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.