

Chapter 6

Library Associations, Leadership, and Programmes: IFLA, AfLIA, and NLA

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ABSTRACT

Professions are distinct groups whose members share body of knowledge and practice as well as ethics of engagements in common. Every profession is brought together by an association that in one way or another influences the practice of the profession. The influence of library associations, for example, IFLA, AfLIA, and NLA, on library and information services cannot be underestimated, but suffice it to say that these associations have led to the growth and development of the library profession. This chapter therefore examines these associations, programmes, areas of influence, their problems, and recommendations are made based on the identified challenges.

INTRODUCTION

Every profession is brought together by an association that in one way or the other influences the practice of the profession. Libraries have always played a key role in the development of an information literate populace that can participate as informed citizens in a democratic society. Libraries also uphold and champion intellectual freedom or right to free access to information. It has been observed that libraries

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cannot play this role in isolation hence the need for professional associations. In the context of libraries, the association means the organization of the library staff members who have undergone training at different levels in Library and Information Science. Thus, the library association is an organization of persons or institutions related with the library jobs and profession. Library associations play important roles by training and retraining librarians, influencing government policies and developing professional policies which influence library and information services.

A profession could simply be viewed as an occupation that require extensive education or specialized training. A profession is a type of job that needs special training or skills especially one that needs a higher level of education. The professions stand out as distinct groups whose members share common socio-economic origins, educational experiences and life styles. The concern to provide a framework for the development of individuals in a profession and the need to influence the creation of the social framework within which the profession as a whole can develop necessitate the need for professionals within professions to come together under well-structured associations. Professional associations provide platform for the interchange/exchange of ideas, self-control and benefit both for the membership and the practice of the profession as a whole. The formation of these associations could be traced to the colonial era. They are distinguished by their common issues and trends, including their ability to communicate with their members, their ability to create relevant programmes and conferences, and their need for self-evaluation.

The growth and importance of libraries brought about the profession of librarianship. Librarianship is the profession that emerged from library practice. Librarianship as a profession has its associations. These are associations of librarians – practicing or retired and all persons and organizations interested in library work. They provide opportunities for librarians to meet and share experiences and learn from each other. They offer a range of services to members and look after their interest in dealing with the profession; they act as the ideal contact point for all within the profession. Although library associations do serve the needs of their members, ultimately, the long-term benefactors are the end-users of the services that these members provide (Ossai-Ugbah, 2013). They lay down standards for performance, thereby protecting the continuing existence of special services and monitor trends in user-needs.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A professional association is intentionally formed to provide a platform that will unite and inform people who are in the same profession. They are avenues for networking, as they create opportunities for professionals to connect with their peers, mentors, future mentees and others in the profession. Such associations also imbue members

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