

Ministry of Education

Ministère de l'Éducation

Culture

Finnish Public Library Policy 2015

National strategic areas of focus

Publications of the Ministry of Education 2009:31



Finnish Public Library Policy 2015

National strategic areas of focus

Publications of the Ministry of Education 2009:31

Ministry of Education • Cultural Division,
Department for Cultural, Sport and Youth Policy



OPETUSMINISTERIÖ

Undervisningsministeriet

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Ministère de l'Éducation

Ministry of Education / Culture Division,
Department for Cultural, Sport and Youth Policy
P.O.BOX 29
FI-00023 GOVERNMENT

<http://www.minedu.fi>

Layout: Petteri Lehtinen / St. MIR

Photos: Jorma Waldén

(Entresse Library, Espoo and Turku City Library, Turku)

Printed by Yliopistopaino, Helsinki 2009

ISBN 1458-8110 (print)

ISBN 1797-9501 (pdf)

ISSN 978-952-485-740-6 (print)

ISSN 978-952-485-741-3 (pdf)

Publications of the Ministry of Education 2009:31

Index

| | |
|---|----|
| National strategic areas of focus | 5 |
| The library is a basic service along with comprehensive education | 7 |
| Library legislation and the government's funding | 9 |
| The strengths of the libraries | 11 |
| Libraries answer to future challenges by focusing on expertise and emphasizing quality | 13 |
| Future success of libraries must be earned | 15 |
| The patron at the center, always | 17 |
| Implementing of the cultural rights, as stated in the Constitution of Finland | 19 |
| National volition in the next government program | 19 |
| Holistic concept of the knowledge provision of an individual citizen | 19 |
| Cultural knowledge society | 19 |
| Municipalities | 20 |
| Implementing the basic mission | 20 |
| Libraries as accessible learning environments and meeting places | 20 |
| Library services for preschool, comprehensive school and upper secondary school | 20 |
| Toward a new culture of service and assembly | 20 |
| Ministry of Education | 21 |
| Development of government funding | 21 |
| Updating library legislation and creating national criteria for quality | 21 |
| Regional library activities | 21 |
| The government's central administration to support the library network across administrative boundaries | 21 |
| What type of additional value is achieved with the above-mentioned measures | 22 |
| Finnish Public Library Policy 2015 is based on the national tradition of culture education | 25 |
| Finnish Public Library Policy 2015 is a continuation of the Library Act and the library programs and strategies to come | 26 |
| Finnish Public Library Policy 2015 implements the cultural rights | 29 |
| Messages in the library programs and strategies specified in Finland's government programs | 31 |
| Further information | 32 |



*Let me push that button...
and now I've loaned a book all by myself*

National strategic areas of focus

The Finnish Public Library Policy 2015 of the Ministry of Education. *National strategic areas of focus* is the volition of the Ministry, which defines the direction and objectives of the activities in Finnish public libraries. It provides a foundation for proposing regulations and government financing.

The objective is to ensure the access to knowledge and cultural sources in a networking information, civic and learning society. The purpose of the program is to update previous library programs and strategies set forth by the Ministry of Education to correspond with upcoming changes in the operations environment.





Story hour is the best

The library is a basic service along with comprehensive education

it actualizes the basic cultural rights, as stated in the Constitution of Finland, of each and every citizen. Now, more than ever, libraries must strive to achieve intellectual equality and reduce the digital information gap between citizens.



Young people, the taxpayers of tomorrow determine whether library services are needed in the future

Library legislation and the government's funding

have guaranteed the steady development of municipal libraries in the entire country.

The municipalities in Finland are responsible for maintaining public libraries. The government subsidizes the organization of activities by funding a proportion of the costs to run public libraries. On the national level, activities are regulated by the Library Act and Decree, defining of policy, and discretionary funding.

The objective of the library and information services provided by public libraries is to promote equal opportunities among citizens for personal cultivation, for literary and cultural pursuits, for continuous development of knowledge, personal skills and civic skills, for internationalisation, and for lifelong learning. Library activities also

aim at promoting the development of virtual and interactive network services and their educational and cultural contents. (Library act 904/1998, 2§.)

The Ministry of Education has systematically provided state subsidizes for the costs of running municipal libraries, for construction of new library buildings, and for the purchases of bookmobiles for the past 50 years. Once the good standard of the network of services became assured, the Ministry of Education also funded new development projects, such as the acquisition of Internet connections and the creation of contents and user-friendly services on the web. In the 1990s, the Ministry also began funding the libraries.fi service and other centrally produced services.



Siuna 2
Kävelin, 12. Woulton
Kone vapaa

In the library, you can also be alone in company with others

The strengths of the libraries

include being up to date and offering an extensive range of services. This has resulted in large numbers of patrons and loans. It is only in public libraries that a diverse selection of literature, periodicals, music, movies and other recorded material, as well as quality information retrieval services are organized and saved all in the same place. Printed and virtual collections are offered side by side. Pleasant facilities and long opening hours offer patrons a safe place to meet that supports community, participation and the building of a multicultural frame of mind.

The library represents continuity and perseverance in a hectic society. Being transparent and offering free use of the collections and electronic equipment are practices to which people are unanimously committed. The ability to react quickly to the changes in society and the high level of education in the field are the stepping stones with which the library has

succeeded in its mission. Teaching in the library and information field is available in all levels of education after comprehensive education. In Finland, scholars can receive a doctor's degree in information studies, and for more than 40 years library directors have been required to complete a university degree.

Public libraries function as part of the national and international library and information services network. They are pioneers in collaboration that reaches across municipal borders. Regional computerized library systems and databases have been systematically constructed. Large consortiums have been established for acquiring library materials and for transports between service points. To the patrons, the collaborating libraries are seen as one service organization, which has increased the availability of services, quality and cost-effectiveness. Overlapping work has been reduced.



Wireless networks are common in today's libraries

Libraries answer to future challenges by focusing on expertise and emphasizing quality

The first condition for quality is a sufficient number of staff members highly educated in the field whose expertise is within reach of the patrons. Libraries are expected to mediate relevant information and knowledge and to create quality online services in a constantly expanding flood of information.

Guiding patrons in handling the abundance of information will become the core mission in libraries. This core mission refers to the readiness to select, acquire, seek, evaluate and use printed, online and new materials and contents. It begins with the knowledge provision of the individual, which is the

most important objective in increasing the quality of library and information retrieval services. Individuals, groups and learners of different ages will be successfully guided to utilize various information and cultural sources.

As the Internet and digital services have become common, libraries have been clearly placed in a position where, for the first time, they have to compete with other actors. They are also competing for people's time. To succeed, libraries must produce the type of added value to their services that others are not able to offer.

uutistori | nyhetstori



*Libraries have good equipment
and quick Internet connections*

Future success of libraries must be earned

Patrons are experts at what they need from the library. Each municipal resident and learner decides whether or not (s)he uses library services in the physical environment or online or whether (s)he will replace library services with other services. Today's children and youth will determine whether or not they will need library services in the future.

The library is not in a permanent state. The significance of its services can no longer be argued based on traditional library use alone. As changes occur in the structure of municipalities and services, it is important to know how to argue for the right of its existence, which is patron-oriented. The way people learn, seek information, read and write, as well as the way they use the library have changed and will continue to change.





There is no better way to reach the people in rural areas than with the bookmobile



The patron at the center, always

Knowing the actual opportunities available and the skill to find exactly what one is looking for – reliable information and the ability to use it – pose the greatest challenge for an individual. Finding relevant online information in the abundance of information that is available is a great challenge at the moment for libraries as well. Because of the varied levels of quality of online information, there is demand for strong expertise among the staff in libraries. The need for personal guidance increases; it is not enough that there are computers at home or otherwise easily

available, quick Internet connections, and material available online. Patrons, for example active senior citizens and busy people of the working age need new, customized services.

For the patron, it is important that material is found and smoothly delivered. The use of library services should be possible there where people are, whether physically or virtually. Non-patrons can be reached with new types of logistics solutions and alternative service locations.



Implementing of the cultural rights, as stated in the Constitution of Finland

National volition in the next government program

Holistic concept of the knowledge provision of an individual citizen

- The meaning of civic knowledge provision will be defined. The basic cultural rights of citizens will be determined in relation to the ever-expanding availability of online information. There is no holistic service concept for civic knowledge provision. Essential digital material and services that should be available to everyone free of charge through public funding will be defined and made available.
- Public libraries will be seen as central actors in providing the knowledge provision for individual citizens in a networking information society. The role of libraries as organizers and initiators of online cultural contents, as well as their part in the chain of producing and mediating information, will be made more transparent.

- In upcoming years, the societal mission of public libraries as a central part of the development of a learning civic society in Finland will be identified and decided upon. In practice, libraries will incorporate skills in knowledge management and media literacy into learning.
- Everyone will benefit from the above-mentioned measures: library patrons, as well as independent students, comprehensive schools and upper secondary schools that do not have their own libraries and/or pedagogic informatician.

Cultural knowledge society

- A new kind of information society contract is needed based on consciously chosen values that guarantee all citizens the prevailing rights in the cultural knowledge society. Defining this involves both the access to information and skills in acquiring and producing relevant information.

Municipalities

Implementing the basic mission

- There will be enough well-educated staff available for citizens and learners in local libraries.
- In addition to printed material, libraries will invest in developing and offering new materials and types of services. Purposeful, transparent marketing of library services will become an intimate part of library work.

Libraries as accessible learning environments and meeting places

- Funding for public libraries will be re-evaluated from the perspective of an accessible center of learning. The library alone is not responsible for resolving the issue or funding it.
- More and more, the library facilities will function as learning arenas where patrons can utilize a diverse selection of materials and receive more solid guidance in information management.
- Library facilities will be modified to support learning, working and socializing.

Library services for preschool, comprehensive school and upper secondary school

- Daycares, schools and other learning institutions actively use basic public library services.
- Creating custom library and information services for schools and educational institutions that do not have their own library requires the existence of overt contractual practices. Contracts will include what services will be established and what they will cost, e.g. for teaching pupils, students and teachers how to retrieve and manage information.

Toward a new culture of service and assembly

- To succeed, libraries should know how to approach patrons and their various needs. Expertise in library work and new, quality and interactive services will actively be made visible for the municipal residents to use.
- Current patron needs will be the basis for library systems and services, not the previous practices earlier considered correct.
- This requires a new way of thinking and a re-evaluation of attitudes and the traditional service culture.

Ministry of Education

Development of government funding

- Government funding will be directed at experimentation and development activities in public libraries according to the objectives of this program. Investments will be made in long-term projects that involve the entire country and that have a long-term impact on library activities to reinforce the foundation of expertise in libraries. The continuity of funding for the special tasks carried out in libraries and centralized services will be ensured.
- There will be active participation in **The National Digital Library 2008–2011** project of the Ministry of Education.
- National projects will be supported in the utilization of libraries' joint meta-data.
- If necessary, new, alternative forms of funding will be created alongside the basic funding to answer to patrons' changing needs and communications technology as new forms of material and logistics develop.

Updating library legislation and creating national criteria for quality

- The rights of patrons and the equal availability of services to all patrons and the level of quality will be specified. Public library legislation will be revised and national quality criteria will be created to develop and evaluate library activities.

Regional library activities

- Regional distribution of the work in libraries will be re-evaluated in connection with the changes in the government's regional and municipal administration.

The government's central administration to support the library network across administrative boundaries

- Collaboration between various actors in the government's central administration will be reinforced and their activities will support the national development of the library network.

What type of additional value is achieved with the above-mentioned measures

- The access and attainment of information and culture will be guaranteed to the residents in the municipalities in all upcoming changes.
- Libraries will reduce intellectual and social marginalization and inequality.
- Equality among residents in the municipality will improve with the use of online services.
- Media, information and traditional literacy among children and youth will be strengthened.
- Participation and community among residents of the municipality will increase. The quality of life will improve.
- The library will be an active “third space” that offers alternatives.
- Everyone will benefit from the solid expertise of the library staff.
- The level of up-to-date expertise and the infrastructure of knowledge provision will increase the competitiveness and success of the various regions.
- Patrons will see the library network as one service organization where everyone is able to easily obtain the services they need.
- Libraries and the various participants in information services will work closely together, as an

increasingly advantageous network for the citizens, where regional and national services as well as the creation of them are well-organized.

- Quality library network services and national material will be within the reach of small municipalities, sparsely populated areas and small organizations. With individual libraries, it will be possible to focus on the core services of the local area and organizations using centralized services.
- Fairly distributing new material, services and ways of working to the different parts of the country via public libraries will become easier.
- Making deliberate decisions will establish sensible activities that extend across municipal and administrative borders and overlapping work will be avoided.
- The opportunities for the library to support the education of the people, national identity, multicultural encounters and internationalism will be reinforced.
- High-quality library and information services will save time and money and have a long-term impact on society.



After school children and youth occupy the library

Finnish Public Library Policy 2015 is based on the national tradition of culture education

The basic mission of public libraries and the idea of offering services free of charge are undertakings that have endured various societal and technological changes in Finland for nearly a century. The first Library Act, which was passed as early as 1928, stated that municipal libraries are to offer literature

and staff services free of charge to the citizens to increase their level of education and to promote independent study. The Library Act of 1961 created the foundation for today's network of public libraries. In 1998, the Act anticipated the future and it is still feasible.

Finnish Public Library Policy 2015 is a continuation of the Library Act and the library programs and strategies to come

The Ministry of Education outlines library policy. The Ministry's work in the library field is governed by aims set in the government program. National library programs and strategies have seized upon future challenges and the definitions of policy based on them have been considered in the government's program documents. Governmental officials working in the regions have spread their message. National definitions of policy have been substantiated in regional and municipal libraries by taking into consideration the special needs of each operations environment.

The values, visions, objectives and challenges presented in the Library Act and previous library strategies and programs set forth by the Ministry of Education are still feasible today. The areas of emphasis change with the times. Various publications have presented a number of perspectives about the library's mission in a knowledge society, for example.

The objectives in the Library Act of 1998 were specified more precisely in a 2001 publication by the Ministry of Education, **Library Policy Programme 2001–2004**. *A wide range of culture and quality information retrieval in the library*, which stated that the library is partially responsible for the knowledge provision of individual citizens by creating quality and sustainability in the information chain. It guarantees the diverse availability of information and cultural sources and expertise. The library functions openly and keeps up with the times through the consideration of the environment in which it operates. The local, regional and national missions of libraries specified in the program have furthered the sensible production of library services.

The program also provided the basis for **The Library Strategy 2010**. *Policy for access to knowledge and culture* (Ministry of Education 2003). This program emphasized that libraries should not be considered solely responsible for library services; rather, the

services should be intimately associated with all learning and the holistic development of society. Library services, the knowledge provision for learners, and electronic communication within the public administration will be developed towards a joint web service, not as separate, short-sighted projects. The distribution of tasks for municipalities and government officials was specified more closely in the strategy. Municipalities are responsible for basic services, e.g. facilities, hiring knowledgeable staff, and acquiring current material and equipment. The government supports municipalities by funding operating costs, construction, purchases of bookmobiles, and development projects.

The 2006 publication by the Ministry of Education, **Library Development Program 2006–2010**. *The library as an integrated service center for rural and urban areas*, offered alternative concepts for local library and bookmobile services. The proposals are now topical issues as municipalities are being joined together. The situation provides opportunity to evaluate the adequacy of the staff's level of education as a whole and to determine if facilities are being diversely used together with other administrative

municipalities. The service concept of public libraries as environments open to everyone for learning, acquiring experiences, and meeting with others is evaluated according to local needs.

The Library Act and Decree, Library Policy Programme 2001–2004, Library Strategy 2010 and Library Development Program 2006–2010 can be viewed at the web site of the Ministry of Education.

A policy for service production and concrete models for determining free basic services are sought in a report published by the Ministry of Education in 2004. Concepts of basic services and additional services are defined. The report also specifies the distribution of tasks concerning production of digital services. The alternatives presented in the publication are still very feasible to use in the development of library activities.

Tomorrow's logistics solutions for the library are drawn up by logistics professionals in another report from the same year. Alternative models for the logistics issues of libraries are presented. Appropriate logistics solutions make economies and improve customer service.



It's fun to visit the library

Finnish Public Library Policy 2015 implements the cultural rights

set forth in the **Constitution of Finland**: “The public authorities shall, as provided in more detail by an Act, guarantee for everyone equal opportunity to receive other educational services in accordance with their ability and special needs, as well as the opportunity to develop themselves without being

prevented by economic hardship” (Constitution of Finland 1999/731, section 16). In practice this means that public authorities are responsible for creating the prerequisites for individuals to develop themselves by, for example, maintaining and supporting libraries.

Palauta
Återlämna
Return

Kaupungin



Messages in the library programs and strategies specified in Finland's government programs

The Government Platform 2007–2011 stated that the role of the library as a local and multi-service system for encouraging learning, knowledge provision, and obtaining cultural sources will be strengthened. The state subsidizes for the constructions of new libraries will be maintained. **The Library Development Program 2006–2010** of the Ministry of Education influenced the text for the program.

The Government Platform 2003–2007 stated that the availability of a diverse range of quality information and library services will be guaranteed in the entire country utilizing the suggestions in the **Library**

Strategy 2010. The basic services offered by libraries will remain free of charge. Furthermore, as part of the information society program, officials promised to strengthen the role of the library as a disperser of basic skills needed in the information society.

The Government Platform 1999–2003 stated that the public library is a national foundation pillar for education and culture, which supports the educational aspirations of the entire population and the marginalization of people and regions will be prevented by offering everyone equal opportunity to obtain the services offered in the knowledge society.



Further information is available from

Kirsti Kekki, tel. +358-9-1607 7240

Hannu Sulin, tel. +358-9-1607 7021

Barbro Wigell-Ryynänen, tel. +358-9-1607 7056

firstname.lastname@minedu.fi

<http://www.minedu.fi> :

Library Act and Degree 1998

Library Development Program 2006-2010. Publications of the Ministry of Education 2006:44

Library Strategy 2010 - Policy for access to knowledge and culture. Publications of the Ministry of Education 2003:9

A wide range of culture and quality information retrieval in the library. Ministry of Education 2001

<http://www.libraries.fi>

<http://tilastot.kirjastot.fi> (Finnish Public Library Statistics)

The patrons should be able to identify staff members easily





OPETUSMINISTERIÖ

Undervisningsministeriet

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION

Ministère de l'Éducation

ISSN 1458-8110 (print)

ISSN 1797-9501 (pdf)

