

Editorial

Users as the base for the development of library collections: the public library

Information needs are the central element of library science theory, because the activities of the library and information are underpinned by satisfying the needs of the persons who, for example, go to the public library and whom we commonly call users.

According to Rendón Rojas,¹ in the information-support media-user-document-information unit relationship, the information user's needs drive the librarianship activities of the information unit to develop collection. Determining and satisfying these information needs may be deemed one of the basic purposes of information units, whether they be the public library, newspaper archive, documentation center, information center, etc. Therefore, the need for information consists of the insufficiency or lack of knowledge with regard to some objects or parts of objects, phenomena or events that, in order to be addressed, requires additional knowledge.²

- 1 Miguel Ángel Rendón Rojas, *Bases teóricas y filosóficas de la bibliotecología* (México: UNAM, Centro Universitario de Investigaciones Bibliotecológicas, 1997), 123.
- 2 The concept of information needs is treated in Juan José Calva González, *Las necesidades de información. Teoría y métodos* (México: UNAM, 2001), 76.

In this light, one should keep in mind that information is generated by humans and is recorded to a support for the purpose of subsequent use by others. People need to have certain information and knowledge for orientation in the world and to act in accord with their surroundings. The human mind has developed to adapt to the environment and transform it. This is the intrinsic feature of human beings. Among other means, information and knowledge are attained through the auspices of the work of libraries.³

The lack of information or knowledge of a given object, phenomenon or event produces internal dissatisfaction and the information need to more completely understand the object, phenomenon or event. We may well assert that information needs are phenomena that arise repeatedly and without end in our current society, organizations and individuals

Communities or subjects are links to functions and members of society. We see this in commerce, doctors, hospitals, lawyers, law firms, teachers and students, schools, workers, factories, housewives, homes, accountants, accounting firms, etc. The diverse social sectors are associated with public libraries in that members of society need to be informed in order to ensure progress. In this light, information is a key factor for a citizens and the country's efforts to attain social, economic and political objectives.⁴ The persons who comprise these social sectors require informational support from the public library in order to perform their activities. In order to achieve this objective, Mexico has established the National Network of Public Libraries. Every library should be properly apprised of the information needs of its respective community.

3 Rendón Rojas, *Bases teóricas...*, 40.

4 Elsa Barberena, *Las necesidades de información en el área científica* (México, n. d.), 6.

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