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Workshop: Democracy, communities and libraries

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Speakers

[Ellen Walraven](#)

[Sussie Pagh](#)

[Lisbeth Mærkedahl](#)

[margit johansen](#)

Track: Workshops

11:00 - 12:00PM on Tuesday, June 16 in [Lab 5](#)



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We will share ideas and experiences on how can libraries - and other organizations - create physical and virtual forums for public debate?

How can we make difficult political issues interesting and involve communities and citizen's participation in public debate - and create a platform for creation of political agendas?

[Fo Aarhus Sussie Pagh](#)

FO-Århus-
Open Education
Association

FO- Århus: www.fo-aarhus.dk

1 / 14 join conversation on slideshare

View more [documents](#) from [Mainlibrary Aarhus](#).

Two speakers from the world outside libraries will inspire the interactive workshop:

Ellen Walraven: De Balie, Centre for culture and Politics, Amsterdam.

De Balie is a house of opinion, and has been at the forefront of public debate in the Netherlands in its twenty-five years long history.

De Balie hosts more than 500 events per year which attract up to 32.000 visitors. This prominent non-fiction theatre presents speakers from all over the world.

Programmes in De Balie are always fresh and original, since the staff of De Balie present important topics in new concepts and frameworks. Examples are the use of actors in debates, using the form of a court of law to structure the information and playing negotiation games, for example on Kosovo. In many ways, the programmes are not finished products. They are part of the ongoing research process of De Balie to understand and show, and intervene in, human perceptions. De Balie likes to make the familiar unfamiliar and the other way around.

<http://www.debalie.nl/>

Sussie Pagh, FO-Aarhus - [Free Education Association](#)

FO Aarhus is also initiating activities involving communities and citizens in democratic debate. Examples are Green Guides (environmental development in cities) and 100 Places to Remember Before they Disappear: . <http://www.dialog09.dk/idd287.asp>

FO-Aarhus - Free Education Association- is one of the Danish education associations. These associations were initiated by the four oldest Danish political parties respectively. Today party affiliation may be seen only in board membership.

FO-Aarhus was founded in 1952 by members of The Social Liberal Party with the object of broadening public enlightenment in general and working for public acceptance of the ideals of the UN.


The "traditional" leisure time education for adults still take an important role in the activities, but also project and joint ventures with public services to offer unemployed people opportunities to return to the labour market have become numerous, many of the aiming to at offering education to immigrants thus paving their way to integration into the Danish association.

Workshop chair: Margit Johansen.

Margit is anthropologist and is working with issues around integration in relation to the library service in Aarhus.

Reporter: Lisbeth Mærkedahl

Comments

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[Lotte Duwe Nielsen](#)

De Balie is a fantastic place and idea. For instance the Black Marked
<http://www.mobileacademy-berlin.com/pexperten/index.html>

12:23PM Tue Jun 16, 2009

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[Lotte Duwe Nielsen](#)

What's next - regarding Democracy, Communities and libraries? People in the workshop says:

- social capital & partnerships
- Dialogue, learning democratic citizenship
- making events Sundays with brunch combined with presentations and discussions about the library - maybe outside?
- encourage students to cooperation and partnership
- new skills for librarians
- catalyst for democracy
- library as knowledge creating institution
- librarians roles and cooperation with other institutions - competences
- inspirations about dissemination, integration, cooperation, librarians roles as part of the library policy in Aarhus

12:31PM Tue Jun 16, 2009

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Ellen Walraven also told about the permanent breakfasts - a way of winning back the public domain.

Fantastic

<http://www.p-breakfast.net/en/index.html>

12:34PM Tue Jun 16, 2009

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[Lotte Duwe Nielsen](#)

Permanant Breakfast - The main idea:

- One person invites to breakfast in a public space
- the invited persons (usually 4) commit themselves to organize another public breakfast with different persons in a different place as soon as possible, and so on and so forth.

Following the snowball principle, there would be 1.6 mio. people publicly breakfasting no later than on the tenth day.

http://www.ritesinstitute.org/permbreak_blog/

09:15AM Fri Jun 19, 2009

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[Lisbeth Maerkedah](#)

Summary

Do you need inspiration to create forums for public debate? Forums where people actually come – and participate. So please continue reading.

Sussie Pagh from FO-Aarhus in Denmark and Ellen Walraven from Debalie in Holland gave examples on how you shall do – so it works

By combining exhibition and events in “100 places to remember before they disappear” FO Aarhus started a debate about our environment and what every single of us can do to protect it. There was an exhibition with scenery pictures from all over the world value-added with information about the environment; local school kids met “real” Vikings (staff from a museum) and talked about making energy today and at that time, and in the city centre it was possible to try to drive an electronic car.

In Amsterdam Debalie wants to translate knowledge back to its roots by using the 3. Place as playground to put other perspectives on relevant topics related to the community. The “way to do it” is by playing with the formats. Some very interesting examples came up:

- Brunch (smoothies and bread) every Sunday with 3-4 lectures
- Turkish wedding – set up where the priest ask the bridal pair questions related to the community ex what

to do with your children if you divorce etc

- Expertcracy – where people buy help from an expert for 50 cent. The experts is challenged at his profession – and it gives new perspectives for all parts
- Tell me your life story and see it afterwards as a theatre act

Some common experience from the different events:

- Not to give solution, but value adding – so people finds their own position
- There is not a winner, but all get an insight in a relevant, large topic/issue
- Meet the experts in other surrounding as usual
- People want to participate in the debate – they are concerned about the future

Output from the Group work:

- Can we use the ideas in libraries?

o YES we can use the ideas. The big challenge is to find the rights formats, so people actually come and debate

o We have to think about improve the education and at the School of Library and Information Science – so people working at the library are more open-minded and innovative

04:25PM Thu Jun 18, 2009

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