"Bibliotecas motores del cambio". Strategies and future prospects for libraries. Mario Coffa interviews Gloria Perez Salmeron, President of IFLA

I would like to start with the sentence that you put on your Facebook social page: "Bibliotecas motores del cambio". What does it mean to you?

"Libraries: Motors of Change" is my moto as IFLA President. There's a deep message in my program expressed shortly in this moto. I'm absolutely aligned to Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda and the way that libraries can be the main gates to access to information to achieve a real social change. Communities among libraries can get connected; can get meaningful access to information to improve their own lives. And, we, librarians, we have an important role to develop our communities of users, therefore our societies.

It was very interesting to read the document "Development and Access to Information 2019 (DA2I 2019 Report)"; in the context of libraries, what are the novelties and what will be the future scenarios in terms of accessibility?

It's very pleasant to see you are really updated about what IFLA is doing. Development and Access to Information (DA2I) is a series of reports, led by IFLA in partnership with the Technology and Social Change Group, University of Washington (TASCHA), that monitor the progress countries are making towards fulfilling their commitment to promote meaningful access to information (A2I) as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. In response to governments' commitment to promote meaningful access to information (A2I) as part of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals, the report provides a range of indicators of how well countries are performing. Looking at four different pillars of access – connectivity, social and cultural norms, skills and laws – it gives insights into the different dimensions of meaningful access to information. Drawing on the rich experience of IFLA, it also includes a particular focus on libraries, sharing evaluated case-studies of how they promote more

socially and economically inclusive societies. So it means as the role of information in our societies has never been greater. It is an enabler, a raw material, a source of innovation and creativity. To give everyone access to it is to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to learn, grow, and take better decisions for themselves and for those around them. And with the report of 2019 that was presented on 23 May 2019, during the IFLA President's Meeting in Buenos Aires, Argentina we would like to remark how libraries can make the difference in terms of given access to everyone without any distinction, to contribute to the progress of meaningful access to information that democratises access as the paradigm of development.

A question I have already asked other colleagues: according to you, by verifying the now recognized value of this noble profession, what is necessary to do to obtain recognition of the profession of "librarian" in a professional and therefore work and contractual environment?

I guess that my answer about the value of us librarians, as professionals of information, is indeed well related to the offer and answers we can give to the requests by society. In my point of view, our actions regarding people's information needs to increase their information world or their welfare, all kind of people, I mean, from researchers to citizens in general, will ride us to the highest position as people will value us according to of the good results we can provide them.

Digital and digital libraries: are we going in the right direction? What scenarios do you plan for the near future?

Digital transformation is everywhere nowadays and people use to have smarts devices in their pockets to get connected with information. Libraries are doing a great effort to get digital services as well. In my opinion, Heritage Libraries have a continuing role to digitalise and disseminate their main collections giving access through the internet to them. Public libraries should reinforce their digital libraries services including reading and what citizens need to get to optimise their work. What would be my desire for all kind of libraries would be to have a good understanding of what is important for the communities they serve. And become the motors of change in any context, regarding

different needs. It means work directly with people to provide them the skills, to empower users in becoming the best users of the digital library services.

How and what can an institution such as IFLA do to support and incite this process of enhancing the library in a capilar (or almost) way in the world?

IFLA is the global voice of libraries, recognised as the main organisation who represents Library Field all over the world. During these last 2 years, IFLA has tackled an important process regarding the Global Vision of Libraries to face the challenges of the globalization and finding out new opportunities to strengthen the library field and enhancing the library in an inclusive and participatory way. This process has had an absolute response of more than 33.000 librarians that are tuned to library field transformation and the possible changes we need to tackle libraries future. I'm confident that the movement of transformation and librarians' mind-set change are getting up a gear a new way to understand that together we can get our future.

Giulio has just graduated in Library Science and wants to be a librarian: what would you recommend?

Some years ago I got an interview from Julián Marquina, a Spanish colleague to share with his students of last year of librarianship degree. I was happy to build this Decalogue that I think is still useful, so I would tell him to follow these 10 steps:

1. Empathy: What do you think about your users' needs?

2. Jargon: Use a language that is close to your users and in the proper context. Users' understanding.

3. Strategy: Be strategic; plan your services and products from a perspective of necessity always.

4. Legal framework. Attend to the legal framework, but please be practical.

5. Change management: Go forward and change things ... do not do them as they have always been done.

6. Teamwork: The sum always favours, multiplies.

7. Evaluate: work with indicators and think that services always have to be profitable.

8. Innovation: Be bold, innovative and brave. Propose things that are worthwhile and viable.

9. Update yourself: Never stop training, always be aware of professional issues, see the latest news...

10. Try to be very happy

Thank you to this opportunity to communicate with my Italian colleagues.