Library and Research Services for Parliaments
ANNUAL REPORT
2019-2020

Introduction

Sections of IFLA prepare an annual report for the information of the Professional Committee of IFLA. The report, or a summary, is also provided to members of the Section and will be available on the Section's webpages.

This report covers the period September 2019 – August 2020.

The Annual Report refers primarily to the activities identified in the Section's Action Plan and the report closely follows the structure of the Action Plan document.

Overview

Activity in the first half of the year (September-March) was focused on organisation of the satellite conference (a three-day event) and the WLIC session, work which was effectively written-off with the COVID-19 crisis. An early decision was made to cancel the satellite conference (announced 30 March). The Section responded to the crisis by sharing of information: an online forum was established and a survey conducted on how individual services had been affected and how they had responded. It was difficult to get traction for IFLAPARL activities when managers and professionals were mainly focused on getting through the crisis at the local level. Nevertheless, one major project – the guidelines for parliamentary libraries – reached its concluding stages, and some progress was made in raising the profile of the Section. A major rethink of activities is now required as we will be without a regular meeting for at least three years – from August 2019 to August 2022. It is hoped that IFLA will be more supportive of future project proposals from the Section, if only to provide a stronger argument for services to subscribe.

Projects/Activities

Objective 1	
Strengthen the global voice of parliamentary library & research services	

Projects/Activities	Progress
Contact international partners and potential partners to discuss opportunities for cooperation, how IFLAPARL could best contribute. Seek partners for a joint event/publication on the contribution to SDG 16.	*An initial mailshot and mailing list was prepared, and some initial discussion was had with the Inter-Parliamentary Union, but no further move was made due to the COVID-19 crisis and uncertainty as to what IFLAPARL could contribute in the current situation.* *The link to SDG 16 of IFLAPARL services was emphasized in a presentation to the Government Libraries mid-year conference December 2019*
Establish a strong working relationship with the new *Centre for Innovation in Parliament* and contribute to the next World e-Parliament conference (2020) & report (2021).	*Contact was made with the Inter-Parliamentary Union (the hosts of the Centre for Innovation in Parliament) but their work had been postponed due to COVID-19.*
Strengthen our relationship with regional groups to support their work and seek opportunities to help establish new regional groups, in conjunction with appropriate partners.	*The Standing Committee reflected on the appropriate role of IFLAPARL – what value it could add – when many relevant functions are performed by regional associations in many parts of the world. This reflection led to an offer to the known regional bodies of stronger cooperation while respecting their role and autonomy. The communication went out in summer 2020 and we await responses. A follow-up communication will be made in the autumn.*

Risks
There are doubts about how much work we can expect from the Standing Committee and wider membership – exacerbated by the challenges of service management in the COVID-19 crisis and the lack of contact. The potential partners are also struggling with COVID-19 and the usual opportunities for informal discussion and creativity between organizations have largely disappeared. We have nevertheless been approached to provide assistance with projects in 2020 and have been uncertain how to respond.

Output	Impact
No tangible output so far.	*The clarification of the respective roles of IFLAPARL and the regional bodies should be useful, could avoid duplication and could encourage more cooperation and more focused effort.*

Communications
The Standing Committee and wider membership and profession have been kept informed through Basecamp and the Section Newsletter.

Objective 2	
Inspire and enhance professional practice in parliamentary library & research services	
Projects/Activities	**Progress**
Update and publish a revised edition of the *Guidelines for Parliamentary Libraries.*	*A final draft text has been submitted by the working group and the Standing Committee will submit it to IFLA for approval in September 2020. It will be published following approval and professional layout. The project to create a wiki or other easily revisable version will follow.*
Complete and publish the *IFLAPARL Ethics Checklists.*	*Achieved, with translations into French and Spanish also now available.* *Presentation to the 2019 IFLAPARL Satellite Conference, the conference of the European Centre for Parliamentary Research and Documentation, and by Zoom to the parliament of Mexico.*
Capacity-building workshop	*Project did not receive IFLA support and was cancelled.*
Review the Section's guidance/publications to identify need (a) for revision (b) new guidance publications	*Postponed until after the 'Guidelines for Parliamentary Libraries' is finalized.*
Sharing practice in response to COVID-19	*This item was added to the Action Plan in May 2020. A new forum was established on Basecamp open to all relevant services. A survey on the impact on services of COID-19 was run from May to August 2020. Interim reports were circulated during the period and a final report prepared for circulation in September.*
Risks	
The Guidelines for Parliamentary Libraries revision illustrated the declining engagement of the IFLAPARL membership referred to under Objective 1, and this predated COVID-19. The concept of an online revisable version (e.g. wiki) offers the opportunity to update and expand the guidance in a more organic way than periodic new editions. We are informed that the new IFLA website cannot accommodate a wiki so alternative solutions will be sought.	
Output	**Impact**
Guidelines:	*This publication has been a standard for almost thirty years and is used by new staff and developing services worldwide.*
Ethics:	*There are many ethical challenges in running parliamentary library and research services and it can be difficult to discuss and deal with them at the institutional level. This checklist has been welcomed as a tool that can inform the development of local policies and be used to open up difficult conversations at local level.*
COVID-19 report:	*The sharing of practice during the pandemic has been welcomed, and the results were professionally encouraging. There are some lessons which might have an impact on future practice.*

Communications
These projects are communicated via Basecamp to the Standing Committee and in the case of COVID-19 any relevant service that signed up for the forum. All subscribers to the mailing list (much wider than the formal membership) have been kept informed by newsletter. Publications are available via the IFLA website.

Objective 3
Connect and empower parliamentary library & research services and their staff

Projects/Activities	Progress
Organise the 2020 pre-conference satellite meeting	*This conference had been planned and organised in detail together with our hosts at the parliament of Ireland, before cancellation*
Organise the Section's 2020 WLIC sessions.	*Our sessions had a good prospective programme ready to run before cancellation.*
Organise the 2021 pre-conference satellite meeting – location to be determined.	*The parliament of the Netherlands agreed to host the 2021 event in the Hague. With the WLIC as a virtual event the satellite conference will be reconsidered.*
Organise the Section's 2021 WLIC sessions.	*We will run with same theme as 2020 but will renew the call for papers*
Promote and encourage further registration to the World Directory of Library & Research Services of Parliaments	*This action was to be addressed at the satellite conference. Work has been done with the aim of simplifying the registration of information in the directory, but not finalized.*
Risks	
In-person networking and discussion are key to IFLAPARL and only possible at the pre-conference satellite and WLIC. The virtual format of the 2021 conference presents a challenge in generating the engagement and commitment of our members. On the other hand, the format does tend to equalize access worldwide – with a caveat that internet access is not equal. To note: IFLAPARL's relevance to members is primarily through its satellite conference.	

Output	Impact
Nil	*Nil*
Communications	
Nil	

Objective 4

Optimise the Section's operations

Projects/Activities	Progress
Update the Section's previous communications plan (2015-17) to create a new communications & outreach plan, which reflects our ambitions and the latest IFLA standards. [KI 4.4]	*Communications initiatives outlined within previous Annual Plan, and included outreach to regional associations and organizations supporting parliamentary and democratic development, reported above, as well as a focus on the role and use of the WDLRSP.* *A separate communications plan has not been developed.*
Review the Section's social media presence, select the most appropriate channels to use and make more effective use of them. [KI 4.4]	*Discussion centred around a refocus on Twitter as the most appropriate channel for IFLAPARL; social media logos and channels added to the section newsletter.*
Review IFLAPARL content on new IFLA website (based on WordPress). [KI 4.4]	*New IFLA website not yet released; IFLAPARL content such as newsletters have been updated to the existing site.*
Incorporate any new IFLA corporate designs & comms templates, arising from work on new IFLA website. There would be work for us in adopt/adapting these in our own comms & publications. [KI 4.4]	*New IFLA website has not been released.*
Aim to stabilise or increase Section membership [KI 4.3]	*Outreach to regional associations and organizations supporting parliamentary and democratic development is hoped to support stable membership.* *Update 3/10/20: new Section membership figures for September 2020 show a net loss of nine members in the past year (-10%). Sixteen memberships were not renewed, seven new memberships were taken out. The losses included seven parliaments and two regional associations of parliamentary library & research services, the remainder being individuals and organisations other than parliaments. Broadly, the gains are mainly in Europe and the losses are elsewhere.*

Risks

IFLAPARL Newsletters and listserv continue to be a main form of communication - the updates to the IFLA website would help to engage users with a refreshed look and feel, and to support ease of updates by officers.
There is no real motivation to be a subscribing member when almost all benefits are available to non-members.

Output	Impact

Two newsletters were published	Connection between jurisdictions during a year where we were unable to gather in person.
COVI-19 forum on basecamp	Clearinghouse for communication and information produced by member parliaments on the impact of the pandemic on services; and on products, services or other innovations developed during / in response to the pandemic

Communications

All initiatives including the COVID forum, the survey, etc were promoted through the newsletter and through individual posts to the listserv.

Standing Committee membership

Standing Committee members' names	Role on the Standing Committee (if any) and contribution made to the work of the Professional Unit over the year (Chair, Information Coordinator, Project Leader)	Comments on position (resigned, co-opted to fill a casual vacancy, etc.)
1. Iain Watt	Chair	
2. Sonia Bebbington	Secretary	
3. Ellie Valentine	Information coordinator	
4. Agata Karwowska-Sokolowska	Member	
5. Clara Bessa de Costa	Member	
6. Christine Wellems	Member	
7. Mary Manzanec	Member	
8. Shu Guang Zhang	Member	
9. Janice Silviera	Member	
10. Chama Mpundy Mfula	Member	
11. Paola Mandillo	Member	
12. Ida Keleman	Member	
13. Karin Finer	Member	
14. Chifuyu Hiyama	Member	
15. Fadimatou Epse Bello Mohamadou	Member	
16. Jonathan Curtis	Member	
17. Jose-Maria Hernandez Vallejo	Member	
18. Karin Zaal	Member	

Names of any other reporting persons	Role *For example, Corresponding Members*	Comments on position *(resigned, co-opted to fill a casual vacancy, etc.)*
1. Julie Anderson	Corresponding Member	
2. Veronica Kulczewski	Corresponding Member	
3. Jill Taylor	Corresponding Member	
4. Mohammed Nyagsi	Corresponding Member	
5. Mireille Eza	Corresponding Member	

Professional Unit meetings or conference calls

Date	Location or type of meeting	Main outcomes
1. March 22 & 25th, 2020	Zoom	Action plan update; capacity building workshop – funding outcome; webinar ideas; WDLRSP uptake and options; IFLAPARL value proposition; IFLA statement on COVID-19; Pre-Conference and WLIC planning; Roundtable, largely on COVID impacts in each jurisdiction
2. June 28 & 29th, 2020	Zoom	Action plan update; letter drafted to regional associations; discussion of options for other organizations to send to (parl. And democracy strengthening); options to proceed w publication of guidelines; options for rolling our 2020 conference themes into 2021; news from IFLA HQ and roundtable