How African Libraries contribute to the African Union 2063 Agenda:
The Africa We Want

AFRICAN LIBRARIES DRIVING DEVELOPMENT

The development of human capital is key to the progress and prosperity of Africa. The AU 2063 Agenda as an aggregated and ambitious initiative for a better life for all Africans is undergirded by the need to develop and have Africans who will be instruments of the continent's transformation; who will have a broad understanding of the core values of Africa and where the continent ought to be in all spheres of human, social, political and economic development. Access to relevant, accurate and timely information is essential to development in the 21st century. Beyond the noted roles of libraries in inculcating and promoting literacy, libraries of all types perform significant and crucial functions in driving development through the provision of access to information and knowledge that trigger innovative ideas, promote well-being, inclusiveness and peaceful co-existence, engender food security, good governance among other key outcomes.

ASPIRATION

AGENDA 2063
ASPIRATIONS FOR THE
AFRICA WE WANT

Aspiration 1
A Prosperous Africa, based on Inclusive
Growth and Sustainable Development.

GOAL

1) A High Standard of Living, Quality of Life and Well Being for All Citizens
Priority Areas
. Incomes, Jobs and decent work
. Poverty, Inequality and Hunger
. Social security and protection Including Persons with Disabilities
. Modern and Livable Habitats and Basic Quality Services

2) Well Educated Citizens and Skills revolution underpinned by Science, Technology and Innovation
Priority Area
Education and STI skills driven revolution

(3) Healthy and well-nourished citizens
Priority Area
Health and Nutrition

(4) Transformed Economies
Priority Areas
. Sustainable and inclusive economic growth
. STI driven Manufacturing / Industrialization and Value
  addition
. Economic diversification and resilience
. Hospitality/Tourism
(5) Modern Agriculture for increased productivity and
production
Priority Area
Agricultural Productivity and Production

(6) Blue/ ocean economy for accelerated economic growth
Priority Areas
. Marine resources and Energy
. Ports Operations and Marine Transport

7) Environmentally sustainable and climate resilient
economies and communities
Priority Areas
. Sustainable natural resource management and
  Biodiversity conservation
. Sustainable consumption and production patterns
. Water security
. Climate resilience and natural disasters preparedness
  and prevention
. Renewable energy

Libraries contribute in significant ways to the standard of living of different communities as they provide access to information that makes people in different African communities understand practices, ideas and concepts for better living.

The facilities and environment of libraries promote literacy, learning and education which has been scientifically linked to better quality of life.

People need jobs for their economic well-being. Most jobs in the 21st century require basic Technologies (ICT) skills. This is a hard fit for many who schooled before computers were introduced in many learning institutions in parts of Africa. Libraries in different communities help people to retool with computer and digital skills so that they can get available jobs. Libraries run job searches and assist people to write and review their job applications and CVs. Businesses use library spaces for small meetings and the facilities of libraries for sending mails and building connection. Libraries also offer entrepreneurship classes for starting SMEs. Through these functions, libraries assist their communities to push back poverty, get decent jobs and improve their standards of living.

Libraries are part of the critical social infrastructure in communities all over Africa that dispel isolationism, promote inclusivity that is needed for building healthy 21st century communities as they connect persons, organisations and opportunities.

Libraries of all types ensure quality education by giving access to multiplicity of sources, opinions and voices that assist Africans to think and understand concepts, and not just learn by rote.

Research has shown that there is a link between academic failure, delinquency, crime and inadequate reading skills. Libraries consciously bridge the gap for those who cannot read because they cannot afford school texts nor the space for studying as they use library resources and facilities to upgrade reading skills, do their assignments and keep up with classrooms reading.

It has been acknowledged that pre-primary literacy is basic for the development of reading skills by children. Libraries run story hour programmes where basic literacy skills are imparted to preschool children.

Out of school children is a social misnomer that portends great danger to Africa as a sizable percentage of the next generation grows into adulthood without the knowledge and skills to earn a living legally or to fend for themselves. Libraries are taking up the challenge to offer informal education and skill acquisition sessions for street children and out of school children in particular.

African medical and hospital libraries make information and research data available to health professionals in support of quality medical investigations and healthcare for communities. Libraries also provide resources for teaching health personnel about modern practices.

Libraries partner with government agencies and non-governmental bodies in providing access to information on public health issues such as drug abuse, safe sex, disadvantages of teenage pregnancy and the handwashing campaign to ward off diseases.

Libraries offer spaces outside of hospitals where groups that work in the areas of health and wellbeing can engage with communities to promote healthy lifestyles.

The economic well-being and growth of nation States used to rely heavily on the availability of natural resources within their boundaries, offshore and onshore. However, 21st century realities show that Information is trumping natural resources as the driver of economies. Countries that are not naturally endowed with resources are building up their intellectual capital as they realize that sustainable and inclusive economic growth is   determined by the amount of quality information that is available and accessible. The accumulated knowledge is used to create goods and services as skilled workers are exposed to information and 21st century concepts. Libraries play central roles in the knowledge economy of nations as spaces (virtual and physical) where relevant, accurate and timely information can be sourced for development.

21st century economies are hugely dependent on digital technologies for banking, taxation, communicating with others for business purposes, advertising one's products and getting information on resources, transportations, knowing and connecting with viable markets etc. Industries

keying into the digital economy need workers who can perform their duties seamlessly online with different devices. Libraries are in the forefront of impartation of digital skills for African workforce development and manpower in training.

Libraries nurture new business enterprises by providing spaces and facilities for them to function and meet potential clientele and Libraries also provide the information base for SMEs and the entire business ecosystem as they seek to develop their operations and diversify into new areas.

Libraries stock documentary heritage that serve as tourist attractions and promote the cultural identity of their communities.

Agriculture is the largest occupation in most of rural Africa and contributes to the economic well-being of most. The sector grows when information about best practices and research-based knowledge is accessible to practitioners in all corners of the community.

Libraries provide access to data and research on possibilities of sustainable blue/ocean economy for economic growth.

Wrong practices that can endanger the soil, flora, fauna and the ozone layer can be curtailed when people have the information and understanding about correct methods and procedures that can protect the ecosystem as they carry out routine daily activities.

Libraries are creating awareness and providing information about current realities such as climate change, desertification and water security. This is expected to lead to changes in practices that endanger natural resources and biodiversity.

EXAMPLES

Libraries in Botswana, Ghana, Namibia, Malawi, Nigeria, Uganda, Kenya, Seychelles, Zambia and South Africa, provide free internet services for their communities to search for jobs online. This is of great importance in areas where the only source of free internet is the library. The libraries also have Job Search corners where they place vacancies culled from online and offline sources. This is particularly useful to job seekers who may likely miss openings if no one curates them.

Enugu State Library, Enugu State Nigeria, offers skill acquisition classes on shoemaking. These classes assist the unemployed youths to learn how to make shoes, sandals, slippers as well as tips on how to start/manage and be successful in running a shoemaking business. This improves their quality of life as they gain economic skills.

Msunduzi Library, South Africa and Northern Regional Library, Ghana, National Library, Uganda offer basic ICT classes for office workers who need such skills to get

promotions and take on extra tasks/responsibilities.

Eastwood Library, South Africa has a Seniors Club for elderly people in the community who gather in the library once a week to do beadwork, knitting, share stories of events and receive health information from Nurses invited by the library. This bonds them together and dispels loneliness thereby making them live happily.

Libraries promote inclusivity for the visually Impaired as resources are provided in braille in South Africa Library for the Blind and Bibliotheque Le Pavillion Blanc – Library for the Blind in Cameroon. Mobile libraries provide book and information services to those who are homebound in Madagascar, Ghana, South Africa and Kenya.

Homework services are provided by public libraries in Ghana and Zambia to help young people who do not have the school texts for assignments and/or who do not have supportive literate guardians at home to guide them.

Tanzania Library Board Services operate Reading Tents where pupils from different schools compete in reading, mathematics, poetry writing, drama, dance and drawing. The programme which focuses on supporting reforms in education with emphasis on early years as a foundation for higher one improves basic literacy and numeracy skills for children aged 5 – 13 years.

Malawi National Library lays a foundation for quality education by organising free lessons on how to read and write for nursery school and grade one learners.

A high percentage of innovations in 21st century is undergirded by digital literacy. Academic libraries all over Africa have a compulsory course that teach first year students in their institutions how to search, evaluate, use and create information using modern digital tools. Public libraries in Ghana, Uganda, South Africa, Nigeria, Kenya, Cameroon, Sierra Leone, Malawi, Namibia and Tanzania teach digital literacy skills which include basic computer operations, Microsoft packages.

Kawempe Youth Centre, Uganda and Kenya National Library Services, Nakuru are among the libraries that provide the space and facilities for citizens who cannot engage in any form of formal education to take Online courses for free. Through ICT4Development, Kawempe Youth centre provides the opportunity for young people to learn ICT and participate in projects that promote life–long learning.

Using opensource software, libraries in Nigeria, Kenya, Ghana, Uganda and South Africa translate children's books into local languages. These books which are stored offline and online, introduce modern concepts such as robotics, Internet of Things, recycling and climate change to African children using their local languages. This creates room for better understanding of scientific principles and ideas which are explained with phrases instead of just single words.

Soma Book Café, Dar es Salaam works at inculcating literacy into children aged 8yrs and below by instilling a culture of

reading and writing. The children are encouraged to listen as stories are read to them as well as get involved and create their own stories which are compiled and published online.

Nakuru Public Library, Kenya, leverages on technology to teach children basic mathematical concepts. High academic achievement has been reported among those who attend the library programme MathsWhizz.

The City Library Abuja Nigeria, scouts for Almajiri (street children) who have never had any form of education. These kids are taught basic literacy skills and economic skills that can help them fend for themselves in the society.

Lusumu Public Pibrary, Kenya and Laterbiokorshie community library Ghana run campaigns in secondary schools in their regions in partnership with other bodies on curbing teenage pregnancy through the provision of information on reproductive health, rape, drug abuse and how to overcome addiction and distribution of free sanitary pads.

The Nambi Sseppuuya Community Resource Centre has a resource person that sews reusable sanitary towels from old clothes. Through this, the library helps young girls who cannot afford regular sanitary pads to be clean during their monthly period.

Drug abuse is a rising health issue among young Africans. The National Library of Nigeria, Plateau State branch runs an educative information series on the perils of drug abuse.

This is changing the community as youths are beginning to prefer to learn different skills in the library including dancing and beadworks rather than engage in vices.

Outapi Library, Namibia and Seychelles National Library run health and fitness clubs which aim at helping their different communities improve their health through physical exercises and health information sharing.

The National Library of Nigeria, Wuse Branch Abuja, working with medical non-governmental bodies carries out health awareness campaigns in suburbs on hypertension and depression. The Prof. Kenneth Dike State Central Library, Nigeria.

In Zambia, Mpopoma Municipal Mibrary working with the health authority trains and provides information on First Aid so that communities can know what to do first when someone falls ill.

In Sierra Leone, nurses are learning from books in the hospital library and the knowledge they gain is helping them have more safe deliveries in maternities.

Kawempe Library, Uganda collaborates with a health NGO to offer emergency training for emergency responders. This is useful where ambulances might not arrive on time or the hospital is far from a community.

Msunduzi Municipal Public Library service, Pietermaritzburg, South Africa has a Bibliotherapy service

targeted at reading to children in hospitals beds for a healthy frame of mind that aids healing.

Kigali Public Library, Rwanda and Northern Regional Library, Ghana run programmes that promote the knowledge economy such as Reading for Change and Reading for Progress. These programmes expose young people to knowledge that can be exploited, adapted and used to drive economic growth.

The Madagascar Mobile Library chronicles and publicizes the lifecycle and growth of the world-famous Madagascar lemurs for conservation purposes and tourism promotion in the country.

The headquarters of the Kenya National Library Services (KNLS) in Nairobi, is designed not just to be the centre of learning in the country but as a tourist destination.

Agricultural research Libraries in Nigeria, Tanzania, South Africa, Ethiopia package and disseminate information that farmers use to choose improved seedlings, better cultivation methods, storage and addition of value to farm produce.

Kilifi Library, Kenya is working with non-governmental organizations and government agencies in building capacities for urban-based farming in regenerative polyculture food production systems that require no digging, pesticides, insecticides, weeding, or continuous watering.

Nakaseke Community Library, Uganda provides information to rural farmers on best agricultural practices, weather forecasts and how it would affect their crops and market surveys of prices of products.

Sapele Branch Library, Delta State Nigeria connects fish farmers with information to boost their productivity and access credit facilities from financial institutions.

In Oyo town, Nigeria, the zonal library provides information on how to protect the environment through proper disposable and recycling of one-use plastic wastes. In Abuja, Nigeria the Wuse branch of the National Library of Nigeria carries out awareness campaigns and services on the dangers of using plastic/polythene bags

Through Libraries, AfLIA carried out a continent-wide awareness drive on how to tackle water shortage, including how to use wastewater appropriately in different parts of the continent.

To conserve and protect the ecosystem, Nakuru Library Kenya leads an annual tree planting campaign. This is done to make the community understand the need to plant a tree for every one that is cut.

AfLIA created awareness and urged people to take action about climate change all through the continent through a poster and video competition. Participants in AfLIA training programs from Nigeria and Namibia for public librarians have created video clips about plastic waste and proper refuse disposal methods. These clips are used to create awareness about how the continent can jeopardize the bio-diversity of the environment.

ASPIRATION

AGENDA 2063
ASPIRATIONS FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT

Aspiration 2
An Integrated Continent Politically united and based on the ideals of Pan Africanism and the vision of African Renaissance.

GOAL

((8) United Africa (Federal or Confederate)

(9) Continental Financial and Monetary Institutions are established and functional
<u>Priority Area</u>
Financial and Monetary Institutions

(10) World Class Infrastructure criss-crosses Africa
<u>Priority Area</u>
Communications and Infrastructure Connectivity

L ibraries enable African citizens to travel around the continent as they read books about other countries. This is the necessary foundation for building a United Africa – when all Africans are able to identify other countries within the continent not as strangers but as their kith and kin.

Access to useful and affordable products and services of financial institutions is a prerequisite for reduction of poverty. While many African communities are underbanked, many do not know the functions of banks or have an uninformed bias against banking. Libraries provide information that will bring financial inclusion for millions of Africans.

Communication is essential for development. Internet has opened up great possibilities in communications, education, health and other areas that engender innovations and growth. Internet penetration in Africa is on the rise. However, there are still communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay the rates for daily internet connectivity.

Libraries use the Internet as a platform for provision of information and for helping users communicate ideas, create, generate knowledge and link up with possibilities within and across borders.

A critical aspect of connectivity infrastructure is the skill-set needed to work on digital platforms. Libraries are clear leaders in the inculcation of digital literacy all over the continent.

EXAMPLES

The National Library of Nigeria, Abuja runs a programme for financial literacy in the suburbs of the capital city. In partnership with banks, the library creates awareness about savings, lending function of banks and use of ATMs.

Libraries in most African communities are the only spaces where people can access internet feely to get information, study or just to connect with family and friends that are not nearby. Libraries have facilities and space that enable users to access internet or use their devices and connect to the library's Internet.

Libraries across the continent teach digital literacy at all levels; for beginners, intermediate and advanced learners. Those involved in distant learning use the Internet facilities in public libraries to do access resources for their courses as well as complete their assignments.

Public libraries in Kenya and Uganda run P2P online learning classes for people who wish to enhance their educational status or just to learn more chosen subject areas.

ASPIRATION

AGENDA 2063
ASPIRATIONS FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT

Aspiration 3
An Africa of Good Governance, Democracy, respect for human Rights, Justice and the Rule of Law.

③

GOAL

(11) Democratic values, practices, universal principles of human rights, justice and the rule of law entrenched
<u>Priority Areas</u>
. Democracy and Good Governance
. Human Rights, Justice and The Rule of Law

(12) Capable institutions and transformative leadership
 in place
<u>Priority Areas</u>
. Institutions and Leadership
. Participatory Development and Local Governance

L ibraries enable communities to become aware of the activities of the different arms of government, track what their representatives are doing and most importantly be better informed of the policies of government and how they affect them in order to participate fully in democracy. Libraries are symbols of the freedom of choice, freedom to learn and know new things.

Information resources in all library types in Africa provide people access to information as a human right. When people are informed, the rule of law is better upheld as they not only know their rights as citizens but also their duties and obligations which help to recognise the rights of others too.

 Readers are leaders. Libraries all over Africa provide the information resources that leaders and those aspiring to lead need for policy formulation and character traits that are needful for transformational leadership.

No leader can succeed without knowledge of alternative views in making decisions about any matter. Libraries breakdown information and repackage them so that leaders can have a bird-eye balanced view of issues.

EXAMPLES

Information resources and links online and offline in all library types in Africa provide people access to information as a human right. Ignorance, and misinformation which libraries stand against breed oppression and denial of justice and human rights. When people are informed, the rule of law is better upheld as they will not just know their rights as citizens of a country but also their duties and obligations which help to ensure the recognition of the rights of others too.

In partnership with an NGO, Mongu Provincial Library, Zambia, has a service that disseminates information about voters' apathy and how it can truncate democracy.

Kigali Public Library, Rwanda runs a programme – Leaders Exchange Hub for young people who are aspiring to get into leadership positions in different areas of life.

ASPIRATION

AGENDA 2063
ASPIRATIONS FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT

Aspiration 4
A Peaceful and Secure Africa

GOAL

(13) Peace Security and Stability is preserved
Priority Area
Maintenance and Preservation of Peace and Security

(14) A Stable and Peaceful Africa
Priority Area
Institutional structure for AU Instruments on Peace and Security

(15) A Fully functional and operational APSA
Priority Area
Fully operational and functional APSA Pillars

F ake news, post-truth and alternative truths are 21st words and concepts which have the capacity to cause divisions and generate conflicts in communities and countries. This could effectively threaten the peace, security and well-being of people. Academic and public libraries all over Africa help in building resilience against fake news as they teach information literacy and highlight the importance of evaluating information sources.

The rule of law breeds peace and security. Access to legislation and legal information are necessary for peace and security. When citizens know their civic obligations and rights, institutions who are empowered to maintain peace and order perform better and security is more assured.

African Peace and Security Architecture(APSA) can only be fully effective when there is access to relevant and timely information that can guide the Panel of the Wise and other stakeholders to engage in dialogues and interactions that can engender peace and promote good governance.

EXAMPLES

Academic libraries in tertiary institutions all over Africa teach skills that help people to gain abilities for effective evaluation of information and determination of fake and real news. These skills have the capacity to engender peace and curb the spread of wrong information that can cause conflicts and insecurity.

African National libraries have holdings of important documentary evidence which provide guides in settling of conflicts in the continent.

Information such as history of wars and migrations and agreement instruments which assist in knowing the source of disputes and settling conflicts are found in National Libraries in Africa.

ASPIRATION

AGENDA 2063
ASPIRATIONS FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT

Aspiration 5
Africa with a Strong Cultural Identity
Common Heritage, Values and Ethics.

GOAL

16) African Cultural Renaissance is pre- eminent
Priority Areas
. Values and Ideals of Pan Africanism
. Cultural Values and African Renaissance
. Cultural Heritage, Creative Arts and Businesses

L ibraries are the intellectual storehouses of documentary heritage. They collect, store and make accessible information resources that promote cultural values and Pan Africanism.

Information resources in libraries inspire creativity and are used extensively for research by artists of different genres who seek to infuse authenticity into their works.

EXAMPLES

AfLIA as the umbrella body for Librarians in Africa had long recognized the importance of Pan Africanism, and so held an exhibition programme 'My Africa, Your Africa, Our Africa' which was run by public libraries all over the continent to make communities proud of their culture, to build understanding that others might have different cultures and most importantly to know that despite the differences, Africa is one.

National Libraries across Africa collect legal deposit copies of information resources published in their countries or about their countries and preserve that as an important part of cultural documentary heritage for the present generations and those unborn.

ASPIRATION

AGENDA 2063
ASPIRATIONS FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT

Aspiration 6
An Africa Whose Development is people driven, relying on the potential offered by African People, especially its Women and Youth, and caring for Children.

⑥

GOAL
(17) Full Gender Equality in All Spheres of Life
Priority Areas
. Women and Girls Empowerment
. Violence & Discrimination against Women and Girls

(18) Engaged and Empowered Youth and Children
Priority Area
Youth Empowerment and Children

Women hold up half the sky. Women who can read and write have more chances of helping their children achieve than those who cannot. Literate women make for healthier communities. Research has shown that there is lower infant and maternal mortality where the percentage of literate women is high.

Empowerment of women and girls with literacy skills and 21st century skills by libraries engenders inclusive, open and prosperous communities.

Violence and discrimination against the female gender is rampant where women and girls are perceived as those without economic power and cannot fend for themselves. This breeds inequality. Libraries assist women and the girl-child through different programmes to gain economic skills that help them to contribute meaningfully to their families.

Africa's demographics show a definite youth bulge. Equipping these young people with competitive skills which are not taught in schools is necessary. This will increase their chances of employment in the global market.

EXAMPLES

Anambra State Library, Nigeria works with NGOs to run programmes for girls on coding.

Nakeseke Library, Uganda provides agricultural information specifically targeted at rural women to assist them in marketing their farm produce.

Lusumu Library, Kenya has programmes that teach women in the community how to make and market beads.

The National Library of Uganda through its branches provides training on MS Word and spreadsheets to girls in secondary schools to assist in getting them ready to face challenges of 21st century learning and workplaces.

Kano State Library Board, Nigeria runs Women Empowerment programmes to teach women how to start small scale business with soft loans from government.

Oshana Regional Library, Namibia and Nakuru Library, Kenya encourage creativity, positive use of imagination and skill acquisition by children and young people through the design and production of beads from papers and recycled materials.

Different branches of Ghana Library Authority organize Tech tutorials for the children and youth on graphic designs, Microsoft suite and use of e-readers.
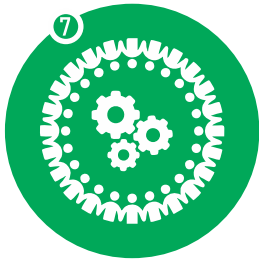
Thika Library, Kenya focuses on empowering youth especially those who are unemployed. Their programme 'Provision of ICT and entrepreneurial skills and information to young people in Thika helps those who completed schooling but lack relevant skills to start, run viable businesses or become gainfully employed.

ASPIRATION

AGENDA 2063
ASPIRATIONS FOR THE AFRICA WE WANT

Aspiration 7
An Africa as A Strong, United, Resilient and Influential Global Player and Partner.

⑦

GOAL
(19) Africa as a major partner in global affairs and peaceful co-existence
Priority Areas
Africa's place in global affairs.
Partnerships

(20) Africa takes full responsibility for financing her development
Priority Areas
African Capital market
Fiscal system and Public Sector Revenues
Development Assistance

C onflicts are predicated on lack of understanding. Libraries support this goal by providing information resources that leads to understanding how Africa can better relate to other continents with different cultures and value systems.

A well-organized financial market is one of the indicators of a healthy and efficient economy as the flow of savings and investments are managed for sustainable development. Vibrant capital markets are better achieved where there is financial inclusion and citizens have access to information on relevant laws and services as pertains to financial markets and opportunities. Without access to appropriate information about capital market operations and services, many Africans will continue to be side-lined and lose out on financial opportunities. This has the capacity to delay a robust African capital.

EXAMPLES

National Libraries in Kenya, Nigeria, Uganda, South Africa, Namibia, among others have information resources about their countries that are a guide for those who wish to partner with the countries. The resources assist foreigners to understand basics of the language, norms, taboos and way of life of the people. The information in these guides aid the building of partnerships across borders.

Libraries in Africa stock and compile online, offline and print resources on financial matters which are relevant for those who wish to invest in the capital market.

AGENDA 2063
ASPIRATIONS FOR THE
AFRICA WE WANT

Aspiration 1
A Prosperous Africa,
based on Inclusive Growth
and Sustainable Development.

Aspiration 2
An Integrated Continent Politically
united and based on the ideals of
Pan Africanism and the vision of
African Renaissance.

Aspiration 3
An Africa of Good Governance,
Democracy, respect for
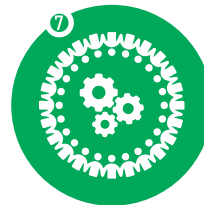human Rights, Justice and
the Rule of Law.

Aspiration 4
A Peaceful and
Secure Africa

Aspiration 5
Africa with a Strong Cultural
Identity Common Heritage,
Values and Ethics.

Aspiration 6
An Africa Whose Development is
people driven, relying on the potential
offered by African People, especially its
Women and Youth, and caring for Children.

Aspiration 7
An Africa as A Strong, United,
Resilient and Influential Global
Player and Partner.

AFRICAN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION
ASSOCIATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS
(AfLIA)

Notes

web.aflia.net

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