

Can library legislation change the world?

- or a country?



Finnish Library Act (2016)

- Progressive
- Emphasizes the active role of library
- Lots of potential – core content is ambitious



Changes and highlights

Current - previous

2016

- **The duties of a public library** stated in the Library Act
- Aims include: Societal dialogue, multiculturalism

1998

- Goal to promote the development of **virtual and interactive online services** and their educational content.
- Library and information service personnel as well as **renewable library materials and equipment** must be available to customers

The aim of the Library Act is to promote

- Equal opportunities for education and culture
- Opportunity for lifelong learning and development of various skills
- Active citizenship, democracy and freedom of speech





The duties of a public library include

- Access to collections, knowledge and cultural content
- Maintain versatile and renewable collection
- Promote reading and literacy
- Provide information service, guidance and support in access to information and multiliteracy
- Provide premises to learning, hobbies, working and civic activities
- Further societal and cultural dialogue



Criticism

- No obligations of number of qualified staff members
- No obligations of number of libraries depending on size of municipality
- "The municipality is obliged to evaluate the operations of public library"

Bottom line

The Library Act is mostly considered executable and coherent.

Legislation has not protected libraries from decay in many parts of the country.

