Summary

Ethical Principles / A Critical Appreciation of BID's Newest Professional Standards for Librarians (Hermann Rösch)
(pp. 174 – 179)

In October 2017 Germany's umbrella organization for libraries, „Bibliothek und Information Deutschland" (BID) passed a revised version of its ethical principles and made it available to the library world in the November issue of »BuB«. BID thereby continued a relatively young tradition in Germany. Although the oldest ethical standards for libraries was passed in the USA in 1938/39, the majority of the ethical standards in over 70 countries were established by 2004.

Despite a few shortcomings the newly revised ethical paper represents considerable progress since its predecessor of 2007. Some gaps could be closed and important updates added. Compared to 2007 there are much strong positions taken with regard to social and political issues. But some backsliding can also be detected, iIn particular regarding the topics of privacy and data security. Other ethical aspects are merely enumerated and in this way lose their precision (e.g., equal opportunity, information competency). Individual ethics and institutional ethics have become intertwined. Compared to the IFLA code of ethics important issues have been left out or marginalized. At several (though few) points the relationship between law and ethics has been misunderstood.

However, the greatest deficit can be found in the fact that these ethical principles were established without any notable public debate and, hence, are marked by the same congenital defect associated with the previous version in 2007. Moreover, the statements it contains about popularization and fostering are blurry and lack credibility. There is a great danger that the entire undertaking »Ethical Principles 2017« will in this way be seriously impaired, if not a complete failure.

USESCO Calls for Cooperation in Educational Networks / The Role of Libraries in the U.N. Agenda 2030 (Stefan Volkmann)
(pp. 196 – 199)

In December 2017 the UNESCO Institute for Lifelong Learning published an internationally accessible »Guide to Action« for cities and municipalities. It deals with ways to achieve a UN agenda through local educational networks and lifelong learning by 2030. As centers of learning and aggregators of cooperative endeavors, libraries are assigned a very special role, as can already be seen in many »learning cities.« The UNESCO scheme provides a practical approach for libraries who wish to adopt the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs).

The IFLA World Congress introduced the SDGs to the library world in August 2017. Many examples have shown how libraries can contribute to relieving social inequality and obtaining greater sustainability. They do more than simply enable access to information. While the core tasks can address education and socio-cultural programs, as a physical place, as an agency or as a partner it can help tackle ecological and economic deficits, and thereby meet all of the 17 SDGs. This breadth of scope, in comparison with other developmental organizations, is truly unique.

About 100 cities around the world are currently part of UNESCO's »Global Network of Learning Cities«. Each of them has their own problems but share the conviction that they can empower their citizens through cooperative lifelong learning to find solutions for these problems. UNESCO agrees that these ambitious goals of sustainability cannot be implemented without cooperative partnerships. In order to endow it with greater weight, mayors, educational institutions and other communal forces are called upon to join together in networks, in order to achieve the SDGs together. Many of the winners of the UNESCO Learning City Award have made use of libraries to carry education into even the most disadvantaged quarters of their cities. The prerequisite to all this is simply a political commitment.

Simply Read! / Inclusion and Involvement with »Simple Language« (Dorothee Mammel)
(pp. 200 – 205)

The topic »simple language« is being closely watched in German society and a political awareness of its necessity is growing. The current legal situation is also a decisive factor. Cultural institutions such as libraries and museum have initiated pilot projects and schemes with regard to collection promotion, exhibition tours and design, or mediation projects in »simple language«. The »Network for Simple Language«, as well as linguists and graphic designers are involved in the developing language further and are offering more and more opportunities to become qualified in this area.

Public libraries, as institutions supported by local or state governments, are expected to facilitate public participation in cultural and education undertakings and to take into account target groups which have not used libraries in the past. This will need to go above and beyond making a collection of materials accessible in »simple or easy language«. Correspondence and overdue reminders as well as library statutes and library user guides, program events or language courses are all potential areas to be tackled. For these measures to be successful and to actually reach their intended audience it will be essential to integrate efforts with those of self-help groups and other similar endeavors. In terms of the educational, cultural political and social functions named in the IFLA/UNESCO manifesto, public libraries have a high potential for facilitating inclusion: »Libraries for Everyone« is no longer merely library work aimed at so-called fringe groups or the marginalized, but a concept of inclusion that places them within the core of actions and attention, and leads to useful results for everyone.

Translated by Martha Baker