Libraries should improve the lives of citizens

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The transformation in a nutshell

From loan of dirty (soiled), but pro-fessionally quality controlled library-bound books to '**customer is king**'

What business are you in?
Lending books?
or
Improving the lives of people?

- For the last 15 years libraries have been changing rapidly in many countries
- From collection to connection
- To community centres
- To co-creation
- Digital service providers
- Differentiated user orientation

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Libraries have always been changing

- All historical changes have seen libraries change as well or play a part
- From medieval to renaissance thinking
- The enlightenment and bourgeois revolution
- The move from agricultural to industrial society
- Break through of the information society
- And now the change into …..something even more fluid

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The only constant is change

According to researchers as Lyotard, Giddens, Zygmunt Bauman institutions and individuals loose traditional identity and roles, form a transformation from 'solid' to 'fluid, and create fragmentation of society

Some of todays challenges

- What are we going to live on tomorrow?

  The economic pressure for innovation

- How can we add value to everybody in a fluid change?

  The pressure for identity and coherence

- Can we bridge digital and social gaps?

  The pressure for lifelong learning

- Can we maintain democracy and wellfare?

  The pressure for involvement and responsibility

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Today's world crisis is different

- We don't know how to handle properly the recession, digital wave, loss of identity and jobs, lack of competencies

- We are acting on constructed understan-dings of past and future in a new reality

Some needs that roar for **new** actions

- Read – you MUST be able to!
- Educate – if not you are lost!
- ICT-competencies for EVERYBODY- or exclusion
- Lifelong learning to cope with changing labor market and society
- Fight diseases deriving from unhealthy lifestyles
- Build bridges over the social and digital divides

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We must face a new enlightenment challenge

The fast change in living conditions leads to a massive need for developing new personal, social and professional competencies in all ages in every corner of society

Who is going to deliver?
How will people learn?

The library is going to deliver

We have no institutions that can cope fully with the challenge, but the free public libraries are closest to be able to develop this new kind of enlightenment.
The library must change to cope more.

What goals and values should guide this transformation?

Depending on society!
Democratic societies depend on citizens that

- develop personally
- in dialogue with fellow citizens
- take part in social and societal relations and
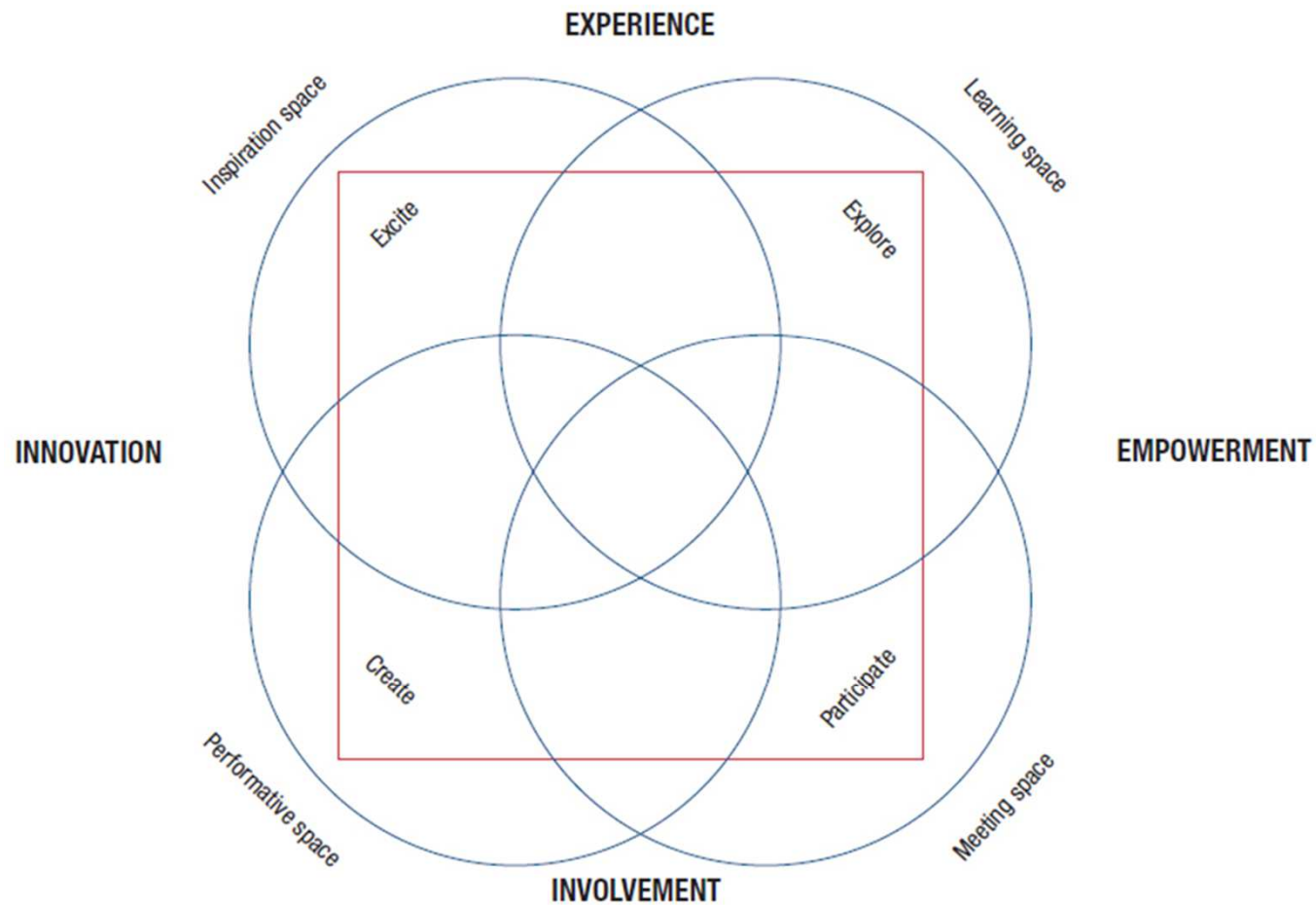- contribute to the common good

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Values might be

- Help people to get **experience**
- Create frames for citizens' **involvement**
- Giving **empowerment** to people so they can cope with everyday life
- Further **innovation** as the fuel for development of society

The **goal** could be

To make people learn and explore in an inspiring and exciting way, so they participate, perform and create

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Leading to a new library concept

EXPERIENCE

Inspiration space

Learning space

Excite

Explore

INNOVATION

EMPOWERMENT

Create

Participate

Performative space

Meeting space

INVOLVEMENT

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Some Danish examples on new services

- New kind of childrens web
- Homework café on- and offline
- Learn (more) on ICT
- We solve your pc problems
- Ask a librarian-web
- Ageforce
- Reading circles and clubs
- New literature web
- Creative workshops
- The career library

A formula for change

- **Plan services based on user needs, diversify**
- **Base services on partnerships and change organization accordingly**
- **Let virtual and real services interact**
- **Design the library space for (different) people, not for books**
- **Offer ongoing activities in the library space, learning, entertain-ment, presentations, workshops**
- **Competence building based on strategic goals**

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Good luck!

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