

IFLA Committee on Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE)

ANNUAL REPORT 2002

SUMMARY

At the IFLA Conference in Glasgow, August 2002 IFLA/FAIFE presented the results of our commitment to undertake a leading role in the development of IFLA policy positions regarding freedom of access to information: *The Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services, and Intellectual Freedom* and *The IFLA Internet Manifesto* were adopted unanimously by IFLA Council. The Governing Board also approved *The IFLA Statement on Sustainable Development*. All of these are landmark declarations, which join the Public Library Manifesto and School Library Manifesto to provide a foundation for the promotion of intellectual freedom in regard to library and information service.

The IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report 2002: Libraries, Conflicts and the Internet was also launched at a press conference in Glasgow. The report is the first of its kind and comprises the second volume of the IFLA/FAIFE World Report Series. Its publication, together with many other FAIFE activities and meetings during the conference, presented to delegates the challenging issues with which we are confronted.

2002 also emphasized IFLA and IFLA/FAIFE's involvement in UNESCO preparatory activities with regards to the World Summit of the Information Society (WSIS). FAIFE has now become a member of the IFLA WSIS delegation, and during the year we have participated in meetings and other related activities such as the UNESCO online *Discussion Forum*.

Regrettably, the Office has had to concentrate many resources on the financial difficulties FAIFE is currently facing. For this reason, our investigation and monitoring capacities have been lower than intended. We have been seeking financial support to cover the costs of administration, a full time investigator/editor and special projects such as the World Report. Members of the FAIFE Committee, IFLA Headquarters as well as other supporters have been very helpful identifying possible sponsors and we are immensely grateful for all their support.

Our PhD project, entitled *To what extent can libraries provide free equal and unhampered access to Internet accessible information resources on a global scale?* and co-sponsored by the Royal Danish School of Library and Information Science, is well under way. At several meetings and conferences, Stuart Hamilton has successfully presented his first results and raised much interest on libraries and freedom of access to Internet accessible information both within and outside the international library community.

This report will discuss the past year's achievements on basis of priorities and resources available.

IFLA/FAIFE TERMS OF REFERENCE

In August 2001 the former IFLA Executive Board confirmed the terms of reference of the IFLA/FAIFE Committee, which are:

FAIFE is an initiative within IFLA to defend and promote the basic human rights defined in Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

The FAIFE Committee and Office further free access to information and freedom of expression in all aspects, directly or indirectly, related to library and information services.

FAIFE monitors the state of intellectual freedom within the library and information community worldwide, supports IFLA policy development and cooperation with other international human rights organisations, and responds to violations of free access to information and freedom of expression.

ORGANISATION OF IFLA/FAIFE

IFLA/FAIFE is one of the IFLA Core Activities organised with a Chair, Advisory Board and Committee. The current Chair is also a member of the IFLA Governing Board. According to newly adopted structural arrangements, the IFLA Executive Board appoints Chair and members for a period of three years with the possibility of re-appointment for a second term.

Advisory Board

The Advisory Board is to advocate the work of IFLA/FAIFE, assist in fund-raising activities, and act as an executive committee. The current members are: Alex Byrne (chair, Australia), Marianna Tax Choldin (USA), Winnie Vitzansky and Borge Sorensen (both Denmark). Susanne Seidelin provides the secretariat. The Advisory Board works mainly through e-mail correspondence, meets twice during the IFLA conferences, and holds an annual mid-term meeting. In February 2003 the Advisory Board will hold its fourth face-to-face meeting to discuss strategic and financial issues. The board has been in office for one and a year and a half and has proved an efficient and supportive addition to the work of the Committee. The fact that all members hold senior positions and have built long-term international relations and networks is an obvious advantage for the fundraising activities and general promotion of FAIFE and should be taken into consideration when future boards are appointed. Though their professional life obviously keeps them very busy elsewhere, the board members have constructively dedicated their time and energy to further our work.

Committee

Presently, the IFLA/FAIFE Committee has 23 members. The members' list is available at www.ifla.org/faife/. Members are to actively participate in the development of strategy and action plans, partake in FAIFE activities such as serving on one of the work teams, raise awareness and promote freedom of access to information in their country and region. The success of FAIFE depends on close working relations between Committee, Chair and Office. To further relations and advance of some of our major projects, work teams have been established on the IFLA/FAIFE World report Series; FAIFE programme development for IFLA general conferences; and development and implementation of the *IFLA Internet Manifesto*. This working method has improved the involvement of members and allows interested colleagues from outside of FAIFE to join - a good and

concrete way to raise the FAIFE flag. Normally, the teams communicate through email but in addition to this, all work teams had face-to-face meetings during the IFLA conference in Glasgow.

The Committee holds two annual business meetings. We are very much aware of the advantages of a mid-term meeting as well but, so far, it has not been financially feasible. Given the objectives of FAIFE - and the lack of resources - the need for a dedicated membership has been underlined on many occasions. We are immensely grateful to those who have managed to give priority to their FAIFE commitment. However responding to a paper submitted on behalf of the Advisory Board, the Committee openly discussed how to encourage greater contribution by the less involved - or inactive - members. Problems that may cause inactivity were identified such as language, financial difficulties that prevent participation in meetings and differences regarding views on the concept of freedom of access to information. It was agreed that future candidates should match the qualifications and expertise needed for serving on the Committee and that the actions expected of members should be identified. To this end, the Committee suggested that members should take initiatives to translate and in other ways promote the *Internet Manifesto* and the *Glasgow Declaration* in their countries and also contribute to the *World Report 2003* and report on incidents and other FAIFE related activities. Greater involvement was demonstrated in Glasgow where membership provided oral or written reports on intellectual freedom in their own countries. Unfortunately, the very constructive debate at the business meeting has not been reflected in subsequent communications from less active members.

The Chair has recently proposed a structure that takes into consideration the involvement and expertise of membership. On this background IFLA Governing Board adopted new structural arrangements in December 2002. Committee members, however active, are professionals that foremost have to prioritise their jobs. Their voluntary contributions cannot compensate for lack of resources or the increasing number of tasks expected of FAIFE.

The Office

The Chair, Office and IFLA Headquarters work closely together with regards to policy and position paper development, responses to reported incidents, WSIS cooperation and other such international issues. Chair and Office, members of the Committee and PhD student represent IFLA/FAIFE - or IFLA - at conferences and meetings on issues relating to intellectual freedom. The work of IFLA/FAIFE has been described in many papers, articles and reports. Other activities of the Office include finance, budget and accounts; development and implementation of strategy and action plans and related activities including development of IFLA/FAIFE publications such as the World Report Series; and project descriptions and implementation.

FINANCIAL SITUATION AND FUNDING

Concerns of the instability of FAIFE's finances were growing through 2002. In spring, the budget was revised with the consequence that additional staff could not be hired to further the investigation and monitoring part of our activities and the editorial work on the World Report Series. The financial situation was discussed at length during the Committee meeting in Glasgow and possible sponsors identified to be approached. The Office has submitted applications for 2003 grants of a total of USD 190.000 to possible

sponsors to cover administrative costs, investigations, and the editing and publication of World Report 2003. We have received one positive and one negative response and are currently awaiting the outcome of our application to DANIDA. The present contract with SIDA will expire by end of 2003. We have therefore approached SIDA regarding a possible prolongation with the result that a meeting will be arranged in the spring to discuss our future cooperation.

FAIFE has received a generous donation from the Swedish Library Association of a total of SEK 300.000, and at a Nordic library associations meeting in the autumn of 2002 it was decided that each association would donate a symbolic sum to support FAIFE with the hope that this gesture would encourage other members of the international library community to follow up on the initiative. Also, member organisations of the Danish Library Umbrella have decided to donate symbolic sums in support of our work, and we have received a grant from IFLA97 of DKK 40.000 for the next World Report.

Over the years, the Nordic library community and the Swedish and Danish governments have generously supported IFLA/FAIFE - without their grants we would possibly not exist. This year our Nordic colleagues have once again proved their true commitment and strong support. As said on many occasions - a broader funding base of FAIFE is needed to globally safeguard our work. No doubt, there is an interest in our activities but it has, so far, proved very difficult to raise money outside of Scandinavia. Unfortunately, the Core Activity funding campaign gave few results so a more systematic approach to the financial problems was initiated late 2002 when IFLA Headquarters followed up on the Nordic gesture and took initiative to raise money for IFLA/FAIFE in countries outside Scandinavia. It is too early to predict the general outcome but some positive responses have been received. The principle of having a range of smaller sponsors from all over the world will help initiating a global "ownership" of FAIFE amongst the IFLA membership. However, a campaign of this kind will take time and meanwhile we hope that main sponsors such as SIDA and - hopefully - DANIDA will form the funding base of our activities.

IFLA/FAIFE ACTIVITIES IN 2002

As mentioned in the introduction, FAIFE's professional focus in 2002 was on the development of IFLA policy statements and the Summary Report - all embracing the principles of freedom of access to information, freedom of expression and the role of libraries in the information society. Together with WSIS activities this focus reflects a growing need to defend the basic principles of intellectual freedom. Violations of these principles and rights are growing in the wake of 11 September and the current global instability and prospects of war. How IFLA and the international library community could respond to this challenge is the subject of a project undertaken by PAC and FAIFE. To this end, FAIFE is currently working on a proposed statement on libraries and wars for the consideration by the IFLA Governing Board.

Unfortunately, the necessary resources have not been available to investigate and respond to violations in individual countries. To build an investigation and monitoring unit is therefore at top of our wish list, subject to finances.

THE INTERNET AND FREEDOM OF ACCESS TO INFORMATION

With the implementation of the PhD project, launch of the Internet Manifesto, and the

Summary Report, IFLA/FAIFE has emphasized its focus on the Internet and freedom of access to information. At international conferences and seminars Stuart Hamilton has raised awareness of the important role of libraries in providing Internet accessible information - often to an audience unfamiliar with the capacity of libraries. Within the library community his presentations have likewise been an eye opener in regard to global access in general and implementation of the Internet in libraries.

The *Internet Manifesto* has, so far, been translated into nine different languages and we expect more to follow. We also expect UNESCO to adopt the *Manifesto* very soon. With the Australian Library and Information Association as host, the first workshop on how to implement the *Manifesto* was to take place in Sydney January 2003. Unfortunately, it was cancelled due to the limited number of participants but another will probably be scheduled later this year. Colleagues in Africa, the Caribbean, North and South America have expressed interest in organising workshops as well but, again, subject to finances.

GLASGOW DECLARATION

The *Glasgow Declaration* was promulgated to mark the 75th anniversary of IFLA and its professional commitment to "defending the principle of freedom of information". IFLA/FAIFE undertook the leading role in the development of the document, which was presented by Chair for the adoption of IFLA Council. As with the *Manifesto*, translations into as many languages as possible are encouraged and so is the endorsement, and not least, implementation by libraries and their organisations worldwide.

To help further this process and to advocate the principles to a wider audience, IFLA HQ and FAIFE, this year plan to publish a booklet comprising these policy statements and the *IFLA Statement on Sustainable Development*.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Round Table for the Management of Library Associations (RTMLA) encouraged IFLA to be represented at the World Summit of Sustainable Development in Johannesburg (August 2002). At the Governing Board meeting in March it was decided that Winnie Vitzansky should represent IFLA in Johannesburg, and that an IFLA position paper should be developed for the summit. Working from a draft prepared by Marian Koren, the Office has been heavily involved in developing the *IFLA Statement on Libraries and Sustainable Development* that was adopted by Council in August. In her report on the summit, Winnie Vitzansky suggested a new pro-active IFLA approach to lobby and campaign at events such as world summits.

THE WORLD SUMMIT ON THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

IFLA/FAIFE has been involved in the UNESCO WSIS preparatory meetings and activities throughout the year. Reports on the outcome of these activities have been submitted to IFLA Governing Board and the Committee in July and December 2002. We have attended three meetings in Paris and one in Bucharest.

As a result of a NGO meeting in Paris in November, the UNESCO WSIS online Discussion Forum opened 9 December to 15 January 2003. IFLA accepted the role of rapporteur of the *Content* theme of the forum and IFLA/FAIFE of moderator and rapporteur of the

Access theme. On basis of reports on each of the eight discussion themes, a general report on the forum's recommendations to the WSIS general statement and action plan was recently submitted to the WSIS Executive Secretariat in Geneva. The themes will be further debated at WSIS PrepCom II in Geneva 17-28 February 2003.

Following the WSIS activities we have increased our working relations with other international NGOs representing media and journalists within the broadcasting, newspapers, TV and Internet business - all of whom are engaged in freedom of expression issues. As mentioned in my previous reports to the GB, IFLA should seek partnerships with some of these NGOs to further IFLA positions during - and after - WSIS.

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

With three IFLA policy position papers on access to information - let alone IFLA positions on other issues adopted by membership in 2002 - IFLA is facing the challenge on how to efficiently implement policy around the world. Though FAIFE is involved in the organisation of *Internet Manifesto* workshops, it is unlikely that we, or IFLA, will have the necessary resources for policy implementation on a broader scale. We will have to seek partners among the membership and, as has been said by others, the national library associations are likely to undertake this role. Winnie Vitzansky has suggested how to campaign at major international events. We also need a proactive approach on the implementation of IFLA policy statements and lobbying for the role of libraries: a document describing the process from development to implementation including a "script" of how to initiate an advocacy and implementation campaign in practice. This would help promote IFLA policy in libraries around the world, and support the implementation process on national level. Equally important it would anchor the policy development process within IFLA in general and be most helpful for those working with these issues on a daily basis.

THE IFLA/FAIFE WORLD REPORT SERIES

Following the launch of the first *IFLA/FAIFE World Report on Libraries and Intellectual Freedom* at the IFLA Conference in Boston 2001, we launched *The IFLA/FAIFE Summary Report Libraries, Conflicts and the Internet* in Glasgow 2002. It comprised of an introduction and general update of the conclusions in the *World Report*; an overview of global Internet access barriers; the Internet: the information tool of the 21st century; libraries and conflicts; 'Beacon for Freedom of Expression' the Alexandria database; and a chapter on how to respond when the intellectual freedoms are at stake. The last theme was also debated at the IFLA/FAIFE open session in Glasgow.

Already in Glasgow we indicated that with the present Office resources, we would not be able to undertake the research and editorial work of the *IFLA/FAIFE World Report 2003* - unless additional funding could be obtained. We have received a grant from IFLA97 to cover some of the publication costs but have no funding for the major part of the work. However, our PhD student is preparing an international survey to be sent to national library associations and key persons within the international library community. We have been offered an opportunity to add questions for the *World Report* to his questionnaire and hope this way to be able to gather sufficient information for a report. Still though, we will need volunteers to help working up the results for publication. At

this point, I am sorry to say that we cannot guarantee the publication or that the report will be ready to launch at the IFLA Conference in Berlin.

CODES OF ETHICS AND PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

All over the world, we notice an increasing interest in professional values. Librarians have taken initiatives to develop professional codes of ethics and conduct. Many of these codes - currently 27 with more on the way - are available in English at: www.ifla.org/faife/ethics/codes.htm.

In August 2002 a significant international survey on the subject was published in cooperation with IFLA, *The Ethics of Librarianship - an International Survey*, edited by Dr Robert Wallace Vaagan of the University of Oslo with an introduction by the Chair of the IFLA/FAIFE Committee Alex Byrne. The topic of the survey will be followed up in Berlin by a FAIFE and LTR joint workshop titled: *The librarian: the key to open and close collections. Issues on ethics of librarianship*. The workshop will focus on ethics and professional conduct when libraries are endangered due to conflicts or natural disasters. Some of the issues of debate are: Will librarians show solidarity to initiate rebuilding of libraries? What will they do when they feel external pressure to censor the Internet, remove materials, or disclose user privacy? Will they deny children and others access to information? What should a librarian do, confronted with collections which might be repatriated?

CONFERENCE, WORKSHOP AND MEETING ACTIVITIES

Seminar in Berlin

As part of the promoting activities prior to the IFLA Conference in Berlin, the IFLA2003 Secretariat, Freie Universität Berlin and IFLA/FAIFE arranged a very successful seminar on *Intellectual Freedom and Libraries: International Aspects*. Three articles on the seminar were published in IFLA Journal, vol.28 no. 4, 2002.

Danish seminars

Unfortunately, a seminar on *Censorship and Freedom of Access to Information in Libraries and on the Internet* arranged by FAIFE and The Royal School of Library and Information Science's Department of Information Studies had to be cancelled. The budget was based on 50 participants but only 21 registered. As international aspects were part of the programme the seminar language was English. This may have influenced possible participants as a contribution in the Danish 'Library Press' argued against participating on this ground. The Office was interviewed in the following issue but it was too close to deadline for registration to affect the result.

Fortunately, FAIFE had another chance meeting with Danish colleagues at a seminar on 'Challenges Facing Libraries and Culture' this spring. Librarians and local county politicians present showed a great interest in our work and the role of libraries regarding censorship and the Internet.

Window or filter- freedom of speech without limitations

The heading refers to a paper given at the Norwegian Library Association's annual meeting. A very small but very enthusiastic audience discussed the work of FAIFE and

the Alexandria international database on censorship. FAIFE has been appointed member of the international Steering Committee where also the International Freedom of Expression Exchange (IFEX) is represented.

Network Centre in Russia

In March, Russian colleagues came to Copenhagen to be introduced to the work of FAIFE and discuss the future Russian Network Centre at the All-Russia State Library for Foreign Literature in Moscow: Ms. Anastasia A. Kornienko of the library's International Relations Department, Mr. Viacheslav I. Bakhmin Program Block Executive Director of the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation) and Fr. Georgy Chistyakov Civil Society Program of the Open Society Institute (Soros Foundation). Marianna Tax Choldin, who has excellent working relations with Russia, also attended the meeting. The outcome was very positive and there is no doubt that the Network Centre will raise the FAIFE flag with great professionalism and dedication. The Centre will be officially opened by Chair in 2003.

Committee member lecture in Copenhagen

Member of the Committee Dr Alvin Schrader visited the Royal School of Library and Information Science in Copenhagen in May to lecture on his project *Library and Information Science Definition Research*. There was also time for a half-day meeting with the Office on FAIFE activities, the implementation of the *Internet Manifesto* and the PhD project. We were very pleased to have this opportunity to discuss professional issues with a Committee member, and would welcome more meetings of this kind.

IFEX annual meeting

Committee member Mr Charles Batambuze represented FAIFE at the IFEX annual conference in Dakar, Senegal. On request, the Office had submitted proposals for the agenda and forwarded the *Glasgow Declaration* and the *Internet Manifesto* to be considered by IFEX. Charles Batambuze concludes that his attendance opened up for closer working relations with IFEX - also on special cases where we could act jointly. Michael Elbaz one of the IFEX Action Alert Network Coordinators and Nick Fillmore the Director of Development would both welcome a closer cooperation between IFEX and IFLA/FAIFE. In his report, Charles Batambuze suggests that IFLA/FAIFE should develop a standard that will guide members in deciding what constitutes abuse of freedom of expression and that IFLA/FAIFE build a network of members in the different countries who would report on freedom of expression abuses within our domain.

SPECIAL CASES

IFLA/FAIFE should concentrate its efforts on libraries and the safeguarding of freedom of access to information for all individuals. This is an ambiguous priority, which - should we fully live up to the intentions - would occupy the time of several full-time positions. The more incidents we are responding to the more work is generated in so far as more cases are reported and old cases needed to be followed up upon. Even if more resources were available, we would still need systematic reports to provide an overview of the situation worldwide. To this end, we should set up a reporting network with regular input from library associations; IFLA Sections; Committee members; network centres; IFLA regional offices; core activities and partners outside the library community. This information would also be of immense help for future world reports.

Cuba

Over the years, IFLA/FAIFE has paid visits to Cuba and issued two reports on freedom of access to information in the country based on visits to official libraries, meetings with "independent librarians" - and Cuban authorities. Friends of Cuban Libraries has reported on harassment of 'Independent Libraries and librarians' and IFLA/FAIFE has consulted with independent agencies such as Amnesty International for confirmation. FAIFE organised a panel discussion at the IFLA conference in Boston and IFLA Council adopted a resolution. Also in 2002, incidents and harassments were reported but as human rights organisations submit frequent reports on the situation FAIFE has concentrated our resources elsewhere. Should the situation change remarkably, we are of course prepared to respond.

Zimbabwe

The present situation in Zimbabwe is of major concern and calls for further investigation with regards to libraries and freedom of access to information. There is no news on the re-opening of the British Council Library in Harare - a case IFLA/FAIFE reacted to in 2001 with a letter to President Robert Mugabe stating the severe consequences for students' access to library information and services. IFEX reports regularly on imprisonment of journalists and harassment of human rights.

East Timor

IFLA/FAIFE has established contact with colleagues in East Timor in regard to the re-construction of the university library that was destroyed during the Indonesian-sponsored militia attacks. A support group has been supplying funds and materials. It is clear that the needs of East Timor are very extensive and include the development of a national model for library provision. However, there seems to be little coordination of the needs for national, university, polytechnic, school, public, law and medical libraries. With special attention to this project, we are currently looking into possibilities on how best to support the library services in the country. To this end we have consulted UNESCO who recommended that the Government of East Timor to formulate a project proposal for their consideration. In 2003 we shall continue this work.

Afghanistan

Unfortunately, there has been no progress with regard to the joint IFLA/UNESCO library mission to Afghanistan. Last year, FAIFE formulated a project proposal on the re-construction and development of public, school and university libraries and library services in Afghanistan. The project was accepted by the Afghan government but is still to be funded. The project included a mission to the country, and we identified two experts willing to join an UNESCO Team Mission on Education in March 2002. However, a Norwegian initiative to raise money for a mission may be under way.

Palestine and Israel

During the year we have received reports of the effects on libraries of the Israeli/Palestinian conflict. A possible mission to the area as discussed at a meeting in Glasgow and presently two Committee members and the Office are preparing a proposal for the consideration of IFLA Governing Board. The proposal will include a general assessment of the situation for libraries in Israel and Palestine, proposals for any immediate action, which may be required, and recommendations to IFLA and UNESCO

on longer-term actions.

France

At the IFLA/FAIFE business meeting in 2002 we followed up on the situation in France. Gérard Briand and Giles Eboli, member of the ABF board and chief librarian of Aix-en-Provence, presented a general overview of the situation in France regarding information access and libraries in the country, followed by an up date on the situation in the libraries of Front National governed cities in south of France. In short:

20% of the population are regular library users. The quality of library services depends on the budget but generally the standard could be better, e.g. on average, libraries acquire 0,5 titles per student per annum. It is important that the library profession and individuals all over the country engage themselves in the work of protecting freedom of access to information. Six years after the first reports, the situation in the three city libraries has not changed for the better. All over the area professional staff have left or been fired. Compared to the level six years ago, acquisition budgets are now 80% lower. However, there seem to be some mobilisation against the situation after the latest election.

Member of the Committee Britt-Marie Haggström visited the area in 2002 in her capacity of chair of EBLIDA and can confirm the seriousness of the situation. However, there is some good news. The French Library Association is currently developing a French Code of Ethics to be published next spring. The code will be of support to the colleagues in the south.

CONCLUSION

Adoption of three IFLA policy statements on freedom of access to information issues in 2002 demonstrates that FAIFE activities are at the heart of IFLA's professional concerns and objectives. However, as results are achieved and FAIFE activities become more widely known, expectations, commitments and workload tend to grow. The challenges we are facing are not only of financial nature. It is time to restate what we mean by claiming that freedom of access to information is at the heart of IFLA objectives.

Where two full time positions may have been sufficient as a starting point for FAIFE, the growing awareness of our activities both within and outside the international library community naturally generates more and more work and consequently requires more resources. Just to live up to the requirements of the present terms of reference, we need a researcher and editor for the World Report Series, a network of rapporteurs to provide information and advice on incidents and sufficient office capacity to research and respond to reported cases. One could argue that all - or some - of FAIFE's activities should be carried from IFLA Headquarters. This would underline the importance of activities and save some administrative costs. However, considering the workload of HQ this would not solve the general capacity problems arising from the current ambitions and growth in demand.

After four years of operation, FAIFE has demonstrated that it plays a necessary and growing role within IFLA but also that currently available resources are insufficient. IFLA will need to consider its priorities in regard to this work and the support available.

Susanne Seidelin

Director IFLA/FAIFE Office
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