

Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge
Thursday May 21 11.00 – 12.30
ITU Room B2

Organised by: The International Federation of Libraries Associations and Institutions (IFLA), SLIR (Swiss librarians for International Relations) and the Association of International Librarians and Information Specialists (AILIS)

Background

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is the global voice of the International library community and represents over 700,000 library and information workers worldwide. IFLA, alongside other library organisations, has been an active participant in the WSIS process since its beginnings. Following the Tunis summit IFLA has been involved in many WSIS follow-up activities including the development of policy guidelines relating to public access computing and digital libraries, multicultural and multilingual access to government information, and the training of librarians and library users. IFLA is the moderator of two WSIS sub-themes, one in Action Line C3 (Access to information) relating to ‘Libraries and Archives’ and the other in Action Line C8 (Cultural diversity and identity, linguistic diversity and local content) relating to ‘Heritage’.

In the years following the Tunis summit IFLA has focused extensively on advocacy in order to make the value of libraries to society more visible to stakeholders and decision makers. In particular, IFLA is advocating for libraries as the driving engines behind access to knowledge – libraries are primary gateways to information and therefore important vehicles for the acquisition of knowledge. Knowledge is foundational to all spheres of life and critical for the growth of society. It is produced when information is absorbed, processed and internalized by individuals. The library, as a major source for information serving a wide spectrum of information seekers, is central to the facilitation of knowledge generation. Libraries as knowledge institutions provide spaces for information-sharing and learning for all ages, genders, ethnicities and socio-economic groups regardless of their information/knowledge needs. Libraries facilitate access to information and provide the means through which new knowledge is developed and made available to all.

Objectives

The goal of this session is to explain the concept of libraries as the driving engines behind access to knowledge, and to introduce brief presentations (some on video) on groundbreaking library activities around the world that are redefining what libraries can do for their users in the digital age. The aim of the session is to make participants aware of what libraries are doing, and to have an open discussion on how libraries might partner with other organisations to innovate and use new technologies at a local level to increase access to knowledge.

Proposed Programme

1. Libraries Driving Access to Knowledge – an introduction

2. The Vasconcelos Project – Libraries, Technology and Buses in Mexico (video)
3. Library 10 – The Library Space as a New Learning Environment in Helsinki
4. Global Libraries Latvia – Strong Libraries Build Strong Communities (video)
5. Libraries as Community Knowledge Spaces in Brazil (video)
6. Open Access and Libraries
7. Open Discussion on:
 - Libraries as drivers of access to information and facilitators of knowledge generation
 - Creating new partnerships for libraries
 - Libraries, ICTs and multilingualism
 - Libraries and local knowledge dissemination

Participants

Speakers will include librarians, representatives from academia, and international organizations operating in the area of ICT for development. The session will interest policy makers, NGOs, academics and representatives from the private sector.

Organisation and Management

The Meeting will be conducted in English. All documents and papers presented at the Meeting will subsequently be posted at: www.ifla.org

Location

ITU, Room B2