

Honorary Fellow Citation for

Deborah Jacobs



Through her leadership and belief in librarians as agents of change in society, Deborah Jacobs has had a profound effect on the transformation of public library services globally and on IFLA as an organisation.

As City Librarian at Seattle Public Library, Deborah was a remarkable leader, establishing new services, mentoring staff and developing skills as a formidable fundraiser. At this time, she was involved with IFLA as a member of IFLA's Metropolitan Libraries Section. Deborah was able to multiply her impact when she was appointed Director of the Global Libraries Program of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The Global Libraries Program provided the platform to spark innovation in libraries in developing and transitioning countries. Networks of inspired librarians have connected nationally and regionally to share knowledge and enthusiasm. The International Network of Emerging Library Innovators (INELI) program was a powerful manifestation of Deborah's passion for encouraging and supporting the next generation of library leaders to explore new ideas, experiment with innovative services and learn from one another.

Libraries around the world have benefited from Deborah's belief that IFLA had the necessary connections and reach to substantially impact the library field. The IFLA Building Strong Library Associations Programme (BSLA) was funded through a grant from the Global Libraries Program and allowed selected national associations to collaborate on capacity building activities and strengthen their understanding of issues across their region. It gave them the capacity to build the skills and strategy needed to tell the story of libraries and gain policymaker support.

From 2008 – 2017, grants totalling over five million euros were provided to support the most impactful and far reaching of IFLA's programs including the Action for Development for Libraries Programme and the International Advocacy Programme. The International Advocacy Programme aimed to promote and support the role libraries can play in the planning and implementation of the United Nations 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals. The programme provided many national associations with the foundation for advocacy efforts with governments and other stakeholders.

IFLA was identified by the Global Libraries program as one of three Legacy Partners, organisations who would receive a substantial financial legacy to continue work that kept the library field strong. The Legacy Grant of over thirty million dollars has enabled the reimagination and reframing of IFLA as an organisation and will allow the federation to extend its reach further than ever before. IFLA aims to build on Deborah's passions for collaboration and new ways of thinking to inspire the global library field to act together to face the challenges of the future.

Deborah Jacobs has been an inspiration, a champion and an advocate for the development of libraries in countries all over the world. She has worked tirelessly in the political and strategical sphere to influence politicians and decision makers to invest in libraries. She is passionate about libraries, their values and the difference that libraries can make to society. Deborah Jacob's outstanding leadership and exceptional support of IFLA and libraries in the international arena make her a worthy recipient of IFLA's highest honour of Honorary Fellow.