Next Library Experiences

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My name is Omar Abdullah Abdi, a kenyan citizen working with the Kenya National Library Service as a resource mobilization librarian. My tasks & responsibilities include finding innovative projects to improve library services across the organization and writing project proposals as well as training and implementing donor/partnership projects.

### Attending Next Library

Attending Next Library was the most exciting an unforgettable experience I have ever had in my life. I strongly believe that the workshops introduced me to a new way of doing business. It changed my mindset regarding the way i need to do things at home. I would like to share some of my most remarkable learning experiences.

1. How libraries in Denmark are transforming libraries from a collection of books to a connection between people. In Denmark, libraries are meeting places for people, and safe places where information is gathered, knowledge is disseminated and people are inspired.

From my visit, it was evident that people were able to use self services and that these gave them freedom to connect themselves with the content of the library without the barriers that are often created by librarians.

2. Libraries are the ”third space”.

I learned that libraries are no longer the busy work place I knew. They should be places for citizens, adult and young alike. It is where people should go to imagine things and explore their mind. It is a place for play and learning.

3. I am also glad that I learned how libraries are managed in Denmark and other Nordic countries. Their association and how they are improving the libraries by involving politicians and people in decision making.

4. I met wonderful, kind, inspiring, outgoing and interesting intelligent people from all over the world. For me, I was able to connect myself with many of them, learn their culture and how they run their libraries. They were indeed wonderful, and I won’t forget any of them in the near future. I will say that they will always stand with me, as their ideas have merged with mine.

5. Another wonderful learning experience was my visit to the Media Space and how the people are using cultural, educational and business concepts to place a library. I saw another plan that is beyond the usual “library”. Here, a lot of worldly concepts have been incorporated into the new Media Space centre.

6. I visited many Danish cultural points of interest, such as Tivoli, the Glyptotek, the Black Diamond, the Danish Parliament, Aalborg Cultural centre Nordkraft, the Cathedral in Aarhus, the Sculptures by the Sea exhibition, and many many more places that inspired me to do something for my home town in Kenya.

7.

All sessions were excellently managed by the crew and the moderators/facilitators. I learned a lot from the various sessions, how to engage in my community and how to become a better librarian. My perspective on libraries is different now, and I intend to uset his insight to move things and contribute to the Next Library spirit in our libraries in Kenya.

Lastly, I learned that the starts is the limit, but the journey may take some time. As the chinese saying goes: Every long journey starts with a single step.

### Conclusion

It is evident from my explanations that what I have learned cannot all be written down, but I wish to mention that I learned how to be an advocate of the library cause and to take concepts from Next Library to my city, my home and my village.

I must thank the sponsors, the organizers, the participants, the people of Denmark and everyone else that, in one way or another, has contributed to the initiation, organization and/or inspiration of the conference.

I am deeply touched by your thoughts, work, and intelligence. I thank Jacob, Lotte, the Crew, and most importantly the host, mr. Rolf Hapel. I thank mr. Thorhauge, the Director of The Danish Agency for Libraries and Media. Thanks to the Gates foundation and all other sponsors of the event.

I hope this is not going to be the end of this wonderful visit. Thank you.

Omar Abdi