



**International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions**

*Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations  
Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section  
Reading Section*

## **IFLA PRE-CONFERENCE**

**INNOVATIVE MULTICULTURAL LIBRARY SERVICES FOR ALL,  
WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO LITERACY, LEARNING AND  
LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY**

**15-17 AUGUST 2007 PRETORIA  
SOUTH AFRICA**

*Evaluation Report to ALP/SIDA/MULTP*

Compiled by  
Dr AJ Swanepoel  
Chair of Local Organizing Committee, Pretoria  
and  
Ann-Katrin Ursberg  
Chair of Conference Working Group  
IFLA Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations/MULTP

## Contents

1. Achievement of objectives and expected results	3
2. Sustainable (long term) impact	4
3. Lessons learnt	5
4. Use of knowledge acquired	5
5. Beneficiaries from the new knowledge	6
6. Expected outreach to beneficiaries (in numbers)	6
7. Deviations from the original plan	6
8. Success stories	7
9. Acknowledgement	7
10. Financial report	7

## 1. Achievement of objectives and expected results

### 1.1 Areas where objectives and expected results were achieved

Verbal and written feedback from several delegates informed the organisers that the conference was very well organised, the programme was relevant and balanced, the speakers were professional, and the venue and accommodation were of a high standard. The conference organisers received no negative feedback of any kind - only complements.

Thanks to generous sponsorships from IFLA/ALP, the South African Department of Arts and Culture and several private companies in South Africa, the organisers were able to cover all expenses and closed its books with a positive balance. Approximate 50% of the surplus was returned to the Department of Arts and Culture and the remainder of the surplus will be returned to the IFLA Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations.

The conference attracted delegates from diverse countries and multicultural environments. The fact should be highlighted that there were more than 30 delegates from the nation of South Africa, such as LIS professionals and students, to whom registration were facilitated by the possibility of getting a reduction of the attendance fee, due to a special grant from the Netherlands Library Association. Their presence contributed well both to the general multicultural theme of the conference, and to the aim of supporting global networking initiatives on matters like the global information gap and the multi-linguistic situation in South Africa and other countries.

The organisers managed to attract delegates from all target groups: Library staff, educators, researchers, professionals involved in literacy and learning, languages and linguistics, community workers, archivists, museum workers, booksellers and publishers. The broadness of the target groups added to the value of the sessions, and influenced positively on the emphasizing of different perspectives of the topics discussed.

## 1.2 Areas where objectives and expected results were not fully achieved

Despite various and prolonged efforts to promote the conference, the attendance was not as good as the organising committee aimed at and wished for. The organisers planned and budgeted for 150 delegates. Of the 136 people that registered for the conference, 115 attended. The original aim was highly set, and many different factors may have influenced on the number of delegates.

One reason for the lower than expected attendance is likely to be attached to the close at hand event – timely and geographically – of the main IFLA conference in Durban, which was the first of its kind in the Southern African region. When it came to making priorities this may have caused local delegates to give preference to the Durban conference. In addition, for many delegates from overseas it was probably too costly to attend a preconference in Pretoria as well as the main conference in Durban.

## 2. Sustainable (long term) impact

It is difficult to determine the sustainable (long term) impact of a conference shortly after the conference. However, it is hoped that the conference will have a lasting impact on the lives of the many children and adults, in South Africa and all around the world, that are not included in the present-day information society due to information illiteracy, multi-linguistic hardships or simply a lack of reading ability.

The need of an increase of multicultural competencies within the LIC area is evident in most parts - if not all - of the world. It's expected that the Pretoria conference has been playing a part when it comes to highlighting of the essential issues of multicultural and multi-lingual science - and practices - in different diverse surroundings. By deliberately balancing these two perspectives against each other in the conference programme, there has been an intention of contributing to the bridge building between scholarship and field work, thus making it easier to improve methods and accomplishments of objectives, aiming to better the access of information to many people in libraries and schools wherever they are.

As for the MULTP Section of IFLA, it is also foreseen that future conferences on the topic of multicultural library services will build on the ideas and innovations of the past one.

### 3. Lessons learnt

Lessons learnt were not new, but has given confirmation to earlier experiences of organizing similar events. Most essential features of the planning process is to:

- a. Organize meticulously.
- b. Take care that the venue meets requirements.
- c. Select knowledgeable, interesting, and enthusiastic speakers
- d. Ensure competent presence on site to ensure continued smooth running of the conference.
- e. Promote the conference aggressively.
- f. Stick to the budget.

### 4. Use of knowledge acquired

It is foreseen that participants in the conference will use the knowledge acquired in the following ways:

- a. Develop and/or implement the knowledge and experience shared formally by speakers, and informally by other delegates, in their own work environments and research projects. As an example the IFLA Multicultural Library Manifesto was presented at the conference, which may be a tool for changes and improvements in the future, within the multicultural library and information society.
- b. Make more informed decisions in their work environments with regard to services to multicultural populations, including structured analysis of the current situation and identification of future objectives
- c. Continue to participate in IFLA conferences and activities in the future and to encourage colleagues to do the same.
- d. Keep and expand professional and multicultural contacts that were made during the conference, including support of sponsors and exhibitors. Participate in different networking activities nationally and globally.

Conference organizers will apply the knowledge and experience gained in organizing an international event in the following ways:

- e. Serve in national and international library committees.
- f. Take leadership roles in organising similar events in future.

## 5. Beneficiaries from the new knowledge

- a. Participants of the conference got a direct approach to the issues of multiculturalism, multilingualism and reading ability referring to schools and libraries. It's expected that delegates initiate development work in their professional surroundings, for example in the field of literacy skills with specific focus on childrens' needs within the regular school system
- b. Libraries, research institutions and other employers may get a second hand benefit from delegates sharing their new experiences and/or initiating new ways of thinking in the LIS field.
- c. IFLA - through its MULTP section - is gaining valuable experience and many new contacts with researchers and field workers within the profession of LIS
- d. Sponsors and exhibitors got new contacts with a number of their consumers /partners
- e. Conference organizers - the Local Organizing Committee and others - gained a lot of new knowledge while being involved in the arrangement of an international conference

## 6. Expected outreach to beneficiaries (in numbers)

Unknown. Though 115 delegates attended the conference, it can be judged that the number of beneficiaries must be surplused many times over, considering second-hand effects emanating from them.

## 7. Deviations from the original plan

The organisers had to deviate from the original plans in three major ways:

- a. Initially the pre-conference would have been organised only by IFLA's Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations. At the 72<sup>nd</sup> IFLA General Conference in Seoul, South Korea, representatives of IFLA's MULTP Section, the Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section and the Reading Section agreed that the 2007 Satellite Conference of the MULTP would be presented in cooperation with the Libraries for Children and Young Adults Section and the Reading Section.

Although the three Sections agreed to retain the the conference theme, dates, and venue that were decided on earlier by the MULTP, the organizing committee had to adjust the programme to represent the views and interests of all three Sections.

- b. Initially the local organizing committee planned to cooperate with the organizers of three other IFLA preconferences that were to be held in the same week as our own conference. Cooperation would have been with regard to transport arrangements, organized library visits and social functions. It turned out to be impractical and unfeasible and eventually all four pre-conferences were organized separately.
- c. The conference budget was adjusted as and when sponsorships were obtained, registrations were received, and quotations were approved.

## **8. Success stories**

The conference organisers were honoured to have three renowned keynote speakers participate in the conference: Dr Loriene Roy, President of the American Library Association (ALA). Ms Patricia Aldana, President of the International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY). Prof Katharine Parry, Hunter College, City University of New York. All three of them were performing marvellously well and gave the opening of each session theme a personal touch and in this respect a striking prelude.

The presence of so many young and enthusiastic library workers/LIS students from the hosting country gave the conference some well needed perspectives from the nation of South Africa. The same goes for the well organized and interesting study visits to local libraries included in the programme. The visit to Alexandra Childrens' Library, situated in the oldest of Johannesburg's vast townships, was one of the most praised features of the conference.

## **9. Acknowledgement**

The Conference Organising Committee hereby gratefully acknowledges the generous sponsorship of IFLA/ALP to contribute to the success of the IFLA Pre-Conference on Innovative Multicultural Library Services for All, 15 – 17 August 2007.

## **10. Financial report**

Attached to this document