IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto

Understanding the Manifesto: A Workshop
About the IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto

• Written by the IFLA Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section.

• The Section brings together libraries and institutions interested in the development and availability of library services designed to meet the needs of cultural and linguistic minorities.

• Approved by the IFLA Governing Board in August 2006 and adopted by UNESCO at its 35th Session in October 2009.
The Manifesto Preamble

• “Cultural Diversity” or “Multiculturalism”
  – the harmonious co-existence and interaction of different cultures;
  – culture is the set of distinctive spiritual, material, intellectual and emotional features of society or a social group;
  – it encompasses literature, lifestyles, ways of living together, value systems, traditions and beliefs.

• Cultural diversity or multiculturalism is the foundation of our collective strength in our local communities and in our global society.

• The definition is based on the UNESCO Universal Declaration on Cultural Diversity (2001).
Principles

Each individual in our global society has the right to a full range of library and information services. In addressing cultural and linguistic diversity, libraries should:

• **Serve all members of the community** without discrimination based on cultural and linguistic heritage;

• Provide information in **appropriate languages and scripts**;

• Give **access to a broad range of materials and services** reflecting all communities and needs;

• Employ **staff to reflect the diversity of the community**, who are trained to work with and serve diverse communities.
Missions of Multicultural Library Services (1)

- **Promoting awareness** of the positive value of cultural diversity and fostering cultural dialogue;
- **Encouraging linguistic diversity** and respect for the mother tongue;
- **Facilitating the harmonious coexistence of several languages**, including learning of several languages from an early age;
- **Safeguarding linguistic and cultural heritage** and giving support to expression, creation and dissemination in all relevant languages;
- **Supporting the preservation of oral tradition** and intangible cultural heritage.
Missions of Multicultural Library Services (2)

- Supporting inclusion and participation of persons and groups from all diverse cultural backgrounds;

- Encouraging information literacy in the digital age, and the mastering of information and communication technologies;

- Promoting linguistic diversity in cyberspace;

- Encouraging universal access to cyberspace;

- Supporting the exchange of knowledge and best practices with regard to cultural pluralism.
Management and Operation

• The core activities of library and information services for culturally and linguistically diverse communities are central, not “separate” or “additional”, and should always be designed to meet local or specific needs.

• The library should have a policy and a strategic plan, defining its mission, objectives, priorities and services related to cultural diversity.

• Cooperation with relevant user groups and professionals at local, national or international level should be encouraged.
Core Actions

• Develop culturally diverse and multilingual collections and services, including digital and multimedia resources;

• Allocate resources for the preservation of cultural expression and heritage, paying particular attention to oral, indigenous and intangible cultural heritage;

• Include programmes supporting user education, information literacy skills, newcomer resources, cultural heritage and cross-cultural dialogue as integral parts of the services;

• Provide access to library resources in appropriate languages through information organization and access systems;

• Develop marketing and outreach materials in appropriate media and languages to attract different groups to the library.
Staff

• The library staff is the active **intermediary between users and resources**.

• Professional **education and continuing training** focused on services to multicultural communities, crosscultural communication and sensitivity, anti-discrimination, cultures and languages should be provided.

• The staff of a multicultural library should **reflect the cultural and linguistic characteristics of the community** to ensure cultural awareness, reflect the community the library serves, and encourage communication.
Funding, Legislation and Networks

• Governments and other decision-making bodies are urged to **establish and fund libraries** and library systems to offer free library and information services to culturally diverse communities.

• All libraries involved in activities in this field must **participate in local, national or international networks** in policy development.

• **Research findings and best practices** should be widely disseminated in order to guide effective multicultural library services.
Implementing the Manifesto

• The international community must recognize and support libraries and information services in their role of promoting and preserving cultural and linguistic diversity.

• Decision makers at all levels and the library community around the world are requested to disseminate this Manifesto and to carry out its principles and actions.