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Evaluation of the Information for All Programme (IFAP)

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The views expressed in this report are those of the assessment team and not UNESCO or its partners. We alone are responsible for any errors or omissions.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Programme description and background

The Information for All Programme (IFAP) was established as a visionary response to technology induced social, cultural and economic transformation. This was a big and useful agenda. Looming increases in inequality, unexpected threats to cultural and linguistic survival, opportunities for realizing educational access for all—the on-rush of technology presented the likelihood of each of these developments and myriad of other risks and opportunities besides. Governments of large well-developed, developing and small countries all recognized the need to respond to equity challenges and recognised that the necessary response was beyond the capacity of the nation states themselves.

The need was for new international instruments and mechanisms with the flexibility, the capacity to induce change and exert influence equal to the tasks at hand. However and perhaps inevitably, what emerged was simply a reconfiguration of what had been before. IFAP beginning with a vision of responding with a global voice to the emerging risks and opportunities quickly discovered the realities of organizational and financial constraints. Thus, rather than taking up the challenge presented to it by the Director General speaking on behalf of the General Conference and addressing the emerging issues of the digital age. IFAP began its life with an extended period of reflexive self-organization.

Meanwhile, the transformations caused by the impact of information and communication technology (ICT) continued exponentially. Meanwhile others took up the challenge, organizing around a mandate which closely mirrored that of IFAP; the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). This event, in which IFAP Programme did not have a recognizable profile, has now concluded in 2005. It left in its wake, among other outcomes and effects a more generalized and heightened awareness of the issues of a digitally impacted societies, a partially mobilized civil society, and a set of recommendations in the form of a Plan of Action which in its broadest terms might be equally seen as a strategic plan for IFAP.

However, following on from WSIS there is now a clear requirement for UNESCO and the other parties to the Summit, to carry forward the Summit's Plan of Action and more importantly to respond to the range of issues and concerns for which the Summit provided a global platform. It is this context which presents the opportunity for a vigorous and effective IFAP supporting UNESCO's mission for building knowledge societies¹ for all and particularly in the context of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

A vigorous IFAP can provide a cornerstone for UNESCO and the multilateral system in addressing the emerging ICT issues of the 21st century. As is becoming apparent and increasingly recognised, the equity issues arising from ICT—including the 'Digital Divide', information literacy, open access to information, information preservation, knowledge use and dissemination—may be to the 21st century what issues surrounding Human Rights were to the 20th. Information and knowledge are now understood as being necessary foundations upon which effective responses to issues of global concern—poverty, peaceful co-existence, the environment, health (particularly Malaria and HIV/AIDS), economic development and the like—must be built. In this sense information, and particularly the responsibility to ensure the implementation of the fundamental principle of an “information society for all” or in its current reformulation “knowledge societies for all” is a key, if not the foundational global mission of the 21st century.

¹ The terminology of “Information Society”, a term which goes back to the early days of computing and refers to the notion of a single technology induced model of an emerging information enriched (or saturated) social environment has more recently been displaced (at least in UNESCO's usage) by the less technology focussed term “knowledge societies” which also suggests a plurality of emerging social and cultural adaptations to new knowledge opportunities and threats. The most recent terminology “shared knowledge societies” suggests an even newer paradigm of shared open and collaborative environments as being the basic model for newly emerging ICT-enabled societies. In this paper we will use either the terminology specified in the particular identified context or a combination of Information Society and knowledge societies recognizing that there is still some ambiguity in the overall usage in this area.

The success or failure of IFAP as a programme and as a key resource in the realization of the mission embedded in its name is of concern not simply from an administrative or a financial perspective, but even more from the perspectives of international policy and global development. Further, as with all missions concerning managing the well being of the future, there are great difficulties and limitations in grasping the enormity of the responsibility and in working through to the methods, structures, even concepts and language appropriate to the task. In this, IFAP or the “Information/knowledge societies for All” mandate is no different in magnitude from other initiatives such as human rights or environmental management in moving forward initially with halting steps but, eventually with more purpose, firmness and increasing confidence.

An appropriately constituted (and importantly, appropriately resourced) IFAP is ideally placed to carry forward such an agenda. Further, it can provide a means for leadership in harnessing the collective will of governments, civil society and business in finding innovative technology enabled solutions for responding to the information and knowledge needs of the disadvantaged and under-served particularly in Less Developed Countries (LDCs).

In doing this, a reinvigorated IFAP will provide leadership within UNESCO and globally for the Member States that recognises that advancement in ICT and its related societal impacts is recasting the environment for governance, competition and development in ways that require new approaches and collaborations to ensure equity of opportunity and of substance.

Major findings

IFAP was formed through the merger of two existing programmes—the General Information Programme (GPI) and the Intergovernmental Informatics Programme (IIP). It was created as an intergovernmental Council concerned with facilitating UNESCO and Member States’ response to the emerging issues of the Information Society. Its formation also highlighted concerns around the creation of more equitable knowledge societies partly as an outcome of efforts to streamline existing activities and partly in recognition of changing technological circumstances. However, from its inception the Programme has been limited in its delivery capacity because after the first two years, the Council has met only every two years, and the Programme has had an extremely limited budget and staff resources.

Nevertheless, the activities of the Programme have resulted in a number of substantive accomplishments in the context of the overall achievement of the Programme’s goals.² Among those accomplishments are:

- a) *the establishment of the intergovernmental framework.* The UNESCO general conference mandated the merger of the IFI and GPI Programmes to form IFAP. This formal decision was translated into the working reality of the IFAP Council, the IFAP Bureau and the supporting secretariat.
- b) *the definition of the rules of procedure.* The IFAP Programme with its mandate arising from the earlier two Programmes, developed rules of procedure as the basis for its continuing operations.
- c) *fund raising.* IFAP has undertaken a degree of resource mobilization with however, only limited success.
- d) *the funding and implementation of projects.* IFAP established and executed administrative procedures for the selection, funding and implementation of a range of field and other projects in the IFAP priority areas.

² A comprehensive listing of the activities and accomplishments of IFAP can be found at 33C/REP/17.

- e) *the establishment of National Committees.* IFAP has begun the process of supporting the establishment of National IFAP Committees and has seen the successful realization of these in several countries to date.
- f) *publications in the IFAP's field of expertise.* IFAP has begun the process of publishing documents in its area of specific interest and expertise³.
- g) *support for the development and implementation of policy and standard setting instruments.* IFAP has contributed through comment and discussion at both the Council and Bureau levels to the process of the creation of policy and standard setting instruments within its area of expertise and interest.
- h) *development of a "visibility strategy" including a "visibility plan".* A working group was established and based on a consultant's report there has been the publication of a document on Living Information which has now been made available in print among other activities to raise IFAP's visibility.⁴
- i) *development of the IFAP Bureau as a specialist body supporting the IFAP Council.* The IFAP Bureau has evolved to become both a specialist body itself and an enabler of expert opinion in support of IFAP's supporting activities substantive.
- j) *the organization of thematic debates with governmental, NGO and other representatives;* IFAP through its Bureau has begun a process of organizing debates on thematic issues within its area of expertise and interest that include governmental and other representatives.⁵

However, overall IFAP's accomplishments in the six years since its establishment in 2001⁶ have been limited and it would appear that IFAP is still in the process of development. Hence, rather than undertaking an "evaluation" of IFAP, the task in this report is more in the nature of a "mid-term" review. The terms of reference reflect this position and reinforce it. Thus, rather than being solely concerned with assessing outcomes in relation to objectives, this project has a primary emphasis on assessing and providing direction towards the re-invigoration of the Programme for its future development.

In the context of these key accomplishments, it must be recognized that IFAP has faced and continues to face a number of key challenges:

- a) *unclear mandate.* IFAP's overall mandate lacks clarity and focus and does not readily lead to clearly identifiable outcomes and achievements.
- b) *insufficient resources.* IFAP lacks the financial and human resources sufficient to realize its objectives.
- c) *lack of information as to impact particularly with respect to a contribution to "development".* IFAP lacks a capacity to monitor or follow-up on the projects funded through the extra-budgetary funding.
- d) *structural limitations.* The IFAP Council meets only every two years and the IFAP Bureau has virtually no resources to support inter-meeting activity in support of substantive activities.

³ The first of these appeared too late (2007) to be reviewed for this project cf.

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=24122&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

⁴ IFAP Visibility Plan (March 2006). UNESCO, IFAP-2005/Bureau.VIII/Inf.5.

⁵ http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/20306/11292292401IFAP_Thematic_Debates.pdf/IFAP_Thematic_Debates.pdf.

⁶ The Executive Board at its 160th session in October 2000 approved the creation of the Information for All Programmer and invited the Director-General to start implementing as of 1 January 2001 (Document 160 EX/Decisions 3.6.1)

- e) *evolving context*. The broad policy, institutional and technological framework within which IFAP is working is in continuing evolution and IFAP has difficulty in responding to the pace and complexity of these changes with its existing resources and structural limitations.

Conclusions

Not surprisingly and given the evident need for such interventions as a response to the profound transformations in all areas related to the appropriation of ICT, WSIS was able to mobilize a high level of energy and a global support base of interest to IFAP. From this, the WSIS process was able to move forward quite actively to fill the gap which IFAP might have otherwise occupied with IFAP having little to no visibility⁷ or activity in the context of WSIS.⁸

WSIS however, was limited in being a specific set of events⁹ (two phases with formal preparatory processes) and producing specific outputs and associated documents. IFAP on the other hand, is an on-going institutional framework within which many of the issues which were addressed within WSIS may continue to be carried forward. Thus a resulting mission for IFAP might be to support both the implementation of the outcomes of WSIS and in an iterative and adaptive fashion to respond to the rapidly evolving issues arising from the overall information technology revolution.

Thus, it should not be surprising, that the major conclusion of this review is that IFAP has a significant and increasingly important role to play in addressing certain of the areas of initial significance to the Programme as for example in ensuring “a narrowing of the gap between the information rich and the information poor” and “the development of common strategies, methods and tools for building a just and free information society” and that this can be approached initially through responding in the context of UNESCO’s responsibilities for the WSIS Plan of Action follow-up and implementation and also in facilitating an on-going adaptation and evolution in the Plan of Action.

More specifically it was concluded that:

- a) There is a lack of coherence and overall lack of clarity and consistency in the primary orienting documents and directions for IFAP. This has contributed significantly to the limited success with which IFAP has realized its objectives and overall in putting its mandate into effect.
- b) IFAP has to date achieved relatively little in its primary area of responsibility the development of instruments supportive of an Information Society for All. The reasons for this are largely built into the initial programme design including the lack of staff and budgetary resources to undertake these activities.
- c) The absence of a fully developed strategic planning process including the preparation of background research and clarification of concepts and goals leading to and identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks and resulting in the determination of priorities, and courses of action has been a major source of weakness for IFAP.
- d) Even with the extraordinary efforts exerted by the Bureau, it is unlikely that the current level of activity (and thus effectiveness) of IFAP can be significantly enhanced without very

⁷ A senior UNESCO official concerned with WSIS and fully aware of IFAP’s areas of mandated interest indicated that “it had never occurred to him that IFAP might play a role in WSIS”.

⁸ The report to the IFAP Council by the Secretariat on UNESCO’s activities with respect to WSIS does not even mention IFAP. The action of the IFAP Council with respect to this document appears to have simply been to note and endorse the current UNESCO activities. IFAP-2003/COUNCIL.II/3, Paris, January 2003. This would appear to be the only substantive document indicating an active involvement by IFAP with WSIS (based on a search of the UNESCO electronic archive).

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/7868/104573291903_-_WSIS.doc/3%2B-%2BWSIS.doc.

⁹ The WSIS has an ongoing follow up process until 2015.

substantial intervention by Member States on IFAP's behalf or through the injection of additional extra-budgetary funds, the amount of which necessarily will be broadly identified in the course of the strategic planning exercise elsewhere recommended in this report.

- e) Certain of the institutional and structural features of IFAP would appear to have had the effect of limiting the effectiveness of the programme.
- f) There has been a considerable degree of success among those few National Committees currently in active operation. The creation of a successful network of National IFAP Committees would appear among the strongest instruments available through which IFAP might exert influence at the national level and achieve a capacity to link global knowledge society concerns and objectives with local initiatives and development.
- g) The approach to activity areas initiated by the Bureau would appear to be useful and forward looking.
- h) It is not evident that IFAP can play a substantive developmental role in support of knowledge societies for all—it lacks resources and expertise. However, if IFAP were to execute its mandated responsibilities in policy support and standard setting this could have a substantial developmental impact by helping to guide and direct the existing flow of developmental assistance and related activities.
- i) While the recommendations of the “Visibility” Report are sound and useful, the best approach to “visibility” will come from a sharper definition of IFAP's mandate, goals and objectives.

Key recommendations

Strategy

The primary finding of this evaluation has been that IFAP lacks a clearly defined mission, set of objectives, strategy for pursuing these objectives and a means for assessing the achievement of these objectives. Thus it is recommended that the Council:

- a) through its Bureau as a first priority undertake a formal strategic planning process for the Information for All Programme;
- b) through this strategic plan identify priority areas for the Programme, specific resource requirements and possible sources for funds to support the activities which are to be identified as priorities through this plan, as well as the reformulation of the Mission (and thus Mission statement) for IFAP;
- c) that the process be undertaken recognizing the considerable contribution which would be provided by involvement in this process of the range of current and potential stakeholders including currently active NGOs, civil society, the private sector and other multilateral agencies with responsibilities in the knowledge society area; and
- d) given the very close alignment between the outcomes of the WSIS process and the overall mandate indicated for IFAP, the Council should identify what it anticipates as being a very significant role for IFAP as UNESCO's representative in the broad multi-lateral follow-up and implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action.

Advisory Board

If IFAP is to have a significant role in creating the normative, policy or standards environment supportive of knowledge societies for all, it in turn must have access to the broadest and most up-to-date range of knowledge and experience in the specific areas of its interest. It is therefore recommended that the Council through the Secretariat initiate the formation of a broad-based and inclusive Advisory Board including representation from the current NGO IFAP stakeholders, the private sector and civil society; that this Advisory Board operate in a primarily electronic and virtual mode; and that it advise the Council through its Bureau on the range of its thematically structured activities including providing comment as input into the strategic planning process.

Standard and norm setting

The area of primary impact for IFAP is in the development and ratification of globally accepted norms supportive of knowledge societies for all and particularly through the variety of inter-governmental instruments, standards, conventions, guidelines, statements of good practice and others. It is recommended that the Council, following on from the proposed strategic planning process, articulate a strategy for IFAP's role within the UN family as a specialist standard and norm setting body in the area of the Information Society and knowledge societies for All.

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

It is recommended that as an element of the strategic planning process (Recommendation 1), the Secretariat examine the possibility of re-assembling activity areas within the Information Society Division, the CI Sector and all other UNESCO Sectors which are identified as those through which UNESCO will contribute to the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action. This effort should concentrate on all the specific areas relevant to achieving knowledge societies for all. The result would be a restructured UNESCO WSIS follow-up Programme in which IFAP plays a leading strategic role within the context of the identification and establishment of norms and instruments that will support the co-ordination and delivery of knowledge societies for all.

National Committees

The slowly emerging network of National IFAP Committees represents the most significant potential resource for IFAP to make a substantive contribution to building knowledge societies for all. The extension of the National Committee network, which quite recently seems to be proceeding at an accelerated pace, will provide IFAP with a means for disseminating the outputs of its international leadership activities to the national level and to effectively respond to the contextual requirements of individual Member States. It is therefore recommended that IFAP strengthen its efforts towards the creation and operational effectiveness of National Committees.

In this context, National Committees as they mature, would be expected to develop processes for multi-stakeholder participation (including inputs from the private and civil society sectors) through expert Advisory Boards in support of the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action and the local development of a collaborative approach to knowledge societies for all.

Development

IFAP has had neither the resources nor the commitment of a network of relevant expertise to have a significant widespread role in 'on-the-ground development'. However, if IFAP is to play a substantive role in enabling the development of 'knowledge societies for all', it must find the contextually relevant means to link into 'on-the-ground' activities. It is therefore recommended that the Council affirm that its primary role in supporting the developmental aspects of 'knowledge societies for all' will come through

the success of its efforts in the formulation, dissemination and influence on the implementation of suitable norms, policies, standard setting and instruments in support of these objectives.

Research

There is the need for IFAP to have access to high quality and state of the art knowledge, experience and evaluative resources in a wide range of areas related to its mandate. This is particularly important in those areas and priority activities where it wishes to have the greatest impact including influencing and supporting the development of 'knowledge societies for all'. particularly in Less Developed Countries. In positioning itself in this manner, IFAP must be able to develop collaborative processes, to influence priorities for research funding (perhaps even through the endorsement of specific project applications) and to be able to identify evaluative processes, practitioner and policy initiatives which will amplify its Mission. It must also be able to develop credibility with Member States, programs, projects and practitioners in these assessments and in the provision of leadership advice, comment and linkages. It is currently clear that the new approaches that are needed to address issues of information and knowledge equity, inclusion, self-reliance and social cohesion, and which are required of programs such as IFAP must be based on high quality methods for measurement and analysis. It is therefore recommended that the Secretariat design and implement a programme of "branding" of externally funded research conducted in association with the identified priorities and policy development interests of the programme.

1. EVALUATION SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. Executive Board decision

As requested by the Executive Board at its 160th session, “an overall evaluation of the Information for All Programme (IFAP) and its expected results shall be carried out in the seventh year of its existence” (160 EX/Decision 3.6.1). According to the Terms of Reference:

Many of the actions of the Information for All Programme are designed around setting standards, raising awareness and monitoring progress to achieve universal access to information and knowledge. This includes promoting the formulation of integrated information and communication strategies and policies in Member States. Special consideration is being given to fostering international debate on the ethical implications of emerging knowledge societies and assisting in the development of information and management tools. Other objectives will be to enhance the development of “info structures”, such as libraries and archives, especially at the community level; stimulate the production of and access to diverse content; and preserve the documentary heritage, both in digital and traditional formats.¹⁰

1.2. Evaluation scope

The Terms of Reference indicate the requirements of the evaluation as follows:

The main purpose of the Evaluation is to review the role and future relevance of IFAP in pursuing the six core IFAP objectives. The key focus is not to rework these objectives but rather to focus on the most effective ways of achieving them. The evaluation is also expected to provide UNESCO with a clear account of the overall performance of IFAP as well as specific implementable recommendations for future activities. It is intended to:

- *Examine relevance of IFAP to UNESCO’s main objectives, functions and strategies;*
- *Analyse efficiency of programme planning and implementation mechanisms;*
- *Examine relevance of IFAP to international development goals;*
- *Evaluate the suitability of the structure and processes of IFAP for addressing future challenges; and*
- *Evaluate IFAP’s relevance, its results, effectiveness and sustainability, including advice provided in UNESCO’s standard setting activities, advocacy and promotion of reflection and debate and advice in terms of the programme orientation of the Communication and Information (C&I) sector.*

1.3. Methodology

Given the limited activities of the Programme undertaken to date, the methodology for this assessment was divided between information gathering (and analysis) which was concerned with examining the

¹⁰ Evaluation of UNESCO’s Information for All Programme Terms of Reference, Office of Internal Oversight Services, UNESCO, June 2006 http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/22381/11502725461IFAP_evaluation_-_ToRs_final.doc/IFAP%2Bevaluation%2B-%2BToRs%2Bfinal.doc.

Programme retrospectively; and acquiring perspectives and observations concerning the prospects for the Programme into the future.

In support of the *retrospective assessment* the research team undertook the following:

- a) Interviews were conducted with IFAP stakeholders both inside and outside of the organization.¹¹
- b) A survey exploring the experience of National IFAP Committees and National Commissions for UNESCO was prepared in both English and French. Surveys were sent out to all IFAP National Committees and designated IFAP UNESCO National Commission contacts based on names and addresses provided by the IFAP Secretariat.¹²
- c) An on-line survey of identified programme “stakeholders” was undertaken. Programme staff provided a list of some 18,000 electronic mail addresses (derived from, among others, the list of those who had subscribed to a related UNESCO online newsletter). Two rounds of emails were sent to these addresses (of which approximately 15,000 proved to be valid) inviting addressees to complete an on-line questionnaire designed to assess knowledge and opinion concerning the activities of IFAP. Of these, some 950 addressees completed questionnaires for a response rate of approximately 6%.¹³
- d) A survey was prepared and distributed to all recipients of IFAP grants.¹⁴
- e) A case study was undertaken of the IFAP National Committee in New Zealand including in-depth interviews with and an on-site attendance at a regular Committee meeting.
- f) A meeting of the IFAP Bureau was observed and all attendees were interviewed.
- g) An extensive review of documents was undertaken.¹⁵
- h) A workshop was held with key IFAP stakeholders for a review of preliminary findings and recommendations.¹⁶

11 See Appendix B.

12 See summary of results in Appendix C.

13 See summary of results in Appendix D.

14 See summary of results in Appendix E.

15 See Appendix A.

16 See list of attendees in Appendix F.

2. BACKGROUND

In his address to the inaugural meeting of the IFAP Council, the UNESCO Director General, Koichiro Matsuura welcomed the members by saying: “You have gathered here for a meeting that has the potential to become truly historical. For the first time an intergovernmental body with representatives of Member States from all regions will take up the challenges arising from the rapid development of information and communications technologies and their applications.”¹⁷ In the same address he went on to discuss information technology and the role of IFAP in the context of “the birth of a new civilization”, UNESCO’s mandate “to promote the free exchange of ideas and knowledge”, how “all aspects of the Organization’s work are being challenged by this phenomenon” and how “all of UNESCO’s areas of competence- education, the sciences, communication and culture are being affected”.

Further in the address he noted that “the essential prerequisite for the creation of an inclusive and equitable Global Knowledge Society is access for everybody to information. This is why the new Programme, which your Council will be guiding, has been called the ‘Information for All Programme’”.

2.1. IFAP mandate and objectives

After noting how the new Programme was the result of a merger of the pre-existing General Information Programme (GPI) and the Intergovernmental Informatics Programme (IIP), the Director General identified the “two-fold mandate: First, the Programme should foster debate on the political, ethical and social challenges of the emerging Global Knowledge Society. Second, it should implement concrete projects that harness the opportunities of ICT for creating such a Global Knowledge Society.”¹⁸

The Programme’s objectives are:

The Information for All Programme shall provide a platform for international policy discussions and guidelines for action on the preservation of information and universal access to it, on the participation of all in the emerging global information society and on the ethical, legal, and societal consequences of ICT developments.

As a transverse UNESCO programme, the Information for All Programme shall provide a framework for international cooperation and international and regional partnerships. In order to implement the above-mentioned policies, the programme shall support the development of common strategies, methods and tools for building a just and free information society.

In particular, the Information for All Programme aims to:

- a) promote and widen access through the organization, digitization and preservation of information;
- b) support the production of local content and foster the availability of indigenous knowledge through basic literacy and ICT literacy training;

¹⁷ UNESCO DG/2002/34.

¹⁸ In response to what was perceived as an overly narrow and technological (and insufficiently human-centred) approach to the issues being addressed within the context of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), UNESCO has undertaken to standardize its own usage of the terms “Information Society” and “Knowledge societies” as “Knowledge societies”. This indicates its own concern with the development of pluralistic and knowledge based (rather than technology or information based) future ICT-enabled societies. This was linked to the intention of UNESCO to take a more human and development oriented approach to the World Summit. http://www.unesco.org/confgen/sub_bodies/en_sub_9.shtml. In this paper we will in general follow this nomenclature except as is indicated by a formal organizational or definitional designation (as for example the Information Society Division).

- c) promote international reflection and debate on the ethical, legal and societal challenges of the information society;
- d) support training, continuing education and lifelong learning in the fields of communication, information and informatics;
- e) promote the use of international standards and best practices in communication, information and informatics in UNESCO's fields of competence; and
- f) promote information and knowledge networking at local, national, regional and international levels.¹⁹

The main areas of activity of the Programme are:

- developing international, regional and national information policies;
- developing human resources and capabilities for the information age;
- helping to strengthen institutions as gateways for information access; and
- assisting in the development of information processing and management tools and systems.

In the associated document (IFAP-2003/Council.II/2), the Director General provided a description of some aligned activities that were already underway. These demonstrated “the key role that information can play in addressing crucial social issues like poverty and social exclusion, and in empowering development actors in civil society, notably at the local and community levels” and particularly in the areas of:

- addressing ethical and societal challenges of the information society;
- global portals and tools;
- promoting wider access to information in the public domain and Memory of the World;
- reinforcing the role of libraries, archives, information services, and networks and community multimedia centres; and
- developing human resources and capabilities.

2.2. IFAP Council mandate and functions

The Executive Board in its decision establishing the Council provided the following as the “Mandate”:

- a) The Information for All Programme shall be a key participant in the fulfillment of UNESCO's mandate to contribute to “education for all”, to the “free exchange of ideas and knowledge” and to “increase the means of communication between ... peoples”.
- b) The programme shall contribute to narrowing the gap between the information rich and the information poor.

¹⁹ Executive Board Decisions 160th Session #3.6 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001212/121270e.pdf>.

- c) The programme shall take direct initiatives, commission studies, facilitate cooperation, analyse and report on all aspects of access to and management of information.
- d) Because of its trans-disciplinary nature, the programme shall give priority to working with all UNESCO sectors in the adaptation of ICT to their activities.
- e) The programme shall cooperate closely with other bodies of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, and with the private sector in order to fulfill this mandate.

In addition, the Statutes of the Council provided for five “functions”:

- a) considering proposals on the development and adaptation of the Information for All Programme;
- b) recommending the broad lines of action that the Information for All Programme could take;
- c) reviewing and assessing achievements and defining the basic areas requiring increased international cooperation;
- d) promoting participation of Member States in the Information for All Programme;
- e) supporting all fund-raising efforts for the implementation of the Information for All Programme.”²⁰

2.3. IFAP administration

According to the Statutes, the administrative support for the Council would be provided by a Secretariat provided by the Director General²¹. The Programme however, was framed within the overall context of the Information Society Division where (it would appear) specific activities were designated as being activities of the Programme, for the purposes of reporting to the Council and the General Conference by the Director General, as required by the Statutes of the Council. Notably the Secretary to the Council was also to be the Director of the Information Society Division of the Communication and Information (CI) Sector. Additional support to the Council (and the Programme) was to be provided by staff of the Information Society Division and included the part-time²² activities of a Senior Professional, a junior staff member and a Secretary Assistant.

This evaluation has been quite deliberately timed to occur as UNESCO is in the midst of its 34th Planning and Budgeting process (34/C4). It is also positioned at the end of the first six years of IFAP and just as a new Medium Term (6 year) Strategy for the Organization is being prepared. Thus the intention with this report and process is that it will provide input into the 34C/4 process and in this way influence how UNESCO responds to the challenges of building knowledge societies for all into the next medium term cycle.

²⁰ IFAP Council Statutes

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/21326/11395663931/ifap_statutes_en.pdf/ifap_statutes_en.pdf.

²¹ Statutes op. cit.

²² Reported as being no more than 10% of overall available working time.

2.4. IFAP funding

As noted, IFAP since its formation, has been subject to significant budgetary constraints. Originally formed in part as a means to save funds through the elimination of duplication through the merger of two pre-existing programmes, IFAP in addition has been subject to the following:

- The operating costs of the Council and its working groups shall be covered by an appropriation voted for this purpose by the General Conference of UNESCO.
- Member States shall bear the expenses of the participation of their representatives in sessions of the Council and working groups, with the exception of the least developed countries (LDCs) whose participation expenses shall be borne by the Council.
- Voluntary contributions to the Information for All Programme may be accepted and established as trust funds, in accordance with the Financial Regulations of UNESCO, and administered by the Director-General.²³

The actual amount expended for the organization of the Council session and the Bureau meetings for the period 2004/05 amounted to US \$73,118 from the regular programme and budget.²⁴

2.5. IFAP communication tools – website, reports, brochure, publications series

In order to raise its profile and visibility with Member States, donors and other stakeholders, IFAP has undertaken a range of promotional activities and prepared a variety of promotional materials including a website, reports on the Programme, a brochure, and most recently has initiated a publications series.

In addition, the IFAP Council undertook as part of its initial objectives, to use electronic tools in its internal operations as a demonstration to others in UNESCO of the power of these tools. In particular it opted to support electronic meetings and electronic interactions between meetings.

2.6. Context

The establishment of IFAP reflected the broad perception by Member States that there was a need for a specific inter-governmental mechanism to respond to the emerging issues of increasingly technology induced social, political, cultural, educational and other impacts and opportunities. Once having established such a mechanism it must be recognized that the context in which it operates and the environment in which it is meant to have influence is itself in continuing evolution. It is impossible to list or identify all of the environmental or contextual elements whose on-going change would have impact on the activities and opportunities for influence of a programme such as IFAP however, certain of those contextual elements do stand out and particularly:

- a) the rapid advance of the Information Society and the challenge of creating knowledge societies for all
- b) the reform of the UN system and UNESCO's role within this
- c) the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS).

²³ Statutes op. cit.

²⁴ 33C/REP/17. (The reference in fact says \$73,118, 000 but we are assuming that this is a typographical error.)

The Rapid Advance of the Information Society – the Challenge: Creating Knowledge Societies for All

The Information Society, or more broadly the advance in the implementation and use of ICT has accelerated in the period since the establishment of IFAP. Where IFAP was once unique and visionary, as a focus for inter-governmental concern for these issues, there is now recognition by many agencies of such concerns and activities. Equally, the range of impacts and the depth of penetration of the changes induced by ICT are now felt and substantially recognized by many in all corners of the world. These matters include:

- the scope and pace of impact/change due to ICT are accelerating—in education, health, science, culture (among others);
- digital divides are developing, persisting and increasing between those with access to ICT and those without, in both developing and ‘developed’ countries;
- similar divisions are emerging with respect to the opportunities for the range of “effective uses” to which ICT can be applied in matters such as e-government, e-health, e-learning;
- industrial, economic, and policy disruptions are emerging as a result of changes in the capacity and cost of ICT as well as from technology convergence;
- ICT is presenting challenges to the role (governance, economic and social leadership and cultural identity) and the independent operation of nation states;
- there is an emergence of ICT enabled “open” and self-organizing systems (particularly in software but also in other knowledge domains such as electronic publishing) which are either beyond or challenge existing governance, business and social structures; and
- success with ICT enabled processes seems to spring from a combination of top-down infrastructure development and the bottom up social appropriation of systems in a development dynamic that creates and fulfills new needs e.g. cell phones, on-line communities.

Reform of the UN system and UNESCO’s role within this

IFAP as an inter-governmental body has a role to play within the broad UN and multilateral system currently under-going significant reform and specifically those efforts underway to ensure increased integration and specialization of UN activities. In addition, there has been an increasing involvement of Civil Society/multi-stakeholder arrangements in many spheres of service delivery practice. Among the more evident changes have been:

- local level integration of programmes within the variety of UN activities operational at the local level;²⁵
- countries moving to take ownership of developmental processes and to have local expertise capable of undertaking these activities;
- increasing use of ICT as a ‘multidimensional’ and integrating tool for development;
- increasing orientation to “field” (i.e. local) level development activities;

25 cf. UN Country Team, (UNCT), Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF).

- Increasing specialization in the roles of the UN agencies;
- increasing difficulty in maintaining an appropriate balance (and “feedback” connections) between the normative and the operational roles in individual UN agencies and in the UN reform process overall;
- “One UN” at the local and country level and Common Country Assessments and UN Development Assistance²⁶ Frameworks (CCA/UNDAF)s at the national level;
- increased delineation of areas of specific interest/expertise within the array of UN agencies;
- increased attention to involvement of the NGO and civil society sectors in UN activities (Cardoso report),²⁷ and
- increased concern with the involvement of private sector in UN activities (Global Compact).

The intention with the UN Reform exercises is that all of the UN agencies will be impacted and will look to coordinate (create “coherence”) among their various activities. As well, individual agencies have been challenged to identify their “comparative advantage”.²⁸ The Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD/UNCTAD/ECOSOC) has been given the overall mandate for follow-up on the outcomes of WSIS and has made a series of internal adjustments in operating practices and procedures to accommodate this.²⁹

The World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)

Contributing to these overall changes and specific to the sector in which IFAP is active, has been the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS). This has been a recent focal point for attention and activity within the sector and the basis for a variety of emergent multi-lateral, multi-dimensional and multi-partner approaches to the use of ICT. This has been evident in a variety of standards setting and policy making levels among other areas for most of the last decade. The processes of development and now, the implementation phase of WSIS, have deeply impacted on the context for the continuing evolution of IFAP. Matters of interest include:

- Significant roles for multi-stakeholder and partnership approaches;
- Clear roles for UNESCO in facilitation for six Action Lines of WSIS Plan of Action implementation process;
- The, as yet unresolved, nature of the complex integration of ICT and development;
- The continuing debates concerning Internet governance and other policy areas; and
- The significance of WSIS processes on-going to 2015.

26 op. cit. <http://daccessdds.un.org/doc/UNDOC/GEN/N06/621/41/PDF/N0662141.pdf?OpenElement> (A61/83).

27 A58/817 entitled “We the Peoples: civil society, the United Nations and global governance.”

28 The UK Department for International Development discusses this as follows: “UNESCO’s comparative advantage lies in functions which can only be undertaken by an organisation with a global mandate. It is able to provide a forum for: international debate, the establishment of global standards and indicators, sharing of ideas, analysis and experience, and assessment of results. It is not a funding agency and has limited capability for playing an effective role at the country level. Education has from the start been the major part of UNESCO’s mission. Its very broadly-based mandate carries with it risks of diffusion of effort and overlap with other international organisations – but also opportunities to develop interdisciplinary approaches. *DFID Working in Partnership with the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation UNESCO: Institutional Strategy Paper*, 2006, p. 4.

29 <http://stdev.unctad.org/docs/e2006-46.pdf>.

2.7. International Programme for Development of Communications (IPDC)

The International Programme for Development of Communications (IPDC) is also located within the Communication and Information Sector. This Programme has a quite similar overall structure to IFAP in that it has an intergovernmental Council, Bureau and supporting secretariat. The IPDC differs from IFAP however, in having a quite specific set of objectives concerned with the support for media development and particularly journalism development at the local level in Less Developed Countries. The Programme has recently been quite successful in obtaining extra-budgetary funding for its activities. Also, as a somewhat similar Programme with a related set of objectives (the development of knowledge capacity through media at the local level), it is often seen as a possible model for IFAP and a potential merger partner for IFAP.

3. MAJOR OBSERVATIONS AND FINDINGS

3.1. Orienting the IFAP Programme

Background

The background and source documents for IFAP present different perspectives and emphases which can lead to a lack of clarity. While the Director General identified the “mandate” of IFAP as being:

- “First, the Programme should foster debate on the political, ethical and social challenges of the emerging Global Knowledge Society.
- Second it should implement concrete projects that harness the opportunities of ICT for creating such a Global Knowledge Society.”

The Executive Board in its Decision establishing the Council indicated the following:

- The Information for All Programme shall be a key participant in the fulfilment of UNESCO’s mandate to contribute to “education for all”, to the “free exchange of ideas and knowledge” and to “increase the means of communication between ... peoples”.
- The programme shall contribute to narrowing the gap between the information rich and the information poor.
- The programme shall take direct initiatives, commission studies, facilitate cooperation, analyse and report on all aspects of access to and management of information.
- Because of its trans-disciplinary nature, the programme shall give priority to working with all UNESCO sectors in the adaptation of ICT to their activities.
- The programme shall cooperate closely with other bodies of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organizations, and with the private sector in order to fulfill this mandate.

Meanwhile, the “objectives” of the Council (the sole operational activity of the Programme) are further identified as being to:

- provide a platform for international policy discussions and guidelines for action on (a) the preservation of information and universal access to it; (b) the participation of all in the emerging global information society; and (c) the ethical, legal and societal consequences of ICT developments.
- provide a framework for international cooperation and international and regional partnerships.
- support the development of common strategies, methods and tools for building a just and free information society.
- promote and widen access through the organization, digitization and preservation of information;
- support the production of local content and foster the availability of indigenous knowledge through basic literacy and ICT literacy training;

- promote international reflection and debate on the ethical, legal and societal challenges of the information society;
- support training, continuing education and lifelong learning in the fields of communication, information and informatics;
- promote the use of international standards and best practices in communication, information and informatics in UNESCO's fields of competence;
- promote information and knowledge networking at local, national, regional and international levels.³⁰

While the “activities” are described as:

- developing international, regional and national information policies
- developing human resources and capabilities for the information age
- helping to strengthen institutions as gateways for information access
- assisting in the development of information processing and management tools and systems

It is very difficult to see how this mandate, set of objectives, and activities could have been accomplished with a budget not exceeding \$100,000 over two years.

Findings

It is quite clear that at its root, IFAP's mandate, objectives, anticipated mission and activities are not currently integrated nor structured so as to provide a coherent framework for effective action. Rather, they appear to be internally incompatible, and ultimately unachievable under current organizational and financial circumstances. As well they are inconsistent as to whether IFAP is meant to be an advisory body or an implementation body and specifically in its relationship to the IFAP activities in the CI Sector.

The mandate, objectives and tasks are clearly an amalgam of a range of desirable orientations for the programme. They appear to be drawn in part (largely unrevised) from the previous programmes from which IFAP emerged (those objectives concerning “information management”), and in part attempting to respond both to the (understood) requirements of developed and of less developed countries (viz. discussion on the “emerging Global Knowledge Society” AND “projects harnessing ICT opportunities”).

The documents do not appear to differentiate IFAP as a Council of Member States with certain specific resources and capabilities—notably its capacity to create normatively significant global instruments and policy directions; and as an operational Programme (such as that within the CI Sector) with other specific resources—budgets and staff.

The effect of this apparent lack of coherence that is at the core of IFAP, has been that IFAP has not been able to be effective or efficient in either of its what would appear, to be two primary mandated areas: “fostering debate” leading to consensus around normative issues concerning the challenges of the emerging Global Knowledge Society”; or in developing concrete projects/activities supportive of using ICTs as a means for creating a “Global Knowledge Society”.

30 Executive Board Decisions 160th Session #3.6 <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0012/001212/121270e.pdf>.

Both of these mandates are of fundamental importance in building inclusive and equitable knowledge societies globally. However, effectively undertaking appropriate activities in support of either of these two would be sufficient for any programme. Undertaking both clearly overloads the IFAP programme within its current resource availability and with the other limitations with which IFAP must contend.

Equally, the six “objectives” of the programme which, on closer examination can in fact be seen to be nine objectives and three sub-objectives, provide a somewhat less than coherent framework for a set of activities and priorities. These “objectives” are inter-connected. They identify more or less specific potential areas of activity (support for local content development and for training in information management, information literacy campaigns). They offer suggestions for “promoting” various processes (e.g. knowledge networking, issues debates, use of standards and best practices, etc.). They also offer suggestions for providing an institutional context for various processes (policy discussions, development of guidelines in various key areas of knowledge society development, cooperation and partnership development, common strategies and tools). They do not however indicate how these might be undertaken by a “programme” with IFAP’s level of resources.

Moreover, in the absence of clear or operational definitions of key terms (for example “universal access to information”, “global information society”, “knowledge networking”) it is difficult to see how a coherent work plan or programme of activities could be developed from this list. Rather, what the list does is to indicate a broad area of emphasis for the interests and activities of the Programme (in reality, in the absence of resources, this must be limited to the activities of the Council/Bureau/Secretariat) from which virtually any activity (in the general area of emphasis) could be consistently derived.

Given this set of vague framing concepts it is difficult to see how IFAP could in fact, proceed with any degree of direction or strength of purpose. To determine that IFAP has not as yet achieved its “objectives” in its six years of operation is hardly surprising, since it is not clear what in fact it would mean for IFAP to have achieved this particular set of objectives. Moreover, IFAP has not yet been able to adequately clarify or focus these objectives into a more coherent and realizable set of working principles (with the possible exception of the more recent activities of the Bureau identified below) that adequately address the very difficult and complex area of its mandate.³¹

What further might be observed from this discussion is that the identified objectives generally seem to de-emphasize those areas where IFAP as an intergovernmental council could be most effective. These areas are in creating international consensus at the political level around normative issues (as for example equitable access) concerning the Information Society and knowledge societies globally. Additionally IFAP, through its internal workings, has the opportunity to extend the influence of these normative areas of consensus into a broad range of related areas at the global level through global instruments and norms based standards. It could do this through providing normative leadership for multi-lateral and bi-lateral institutions working in the areas of global knowledge societies and ICT for Development; or at the national level, by working to support the achievement of emerging global standards in national programming and policy.

Conclusion

Not surprisingly and given the evident need for such interventions as a response to the profound transformations in all areas related to the appropriation of ICT, WSIS was able to mobilize a high level of energy and a global support base in these same issue areas. From this the WSIS process was able to move

³¹ One of the issues identified by certain Member State representatives to IFAP interviewed in the course of this evaluation was that there was a lack of measurable results from the Programme against which to assess its overall progress. It is an observation of this study that the goals and objectives of IFAP are insufficiently precise to allow for such assessment and it is further the expectation of the evaluators that the development of such indicators could be seen as a potential secondary output from the proposed strategic planning process.

forward quite actively to fill the gap which IFAP might have otherwise occupied, with IFAP having little to no visibility³² or activity in the context of WSIS.³³

WSIS however, was limited in being a specific set of events (two phases with formal preparatory processes) and producing specific outputs and associated documents. IFAP on the other hand, is an on-going institutional framework within which many of the issues which were addressed within WSIS may continue to be carried forward. Thus a resulting mission for IFAP might be to support both the implementation of the outcomes of WSIS and in an iterative and adaptive fashion to respond to the rapidly evolving issues arising from the overall information technology revolution.

It should not be surprising therefore, that the major conclusion of this review is that IFAP has a significant and increasingly important role to play in addressing certain of the areas of initial significance to the Programme as for example in ensuring “a narrowing of the gap between the information rich and the information poor” and “the development of common strategies, methods and tools for building a just and free information society”. It can approach this initially through responding in the context of UNESCO’s responsibilities for the WSIS Plan of Action follow-up and implementation and also in facilitating an on-going adaptation and evolution in the Plan.

The lack of coherence between the objectives of IFAP as stated in the Statutes³⁴ and those as identified within the Medium Term Strategy³⁵ should also be noted. This failing and the overall lack of clarity and consistency in the primary orienting documents and directions for IFAP has contributed significantly to the limited success with which IFAP has realized its objectives and overall in putting its mandate into effect.

3.2. Structure of IFAP

Background

IFAP, according to the original Executive Board decision³⁶ consists of a Council with 26 members elected by the General Conference on a staggered basis for two year terms and with regional representation. By statute the Council now meets once every two years, with management and other matters being undertaken by eight Bureau members elected by the Council. As well there is a Bureau with 8 members elected from the Council at each of its regular meetings and a Secretariat to be provided by the Director General. In addition, at its second Council meeting IFAP undertook a process of developing National Committees to support its activities.³⁷ IFAP, as UNESCO’s leading activity in Information Society areas was mandated to “give priority to working with all UNESCO sectors in the adaptation of ICT to their activities.”

The history of UNESCO includes the proposition that contrary to other UN agencies, participation in UNESCO governance and substantive activities would be done by governmental subject area “experts” rather than for example, governmental representatives or diplomats. The background objective of the former approach was apparently that in areas of “culture, education, and science”, there would be the

32 A senior UNESCO official concerned with WSIS and fully aware of IFAP’s areas of mandated interest indicated that “it had never occurred to him that IFAP might play a role in WSIS”.

33 The report to the IFAP Council by the Secretariat on UNESCO’s activities with respect to WSIS does not even mention IFAP. The action of the IFAP Council with respect to the document appears to have simply been to note and endorse the current UNESCO activities. IFAP-2003/COUNCIL.II/3, Paris, January 2003. This would appear to be the only substantive document indicating an active involvement by IFAP with WSIS (based on a search of the UNESCO electronic archive).http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/7868/104573291903_-_WSIS.doc/3%2B-%2BWSIS.doc

34 cf. Statutes op. cit.

35 Medium Term Strategy [31C/4] cf. para. 175-177.

36 EXDecision 160 op. cit.

37 IFAP-2003/Council.II/9.

need for (and availability of) governmental expertise which could make a substantive contribution to UNESCO's deliberations and to the intergovernmental declarations/decisions as they might emerge.³⁸

The intention at the establishment of the IFAP Council was that "The persons appointed by Member States as their representatives on the Council shall preferably be specialists in the fields covered by the Information for All Programme."³⁹

The IFAP Bureau has begun a process of becoming engaged with a variety of substantive issues and has been developing a limited number of modalities for examining those issues. The Bureau has undertaken to establish a variety of Working Groups to address substantive issues of concern with the mandate of the Programme including on Info-ethics, Information Literacy, digital literacy and Measurement of Knowledge Societies. These Working Groups meet during the Bureau meetings and have included representation from NGO stakeholders, other Divisions within the sector, other sectors in UNESCO, and outside UN agencies. The specific work patterns, activities and outcomes of these Working Groups have not been clearly specified except that it is expected that they will ultimately provide advice to the Council in substantive areas.

In addition to and in association with the Working Groups, the Bureau has held several thematic meetings dealing with substantive issues, including a joint meeting with the IPDC which was concerned with community based knowledge development.

Background – IFAP National Committees

IFAP in its establishment was given the right to create National Committees which would have direct links to the IFAP Council through its Secretariat. However, the activities supporting the development of National Committees only began to be effective in 2004.

A sum was made available through the regular budget (2004/5) and administered through regional UNESCO staff to support the development of National Committees.⁴⁰

The National Committees are for the most part organized within the context of the National Commissions and particularly the Communication and Information sub-Commission within the National Commissions.

The overall objective of the National Committees is "assisting in the elaboration of socially oriented latter-day information policies, which will help man to develop knowledge and habits necessary for life in information society objectives"⁴¹ and more specifically:

- identify and motivate national institutions concerned with the various objectives and activities of IFAP;
- constitute a permanent forum to facilitate the flow of information between UNESCO/IFAP and interested national institutions;
- regularly disseminate information about IFAP objectives and activities provided by the UNESCO/IFAP Secretariat, including a national IFAP website;

38 Interviews with UNESCO officials

39 IFAP-2002/COUNCIL.I/Inf.3, Paris, 18 January 2002 Interviews with those knowledgeable concerning member state representatives to the Council indicated that while such representation was mixed, that the trend over time was that the preponderance of representatives were of the order of diplomatic generalists rather than subject area specialists.

40 cf. INF 9 Current status of the IFAP National Committees.

41 See IFAP-2003/Council.II/9 and updated as

http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=23938&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

- organise periodic national IFAP meetings and prepare an annual report on national activities to be addressed to the UNESCO/IFAP secretariat for publication by UNESCO and consideration by the IFAP Intergovernmental Council;
- facilitate appropriate national inputs to and participation in, as a member or as an observer, the sessions of the IFAP Intergovernmental Council, and IFAP related international and regional meetings;
- advise on and organize expert assistance on the planning, implementation and evaluation of IFAP projects;
- assist in obtaining funding for national participation in IFAP projects;
- identify and formulate project proposals for consideration for funding through the IFAP Special Account.
- maintain contacts with other IFAP National Committees on questions of mutual interest.⁴²

The above would appear to be the range of activities usually undertaken by IFAP National Committees however, the DG's expectations concerning the functioning of the National Committees are that they will act so as to facilitate and (for example) support the implementation at the national level of the Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace and the Charter on the Preservation of Digital Heritage".⁴³

The IFAP website and reporting indicates a total of 52 National Committees (only a very few of which are active).

It was reported that the programme for the establishment of IFAP National Committees had not until recently been active although a number of Committees had been established in name only. A program of developing National Committees had recently been established during the 33 C/5 biennium by the Secretariat, and is currently supported by one staff member.

Findings

The challenge for an Intergovernmental Council such as IFAP and particularly one dealing with contemporary and fast emerging issues, is that technical knowledge may be required for many of the areas under negotiation. This required expertise may not be available within the roster of government employees acting as representatives to these bodies. In fact, governments from all countries are increasingly required to rely on extra-governmental expertise in the vast array of technical areas, as for example in ICT. Many of the policy areas in which intergovernmental bodies such as the IFAP Council may be expected to deliberate, most definitely require such expertise. For the IFAP Council to have access to the level and range of expertise appropriate for the development of policy and standards or for advising on the development of policy and standards in the area of the Information Society and the emerging knowledge societies, there is a need for the Programme to be able to draw on currently informed expertise in the variety of areas within its mandate. It is unlikely that sufficient of such expertise will be available through the current process of exclusive Member State representation to the Council.

42 *ibid.*

43 DG/2004/058.

The current rules of procedure for both the Council and the Bureau are that non-governmental representation is only allowed on an observer basis and only on the direct invitation of Council (or Bureau) members.

Similar considerations as the above seem to have provided the background to the recent activities undertaken within WSIS where active and extensive Civil Society participation provided much of the technical expertise and political insight which underlay the more substantive discussions of the Summit. As well, the availability of technical expertise as a source of insight into the variety of technical issues presented by knowledge society developments and particularly those mediated by Information and Communications Technology (ICT) would appear to be part of the background to the involvement of Civil Society in the recently completed multi-stakeholder Internet Governance Forum.

The presence of this expertise in the IFAP Council would appear to be a necessary condition to the effectiveness of the Council both in terms of identifying issues which might need to be addressed and the overall ability of the Council to respond to these issues.

The IFAP Council having only biennial meetings, with limited inter-sessional contact and preparation, has severely limited its effectiveness, and this has restricted the amount of substantive activities which the Council has been able to undertake. The activities of the Bureau which have extended into substantive areas of knowledge gathering has to a degree been as a substitute for this but in the absence of more formal connections between the substantive activities of the Council and these activities of the Bureau the contribution which the Bureau has been able to make in this way has also been limited.

The capacity of the IFAP Council to act in a specialist role relative to the area of its mandate has largely been realized through the activities of the IFAP Bureau which (in its Seventh meeting in July 2004)⁴⁴ began to take on a more substantive form though the organization of the first in a series of thematic sessions in conjunction initially with the Bureau meetings, and then using the outcomes of these meetings, as inputs into meetings of the Intergovernmental Council.⁴⁵ This is a somewhat different role from other such Bureaux to UNESCO Intergovernmental Councils where the role of the Bureaux are largely confined to simply providing administrative support to the Councils. This substantive role of the Bureau has included convening Working Groups on issue areas within the IFAP mandate and extensive participation by NGOs and other sources of expertise on the identified themes. In addition, the Bureau can be characterized as consisting of subject area specialists with the capacity and interest to contribute directly to IFAP substantive discussions and outputs.⁴⁶

While the development of the substantive areas of IFAP activity by the Bureau has gone some distance towards providing the means for informed and concrete activity by the Council. There is however, no overall plan for how such activities might develop, or their relationship with specific anticipated outcomes by the Council.

The use of electronic tools for internal communication within the Programme has been sporadic and these tools are now much more widely used within UNESCO and elsewhere than when IFAP was initiated. Efforts are continuing to encourage and demonstrate the value of such tools to support the on-going activities of the Bureau. These may prove to be particularly cost effective as IFAP moves to implement

44 IFAP-2004/Bureau.VII/1.

45 As but one, if crucial example and as already noted, the contribution of IFAP to the WSIS process was minimal. Even in its role in advising UNESCO in these substantive areas with UNESCO as a major contributing body to WSIS, and at least, based on the documented response of the IFAP Council to a report from the Secretariat on UNESCO's participation in WSIS, IFAP's contribution was simply to acknowledge and affirm its support for UNESCO in these areas with no substantive addition or comment on these activities even though the report itself indicated no involvement of IFAP in this key process and event. IFAP-2003/COUNCIL.II/3.

46 Interviews conducted with each of the Bureau members indicated both substantive expertise and working experience as specialist in the IFAP subject area. It should be noted that the original program design was such that the Council was to have had substantive expertise while the Bureau was to have been simply concerned with meeting arrangements and logistics. The development of a Bureau with specialist knowledge would appear to have been a result of the absence of such knowledge being more widely available within the Council.

some of the proposed recommendations and particularly the extension of involvement of the NGO and civil society sectors.

Findings – National Committees

Only a very limited number of the reported 52 National Committees (NCs) appear to be active at this time. A review indicates that only some dozen or so Committees have a presence on the World Wide Web. A survey sent to available electronic contact points (in French and English) elicited only a handful of responses.⁴⁷ IFAP itself reports that only a very small number of the reported 52 NCs are currently operational.

It was reported⁴⁸ that the funding made available at the regional level to support the development of NCs was not being used, or not being used effectively for this purpose.

However, several of the NCs which took form soon after the initial call have proven to be quite effective. The NC in Russia organized an international conference to address issues of concern in WSIS and has an active program in developing field projects and publications in support of IFAP's objectives.⁴⁹ The NC in New Zealand is particularly active in support of policy development in areas of concern with respect to the development of knowledge societies for all and has taken a role in supporting the development of NCs among the Pacific Island states and a Pacific Regional IFAP Council.⁵⁰

Conclusion

Certain of the institutional and structural features of IFAP would appear to have had the effect of limiting the effectiveness of the programme, particularly a programme such as this one which is meant to be active in a fast-moving and quite technical area. There would appear to be a need to revise these features for IFAP to achieve the desired degree of effectiveness.

While the use of the various communication tools was initially seen as in some sense an extraordinary investment, it should now be understood by the Council that these activities – the website, brochure and so on – are now quite normal to any activity or programme which wishes to have any degree of visibility or legitimacy in the larger world.

There has been a considerable degree of success among those few National Committees currently in active operation. The creation of a successful network of National IFAP Committees would appear among the strongest instruments available through which IFAP might exert influence at the national level and achieve a capacity to link global knowledge society concerns and objectives with local initiatives and development.

The approach to activity areas initiated by the Bureau would appear to be useful and forward looking.

3.3. Role of IFAP as a policy/standards body in UNESCO

Background

IFAP was originally established as a mechanism through which UNESCO (and through UNESCO, the UN system and the Member States) could pay attention to issues arising from the development of the Information Society and specifically “*be a key participant in the fulfillment of UNESCO's mandate to*

47 See Appendix C.

48 Interview results with both UNESCO headquarters and field staff.

49 www.ifapcom.ru

50 Site visit and interviews.

contribute to “education for all”, to the “free exchange of ideas and knowledge” and to “increase the means of communication between peoples”.

At the time of its establishment and for the period immediately prior to this, there was an emerging understanding of the significance and scope of the changes which ICT was precipitating throughout the world and particularly in Developed Countries. As well, less developed countries were coming to recognize the growing gap between their opportunities for technology-based advance and those in the Developed Countries.

The Information for All Programme was established “to provide a platform for international policy discussions and guidelines for action on the preservation of information and universal access to it, on the participation of all in the emerging global information society and on the ethical, legal and societal consequences of ICT developments and to provide a framework for international cooperation and international and regional partnerships. In order to implement the above-mentioned policies, the programme shall support the development of common strategies, methods and tools for building a just and free information society.”⁵¹

IFAP’s “Main Programme Area I” foresees the “Development of inter-sectoral, regional and national information policies” which in this context are based in international standard setting instruments prepared by UNESCO and its partners. Two of these instruments were prepared in the period under review. In 2003 the General Conference of UNESCO adopted “The Recommendation concerning the Promotion and Use of Multilingualism and Universal Access to Cyberspace”.⁵² Also in 2003, the General Conference adopted the “UNESCO Charter on the Preservation of the Digital Heritage.”⁵³ IFAP also reviewed the “Policy Guidelines for the Development and Promotion of Governmental Public Domain Information”. IFAP has reviewed and endorsed these instruments as they have been referred to it in the course of its operation and which fall within its overall area of responsibility.

Findings

The significance of the transformations being precipitated by new information and communication processes has accelerated in the period since 2000 and including the widening of the “Digital Divide” between and within Less Developed and Developed countries. As well, the need for an effective policy response to the changes being brought about by technology change and to eliminating the gap between the utilization of ICT by less developed countries as compared to the developed countries, has grown.

The four year long process of the two phases of the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) has notably addressed many of the fundamental issues which IFAP saw at the outset and for which it was established. WSIS has raised the awareness and visibility of Information Society issues among many who had previously given these matters minimal attention. The WSIS process of investigation and sharing is now concluded, with the development of the Geneva Declaration of Principles, the Geneva Plan of Action, the Tunis Commitment and the Tunis Agenda for the Information Society as outputs. There is no specific evidence of IFAP having played a substantive role or made a direct substantive contribution to any of these⁵⁴ nor has IFAP itself initiated any such instruments in the course of its activities.⁵⁵

While the relevance of IFAP’s mandate in policy and standard setting in the areas of concern to building an Information Society/knowledge societies for all has grown exponentially since IFAP’s creation,

51 Decisions adopted by the Executive Board at its 160th Session (160 EX/Decisions), page 16, paragraph 12.

52 http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-RL_ID=4969&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

53 http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-RL_ID=1539&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html.

54 Nor has any been reported in the course of our interviews. It has however, been indicated that efforts are now underway for IFAP to promote the development of guidelines for the preservation of information. This initiative is certainly to be welcomed however, it is occurring somewhat beyond the cut-off date for the information collection activities of this evaluation and thus its significance in the context of the findings and recommendations of this report are beyond our current scope.

55 Including working and decision documents of the Bureau and Council discussing the most recent instruments.

culminating in the WSIS, the IFAP Council has to date played only a very minor role in this, its primary mandated area. Among the reasons for this are:

- a relatively long period taken for becoming organized in relation to this activity in part because of lack of a clear mandate, clearly identified priorities, as well as a degree of disagreement concerning the interpretation of which areas of the mandate should be the foremost focus of attention;
- a lack of staff resources for identifying and compiling the required information; and
- an apparent lack of a sense of urgency concerning the issues under discussion combined with a meeting schedule for the Council (every two years) which prevents a significant continuity of focus or the development of momentum.

Among IFAP's objectives as noted above are "the development of common strategies, methods, and tools for building an information society". The WSIS presented a very considerable opportunity for IFAP and its Council to further advance these objectives and to build on the achievements of WSIS to support its broad mandate. However, IFAP's lack of involvement directly in WSIS and very limited involvement in the development of UNESCO's activities in WSIS represented a significant lost opportunity for IFAP to pursue the realization of the above noted objective.

IFAP has had little or no research or a continuing programme of participative evaluation undertaken in support of its on-going Programme mission. The projects which have been undertaken using the extra-budgetary funding have not been linked into information gathering or research in support of either programme development or to advance the specific identified priority areas.

Some stakeholders interviewed indicated an interest in working with IFAP to link their research and implementation activities with IFAP's activities in support of its mission. This includes a process of "branding" of externally funded and conducted research.

Conclusion

IFAP has to date achieved relatively little in its primary area of responsibility, the development of instruments supportive of an Information Society for All. The reasons for this are largely built into the initial programme design including the lack of staff and budgetary resources to undertake these activities. There is a need for a programme design in support of suitably documented and developed instruments. In the absence of these, IFAP as an intergovernmental Council with only very limited internal specialist capacity and no means to call on external capacity is rather stranded without even the means to effectively use its sole resource which is its prestige and convening capacity.

The need for activity in this extremely vital area was demonstrated through WSIS and the challenge for UNESCO is that either IFAP must have the opportunity and the means to be effective in its activity area or some other modality for being effective within this policy context will be developed outside of UNESCO.

3.4. The “developmental” role of IFAP⁵⁶

Background

As with all UN agencies there is considerable expectation concerning the contribution that UNESCO and including IFAP will play in support of broad areas of economic and social development. A challenge for IFAP is how to contribute most effectively to economic and social development within the context of knowledge societies for all or rather how to ensure an equitable use of information and knowledge in support of economic and social development. Notably the IPDC has in its mandate a specifically “developmental” agenda while the IFAP mandate indicates that it is to have a role in “narrowing the Digital Divide” but specifically development related activities are nowhere mentioned.

In 2005, 502 project proposals addressing IFAP’s identified priority areas were submitted to the Council for funding with an overall request for a combined total of some \$21 million. Available funding from voluntary contributions of Member States allowed the Council to support only 24 projects from the IFAP Special Fund, at a total cost of \$758,236.00, and a further five projects with funds-in-trust from Spain, totaling \$808,118.52.⁵⁷ In addition, IFAP funded a limited number of projects primarily in partnership with key stakeholders of a more “up-stream” or “infra-structural nature”.

The broad objective of the project funding was “that pilot projects can help to increase visibility within Member States, and can achieve leverage by demonstrating how information and ICT can contribute to national priorities, such as education, health and social inclusion”.⁵⁸ Projects were selected as being consistent with and contributory to at least one of the three identified IFAP priority areas. Projects were almost exclusively undertaken in less developed countries and included a mix of direct development or support projects and projects contributing to social infrastructure development or capacity building.

The process of awarding the contracts included reviewing the individual proposals against specified criteria. The first round of this review was undertaken by CI staff while the second round was undertaken by the members of the Bureau. Actual negotiation of contracts and on-going administration were decentralized to field offices and UNESCO field staff were assigned to individual contracts within their regional area of responsibility.

Findings

The broad area of ICT for Development has become a relatively crowded one with a range of current actors including the UNDP, the World Bank, a range of bi-lateral agencies, hybrid intergovernmental NGO networks such as the Global Knowledge Partnership, and a range of NGOs and civil society organizations. While there are clearly gaps, and as the Director General indicated in his comments to the most recent Council meeting, there is still a very considerable need for funded activity in support of Information and Communications Technology for Development (ICT4D), the specific role that IFAP could play in this area has not been identified. A role in capacity development was mentioned in the original mandate as one of the activities to be undertaken by the Programme but there seems to have been little follow-up on this.

UNESCO in the range of its activities and including those activities identified within the IFAP framework as funded by the regular budget (Information Society Division), is currently active in the area of supporting Information for All as a developmental initiative. Efforts by the IFAP Council to raise extra-

⁵⁶ Developmental here means a direct relationship between the activities of IFAP and social and economic development on-the-ground in Less Developed Countries as for example in the funding of ground level projects or other activities. This possible role for IFAP was one that was identified by several Member States representatives in the course of interviews, in certain instances supportive of such a role, and in others indicating that it was not felt that such a role was either possible or necessary for IFAP.

⁵⁷ UNESCO, General Conference, 33rd session, Paris 2005 33 C/85, 18 October 2005, DRAFT REPORT OF COMMISSION V.

⁵⁸ op. cit.

budgetary funding for the Programme have realized relatively modest amounts over the 6 years of the Programme (and only some \$32,000 in the period March 2005-March 2006). Interviews indicated that there was little immediate likelihood of IFAP receiving considerable additional funding from existing donors. A significant inhibitor of funding support by donors is the absence of the appropriate policy and human resource frameworks within IFAP required to make effective use of funds. This is particularly true in relation to ‘on-the-ground’ projects.

The specific link between many of the projects funded and on-going initiatives by IFAP are not clear (that is how these projects might contribute to a broader strategic development of IFAP’s overall mission). Follow-up of the projects has been undertaken by field offices. The overall evaluation of the projects has not yet been done. The IFAP Council/Bureau itself has little capacity for on-going project selection, contract management or information harvesting/follow-up processes. If any further such activity were to be undertaken, this process would need to be initiated from a standing start or links would need to be established with an existing and experienced project funding group such as the IPDC.

Senior officials in UNESCO acknowledge that IFAP currently lacks the funds or expertise to make a meaningful direct contribution to economic and social development and that to do so would require the mobilization of significant extra-budgetary resources. However, on the number of applications to the Programme for funding, there is a clear need for activities and resources in support of Information for All activities on the ground in the range of Less Developed Countries.

There are currently multiple specialized agencies with significant direct developmental experience, including within UNESCO, who are engaged in developmental activities with respect to the Information Society and the Millennium Development Goals. These agencies are in direct competition for resources in this area. It is not clear what IFAP’s “value-added” would be in the development area.

Conclusion

It is not evident that IFAP can play a substantive developmental role in its mandated area—it lacks the required resources and expertise. However, if IFAP were to execute its mandated responsibilities in policy support and standard setting this would very likely have a substantial developmental impact by helping to guide and direct the existing flow of developmental assistance and related activities.

3.5. Role of IFAP within UNESCO

Background

IFAP is an intergovernmental Council formed by a decision of UNESCO’s Executive Board meeting in its 160th session in 2000, through the merger of two existing Programmes (and intergovernmental Councils). The merger was the result of a perception that the changes in technology were such that a single Programme covering both information content and technology issues could be equally effective and more efficient in operation. The intention with IFAP was that it would be UNESCO’s response to the “development of the Information Society” and more specifically that it would be a means through which UNESCO could contribute to bridging “the Digital Divide”.⁵⁹ In addition the intention was that IFAP would act as a “transverse” UNESCO Programme within Programme V (Communication and Information) and intersectorally across various sectors within UNESCO to bring some coherence to UNESCO’s responses in the area of Information Society/knowledge societies for all.

IFAP, as UNESCO’s leading activity in Information Society areas was mandated to “give priority to working with all UNESCO sectors in the adaptation of ICT to their activities.” Notably the DG said in

⁵⁹ IFAP Report 2004–2005 p. 8.

his inaugural comments “As the IFA Programme was launched on 1 January 2001, the Secretariat has already begun implementation within the framework of the Programme and Budget for 2000–2001 (30 C/5)”. He then went on to discuss “a variety of activities and projects which are to be understood as taking place within the “framework” of the Programme.

Background – IFAP and IPDC

The International Programme for the Development of Communication (IPDC) is a parallel and closely linked intergovernmental programme also located within the Communication and Information Sector. IFAP and IPDC have similar structures in that they both have intergovernmental Councils, operational Bureaux, and small supporting Secretariats.

The linkages with IFAP include a degree of blurring at the edges with respect to the overall objectives of the Programmes, with IPDC being more directly concerned with the use of media in support of ‘development’ and IFAP being more concerned with the management and use of information. However, some overlap may be seen in that both Programmes have a role to play in UNESCO’s overall efforts toward building knowledge societies for all.

Findings

The relationship of the mandate of IFAP with the activities of the Information Society Division (CI/INF) as planned and executed in the context of the biennial Programmes and Budgets (“C/5s”) is not clear, including in the understanding of many of the most significant IFAP stakeholders and even UNESCO staff members. There is a continuing ambiguity as to precisely what is meant by the IFA “Programme”. In certain instances⁶⁰, “the Programme” refers to the specific activities undertaken directly as a result of the actions of the Council or the Bureau or the IFAP Secretariat (for example, the undertaking of projects through extra-budgetary funding). In other instances, “the Programme” refers to the range of activities within the overall Information Society Division which fall within the areas of interest assigned to the Council.⁶¹ IFAP thus can (ambiguously) be perceived either as simply a Council, Bureau, and part-time secretariat responding with extremely limited resources to a vast range of priority areas, or it can be seen as a quite extensive programme of activities undertaken within UNESCO’s regular budget over which the IFAP Council is meant (but rarely does) have some degree of supervisory responsibility.

Further the meaning and significance of the role assigned to IFAP has not been clearly articulated. For example there is no clear delineation of the specific content areas of policy or standards which the Council might choose as areas of specific expertise or interest. This ambiguity in the broad definition of the role and mandate of IFAP would appear to be a possible inhibitor of a perception of the value and significance of IFAP among stakeholders and most likely among Member States.

As well, IFAP started its existence with certain significant limitations:

- a regular budget which in effect provided for little or no staff support or programme related activities;
- a meeting schedule (once per year for the first two years and then once every second year) which only allowed for the development of the programme in “slow motion”. The result was a structure where decisions were being made with no means to effectively follow-up or for implementation as there was little or no staff support and subsequent follow-up could only be conducted on a once per year or once per two year basis; and

60 As evidenced for example, by the agenda and activities of the IFAP Bureau.

61 <http://www.unesco.org.uy/informatica/publicaciones/PaperIS-Kingston-Apr2001.docA58/817>.

- the absence of a substantive policy framework surrounding the activity sufficient to accommodate to the extremely rapidly evolving and emerging technology.

As with many innovative, leading edge and transversal approaches, the establishment of the IFA Programme and Council has suffered from the limitations of not being in a position to fully understand the ‘things that they did not know at the time’ in relation to the task at hand. Thus for example, those establishing IFAP did not anticipate the emergence of the full range and distribution of ICT capacity; of technology convergence; of the range of responses to this in the policy and development contexts; or the wide range of related and emergent multilateral, bilateral, NGO and private sector structures and initiatives which have developed or adapted in response to opportunities and risk.

Findings – IFAP and IPDC

There is considerable and on-going discussion with respect to the advantages and benefits achievable through merging the two Programmes since there would appear to be a *prime facie* opportunity and potential benefits from such an initiative.

The benefits (from the IFAP perspective) from a merger would include:

- providing IFAP with access to what appears to be an on-going flow of extra-budgetary funding to support field projects;
- a well-functioning administrative infrastructure for the management of all phases of funded field projects including selection, contract management and follow-up;
- elimination of possible duplication in administrative areas, Council operations, secretariat functions, promotion and so on; and
- the apparent synergy between the more operational and field oriented activities of IPDC and the more policy-oriented activities of IFAP.

However, the perspective concerning the advantages of merging would appear to overlook the major inhibitor of such a merger which is the absence of a clear fit between the relatively narrow and quite practical objectives of IPDC (media development) and the broader policy objectives of IFAP, combined with an apparent reluctance on the part of Member States to forego either of these two sets of non-convergent objectives.

The result of a merger of IFAP and IPDC would likely be either to bury the quite specific and beneficial activities of IPDC under the broader requirements of IFAP’s policy and standard setting mandate or to jettison the opportunity and mandate toward Information Society/knowledge societies policy development in the pursuit of more specific development activities on the ground.

Since both Councils have some degree of administrative support and operational activities as Councils (holding meetings, technical support for those meetings, administrative and other support for the meetings among others), there is likely to be some degree of overlap and duplication as between the two initiatives. However, the possible savings from the elimination of such duplication would be very slight given the very small operational cost of the IFAP Council. The resulting blurring and confusion that might result from, for example, the creation of a common administrative support function would likely over-ride any benefits arising from such a merger. This suggests that a merger at this level would not be warranted unless there was to be an overall merger of the two bodies.

Further, in the vibrant and emerging environment surrounding the rapid advancement and deployment of ICT, there is clear advantage for UNESCO in supporting and promoting a focused concept of knowledge societies as a framework for integrating the range of ICT enabled knowledge (and information) initiatives.

Conclusion

To date IFAP has not fully taken up its potentially highly significant role within UNESCO as the lead element in responding on behalf of the agency to the emerging risks and opportunities of the Information Society/knowledge societies. It is perhaps not too sweeping a judgement to say that had IFAP effectively undertaken (or perhaps better, had it had the means to effectively undertake) its role within UNESCO then UNESCO's influence on the WSIS process would have been significantly enhanced (and more forcefully inserted). The result of an effective exercising of its mandate by IFAP within WSIS either directly or indirectly through UNESCO would very likely have had the effect of influencing the final outcome of WSIS through its Declaration and Plan of Action to more effectively address those issues of specific interest to IFAP—Information for All, the Digital Divide and the creation of equitable knowledge societies than can be found in the actual outcome. In part this would have been because the stance taken by UNESCO in emphasizing these issues in the context of WSIS rather than the more technical and infrastructure issues would have had greater impact.

In addition, a more active role by IFAP in the WSIS process would have meant that rather than the governmental representatives participating in WSIS (and thus determining its outcomes) being drawn largely from the more technical (International Telecommunications Union) oriented participants they would have been more likely to have been drawn from the more social and developmental policy departments of Member States.

Finally, had UNESCO had greater influence in the WSIS process as for example, as a result of the activities of IFAP, the role and influence of Civil Society in the process might have been enhanced in parallel with the greater role played by the NGO sector in UNESCO's activities and specifically in certain issue areas of particular interest to IFAP.

3.6. Strategic planning

Background

As already noted, IFAP was from its inception meant to provide UNESCO with direction concerning policies and standards to ensure equitable access to the benefits of the emerging Information Society. However in a rapidly developing area such as this, there is a need to continuously revise and reformulate perspectives and approaches in support of these goals. Many of those interviewed for this evaluation expressed concern that the “philosophy” which underlies the activities of the IFAP Council and Programme may not be keeping up with these developments. In the course of the interviews there was considerable discussion of the nature of IFAP's overall perspective (or “philosophy”) concerning Information for All and how this mandate is being interpreted and articulated in relation to the broader emerging developments within knowledge societies.

IFAP was, at its origin, concerned both with the normative issues of knowledge society developments in Developed Countries and in digital divide issues of specific interest in Less Developed Countries⁶².

The current thinking might be summarized as follows: “Information and knowledge are global commons. They are essential to the advancement of education, science, culture and communication, to empowerment, to the promotion of cultural diversity and to the fostering of open governance. UNESCO's

62 DG/2002/34.

mandate “to promote the free flow of ideas by word and image” clearly indicates the part that the Organization is called upon to play in making information and knowledge freely accessible to all, with the production, collection and dissemination of information by all, with the ultimate objective of bridging the gap between the information rich and the information poor.”⁶³

As well there is the following, “Increasing technological convergence of information and informatics is neither necessarily conducive to globally shared ethical, cultural and societal values nor to the development of equitable access to information for all. People in developing countries in particular must, at all costs, be empowered to participate fully in the global society and to gain maximum benefit from effective and efficient access to information.”⁶⁴

The thinking concerning the Programme has evolved from one which was largely “access” driven to one which is concerned with “Living Information”. This brings together two important concepts – “access to information” and the “use of information”. Information that is “living” suggests that people have access to information and can use it. This includes information that previously might have been accessible only in libraries, archives and museums. “Living Information” also refers to information that helps people enhance their “lives”, for example through education and improved health.⁶⁵

In responding to the challenge of achieving its broad objectives, IFAP through its Bureau undertook a strategic review process prior to the 2004 IFAP Council meeting.⁶⁶ This process resulted in the identification of specific priorities for action:

- promoting information literacy for all people, including through capacity- building for education and information professionals (e.g. librarians, archivists);
- strengthening awareness about the importance of preservation of information of all kinds;
- promoting a better understanding of the ethical, legal and societal implications of ICT (Infoethics).⁶⁷

The IFAP Bureau has taken an initial step in translating these priorities into actionable items particularly through the creation of Working Groups and the development of thematic Workshops in conjunction with their regular meetings. However, no clear guidance was given as to what actions might be taken so as to realize these priorities.

As well, IFAP has participated in and contributed to the range of internal UNESCO strategic planning efforts including those associated with the 31C/4 and 31C/5 and the now completed 34C/4 and 34C/5 strategic planning efforts.

Findings

The IFA Programme initially went through a series of planning steps including the work of the Joint General Information Programme (GPI) and Intergovernmental Informatics Programme (IIP) Interim Group. In this way the outline and mandate of the new (IFA) programme, the internal development of the Statutes and Methods of Operation, and most recently the three priorities areas were developed. However,

63 PGI/IIP-2000/interim Committee/2 Meeting of the Interim Committee composed by the Bureaux of the Intergovernmental Council for the General Information Programme and the Intergovernmental Committee for the Intergovernmental Informatics Programme, Draft Outline of the New Programme p. 2.

64 160 EX/Decisions – Annex I, Information for All Programme.

65 <http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/21514/11420052591brochure-en.pdf/brochure-en.pdf>.

66 IFAP-2006/COUNCIL.IV/4, 17 January 2006, Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme, (Fourth Session), 20–22 March 2006, Item 7 of the provisional agenda, IFAP Priorities for 2006-2007.

67 http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/18433/111168922512 - Report_Final.doc/2%2B-%2BReport%2BFinal.doc.

these steps have failed to address some of the more pressing requirements for a Programme such as IFAP that operates in an area which is:

- relatively “fuzzy” or ill-defined;
- subject to extremely rapid change both technologically and institutionally;
- occupied by a relatively large number of other actors including other groups within UNESCO, other UN agencies, major NGOs and Civil Society, and the private sector; and
- the object of a major UN initiative—the World Summit on the Information Society.

IFAP can be seen as lacking:

- a specific set of activities leading to a clear set of deliverables linked to the broad overall Programme mission and goals;
- a clear source of (regular budget or extra-budgetary) funds;
- a clear set of measurable success factors; and
- a realistic timeline for implementation.

When IFAP was first conceived, its area of interest “the Global Information Society” was relatively unoccupied and from the perspective of multilateral institutions it was a significant innovation. It did however, share these interests with several other agencies even prior to WSIS (including for example, the DOTForce initiative of the G8 and the UN’s own ICT Task Force). However, its development would seem to have occurred without reference to these other bodies.

As with many programmes in emerging areas it has not always been possible in advance to have a clear perspective on the strategies by which the programme’s objectives might be realized. Additionally, the theoretical or conceptual underpinnings of IFAP (for example the definition of key terms such as Information Society) have not been fully developed. What is presented as assertion in the context of the Programme is, in some significant respects, still open to theoretical and empirical examination, clarification and even dispute—including for example, the determination of the specific relationship between information (or “knowledge”) and “development”. Clearly there is a relationship, but the nature of this relationship is not unambiguous. Nor is there unanimous agreement as to how this relationship might be realized in practice.

There is little evidence that the strategic review undertaken by the Council employed effective strategic planning methods (as for example Logframes/Surveys, etc) to identify the strategic priorities. The priorities, as a consequence, appear to have been identified on an expedient rather than a “strategic” basis. That is, they were not linked into a broader strategic plan framed within the context of the overall medium and longer term goals of the agency; nor do they adequately define how these priorities would support the achievement of these longer term goals; nor the steps, including activities, through which these goals might be realized. There is thus a lack of clarity in the relationship between IFAP’s goals and its activities.

A number of the difficulties with the Programme as outlined elsewhere in this evaluation are traceable to the absence of a Strategic Plan which reflects and prioritizes these changed and changing circumstances.⁶⁸

⁶⁸ The issues here to some degree go to the heart of a deeper discussion concerning the role and status of IFAP. It is the perspective adopted in this evaluation, that IFAP has a legislated mandate to undertake certain activities in association with UNESCO but that these activities are not

The role of the Council in relation to the “Programme” is identified in the original Statutes. However, how the Council’s responsibilities toward UNESCO and the larger international community are to be fulfilled, does not appear to have been directly addressed in the planning efforts to date. Developing an appropriately contextualized Strategic Plan for the IFAP Programme and particularly one that would allow for continuing development and modification as activities were undertaken, would be of immense value.

IFAP has responsibilities within a fast moving and highly significant area of development. The priority areas identified by the IFAP Council are important and significant ones and quite appropriate within the overall context of building knowledge societies for all. Also, these priorities link the Programme directly into the on-going activities and priorities of several of IFAP’s current major NGO stakeholder groups notably the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), The International Council on Archives (ICA) and Co-ordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAA). However, there is some concern among IFAP stakeholders that other possible priority areas which fall within the broad mandate of “Information/knowledge societies for All” (as for example, free and open source software, the use of knowledge for development, the control of information flow and access through copyright), have not been sufficiently addressed within the IFAP context. Attention to these other areas would extend the influence of the Council and result in an expansion in the range and number of stakeholder groups.

Conclusion

The absence of a fully developed strategic planning process including the preparation of background research and clarification of concepts and goals leading to and identification of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and risks and resulting in the determination of priorities, and courses of action has been a major source of weakness for IFAP.

3.7. IFAP funding

Background

UNESCO, through its biennial programme and budgets (C/5s) provides funding⁶⁹ for the organization of the biennial meeting of the Council and the bi-annual meetings of the Bureau. Direct travel and per diem funding is only provided to representatives of LDCs. The representatives of other Member States provide funding for their own participation.⁷⁰ No funding is available to support expert or NGO participation in meetings.

In addition to the funding from the regular budget, IFAP has had access to extra-budgetary funds and funds in trust from several sources. Specifically this includes funds that were carried over from the two pre-existing programmes (PGI and IIP) from which IFAP was created. In these cases the funds in trust (from Spain), the interest from the accounts of the funds held in trust by the earlier programmes and these funds themselves has provided funding for the competitive project cycle which IFAP recently initiated.

necessarily to be undertaken solely within the aegis of UNESCO. What this means is that while for example, IFAP may be asked and undertake to, contribute to the internal UNESCO strategic planning processes (e.g. those associated with the 6 year planning cycle—currently 34C5), these efforts do not themselves constitute a strategic planning activity by IFAP for IFAP. Rather these contributions can be seen as part of the overall “advisory” role assigned to IFAP in its initial mandate. Further it should be noted, that it is the understanding of the evaluators that the strategic planning efforts and outcomes of UNESCO as a whole do not constitute the detail or even the necessary outline of a “strategic plan” for IFAP. While a strategic effort for IFAP would necessarily be framed within the context of its relationship to and role(s) within UNESCO, as an intergovernmental body IFAP’s mandate is to advise within the legislative framework of UNESCO rather than simply within the administrative structure of the UNESCO secretariat.

69 IFAP-2006/Bureau.XI/Inf.5 Paris, 26 August 2006, Intergovernmental Council for the Information for All Programme, Eleventh Meeting of the Bureau, Room VI, 21-22 September 2006, Funding new projects.

70 http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/21326/11395663931ifap_statutes_en.pdf/ifap_statutes_en.pdf.

In spite of a somewhat active effort at fund raising through Member States and particularly IFAP Member States only some \$400,000 in extra-budgetary has been raised specifically for IFAP since its formation in 2000 as can be seen in the chart below.

The extra-budgetary funds have now been expended on projects and no additional funds have been forthcoming from extra-budgetary sources.⁷¹ Under the 2004/2005 biennium budget an additional \$186,000 was allocated to IFAP for “Strengthening the Information for All programme” i.e. development of National Committees.⁷²

IFAP Extra-budgetary funds 2000-2006

Country	IFAP Special Account Contributions '00-'06	Funds-in-trust Pre: '00
Brazil	100,202	
China	40,000	
France	218,950	
Greece	8,000	
India	9,967	
Saudi Arabia	20,000	
Spain		808,119
Funds of the former Intergovernmental Informatics Programme (pre: 2000)	748,342	
IFAP funds interest	20,385	
Total	1,973,965	808,119

Findings

Current levels of funding are evidently sufficient for the functioning of the IFAP Council and Bureau and for the current levels of conventional activities (biennial Council meetings and bi-annual Bureau meetings). Current levels of funding are however, insufficient to allow for an increase in the level of activities through IFAP or even for the beginnings of planning and development for such an increase in activities.⁷³ The reserve of extra-budgetary funds which were for the most part carry-overs from the earlier Programmes has now been largely expended.⁷⁴

UNESCO as a whole continues to suffer from severe (regular) budgetary constraints, although as is frequently noted in discussions concerning UNESCO and other UN funding, it may be that the IFAP activities and objectives will need to be structured such that identifiable results and value for money

71 Allocating Funds From the IFAP Special Account/Funds-in-Trust., IFAP-2006/COUNCIL.IV/8.

72 See also « Report by the Director-General on the activities of the Information for All Programme » Annexes 1 and 2 (IFAP-2006/COUNCIL.IV/2).

73 DG/2002/34.

74 For a detailed description and discussion of the funding situation of the IFAP Programme see for example, IFAP-2005/Bureau.IX/Inf.4.

demonstrated before additional funds will be forthcoming from Member States.. The implementation of a formal strategic planning process within IFAP would be a useful and necessary intermediary step in this development.

Conclusion

Even with the extraordinary efforts exerted by the Bureau, it is unlikely that the current level of activity (and thus effectiveness) of IFAP can be significantly enhanced without very substantial intervention by Member States on IFAP's behalf or through the injection of additional extra-budgetary funds as might be identified in the course of the strategic planning process elsewhere recommended in this report.

3.8. IFAP visibility and relationship with the private sector

Background

There is a strong perception including within the Council that IFAP does not have sufficient visibility and that the unwillingness of Member States or others to provide extra-budgetary funding for the Programme is a result of this lack of visibility. The IFAP Council passed a resolution (2005) requesting that a study be undertaken concerning the visibility of the programme⁷⁵. The study made a series of recommendations concerning raising the profile and visibility of IFAP including the development of a "brand" for the Programme (Living Information) and a biennial publication reporting on activities.⁷⁶ The first of these appeared in 2006.⁷⁷

While the mandate of IFAP includes the following: "The programme shall cooperate closely with other bodies of the United Nations system, other intergovernmental organizations and non-governmental organisations, and with the private sector in order to fulfill this mandate"⁷⁸. To date there has been little direct support by or involvement of the private sector with the activities of IFAP. However, discussions are reportedly currently underway for significant support from at least one potential contributor. Moreover, the WSIS and certain of the related activities and follow-ups (notably the Global Alliance for ICT 4 Development [GAID] and the Internet Governance Forum) have involved substantial interest and participation from the private sector.

Findings

IFAP would appear to have visibility insufficient to its requirements as for example, to obtain the amount of extra-budgetary resources required for its programme objectives. Specific data was not available concerning the broader visibility of the Programme but the concern in this area expressed by those interviewed and as suggested by the efforts of the Council would suggest that the Programme overall does lack a broad visibility both in the interested general public as well as among governments and professionals in the area.⁷⁹

This lack of visibility or perhaps indifference towards the programme (which would have the same overall effect) is indicated by among others:

- a survey made available on the web and which was announced to some 20,000 email addresses provided through the Programme had a very low (less than 3%) response rate;

⁷⁵http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/files/19895/11266212681/INF_4_Functioning_of_IFAP_Rev.doc/INF%2B4%2BFunctioning%2Bof%2BIFAP%2BRev.doc.

⁷⁶ Draft IFAP Visibility Plan, Appendix to IFAP-2006/COUNCIL.IV/6.

⁷⁷ Living Information, Information for All Programme Report 2004/2006 (2006). Paris: UNESCO.

⁷⁸ op. cit.

⁷⁹ For detailed results in this area see Appendix C.

- the results of the efforts by the Evaluation Team to survey both National Commissions and a broad range of members of stakeholder organizations and individuals with an interest in this issue area (registrants for newsletters and other on-line activities of the Information Society Division) have been disappointing both in the numbers of responses and in their overall indication of a lack of awareness of the Programme;⁸⁰
- a lack of participation by the private sector in the activities of IFAP;
- a lack of success in attempts at resource mobilization;
- anecdotal evidence among professionals in the information and knowledge for development area of a lack of awareness concerning IFAP.

The most specific of the overall objectives of the activities undertaken to raise the visibility of the Programme were to increase the extra-budgetary funding provided to the Programme by donor countries. A less specific objective was to increase within Member States, an “awareness of the importance of information in their National Plans and promote a regulatory environment that encourages the creation and use of information”.⁸¹ Neither objective has had visible effects nor has any measurement of such impacts been undertaken.

While the introduction of the various communication tools have proven useful as a means for communication of the activities of the IFAP Council and Programme, to date this has not had the desired effect in stimulating donor interest. Rather the effect has likely been that the use of these tools has allowed IFAP to achieve a “normal” level of visibility as an activity area within UNESCO rather than to raise its visibility above the threshold of other programmes equally competing for donor attention.

Overall, the private sector has a very considerable interest in policy matters related to the Information Society and particularly at the national level. Private sector resources could be usefully engaged in the activities of IFAP in support of IFAP’s mission and goals. The challenge is to determine how best to engage and include the private sector in these areas.

Conclusion

While the recommendations of the “Visibility” Report are sound and useful, the best approach to “visibility” will come from a sharper definition of IFAP’s mandate, goals and objectives. There is a very considerable global interest including within the UN system, concerning Information Society/knowledge societies issues and the areas of activity which IFAP on behalf of UNESCO could be undertaking. There is a strong likelihood that through clarifying IFAP’s role in relation to these and then by developing a set of related objectives and successfully implementing the associated activities, IFAP will raise its profile and visibility including with the private sector.

3.9. A new strategic positioning and structure for IFAP

Background

As already noted above, to some degree IFAP’s activities and areas of interest have been confirmed as well as overshadowed, although gaining a new importance, from the activities of the WSIS. Of course, WSIS operated at a high level of generality and IFAP would be able to act and develop policy at a more specific and concrete level. Moreover, it also would be possible for IFAP to benefit from the advanced

⁸⁰ See Appendix D.

⁸¹ Draft IFAP Visibility Plan, Appendix to IFAP-2006/COUNCIL.IV/6.

degree of development achieved including leveraging the considerable interest and activity that WSIS created.

Recommendations

IFAP could link into the activities and attention of the non-governmental sector—civil society, NGOs and the private sector. Many of these bodies and structures have become mobilized in response to the opportunities (and threats) identified in the context of WSIS both at the global and the national level.

It is recommended, as already referred to above, that IFAP align itself with the activities in the follow-up and implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action. This could include developing a Programme responsibility for carrying through on the areas of involvement and responsibility assigned to UNESCO in the WSIS follow-up and Plan of Action. The current situation in UNESCO with respect to WSIS follow-up appears to be a relatively formal one that involves responsibilities being diffused within the agency and with only limited additional attention or resources assigned to this. The challenge (and opportunity) for IFAP would be to see the follow-up to WSIS not as a responsibility but as a way of carrying forward its already identified mandate and building on the WSIS generated momentum and cadre of active participants both globally and in a number of Member States.

The process could proceed as follows:

- a) IFAP Council could support the UNESCO Secretariat in its role as facilitator of coordination of the six WSIS Action Lines. In the course of doing this, the IFAP Council would undertake a strategic planning exercise where it would identify the most appropriate strategy for linking its identified mandate and goals with the WSIS Plan of Action and follow-up goals. This would include identifying progress towards linking a renewed knowledge societies mandate with a clearly identified set of areas for policy development, and linking these in turn with the objectives, activities and advocacy that support the achievement of the MDGs.
- b) IFAP through its National Committees could help UNESCO implement concrete activities within the WSIS Plan of Action and through its Council to mobilize national resources and activities in support of the Plan of Action.
- c) The IFAP Bureau could be re-structured to more closely resemble the multi-stakeholder partnership approach to policy development as pioneered in WSIS. Such an approach could develop procedures for authorizing and facilitating the participation of Civil Society and private sector stakeholders (as experts) in the Bureau's activities. This would include the Bureau's role in support of the IFAP Council's policy development and standard setting processes.
- d) IFAP's approach to National Commissions which already reflects the multi-stakeholder approach to policy development and advocacy at the national level should be strongly recognized and implemented in existing/new National Committees.
- e) During the implementation of a multi-stakeholder approach IFAP should enter into partnership with a range of non-governmental (NGO) and civil society organizations including existing stakeholders, research organizations and private sector organizations. This approach would not only facilitate multi-stakeholder participation in global level IFAP activities but equally facilitate participation by the extended networks of these organizations into the renewed IFAP National Committees.
- f) IFAP could create a set of procedures for "branding" externally funded research projects and implementation activities within a broad context of utilizing these activities as knowledge-

based contributors to policy development. This would include the creation of suitable policy and research analysis capabilities within the IFAP Secretariat.

- g) IFAP would seek changes in the regular budget funding to reflect the significance of its renewed activities overall for the organization.

4. RECOMMENDATIONS⁸²

4.1. Strategy

The primary finding of this evaluation has been that IFAP lacks a clearly defined mission, set of objectives, strategy for pursuing these objectives and a means for assessing the achievement of these objectives. Thus the first recommendation is that IFAP overcome this limitation by undertaking a strategic planning process through which it would be expected to clarify its mission (and develop a revised mission statement); develop a clear set of objectives as the framework for its short, medium and longer term activities; identify a realistic and context aware organizational and resource mobilization strategy consistent with those objectives and the actions to be undertaken to achieve these; and put in place the means for developing indicators for the achievement of these objectives.

Recommendation 1: It is recommended that the Council through its Bureau as a first priority:

- a) undertake a formal strategic planning process for the Information for All Programme immediately upon acceptance of this report with its recommendations;
- b) develop a strategic plan that identifies specific resource requirements and possible sources for funds to support the activities which are to be identified as priorities through this plan;
- c) recognize the considerable contribution which would be provided by involvement in this process by the range of current and potential stakeholders including currently active NGOs, civil society, the private sector and other multilateral agencies with responsibilities in the knowledge societies area;
- d) include in the strategic plan the identification of priority areas for the Programme; and
- e) expand the range of possible civil society stakeholder groups involved with IFAP to further develop their concerns.

4.2. Mission

As noted above the current mandate, mission, objectives and functions of the Programme are overly broad, inconsistent, unrealistic (given resource and other constraints), and out of date (that is no longer reflective of the broader organizational, technology and policy contexts). It is thus recommended that a key element of the Strategic Planning Exercise be the reformulation of the Mission (and thus Mission statement) for IFAP.

Further, given the very close alignment between the outcomes of the WSIS process and the overall mandate indicated for IFAP, it is recommended that there be a very significant role for IFAP in the broad multi-lateral follow-up and implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action and particularly as the UNESCO flagship in this area.

Recommendation 2: It is recommended that the Council indicate as a preferred element of the strategic planning process that IFAP's role within the WSIS follow-on and implementation and

⁸² The evaluator has taken note that in the context of the 34C/5 – the next UNESCO programming cycle – the IFAP budget remains the same. The evaluation recommendations have taken this important element into consideration when crafting recommendations and it is the belief of the evaluator that the recommendations as presented do not imply or recommend activities which would require a significant increase in the current budget.

particularly as UNESCO's flagship in this area be recognized as a central component in the determination of modalities for the realization of IFAP's mission, including for:

- a) the programmatic level of the WSIS Plan of Action and IFAP's nascent programme activities;
- b) at the administrative level, the IFAP Council and the associated post-WSIS follow-up and implementation structures through the CSTD and ECOSOC governing boards and the other participating UN agencies; and
- c) the mandate of the IFAP Council and the WSIS outcomes as identified above.

Recommendation 3: It is recommended that the revised mission address issues such as:

- a) the alignment between IFAP's "philosophy" and underlying principles with the concepts used in WSIS including Information, Information Society, Knowledge Societies and others;
- b) identification of specific areas of possible policy or standards significance arising out of the WSIS Plan of Action for action/deliberation by the IFAP Council;
- c) a clarification of the relationship between the regular programme activities of the Information Society Division arising from the biennial programmes and budget exercise (C/5) and IFAP.

Recommendation 4: It is recommended that the Executive Board review the 34 C/4 Medium Term Strategy planning process so as to reflect the significant role that the IFAP Council and a revitalized Programme might play in supporting UNESCO in post-WSIS implementation and follow-up knowledge societies activities and to ensure that means are provided to allow for this to occur.

Recommendation 5: It is recommended that the UNESCO secretariat provide a clear delineation of what is meant by a "Programme" within the UNESCO context including a delineation of the relationship between the IFAP Council and the IFAP "programme" and a specification of the role and responsibilities of the IFAP Council in relation to the IFAP "programme" (including in the areas of planning and budgeting) and a delineation of the modalities through which such a role and responsibility may be realized.

4.3. Advisory Board and Research

If IFAP is to have a significant role in creating the normative, policy or standards environment supportive of knowledge societies for all, it in turn must have access to the broadest and most up-to-date range of knowledge and experience in the specific areas of its interest. While a degree of expertise is available through the representative members appointed by the Member States to the Council and through the current largely informal processes of consultation with stakeholders and particularly a key but limited set of major NGOs, there is a significant need for access to additional expertise in the range of issue areas in which it is anticipated that IFAP might be directed to become involved as a result of the development of its strategic plan.

Recommendation 6: It is recommended that the Council through the Secretariat initiate the formation of a broad based and inclusive Advisory Board including representation from current NGO IFAP stakeholders, the private sector and civil society for the Information for All Programme; to operate in a primarily electronic and virtual mode; and to advise the Council through its Bureau on the range of its thematically structured activities including providing comment as input into the strategic planning process.

Recommendation 7: It is recommended that the Council through the Secretariat develop a strategy for clarifying the conceptual foundation for the creation of knowledge societies for all as an input into the strategic planning exercise and particularly as a contribution to the clarification of the mission of IFAP and appropriate modalities and activities for the realization of that mission.

Recommendation 8: It is recommended that the Council through the Secretariat initiate a consortia of national research funding bodies e.g. National Science Foundation (USA), Social Science and Humanities Research Council (Canada), South African National Research Foundation, National Agricultural Research Organization (Uganda) among others to identify the research issues contributory to the development of “Knowledge Societies for All” and as contributory to the identification of appropriate and necessary instruments supportive of this objective. This consortia would also act so as to:

- a) sponsor within their national domains and globally a research program on the conceptual and critical foundations for “building knowledge societies for all”;
- b) organize through this consortia and with external funding an international, multi-disciplinary and multi-stakeholder research programme on building knowledge societies for all; and
- c) initiate through this consortia and with external funding colloquia examining the theoretical foundations of the Information Society and knowledge societies.

Recommendation 9: It is recommended that the Council recognize the current activities of the Bureau as valuable modalities for future Council and Programme activities and that these be incorporated and systematized within the context of the proposed Plan.

4.4. Standard and norm setting

The area of primary impact for IFAP is in the development and ratification of globally accepted norms supportive of knowledge societies for all and particularly through the variety of intergovernmental instruments, standards, conventions, guidelines, statements of good practice and so on. However, to be effective IFAP would need to have access to expert knowledge in the specific areas in which it would be active.

Recommendation 10: It is recommended that the Council through its Bureau and following on from the proposed Strategic Planning exercise, articulate a strategy for the realization by IFAP of its possible role within the UN family as a specialist standard and norm setting body in the area of the Information Society and knowledge societies for all.

Recommendation 11: It is recommended that the Council initiate a process of determining how IFAP could be most effective within the overall UN system as a specialist body concerned with the development of instruments supportive of knowledge societies for all policy framework and the follow-up to the WSIS process as might be appropriate.

Recommendation 12: It is recommended that the Council through its Bureau initiate contact and liaison with the CSTD and other UN agencies as appropriate, as potential cooperating bodies in the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action and specifically to share experiences and to avoid duplication.

Recommendation 13: It is recommended that the Council through its Bureau begin to become directly active and a contributor to the broad networks of those active in Knowledge for Development

activities and specifically towards identifying and promoting consensus within these networks towards intergovernmental policy formulation, and standard and norm setting.

Recommendation 14: It is recommended that the Council as part of the proposed strategic planning process and in order to ensure better alignment of IFAP's activities with UNESCO's role in implementing the WSIS Geneva Action Plan, the Secretariat on behalf of the Council be instructed to develop:

- a) a process for identifying instruments within IFAP's area of responsibility that might be contributory to the realization of IFAP's mission;
- b) priorities with respect to these instruments within the framework of desired outcomes;
- c) a process through which background research and analysis in support of the delineation of the content of these instruments would be undertaken including through commissioned research, expert colloquia, and integration of practitioner knowledge and good practice through Workshops (and particularly so as to capture regional knowledge and experience including that from Less Developed Countries);
- d) a process of consensus building in support of such instruments and including through multi-stakeholder processes and the inclusion of civil society;
- e) a series of activities (and particularly for and in conjunction with National Committees) to make the instruments once agreed upon, more widely known and to support their implementation and activation through action at the national level; and
- f) a process for undertaking evaluation research and obtaining feedback concerning the outcomes and impacts of instruments as they may be promulgated and including linking such feedback into the design of implementation related activities and the revision of existing or identification of other such instruments.

Recommendation 15: It is recommended that the National Committees take up the role of identifying areas where there may be a need for standard and norm setting support of knowledge societies at the national level.

4.5. WSIS

The agenda and outcomes of WSIS to a considerable degree overlapped with the broad mission of IFAP. It is striking that IFAP played such a small role in WSIS and even within the UNESCO participation in WSIS. However, WSIS is now concluded and is in the implementation and follow-up phase and this presents a significant opportunity for IFAP to gain additional leverage, a widened network of collaborators and partners, and to amplify its own activities through an alignment of its efforts with those of others sharing similar goals in the context of the outcomes and implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action.

Recommendation 16: It is recommended that the Secretariat examine as an element of the above mentioned strategic planning process the possibility of re-assembling activity areas within the Information Society Division, the CI Sector and all other UNESCO Sectors which are identified as being those through which UNESCO will be contributing to the implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action in the specific areas of relevance to knowledge societies for all. This would result in a restructured UNESCO WSIS follow-up Programme with IFAP playing a lead role within this and

particularly in the identification and establishment of norms and instruments supportive of knowledge societies for all.⁸³

Recommendation 17: It is recommended that the Council revisit and revise IFAP’s objectives and the five “Main programme areas” to pay particular attention to those areas highlighted in the WSIS Geneva Plan of Action and specifically in those Action Lines where UNESCO has been assigned the role of “facilitator” so that IFAP becomes a cornerstone programme on behalf of UNESCO in this implementation process.

Recommendation 18: It is recommended that the Council recognise:

- a) the similarity in some of the fundamental objectives of IFAP and the outcomes of WSIS;
- b) the opportunity that the overall WSIS process, in particular its “energizing” of Civil Society and the creation of a multi-stakeholder processes, presents for advancing IFAP’s mandate and for revitalizing IFAP in its overall efforts;
- c) its possible role in assisting UNESCO in its efforts as both an implementer of actions and a facilitator of the six WSIS actions lines for which UNESCO has been assigned facilitating responsibility.

Recommendation 19: It is recommended that the Bureau undertake to reconcile the activities for which UNESCO has primary responsibility within the context of the WSIS implementation and the IFAP mandate as identified in the Statutes of the Council.

Recommendation 20: It is recommended that the National Committees as they reach a suitable degree of development and maturity, undertake strategic planning exercises at the national level parallel to those at the Council level with the objective of supporting and facilitating a national level implementation of the WSIS Plan of Action.

4.6. National Committees

The slowly emerging network of National IFAP Committees represents the most significant potential resource for IFAP to make a substantive contribution to building knowledge societies for all. The two most mature National Committees that of Russia and New Zealand, have each in their own ways begun the process of creating effective links for the two-way flow of information and influence from the national level to UNESCO and from UNESCO back to the national level. Russia has organized an active research and publication program linked into the knowledge societies for all themes as well as an intersessional conference contributory to WSIS. New Zealand has established an on-going framework for discussion of issues of concern to IFAP including influential national representation and an emerging role in supporting the developmental elements of the IFAP mission. The extension of the National Committee network, which as of recent months now seems to be proceeding at a useful pace, will provide IFAP with a means for disseminating the outputs of its activities to the national level and similarly of having its activities adjusted so as to respond to the needs and opportunities at the national level.

Recommendation 21: It is recommended that the Secretariat and IFAP Bureau re-double their efforts at creating National Committees within Member States through the active “marketing” of these as possible by the IFAP Bureau and through engaging the Council in these efforts as for example, by engaging the UNESCO National Commissions in support of the establishment of National Committees.

83 cf. the UN’s “Delivering as One” proposal (A/61/583).

Recommendation 22: Is it recommended that the National Committees as they mature develop multi-stakeholder participation (including from the private and civil society sectors) through expert Advisory Boards in support of the implementation of the WSIS Plan of action and the local development of knowledge societies for all.

Recommendation 23: It is recommended that the National Committees as they mature undertake strategic planning exercises based on a framework provided by the Secretariat to identify national priorities, possible sources of funding, and action plans. This should be framed within the context of the follow-up to WSIS and implementation of the UNESCO assigned action lines at the national level and within a broader co-ordinated global WSIS follow-up framework as discussed elsewhere in this document.

Recommendation 24: Is it recommended that the National Committees as they mature make a contribution to WSIS implementation particularly through their suggested role as supporting knowledge society policy and standard setting at the national level.

Recommendation 25: Is it recommended that the National Committees as they mature determine how a “One UN” approach to activities at the national level might impact on the activities of the IFAP National Committees and particularly to explore:

- a) the utilization of the National Committees as the means for facilitating a multi-stakeholder role (including an active advisory role for Civil Society and the private sector) in ICT related policy and programming activities as initiated through the Common Country Assessment (CCA) and UN Development Assistance Framework (DAF) at the national level;
- b) the possibility that the individual IFAP National Committees might contribute to the national CCA and UNDAF processes as a specialist body at the national level concerned with Information Society issues within the context of knowledge societies, follow-up to WSIS and overall policy in support of knowledge societies for all.

4.7. Development

IFAP has neither the resources nor the expertise to have a significant role in on-the-ground development, nor under current conditions is there a realistic likelihood that it will acquire either of these in the near future. However, if IFAP is to play a substantive role in enabling the development of knowledge societies for all it must find a means to link into on-the-ground activities both as a contributor and as a consumer of information and experience. The development of a network of National Committees provides one set of opportunities in this area. There is the additional need for IFAP to be creative and innovative in relationship to further possible contributions to and involvements in developmental processes.

Recommendation 26: Is it recommended that the Council as part of the recommended strategic planning process, explore IFAP’s possible value-added in the area of “development” and including who might be potential partners and supporters of these efforts. As an example, IFAP might look to take an active role in the development of Information Literacy but the issue of how to pursue this in the absence of funding remains unresolved. Whether for example, partnering with a range of NGOs active in the area might provide sufficient synergies to support an active programme or sufficient credibility to gain the interest of a potential donor, or whether IFAP/UNESCO’s branding of activities in one or another of these areas would be sufficient to generate resources or activity is something which should be systematically examined.⁸⁴

⁸⁴ cf. IFAP-2006/Bureau.XI/Inf.5.

Recommendation 27: It is recommended that the Council as part of the proposed strategic planning process identify the role that IFAP could play either directly or through National IFAP Committees in creating suitable policy and human resource frameworks to facilitate donor support for information/knowledge society for all activities at the national level.

Recommendation 28: It is recommended that the Council recognize that its primary role in supporting the developmental aspects of knowledge societies for all, will most likely come through the success of its efforts in the formulation, dissemination and influence regarding implementation of suitable norms, policies, standard setting and instruments in support of these objectives.

4.8. Research

It is most likely that the primary component of the revised and renewed mission for IFAP resulting from the recommended strategic planning process will be policy formulation and standard setting. Such a mission however, in an area as complex and fast changing as that comprising technology, information and knowledge requires a very considerable degree of systematized insight and knowledge. This, in the form of systematic research, is required so as to identify the emerging areas of policy and standard setting interest, the information background for the formulation of policy and standards, and as a way to re-adjust and re-develop the policies and standards as circumstances change and outcomes and impacts emerge.

There is the need for IFAP to have access to high quality and state of the art knowledge and experience in a wide range of areas and particularly in those areas where it wishes to have the greatest impact. Recognizing that “research” is a highly skilled and frequently resource intensive activity, any involvement by IFAP in research must necessarily be through partnerships where IFAP’s own prestige as an intergovernmental Council and its associated prestige as an arm of UNESCO and the UN system allows it to gain the benefits of helping to define the areas and topics of research and have access to the outcomes of the research without having to be directly involved in either funding or managing the research activity.

Recommendation 29: It is recommended that the Secretariat design and implement a programme of “branding” of externally funded research conducted in association with the identified priorities and policy development interests of the programme.

Recommendation 30: It is recommended that this branding process would include externally directed and funded researchers and/or practitioners undertaking activities within a research framework mutually agreed upon between IFAP and the researcher or practitioner. The intention would be to formally identify a specific research project (or in some cases programme) as being that of UNESCO/IFAP.

Recommendation 31: It is recommended the branding be contingent on the identified project meeting certain pre-defined conditions that:

- a) it was jointly planned between the Council and the researcher or practitioner so as to, at least in part, inform the development of IFAP’s policy or standards proposals or good practice initiatives;
- b) a relationship between the projects funded, IFAP’s programmatic role in these projects and the use of such projects to obtain knowledge supportive of the development of policy or standards instruments or good practice guidelines, was clearly identified; and

- c) a specified amount of funding would be contributed from the research project to support appropriate staffing resources, research integration and policy development activity within IFAP.

Recommendation 32: It is recommended that the IFAP publishing programme undertake the broader dissemination of the results of the above noted research activities.

4.9. IFAP and IPDC

The possible merger of IFAP and IPDC has been a subject of considerable discussion and debate and particularly among Member States. While on its face, such a merger would appear to be natural out of which significant synergies might emerge; in fact, it is more likely, given resource and organizational realities, that the respective weaknesses of the two programmes would come to the fore to weigh down the activities of the combined enterprise.

Recommendation 33: It is recommended that the IFAP and IPDC retain their separate structures.

Recommendation 34: It is recommended that, as part of the strategic planning process recommended above, possible linkages between the two programmes as for example, through the establishment of common initiatives where there is an overlap in areas of activity be explored viz. where there is a use of 'media' and development communications as a resource to support the development of knowledge societies.

Recommendation 35: It is recommended that, in conjunction with this, IPDC-funded projects be made eligible (and encouraged to participate) in the proposed IFAP "branding" process including in the exploration of the linkage between individual "pilot" projects and their use as "research", "good practice" or information/knowledge inputs into the IFAP policy development process.

APPENDIX A: DOCUMENTS REVIEWED

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APPENDIX B: LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Abid, Abdelaziz, Senior Programme Specialist, Information Society Division, UNESCO, Paris

Byrne, Alex, President of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), Brisbane Australia

Canavaggio, Perrine, Deputy Secretary General International Council on Archives, Paris

Dlamini, Hezekiel, Advisor, Communication and Information, UNESCO Accra Office

D'Orville, Hans, Director in the Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO, Paris

Durrant, Fay, Head Department of Library and Information Studies, University of the West Indies, Kingston, Jamaica, Member IFAP Bureau

Gresiczki, Peter, Secretary General Hungarian National Commission for UNESCO, Budapest Hungary, Member IFAP Bureau

Hassan, Ayesha, Senior Policy Manager E-Business, IT & Telecoms; Executive in charge of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Policy, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), Paris

Isaacs, Susan, Culture and Communications Specialist, New Zealand Commission for UNESCO, Christchurch, New Zealand

Ito, Misako, Assistant Programme Specialist in the Information Society Division – Universal Access and Preservation Section, UNESCO, Paris

Jayaweera, Wijayananda, Director in the Communication Development Division, UNESCO, Paris

Khan, Abdul Waheed, ADG Communication and Information Sector, UNESCO, Paris

de la La Chappelle, Bertrand Special delegate for the Information Society, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France

Lacken, Catherine, Rapporteur, Coordinating Council of Audiovisual Archives Associations (CCAAA)

Le Saux, Jean-Yves, Director Division of Programme Planning, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO, Paris, France

Levasseur, Dominique Political Officer, Permanent Canadian Delegation to UNESCO, Paris, France

Longworth, Elisabeth, Director in the Office of the Director-General, UNESCO, Paris

Malbert, Daniel, IFAP Chair 2004-2005; France

Menezes, Claudio, Senior Programme Specialist, Information Society Division

Mlaki, Theophilu, Director of Information and Documentation, Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology, Dar Es Salaam, Tanzania, Member IFAP Bureau

Molnar, Ludovit, Member of the working group that established IFAP; Slovakia

Onager, Suzanne, Programme Advisor for Communication and Information, Bangkok

Osman, Izzeldin, Member of IFAP Council and Bureau; Sudan

Plathe, Axel, Chief of Section in the Information Society Division - Universal Access and Preservation Section, UNESCO

Rondon-Fuentes, Kris Chief of Administration, Communication and Information Division, UNESCO, Paris

Rose, Elizabeth Secretary General, New Zealand Commission for UNESCO, Christchurch New Zealand

Saidou-Djermakoye, Mariama, Senior Programme Planning Officer in the Division of Programme Planning, Monitoring and Reporting, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO

Schüller, Dietrich, Member of IFAP Council and Bureau, Vienna, Austria

Schmidt, Mogens, Deputy Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information

Sheya, Mohammed, Former Member of IFAP Council and Bureau; Tanzania

Wu, Yishan, Chief Engineer, Institute of Science and Technical Information of China, Beijing, China, Member IFAP Bureau

Zwimpfer, Laurence, IFAP Chair 2006-2007; Christchurch, New Zealand

APPENDIX C: SURVEY OF IFAP NATIONAL COMMITTEES

A survey of all 182 UNESCO client countries was undertaken so as to determine the degree to which the implementation of the IFAP Programme at the national level corresponded to the expectation and desired outcomes and its identified impacts.

Two questionnaires were designed, one addressed to the **UNESCO National Commissions** in countries without an IFAP National Committee and a second directed to the **IFAP National Committees** where such had been formed. The questionnaires were both prepared in French and English and sent electronically to a mailing list of persons responsible for the UNESCO National Commissions and the IFAP National Committees in 182 countries as identified by the IFAP Secretariat.

The cover letter accompanying the questionnaire stressed that the main objectives of this evaluation were to assess IFAP's achievements to date and to provide a basis for future development of IFAP's efforts towards building inclusive knowledge societies and living information.

The questionnaire addressed to the UNESCO National Commissions inquired whether the members of the Commission were aware of the IFAP programme; if so, how they acquired this awareness and what organizations in their UNESCO National Commission dealt with issues or had activities that related to the IFAP programme. As well, they were asked to identify what challenges their countries faced in ensuring universal access to information and knowledge and the ability of the citizens to make effective use of this information and knowledge for personal, social and economic development, and further whether the IFAP programme could provide them with support in addressing their challenges.

The questionnaire addressed to the IFAP programme National Committees focused on how well the Committees functioned, what activities they engaged in, the challenges faced in their countries and whether the IFAP programme was helping to address these issues and whether in their future plans to address them they intended to work in conjunction with local institutions.

There was a very low response rate (less than 10 responses overall out of some 182 distributed) to both questionnaires. Of those responding, the most striking finding was that developed countries had active UNESCO National Commissions that helped to further a holistic approach to the issues of an information society. Developing country respondents indicated that they faced a different order of challenges—a lack of connectivity and capacity for outreach through modern technology; the need to acquire and maintain end user equipment; and a lack of trained human resources for training and maintenance activities.

APPENDIX D: IFAP STAKEHOLDER SURVEY

Methodology

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the questionnaire preparation phase, content analysis was used to analyse the contemporary IFAP policy and action-related documents as well as documentation regarding the IFAP granted projects.

The data collection was done by using a questionnaire aimed at the IFAP stakeholders. The IFAP stakeholders' survey was conducted online while the IFAP projects questionnaire was distributed by e-mail (optionally by fax).

In analysing the collected data both the statistical method and content analysis were applied. The study used the descriptive statistical technique to present the findings (for example, the frequency tables and the bar charts of each variable/question). Some cross-tabulations were also done in order to find out if there were associations between responses to different questions. The content analysis was applied primarily in analysing the data regarding the IFAP granted projects.

Response

A list of 20443 e-mail addresses was received. After screening these addresses it was found that 18177 of these addresses were valid e-mail addresses. An e-mail was sent to the respondents on this list, and approximately 3700 were returned within seconds as "Unknown" address. This means that only about 14500 respondents received requests to complete the questionnaire. There were 974 responses. After cleaning and screening the data 902 responses were identified as valid and usable. This leaves a response rate of 6.22%.

Survey demographics

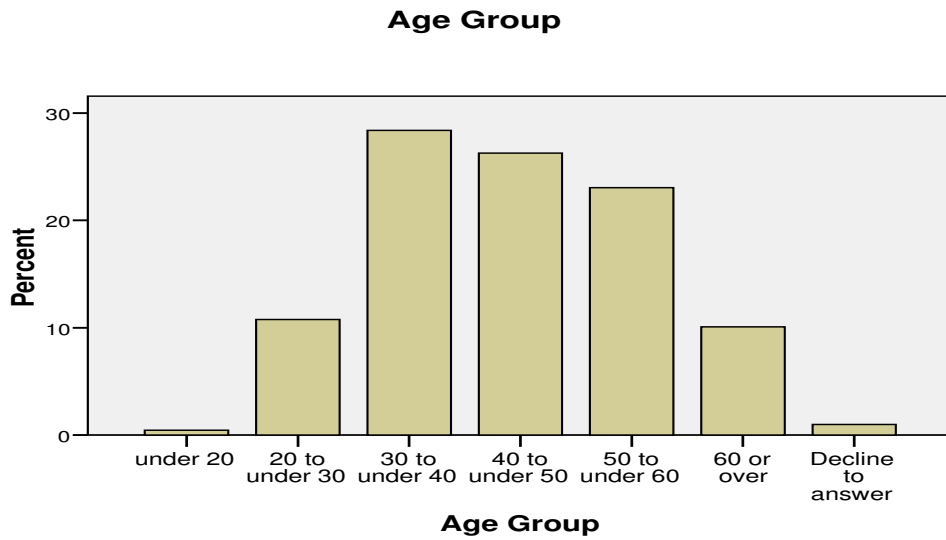
Age group of respondents

28.4% of the respondents are between 30 and 40 years of age and 78.1% of the respondents are between 30 and 60 years of age.

Age group of respondents

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid			
under 20	4	.4	.4
20 to under 30	97	10.8	11.2
30 to under 40	256	28.4	39.6
40 to under 50	237	26.3	65.9
50 to under 60	208	23.1	88.9
60 or over	91	10.1	99.0
Decline to answer	9	1.0	100.0
Total	902	100.0	

Age group of respondents



Location by country

The table below gives a list of those countries from where 2% or more of the respondents lived.

Short list of respondents' locations

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Belgium	21	2.3%	2.3%
Brazil	33	3.7%	6.0%
Canada	46	5.1%	11.1%
France	67	7.4%	18.5%
Germany	21	2.3%	20.8%
Italy	23	2.5%	23.3%
South Africa	19	2.1%	25.4%
Switzerland	27	3.0%	28.4%
Tunisia	41	4.5%	32.9%
United Kingdom of Great Britain	21	2.3%	35.2%
United States of America	68	7.5%	42.7%

Gender

Of the 902 respondents, 62.4% indicated that they were male and 37.3% indicated that they were female.

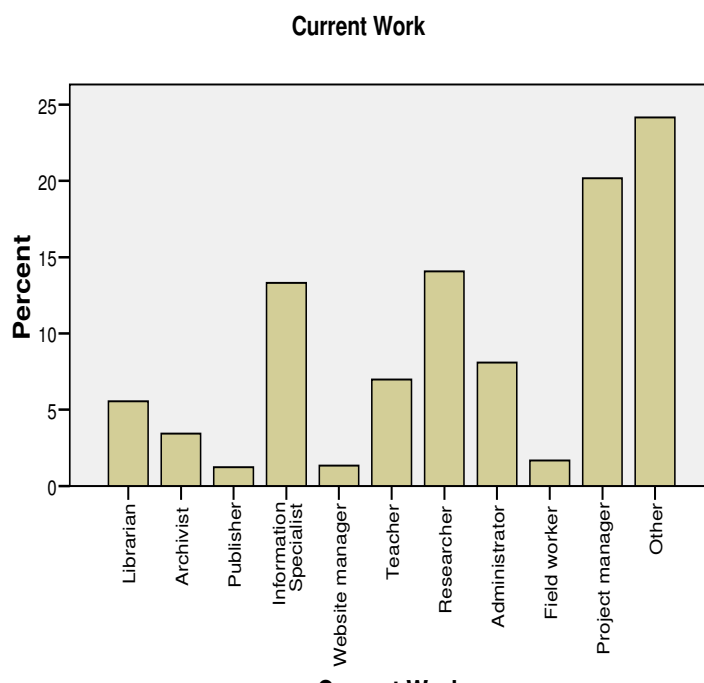
Respondents' gender

	Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Male	563	62.4	62.4
Female	336	37.3	99.7
Decline to answer	3	0.3	100.0
Total	902	100.0	

Respondents' current work situation

The four categories that received most responses were Information Specialist (13.3%), Researcher (14.1%), Project manager (20.2%) and “Other” (24.2%).

Current work situation categories and frequencies



Respondents' affiliation

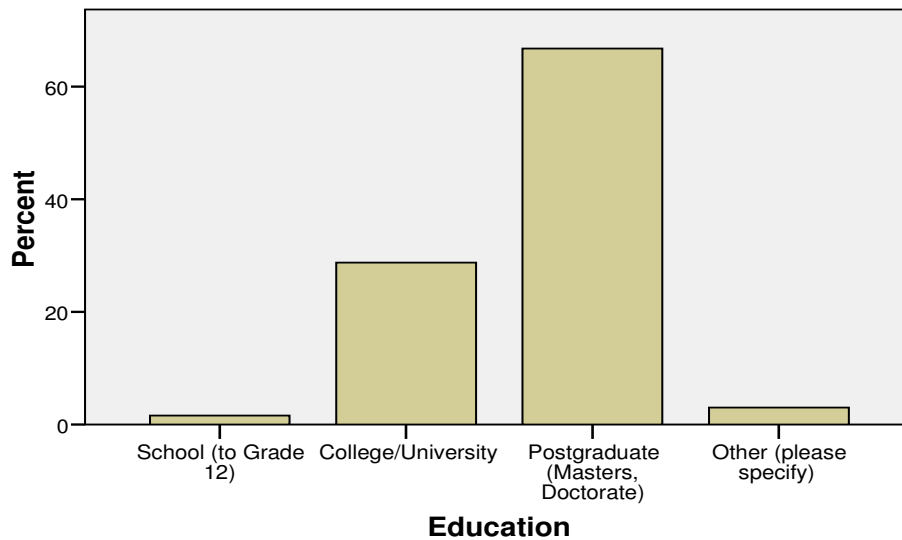
14.6 % of the respondents indicated that they work for NGOs, and 19.5 % indicated that they were “just an interested member of the general public”. All the other responses were fairly evenly spread over the other 28 categories.

Highest level of education

66.7% of the respondents indicated that their highest level of education is post graduate, and a further 28% indicated that they had a college or university education.

Highest level of education

Education



Awareness of IFAP: Had you heard of IFAP before completing this questionnaire?

This question was one of the main research questions of this survey. As can be seen in the table below, 51.8 of the respondents indicated that they had not heard of the IFA program.

Scope of IFAP Awareness

		Frequency	Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Yes	433	48.0	48.2
	No	465	51.6	100.0
	Total	898	99.6	
Missing	System	4	0.4	
Total		902	100.0	

APPENDIX E: SURVEY OF GRANT RECIPIENTS

This study utilized both quantitative and qualitative methods. In the questionnaire preparation phase, content analysis was used to analyse the contemporary IFAP policy and action-related documents as well as documentation regarding the IFAP granted projects.

The data collection was done by a questionnaire directed toward the IFAP projects grant recipients. The IFAP projects questionnaire was distributed by e-mail (optionally by fax).

In analysing the collected data both the statistical method and the content analysis were applied. The study uses the descriptive statistical technique to present the findings (for example, the frequency tables and the bar charts of each variable /question). Some cross-tabulations were also done in order to find out if there were associations between responses to different questions. The content analysis was applied primarily in analysing the data regarding the IFAP granted projects.

There was an exceptionally small response rate to the questionnaire partly as a result either of absent or incorrect (or non-responsive) email addresses or because of non-response from those receiving the survey even after repeated requests.

APPENDIX F: WORKSHOP ON IFAP EVALUATION: PRESENTING DRAFT RECOMMENDATIONS

UNESCO House, Paris, Fontenoy Building, Room VIII, 12 December 2006

Name	First name	Function	Attendance
Gurstein	Michael	Evaluator; Executive Director, Centre for Community Informatics Research, Development and Training in Vancouver, Canada	Personal (P)
Taylor	Wallace	Evaluator; Professor of Information Society and Community Informatics, Cape Peninsula University of Technology, South Africa	P
Piric	Amir	Chief, Evaluation, IOS, UNESCO	P
Shintani	Atsuko	Assistant Evaluation Specialist, IOS, UNESCO	P
Albada, Van	Joan	Secretary-General of the International Council on Archives (ICA)	P
Lor	Peter	Secretary General of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)	Audio
Bommelaer	Constance	Public Policy Manager in the Internet Society (ISOC)	P
Geiger	Charles	Executive Director in the WSIS Executive Secretariat	Video
Rudgard	Stephen	Chief WAICENT Capacity Building and Outreach in the UN Food and Agriculture Organisation	Audio
Deggeller	Kurt	Past President, International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives (IASA)	Audio
Hassan	Ayesha	Senior Policy Manager E-Business, IT & Telecoms; Executive in charge of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) Policy, International Chamber of Commerce (ICC)	P
La Chappelle, de la	Bertrand	Special delegate for the Information Society, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, France	P
Zwimpfer	Laurence	IFAP Chair 2006-2007; New Zealand	Video
Malbert	Daniel	IFAP Chair 2004-2005; France	P
Molnar	Ludovit	Member of the working group that established IFAP; Slovakia	Audio
Sheya	Mohammed	Former Member of IFAP Council and Bureau; Tanzania	P
Osman	Izzeldin	New member of IFAP Council and Bureau; Sudan	Audio
Schüller	Dietrich	Member of IFAP Council and Bureau	Audio
Demidov	Alexei	President of the Russian IFAP National Committee	Video
Khan	Abdul	ADG Communication & Information Sector, UNESCO	P

	Waheed		
Jayaweera	Wijayananda	Director in the Communication Development Division, UNESCO	P
Schmidt	Mogens	Deputy Assistant Director-General for Communication and Information	P
Saidou-Djermakoye	Mariama	Senior Programme Planning Officer in the Division of Programme Planning, Monitoring and Reporting, Bureau of Strategic Planning, UNESCO	P
Gaschutz	Cordula	Chief of Unit in the Executive Office - Coordination and Evaluation, UNESCO	P
Moller	Brigitte	Director, Division for Cooperation with. Extrabudgetary Funding Sources, UNESCO	P
Plathe	Axel	Chief of Section in the Information Society Division - Universal Access and Preservation Section, UNESCO	P
Ito	Misako	Assistant Programme Specialist in the Information Society Division – Universal Access and Preservation Section, UNESCO	P
Schlecker	Sabine	Intern in the Information Society Division - Universal Access and Preservation Section, UNESCO	P