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Analysis and Promotion of IFLA International Advocacy Programs: Postprint

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] To facilitate the implementation of the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Agenda, this paper proposes that library associations and libraries actively participate in the IAP (International Advocacy Programme) project launched by IFLA to support the Agenda. [Method/Process] By analyzing the policy foundation and characteristics of the Agenda, introducing the content and implementation of the IAP project, and examining the intrinsic connections between sustainable development goals and libraries. [Results/Conclusion] It identifies that libraries can contribute to the Agenda's implementation through information decision support, provision of lifelong learning opportunities, elimination of inequalities, protection of human cultural heritage, and legal safeguarding of information access rights. The paper also summarizes China's support for the Agenda and participation in the IAP project from three dimensions: government level, association level, and library level, including following up on IFLA's IAP project, publicizing and implementing the Public Cultural Service Guarantee Law, implementing the National Reading "13th Five-Year" Development Plan, and participating in consultations on library-related regulations.

Full Text

Preamble

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Analysis and Promotion of IFLA's International Advocacy Program

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Abstract

[Purpose/Significance] To promote the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, this paper calls on library associations and libraries to actively participate in IFLA's International Advocacy Program (IAP) launched in support of the Agenda. **[Method/Process]** The paper analyzes the policy foundation and characteristics of the Agenda, introduces the content and implementation of the IAP, and examines the inherent connections between the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and libraries. **[Result/Conclusion]** The paper identifies that libraries can contribute to the Agenda through information support for decision-making, provision of lifelong learning opportunities, elimination of inequality, preservation of cultural heritage, and legal protection of information access rights. It also summarizes China's support for the Agenda and participation in the IAP from three dimensions: government, library associations, and individual libraries, including following up on IFLA's IAP, promoting the Public Cultural Service Guarantee Law, implementing the 13th Five-Year Plan for National Reading, and participating in consultations on library-related legislation.

Keywords: UN 2030 Agenda; IFLA; IAP; Library Society of China

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On September 25, 2015, the United Nations formally adopted the outcome document "Transforming Our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development" (UN 2030 Agenda), agreed upon by 193 member states, announcing 17 Sustainable Development Goals and 169 specific targets, which officially took effect on January 1, 2016. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) participated throughout the negotiation process of the 2030 Agenda and launched the International Advocacy Program (IAP) in December 2015 to advocate for the Agenda's implementation. By enhancing the advocacy capacity of its members, IFLA aims to position libraries as key players in political, economic, and social transformation. To date, only one article in the academic community has briefly introduced the UN 2030 Agenda, analyzing IFLA's guiding document "Libraries and the 2030 Agenda: Advocacy and Implementation" from five perspectives: information access as the core, strengthening community partnerships, establishing standardized procedures, aligning with national and regional development agendas, and enhancing library discourse power. However, it has not deeply explored the intrinsic connections between the SDGs and libraries or how libraries can provide support. IFLA regularly publishes IAP briefings outlining global library participation, but these lack analysis integrated with local library development contexts. Why did the UN formulate the 2030 Agenda, and what are its contents and characteristics? What is IFLA's stance on the Agenda, and what role did it play in its formulation? What are the specific contents of the IAP? How can the Chinese library community support the 2030 Agenda? This paper addresses these questions by tracing the development and release of the 2030 Agenda and IAP, summariz-

ing China's support from three levels, and calling on library associations and libraries to actively participate in the IAP to promote the Agenda's implementation and advance library development.

1. Background, Content, and Characteristics of the UN 2030 Agenda

1.1 Policy Foundation

The United Nations is committed to promoting international exchange and cooperation in international security, economic development, social progress, human rights, and world peace. The 2030 Agenda continues the UN's consistent focus on equality, freedom, economic development, and social progress while emphasizing environmental protection. It builds upon two key policy foundations:

First, the UN Millennium Development Goals (2000-2015). Adopted at the 2000 UN Millennium Summit, the MDGs comprised 8 goals, 21 sub-targets, and 60 official indicators. In the final year of implementation, the UN released "The 2015 Millennium Development Goals Report," compiled from data by the UN and over 27 international agencies. While acknowledging significant progress, the report noted that approximately 800 million people still lived in extreme poverty, 57 million primary school-age children were out of school, women faced discrimination in employment and public decision-making, and one-third of the global population lacked improved sanitation facilities. World leaders called for an ambitious, long-term sustainability agenda to succeed the MDGs. China also released its own implementation report, acknowledging progress while highlighting persistent urban-rural imbalances and gaps with developed countries.

Second, the 2012 UN Conference on Sustainable Development (Rio+20). Building on the 1972 Stockholm Declaration and the 1992 Rio Declaration, the Rio+20 conference reaffirmed commitments to sustainable development, assessed international progress, and addressed new challenges facing developing countries.

1.2 Content and Characteristics

The 2030 Agenda's content can be summarized as five pillars (5Ps): People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, and Partnerships, encompassing 17 SDGs and 169 targets. It aims to strengthen world peace and freedom, balancing economic, social, and environmental dimensions to eradicate poverty and hunger, reduce inequalities, build peaceful and inclusive societies, protect human rights, promote gender equality, and preserve the planet and its natural resources by 2030.

Key characteristics include: comprehensive coverage across economic development, social progress, and environmental protection; universal applicability to all countries regardless of development status; and an inclusive formulation process involving all member states through global forums and surveys of over 4.5 million people.

2. Launch and Promotion of IFLA's IAP

Even before the 2030 Agenda's formal adoption, IFLA expressed strong support on its website, noting that its proposals on information access, literacy, cultural heritage protection, and ICT 普及 had been fully reflected in the SDGs (e.g., targets 4.6, 4.7, 5b, 9c, 16.10, 17.8 for information access; target 11.4 for cultural heritage). Notably, target 16.10—ensuring public access to information and protecting fundamental freedoms in accordance with national legislation and international agreements—aligns perfectly with IFLA's longstanding advocacy. To promote this goal, IFLA plans to publish an annual Development and Access to Information (DA2I) report, with the first issue released in July 2017 establishing indicators across infrastructure, social impact, organizational capacity, and policy dimensions.

2.1 IAP Content

In December 2015, IFLA's Governing Board adopted the “IFLA Strategic Plan 2016-2021,” outlining four strategic directions: libraries in society, information and knowledge, cultural heritage, and capacity building. The capacity-building direction emphasizes enhancing library status within the 2030 Agenda framework through the IAP. In March 2016, IFLA released the online document “Libraries, Advocacy and the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda” and the IFLA “Libraries and the 2030 Agenda” Toolkit to help libraries understand the Agenda, track implementation, and inform users about the SDGs.

The IAP is a capacity-building initiative designed to enhance librarians' understanding of the SDGs, clarify libraries' roles in promoting the Agenda, increase organizational participation, and open channels for expert input. It focuses on raising awareness and building capacity to demonstrate how libraries benefit individuals and communities and support national decision-making, thereby strengthening advocacy for optimal information access policies at all levels. Currently, 73 countries participate in the IAP, with IFLA regularly reporting progress to members.

2.2 IAP Implementation

Under the guidance of “Libraries and the 2030 Agenda” and the IAP, IFLA has organized numerous regional workshops (see Table 1). The inaugural workshop in Singapore introduced six key areas: IFLA/IAP introduction, UN 2030 Agenda overview, library roles, advocacy strategies, planning promotional activities, and IFLA funding opportunities. Participants are encouraged to share workshop content with their national library associations, organize awareness-raising events, develop promotion plans, designate contact persons, and regularly report progress to IFLA for sharing among IAP members. IFLA also invites IAP members to submit promotion proposals, awarding grants to feasible and impactful projects. In one round, 10 projects were selected from 115 submissions. According to the latest IAP update, libraries worldwide have con-

ducted various seminars, workshops, and training sessions, with 69 countries (14 in Africa, 18 in Asia-Pacific, 13 in Europe, 24 in Latin America and Caribbean) reporting activities.

3. Library Roles Under IAP Guidance

By analyzing the 17 SDGs (see Table 2) and 169 targets, libraries can contribute in several key areas:

3.1 Providing Information for Decision-Making and Social Development

Libraries' fundamental function is collecting, organizing, and providing access to information and documents, directly supporting SDGs 1-3, 6-8, and 12-15. By providing employment information, libraries help users improve their conditions, reduce poverty (Goals 1, 8), and mitigate social instability. Healthcare information helps users maintain wellness, while energy use and disease prevention information improves public health (Goals 3, 6, 7). Agricultural, land use, and environmental data support sustainable production and consumption (Goals 2, 12-15). Libraries also serve as think tanks supporting national development plans at regional and national levels (Goal 17).

3.2 Providing Lifelong Learning Opportunities

Libraries have long served as social education institutions, offering rich resources and spaces for learning, social interaction, and leisure. Public libraries worldwide run extensive education programs: free book distribution and literacy programs for infants, reading promotion for youth, and liberal arts programs for adults. As urban "third spaces," libraries are often the primary or only low-cost/free public internet access points, serving as crucial connectivity tools (Goal 9). Historically, libraries function as urban knowledge, learning, and cultural centers, ensuring inclusive and equitable quality education and lifelong learning opportunities for all (Goal 4).

3.3 Eliminating Inequality

UNESCO's Public Library Manifesto states that everyone has equal rights to library services regardless of age, race, gender, religion, nationality, language, or social status, requiring special services for disadvantaged groups. IFLA's 2012 Code of Ethics for Librarians similarly mandates inclusive, non-discriminatory services. Libraries thus bear the important mission of eliminating inequality, particularly by assisting information-vulnerable groups and bridging the digital divide (Goals 5, 10).

3.4 Preserving Cultural Heritage

Preserving cultural heritage is a vital library function. IFLA's Strategic Plan 2016-2021 emphasizes establishing global professional centers for documentary heritage protection, developing collection and preservation standards, and collaborating with heritage institutions on risk registers to protect world cultural heritage. IFLA has issued policy statements supporting SDG 11.4, creating risk registers to identify documentary heritage at risk from natural or human-made disasters and promote emergency response, in partnership with UNESCO and Blue Shield. This work contributes to building inclusive, safe, resilient, and sustainable cities and human settlements (Goal 11).

3.5 Legally Protecting Information Access Rights

Freedom of information access is a universally recognized human right. Protecting this right reflects fairness in information resource allocation and the public's demand to share development outcomes. Public libraries must uphold principles of public service, equality, and neutrality. Library legislation is crucial for sustainable library development and free services. The legal framework includes both library-specific laws and other relevant legislation. The 2030 Agenda's Goal 16 emphasizes promoting rule of law, ensuring equal access to justice (16.3), guaranteeing public information access and fundamental freedoms (16.10), and implementing non-discriminatory laws and policies (16.b). Only through legal protection of information rights can inequality be eliminated and peaceful, inclusive societies sustainably developed.

4. China's Support and Advocacy for the 2030 Agenda

4.1 Government Level

China expressed support immediately upon the Agenda's release. On September 26, 2015, President Xi Jinping pledged at the UN Development Summit that China would take implementing the post-2015 development agenda as its responsibility. On September 19, 2016, Premier Li Keqiang announced China's National Plan for Implementing the 2030 Agenda. These actions demonstrate top-level Chinese commitment to sustainable development.

4.2 Library Association Level

In October 2016, Cheng Huanwen, Vice President of the Library Society of China and Director of Sun Yat-sen University Library, attended the Asia-Pacific regional workshop in Singapore and reported back to the Library Society of China. In November 2016, at a Ministry of Culture meeting on promoting the Public Cultural Service Guarantee Law, Professor Cheng reported on the 2030 Agenda's importance and IFLA's IAP action plan, emphasizing the law's alignment with Goal 16.10. The Library Society of China subsequently compiled and promoted Chinese and English versions of "Transforming Our World: The

2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.” In July 2017, the Society released three 30-minute promotional videos with PPTs and five related documents, titled: 1) Transforming Our World: Understanding the UN 2030 Agenda; 2) How Libraries Can Promote the UN 2030 Agenda; and 3) Actions of China’s Library Community. At the 83rd IFLA Congress in Wrocław, Poland in August 2017, newly elected IFLA Governing Board member Cheng Huanwen presented on “IFLA and IAP: Actions of China’s Library Community,” outlining China’s support and future action plans.

4.3 Library Level

Chinese public libraries have advanced dramatically in both legal construction and reading promotion. The library community’s promotional work for the 2030 Agenda focuses on four aspects:

4.3.1 Following IFLA’s IAP: IFLA’s Toolkit provides a platform for sharing global implementation progress and national development plans, with contact persons in each national library association submitting regular reports. China will both learn from global case studies and regularly report its IAP progress to IFLA.

4.3.2 Promoting the Public Cultural Service Guarantee Law: Adopted in December 2016 and effective March 1, 2017, this law clarifies government responsibility for providing standardized, equalized basic public cultural services through free or subsidized provision. A January 2017 symposium emphasized implementation to protect citizens’ cultural rights. The library community has published interpretive articles, such as a special issue in *Library Tribune* 2017(6), examining the law’s spirit, provisions, and implementation. Broader promotion and implementation of this law best demonstrate support for SDG 16.

4.3.3 Implementing the 13th Five-Year Plan for National Reading: Released in December 2016, this plan reflects the Party Central Committee’s emphasis on national reading, adhering to four principles: government leadership with social participation; content quality over quantity; prioritizing children; and public welfare reaching grassroots levels. It sets targets for establishing reading promotion associations and brand activities nationwide by 2020, and delivering quality publications to 50 million migrant workers and ethnic minority mobile users. Implementation will contribute to both a scholarly society and the 2030 Agenda.

4.3.4 Participating in Library Legislation Consultations: By end-2016, China had only six cultural laws among 257 effective national laws. The Public Library Law, passed November 4, 2017 and effective January 1, 2018, represents major progress, as does the draft National Reading Promotion Regulation approved by the State Council Legislative Affairs Office in June 2017. Library scholars have long contributed to legislative research and will continue monitoring and participating in these laws’ revision and improvement.

In conclusion, China's library community will actively implement IAP-related work, promote the 2030 Agenda, and fully leverage libraries' social functions to contribute to sustainable development.

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Author Contributions

He Yun: Developed the paper framework, collected research materials, wrote and revised the manuscript.

Cheng Huanwen: Determined the research topic, proposed research ideas and revision suggestions.

The Analysis and Promotion of IFLA IAP for UN Agenda 2030

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Abstract: [Purpose/significance] In order to make a promotion of UN 2030 Agenda, IFLA launched an International Advocacy Program (IAP) on December, 2015. The paper aims to make a better understanding of the Agenda and IAP. [Method/process] The paper analyses the policy foundation and features of the Agenda, introduces the content and implementation of the IAP program, focuses on the connection between the SDGs and librarianships. [Result/conclusion] The paper reveals that libraries may contribute to the SDGs in information support, life-long study, eliminating inequality, culture and heritage preservation and accessing to information in accordance with national

legislation and international agreements. The government, library societies and libraries in China are supporting the Agenda and may join the IFLA IAP on four aspects as follows: updating with the IAP, advocacy of the Law of Public Culture Service Protection, implementation on the 13th Five-Year Development Plan of National Reading, participating in the consultation of library legislation.

Keywords: UN 2030 Agenda; IFLA; IAP; Library Society of China

Note: Figure translations are in progress. See original paper for figures.

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