

Stichting IFLA Global Libraries Report on Activities 2021

Background

Stichting IFLA Global Libraries (SIGL), an independent public benefit foundation, was established in 2016 to support the work of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) as a legacy partner of Global Libraries.

The object of the foundation, which is exclusively charitable and educational, is to strengthen the library field and to empower public libraries to improve people's lives and support growth of sustainable societies.

This report will focus on the activities undertaken by IFLA in support on the legacy initiatives throughout 2021. This work was inevitably affected by disruptions linked to COVID-19 which made it impossible to plan for face-to-face meetings. However, building on the experience of 2020, we were able to move a large share of activities online, thereby delivering on the goals of the foundation.

Overview of phases and implementation

IFLA's Legacy grant is shaped in three phases:

1. Discover and Launch (2017-2018)

As initially planned, this phase established a collective Global Vision (GV) among IFLA members and the library field and engaged IFLA's Professional Units and members in synchronized planning to achieve the vision that will catalyse and promote change. It built a strong foundation for subsequent phases and prepared grounds for developing strong library metrics for better advocacy by launching the first Library Map of the World (LMW) and Development and Access to Information (DA2I) report.

2. Implement and Amplify (2018-2022)

This phase aims at implementing strategic and operational plans developed in phase one and aligns IFLA's work to implement the Vision around an ongoing consultative cycle. It uses capacity building and knowledge sharing to build, connect and mobilize efforts of leaders at the national level, and begins the shift to strong regional leadership that will facilitate regional cooperation and progress on common challenges.

3. Grow and Thrive (2023-2026)

This phase will see IFLA and the library field reaching full capacity and operating with increased effectiveness and impact. All the work to build capacity and expertise will be in place and results will begin to be fully realized. Library leaders will be able to assess and communicate impact on local communities and at the national level to advocate for funding, resources and enabling policy environments. A cycle of strategic renewal and progression will be well-established that will ensure sustainability and lay the foundation for action beyond legacy.

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1. Convene the library field to develop a global vision for the future of libraries that only a strong and connected library field can achieve. With the result of the Global Vision discussion (2017 and 2018), the IFLA Strategy was developed in an inclusive way with all members (2018-2019) and launched in August 2019. Since then we have both focused on the implementation of the Strategy, working with Members and sections alike, and reformed IFLA's governance to match the ambition of the Strategy.
2. Conduct a membership survey to understand what members value in IFLA and what they hope for the future of IFLA (completed in 2018)
3. Create a plan to develop capacity to support regional operations and national development and learning (ongoing, linked to point 1)
4. Library Map of the World/Development and Access to Information (DA2I) Report (ongoing)
5. Planning for Leader Mobilization (ongoing)
6. Launch campaigns to support the library field to adopt community engagement and outcome measurement (ongoing)
7. Modernise the IFLA website in order to ensure that it can act as an effective hub and support for the global library field (2018-2021, with ongoing changes)
8. Enable the updating of IFLA's governance to ensure that it can better support the global library field into the future (2019-2021)

2021 started with the overwhelming approval by Members of IFLA's new Statutes. This was the key part of the Governance Review, the result of an intensive period of work by IFLA's Governing Board in regular consultation with members and volunteers. Thanks to this, it was possible to elect a new slate of volunteers in line with the new rules, who subsequently started work after the 2021 General Assembly. Subsequent to the agreement of the new Statutes, IFLA's Governing Board agreed a new set of Rules of Procedure, which provide additional detail.

Together, these help deliver on the roadmap agreed with the SIGL Board, and will give IFLA structures better suited to providing leadership for the field in an inclusive, effective and transparent way. In particular, it has led to the creation of new regional structures which bring a new energy to efforts to strengthen the library field at the regional and national levels – see more below.

To accompany this, work took place throughout the year on a Handbook, which will provide further information to IFLA's volunteers and others about how to make the best of the new rules, as well as offering additional information on specific procedures. This work has advanced well, with most of the Handbook completed, and elements already in use, for example around the co-option of members to regional committees. This work will continue into 2022. More generally, SIGL support is allowing IFLA to provide more intensive support to volunteer groups, in particular the regional ones, in order to help them plan and realise their potential.

2021 saw continued limitations, nonetheless, on possibilities to travel, with virtual meetings offering only a partial alternative. In particular, it prevented the delivery of further regional workshops. However, instead, with SIGL support IFLA invested strongly in supporting the starting-up of new regional units – six Regional Division Committees for Asia-Oceania, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, North America, and Sub-Saharan Africa.

IFLA staff supported by SIGL worked closely with the newly elected chair of the Regional Council in order to hold meetings with the new Division chairs, develop templates for action planning, set up a process for co-opting members to those committees which didn't get up to 20 members. Furthermore, the Regional Council established its own action plan on the Sustainable Development Goals, working to bring together efforts to maximise synergies.

In addition, we also pursued the #IFLAFromHome initiative, that saw IFLA members and volunteers share their experiences of working with the IFLA Strategy, and explain the transformative impact that it has had on their action. Through this, it has been possible to engage and inspire more people in the global library field to work together, in pursuit of the goals of the Legacy. With the change in committees in August 2021, there has been a short break as new volunteers take up their roles and define action plans. We look forward to new posts in 2022. Meanwhile, the 10-Minute International Librarian series, highlighting ways to strengthen service, collaboration and partnership.

Concerning the Trend Report, it remained the case that the uncertainty faced by the field, as well as the need to focus on consolidation of reforms meant that 2021 was not a good time to work towards a major update of the Trend Report. However, it was possible to design the President-elect's session at that year's World Library and Information Congress (see more below) to focus on trends submitted by emerging leaders from around the world.

As a result, and in addition to an engaging and interactive session, it was possible to issue a Trend Report update for 2021, based on trends proposed by leaders. This was published in early January 2022, and received strong attention from across the field.

A key deliverable for 2021 was IFLA's new website. This was conceived and designed as to make the maximum contribution towards SIGL goals by providing a platform and hub for libraries to share and learn. In addition to a fresher look, it offers improved navigation and functionality both for those working with IFLA every day, and first-time visitors. Volunteers in IFLA's many committees are better able to add material to their own webpages, from news to resources. Accompanying the website was the development of a

Dspace repository to hold IFLA's thousands of resources. The implementation of a repository will benefit IFLA into the future with a single source for material such as statements, standards and guidelines. Work on the website represented a very considerable investment of time and effort, but with a strongly positive result.

The Library Map of the World continued to grow, with new data, SDG stories and country profiles added. The latter in particular offer a powerful opportunity for libraries to reflect on their priorities, and even to build new connections, as well as to present

themselves to the world. In addition, the LMW team has engaged in numerous workshops, conferences and other events, helping build skills for community engagement, impact evaluation and storytelling. Invitations to hold workshops point to the ongoing need of libraries to be able to articulate the value they bring to communities. In particular, the team will work with IFLA's new Regional Division Committees in order to increase engagement at the regional level.

Following a decision in 2020, 2021 was the first year in which IFLA held a virtual World Library and Information Congress. This was a demonstrable success, with participants strongly appreciating the opportunity to be together again, even if online. The Congress offered a useful opportunity to experiment with new, more dynamic session formats, building on ideas shared by volunteers and past participants about how to make the most of the event. IFLA's Professional Units devised a rich programme, complemented by a range of high-level speakers sharing insights, and emerging leaders' sessions focused on different world regions. The Congress also offered useful lessons for future hybrid events. SIGL funding was used to support attendance grants to emerging leaders from all IFLA regions.