



IFLA Agricultural Libraries Special Interest Group

Report of the SIG Business Meeting held on 20 August 2015

Date and venue

The Agricultural Libraries SIG held its Business Meeting on Thursday, 20 August 2015, at the Cape Town International Convention Centre.

Attendees

The following people attended:

1. Mr Peter Walton, Agricultural Information Specialist, Darwin, **Australia** – chair
2. Ms Poloko Ntokwane, Librarian, Botswana College of Agriculture, Gaborone, **Botswana**
3. Mr Sunil Gorla, Deputy Librarian, GB Pant University of Agriculture & Technology, Pantnagar, **India**
4. Dr Akobundu Dike Ugah, Librarian, Michael Okpara University of Agriculture, Umudike, **Nigeria**
5. Ms Kristen Mastel, Outreach & Instruction Librarian, University of Minnesota, **USA**
6. Prof. Dr Takashi Nagatsuka, Dept of Library, Archival & Information Studies, Tsurumi University, **Japan**
7. Ms Helen Mandl, Manager Member Services, IFLA – observer

Business

The meeting commenced at 9.45 a.m.

In the absence of the SIG Convenor, Peter Walton was asked by Helen Mandl to chair the meeting.

Agricultural Libraries Section

The chair asked Helen to provide an update on the progress of the possible transition of the SIG to be a Section of IFLA under Division I. This had been a desire of Dr Dewa Reddy¹, the begetter of the SIG, and he had been campaigning to have the Group transform into a Section. However, only 10 or so IFLA members had said that they would sign up for an Agricultural Libraries Section; far less than the 40 members needed to convince the Professional Committee.

The meeting felt that the additional burden of becoming a Section – election of officers, meetings, etc. – was beyond necessity. The meeting felt that an SIG could be a more flexible, and more easily managed vehicle for agricultural libraries.

IFLA Strategic Plan

The meeting considered the paper, “Introducing the draft of the new IFLA Strategic Plan and Key Initiatives”. Of key importance is the fact that the 2016–2021 Strategic Plan is

¹ Due to family reasons, Dr Reddy himself was not able to attend the World Congress and prosecute his case.

underpinned by IFLA's response to the UN Post-2015 Development Agenda. That is, the global shift from the Millennium Development Goals that conclude this year, and the Sustainable Development Goals that commences in 2016.

As librarians working in one of the key sectors covered by the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), it behoves the Group to consider both how it will response to the IFLA Strategic Plan as well as contribute to attaining the SDGs. Under the Strategic Plan key areas include:

- Strategic Direction 1: Libraries in Society – libraries acting as “key providers of information, education, research, culture and social participation”. Significant issues for agricultural libraries are their contribution to activities to do with food security and climate change adaptation.
- Strategic Direction 2: Information and Knowledge – libraries acting as “catalysts of innovation, able to facilitate the creation and re-use of content by their communities”. To what extent are agriculture libraries storehouses of knowledge and information? And to what extent are they active participants in its dissemination, particularly through innovative means?
- Strategic Direction 4: Capacity Building – raising “the voice of libraries and librarians at national, regional and global levels”, and strengthening the “ability of IFLA's members to advocate effectively for libraries as key players in political, economic and social change” – do agricultural libraries have a role to play in the national development agendas? What skills and capacities are needed by agricultural librarians to reach beyond their walls?

Under SD1, note was taken of the 2015–2016 IFLA Key Initiative:

- “We will build a set of resources to inform our policy work on access to information, data and knowledge”

Under SD2, note was taken of the 2015–2016 IFLA Key Initiative:

- “We will maximise the support for the Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development to highlight the importance of information access and libraries to sustainable development”

Under SD4, note was taken of the 2015–2016 IFLA Key Initiatives:

- “We will work with libraries and partners to raise awareness of the role of libraries within the Sustainable Development Agenda”
- “We will measure the progress of access to information and its impact on the Sustainable Development Goals”

In the context of the IFLA Strategic Plan and the Group, the meeting discussed:

- Promotion of partnerships, both within organisations and beyond. An example was provided about mistrust and lack of information sharing within a university context, as a problem; and use of public libraries as a community hub for information on all subjects, including agriculture. The meeting considered that some well-chosen case studies could be prepared to demonstrate effective partnerships, and that these case studies could be presented on the website.

- The role that agriculture libraries can play in supporting the development agenda needs to be highlighted. The foundation of an effective partnership is one where all parties are aware of the strengths (and weaknesses) of each party; in the case of libraries and librarians there needs to be greater awareness among policymakers and planners as to the role libraries can play, given their unique skill-set and attitude.

Next steps

The meeting agreed the following:

- To continue to work together as a Group to prepare a plan of action (small project/s and activities) being the Group's response to the IFLA Strategic Plan, for the years 2015 and 2016, with an immediate focus on the Agricultural Libraries SIG session at WLIC 2016
- To use the website and listserv to raise interest and engagement in the work of the SIG, as well as to share documents and case studies.

The meeting concluded at 11.20 a.m., but was followed by a five-minute update on IAALD (by Peter). One of the initiatives that was discussed at Cornell (host of the 2013 IAALD World Congress) was IAALD partnering with regional sections of IFLA to enhance the status of agricultural libraries and networks at the national level; this is completely in line with the draft IFLA Strategic Plan.

Report prepared by

Peter Walton

4 September 2015

Addendum

Subsequent to the Business Meeting, Helen Mandl shared (with Peter Walton) a "Call for Examples: Libraries and the UN 2030 Agenda". The idea is that IFLA will develop a booklet about the role of libraries and the 2030 Agenda. This booklet will:

- Raise the profile of the contribution libraries make across the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs
- Support capacity building of libraries and library associations in their advocacy to include libraries, access to information, ICT and culture in national development plans.

The format of the booklet will include:

- An overview of the 2030 Agenda and each of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals
- Examples, impact and pictures of library programmes and services that contribute to specified targets
- Suggestions for policymakers on what libraries can contribute in meeting the Goals.

IFLA is calling for examples to be added to the libraries and the 2030 Agenda booklet to ensure that the booklet represents the scope of the library and information services profession in all regions, library types and at all levels.

This is something the SIG ought to address in its Plan of Action, but time is of the essence – the deadline is **14 Sep 2015**.