Building Your Library Association

Slides: Topic 2: Structure and Governance in Action

International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions

Learning Objectives

- At the completion of this topic you should be able to:
  - Explain the role and responsibility of an association's governing body
  - Demonstrate an understanding of delegation and the circumstances in which it would be appropriate for a governing body to delegate powers
  - Explain the role and purpose of governing body committees and member-initiated groups
  - Apply guidelines for establishing committees and appointing members in your own association
  - Document functions for the various groups of an association as a way of clarifying roles and responsibilities
  - Evaluate the effectiveness of the main committees of your association and identify strategies for improvement

Governing boards

- Ensures the association engages in strategic planning on an ongoing basis
- Ensures the goals and objectives in the strategic plan are met
- Assures the association is well run and meets financial objectives
- Making of policy and by-laws
- Establishment of committees and divisions, groups etc and supports them in their work
- Appoints and evaluates the association director
- Affiliation with other associations and bodies

Appointing members

- How many board members are required? This will obviously vary depending on the size of the association but key issues in determining size are:
  - Amount of work conducted at each meeting
  - The extent to which board members are involved in the work of the association – how 'hands on' it is.
  - Political considerations
- What personal skills and attributes should members have to help govern the association? E.g., an ability to think strategically
- Should stakeholders be represented e.g., divisions and geographical areas
- How long should the appointment be? Typically 2-3 years
- How are they to be appointed? The process should be fair and transparent

Committees

- Committees play an important role for an association. There are three main types of committees:
  - Standing committees of the governing board. A board should establish standing committees in important areas of its responsibility but which are too complex or too many for it to manage itself
  - Ad hoc, or occasional committees. These are established for a limited time span
  - Some boards also establish an executive committee

Divisions

- Divisions focus on a particular area of professional interest areas
- Are established as part of the governance arrangements – through the constitution for example
- Divisions typically have their own elected officers and their management is governed through by-laws
- Members of divisions must be members of the association

Activity 1: Organisational structure

- Describe the structure of your library association.
- Does it work well?
- Is it well suited to its purpose?

Developing committees or groups

- Consider:
  - The name e.g., Finance Committee
  - The description of the purpose of the committee – known as the terms of reference
  - The tasks of the committee which can be written as goals, with measurable outcomes
  - The beginning and ending of the work of the committee
  - The people involved in the committee and how they relate to each other
  - Any requirement for the Executive Director or other staff time
  - Any financial requirements
  - Regular and final reporting obligations

Effective committees or groups

- Ensure the committee has a specific charge or set of tasks to address, and ensure board members understand the committee's charge
- Have at least two board members on each committee
  In each board meeting, have each committee chair report the committee's work since the past board meeting
- Consider having non-board members as members of the committee