



Indigenous Matters Special Interest Group

Purpose:

The task force for Developmental Issues and Key Questions endeavor to create a list of developmental issues and address key questions such as: what is indigenous and how libraries, collections, publishers, and services can encourage cultural diversity.

1. Indigenous is a term used to identify the universal population of Indigenous peoples although some may choose to define and identify ourselves in our own languages or specific tribal identities. Some may use other labels or names such as Native, Native American, Aborigine, First Nation, etc. In other words, “Indigenous is inclusive of all first peoples – unique in our own cultures – but common in our experience of colonialism and our understanding of the world” (Wilson, 2008, p. 276).

Indigenous peoples come from distinct lands, cultures, and languages throughout the world. Indigenous peoples possess worldviews, philosophies, and a way of life that is based on the natural order of the universe. Indigenous peoples have an intimate knowledge, connection to, and a relationship with their ancestral land and environment. All things have life and all life is connected. This unique knowledge and relationship is based on respect, reciprocity, and a responsibility to live in harmony with all life.

The task force recommends a broad and inclusive understanding of the term reflecting the approach of the United Nations.

United Nations. Department of Economic and Social Affairs. Workshop on Data Collection and Disaggregation for Indigenous Peoples (New York, 19-21 January 2004). Available:

http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unpfii/documents/workshop_data_ilo.doc

United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, Indigenous Peoples, Indigenous Voices, Fact Sheet. Available:

www.wipce2008.com/enews/pdf/wipce_fact_sheet_21-10-07.pdf

2. This task force proposes that libraries, collections, publishers, and services encourage cultural diversity. The following are merely offered as suggestions and are not intended to be comprehensive, applicable to all situations, or sequential.

- a. Establish trust and develop a relationship based on respect and reciprocity with local or regional Indigenous communities by contacting tribal governments or culturally affiliated representatives
- b. Encourage those who are defined locally as Indigenous and seek, invite and enable their participation in determining strategies for the establishment of programs and services that will benefit them
- c. Providing culturally appropriate reading and information literacy training and services
- d. Scheduling traditional story-telling and other performance arts
- e. Teaching high level research and publishing skills, including high tech media
- f. Acquiring materials by and about Indigenous peoples that give voice and perspectives
- g. Collaborate and consult with Indigenous people for collection development, programming, services, educational curriculums, etc. based on local, regional and national indigenous interests and issues
- h. Create a position to serve as coordinator or liaison for Indigenous communities, associations, government with preference given to an Indigenous librarian . The purpose is to develop, promote, and facilitate access to indigenous resources
- i. Initiate and fund programs to recruit and train Indigenous persons as librarians, archivists, researchers and technicians, and guide them to responsible positions
- j. Encourage and assist with documenting and publishing Indigenous historical and contemporary histories and events
- k. Develop websites or provide portals to resources relevant to Indigenous people e.g. tribal governments and services; health and welfare, legal resources, education, employment, etc.
- l. Identify and develop a list of Indigenous cultural bearers and educators with contact information for educational purposes, e.g. basket weavers, language teachers, artisans and musicians, dancers, storytellers, etc.
- m. Identify and provide access to historical and cultural Indigenous materials by developing guides and indexes
- n. Plan and facilitate workshops for the non-Indigenous that helps with the understanding of offensive materials, cultural traditions and customs

References

Nelson, M.K., (Ed.). (2008). *Original instructions: Indigenous teachings for a sustainable future*. Rochester, VT: Bear & Company.

Pelletier, D. (2003). Library and archives of Canada Initiates Aboriginal resources and services program [Electronic version]. *Feliciter*, 5.

Wilson, S. (2008). *Research is ceremony: Indigenous research methods*. Halifax and Winnipeg, Canada: Fernwood Publishing.

Yellow Bird, M. (Spring 1999). What we want to be called: Indigenous Peoples' perspectives on racial and ethnic identity labels. [Electronic version]. *American Indian Quarterly*, 23, 2.