

IFAA - Federative International SubCommittee on Body Donation (FISBoD)

FISBoD ANNUAL REPORT – 2024-2025

The IFAA Executive Committee approved the creation of the Subcommittee on Body Donation at its meeting on May 22, 2024, and appointed Susana Biasutto (Argentina) as Chair. Due to the need to hold a meeting with the new Chair of the Ethics Committee (FICEM), it was requested to postpone the constitution until the World Congress in Gwangju (South Korea).

Objective: “To collaborate with the members of the associations within the IFAA to provide encouragement and support for developing body donation programmes (BDP) in those universities that do not yet have them, in accordance with the IFAA’s ethical guidelines and within the existing legal framework. In those universities where a BDP exists, but doesn’t work, the Committee will suggest ways of improving the situation”.

Working methodology: “Through contact with member associations, we aim to learn the current situation within their universities and will offer the possibility of working together to achieve BDP objectives. Our goal is to maintain sincere and friendly contacts with the anatomical associations, providing support, and even guidance, when it required. Contacts with member associations will also provide an opportunity for associations to collaborate.

The Subcommittee on Body Donation held its first meeting and began its activities on October 10, 2024. At the time of writing this report, we have held **a total of 23 meetings: a) 6 Subcommittee meetings and b) 17 meetings with 12 associations from 4 different continents** (2 from Africa, 3 from America, 4 from Asia, 3 from Europe). Two associations have not responded to repeated emails (we will continue insisting), have not been able to organize a meeting.

Although FISBoD followed a consistent approach for our meetings with associations, each meeting led to a different outcome, due to the differing situations their countries faced. FISBoD sought to understand, interpret and propose alternatives to address the difficulties. For this report, we will mention some of the relevant issues we identified:

- Most associations are unaware of the IFAA guidelines, although those that have BDPs generally agree with their provisions. FISBoD has disseminated the guidelines.
- We have interviewed associations with very diverse situations, ranging from having a BDP at every university to not even having considered the matter previously. In all cases, we have learned a great deal from each meeting. The strategies for developing BDPs in some countries are outstanding and can surely be helpful for other associations. In other cases, we have managed to encourage (to a greater or lesser extent) anatomists to begin or resume the path of body donation. We will monitor these latter associations to prevent their enthusiasm from fading.

- Some countries have legislation that facilitates the use of unclaimed bodies and thus have access to bodies without the work and effort required to create and develop a donation programme. We have encouraged them to change the way bodies are acquired on ethical grounds, while also emphasising the beneficial effects of BDP on attitudinal change of students, and on the public appreciation of anatomists generated by the dissemination of donation programs.

- Associations wishing to initiate new BDPs often point out a lack of financial resources. However, it is difficult to determine the true extent of this issue as, in some cases, the impression was gained that this might just be an excuse. Undoubtedly, starting a BDP requires financial support from the university, but this varies depending on the current modality of work (unclaimed bodies are being received, preserved, stored and used, or cadaveric material and facilities are completely unavailable).

- Africa and Latin America, in particular, are the regions that have made the least progress. However, a difference was perceived between them. In Africa, a strong cultural and religious influence predominates, while in Latin America, a lack of knowledge prevails. We believe we have made significant progress in certain cases. Some anatomists have begun extensive work for their universities' BDPs and others have taken an interest in the topic and begun to develop strategies to overcome difficulties.

Undoubtedly, the work of FISBoD will be arduous, ongoing and extensive, but we are confident that we can progress.

FISBoD members:

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Agustin Cabrera (Uruguay)
Raffaele De Caro (Italy)
Brenda De Gama (South Africa)
Ilke A. Gürses (Turkey)
Bernard Moxham (United Kingdom)
Madiahah Rushaidi (Malaysia)
Chair: Susana Biasutto (Argentina)

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