

Beacons of the Information Society: The Alexandria Proclamation on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning

Celebrating this week's confirmation of the site of the Pharos of Alexandria, one of the ancient wonders of the world, the participants in the High Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning held at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on 6-9 November 2005 proclaim that information literacy and lifelong learning are the beacons of the Information Society, illuminating the courses to development, prosperity and freedom.

Information Literacy lies at the core of lifelong learning. It empowers people in all walks of life to seek, evaluate, use and create information effectively to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals. It is a basic human right in a digital world and promotes social inclusion of all nations.

Lifelong learning enables individuals, communities and nations to attain their goals and to take advantage of emerging opportunities in the evolving global environment for shared benefit. It assists them and their institutions to meet technological, economic and social challenges, to redress disadvantage and to advance the well being of all.

Information Literacy

- comprises the competencies to recognize information needs and to locate, evaluate, apply and create information within cultural and social contexts;
- is crucial to the competitive advantage of individuals, enterprises (especially small and medium enterprises), regions and nations;
- provides the key to effective access, use and creation of content to support economic development, education, health and human services, and all other aspects of contemporary societies, and thereby provides the vital foundation for fulfilling the goals of the Millennium Declaration and the World Summit on the Information Society; and
- extends beyond current technologies to encompass learning, critical thinking and interpretative skills across professional boundaries and empowers individuals and communities. Within the context of the developing Information Society, we urge governments and intergovernmental organizations to pursue policies and programs to promote information literacy and lifelong learning. In particular, we ask them to support

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- regional and thematic meetings which will facilitate the adoption of information literacy and lifelong learning strategies within specific regions and socioeconomic sectors;
- professional development of personnel in education, library, information, archive, and health and human services in the principles and practices of information literacy and lifelong learning;
- inclusion of information literacy into initial and continuing education for key economic sectors and government policy making and administration, and into the practice of advisors to the business, industry and agriculture sectors;
- programs to increase the employability and entrepreneurial capabilities of women and the disadvantaged, including immigrants, the underemployed and the unemployed; and
- recognition of lifelong learning and information literacy as key elements for the development of generic capabilities which must be required for the accreditation of all education and training programs.

We affirm that vigorous investment in information literacy and lifelong learning strategies creates public value and is essential to the development of the Information Society.

Adopted in Alexandria, Egypt at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina on 9 November 2005.

Retirado de <https://www.ifla.org/publications/beacons-of-the-information-society-the-alexandria-proclamation-on-information-literacy>, em 16/06/2018