



Building the IFLA Change Agenda

The President-Elect's meeting in Cape Town on 20 August 2015 was a two-day summit focused on how libraries and the profession must take advantage of the opportunities presented by current trends. Speakers from Namibia, Uruguay, Singapore and the United States focused on strategies developed and tactics used to ensure that libraries are at the table for discussions on national development plans, copyright and other issues. During discussions delegates shared the issues emerging in their countries and how to address them.

The Change Agenda

The Change agenda focuses on building four levels of the information profession: the Individual level, the Organizational level, the National level and the Global level. Responding to the efforts to build the Change Agenda in the coming years, congress participants—including representatives from all IFLA regions—gave brief descriptions of trends in their regions.

The Individual level

— focuses on understanding the skills and competencies librarians will need to be successful in the digital age of information. It is important to promote lifelong learning in the library profession so that librarians are equipped to provide transformational services that will keep libraries and the library profession strong.

Challenges

- Improve librarians' competences; the majority of people who work in public libraries are not library school graduates
- Educating staff about how to strategically advocate

Opportunities

- Library education need to include advocacy to the curriculum
- Advocacy to become a part of the staff's performance goals
- Building copyright and eLending knowledge

The Organisational level

— focuses on building the agenda for libraries, understanding community needs and ensuring that libraries continue to connect people to social, political and economic information that will promote civic engagement and empowerment.

Challenges

- Need to break down silos and work across borders of all kinds
- Libraries need to align their services to meet community needs
- Library management systems should be more affordable and accessible
- Building community data

Opportunities

- Libraries need to build a network that can advocate for libraries

- Need to focus on a community agenda more than the library agenda
- Opportunities to use technology to improve functional literacy

The National level

— focuses on developing the national and regional policy agenda. National Library Associations will need to collaborate with library leaders to work on legislations in their countries. It is important that these groups meet and discuss public policy issues that affect the future of libraries and the entire digital information environment.

Challenges

- Librarians are limited in their ability to advocate because they are publicly funded

Opportunities

- Improving advocacy skills at national level
- Working more collaboratively and campaigning for the rights of libraries
- Creating a common agenda for libraries across all borders

The Global level

— focuses on the global information policy agenda. As we are aware access to information will be vital in the process of achieving all [Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda](#). Librarians are skilled information professionals who can be strong partners in increasing access to information. Therefore librarians will need to actively engage with policy makers and use their resources to ensure that libraries participate and are involved in global discussions.

Challenges

- Responses to global development of librarians

Opportunities

- Associations will need to join in with IFLA and support the SDGs
- Forming coalitions/partnerships with globally recognised library associations such as EBLIDA and LIBER
- Engaging in SDGs provides a platform to communicate the role of libraries in achieving SDG goals

Responses to national development issues: Africa, Asia and Oceania

During the President-Elect's meeting, library leaders gave a brief description of information trends and identified the challenges libraries and librarians are experiencing in their region.

Asia and Oceania

Library Associations in the Asia and Oceania region have been actively advocating the importance of libraries and access to information, promoting the [IFLA framework](#), the [Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development](#), and advocating the rights of libraries at the World's Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO). However, there is still very little government support and joint cooperation between libraries and library associations in some countries. Libraries in Asia and Oceania still need to build their government network, government support for the library agenda, improve advocacy skills and build a framework for big data.

Africa

African Libraries have been working on positioning library information services at a very high level and providing future visions for libraries by positioning libraries with the [Sustainable Development Goals of the 2030 Agenda](#) together with the [African Union 2063 Agenda](#). However, African libraries would like to create a common protocol to guide libraries. Funding for libraries and finding resources to achieve international implementation tools remain a critical issue.

Europe

European libraries have a strong government position on copyright and eLending issues and the position of libraries has been getting stronger over the last 10 years. There is a good network of libraries changing the perception of traditional libraries from bricks and mortar institutions to modern digital information centres. However, challenges still exist. For example, libraries in Switzerland still face the task of building a national library policy, budget cuts in the United Kingdom continue to affect public library funding, and copyright issues with the European Union persistent.

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