



**WSIS
FORUM 2026**

**6-10 July 2026
Geneva, Switzerland**

Session Outcome Document

Investing in what already works: Public access institutions as drivers of digital equity

International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, UNESCO, Universal Postal Union

Wednesday 8 July, 11:00am-11:45am

<https://www.itu.int/net4/wsis/forum/2026/Agenda/Session/199>

Key Issues discussed:

- The session opened with a reminder of the fact that the WSIS Action Lines underline the relevance of connecting community anchor institutions as an enabler of wider connectivity and inclusion. The relevance of this has been reaffirmed by the WSIS+20 outcome document. The question then is of what a high-impact public access strategy looks like in the 3rd decade of WSIS.
- UNESCO highlighted work to promote a more holistic approach to understanding internet inclusion, notably the ROAM-X indicators and work around multilingualism, as well as work with IFLA to underline the role of libraries in this space.
- UPU and IFLA presented fresh research into the degree to which Universal Service and Access Funds are already engaging post offices and IFLA.
- UPU started by highlighting how post offices were frequently present in areas which tended to suffer most from connectivity challenges, and were also very often active in providing a variety of services that helped people make the most of the internet. UPU highlighted in particular the examples of Zimbabwe, Mauritius and Botswana.
- IFLA noted libraries' wide reach and ability to offer a range of services alongside internet access, including access to culture and public space.
- The research demonstrated that both types of institution were involved in USAF-funded projects that covered new services, digital literacy training, and other forms of support, underlining that there is already a wealth of experience of how to integrate them into wider universal service planning.

Key Outcomes of the session

- A large majority of active Universal Service and Access Funds either have a record of investing directly in supporting connectivity via post offices and libraries, or are supporting the type of activities that these anchor institutions offer.
- With both the UPU and IFLA reports based on desk-research, there is strong potential to strengthen the findings by engaging directly with USAF authorities and beneficiaries.
- In response to questions about the priorities for a research and action agenda on public access in the third decade of the WSIS process, participants highlighted in particular the need to reflect on how to ensure the long-term sustainability of funding for such inclusion efforts, how to measure the impact of public access infrastructures, and how to build skills in the public sector to make the most of these opportunities.

Key Recommendations and Forward-Looking Actions

- UPU and IFLA will together seek additional inputs and ideas on what a research and action agenda could look like, with a view to finalising a plan by the 2026 Internet Governance Forum. They will welcome cooperation with other actors with a shared interest in realising the potential of public access to drive digital inclusion.
- There is also a value in taking forwards work on USAFs, and to work to integrate consideration of libraries into wider processes bringing together relevant authorities to plan for the future.
- UNESCO, UPU and IFLA will explore the potential for a policy brief on connectivity through community anchor institutions.