

IFLA/FAIFE

PROGRAMME 2001-2003

Strategy and Action Plan 2001-2003

By the IFLA/FAIFE Committee and Office, September 2001

Mission of IFLA/FAIFE

In an increasingly interconnected world, information is more than ever crucial. The human right to freedom of expression and free access to information is the foundation of autonomy, both individual and societal. Librarians must defend that universal right vigorously, ensuring that it is not compromised nor abrogated.

While taking a duty of care when appropriate and taking steps to respect individual cultures and individual preferences, we must stand for freedom, in both expression and free and equal access to information for all regardless the ability to read print text.

IFLA/FAIFE builds on the excellent work pursued over many years through IFLA's Divisions, Sections and Core Programs, but with a focus on human rights, on intellectual freedom and the barriers to free access to information and freedom of expression. The main focus of our work is to ensure that our clients, the peoples of the world, may "seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers".

The IFLA/FAIFE'S mandate is clearly drawn from Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to freedom of expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Current state of libraries and intellectual freedom

The country reports, published in the IFLA/FAIFE World Report 2001. Libraries and Intellectual Freedom, confirm that all is not well with the state of freedom of access to information and freedom of expression in the world. We had been heartened to see the lifting of some restrictions in Indonesia. There are other positive signs in the region with the reconstruction of libraries in Cambodia and Laos. But there is a long way to go especially in Burma/Myanmar. As we ended our meeting in Bangkok, the people of East Timor voted in a plebiscite. In the ensuing wave of destruction, murder and rape, all the libraries were destroyed. The people of the new nation of Timor Lorosae need the assistance of the world's librarians to rebuild their libraries and to assist them in creating a civil society.

Trends in other parts of the world can be discerned from the World Report. In Eastern Europe, there have been positive moves towards protecting free access to information and freedom of expression. However, inadequate funding prevents library services from meeting even the most basic needs of their clients and compromises professional

standards. Eastern European professionals demonstrate their commitment to free access to information through many initiatives such as to open collections of banned books. In Africa, censorship plays a key role in some countries and violation of human rights is part of daily life. In others, we see the tentative development of free library services. In many countries around the world, censorship of the Internet is attempted.

In an increasingly globalised world, it is inevitable that the key issues facing libraries and librarians in offering free access to information should be global. Many of them echo the big challenges facing the countries of the world: economic, political and cultural. However, free access to information, and its counterpart freedom of expression, is a crucial element in seeking to solve the world's problems. Without ready access to information, it is impossible to understand, let alone address, problems such as the catastrophic HIV/AIDS epidemic in sub-Saharan Africa.

IFLA/FAIFE Goals

The IFLA/FAIFE initiative has moved from its initial project stage to recognition as a permanent IFLA Core Activity. It is now time for both consolidation and expansion in strategic directions. The IFLA/FAIFE Committee discussed the future directions at its meetings in Boston 2001 and will communicate them in this Action Plan and future publications. Broadly speaking, all activities should make a difference and be noteworthy.

In short the scope of IFLA/FAIFE is to:

1. *Go global*
2. *Involve colleagues worldwide*
3. *Produce visible results*

IFLA/FAIFE Priorities and Actions for 2001-2003

Priority 1

Concentrate our efforts on libraries and the safeguarding of free access to information for all individuals.

Relates to IFLA Professional Priority: Defending the principle of freedom of information

Goals

- All IFLA/FAIFE activities should be noticeable and make a difference. They should focus on the library issues within the context of intellectual freedom and freedom of expression. Thus, we should place our emphasis on access to information. Initiatives should be taken to raise awareness to free access to information in libraries that tend to emphasise tangible results. IFLA members should "own" IFLA/FAIFE and translate the Federation's commitment to free access to information and freedom of expression into the work of all sections, divisions and roundtables.

Actions

- **2001:** Develop the draft Glasgow Declaration
- **2001-2002:** Develop the co-operation with IFEX
- **2001-2003:** Develop the co-operation with IFLA sections
- **2001-2003:** Through the Network Centres and resource persons develop a corps of

translators

- **2002:** Establish a co-project with library schools on developing an IFLA/FAIFE learning package, possibly funded by the EU or other funding agencies.
- **2002:** Produce and publish IFLA/FAIFE PR materials

Priority 2

Make IFLA/FAIFE the authoritative source on libraries and intellectual freedom through the World Report and other communication initiatives.

Relates to IFLA Professional Priority: Defending the principle of freedom of information

Goals

- The first IFLA/FAIFE World Report was launched in Boston. It represents a significant achievement but covers only 46 countries, about 30% of the countries represented in IFLA. It should cover all those countries and present a reliable and authoritative summary of the state of intellectual freedom in regard to libraries around the globe. The World Report will be published bi-annually. A shorter report on the global status of intellectual freedom and free access to information will be published in the alternate years.

Actions

- **2001-2002:** Formulate principles for the two publications, including design, information requested, review procedure of information received, editing process, production process.
- **2001-2002:** Develop and publish a production plan for both publications, including deadlines for each step in the production process.

Priority 3

Strengthen the process for responding to incidents, including the development of an IFLA/FAIFE alert manual.

Relates to IFLA Professional Priority: Providing unrestricted access to information

Goals

- Experience over the last four years has demonstrated that IFLA/FAIFE can respond effectively to reports of incidents and violations despite limited resources. A procedure has been developed and is followed. There is however a need to document that procedure and to integrate it with the alerts process operated by IFEX, which IFLA/FAIFE joined in 2000.

Actions

- **2001-2002:** Develop an IFLA/FAIFE Alert Manual
- 2001-2003: Expand the co-operation with other library and human rights organisations to co-ordinate actions and responses to incidents

Priority 4

Establish a Network of IFLA/FAIFE Centres.

Relates to IFLA Professional Priority: Defending the principle of freedom of information

Goals

- Develop a formal network consisting of small numbers of IFLA Centres for Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression around the world operated by Associations or Institutions members of IFLA.

Actions

- **2001**: Submit proposal for a formal network of IFLA Centres for Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression to the Governing Board. See separate paper.
- **2001**: Develop call for expressions of interest and review process for potential hosts
- **2001-2002**: Establish pilot-projects in two regions
- **2002-2003**: Evaluate the projects
- **2002-2003**: Identify regions suitable for further Network Centres

Priority 5

Heighten the importance of bridging the digital divide.

Relates to IFLA Professional Priority: Supporting the role of libraries in society

Goals

- In an increasingly interconnected world, information is more than ever crucial. Heighten awareness of the digital divide and its implications for free and equal access to information. Special awareness towards disadvantaged groups such as handicapped, and women in developed and undeveloped countries. Develop strategies to heighten awareness of the digital divide and its implications for access to information. Promote responses to it. Develop a position and recommended strategies that can be put to governments and publishers.

Actions

- **2002-2003**: Develop strategies to heighten awareness in cooperation with relevant IFLA sections and other Core Activities.
- **2002-2003**: Promote responses to it.
- **2003**: Develop a position and recommended strategies that can be put to governments and publishers.

Priority 6

Free and equal access to digital information

Relates to IFLA Professional Priority: Supporting the role of libraries in society

Goals

- Internet censorship has been implemented or is being contemplated in countries around the world. It is necessary to develop a statement on filtering and outline guidelines for libraries and librarians on free and equal access to the information on the Internet. Develop an **IFLA Internet Manifesto** mirroring the manifestos for public and school libraries.

Actions

- **2001:** Develop an **IFLA Internet Manifesto**.
- **2001-2003:** Arrange and participate in activities, seminars and meetings on the issue.
- **2001:** Establish a PhD co-project on free access to Internet information in a global perspective with The Royal School of Library and Information Science, Denmark.
- **2001-2003:** Ongoing presentation of the results of the PhD project

Priority 7

Build the funding base for IFLA/FAIFE

Relates to the IFLA policy for Core Activity funding

Goals

- Strongly supported in its first years by the Danish Library Umbrella, City of Copenhagen and Danish Government, the Office is now mainly supported by SIDA and DANIDA. This support has made possible the achievements described in the report to Council 2001. However, it renders the initiative vulnerable to the discontinuation of that funding after the current period. To safeguard the future of IFLA/FAIFE a broader based financial support must be achieved to safeguard the initiative and to confirm its global status.

Actions

- **2001:** Outline a funding policy and the future funding procedure in co-operation with IFLA HQ.
- **2001:** Establish an IFLA/FAIFE funding work team
- **2002:** Develop an action plan for funding activities

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