



## **IFLA/IBBY/IRA Memorandum of Understanding: Meeting to progress ideas World Library and Information Congress, Seoul, 22nd August 2006**

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### **Minutes**

#### **1. Introductions**

This meeting was called to progress ideas arising out of the Memorandum of Understanding agreed in Zagreb, Croatia, in August 2005. In this memorandum, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), the International Board on Books for young People (IBBY), and the International Reading Association (IRA) agreed on common priorities and co-operative agreements, specifically in areas of literacy and reading.

The three organisations' websites are [www.ifla.org](http://www.ifla.org), [www.ibby.org](http://www.ibby.org), and [www.reading.org](http://www.reading.org)

Gwynneth Evans (IFLA Reading Section) took the chair for this meeting, and invited everyone present to introduce themselves, noting as they did so if they were members of IBBY or IRA.

*The attendance list for this meeting is on a separate list*

#### **2. Introduction to the agreement**

An agenda and notes on the Memorandum were circulated. Gwynneth Evans outlined the background to the agreement. Essentially in three parts, its key themes could be summarised as follows:

- The three organisations have many topics in common
- There are many ways of learning, not just through formal education but through other agencies (such as libraries, and community literacy initiatives). Literacy must not simply be achieved, but *sustained*.
- Literacy is interconnected with other areas of life, and must be addressed through a variety of means.

The nine areas of activity listed in the agreement have been divided into two categories: short term and medium term activities. The period of activity suggested is 2006-2008.

The six key recommendations are:

1. IFLA offer associate status to IRA and IBBY, as a reciprocal benefit, and a free registration to the annual conference to a designated member/official representative of IRA and IBBY, and encourage Sections to include these representatives as speakers, when appropriate. Travel will not be covered for a representative of the partner organisations.
2. IFLA appoint two representatives to liaise with the representatives from IRA and IBBY for the years 2006-2008 – Chairs of reading and Libraries for Children and young Adults.

3. IFLA invite representatives from IRA and IBBY to a special meeting at the World Library and Information Congress in Seoul, in order that the representatives may become acquainted and initiate discussion on a plan of action for 2006-2008.
4. Links be made, if not now in place, on the section websites, where common interests are evident (School Libraries, Reading, Libraries for Children and Young Adults)
5. IFLA Section exchange documents of common interest (e.g. position statements, guidelines, research reports) of pertinence, and solicit news and articles from IRA and IBBY representatives for their Section newsletters.
6. Sectional activities already involving IRA and IBBY be continued, and recognised as part of the agreement.

The agreement was followed by a 'proposal for concrete action', produced by the three people most involved in the Memorandum. This proposes a committee of representatives to see how the organisations could support literacy, especially in public libraries and school libraries in Africa – and to discuss support for local publishing. Gwynneth Evans and Ivanka Stricevic are to co-ordinate this work, and the present meeting is a stage in this process. The World Library and Information Congress in Durban is another important step.

Ivanka Stricevic then added her own comments to the introduction, stressing that it was important to choose actions that would be successful; targets had to be achievable, and avoid overreaching. The 2007 Durban conference was a challenge; the Section on Services to Multicultural Populations was planning a pre-conference event, and the Children's and Young Adults Section with Reading had considered one too. Ivanka and Gwynneth would be meeting with representatives of Services to Multicultural Populations to work things out. Direct involvement of the representatives is important, but also the content of any initiatives. She analysed the main activities of the three organisations as follows:

IBBY: Production, Promotion (e.g. via the Hans Christian Andersen Award)

IFLA: Access, Promotion

IRA: Promotion

Thus, the common element, she argued, was promotion.

### 3. Discussion

There followed a wide-ranging discussion, covering agenda points 3, 4 and 5. Contributions included:

*Gwynneth Evans:* Training and capacity-building is another thread common to all three organisations.

*Kirsten Neilsen:* The multicultural section has started planning its pre-conference; she invited the Children and Young Adults Section to join with them in this. To Helena Asamoah-Hassan's enquiry about contacting African Section colleagues, Kirsten Neilsen replied that this had been done.

*Ivanka Stricevic:* The conference should focus on joint projects for Africa, and on how our individual section programmes can appeal to IBBY and IRA, and involve them

*Gwynneth Evans:* IFLA Sections need to ask themselves which of their guidelines and statements could have IRA and IBBY signatories added. The manifesto for multicultural services, coming up, is a key example as it will go to UNESCO after approval at the IFLA level.

*James Henri:* The School Libraries manifesto might be appropriate for similar consideration.

*Tatiana Zhukova:* A promotion programme for Russian libraries, building on the 'Center for the Book' movement there, would involve IBBY and IRA.

*Jenny Nilsson:* The IFLA Libraries for the Blind and Partially Sighted is also having a pre-conference in Georgetown near Durban; she invited participation from IBBY and IRA, and felt it would be useful to have a collaborative document on children's reading difficulties. Ivanka Stricevic referred her to 'Outstanding Books for Outstanding Children', on the IBBY site.

*Helena Asamoah-Hassan:* How many sections have members from Africa? A quick estimate from those present suggested Children's and Young Adults 0, Services to the Blind 1, Reading 2, and School Libraries 2. The African Section has a priority of securing representation on all sections, and she offered to send its examples of best practice to Gwynneth Evans.

*Ivanka Stricevic:* The Children and Young Adults Section is about to produce guidelines for services to babies and toddlers; she offered to send this to the Reading Section for comments, and in addition would send it to IRA and IBBY. The Section's guidelines on internet use would be looked at by IRA.

*Gwynneth Evans:* In response to a question from John Cole about what reciprocal action IBBY and IRA would be taking, Gwynneth pointed out that IBBY would be discussing the implications at their Macau Conference. She asked all Information Officers to put links to IBBY and IRA on their sections' websites.

*John Cole:* Notwithstanding any pre-conference plans, IRA and IBBY speakers should be a feature of the main conference programme. He also mentioned programmes such as the Centers for the Book and One Book, One City that could be adopted or adapted to different situations.

*Helena Asamoah-Hassan:* The Pan-African Conference on Reading for All would take place later in \*August in Ghana; she asked whether there would be IBBY and IRA participation in this event.  
\*This event is now scheduled for early September

*Gwynneth Evans:* Noted a need to translate the Memorandum of Understanding into other than English.

*Ivanka Stricevic:* Noted that cooperation could take place at three levels: local, national and international. Guidelines should be produced for people from the three organisations working at local level (librarians, teachers and others); these could feature practical concrete ideas on co-operation.

*Suzanne Payette:* Noted the sharing of good practice such as the early reading programmes for babies and children, sponsored by public libraries and their partners.

## **6. Conclusion**

Gwynneth Evans summed up the points made, and proposed the following actions:

- a) Notes of the meeting would be produced (Alec Williams from the Reading Section had agreed to write these) and circulated.
- b) Section members were all asked to remember the memorandum of understanding in their Durban conference planning

- c) Sections were asked to look at all their publications, to see if it was appropriate to send copies to IBBY and IRA, and/or to ask for their endorsement prior to publication.
- d) Sections should feature the Memorandum in their Newsletters, and in their website links.
- e) Any co-operative projects involving sections should be reported formally in their minutes and newsletters, so the partners could evaluate progress.
- f) Helena Asamoah-Hassan would work with sections to ensure representation from African countries.

The meeting closed with a brief presentation by Clarisse Chébli, on Assabil's work in Lebanon during the recent war.

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