



Guidelines for Library Services For Young Adults

The Guidelines are a revision from the Guidelines that were published in 1996 by the Standing Committee from Section Libraries for children and young adults.

We owe special thanks to the members of the working group:

Viviana Quiñones (France), Ivan Chew (Singapore) and Ingrid Bon (Netherlands) but specially Pat Muller (Richmond, USA) for her excellent job on coordinating the whole process.

Section 1

Introduction

Goals of the Guidelines

This publication, IFLA 'Guidelines for Library Services for Young Adults' provides a framework for developing services to young adults and libraries, for the international community. It provides the intellectual building block for a country, for its service through its librarians. The Guidelines contain both philosophical and practical ideas that can improve a library's response to meeting the educational, informational, cultural, and leisure needs of young adults, in ways that are developmentally appropriate. It is to be used as a document for librarians, decision-makers, policy makers, library students, and stakeholders in the development of services for young people.

Audience for the guidelines:

- Practising librarians in all types of libraries and communities, urban and rural areas around the world, professionals, assistants and volunteers.
- Library administrators and decision-makers
- Professional educators and students in library schools.

Each public library has a different community to serve and therefore different priorities and needs. Although special library services for young adults have not been well established in all countries, these guidelines are created in the belief that young adulthood is a unique life stage. Young adults are entitled to the same quality of library services offered for other age groups in the population. Wherever possible, the services should be developed in partnership with young adults themselves.

Mission and Goals for Library Services for Young Adults

"The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision making and cultural development of the individual and social groups"

(UNESCO/ IFLA PUBLIC LIBRARY MANIFESTO, 1995)

The UNESCO MANIFESTO proclaims the belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information.

"Teenagers need special attention since many abandon voluntary reading at this stage in their lives. Their introduction to a wide array of books, compatible with their changing interests, should be encouraged by librarians and others who are aware of their psychological and emotional growth"

(CHARTER FOR THE READER, INTERNATIONAL BOOK COMMITTEE AND INTERNATIONAL PUBLISHING ASSOCIATION 1992)

The mission of the library with respect to young adult services is

to assist the individual in achieving a successful transition from childhood to adulthood by providing both access to resources, and an environment that meets the specific needs of young adults for intellectual, emotional, and social development.

Goals for Library Services for Young Adults

- Library services for young adults should provide a transition from children's services to adult services that is based on the unique needs of young adults.
- Young adults need and deserve services that address their educational, informational, cultural, and leisure time needs.
- Services should promote literacy, lifelong learning, information literacy and reading for pleasure.

These ten goals provide a framework for libraries to follow in developing services for young adults:

1. The library has established clear policy statements concerning the right to free access by young adults to library resources and information sources; and respect for the rights of young adults to select materials appropriate to their needs without censorship.
2. The library program for young adults is effectively managed according to best practices.
3. There is equitable distribution of resources to support programs and services for young adults.
4. Library staff are knowledgeable about adolescent development and age appropriate resources for young adults, inclusive of those with special needs.
5. The library provides a wide spectrum of current materials of interest to young adults to encourage life-long learning, literacy, reading motivation, and reader development.
6. The library provides resources to support the educational needs of young adults.
7. The library assists young adults in acquiring the skills to effectively access all library resources and become information and computer literate.
8. The library fosters youth development by providing opportunities for young adults to participate in planning and implementing library programs and services for themselves; and volunteer opportunities for helping others.
9. The library creates an area just for young adults that is attractive and that reflects their lifestyle.
10. The library works in partnership with other community agencies and organizations to support all aspects of healthy, successful youth development.

SECTION 2

Definition of the target group

The target group (young adult) can be defined as a group of people in-between childhood and adulthood. Each library can set their own age range for what they consider to be young

adult, which can vary by cultural background and country. Generally speaking, the years between twelve and eighteen are often used as a range for young adult library services. This range may be extended past eighteen years depending on country and culture. The target group includes all members regardless of race, religion, cultural background, intellectual, or physical ability.

Needs of the target group

Cultural Needs:

The library must be open to everybody and therefore must respect different cultural needs. Cultural needs have their roots in both oral and visual traditions, in the changing of society and social status, in cultural diversity and in one's own personal vision for the future.

Developmental Needs:

Services for young adults should be designed in cooperation with representatives of the target group. Young adults should be actively involved in planning, implementing and evaluating resources, services, and programs. They should be treated with respect, acceptance, and a willingness by the library to validate their choices, even if different to those that the library traditionally offers.

Libraries that structure their programs and services within the context of research-based youth development models can provide opportunities for young adults to achieve a successful transition from adolescence to adulthood.

Materials

Young adults are a diverse group whose interests, maturity level, needs and abilities varies greatly. Therefore, libraries must provide a variety of resources to reflect their needs. Special attention must be paid to young adults with disabilities, and those who are social and linguistic minorities. Materials in other languages should be included in the collection, along with those that reflect cultural diversity.

Giving Young Adults opportunities to be involved in the selection and display of library materials for their age group, can bring positive benefits in promoting library services and resources and can help to increase library use

Many formats are recommended including comic books, popular genres such as science fiction, fantasy, romance, and mysteries to name a few, and current popular music.

Printed materials can include:

- Books
- Magazines
- Brochures
- Posters
- Comic books
- Graphic novels
- Other languages, including Braille and Signlanguage

Non-printed material can include:

- Audiobooks
- Music
- Multimedia such as CD-ROMs, CDI
- Computer software
- Video-cassettes and DVD's
- Board and electronic games
- Electronic networks and database products

These formats should be reviewed on a regular basis, to allow for changing technology.

Equipment should be provided that is sufficient to support the user's needs to access non-printed materials (e.g. game consoles).

Services

Services must be provided that support the needs of young adults as defined earlier in this document. The following list of recommended services is not comprehensive, but serves as a guide to the types of services that libraries may wish to consider initiating for this target audience. When planning services, consideration should always be given to physical, digital, and program activities.

Examples of Recommended Services

- Free access to the Internet
- Providing reference information to support educational achievement and personal development.
- Conducting library tours that support self-sufficiency and comfort level in using the library.
- Training for literacy and information finding skills, using both print and electronic resources.
- Offering readers advisory services for individuals and groups
- Encouraging the use of the collection in all formats
- Providing finding aids and other supporting materials
- Facilitating access to resources outside the collection when necessary, such as referrals and inter-library loans.
- Promoting services to young adults within the community
- Co-operating with other information and service providers in the community
- Providing services to special groups such as young adults with disabilities, teen parents, and teens who may be incarcerated or unable to come to the library for a variety of reasons.

Programs and Youth Participation

Libraries who wish to offer effective and meaningful programs for young adults must seek out their participation at all stages of

the program process. Involving young adults in decision-making, planning, and implementing programs for themselves is highly recommended as a best practice that contributes to positive youth development.

Young adults should be recognized as the experts on what will be appealing and useful to them. It is recommended that libraries create a process by which young adults can give input on facilities, programs, and services--such as a Teen Advisory Board or a Teen Ambassador program. Libraries also need to recognize teens as a resource for presenting programs to others in the community.

Examples of Recommended Programmes

(The following list of recommended programs serves as a guide to the types of programs that libraries may wish to consider, but the interests and influence of local teens should always be the deciding factor in program planning)

- Book talks, storytelling, and book promotion
- Discussion groups and clubs
- Information programs on topics of interest such as health, careers, current issues
- Celebrity visits of authors, athletes, and persons of local interest
- Performances of a cultural nature such as music, art, and drama
- Co-operative programming with community institutions and groups
- Young adult productions (drama, publications, TV, video)
- Workshops designed to teach a skill or for creative expression
- Reading debates
- Book promotions

Staff

Staff who work with young adults should have the following skills and competencies:

- Understanding of the unique developmental needs of young adults
- Respect for young adults as individuals
- Knowledge of young adult culture and interests
- Ability to create partnerships among other groups in the community that address needs of young adults
- Flexibility to follow the changing needs and interests of young adults
- Ability to advocate for young adults within the library and in the wider community
- Ability to work in partnership with young adults
- Knowledge of all media, including books and resources in all formats
- Creative Thinking skills

SECTION 3

Co-operation with other institutions

The quality of library services for young adults demands a good network with other professional or voluntary institutions in the local community. The young adults' activities in culture, education and social life must be co-ordinated so that the local institutions do not compete but co-operate for the benefit of the young adults. Many librarians have the resources and the know-how to be the professional co-ordinators for the benefit of young adults.

Educational networking

Schools are one of the the most important partners for public libraries serving young adults. In many countries and regions of countries, there will only be a school library, a public library or sometimes a combined library to serve the public. Co-operative planning between school libraries and public libraries can improve local efforts to meet the needs and interests of young adults. A formal agreement is recommended to ensure the implementation of the plan of co-operation.

Cultural networking

Cultural networking is an effective way of focusing on the identity in a multicultural society so as to meet the needs of young adults. The public library, working together with other cultural institutions and young adults, can plan and deliver cultural programmes such as:

- Literature, music, and film festivals
- Visual art exhibitions
- Carnivals
- Performing arts, including street arts

Professional Networking

Library staff should make a strong effort to co-operate with other agencies in the community that serve young adults. Regular communication with social services, employment, welfare, and law enforcement agencies, as well as with other youth services groups, can assist libraries in becoming aware of new trends, developing social problems, and other local issues as well as helping to reach young adults who wouldn't normally visit a library. Collaborative solutions can then be developed and implemented to improve the lives of young people.

SECTION 4

Planning and Evaluation

Effective planning requires that the library begin a process of data-gathering and goal-setting.

Data gathering is an important step in planning and evaluation. Demographic data should be collected for the library service area from government sources such as census data, school achievement, economic indicators, and social indicators. Collecting from a variety of sources will allow the library to form a profile of the young adult population and to make informed decisions about programs and services

An effective plan for young adult services should ideally be composed of between three and six long range goals. Libraries

should strive to determine which goals are the most strategic in meeting or improving library services for young adults. A budget should be established with these prioritized goals.

Over time, emphasis should be applied toward achieving these goals. This allows the library to concentrate on making sustainable progress toward a few goals, rather than scattering resources in many directions, without measurable success. For example, a library may wish to concentrate on building up a young adult collection and providing an attractive teen area. Another library may wish to focus on educational support and improving teen literacy. Goals should be determined based on the needs of the users, as well as the resources that are available to address the need.

The library should also seek input from young adults who are not using its services and facilities.

Evaluation of Services

Qualitative and quantitative measures should be used to determine the success of young adult programs and services. The following measures are suggested for consideration by libraries who wish to evaluate their effectiveness in serving young adults:

Five Basic Measures of Service:

- Circulation per capita of materials for young adults
- Expenditures per capita of library funds for young adult materials
- Materials holdings per capita for young adult materials
- Turnover rate - Divide the circulation by the holdings to measure usage
- Program attendance per capita

Additional Service Measures:

- Library visits as a percentage of the young adult population
- Building use by young adults
- Registration as a proportion of the population
- In-library use of material
- Reference services per young adult population
- Success rate of information transactions
- External groups visiting the library and library tours
- Outreach visits to outside groups by the librarian
- Anecdotal evidence of the success of programs and services
- Surveys or interviews, which measure changes or improvements in attitudes, knowledge, skills, or benefits to young adults--by asking them directly if such activities have made a difference to them
- Users should be included in the evaluations
- Use of National Standards (if available)

SECTION 5

Marketing and Promotion

Promoting the library to young adults is an important activity. Many young adults do not know the scope or value of the resources that are available to them in the library. A promotional plan should include a variety of methods for reaching young adults. Some suggestions for marketing library programs and services are:

- Make publicity available in places where young adults congregate, such as cinemas, cafes, popular stores
- Build credibility by asking teens to help design publicity and other promotional materials, and by acting on their suggestions.
- Promote services for teens on a library young adult webpage
- Sponsor events that connect the library to a cause that teens care about
- Offer contests and promotions that offer teens the opportunity to show off their knowledge and abilities.
- Design promotional materials that show an understanding of teen culture and interests, such as sports, celebrities, love, fantasies, new trends, and music
- Make publicity available through community partners such as schools and other organizations.

SECTION 6

Best Practices

The following best practices are provided to further guide and inform a library's use of the guidelines. Each library must choose the programs and services that will be of most benefit to the young adults served by the library. And each library's service response will be different, since it will be based on the unique needs and characteristics of the young adults in the community, as well as on library and community resources.

Homework Support

Libraries in Denmark are entering into an agreement with the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Refugees to strengthen the libraries' ability to serve the needs of young adults from other ethnic groups who are not native Danish speakers. Funding has been made available for the establishment and maintenance of homework support programs, known as Homework Cafes, for bilingual students. Many of the volunteer tutors are older people or young students from the community. Some of the benefits are improved language skills, greater school success, and the opportunity to meet other students like themselves.

Library Clubs

The public library in Aalborg, Denmark has started several clubs for young people to attract them into the library for positive social activity. Each day of the week a different club meets. Monday is for playing Wii, Tuesday is for Manga, Wednesday is for Homework, and Thursday is the Reading club which discussese books of all kinds and poetry. Library staff and young people form relationships which lead to new and valuable ideas for library services.

Youth Multi-media Library

Hamburg, Germany has created a youth library with the objective of providing young people in the surrounding area with a multi-media trend library and welcoming space for leisure activities. The collection consists of 50% print media and 50% audio-visual media, including CDs, DVDs, audiobooks, board games, magazines, UMDs, games for Xbox, Playstation, Nintendo DS, and Wii. Some of the main topics in the collection are adventure, action, comics, games, love and sex, stress, addiction, and mystery. The youth library seeks to promote reading and media skills through the active use of all kinds of media. The building housing the youth library is a refurbished propeller factory which offers catering, and a cinema in addition to the library.

Teen culture and lifestyle is embraced and celebrated in Viroflay, a suburb of Paris. A new multimedia library for teens is filled with noise from walkmans, mobile phones, and MP3 players, all of which are allowed in the library. Music may be legally downloaded to their music players. There is a high level of trust between the teens and the library staff, which results in self-control by the teens. The media library has sponsored a cartooning workshop and features short films created by the teens on the library welcome screens.

Teen Lock-in Night

Teens ages 15 to 20 voluntarily locked themselves (with adult supervision) into the library for an overnight literacy experience, in Troyes France. The topic for the evening was "Books and Cinema." For the entire night, teenagers watched short films, talked with writers, film directors and screenwriters, and at the end, shared a breakfast with them. Events such as this nurture independence, creativity, and a positive attitude toward the library.

Expanding Services to Visually Impaired Teens

In 2007, the Lucien Herr Library in Saint Jacques de la Lande in Brittany, France expanded access to their annual literature prize for teenagers, to those who are blind and visually impaired. The multimedia library arranged for audio transcriptions of the 10 titles in the competition. In 2008 professional actors will read the entries. Several copies of the audio books were distributed to local teens, along with playing devices. Rather than being marginalized, teens with disabilities are valued and provided with the tools to participate in library activities.

Youth Helping Youth

The Bookworm Cafe Club in Rijeka, Croatia is the most long-lasting teen activity in the city, which is known for its Teens for Teens/Young for Young project. The project started in 2001 in the form of a series of coordinated workshops led by young library members for other users of their own age. The Club meets once a month and draws young readers ages 14 to 19, who come together for their common interest in books and reading. Each month the group decides on a book to read and discuss. The members also manage a bulletin board in the library for news about meetings and themes, and for posting recommendations. They also write recommendations for the library's web site and have on occasion read their reviews on the radio. The Club is an excellent example of youth participation in action.

Creative Performing

Teens are being given the opportunity to present their creative skills to others through a program entitled "Svastarnica" in Zadar City, Croatia. This is a monthly program based on the "open mic" concept, in which teens are encouraged to give a creative performance in front of their peers. "Svastarnica" is a program which enables all teens to perform, to present their skills and capabilities in a variety of disciplines such as singing, dancing, acting, art, fashion, and creative writing. New generations of teens are now adding other forms of entertainment such as quizzes, pantomime, charades, and other competitive games. Although the purpose is to build self-confidence and have fun, librarians who coordinate the program also implement topics from youth literature, in order to promote reading in a relaxing and friendly environment.

Staff Game Night

Introducing library staff to teen culture and lifestyle can be an essential step forward in serving teens. A library in Richmond, Virginia in the U. S. recently hosted a teen game night for library employees, who gathered after work on a Friday evening to eat pizza and play a variety of games that are popular with teens, such as Guitar Hero, Wii, and Dance Dance Revolution. They found that they enjoyed playing the games and creating their online Avatars for Wii. It gave the staff a new appreciation for this aspect of teen culture, and created a feeling of connection with teens in the community.

Teen Tech Week

La Puente Library in Los Angeles County, U. S. will host a online activities for teens during their celebration of Teen Tech Week. This is a national event in the U. S. to draw attention to the role that technology plays in the lives of teens. The La Puente program will focus on information literacy by giving out gift cards for correct answers to scavenger hunt queries about databases and other online resources. . Teens will also gain knowledge about safety and privacy by shopping online for library books to add to the young adult collection. Friday will be a fun technology day, as teens will have the opportunity to compete in Wii gaming, Guitar Hero, and Dance, Dance Revolution.

Queens Library in Forest Hills, N.Y. will launch a "Tech Buddies" program that matches teens with seniors who would like to become better versed in technology while teaching safety and privacy skills along the way. The program will focus on the more entertaining and fun aspects of technology: podcasts, short video, and video games. The selected teens and seniors will gather for Wii games and snacks during Teen Tech Week and continue to meet the next 10 weeks for tech activities.

Appendix A
Self-assessment Checklist

For the best results while using this as an assessment tool, within each box mark the month and year which matches your progress: for example, if your library "needs to consider" including services to young adults in their mission statement, mark "2009."

In the interest of serving young adults, every public library shall:

1. **Strive to provide** high quality services for young adults, seeing those services as important, and treated equally with, services for adults.

<i>Where is the library on this continuum?</i>			
_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>needs to consider</i>	<i>in planning stages</i>	<i>already implemented</i>	<i>achieving and evaluating</i>

2. **Include** service to young adults in their mission statement.

<i>Where is the library on this continuum?</i>			
_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>needs to consider</i>	<i>in planning stages</i>	<i>already implemented</i>	<i>achieving and evaluating</i>

3. **Ensure** ease in obtaining library cards and library privileges.

<i>Where is the library on this continuum?</i>			
_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>needs to consider</i>	<i>in planning stages</i>	<i>already implemented</i>	<i>achieving and evaluating</i>

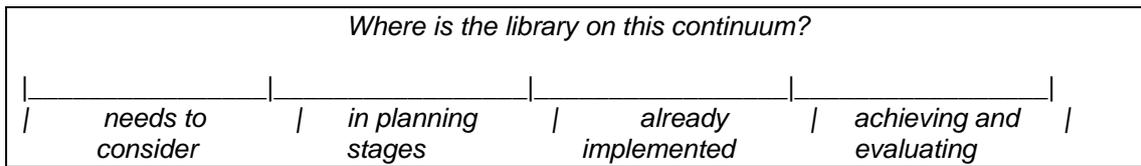
4. **Understand** the need for prominent signage, in both words and pictographs, to allow patrons independence in navigating library locations.

<i>Where is the library on this continuum?</i>			
_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>needs to consider</i>	<i>in planning stages</i>	<i>already implemented</i>	<i>achieving and evaluating</i>

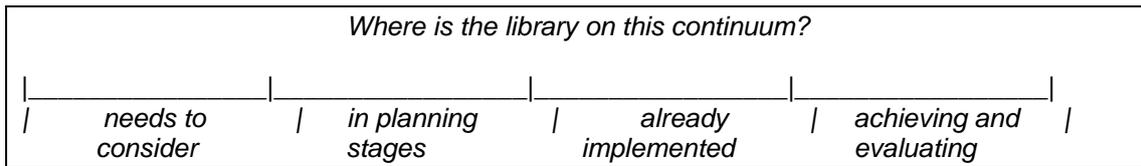
5. **Provide** a clearly defined space dedicated to resources for young adults in all service locations, including mobile services and through delivery services.

<i>Where is the library on this continuum?</i>			
_____	_____	_____	_____
<i>needs to consider</i>	<i>in planning stages</i>	<i>already implemented</i>	<i>achieving and evaluating</i>

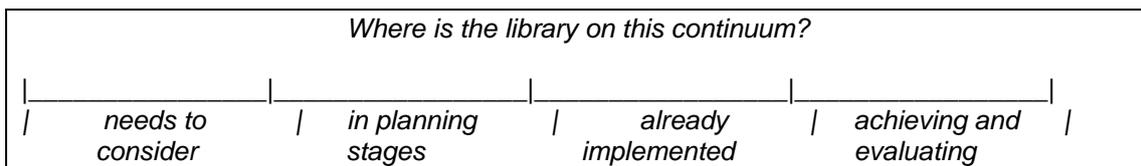
6. **Select** and purchase materials for this audience, which support the literacy goal of "raising readers."



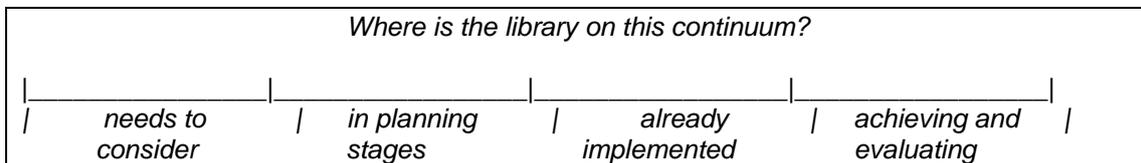
7. **Provide** a welcoming environment that is comfortable and safe and conducive to young people.



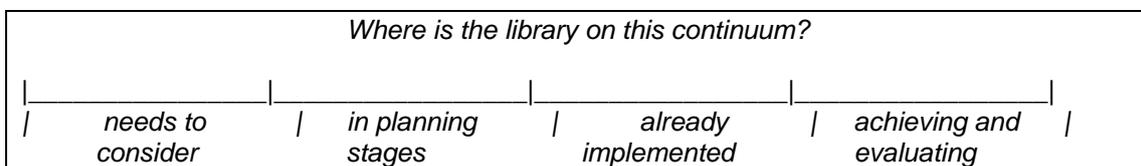
8. **Provide** a generous number of age-appropriate resources, in a variety of formats, including: computergames, print, multimedia, technology and adaptive devices.



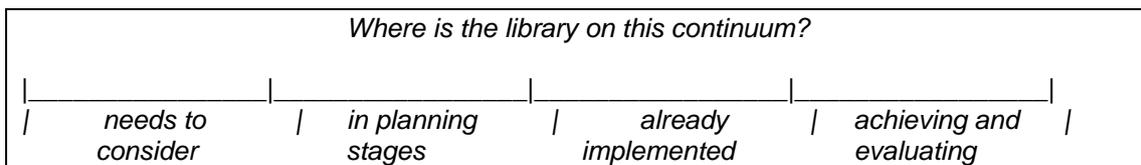
9. **Provide** accessible materials and services for all regardless of ability.

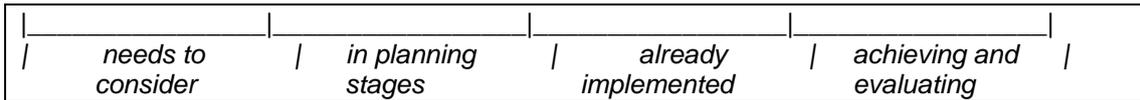


10. **Maintain** adequate staffing to offer reference and readers' advisory services, as well as to present programs.

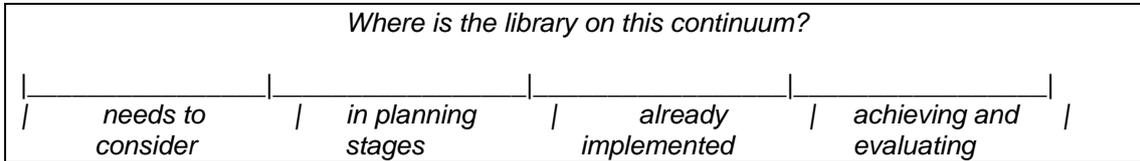


11. **Be responsible** for up-to-date educational opportunities and training programs.

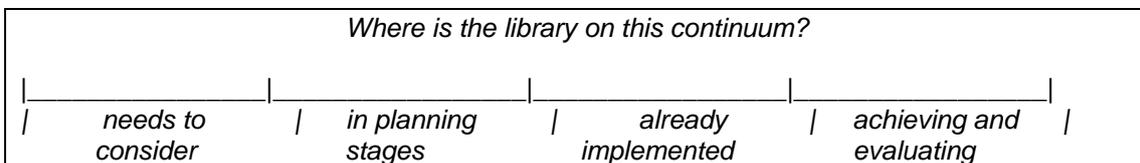




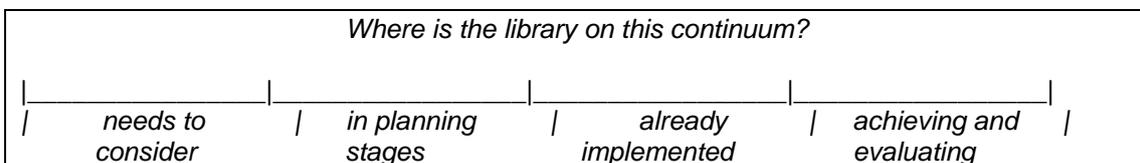
18. **Encourage** informal gatherings and discussions to nurture confidence-building and problem-solving skills for young adults.



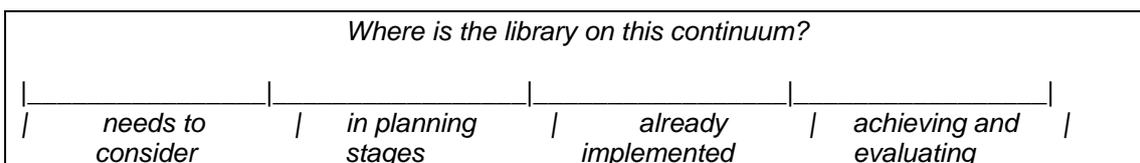
19. **Dedicate itself** to having a competent, sensitive, and culturally diverse staff, reflecting the community's population groups, to serve the multicultural needs of all users.



20. **Have in place** evaluation tools and criteria to provide accountability of staff and offer required professional development opportunities in order to assure excellent service to all segments of society.



21. **Strive for** adequate core funding to provide a FREE public library.



22. **Keep abreast** of best practices from around the world and adapt and apply new ideas as they benefit the library in its quest for excellence.

