

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.