

# Libraries and national development plans

Libraries make an important contribution to development. **Take action now** so that on 1 January 2016, libraries will be ready to support implementation of the new development agenda, and that governments will be seeking libraries' involvement.

It is expected that, as with the MDGs, national governments will develop their own action plans in response to the post-2015 goals that emphasize or deemphasize various goals depending on the local situation.

## **Take Action Immediately!**

- Find out if your country has already started working on national development plans
- Find out which government departments or ministries are responsible for plans
- Organize meetings and take part in open consultations on plans

## **Understand:**

- The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and IFLA's position on access to information and the role of libraries

## **Help implement the post-2015 goals from 1 January 2016:**

- Prepare national library strategy for access to information from January 2016 onwards
- Analyse how access to information is cross-cutting, and can help meet all of the SDGs

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## **Why are national development plans important?**

National development agendas will shape many government spending and programme priorities. These plans can include national development, broadband, digital inclusion, and social development plans, amongst others. By demonstrating the contribution libraries make across the goal framework through campaigns and meetings with government officials, libraries will be in the best position to partner with government and others to implement national strategies and programmes that benefit library users.

## **Why do libraries need to be included in national development plans?**

Increased access to information and knowledge, underpinned by universal literacy, is an essential pillar of sustainable development as evidenced by target 16.10 of the Sustainable Development Goals:

16.10: "Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreement."

Access to information is cross-cutting, and can help support all of the SDGs. IFLA believes that increasing access to information and knowledge across society, assisted by the availability of information and communications technologies (ICTs), supports sustainable development and improves people's lives. The *Lyon Declaration on Access to*

*Information and Development*<sup>1</sup> shows that libraries, information intermediaries, and development organisations are united behind the inclusion of access to information in the post-2015 development framework. Over 500 organisations have signed the declaration.

Libraries strongly support broader development targets on access to information. Libraries are the institutions in society that assist people to exercise their right to information, and safeguard and provide access to cultural heritage. The growth of libraries in an evolving information and cultural environment is essential, as key stakeholders providing access to information, education and research and social participation.

### **What will happen if libraries are not included in national development plans?**

If access to information and libraries are not included, it's more than a missed opportunity. Governments may overlook libraries and fund other organisations to provide public access, information and skills, or they may not recognize the need for public access at all.

### **What are some examples?**

Botswana Library Association developed a strategy to identify where libraries contribute to Botswana Vision 2016. Libraries drive the *An Educated and Informed Nation* Pillar of Vision 2016 directly in that they collect, organise and disseminate information that society access and uses to inform themselves on various issues of life. However, attainment of the Vision extends beyond just informing and educating, it cuts across all the pillars by empowering communities through knowledge and the ability to access information for themselves.<sup>2</sup>

Zimbabwe Library Association is currently seeking to align libraries to participate in national development through the Zimbabwe Agenda for Sustainable Socio-Economic Transformation (Zim Asset).

In the United States, the National Broadband Plan recognises the role of libraries and other community organisations in providing training and access to high-speed Internet<sup>3</sup>.

In Moldova, libraries are contributing to Open Government Partnership (OGP) action plans, a platform between government, civil society and business to drive commitments to open government and accountability. Librarians attend civil society meetings to help develop the country's national action plan, and to include the role of libraries as a supporter of access to information.

## **Keep IFLA informed of outcomes**

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<sup>1</sup> *Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development* <http://www.lyondeclaration.org/>

<sup>2</sup> Radijeng, Kgomo (2013). The Role of public libraries in the attainment of Botswana's vision 2016. <http://library.ifla.org/258/1/201-radijeng-en.pdf>

<sup>3</sup> Becker, Samantha, Mike Crandall, Chris Coward, Rebecca Sears, Ron Carlee, Kira Hasbargen, and Mary Alice Ball. 2012. *Building Digital Communities: A framework for action*. Institute of Museum and Library Services <https://dlib.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/handle/1773/19676>

## International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

Feedback to IFLA will help us to support you. Please contact [Fiona Bradley](#) and [Stuart Hamilton](#) when you:

- Organise a meeting with decision makers
- Hear that your country is working on national development plans
- Need additional background on the Sustainable Development Goals, the Lyon Declaration, or examples to use in your meeting.