if a solution may be to transfer library tasks from the Authority to the National Library.

As discussed in detail in the white paper on digitisation, the Ministry will establish a council consisting of key players in the ALM field. The council is to evaluate on an ongoing basis the overarching

strategies for digitisation in order to make proposals that contribute to integrated digital collection management. The council is to give its input to the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs. The Ministry will draft a mandate for the council.

An important task going forward will be to bolster statistical compilation and analysis. This also includes keeping up with and communicating what is happening internationally in terms of the development of knowledge in the field. Various kinds of indicators are to be developed for what constitutes adequate provision of service in archives, libraries and museums. On the basis of indicators and special survey projects, updated reports are to be prepared of the current state of archives, libraries and museums.

A need has been determined to develop clearer national objectives and better lines of collaboration so that the totality of services provided by the library network is of the highest possible quality. At the same time, there is a need for a better dialogue and clearer expectations and obligations between levels of administration so that resources and efforts are channelled and developed in an optimal manner.

The Ministry also believes that there is a need to bolster general R&D activities in the ALM field. The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research will jointly consider collaboration on research and development activities across the sectors.

Measures:

- *Developing new means of delivery:* The state grant to the interlibrary loan service at the Oslo Public Library will be abolished. Instead the Ministry will consider other measures that will bolster interlibrary loan collaboration and the logistics system in the library network. Further development of the National Library's depository library will be an important measure. Initiatives will also be taken to test alternative means of delivering library materials, such as «Book in Shop».
- *Guidelines for interlibrary loan collaboration:* New, common guidelines for interlibrary loan collaboration have been drafted, and the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will consider laying down regulations for interlibrary loan collaboration and registration pursuant to Section 3 of the Act relating to public libraries.
- *Harmonising legislation:* The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research will harmonise the legislation for public libraries and university

- and university college libraries to enhance collaboration among these libraries.
- *Amending the Act relating to public libraries:* In a process to harmonise the legislation in the library field, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will also consider amending the Act relating to public libraries.
 - *Collaboration and coordination:* The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will encourage collaboration and coordination solutions in the library network locally and regionally. The objective is to try out various organisation models and make room for creative and flexible experimentation based for example on the host municipality model.
 - *Voluntary collaboration agreements:* A scheme of voluntary agreements is to be put in place on collaboration on library development between the central government and the county authorities as a tool for implementing national policy and encouraging county and municipal library plans.
 - *Competence development:* The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research will jointly assess what measures are necessary for bolstering and developing the overall competence in the library sector. An overall competence development programme for the entire library sector will be considered.
 - *Evaluating library science programmes:* The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research will jointly consider the need for re-evaluating first degree programmes in library science.
 - *Coordination between the National Library and the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority:* In consultation with relevant ministries and the board of the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will assess the feasibility of closer coordination or a merger of library tasks at the National Library and the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority – or whether a solution may be to transfer library tasks from the Authority to the National Library.
 - *Surveys and analyses:* A joint effort will be made to perform detailed surveys and analyses of the ALM field. This will provide an overall report of the state of the ABM field and can serve as the basis for forming future policy.
 - *Norwegian Digitisation Council:* To establish a solid basis for necessary coordination of digitisation efforts, the Ministry of Culture and

- Church Affairs will establish a council composed of key players in the ALM field. The Ministry will draft a mandate for the council.
- *Copyright and privacy:* Expertise in copyright and privacy issues is to be concentrated at the National Library and the National Archive Services of Norway. These centres of expertise are to provide services to other ALM institutions as needed.
 - *R&D in the archive, library and museum field:* The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research will jointly consider collaboration on research and development in the archive, library and museum field.

3.3 The library as a meeting place and arena of learning and culture

Furthermore, all libraries, particularly public libraries, have a dimension that emphasises *the library as a meeting place and arena of learning and culture*. This perspective is especially important with regard to libraries as physical spaces. Because of their intended function as arenas for learning for researchers, students and other users, academic libraries have special challenges. School libraries and public libraries both face challenges, and have a great potential for promoting love of reading, encouraging reading and mediating culture.

The report points out that library spaces are largely used as meeting places, arenas for learning and social venues. We see activities coming in to a greater degree to public libraries and libraries in the education sector. In many ways libraries have changed their role from being spaces for individual in-depth study to being spaces for active community, and the physical library premises have qualities that cannot simply be replaced by digital distribution of information. The social meeting place for all represents a quality that needs to be developed.

The report discusses in detail measures that can strengthen libraries as a place of experiencing, learning and seeking out knowledge. The assumption is that public libraries should play a more central role for the entire area of local culture. The development of public libraries as both a purveyor of digital services and a physical meeting place underscores the idea that the local authoritative ought to think coordination and sharing premises for the activities and tasks they perform in the entire field of culture. Public libraries must be easily accessible especially where the people are, and

they can also be integrated into or share premises with shopping centres, cinemas, railway stations, schools of music and performing arts, museums or other venues.

The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will enhance libraries as public meeting places and work to highlight and emphasise libraries with good functionality, meeting place function and good partnerships with other parties. A model library scheme will be specified in detail. The Ministry will also consider establishing a project to bolster public libraries as social bridge-builders and encourage broader collaboration and interaction between libraries and volunteer organisations.

The library as an arena for learning may be defined on the basis of the fact that large numbers of people use it as a place of work and study, but they also spend time reading, browsing and familiarising themselves with the collections. While libraries in the education sector are important contributors to formal learning, public libraries are especially important for informal learning by providing free access to knowledge and information. The public library can be a major resource and partner in local strategies for education, learning and human resource and business development.

The report emphasises that public libraries can be important arenas for digital skills. With the Support of the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform, the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority has received funding to develop libraries as arenas for digital skills. The project may lay the groundwork for such efforts at all major public libraries.

The school library is an arena for learning for children and adolescents in primary and secondary school. The Ministry of Education and Research has launched a national programme of school library development for 2009–2012. The programme includes measures to bolster reading, skills development, knowledge creating, information skills and statistics, rules and collaboration.

The report also discusses libraries as arenas for a love of reading and reading proficiency. It is emphasised that libraries have a great potential for collaborating with schools and day nurseries to promote the love of reading and reading proficiency. It is proposed to designate the writers' organisation Norsk forfattersentrum as a national player for literature in «The Cultural Rucksack».

The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research will jointly arrange for 2010 to be a National Reading Year as part of efforts to promote reading among children, adolescents and adults in the period

2010–2014. This will largely involve putting in place a national framework for the many different efforts to promote reading now directed by various players. The Ministry will also explore needs for schemes that may help to facilitate clearer and more appropriate frameworks for mediating culture and literature in the libraries.

Finally the question of setting up an art collection scheme, a scheme at Norwegian libraries for lending art is discussed in detail.

Measures:

- *Model libraries:* To enhance libraries as public meeting places and highlight public libraries with good functionality, meeting place function and good partnerships with outside parties, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will set up a model libraries scheme.
- *Libraries as meeting places:* To encourage broader collaboration and interaction between libraries and the volunteer sector, the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will establish a dedicated project that can bolster public libraries as societal bridge-builders and meeting places for groups that do not participate much in cultural life and organisations.
- *Raising digital skills:* The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority has received funding from the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform to develop libraries as arenas for digital skills. The project may lay the groundwork for such efforts at all major public libraries.
- *Cultural buildings:* From 2010 the county authorities will administer more of the gaming funds that go to regional meeting places and arenas for mediating culture. The Ministry will formulate new guidelines for the use of these funds.
- *School library development:* The Ministry of Education and Research has launched a national programme of school library development for 2009–2012. The programme includes measures to bolster reading, skills development, knowledge creating, information skills and statistics, rules and collaboration.
- *National player in «The Cultural Rucksack»:* The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will bolster the love of reading and reading proficiency by designating Norsk Forfattersentrum as a national player for literature in «The Cultural Rucksack», and by developing public libraries as arenas for reading and mediating culture.

- *National Reading Year 2010*: The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs and the Ministry of Education and Research will jointly arrange for 2010 to be a National Reading Year as part of efforts to promote reading in the period 2010–2014 aimed at children as well as adults.
- *Mediating culture and literature*: The Ministry will explore needs for schemes that may help to facilitate clearer and more appropriate frameworks for mediating culture and literature in the libraries.

3.4 Library services for all

Library services for the Sami people, national minorities and other minority-language speakers are discussed in detail in the report. Under the Libraries Act, the public libraries are responsible for providing satisfactory services to minority-language speakers in their municipalities. Many are doing a good job, and the Ministry will emphasise that these efforts must continue. Even so, many public libraries do not have the expertise or sufficient numbers of inhabitants with native languages other than Norwegian to offer broad enough services. For that reason the central government shall help minority-language speakers receive library services. The Ministry will emphasise that the Multilingual Library is an important national centre of expertise and a unique network builder in a national context. The library has functions and relevant for minority-language speakers in all of the country's municipalities, and these ought to be developed in the time going forward.

The Sami Parliament is now exploring the possibility of introducing a purchasing scheme for Sami literature, the organisation of such a scheme and the scope it should have if introduced. The Ministry will ensure that the Sami perspective is incorporated into national efforts in the library area. The Ministry will also continue the current arrangement of state grants to the Finnish Library Service and will consider a Norwegian-Russian library service in Kirkenes within the framework of the action plan for Norwegian-Russian cultural cooperation.

Libraries have a two-sided task in the multicultural society. On the one hand, libraries are to do their part for inclusion through mediating literature and knowledge, and on the other hand they are to convey knowledge of the breadth of the cultural diversity in Norway. To strengthen libraries as contributors to inclusion, integration and cultural diversity, there is a need for more develop-

ment efforts and competence-enhancing services. There should also be a greater focus on research to investigate the potential inherent in the library as an active meeting place and societal bridge-builder.

The report also deals with facilitated literature and library services in correctional institutions and health care institutions. It is an aim for both the physical libraries and the services that libraries provide to be accessible to all. This is an important perspective that needs to be built into all plans for developing the libraries in the future. The work done by the Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille is of great value and is to be enhanced further.

In recent years there has been a lot of good work developing library services in prisons, but there will still be a need to bolster services in some of the existing prison libraries. The Ministry will follow up the plan for prison library services so that all inmates have adequate library services.

The Ministry points out that we currently have a diversity of health care institutions on various levels of the public administration, and that the various target groups have differing needs. The Ministry believes that in the future the emphasis must be on ensuring library services to children and youth, long-term patients and patients in rehabilitation. The Ministry believes that the responsibility for operating and funding library services in health care institutions should be assigned to the health service.

Measures:

- *The Sami perspective*: The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will ensure that the Sami perspective is addressed in national initiatives in the library field.
- *Sami bibliography*: The National Library will continue to work on developing a common Sami bibliography in collaboration with the other Nordic national libraries and, if possible, the National Library of Russia.
- *Sami purchase scheme*: The Sami Parliament will explore the possibility of introducing a purchasing scheme for Sami literature, the organisation of such a scheme and the scope it should have if introduced.
- *Diversity*: To strengthen libraries as contributors to inclusion, integration and cultural diversity, there is a need for more development efforts and competence-enhancing services.
- *The Multilingual Library*: The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will strengthen and develop the Multilingual Library as a national centre of expertise for library services for

- minority-language speakers. The library can increasingly serve as a course arranger and coordinator for projects and network efforts.
- *Norwegian-Russian library service*: A Norwegian-Russian library service will be considered within the framework of the action plan for Norwegian-Russian cultural cooperation that was signed in January 2009. The Multilingual Library at the Oslo Public Library will continue to have the national responsibility for Russian library services.
 - *Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille*: The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will ensure that the level of production at the Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille is maintained and that services develop in step with changes in technology.
 - *Libraries in prison*: The Ministry will complete the plan for prison library services so that all inmates have adequate library services.
 - *Libraries in health care institutions*: The Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs will transfer responsibility and funding of library services in health care institutions to the health service.
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