

IFLA/FAIFE

WORKSHOP AT SCECSAL XVII

Diamond Jubilee Conference Centre
Dar es Salaam, Tanzania
10 July 2006

Intellectual Freedom and the Information and Knowledge Society

Presentations by Paul Sturges (Chair of FAIFE) and Sarah Webb (Syracuse University, USA) were followed by a long and lively open forum amongst the more than 150 participants, monitored by Paul Sturges.

Speakers provided an extensive review of the barriers to freedom of access to information that could hold back Africa's entry into the Information and Knowledge Society, before moving on to make suggestions for a programme for the library profession to play an effective role in the process. The following statement is based on a selection of the contributions, concentrating mainly on those addressed to the profession itself.

Statement from the IFLA FAIFE Workshop, 10th July 2006

Participants at the Workshop were clearly united in feeling that the profession needs to reposition itself for the Information and Knowledge Society.

This includes:

- Librarians need to see themselves as change agents, not preservers of heritage;
- The profession should place a much stronger emphasis on outreach activities;
- Libraries should develop demand-driven services rather than offering collections passively to possible users;
- Librarians should encourage the development of an information seeking culture, especially through work with schools;
- Librarians should take command of technology, specifying the products and systems needed for library and information work, developing and maintaining services from within the profession;
- Librarians should seek to make an impact by taking a lead in adopting technical change and active information service provision in their institutions as a preliminary to making a wider national impact;
- The potential for content development by library and information institutions should be explored;
- Librarians should work through their national library associations to make them more effective as lobbying organisations.

Points made for the attention of Library Associations included:

- Lobbying government on the basis of good practice and proven potential for libraries in their own country and elsewhere;
- Developing training packages for the repositioning and renewal of the profession;
- Demanding relevant library and information education programmes from the LIS

schools.

Points made for the attention of LIS schools included:

- Developing and constantly renewing curriculum and programmes so as to create a profession capable leading Africa into the Information and Knowledge Society

Summary made by: **Paul Sturges**, who takes responsibility for the selection of points from the discussion and the omission of others.

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