Public Values of UKB (Dutch University Libraries and *Koninklijke Bibliotheek*)

On public values (and the SDGs)

In the Netherlands, we value the fundamental rights of freedom, equality and solidarity. These fundamental rights are laid down by law and form the moral compass for the public values of the Dutch institutions for education and research. Public value is described as (1) the collective image of what society perceives as valuable; this is (2) established in a way that is legitimate and inspires trust in society and is (3) reflected in the daily services of our organisations (based on Talbot 2006, Moore 1995). Privacy, security, reliability, transparency, solidarity, inclusiveness and diversity are examples of public values.

The ever-increasing possibilities of digitisation are putting pressure on these values, for example through datafication, the increasing dependence on dominant (commercial) market parties such as tech companies, and the influence exerted by fake news and deepfakes. Institutions for education and research speak out against this in public and actively promote public values in the dynamics between market parties, governments and other organisations, for example by laying down the principles on which their services have been founded.

Against this background, people all over the world are working towards a sustainable society. All UN member states have committed themselves to the 'Sustainable Development Goals', described in the UN Agenda 2030. Research and education institutions act accordingly in business operations (e.g. climate-neutral real estate projects), in education and in research.

UBK, the consortium of the Dutch University Libraries and the *Koninklijke Bibliotheek*, also plays a role and carries responsibility in the debate on public values. It is outlined below what these roles and responsibilities are and how they are expressed in the libraries' work.

Which values are relevant to UKB?

The public values within UKB are in line with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. UKB contributes to the realisation of the SDGs, either directly or indirectly. The following, in particular, apply:

- *Goal 3* – Good health and well-being. Safeguarding good health and promoting prosperity for all ages. Particularly medical university libraries aim at reducing child mortality, eradicating fatal diseases, and supporting research into the development of medicines and vaccines.
- *Goal 4* – Quality education. Safeguarding equal access to quality education and promoting lifelong learning for all. Particularly important are targets 4.4 (skills) and 4.6 (literacy), which are aimed at increasing competences (including technical competences), literacy and reading skills.
- *Goal 9* – Industry, innovation and infrastructure. Building resilient infrastructure, promoting inclusive and sustainable industrialisation, and stimulating innovation, with target 9.5 specifically aimed at improving scientific research [...] in all countries [...].
- *Goal 11* – Sustainable cities and communities. In particular target 11.4: increasing efforts to protect and safeguard the world's cultural and natural heritage.
- *Goal 16* – Peace, justice and strong public services. In particular target 16.10: safeguarding public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

For UKB, various public values are central to policy and implementation, both in theory and in practice. These are increasing literacy (including digital literacy), protecting privacy (also online), preserving and providing access to heritage, providing public access to information, and promoting science. UKB puts these into practice by facilitating education and research by rendering scientific information findable and sustainably accessible in digital and physical sources, as well as by promoting literacy and information skills. We are working on innovation in an international knowledge infrastructure, based on open data standards. UKB also promotes and facilitates open science and education.

> 'The university library is not only a connector and disseminator [of knowledge], but also a facilitator and generator of knowledge'
>
> Prof. Karen Maex, *Rector Magnificus* of the University of Amsterdam, 'Protect independent and public knowledge', Foundation Day Address, 8 January 2021

What do we, as UKB, stand for?

Libraries stand for openness and independence. They do so dynamically, within the context of time and place. Important values for UKB are central to policy and implementation, thinking and doing; these values form the essence of libraries. These values are the following:

1. Information gathering that is free from censorship, as a foundation for people to form their own, free opinion.

2. Reliability of information in a time of increasing fake news and data falsification.

3. Integrity and personal safety of users of information (including scientific information).

How do we contribute to these values and make them visible?

Libraries have the task of providing high-quality information, and they promote independent knowledge processing and knowledge sharing. UKB supports initiatives that contribute to these public values, and this becomes clear in policy, services, advice and public access to Open Science (Research Data management that complies with the FAIR principles – findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable, Open Educational Resources, and Open Access publishing). In practice, public values are also made visible in the collections, in developing the collections, and in making information accessible. Libraries support citizen science whenever this is relevant.

These are broad concepts that require concretisation. Below we explain what they entail and how they are reflected in the work of the library.

What?	How?
Promoting the discovery and use of facts as well as promoting information skills	Training and education, seminars, learning pathways in information skills and information literacy frameworks.

Protecting privacy, also online	By means of processor agreements, GDPR compliance and technical infrastructure. *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* sponsors the Public Spaces initiative and PublicRoam.
Conserving and making heritage sustainably available	By means of: - careful physical and digital preservation and management of heritage. - social valorisation through digitisation of heritage collections of university libraries in various manifestations, such as exhibitions and podcasts. - providing access to as many publications and as many 'open' publications as possible via Delpher (digitised books, newspapers and magazines) and DBNL (Digital Library of Dutch Literature), as well as via the digital collections of university libraries. - active participation in national and international collaborations, such as LIBER, IFLA, LERU, YERUN and *Netwerk Digitaal Erfgoed* (Network for Digital Heritage).
Providing access to information, including public access	By providing open access to physical and digital (scientific) sources and portals whenever possible.
Promoting Open Science	By supporting Open Access and Open Educational Resources, for example through the Acceleration agenda and FAIR research output such as data and research software in Digital Competence Centers (DCC). Promoting 'data donorship' by means of e.g. open infrastructures, open sources and open software, and by advising NPOS.
Promoting science	By making data, datasets and additional information available – as much as possible 'openly'; providing space for researchers-in-residence; being a partner in national infrastructures such as Clariah+ and other national and international research programmes; preserving/safeguarding scientific publications; supporting citizen science.
Dealing responsibly with Artificial Intelligence (AI)	By participating in Dutch AI hub formation; being open to the worrying aspects of using AI methodologies, such as bias and tunnel vision; to this end, *Koninklijke Bibliotheek* has drawn up seven principles for the responsible use of AI by libraries.
Contributing to public and scientific issues/debate	By making available spaces, knowledge, collections, and databases. Contributing to scientific information on SDGs.

Reflecting the scientific state of affairs	By providing collection profiles and keeping these up-to-date.
Pursuing cooperation and participating in networks that have the same goals and ambitions	By means of structural cooperation and knowledge exchange.
Digital sovereignty	By preventing vendor lock-in with suppliers by means of opting out and exit strategies, and interoperability of systems and tools for creating and sharing information. Use of Open Source software in unlocking scientific output whenever necessary. Initiating and/or contributing to initiatives that make higher education less dependent on or independent of commercial market parties.
Conscious and sustainable business operations	By means of: - careful handling of public funds. - pursuing diversity and inclusiveness, regarding both employees and users. - striving for climate neutral and healthy work.

How can we safeguard these values?

1. Each UKB working group will be asked to agree on how the group plans to pay attention to public values as well as to indicate one specific item that the group will work on in 2022.

2. The new UKB website will pay attention to public values (e.g. by interviewing colleagues).

3. UKB will work together with other parties (SURF, CSC and VSNU) to embed public values both in policy and in programmes. Specific activities for the coming year include supervising the elaboration of the business case 'Open Knowledge Base' and the screening of contracts for research systems.

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