

Honorary Fellow Citation for

Sinikka Sipilä



In the depths of her being, Sinikka Sipilä is a true librarian. Through her work at the Hämeenlinna City Library and the University of Tampere, she formed the belief that libraries are powerful agents of societal development, strengthen communities and assist individuals in their daily lives. In addition to her work, Sinikka became active on the Board of the Finnish Library Association and was appointed Secretary General of the Association in 1997. She actively promoted cooperation with Nordic, Baltic and other European library associations during her term of office.

As a result of time spent working in Tanzania, Sinikka discovered a passion for library development. She was involved as a library expert and advisor in projects undertaken by Finnish universities and government in Africa and Asia, inspiring others to believe in the role of libraries in the development of societies.

Sinikka's contribution to IFLA is extensive as a member of the Standing Committee and Chair of Management of Library Associations Section (MLAS); on the IFLA delegation to the UN World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS); Co-Chair of the IFLA World Library and Information Congress 2012 in Helsinki; on the IFLA Governing Board 2007-2013; and as IFLA President 2013-2015.

Her Presidential theme of 'Strong Libraries, Strong Societies' emphasized the capacity of libraries to promote equal opportunities and equitable access to life-long learning and education, to research and innovation, and to culture and recreation for all. The theme resonated with many and provided inspiration to the development efforts of library associations in diverse nations. In 2014, Sinikka launched IFLA's Lyon Declaration on Access to Information and Development to which over 600 library institutions and organisations around the world became signatories. IFLA was able to use the declaration to great effect to advocate for the inclusion of access to information in the United Nations 2030 Agenda and Sustainable Development Goals and in meetings with governments.

In 2015, Sinikka, in conjunction with colleagues from the African continent, led a high level meeting of national librarians and Ministers from a range of countries across Africa, resulting in the Cape Town Declaration. The Declaration is a commitment to provide the necessary resources for the development of African libraries allowing them to respond to modern day challenges and provide access to emerging technologies.

The theme of her presidency is still being quoted and forms part of her legacy to the profession. Sinikka Sipilä's significant efforts on behalf of IFLA and her contributions to library development at the international level qualify her as a worthy recipient of IFLA's highest honour of Honorary Fellow.