Evidence for Global and Disaster Health [E4GDH] special interest group

The Evidence for Global and Disaster Health [E4GDH] special interest group contributes to IFLA's mission with a focus on strengthening the evidence-based practice of librarians in global and disaster health through advocacy, skills development, and capacity building, plus partnerships. 

The following text is from our internal Action Plan:

Strategic Direction 2: Inspire and Enhance Professional Practice

1. Evidence briefing: What is the evidence on the role of libraries during times of crisis?

   Please provide a brief description of the activity/output:

   This evidence briefing (EB) is a follow-up to the 2017 EB summarising the research on knowledge and library service provision and knowledge management to support global health, and disaster and emergency preparedness. That EB showed that libraries have a very important role to play in terms of providing support during, and after disasters. They provide a safe place for rescued citizens, and support disaster teams, providing them with the best evidence to inform decision-making, and acting as knowledge brokers to ensure relevant knowledge and information is shared effectively. It found that libraries can demonstrate their position as a primary and valuable source of trustworthy information, by providing quick and easy access to reliable information in times of crisis.

   This briefing will discuss all the different ways that libraries around the world are supporting their communities in times of crisis. It is hoped that the information contained will help libraries adapt some of these ideas to suit their own communities, with a view to improving access to support and information services during challenging times.

   Lead: Caroline De Brún. Emma Farrow,

2. Healthcare information access as a human right

   Please provide a brief description of the activity/output:

   A survey instrument was created to assess the extent to which respondents consider health care to be a human right, and opinions on the appropriate role of international organizations including the World Health Organization (WHO) in supporting health care as a human right. This survey is being conducted by Healthcare Information For All (HIFA.org) and our Special Interest Group (SIG). HIFA is currently in official relations with WHO as a non-state actor. We will use the survey to create a position report for the WHO, trying to influence the organization to take an official stance. We will use this work to promote the cause or health information as a human right.

   The target group is the global network of people who create, disseminate, and use healthcare information. Lack of reliable healthcare information contributes to avoidable death and suffering for everyone. This activity is important as it potentially advocates for all people to have access to accurate and up-to-date information support by evidence, that will aid in decreasing the burden of unnecessary negative health outcomes.

   This output will aid people and organizations in advocating for healthcare information access to be considered a right, and to promote this advocacy to the WHO.

   Lead: Margaret Sullivan. Emma Farrow, Ola El Zein, Cindy Periard, as available
3. Webinar series

Please provide a brief description of the activity/output:
Webinar series, in collaboration with other IFLA units and external partners, including HBS members Feili, Tzu-heng, and Alessia.

A minimum of 2 webinars in partnership with other IFLA units will take place in 2023-2024.

Webinars have a broader reach / are more accessible than in-person sessions and so provide an important opportunity to: discuss specific issues in greater depth, share our learning, provide advocacy messages. Working in partnership will bring different perspectives. (whilst also raising awareness of the work of our SIG with our partners and their communities)

Webinars enable us to reach more people, while providing more equitable access to the content. Timings will be varied so regions can join live, and the recording made freely available.

In our joint meeting we briefly discussed the broad topic of climate change/environmental justice and health information as one theme. Our satellite meeting will highlight issues, and key roles librarians can play.

Leads: Blessing Mawire, Ola El Zein

Strategic Direction 4 - Optimise our Organisation

1. Strengthen E4GDH capacity and communications

Please provide a brief description of the activity/output:

Strengthening our committee and advisory group will enable us to both better represent and respond to our sector; our visibility will be improved through stronger communications:
(i) Nurture and strengthen core Committee; respond to new Co-opting and Mentoring guidelines, appoint new social media and web lead(s).
(ii) Review Advisory Group, widen global representation and diversity
(iii) Begin preparations for longer term goals within IFLA structure.

Leads: SIG convenor