



Professional Profile - Community Librarian

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1. Introduction

We are in 2025

The library has projected all events for the coming week on the outside wall of the building. You enter because you are curious, or because you are a member of the library and a message on your glasses has tempted you to go inside. As soon as you enter, your own devices are immediately connected with the library's own systems. You seamlessly become part of a world of stories and a riches of knowledge held in databases and electronic books, on paper and in the minds of people. You can engage in activities on your own or together with other people, or just relax with a book. The library systems stimulate 'chance encounters'. If you open up your profile, you are invited to participate in activities or linked to people with similar interests.

The library of the future is situated in a building in the center of your city, neighborhood or town, where it is part of the core social infrastructure of the local community. Some libraries have movable units that can be placed near for example schools or public institutions for short or longer periods of time. Or they can be rented and configured for local public events. More often than not this is one of the few public places left in the local environment. These places form an important extension of the digital library framework and are closely tuned to what is required locally. In the larger cities the library is a melting pot through its great diversity of visitors. In smaller places, the library closely cooperates with the local council, performing arts institutions and local service providers.

The library invites you to read, study, follow courses, work or just hang around and get inspired. There are quiet places, cubes to totally disconnect and escape from the daily hustle and bustle. You will be amazed by its stories and the information that is relevant to you. You can use the latest reading and study methods in the simulations- and serious gaming zones, the Deep Thinking Lab, or via multi-sensory story engines. With these, you can engage on your own or together with others. Through the walls or the large multi-media table displays you can literally enlarge your world, and make your digital contacts with other people an almost real sensory experience. Or, you can get materials from the digital collection, use them for school or work, and add your own information to the collection. In the movies theater you can order display of a virtual lecture, conference or talk.

2. Library of the future

The Dutch Library Law lists five functions that a public library must fulfill.

The five functions are:

1. Making knowledge and information available
2. Providing opportunities for development and education
3. Promote reading and provide an introduction to literature
4. Organizing social encounters and debate
5. Getting acquainted with art and culture.

The general principles in the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto have been translated into commissions to governments and to the library sector. In doing so, the public library distinguishes itself from other providers of information by functioning on the basis of the public values of reliability, independence, authenticity, diversity, and accessibility.

1 Providing availability and access to knowledge and information

In a complex and information-rich world, it becomes increasingly difficult for people to find their way. The library manages and unlocks physical and digital sources of literature, philosophy and science. The correct handling and interpretation of information is especially important, in addition to the availability of devices to access that information. The library is an expert in finding and connecting information and information transfer. The library supports people, inspires and surprises them with new perspectives.

2 A stimulating learning environment

The library provides users with a physical and/or virtual platform where they can come together, share knowledge and acquire key 21st century skills. The library stimulates the deepening and extension of knowledge, self-study and self-development. The library is focused on reducing backlogs and on further developing talents. The library is available for every citizen.

3 Language is at the core for everything

In a society that has developed into a knowledge-based society, language is the basis for acquiring knowledge. That is why support in the field of language skills and the promotion of literacy and reading culture will continue to lie at the heart of the public library's services. The library inspires and stimulates readers and potential readers and guides them to the collection of books and stories (physical and virtual). The library is the obvious professional partner of educational institutions and an important player in tackling illiteracy or literacy-related problems.

4. A lively and stimulating place for encounters and debate

Knowledge is increasingly being created in a network and community context, in physical and virtual places where people come together, discuss, negotiate, learn and create. Libraries offer a stimulating (virtual) environment to learn or read and to be among people and a physical place where everything is organized. Everyone is welcome here, and people come into contact with other cultures, lifestyles and backgrounds. In this way the library contributes to the empathic capacity of society. Locally, the library provides a platform for social and cultural organizations, tailored to individual needs and local focus areas. The library can invite and encourage people to get involved in the local debate on, for example, local decision-making and community issues. The library contributes to the formation of the local identity and stimulates involvement in society.

5. Getting acquainted with art and culture

The library offers the user the opportunity to become acquainted with art and culture.

3. Professional profile

Critical professional situation

To get a clear picture of the daily work of the Community Librarian you can read below a description of a typical working day of Martin, Community Librarian at the Public Library. In the course of the working day Martin uses various competencies, knowledge, insights and skills integrally. These are competencies, knowledge, insights and skills on which success or failure in his work depends.

Martin is passionate about and committed to the Public Library. Martin works fulltime. The Public Library is located in an urban area with different neighborhoods representing different social classes. Martin is a socially engaged person and works in his spare time as a volunteer at the local broadcasting station. As a result, he is well-informed about what is going on in the city where The Public Library is located. Martin is good at customer contacts and feels good about the instances when he adds value for the customer. For example, he helps them with questions about the collection or with questions about creating an ebook account online. He also has an 'antenna' for people he calls 'knowledge keepers'. These are visitors who, besides coming to borrow books, also have specialist knowledge, passion for a subject or a specific talent. He approaches them actively and tries to seduce them to become 'acquaintances' and share their knowledge with others via the (virtual) library stage.

Martin is a 'community builder'. He likes to connect people through common interests or relevant social themes. For example, last week, in the run-up to the elections, he organized an afternoon on the theme of 'democracy'. A number of inspiring speakers gave a lecture and then the visitors started a discussion with the speakers and with each other. For those who find it interesting, the virtual discussion platform of the Public Library offers the possibility to continue the discussion for another two weeks and the participants can find more background information via the website of the Public Library. For some secondary schools, this afternoon was the starting point of a series of lessons on democracy in which the speakers gave another lesson at the schools and students can use the knowledge resources that the Public Library makes available physically and via the website for their thesis.

Martin is very visible on the library floor and he is well informed about the products and services of the Public Library. Because of this, he knows how to make the connection from the loan of books to other products. He makes visitors enthusiastic for literature and he points them to national or regional art projects that match the interest of the visitors.

In terms of content Martin can always fall back on the specialist of the cluster to which a particular product belongs, for his own information. These specialists know everything about their products, know the network, have clear goals and can also dispose of the budget they have been given to realize these goals together with the team. As a result, Martin is always able to switch quickly and is not waylaid and short of resources.

Martin has many contacts in the city and takes a good look at which current developments are of interest to the Public Library. Now that a local asylum seekers' center will soon be opened, he is already thinking about how the Public Library could cooperate with the asylum seekers' center to support the refugees. For example, he could offer to provide language and cultural training at the Public Library.

If a new partner becomes active in the branch of the Public Library, Martin hears this at an early stage from his manager via the (virtual) work consultation. In this way, there will soon be two consultation hours in the Public Library from the municipality. One about care allowances and one for questions about the local estate tax, which will soon be communicated to all homeowners. This collaboration arose from a

conversation that Martin himself had with a library visitor. Each visitor has a unique background with interests, a job and possibly involvement in a social organization. This way of 'looking' is very natural for Martin, because of his curiosity and interest in people.

Main tasks

During his working day Martin performs the four main tasks of the Community Librarian:

1. Local liaison, ambassador, community builder;
2. Information broker, source of information and helper;
3. Communicator;
4. Co-creator.

The local liaison, ambassador, community builder:

- Follows trends and social developments in the world, in his country, in the region, in the city and in the neighborhood and is part of this;
- Translates knowledge and experiences into concrete possibilities in the programming of the library;
- Initiates and supports the communications on social media directly and indirectly, and promotes the products and services;
- Organizes and facilitates meetings and activities and substantiates their importance from a social, national, regional and local perspective;
- Represents the organization and refers external contacts to the right colleague(s) and cooperation partners.

The information broker, source of information, and helper:

- Advises clients in a pleasant, hospitable and professional manner aimed at increasing their independence;
- Guides clients in their information search and the interpretation of search results;
- Guides clients in the use of databases & media and the application of systems;
- Identifies and analyzes customer questions and answers them in a professional manner and puts the customer in contact with the colleague with the right knowledge and expertise;
- Encourages customers to make use of other products & services that fit their needs.
- Maintains the collection at the location;
- Provides content information to visitors about the service package;
- Proactively promotes, places, presents and sells the library's products and services.

The communicator:

- Observes, identifies and reports trends in the nature of our customers' wishes and questions;
- Reports complaints and communicates relevant information to the team;
- Formulates, in consultation with his superior or with the help of a designated colleague, press releases and other communications for the local activities;
- Advises the team on matters that improve our services and contributes to this ourselves;
- Coaches, guides and advises his (paid and volunteer) colleagues in the use of services, products and about patron service matters if necessary.

The co-creator

- Creates, in coherence and in cooperation with his environment, knowledge, insights or developments that have not been conceived in advance.

Competencies

The sectoral advisory board is of the opinion that the Community Librarian can operate successfully in the above mentioned situations, if he/she has the following competencies:

1. *Knowledge of information sources*
2. *Customer and relationship oriented action*
3. *An enterprising attitude*
4. *Collaboration abilities*
5. *Learning abilities*
6. *Social sensitivity*
7. *Communication and networking skills*
8. *Planning and organizing*

4. Training profile for the Community Librarian

Library services institution Cubiss and Avans+ University of Applied Sciences have developed a training program that allows participants to develop the competencies mentioned in the professional profile and thus meet the requirements of the profession of Community Librarian. In this training profile you will first read which target group the training is aimed at and what the general objective of the training is. This document concludes with the final qualifications that Avans+ University of Applied Sciences has attached to this program.

Target group

The target group of the Community Librarian program consists of professionals with at least a Bachelor's university degree. The professionals will enter into, or are already working within the library organization.

Objective

The training program for 'Community Librarian' aims to strengthen the innovative power within the library, by (further) developing the competences mentioned in the professional profile.

Final qualifications

These final qualifications indicate the minimum knowledge, insights, skills and attitude aspects the participant must have at the end of the Community Librarian training:

1. *Knowledge of sources*

The Community Librarian is well aware of all the sources he/she has at his disposal (digital, in books, from colleagues and from customers) and he/she knows how to unlock and manage those sources.

2. *Customer and relationship oriented action*

The Community Librarian recognizes the wishes, needs and interests of both internal and external customers/relations and acts accordingly. He/she empathizes with customer opinions and questions, thinks in terms of solutions and translates these into activities and actions.

3. *An enterprising attitude*

The Community Librarian identifies external opportunities and acts accordingly. He feels connected with the organization and with the work. He/she has passion for the cause and strives to achieve the goals the library organization strives for. He/she develops himself with the goal of realizing business success.

4. *Collaborate*

The Community Librarian actively contributes to achieving results and organizational goals together with others, even when this is not of direct personal interest.

5. Learning abilities

The Community Librarian has the ability to learn from experience and apply what has been learned to new situations; he/she also has the ability to bundle knowledge and share findings with others in order to work together towards a common goal.

6. Environmentally aware

The Community Librarian is open to experiences, actively searches for new information, uses an open approach without prejudice. He/she shows an intrinsic, personal and professional interest in social and/or cultural developments or other environmental factors that influence the library organization on a macro, meso and micro level. He/she shows to be well-informed and able to place the services in this context.

7. Flexible working posture

The Community Librarian is able to perform changing tasks and respond adequately to changing circumstances. He/she is open to new ideas. He/she adapts his commitment, style and approach to changes.

8. Communicative and networkable

The Community Librarian is able to convey ideas and information, both verbally and in writing, clearly and unambiguously, in such a way that the content is understood, with effective use of existing means of communication, and is able to further develop, maintain and use this in external contacts to achieve the organization's objectives.

9. Planning and organizing

The Community Librarian effectively determines goals and priorities and indicates the time, actions and resources needed to achieve certain goals. He/she prepares activities and arranges them in such a way that they can be carried out efficiently and effectively. He/she directs actions and activities according to schedule and monitors progress.