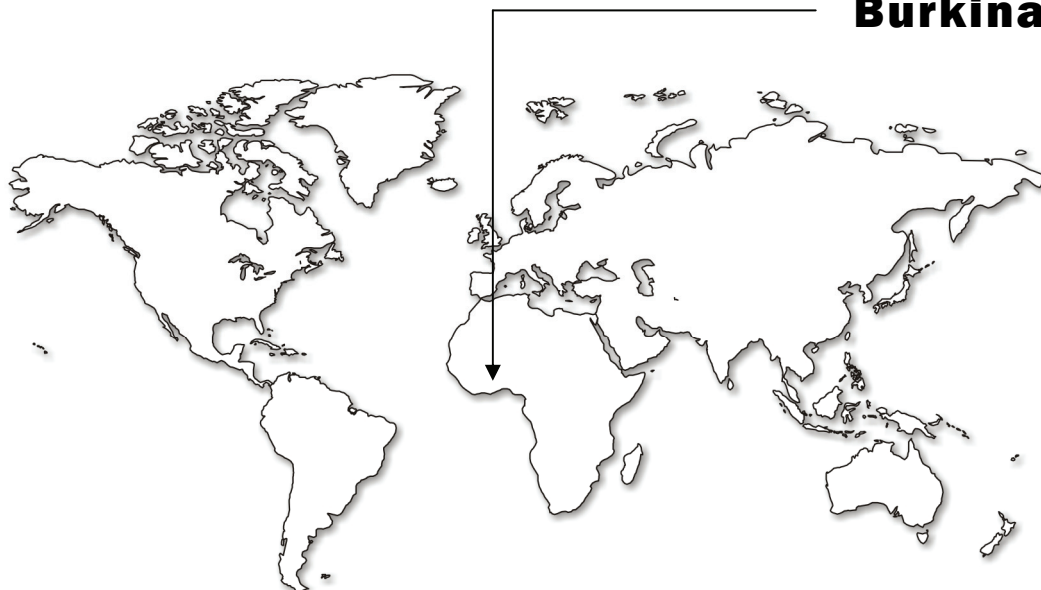# Burkina Faso

Responding institution:
Bibliothèque Nationale du Burkina

This is Burkina Faso's first contribution to the World Report series. This report relates to the estimated 60 public libraries and 62 research libraries, consisting of 5 university research libraries, 50 school libraries and 7 government-funded research libraries.

According to Internet World Stats, Burkina Faso had an Internet population of 0.5% in September 2006. This low rate of Internet penetration is reflected in the percentage of libraries – less than 20% of public, school, university and government-funded research libraries – that provide their users with access to the Internet. Users can, however, access the Internet free of charge in all libraries that do offer access. In some cases, the state and/or other library authorities made extra funding available for Internet access in the library system in the last two years, especially towards the national library and university libraries.

An average amount of local content is available on the Internet, but very little content is available in local languages. The reported literacy rate in Burkina Faso is 60%, which differs substantially from the rate of 21.8% given in the 2007 *CIA World Factbook*.

The library association is to a certain degree in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals, motivated by the protection of children, national security, the prevention of crime and the safeguarding of public morality. The respondent has indicated that the use of filtering software is not widespread in the country's libraries, due to limited access and use of the Internet. It is, however, operational in those institutions where there is free Internet access.

Anti-terror legislation has been passed in Burkina Faso but, according to the respondent, such legislation will not impact on user privacy. Moreover, the keeping of user records does not affect the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user. The respondent has stated that freedom of expression is a reality in Burkina Faso and that citizens are living in a peaceful environment.

No reports of violations of intellectual freedom, access to information and/or freedom of expression in the last two years have been reported. The respondent has stated that, during the 1990s, there were some popular uprisings, but since 2000 up to the present, no incidents have occurred that negatively affect freedom of access to information or freedom of expression. Consulted third-party sources, however, have expressed some concerns, especially with regard to press freedom (see below).

Libraries in Burkina Faso are involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes. Examples are their exhibitions of books on the subject, and conferences. Libraries also have special programmes focusing on the promotion of women's literacy and women's access to information.

The library association has not adopted a code of ethics, the IFLA Internet Manifesto or the Glasgow Declaration. The respondent has, however, indicated the intent to adopt these within the next two years.

User privacy and anti-terror legislation

Anti-terror legislation has been passed in Burkina Faso. According to the respondent, such legislation will not impact on user privacy and the keeping of user records also does not affect the freedom of expression of the individual Internet library user. Freedom of expression is a reality in Burkina Faso and that citizens are living in a peaceful environment.

Reported incidents/violations of intellectual freedom in the past two years

No reports of violations of intellectual freedom, access to information and/or freedom of expression in the last two years have been reported by the respondent. The respondent has stated that, during the 1990s, there were some popular uprisings, but since 2000 until now no incidents have occurred that negatively affect freedom of access to information or freedom of expression. The multitude of press articles accessible on the Internet is cited as an example of freedom of expression. The respondent has also listed the following information resources pertaining to freedom of access to information: (i) Documentary structures; (ii) Local press; (iii) Foreign press broadcasts – operating freely in the country and without censorship; (iv) Internet and ICTs; (v) Conferences and workshops on issues such as politics, socio-economic and cultural matters; (vi) Broadcasting media and television; (vii) Foreign information channels.

Freedom of expression is a reality in Burkina Faso, and the 2006 and 2007 annual reports of Reporters Without Borders (http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20724 and http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=17368) confirm freedom of the press. The 2006 annual report states that "a robust satirical press comes out regularly without suffering any particular difficulties" (http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=20724). IFEX (2007) has also reported on the second International Festival of Freedom of Expression *(Festival international de la liberté d'expression et de la presse, FILEP)* held in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/82770/).

The 2007 annual report of Reporters Without Borders nevertheless raises some concerns regarding criticism of the government and the unresolved murder of a former editor of the weekly l'*Independant* in 1998, which continues to raise questions (http://www.rsf.org/article.php3?id_article=17368). IFEX (http://www.ifex.org/en/content/view/full/48/) also reports on

incidents (attacks on, and threats to, journalists and media workers) that raise questions regarding the status of press freedom in Burkina Faso.

HIV/Aids awareness

Libraries are involved in HIV/Aids awareness programmes. Examples are exhibitions of books on the subject, and conferences. They also offer information to members of the community who cannot read through meetings and discussion groups, as well as debates in vernacular languages.

Women and freedom of access to information

Libraries in Burkina Faso have special programmes focusing on the promotion of women's literacy and women's access to information. Over the years, a national literacy programme was put in place. It was sustained during the 1990s by the creation of special libraries for village residents for the purposes of providing necessary information to neo-literates, promoting their general knowledge and improving their living conditions. Nowadays the government emphasises the literacy of women and young girls countrywide.

Libraries also have special programmes for promoting women's access to information. Reported examples include education, health and family planning, with emphasis on the fight against excision (female circumcision), HIV/Aids and sexually transmitted diseases.

IFLA Internet Manifesto

The library association has not yet adopted the IFLA Internet Manifesto. The respondent has indicated that the matter is in progress and that the intention is to adopt the Manifesto within the next two years.

IFLA Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom

The library association has not adopted the IFLA Glasgow Declaration. The respondent has indicated the intent to adopt it within the next two years.

Ethics

The library association has not yet adopted a code of ethics. It is in the process of adopting such a code and the intention is to have it ready within the next two years.

Main indicators

Country name:	Burkina Faso
Population:	14 326 203 (July 2007 est.)
Main language:	French (official), native African languages belonging to the Sudanic family (spoken by 90% of the population)
Literacy:	21.8%
Literacy reported by respondent:	60%

Population figures, language and literacy are from the
CIA World Factbook, 2007 edition
(https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/index.html).

Burkina Faso

Libraries and Internet access

As Burkina Faso participated for the first time in the IFLA/FAIFE World Report in 2007, no comparisons can be made with previous reports.

Library services

Estimated number of public libraries*:	60
Estimated number of school libraries:	Approximately 50
Estimated number of university libraries:	5
Estimated number of government-funded research libraries:	7
Source of these numbers:	Index of Documentary Structures; contact with the people in charge of these institutions

Internet access

Population online**:	64 600 Internet users as of Sept. 2006 (0.5%)
Percentage of public libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of school libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of university libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
Percentage of government-funded research libraries offering Internet access to users:	Less than 20%
In your estimate, how much local content*** is available on the Internet:	Average
To what degree is content on the Internet available in local languages:	Very little
Is the library association in favour of filtering information on library Internet terminals:	Yes, to a certain degree – for the protection of children, national security, and to prevent crime and safeguard public morality
Is the use of filtering software widespread in your country's libraries:	No – information is not filtered due to limited access and use of the Internet; however, it is operational in those institutions where there is free access to the Internet
Is it free of charge for library users to access the Internet on library computers:	Yes, in all libraries
Has the state or other library authorities made any extra funding available for Internet access in the library system of your country in the last two years:	Yes, in some cases – for the national library, as well as some research libraries

* Public library service points, including branch libraries.
** Online population numbers are from Internet World Stats (www.Internetworldstats.com).
*** Local content is defined as content that originates in the country.