World Library and Information Congress : 75th IFLA General Conference and Assembly

Environmental sustainability and Libraries SIG
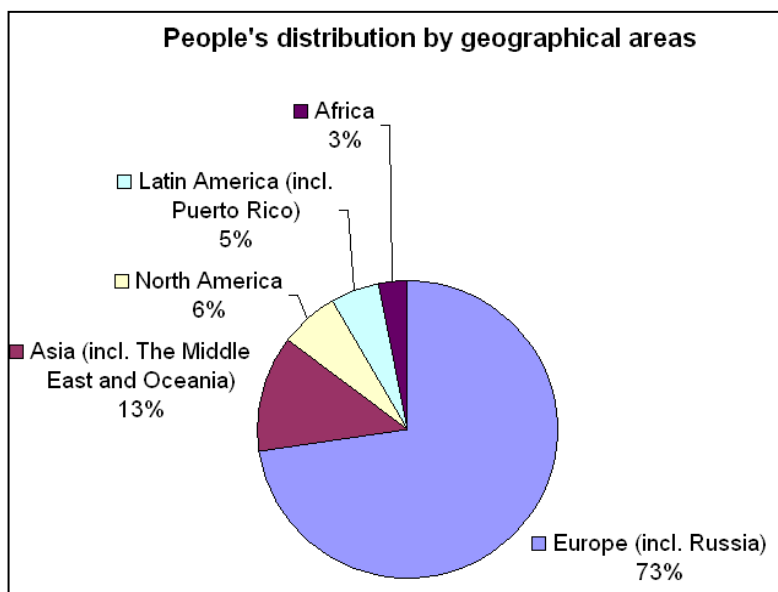Wednesday 26 august 2009 - Blue room – 11:45-13:45

SHORT REPORT OF THE SESSION

The assistance

For its first session Environmental Sustainability and Libraries grouped together more than 100 people from various countries. 95 people accepted to leave us their visit card, or their names and mails. The others leaved us only a name, with no mention of the country, or didn't give us no information at all.

Thanks to the good job made by the volunteers, we're able to have a detailed board of represented countries visible below.

Countries	Flag	Number of Representatives	Countries	Flag	Number of Representatives
Argentina		1	Lituania		1
Australia		5	Malaysia		1
Belgium		1	Mexico		1
Brazil		1	Norway		2
Canada		1	Puerto Rico		1
Chile		1	Russia		2
Denmark		2	South Africa		1
Finland		6	South Korea		1
France		14	Spain		10
Germany		1	Sweden		5
Italy		18	The Netherlands		1
Japan		3	Uganda		1
Kenya		1	United Kingdom		6
Lebanon		2	USA		5

To have a better point of view, I grouped the countries by geographical areas. The graphic below shows us that many participants were from Europe. It is not a surprise as Milan is in Europe.

People's distribution by geographical areas

- Africa 3%
- Latin America (incl. Puerto Rico) 5%
- North America 6%
- Asia (incl. The Middle East and Oceania) 13%
- Europe (incl. Russia) 73%

But the interesting thing, is that Asia, Latin America and Africa are present too. This is an important information. Because it is the first time since the beginning of the group that this countries are represented.

One of the goal of the group is to demonstrate that green libraries is a common concern of worldwide librarians, and not a rich countries worry. It also to pass the split between North and South countries.

Could green libraries be the first step of this ?

The interventions

Interventions will not be detailed in this report as they will be put online in December 2009 at this address http://www.ifla.org/en/environmental-sustainability-and-libraries/conferences. If you want to learn more on the contents, please check on the IFLA website.

The most part of the session consisted in showing different aspects of the ways libraries engaged themselves on environmental sustainability. For some it is by networking. Others by involving the public in the building project, for others, it's in organizing partnerships between different institutions.

The language(s)

The session had been mostly held in English. Even if the group advocate for an intercultural approach, that means also the freedom of expression in its own language, the result of not speaking in English provokes a loss of participants. So there is no real choice of language as English is still staying the common way of expression when there isn't simultaneous translation.
Unfortunately, this asks the problem of the complexity of speech. Pronunciation, accent, mistakes, and the hardness of expressing concepts in another language could reduce the wealth of the speeches. To avoid this problem, there is a possibility of producing bilingual documents. It could help the speaker by obliging him or her to be concise and precise, and offers the room a double help in understanding.

The brainstorming session

Convinced by the brainstorming session of Ellen Tyse, we decided to organise for the last 45 minutes a green brainstorming session, according to clear objective and procedure.

The objective were to define actions for the SIG by creating temporary working groups thinking on themes following a scheduled time.

The procedure was organised like this :
1. People grouped together around a theme they've chosen   12h50
   Themes were :
   - Buildings
   - Collections

- Users
- Management
- Events

2. - Name a chair and a recording secretary
3. Discuss the topic (15 min)   12h55
4. Summarize your ideas (secretary) : We're looking for action, so begin by a verb 13h10
5. Choose your best or more innovative idea   13h15
6. Share it with the general audience (chair) (2 minutes a group).   13h20
   Not all groups may be able to present the results because of time.
7. Handing your recording sheet to the convenors of the SIG.
8. Working groups will be created from the best or more innovative ideas.   13h30
9. Write on your visit card the working group(s) you have chosen.
   Give it to the convenors of the SIG.   13h35

Facing a lack of time, we only had a one-quarter brainstorming possibility. But nevertheless, about fifteen people crossed their words and minds on 4 themes. And here are the results :

- Buildings
  - Renovating the buildings
  - Producing a list of green buildings
  - Using Delicious to share information
  - Thinking of electricity and of air-conditioning system

- Collections
  - Digitizing ? What impact ?
  - Recycling libraries materials
    - In Paris outdated library's books are used for district heating

- Management
  - Adopting guidelines on collections and best practices
  - Using the general tools that are existing and grouped them together to produce useful environmental-friendly tools
  - Managing the documentation awareness to be proactive
  - Considering the impacts on environment of the ways we're working
  - Promoting recycling material, such as sustainable USB key

- Users
  - Thinking of users and employees health
    - What about Wifi and RFID issues, the danger of the electronic waves
  - Involving the users in the library program
  - Working with NGO ready to help
  - Facilitating the access to soft transport (bicycles, roller…)
  - Offering recycling containers (bottle's capsule, piles…)
  - Promoting green bags (paper or cotton?)
  - Explaining to the people is one of the library's role

By extension, participants continued the meeting outside the room after the time was over. All of them agreed on the need to produce a green assessment of the IFLA congress.

More to come in the following weeks on http://ecotheques.ning.com/

If you're interested, you can suscribe to our mailing list at
http://infoserv.inist.fr/wwsympa.fcgi/info/ensulib