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**IFLA INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY PROGRAMME**

**LIBRARIES, DEVELOPMENT, AND THE UN 2030 AGENDA**

**TOPIC 4: DEVELOPING AN ADVOCACY PLAN TO SUPPORT THE UN 2030 AGENDA**

**ACTIVITY 4.2: MEETING WITH POLICYMAKERS (ROLE PLAY)**

**INSTRUCTIONS**

This role play will give you the opportunity to participate in mock meetings with Member States, Ministers and Government Officials, followed by a debrief and discussion on the topic.

This cluster session will simulate meetings at the national level, with UN Member State representatives (often, Ministry of Foreign Affairs staff), government officials and Ministers. Many associations have experience of this, and will be invited to share experiences from their country and insights into the process of securing meetings and advocating for libraries during and after meetings.

You will work together in a group and choose roles for the mock meetings. The facilitators will play the roles of secretaries (don't underestimate their importance!), ministry staff, and Ministers. You will have time to:

* Prepare some talking points for your meeting. Decide who are the best representatives for your topic/issue to attend the meeting
* Decide how you should follow up after the meeting, depending on whether you got what you wanted or not!

At the end of the role play there will be a debrief about the exercise, so that we can discuss the strengths and weaknesses of meetings with government officials to negotiate and gain support for libraries.

**Step 1: Assignment of roles**

Take a few minutes to explain each person’s role in the roleplay activity. Depending on the number of workshop participants, you could have up to 3 groups.

During the roleplay, participants will have the opportunity to meet with one or more Ministries – each Minister with his/her own distinct personality, meeting style and ultimate objectives.

Choose up to three people to play the roles of Ministers and their advisers:

* Minister for Culture
* Minister for Education
* Minister for National Development Planning

These can be adjusted if required, depending on the regional context. The rest of the participants will be split into small groups and given 10 minutes to prepare talking points before going into their meetings with the various Ministers.

**Minister for ICT and her adviser**

You'll be playing the Minister for Information Communications & Technology, with a facilitator as your adviser. You are happy to meet with these library delegations, but you aren't really interested in their issues - you only want to talk about [surveillance and privacy - you can choose something else, so long as it's unrelated to their topic!]. The challenge will be to keep the meeting on their topic, and not get diverted by your questions.

**Minister for Education and his adviser**

You'll be playing the Minister for Education with a facilitator as your adviser. You're running late for every meeting [cutting the time for the participants down], you're distracted and will be called out of the meeting on several occasions for important business, leaving the groups talking to your adviser. The challenge for the participants will be to understand the importance of your adviser and work with the disruptions.

**Minister for Culture and her adviser**

You'll be playing the Minister for Culture with a facilitator as your adviser. You are very sympathetic to the library issues, and want to help - but you are ultimately powerless. You keep asking the delegations how they will convince the other ministries of the importance of these issues, how they will get the government to change the policy, how will this work for the citizens in practice. Basically, lots of questions!

**Guidance for participants**

You will be playing the role of a secretary, ministerial staffer, vice-minister or minister in an unknown country. Your ministry could be the ministry of culture, inclusion, higher education or ICT, depending on the process for implementing the SDGs in your country.

Although practices vary widely across ministries – let alone in different countries – the basics of setting up a meeting, arriving at the meeting, holding the meeting and following up will be covered. Associates will need to be wary of the importance of gaining the support of secretaries when they set up their meeting (via letter or a call), patience when they arrive – meetings never run on time, and unexpected issues, like the sudden unavailability of the Minister and a fill in by the Vice Minister, or a crowd of other staff who join in on the meeting to advise the Minister.

During the mock meeting, the ministerial staff and Minister may be sympathetic or unsympathetic to libraries. Participants will need to adjust their arguments and ask on the fly – maybe they have a personal connection they can lean on or they know what projects the Ministry is working on right now, and how libraries can help.

After the meeting, participants will have time to work out how they will follow up the meeting- immediately through a letter or call, and later on through a media release (depending on the success or failure of the meeting!) and so on.

**Step 2: Roleplay**

Begin the roleplay, making sure that clear areas are marked out for each group so that participants can hear each other and not be distracted by other groups at the same time. Allow 20 minutes per discussion, and ask the groups to circulate after each discussion.

**Step 3: Debrief**

Debrief the roleplay and ask each of the participants, including those who were playing Ministers and staff, what they thought of the experience. Did it bear any reality to experiences they have had in meeting with policymakers in the past? What tips would they share with other participants?