



# Malta's Libraries: A challenge to change

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# Objectives of the Forum

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- Defining a Forum: a public meeting or assembly for open discussion
- Open discussion on the Report on the State of Maltese Libraries
- 107 days after the launch, we would like to hear the opinions, suggestions and criticism from the parties involved and the general public
- Provide further information for future bilateral discussions with representatives of the various library sectors
- Draw a set of resolutions backing the recommendations of the report



# About this presentation

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- Highlight the recommendations presented in the report for each sector
- Inform participants of developments since report was published
- Offer a background for discussion by participants
- Present draft resolutions for discussion, and finalising.



# Report recommendations

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- National Library
- Public Libraries
- Academic Libraries
- School Libraries
- Special Libraries



# National Library

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- Accessibility
- Storage
- Signs
- Website
- Internet points
- MNB
- Service to users
- Professional staff
- Collection development
- Budget
- Performance Indicators
- International cooperation
- National cooperation



# National Library

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- Out of these 13 recommendations, what can be achieved in the short / medium / long term?
- What are the main barriers?
- How can other entities such as MIIIT, the private sector, international institutions help?
- Are there alternative ways of funding?
- What about the setting up of a National Bibliographic Centre (suggested in 1999)?
- Do we need a Legal Deposit Law?



# Public Libraries

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- Accessibility
- Security
- Health and Safety
- Décor
- Reading facilities
- Signs
- User-education
- Location
- Educational role
- Collection management
- Finance
- Performance indicators
- Training
- Opening hours
- Human resources
- Processing of acquisitions
- Networking
- Management
- Cover for staff



# Public Libraries

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- Can we assign priority levels to recommendations?
- Who can assist? MIIIT, Local Councils, MaLIA and other entities
- What barriers exist?
- What about time-frames?
- Can we define the role of a public library in the information society?
- How can we promote services offered to the public?
- Is out-sourcing a solution?



# Academic Libraries

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- Accessibility
- Health and Safety
- Separate budgets
- Professional/trained staff
- Automation
- Collection development / evaluation
- Cooperation between academic libraries



# Academic Libraries

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- How can academic libraries cooperate for the benefit of users?
- Is the idea of a union catalogue or a portal (access point to various catalogues) a real need?
- Separate Budget allocations from parent institutions. Is it feasible?
- Should MaLIA provide specific training for staff in small academic libraries?



# School Libraries

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- Accessibility
- Health and Safety
- Services / Signs
- Collection development
- Budget
- Collection development
- Staff qualifications / Training
- Performance indicators
- Non-library duties
- Opening hours
- Cover for absence
- Networking
- Management
- SLS
- Standards



# School Libraries

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- Again, setting priorities is important.
- What are the potential barriers to implementation?
- Can cooperative collection development work?
- How can MaLIA contribute to issues such as training / opening hours / professional staff?
- Must a school librarian be a teacher?



# Special Libraries

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- Awareness amongst top management
- Promoting special collections
- Guidelines
- Roving librarians
- Recognition
- Directional signs
- Adequate premises
- Administrative records
- Health and Safety
- Accessibility



# Special Libraries

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- Should MaLIA prepare guidelines for minimum standards in special libraries/
- How can awareness of the importance of special libraries be raised?
- Is resource sharing possible in such an eclectic environment?
- Should MaLIA offer consultancy services to individual libraries?



# Conclusion of report

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- Vision
- Funding
- Qualified Staff
- Collection Development
- Performance indicators
- Standards and Guidelines for libraries
- Cooperation



## What happened since...

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- Report got extensive coverage in the media
  - Interview included in 8pm PBS news
  - A number of articles and reviews in the print media
  - A set of interviews on Campus FM
- Meeting with the Minister finally took place. Positive comments on the report
- Positive feedback from colleagues in the UK
- Meeting with Director (Policy Development and Programme Implementation) at MEYE
- Organisation of Forum to follow-up report



## And now?

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- Discussion and feedback is important. That is why we are here today.
- A set of resolutions must be drawn to sustain and encourage the implementation of recommendations
- Follow-up to continue with bilateral meetings with various decision makers



# Discussion

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- Your feedback is important. Let us know your opinion.



# Draft Resolutions

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- The findings and recommendations confirm that
  - despite the fact that seven years have passed since the resolutions of the *Conference on Libraries and National Development* were published, very little progress has been made.
- Some of the resolutions, are, in fact, still valid and it is being proposed that these are re-confirmed.



# Draft Resolutions

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1. The forum confirms the need for a National Commission for Information Policy, the chief aim of which would be that of coordinating a national information policy that will include minimum standards for libraries.
2. The concerns raised about the MNB way back in 1999 are still valid and the need for National Bibliographic Centre is evident now more than ever.
3. The urgent need to fast-track the new legislation on libraries must be emphasised. MaLIA notes with apprehension the lack of proper management infrastructure and adequate human resources to sustain an efficient library service throughout Malta and Gozo.
4. MaLIA calls for the organisation of a national conference bringing together all the entities involved to discuss a strategy for the future of libraries.



# Draft Resolutions

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5. The forum confirms the inadequate budget allocation to the Department of Libraries and Archives and the need for more qualified and trained staff and once again asks the Ministry of Education, Youth and Employment to take the necessary steps to remedy the situation.
6. This Forum appeals to the MaLIA Council to prepare guidelines / standards for the different types of libraries and that these are approved and endorsed by the MEYE.
7. The Forum appeals to MaLIA to reinstate the Register of Library and Information professionals and that this is endorsed by the relevant authorities.



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- Thank you