

IFLA-FAIFE IN THE PHILIPPINES 2009 PROJECT: IMPACT AND OUTPUT

The Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. (PLAI) serves as the accredited association of librarians in the Philippines by the Professional Regulations Commission (PRC) under the Office of the President of the Philippines. As a national association of professional librarians, it is composed of sixteen (16) Regional Councils as Chapters and the members are the licensed librarians in its region distributed by Clusters. The three main islands (clusters) of the Philippines are: *Luzon, Visayas and Mindanao*.

After the successful implementation of the IFLA-FAIFE Internet Manifesto Regional Council's Cascading Workshops, the Council Presidents or their duly designated representative, who were Regional Trainers (RTs), attended this Final Phase of the Project to present their reports and accomplishments in their region. (Details of Regional Reports will be submitted in the Final Report.) This Workshop was held on November 10-11, 2009 at MetroCenter Hotel in Tagbilaran City, Bohol, Philippines.

In attendance were 33 Filipino librarians and one IFLA-FAIFE representative Dir. Barbara Ford. Leading the participants are The IFLA-FAIFE Philippine Executive Team headed by Lilia Echiverri as Chair, Prudenciana C. Cruz, Antonio M. Santos, Susima L. Gonzales and Marlo C. Chavez; the Regional Council Presidents, namely: Sonia Isip, Enrique Cayaban, Africa Castillo, Audrey Anday, Federico Billones, Hinie Gonzales, Marilou Tadlip, Maxie Doreen Cabarron, Andreli Pardales, Benhur Asid, Claudtte Albano, Nora Fe Alajar, Victoria Santos, Ma. Teresa Baylon, Hasmin Mimbala-Abdulharim, Rina Diaron, Nora Claravall. The members of the Executive Council of National Commission for Culture and the Arts (NCCA) – National Committee on Libraries and Information Services (NCLIS) namely:



Rosemarie Ante, Marianita Dablio, Cynthia Dagus, Fr. Paul de Vera, Thelma Kim, Rebecca Napiere, Lourdes Soriano, Iuminada Yap and 2 NCCA-NCLIS representatives, also attended as observers since they also conducted their Regional Meeting in Bohol with its Head, Antonio M. Santos, also the Convenor of IFLA-FAIFE and PLAI Project. These NCLIS members, mostly from the Academe, contributed inputs during the deliberations and the discussions that ensued in the open forum every after presentation and during workshops and plenary sessions.

On Monday, November 9, 2009, all the participants arrived in Tagbilaran City, Bohol. A preliminary meeting for the workshop was held by the Philippine Executive Team to brief the participants on what the two-day workshop will entail.

On Tuesday, November 10, 2009, the Opening Ceremonies was held and each participant was given the chance to introduce themselves and the regions they represent. Dir. Prudenciana C. Cruz of The National Library (TNL) delivered her Welcome Remarks followed by the Opening Remarks by Dir. Barbara Ford, Director of Mortenson Center for International Library Programs, Illinois, U.S.A. Dir. Ford greeted the participants and expressly said that FAIFE is an initiative within IFLA to promote the basic human rights as defined in Article 19 of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. FAIFE works to protect intellectual freedom and the freedom of expression by collecting and disseminating documentation and developing projects to stimulate dialog both within and outside the library world.



Furthermore, the Learning Materials for Workshops on the IFLA Internet Manifesto were developed by FAIFE and have been very effectively used in the Philippines. In addition, she congratulated the Filipino librarians' achievements and gave special thanks to Ms. Lilia Echiverri and her team who have organized excellent workshops and developed concrete projects to improve free access to information for the people of the Philippines. She also informed the participants that Ms. Echiverri is now a member of the IFLA-FAIFE Committee for 2009-2013. She also mentioned that it takes a number of strong partners to develop successful projects like this one in the Philippines. Lastly, she thanked and congratulated the participants, the Philippine Librarians Association, Inc., The National Library and the University of the Philippines Law Library and each and everyone who have made the project a success.

After the Opening Remarks of Dir. Ford, she read the message of Dir. Barbara Jones who was unable to be with the group because of an unexpected commitment. She singled out the professionalism and enthusiasm of the Filipino librarians and congratulated the group for their achievements.

The sessions that followed, included the following: An Overview of the Project by Ms. Lilia F. Echiverri, PLAI President and Chair, IFLA-FAIFE Philippine Project. She discussed the background of the IFLA-FAIFE Project 2009. Mrs. Echiverri acknowledged and thanked the IFLA-FAIFE and SIDA's financial support through Dr. Stuart Hamilton, IFLA Senior Policy Advisor, the IFLA Secretary General Jennefer Nicholson, Members of the FAIFE Committee, Paul Sturges, Loida Garcia-Febo, Barbara Ford and Barbara Jones for trusting PLAI as partner of the very prestigious Association, IFLA-FAIFE. She also discussed the importance of assessing the impact of the workshop and the submission of success stories to the IFLA Success Stories Website. She encouraged the participants to dream big about next steps for the project and for the wider issues of Internet access and role of a librarian through libraries in the Philippines.

The sixteen (16) regional councils took turns to present their reports through a PowerPoint presentation. Every report was brilliantly and professionally presented. Everyone was amazed with the experiences and impact of the project. Each one listened attentively to the success stories and actively participated in the discussions. This phase of the project was cascaded from the national down to regional, provincial, municipal and *barangay* (village) levels.

Librarians, lawyers, information specialist, educators were invited as speakers to share their own views and experiences. Participants included librarians, para-professionals, Information Technologists (IT), administrators, LGUs (Local Government Units) and students and the like. There were a total of 2,300 participants who attended programs in the cascading phase of the project in the sixteen regions.

Participants perceived the roles of librarians in an information society as creators, collectors, communicators and consolidators. Most of the participants found the importance of the Internet Use Policy to be very high considering the availability of Internet-based services in the library that they are connected with. Other interesting issues were also raised by the participants like the sustainability of the free Internet use to all users if they will not charge any fee from the user especially in the private sector. Their concerns include: the maintenance of basics like electricity, barriers with not enough support from top management, monthly charges on internet connection, and maintenance of computer units and their operation. The participants also agreed that the possibility of providing free Internet access would be possible if there is support coming from the government or local officials of the municipality.

After the individual reports of the regional councils, they were grouped into three workshop groups, the *Luzon Cluster*, *Visayas Cluster* and *Mindanao Cluster* to discuss the issues, problems and assess the impact of each cluster. Nora Claravall, the PLAI-Vice-President for Luzon headed the Luzon Cluster. Another was the Visayas Cluster headed by Hinie Gonzales, PLAI-Vice-President for Visayas and lastly Marilou Claravall, the PLAI-Executive Vice-President for the Mindanao Cluster. They all acted as Rapporteur Facilitator and appointed their respective recorder/secretary.

The Workshop Cluster groups were joined by the Philippine Executive Team and NCLIS members. Dir. Ford went around the Workshop groups to observe randomly. The three clusters joined together in a plenary session for the consolidated outcome and reports by their respective rapporteurs. After each presentation there was an open forum. Participants all agreed to the integration of the Internet Manifesto in library services. The Project has elucidated the importance of the Manifesto among library stakeholders. More so, having such guidelines poses a challenge to librarians in their emerging role as agents in the dissemination of information among community stakeholders and in ensuring that the needed resources are available either in traditional or in digital formats.

The summation/synthesis of cluster reports including impact, best/success stories of the participants was again consolidated and reported by Marilou Tadlip, the PLAI

Executive Vice-President. Following are the recommendations. The participants came up with an Internet Manifesto activities framework such as:

(1) Follow-up activities after cascading: (a) The need for further follow-up training on internet manifesto, (b) more awareness campaign on the internet manifesto – the number of days, structure of the presentation, (c) look at the data from the cascading activities as basis for follow-up activities, and (d) conduct of some kind of lecturette;

(2) Public Libraries in the Philippines: How do we involve more public librarians? (a) Motivation of public librarians to be involved in the council (if you cannot find, create); (b) coordination and partnership with government organizations (GO) and Non-Government Organizations (NGO);

(3) Partnership for the Internet Advocacy: (a) IT and library personnel partnership, (b) top management/administrators, (c) stakeholders – end users, (d) consultation with management and administrators on the consolidated output of internet use policies of the different institutions, and others – internet café owners;

(4) Training: (a) pre-training session on how to write internet policies, (b) Module on Information Literary, and (c) Module on responsible internet use.

Lastly, each Island Cluster, through its respective regional councils presented their token of appreciation to Dir. Ford for her untiring support and her expert assistance to Filipino librarians. They likewise expressed their profound gratitude to the IFLA-FAIFE and SIDA.

The year 2009 was enriching and fruitful for the librarians in the Philippines. Freedom of information was the by-word of every librarian. PLAI and the Philippine Executive Team would like to thank IFLA-FAIFE and SIDA for the continuous support it has given to everyone which had contributed to the successful implementation of the project. This led the Filipino librarians, through PLAI, to DREAM BIG AND MAKE THINGS HAPPEN!

(Full reports, documentations and presentations will be submitted to IFLA-FAIFE on or before March 30, 2010.)

Prepared by Lilia F. Echiverri, *President, Philippine Librarians Association, Inc. (PLAI) and Chair, IFLA-FAIFE Philippines Project 2009.*