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**The MLAS Global Library Association Development (GLAD) Program:
What it is and why you should get involved**

By

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Program Rationale and Description

In support of IFLA's new Three Pillars focus on *Society, Members, and the Profession*, the Management of Library Associations Section (MLAS) proposed the creation of the Global Library Association Development Program-known as GLAD - in 2004.

The goals of the program are to:

- Strengthen library associations around the world
- To increase library association membership in IFLA
- To strengthen the role of associations in promoting the goals of IFLA and its members, including increased access to information and education for all through strong and vibrant libraries

The MLAS section believes that strong library associations are a key component in the development and improvement of library services in each country, as well as the development of excellent library professionals.

The MLAS section has created a GLAD web site, maintained by the American Library Association, which may be found at

<http://www.ala.org/ala/ourassociation/governanceofficeb/iflagladpa.cfm>

Overview of GLAD Components

As part of its efforts to strengthen library associations around the world, the GLAD program contains a number of components.

- Directory of Library Associations
- Needs Assessment
- Leadership Development and Training
- GLAD “Twinning” Program
- Regional Association Development

Directory of Library Associations

The first component of global association development is gathering the most basic information: What countries have library associations? Who are their officers and staff? How many members do they have? What are their goals and missions? In a global context, this information is not easy to gather, especially if the association is not an IFLA member.

For many years, a directory of library associations has been maintained for IFLA by the American Library Association. This directory contains address and contact information, as well as links to individual association web sites. The directory can be found at <http://www.ala.org/ala/iro/intlassocorgconf/libraryassociations.cfm>

The MLAS section is currently discussing the creation of a wiki as a method of gathering more information together on individual associations. A wiki would allow each association to create and maintain its own entry. The wiki could include more detailed information on mission, strategic plans, membership, and programs and special projects.

Needs Assessment

The next important component of the GLAD program is the identification of the needs of library associations in developing and developed countries.

In August 2005, a group of association leaders gathered at the Oslo conference to discuss needs, and the results of their work are available on the GLAD web site. Overall, some areas identified as priority needs were:

- Increased advocacy and marketing for libraries and the association
- Developing association financial resources
- Growing membership

Leadership Development and Training

Leadership development and training has been a key function of section activities from the beginning. Programs last year and this year have been co-sponsored with the

Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Section (CPDWL), and have focused on some of the areas identified through the 2005 needs assessment.

A full-day program on Library Association Leadership Development last year included a case study on cooperation between library associations; creating an advocacy plan, individual involvement in global political advocacy, open access in an association, a purposeful library association, and fundamentals of grant writing for associations.

Today's program is the second full day training program co-sponsored with the CPDWL Section.

“Twinning” Program

The Tinning program was the first GLAD component to be developed in 2004. Its goal is to strengthen the individual skills and competencies of library association officers to operate library associations through a mentor-mentee program.

To succeed IFLA needs as many national library associations as possible to be members in IFLA. For many smaller associations it is a challenge to pay their IFLA dues every year. Part of GLAD is to recognize those associations that already assisting other library associations such as the French, Dutch, and Finnish, and to encourage others who have the means to offer to pay for or match funds for these smaller associations to be members of IFLA. The American Library Association is helping to support the participation of the Bulgarian Library Association, and the Special Libraries Association has helped the Polish Library Association. The Norwegian Library Association has announced plans to support participation by the Palestinian Library Association, and this year, MLAS is providing support to a number of associations that are having difficulty maintaining their IFLA membership.

A MLAS GLAD subcommittee is working to identify additional mentor and mentee associations and extend the program. We strongly encourage everyone here today to become a mentor or a mentee.

Regional Association Development

Regional association development is another key component of the GLAD program, as such gatherings provide a perfect opportunity for workshops and discussions that will impact multiple countries and multiple associations. A number of such workshops have been funded by ALP, with MLAS officers and representatives serving as speakers and instructors.

MLAS, through the GLAD Programme has also begun presenting workshops at recent regional conferences in Africa, the Pacific, and Latin America and the Caribbean. These workshops develop a “problems and solutions” session designed specifically for attendees from the region in which the conference is taking place. Problems which will

be discussed under this program are solicited prior to the conference so that the appropriate people can be available during the discussion.

The German Library Association has developed a listing of international library association conferences, which may be found through the GLAD site.

How can you get involved?

The good news is that there are many ways to become involved in global association development:

- As a mentor
- As a mentee
- By helping another association become an IFLA member
- By letting us know your needs
- By helping to develop training workshops and programs that meet your needs
- By working to create association development workshops at regional meetings
- By working to make your association an outspoken advocate for libraries and librarians
- By visiting the MLAS and GLAD web sites
- By providing information on your association to the association wiki
- By becoming a member of the MLAS discussion list.
- By becoming an association member
- By becoming an association leader

Strong associations help build strong libraries - and a strong profession. Become involved now!