

FAIFE World Report: Libraries and Intellectual Freedom



Ukraine

01-06-1999

There are about 45,000 libraries in Ukraine that employ more than 80,000 librarians. Currently, the activities of libraries as social institutions in Ukraine are under the influences of democracy, and are more open to public scrutiny, as are many other organizations in the country. Different social, economic and political changes have occurred in Ukraine just at a time when technological progress has brought unheard-of opportunities for the development of librarianship. But economic instability in the

country has caused a situation where the government cannot provide appropriate funding to libraries, even for library materials and for librarians' salaries. In 1998 the sphere of culture received only 42% of funding allocated in the state budget. Library collections often become outdated. The government announced a special Library Collection program to publish books for libraries, but last year no books were published under this program. It is very difficult to implement new technologies in libraries because of the lack of funding. In 1997, the government issued a special order that listed services libraries could provide for money, and in 1998 it allowed libraries to use money, which they had earned, for their needs.

Recently, one could notice a very painful process: the number of libraries in the country, especially public libraries in rural regions and professional union libraries, was steadily decreasing. To help librarians and the public to correct this situation, Ukraine's Cabinet of Ministers in May 1997 issued Regulation "On Minimal Social Norms of Providing the Population with Public Libraries".

The number of library users has grown. People come to libraries because they need new knowledge in different fields. Creation of new educational establishments and changes in the educational system generated new needs in users. On the other hand, many families now cannot afford to subscribe to a newspaper or a magazine, or to buy books. Under these circumstances, Ukrainian librarians are creatively finding new and unusual ways of surviving and even developing their activity. Rather quickly, librarians understood that they had to change themselves and their libraries in order to improve library services and society's attitude to libraries.

New social priorities of Ukraine as an independent state, its desire to use information in further developing the country caused a change in the status of two leading Ukrainian libraries, which became national libraries: the National Parliamentary Library of Ukraine (in 1994) and the Vernadsky National Library of Ukraine (in 1996). These libraries are the largest in Ukraine. Their collections comprise 17 million items, and to a great extent reflect the intellectual, cultural, economic and scientific development of the people of Ukraine and other nations. New types of libraries have appeared in Ukraine over the last five years, e.g., various ethnic libraries, family libraries, church libraries, NGO libraries. The National University "Kyiv-Mohyla Academy" Library is an example of re-opening one of the oldest academic libraries not only in Ukraine but also in Eastern Europe. The Central Library of Ukraine for Teachers was created. The NGO "Research and Development Center for Philanthropy" opened library on Philanthropy, Civil Society and the Third Sector in 1998.

Education and training of librarians are carried out by two universities of culture in Kyiv and Kharkiv and by Rivne Pedagogical University (specialists), as well as by special colleges of culture (bachelors). The curriculum and programs of training are now under revision to bring them up to the appropriate international level. The experience of foreign countries is duly studied and implemented in Ukraine.

Librarians have begun to seek help and funding for their libraries from foundations and the private sector. The latter is still rather underdeveloped in Ukraine and is not yet ready to help libraries very much. The IRF and the OSI-Budapest Network Library Program provide the most notable financial support to libraries and librarians.

There was a perceived need to create and bring to life new library policies in a democratic Ukraine, based on free access to ideas, library materials and services. Intellectual freedom issues are the basis of contemporary library and information policies in Ukraine. Now the library community understands that it is up to librarians to establish, promote and implement new library policies. Today we see tendencies toward cooperation in the creation of new library and information policies in Ukraine. The Ministry of Culture and Arts (under which the public libraries operate and which must oversee the development of libraries in the country) and newly born non-governmental organizations are interacting in improving

Population:	51,608,000 (1996)
GNP per capita:	\$ 1,200 (1996)
Government / Constitution:	Republic
Main languages:	Ukrainian, Russian, Polish, Tatar
Main religions:	Ukrainian Orthodox, Greek Catholic (Uniate)
Literacy:	99% (1995)
Online:	-

library and information policies and working toward positive legislation. The Ukrainian Library Association is the leading professional NGO in this process.

The Law on Libraries and Librarianship was passed in Ukraine in 1995; the Law on Depository Copy is under discussion now. Experts from the Ministry of Culture and Arts, the Ukrainian Library Association, and various libraries gathered in November 1998 at Verkhovna Rada (the Parliament) of Ukraine for hearings on library laws and policies that were adopted in 1995. It was mentioned that the laws need to better reflect intellectual freedom, unrestricted information flow, and other new realities.

Jointly with other organizations, the Ministry of Culture and Arts created a National Program on Preservation of Library and Archival Collections and set up the Information and Computerisation Committee dealing with the issues of library automation in Ukraine. The Committee worked out the "National Program on Library Automation" and submitted it to the Agency for Information and Computerisation under the Presidential Administration.

The first library associations were founded in Ukraine at the beginning of this century. New times have brought to life new professional library organizations. Librarians recognized that they could benefit from joining in a professional association to provide mutual encouragement and growth, to exchange information, and to promote libraries in the society at large. In 1995, an independent non-governmental professional organization was created – the Ukrainian Library Association. Now it has 30 divisions in major regions of Ukraine and about six hundred active individual members.

The Association strives to achieve and maintain high standards in providing library and information services and educating librarians. The Ukrainian Library Association promotes and implements the principles of intellectual freedom, which is the basis for librarianship in a democratic Ukraine. The Code of Professional Ethics for Librarians was adopted. The Code lists professional values and underlines the vital role the librarians play in supporting democracy, the spirit of openness, and the cultural and economic development of the nation. Preservation of library materials is considered one of the strategic goals of the Ukrainian Library Association. The Association works on strengthening and developing the library profession, library and information science education, and library legislation. It is active in training of librarians, organizing seminars and conferences, book publishing, informing librarians, international cooperation.

Ukrainian Library Association (ULA)

ULA is an independent all-Ukrainian non-governmental organization, which on a voluntary basis unites individuals professionally related to librarianship, bibliographic and informational activities as well as those interested in their development.

The mission of the ULA activities is to promote the all-round development of librarianship and secure the right of readers and information consumers to high-grade and timely library, informational and bibliographic services as well as to protect social and other common interests of ULA members.

Main ULA objectives:

- guaranteeing access of citizens to the whole volume of knowledge and information accumulated in libraries;
- shaping in the society of the understanding of the library priority as a centre of culture, drawing the society attention to its problems;
- promoting the improvement of library legislation, organization and management of librarianship.

To achieve its aims, the ULA:

- exercises public control of librarianship, bibliographic and informational activities;
- participates in the independent expertise of the plans and programs related to development of librarianship in the country;
- organises public discussions of priority problems facing librarianship;
- informs public of the problems emerging in the sector and the ways of their solution;
- supports initiatives of public movements, institutions and organizations, programs of people's deputies aiming to develop culture and librarianship;
- helps to satisfy professional interests of the ULA members including expansion of international contacts;
- enhances professional level of ULA members, forms the environment for professional communication;
- promotes professional and social development of librarians, bibliographers and informational workers, improves the system of their continuous education;
- joins international non-governmental organizations, maintains direct international contacts and ties, negotiates relevant agreements, participates in the implementation of measures which do not contradict the international commitments of Ukraine;
- propagates the achievements of world experience;
- is engaged in publishing activities;
- encourages theoretical research and practical studies in the area of librarianship, bibliographic and informational activities;
- holds conferences, seminars, workshops and other events on the issues of library and informational activities;

- encourages exchange of experience and professional development through preparing curricula, organizing courses, study visits etc.;
- provides for social protection of librarians, bibliographers and informational workers, improves conditions of their work and domestic life, helps to establish appropriate labor remuneration and retirement pensions for them, fosters professional solidarity;
- determines personal bonuses, prizes and other forms of moral and material incentives;
- performs necessary administrative, economic and other commercial activities through setting up self-supporting institutions and organizations with a status of a legal person, establishes enterprises.

ULA Section on "Legislation in the area of librarianship and information"

The section's aim is to harmonise legislation related to the issues of library and information activities in Ukraine, devise policy of systemic approach to law-making in the sphere of information. The section's members focus on the issues of copyright, elaboration and implementation of the mechanism of involving public in the process of devising and implementing library and information legislation.

ULA Round Table on "Ethics of a librarian"

The round table aims at staging and discussing problems of professional ethics of librarians in a democratic society and elaborating the code of ethics of a librarian. The round table fosters consolidation of librarians around moral and ethical problems facing the profession, enhancement of moral self-consciousness of professionals, mobilization of their spiritual potential for the solution of issues put forward by the society. In the course of round table meetings are discussed: the highest goal and bases of morality and moral ideal of a librarian as a personality, criteria of moral assessment of various aspects of social life and library practice as well as actions of a librarian under different life situations etc.

Manifesto on Democratisation of Libraries

A [manifesto on the democratisation of libraries](#) was adopted in Kiev on November 23, 1995 by the participants of International Conference "Library in a Democratic Society", organized by the Department of Library and Information Systems of the Kiev State Institute of Culture and Ukrainian Library Association.