



IFLA

Transparency Manifesto



IFLA Manifesto on Transparency, Good Governance and Freedom from Corruption

IFLA has on numerous occasions and in many forums made clear its belief in the positive role of libraries in society and its commitment to enhancing this role. It has consistently linked this to the principle of Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression, as set out in Article 19 of the UN Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

In particular:

The IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1994) (<http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/unesco/eng.htm>) states the importance of 'the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society';

The Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom (2002) (<http://www.ifla.org/faife/policy/iflastat/gldelclar-e.html>) states that libraries and information services 'help to safeguard democratic values and universal civil rights';

The Alexandria Manifesto on Libraries, the Information Society in Action (2005) (<http://www.ifla.org/III/wsis/AlexandriaManifesto.html>) reasserts the principle that 'libraries and information services [are] vital to a democratic and open Information Society'; and adds that 'Libraries are essential for a well informed citizenry and transparent governance'.

Transparency, Good Governance and Freedom from Corruption

Transparency is the basis of good governance and the first step in fighting corruption. It provides a universal rationale for the provision of good records management systems, archives, and financial regulatory and monitoring systems. It is directly linked to the practice of socially responsible authorship and journalism, the work of editors, the publishing and the distribution of information through all media.

Corruption undermines basic social values, threatens the rule of law, and undermines trust in political institutions. It creates a business environment in which only the corrupt thrive. It hinders scientific work and research, weakens the functions of the professions and obstructs the emergence of the knowledge society. It is a major contribution to the creation and prolongation of human misery and the inhibiting of development. Corruption succeeds most under conditions of secrecy and general ignorance.

IFLA asserts that libraries are in their very essence transparency institutions, dedicated to making available the most accurate and unbiased educational, scientific and technical, and socially relevant information to each and everyone. The information materials and access provided by libraries and information services contribute to good governance by enlarging the knowledge of citizens and enriching their discussions and debates.

Libraries and information services should extend their mission so as to become more active components in good governance and the struggle against corruption. In particular they can perform a significant role in informing citizens of their rights and entitlements.

IFLA therefore calls on all library and information professionals, and all those responsible for the governance of library and information services at national and local level to support the following programme

1. Librarians should counter corruption directly affecting librarianship, as in the sourcing and supply of library materials, appointments to library posts and administration of library contracts and finances. Library Associations should support this through the creation or strengthening of Codes of Professional Ethics.

2. Librarians should strive to improve professional status of all information professionals and promote better pay for professionals to reduce their susceptibility to corruption.
3. Librarians should reassert their role in educating citizens by developing strong collections and facilitating access to information on philosophical and socio/economic/political topics.
4. Where a country has information access or freedom of information laws, librarians should seek to make the library a centre where citizens can be assisted in drawing up and submitting information requests.
5. Where a country does not have information access or freedom of information laws, or such laws are not effective, librarians should support initiatives to draft, amend, promote and protect such laws from neglect.
6. Training should be organised for librarians and users in the use of the type of information that will improve citizens' understanding of the laws and assist them in the pursuit of their rights and entitlements.
7. Libraries should collect information materials issued by official bodies, particularly those that deal with citizens' rights and entitlements. They should seek to make information that is issued by official bodies more comprehensible and accessible (through indexes, abstracts, search support, etc). They should also organise digitisation and other preservation programmes for official information relating to laws, rights and entitlements, and facilitate access to existing databases of these types of information.
8. Libraries should be made available as venues for the promotion of information rights (through posters and other publicity methods) and librarians should seek to raise awareness of the right to information.
9. Libraries should create or cooperate in the creation of anti-corruption portals which link content from official sources, anti-corruption NGOs and other relevant sources.
10. Libraries should support existing and planned citizens' advice centres provided by anti-corruption NGOs with information provision, technical assistance with databases and all other relevant aspects of their professional expertise.