

The EIFL approach to public library innovation: 900 libraries and counting

By Ugne Lipeikaitė & Susan Schnuer
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In this article we reflect on EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme (PLIP), a ten-year journey to spark innovation in public libraries in developing and transitioning countries.

EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries, www.eifl.net) is an international non-governmental organization located in Vilnius, Lithuania, whose vision for libraries is *Knowledge Without Boundaries*. Started in 1999, EIFL is devoted to the access to information through libraries, and works in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. The EIFL-PLIP program was launched in 2009 with a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to support innovation in public libraries using technology and access to the Internet. The EIFL-PLIP staff used a combination of strategies to implement a sustainable approach: research, assessment, partnerships, and co-development, to name a few. In the past 10 years EIFL-PLIP has worked with 900 public libraries and

over 1,200 librarians in more than 40 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and Europe.

"We asked EIFL to join us by pushing boundaries in libraries across developing and transitioning countries by developing a program to spur innovation. And from this small request, the EIFL-PLIP program was born. Their initial thinking and proposal went far beyond anything I could have ever imagined. This is permanent, sustainable impact, at scale, in a way that every funder would be amazed by and proud of. I am. And I consider this work of EIFL's with the public libraries to be one of Global Libraries' lasting legacies." - Deborah L. Jacobs, Former Director, Global Libraries (2008-2018) at Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

Using assessment and partnerships as core principles in the development of innovation in under-resourced countries, the PLIP program has been continuously refined and recalibrated to have greater and longer-lasting impact. EIFL staff expanded their approach to innovation by launching six international projects. All projects were carefully crafted to meet the needs of public librarians in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America.

Sparking Innovation - The Small Grants Project

EIFL's first activity, launched in 2009, was to offer [small grants to fund pilot projects](#) in which libraries used technology to meet community needs in areas such as health, education, agriculture, digital and social inclusion, and employment. In addition to financial support, EIFL offered capacity-building and coaching in the areas of impact assessment and communication.

Results: 50 projects in 27 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe, and Latin America. Almost all the projects have become sustainable public library services, and many have been replicated by public libraries around the world.

Examples:

- In central Serbia, a public library has helped revitalize a declining rural economy by teaching farmers ICT skills, demonstrating to farmers the value of online

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information, and creating an online agricultural produce market.

- In Kenya, Nakuru Public Library's e-learning program is helping children conquer their fear of math.



Children at the Nakuru Public

Advocacy - Perceptions of Public Libraries in Africa Research Project

In 2010, EIFL commissioned [a major study focusing on perceptions of public libraries](#) in Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, and Zimbabwe. In all six countries most people surveyed—including library users and non-users, local and national government officials—viewed libraries as spaces for books and for children to finish their homework. In addition, most libraries had few computers for public use, and the librarians did not have the needed digital skills. Based on the findings of the survey, EIFL-PLIP sought partnerships with national library authorities to support advocacy campaigns, and issued a call for innovative technology library projects that could demonstrate impact on local communities.

Results: Training on advocacy and supporting planning of targeted advocacy campaigns have attracted government investment to public libraries connectivity in Ethiopia, Kenya, Ghana and Uganda.

Examples:

- The Communications Authority of Kenya equipped 46 public libraries in the Kenya National Library Service (KNLS) with computers and the Internet. Today all 62 KNLS public libraries offer free public access to technology, supported by training.
- In Ghana, four regional mobile libraries equipped with laptops, mobile internet, and solar panels, travelled to poor and rural schools. In three years, the project almost doubled the pass rate in the technology exam at the Basic Education Certificate Level from 45% in 2015 to 85% in 2018.

Recognizing Public Library Innovators - An Award Project

In 2011, EIFL introduced the [Public Library Innovation Award](#) to recognize successful and unique library services that had not received EIFL-PLIP support. The awards raised the international profile of creative public libraries,

and inspired other librarians to replicate outstanding services. A side benefit of this project was the collection of more data about modern library services worldwide.

Results: Since 2011, EIFL has issued 12 innovation award calls. The award has been given to 43 winning public libraries in Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Examples:

- Rija'tzuul Na'ooj Library, Guatemala is using ICT to build business of talented women weavers so that they can make a profit from their work.
- Plungė Municipal Clock Tower Library in Plungė, Lithuania, which is boosting tourism through a virtual tour of one of Lithuania's prime historical sites.

Building Capacity to Stimulate Innovation - Training Project

The 2010 perception study identified a key need for training to support librarians in the creation of innovative programs. However, most government infrastructure development initiatives did not include capacity-building for public librarians. To fill this gap, EIFL developed a [pilot capacity-building program](#) for public librarians in Ghana, Kenya and Uganda.

Partners: Kenya National Library Service, Ghana Library Authority, The National Library of Uganda, The Library and Information Association of Zambia.

Results: Since 2014, 1,200 public librarians have completed the 144 hours of face-to-face training delivered by international and local trainers. The training has changed how librarians perceive technology in their daily work. As a result, most librarians started to offer digital skills training for communities, often targeted at specific audiences, like women and girls, school dropouts, farmers or at spe-



A Guatemalan weaver at the Rija'tzuul Na'ooj Library.

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The EIFL approach to public library innovation, continued

cific electronic resources on topics like agriculture or health.

Building National Capacity - A Continuous Professional Development Project

For long term impact and transformation, a stronger integrated approach for continuous professional development (CPD) was needed within national public library systems. In 2018, working with the Kenya National Library System (KNLS), which employs over 600 staff in 62 public libraries, EIFL embarked on an [ambitious 18-month project](#) to develop in-house training skills and strengthen the KNLS human resources strategy. The project builds training and service innovation skills in a team of public librarians, transforming them into master trainers for other public librarians in the KNLS network.

Partners: TASCHA (University of Washington), IREX, P2PU (Peer to Peer University), Aarhus Public Libraries, Kenya National Library Service.

Results: The master trainers in Kenya have already provided training to over 400 public librarians. This project is being replicated in Namibia, and modified for Uganda and Zambia, and will extend to Ghana in 2020.

Broadening Horizons Through Peer Learning - A Leadership Project

An [EIFL study on innovation](#) highlighted the importance of peer-to-peer learning for young professionals. In 2017, EIFL introduced the [Initiative for Young African Library Innovators \(IYALI\)](#) as a transformative learning experience that connects public librarians under 35 with their peers in Africa and other countries.

Partners: IFLA, AfLIA (African Library and Information Associations and Institutions), Aarhus Public Libraries, PLA.



Design Thinking training team in Namibia.

Results: Over the past three years, there have been three IYALI groups, totaling 34 librarians, who have participated in the program in Europe (Lithuania, Poland, and Denmark), and Southeast Asia (Indonesia and Malaysia). In 2020, the IYALI group will travel to attend the Public Library Association conference in Nashville, Tennessee in February 2020. The talented 2020 cohort would be delighted to connect with IRRT members at the conference.



IYALI participants visit Wukirsari Village Library, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

Knowledge without Boundaries is a lofty vision, which EIFL-PLIP staff translate into projects to support libraries and benefit their users. The assessments' results from the first ten years will form the foundation for future initiatives as EIFL seeks partnerships and funding that enrich its ability to foster innovation in public libraries worldwide.

For more information about EIFL-PLIP projects or to investigate a partnership with EIFL, contact Ramune Petuchovaite, EIFL-PLIP Programme Manager, ramune@eifl.net

Follow EIFL on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Google+](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [RSS](#).

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Ugne Lipeikaite is the PLIP Impact Manager at EIFL.

Susan Schnuer is PLIP Capacity-Building Manager at EIFL, as well as a past Chair of IRRT.

Message from the Editors

As we close the calendar year, we bring you stories from around the world about library professionals and libraries impacting the world in different ways.

From EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme in several continents to library intern mentorship program in Kenya, and from webinars highlighting libraries as social change engines to exciting programs at ALA annual this past summer, you will enjoy reading this issue into the holidays.

Looking forward to 2020, we bring you information on ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia in January and Annual Conference in Chicago in June. Do not miss the various calls for participation in IRRT programs for Annual.

Last but not least, consider participating in the [IFLA Library Map of the World](#) project, a representative source of basic library statistics and country-level data with comparisons of different library performance metrics by region.

Happy reading. Happy Holidays.

Contact us: [ala.irrt.leads\[at\]gmail.com](mailto:ala.irrt.leads[at]gmail.com).

Meet the Editors

Rebecca Miller

Rebecca is an independent library consultant, focusing on libraries in developing countries. She specializes in research, strategic planning, outreach, administration/management for libraries. She offers tailored professional development trainings and presentations on these and other topics. Rebecca has over 20 years of experience with libraries, as a practitioner and professor.



Florence Mugambi

Florence is the African Studies Librarian at the Herskovits Library of African Studies, Northwestern University in Evanston, Illinois, USA. She has over 10 years of experience as a librarian, and has a strong interest in literacy & establishment of libraries in rural communities of developing countries. She serves as the chair of the Africa Subcommittee, International Relations Committee.



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Message from the IRRT Chair



Richard Sapon-White
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Greetings, IRRT members!

I hope this issue of *IL* finds you happy, healthy, and deeply engaged with the international library community. I am writing this in mid-November while in Abeokuta, Nigeria, home of the 'Nimbe Adedipe Library of the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta. This library is the sister of my home institution, Oregon State University Libraries & Press, a relationship established four years ago.

I will be writing an article about this visit in the March issue of *IL*, but I can tell you how incredibly rewarding it is to interact with colleagues on the other side of the world, learning how they make librarianship work in their environment while sharing what professional life is like back in the States.

I am looking forward to the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Philadelphia next month and the chance to meet some of you in person. Midwinter's focus is on association business, with many IRRT committees deliberating on plans for Annual. If you are able to make it to Philadelphia, do try to attend the Saturday morning all-subcommittee meeting (see page 9 in this issue for the exact time and place). You will learn a lot about what IRRT is doing and can also sit in on committee sessions.

If you are interested in serving on a committee, this would be a good opportunity for you to hear what committees are doing and express interest in appointment to the committee chair. Committee appointments are made in the spring. You are also invited to attend the IRRT board meeting on Sunday, 26 January, which is open to all Midwinter attendees.

The Executive Board has been busy this fall with several endeavors to improve IRRT operations. A revision of the IRRT Officers Manual, long overdue, is being prepared. A discussion of how to best utilize our time slot at Midwinter and Annual is ongoing and should be communicated to committee chairs and IRRT members well in advance of the 2020 Midwinter. ALA Connect training will be offered soon (perhaps by the time you read this) so that communications of the board and committees can be archived centrally for future reference.

Thanks are due to the IRRT board members (including Delin Guerra, our ex-officio member and ALA office liaison) for their many thoughtful and varied contributions to all of these efforts.

I hope that the year 2020 will be one of a shared vision for peace in the world.



Members of the IRRT Executive Board. Left to right: Mark Mattson, Member-at-Large; Richard Sapon-White, Chair; Muzghan Nazarova, Past Chair; Sandy Hirsh, Councilor; and Julia Gelfand, Secretary/Treasurer, at ALA Annual 2019

Message from the IRRT Chair Elect



Alexandra Houzouri Humphreys
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International Relations Round Table: Then and Now

Seventy years ago, on 23 April 1949, as the world was still recovering from World War II, the Round Table on Library Service Abroad held its first meeting in Washington, D.C. In 1956, in recognition of the increasing importance of international librarianship, the round table formally changed its name to the International Relations Round Table (IRRT).

Since its founding, the primary mission of the IRRT has been “to promote interest in library issues and librarianship worldwide” (<http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/about>).

The first by-laws for the IRRT were adopted in 1962. Since then, they have been amended numerous times, most recently in 2015. This year, IRRT officers are working on updating the by-laws and the “IRRT Officers Manual” (<http://www.ala.org/rt/sites/ala.org/rt/files/content/offmanualrevbylaws052515.pdf>).

The IRRT's leading publication, *International Leads*, circulated its first issue in 1950. The *Bulletin* was published occasionally until 1957, when it became a quarterly publication under the name *Leads: A Fact Sheet*. The name was changed to *International Leads* in 1987.

Currently, the IRRT has fourteen active committees, a number of ad-hoc committees, and a vibrant interest group on “International Sustainable Library Development.” The Round Table has undertaken many initiatives over the years and has participated in several Emerging Leaders programs of the American Library Association.

This year, the International Librarians Mentorship Program submitted a program proposal based on the International Librarians Network peer-mentoring program that ran from 2013 to 2017. The Webinar Ad Hoc Com-

mittee has already organized a two-part webinar as part of the Chair's program theme, “Libraries as Social Change Engines.” The Sister Libraries Committee has initiated a campaign to promote Sister Libraries partnerships between U.S. and foreign libraries.

The International Reception Committee is already planning the 2020 International Librarians Reception in the iconic Chicago Public Library, and the IRRT Pre-Conference Committee has issued a call for presentation proposals for its program during the 2020 ALA Annual Conference. These are only a small portion of the activities that have taken place in the last few months. There is much more to come!

The IRRT continues to focus on international activities and issues and is an active advocate for local and international library programs and initiatives. The IRRT has facilitated opportunities for U.S. librarians to visit libraries on every continent for exchange and other programs. For example, librarians who participate in the Fulbright Scholars program share their U.S. library experiences with their international counterparts, and in doing so take an invaluable wealth of knowledge back to the local communities in their respective countries.

Many IRRT members with international travel and work experience have formed professional and personal relationships with librarians from other countries. Many others have contributed to the richness of the relationships between librarians from all over the world by serving in various IRRT committees.

Find more information about the history of the International Relations Round Table in *International Leads*: [Vol. 13, No. 3, 1999, p.1](#).

Please consider supporting IRRT's international activities with a [donation](#) to the Endowment Fund.



Librarian, let's mentor! The library intern mentorship program at the United States International University, Africa

By: Nyakundi James Nyambane, United States International University, Africa
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Background

The [United States International University—Africa](#) (USIU-Africa) is based in Nairobi, Kenya, and offers several undergraduate and graduate programs. The library and information center receives information science student interns who undertake training in every section of the library for practical and professional skills. From interactions with the interns we discovered that majority of them are not sure of career paths in the library field for various reasons such as lack of motivation, while others feel that careers in information science are not modern and diverse.

This prompted us to think of ways we can introduce them to current trends in the library and information science profession. With the approval and support from the University Librarian, we designed an interns mentorship program.

Mentorship Program

The first mentorship program was developed by Nyakundi James Nyambane and Jackson Wamiti. The first mentorship event was held on 3 July 2019. In attendance were six presenters and twenty library interns.

The objectives of this event were:

- Exposure to and exchange of ideas
- Sharing about new opportunities for professional growth



University Librarian Dr. Sylvia Ogola (center) responds to a question.



Moses Munyao (on screen) participates with the attendees via video conference.

- Opportunity to reflect and realign the students experiences, expectations and perceptions of librarianship
- Develop confidence as librarians and in librarianship
- Understanding other library practices globally and benchmarking the roles
- Learning from shared interactions with the speakers and networking.

The speakers included:

- Charles Wanjala: **Focusing on what matters: Personal professional experience**, (Librarian- USIU-A)
- Dr. Sylvia Ogola: **Being a university librarian** (USIU-A)
- Jarnotti Laaksotti: **Librarianship in Finland: Experiences from Erasmus staff training** (Oulu City Library- Finland)
- Moses Munyao: **Career path “The way to go!”** (Doctoral Student- Oklahoma University, USA)

Reactions and observations

The participants reviews of the event were very positive, describing it as beneficial, educative, timely, informative, and relevant to personal and professional growth. In the end, the participants felt motivated by experiences

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USIU-Africa mentoring, continued

shared by the presenters and positively changed their view of librarianship. They also felt that they were better informed on the varying career paths that they may pursue in future.

The future of the program

Mentorship sessions shall be run on every semester, subject to availability of the interns. We shall extend the sessions to library staff who will be interested in being part of the team either as mentors or participants.

“My mentor said, ‘Let’s go do it,’ not ‘You go do it.’ How powerful when someone says, ‘Let’s!’” — Jim Rohn



Charles Wanjala leads a discussion with attendees.

Call for Submissions

Do you have news or stories about ...

- ◇ **International library activities?**
- ◇ **People in international librarianship?**
- ◇ **Upcoming international conferences?**

Why not submit to International Leads?

Email us at ala.intl.leads@gmail.com

Connect with IRRT

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Web: <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt>

Blog: <http://www.alairrt.blogspot.com>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/International-Relations-Round-Table-244416388965473/>

2020 ALA Midwinter and Annual Conferences Updates

ALA Midwinter:

IRRT and IRC meetings

If you are attending [ALA Midwinter](#) in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in January 2020, we welcome you to join the following IRRT and IRO business meetings:

Friday, 24 January

2:30-4:00 pm: International Relations Committee I; Loews Philadelphia, Penn

Saturday, 25 January

8:30-10:00 am: IRC/IRRT All Subcommittee Meeting; Pennsylvania Convention Center, Room 120-ABC

Sunday, 26 January

11:30 am—1:30 pm: IRRT Executive Committee Meeting; Pennsylvania Convention Center, Room 121-B

1:00-2:00 pm: IFLA Update; Pennsylvania Convention Center, Room 115-C

2:30-4:00 pm—International Relations Committee II; Pennsylvania Convention Center, Room 121-B

ALA Annual Conference:

Call for Participation—Pre-Conference

The IRRT invites you to [submit presentation proposals](#) for their 2020 Pre-conference during the [ALA Annual Conference](#) in Chicago, Illinois, USA, on Friday, 26 June 2020, from 8:00 am - 1:00 pm.

The Pre-Conference will include presentations that address libraries supporting social change globally. Topics considered are:

- Libraries as entrepreneurial hubs
- Libraries and sustainable development
- Libraries developing community partnerships
- Library services to special communities (older adults, immigrants, homeless)

Deadline: January 31, 2020. To [submit a proposal or for additional information, visit the IRRT Preconference page.](#)

Call for Participation—Poster Session

The IRRT International Poster Session Committee invites you to submit poster session proposals on international themes for the 2020 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago, Illinois! The poster session will take place on Sunday, 28 June 2020 from 9:30 am – 11:00 am.

Submissions are invited from international librarians at all types of libraries on any topic relevant to librarianship. Submissions are also invited from librarians in the U.S. on any topic relevant to international populations, projects, and collaborations. Posters may include a description of an innovative library program, an analysis of a solution to a problem, a report of a research study, or any other presentation that would benefit the larger library community. Participants will informally discuss their poster presentations with conference attendees during assigned 1.5-hour time periods. For information on the submission process, please visit the [ALA Poster Session website](#).

Deadline: 31 January 2020. Following a double-blind peer review process, applicants will be notified by early March if their submission has been accepted for presentation at the conference.

Questions can be directed to: Michele Fenton (mfenton@library.in.gov) or Richenda Hawkins (hawkinr@linnbenton.edu), co-chairs of the IRRT International Poster Session Committee.



ALA Annual Conference 2019: Reflections from Past Chair

By: *Muzhgan Nazarova, Librarian, Asian & Middle East Division, Library of Congress*

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When I think back to all that IRRT accomplished over last year, culminating with the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, D.C. on 20-25 June 2019, I realize with a great sense of pride and appreciation that it all has been possible only because of you – the IRRT members.

While I want to wholeheartedly thank each of you for your service to IRRT and commitment to support and promote international librarianship, I am extending special thanks especially to all committee members and co-chairs, for their devotion and contributions to this success. As a result of their selfless efforts, the IRRT had outstanding programs with high interest and attendance at ALA annual.

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude and appreciation for all the hard work and dedication provided by the following IRRT committee chairs. They are the movers and shakers of our organization.

Below is a group picture taken with the chairs and members of different IRRT committees, and IRRT Executive board members after the IRRT/IRC all committee meeting on Saturday morning:



All committee chairs submitted end-of-the-year annual reports reflecting on their committee's activities. A compilation of the reports can be found at <http://bit.ly/IRRTallcomreps2019>.

Chair's Program

Christina Riehman-Murphy (Penn State University)

Jeremiah Paschke-Wood (University of Arizona Libraries)

International Connections

Yan Liu (West Chester University Libraries, PA)

Scott Harkless (Independent LIS Professional, DC)

International Librarians' Pre-conference

Dr. Gloria Faith Creed-Dikeogu (Ottawa University, KS)

Dr. Barbara Marson (East Carolina University, NC)

International Papers

Felicia Zhiran Chan (National Library Board, Singapore)

Jamie Johnston, PhD (Oslo Metropolitan University)

International Reception

Dr. Farzaneh Razzaghi (Western Carolina University, NC)

Laverne Page (Library of Congress, DC)

International Sister Libraries

Alexandra H. Humphreys (Arizona State University, AZ)

Carol Casiano-Bray (US State Department, DC)

International Visitors Center

Katie Spires (Utica College, NY)

Camille L. Callison (University of Manitoba)

Membership

Katherina Yoke Peng Lee (Nanyang Technological Univ., Singapore)

Kate McNamara (US Census Bureau, DC)

Nominating

Elise Aversa (Loyola University of Chicago Libraries, IL)

Laila Hussein Moustafa (University of Illinois Library)

Orientation

Eugene Holland Hayworth (University of Colorado Library, CO)

Peter Bae (Princeton University Library, NJ)

Poster Session

Katie Dow (Charles E. Beatley, Jr. Central Library, VA)

Clement Chu S. Lau (Zach S. Henderson Library, GA)

Publications

Lindsay Inge Carpenter (University of Maryland, College Park)

Colleen Schalm (Parkland Regional Library Lacombe, Canada)

International Sustainable Library Development Interest Group

Connie Champlin (Consultant, Centerville, MA)

Carolyn Ziering (Nahant Public Library, MA)

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ALA Annual Conference 2019: Reflections from Past Chair, continued

Since there are really not enough words to describe what a difference the work of all the committee chairs and members made not only for almost 500 international guests of the ALA Annual but many non-international attendees, I highlight a few of the IRRT programs and events.

IRRT Pre-conference: *Transforming Community Relationships*

At this interactive session led by past ALA and IFLA President Donna Scheeder, representatives of different libraries around the world shared their experiences of serving community needs. Presenters discussed Libraries as third spaces, educational places, business incubators, and performance and creation places; as well as civic engagement and new realities (digital and social media) facing libraries.



Pre-conference presenters

International Librarians Orientation

Invited panel members provided information about the city, ALA's structure, the Open House for international visitors and reception at the Library of Congress. More than 200 international guests attended the orientation. The highlight of the event was a lottery drawing, where Peter Bar was pronounced a Master of IRRT lottery running.



Attendees at Orientation

IRRT Chair's Program: *Serving communities: locally and globally*

IRRT Chair's program showcased the chair's theme of "Serving Communities: Globally and Locally," by addressing how different types of libraries develop innovative services and programs to meet the needs of the communities they serve: locally, nationally, and globally.



IRRT Chair's Program

The International Papers & Projects: *Preparing for a Changing World: How Libraries Facilitate the Acquisition of New Skill Sets in Communities*

Speakers shared about international library projects, trends, and issues relating to new skill sets that have become critical in our world today, ranging from health and new media literacy to dialogue and negotiation.



International Papers & Projects

The Sister Libraries Committee: *Bringing Global to Local: The Horner Fellowship Arizona-Japan Librarian Exchange*

The Horner Fellowship Committee representatives talked about the evolution of the fellowship, discussed the experiences and professional benefits for the Arizona and Japanese library professionals who have traveled with the support of the Horner fund, and elaborated on the impact on the communities they served.



Horner Fellowship presenters

The International Connections committee had two programs:

Leaning International: Stories from the Field

A third iteration of a program I started while the International Connections Committee chair a few years ago.

The International Leaders Forum: Visions for the Global Community of Libraries

Global Library Leaders Glòria Pérez-Salmerón (IFLA President), Gerald Leitner (IFLA Executive Director), Catherina Lau (National Library Board of Singapore), and Donna Scheeder (IFLA Past President) shared their vision of a global community of libraries, discussed opportunities and challenges we face, and how we all can work together to make it happen.



International Leaders

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ALA Annual Conference 2019: Reflections from Past Chair, continued

Best Practices from World Libraries Photo Gallery was also organized by the Connections Committee. It presented a selection of photographs from around the world, featuring library projects and programs that best demonstrate the theme of ALA President Loida Gracia-Febo: “Libraries=Strong Communities.” These photos were displayed at the Walter E. Washington Convention Center.

The Poster Session Committee co-chairs selected 25 posters representing a wide array of topics and geographical origins.

IRRT International Librarians Reception

The Reception Committee did an outstanding job working jointly with ALA’s International Office and the Library of Congress on preparations for the grand reception in the Jefferson Building of the Library of Congress. The committee also coordinated the ALA President’s Citation for International Library Innovation. The guests were greeted by the Principal Deputy Librarian of Congress, Mr. Mark Sweeney.

More pictures can be viewed at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/ala-iro/albums/72157709580320377>



Guests enjoy the International Librarians Reception

The **2019** Citations were awarded to:

- Biblioteca Pública Central Estatal for Sustainable Library, Mexico;
- Tor Browser in Toronto Public Library, Toronto Canada;
- Libraries without Borders/Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, Paris, France; and
- Milton Public Library, Ontario, Canada.

The John Ames Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award for International Librarianship is also awarded during the IRRT International Reception to a person who has made a significant contribution to international librarianship. For 2019, Deborah Jacobs, former director of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation’s Global Libraries initiative, was the recipient.



Deborah Jacobs, center, receives the Humphrey/OCLC/Forest Press Award for International Librarianship

Publications Committee worked very hard to advertise and publicize all the IRRT events and activities through IRRT blog (<http://alairt.blogspot.com/2018/>), Facebook page and Twitter. The IRRT Newsletter [International Leads](#) has become extremely popular since Co-Editors Rebecca Miller and Florence Mugambi (also an IRRT Member-at-Large) came on board two years ago. They have kindly agreed to stay for one more term. Joan Weeks, another longstanding member of the Publications committee, has transformed the IRRT website.

Last but not least, the success of ALA Annual as well as IRRT activities throughout the whole year would not have been possible without the leadership, guidance, support, and cooperation of two exemplary people: Michael Dowling, Director of ALA’s Chapter Relations and the International Relations Office; and Delin Guerra, Program Officer in the International Relations Office.

News Briefs

IRRT Webinar

Libraries as Social Change Engines: Working Together with NGOs in Asia and Africa - A Two-Part Series

The IRRT Webinar Committee held a two-part webinar in November, which highlighted international library partnerships and projects between libraries and non-governmental organizations in Asia and Africa.

The first part, presented on 13 November, focused on Asia. The topic was the partnership between [Asia Foundation](#) and [Myanmar Library Association](#). Speakers were Mi Ki Kyaw Myint, Manager of the Special Projects Unit at The Asia Foundation, and MyatSann Nyein, Vice President of the Myanmar Library Association and Local Coordinator Librarian of the eLibrary Myanmar Project.

The second part, presented on 21 November, focused on Africa. The topic was the [Lubuto Library Partners](#), a non-governmental organization supporting community libraries in Zambia. The speakers were Jane Kinney Meyers, founder and president of Lubuto Library Partners; Elizabeth Giles, Director of Library Services; and Given Besa, Library Manager at Lubuto Model Library.

Recordings of each webinar are available at <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/initiatives>. Visit this page for information on upcoming webinars, too.

Connect with IRRT

Email: ala.intl.leads@gmail.com

Web: <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt>

Blog: <http://www.alairrt.blogspot.com>

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Call for Participation: IFLA Library Map of the World

IRRT International Sustainable Library Development Interest Group (ISLD) encourages all IRRT members to consider participating in the [IFLA Library Map of the World](#) project. The IFLA Library Map of the World is an attempt to document basic information about libraries on a country by country basis and to hear library stories from around the world.

The website documents what countries have responded and those that have not. If anyone has contacts in the countries that have not responded, you are invited to contact Kristine Paberza at IFLA (Kristine.Paberza@ifla.org).

In order to participate in the library stories activity, a program or project must be described. Information about partnerships should also be included. The submission should explain how this project or program improves the lives of the library users and/or community, why the library created the project, and evaluation to show impact, if any.

Photographs and videos are encouraged.

For details about submissions go to: <https://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/4053281/SDG-story-submission>.

Conference Report: International Association of School Librarianship

*By Marina Brodsky, Walworth Barbour AIS, Israel
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School librarians from all over the world gathered together on 20-25, October 2019 for the [48th Annual Conference and 23rd International Forum on Research in School Librarianship](#), in Dubrovnik, Croatia. The conference was organized by joint efforts of the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) and the Croatian Association of School Librarians.

The goal of the conference was to enable librarians to “converge, get empowered and transformed” by learning from each other about current school library practices. Librarians were exploring and discussing ideas of how school library programs support the curriculum, and guide and transform student learning.

Presenters suggested strategies to integrate library programs into educational programs and converge with core subjects. They demonstrated various ways of how librarians constantly expand their services, creating engaging learning spaces, and participating in international projects, such as Erasmus+ and YOUROPE. The power of collaboration, promotion of information and digital literacies, the use of social networks to share professionalism, and student learning were the topics for many presentations.

A unique part of the conference was a visit to two local schools of the Dubrovnik-Neretva County in Croatia. Librarians got acquainted with school libraries and interacted with teachers and students who prepared a special welcoming cultural program with Croatian dances and music. Unforgettable was an outing to Du-



Musicians perform traditional Croatian music during a visit to a Croatian school library.

brovnik and an excursion to public and research libraries, followed by local wine and cheese tasting.

Participation in the IASL conference of 2019 was a great opportunity to promote a Sister Libraries Program run by the ALA IRRT’s Sister Libraries Committee. A letter with a description of the IRRT initiative invited the international librarians to join the Sister Libraries partnerships and get involved in sharing their expertise with other librarians.

All in all, the conference left a feeling of being empowered, transformed, connected, and hopeful for future collaborations. The IRRT Sister Libraries Committee is looking forward to seeing new libraries joining the Sister Libraries partnerships.

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Marina is a member of the Sister Libraries Committee and a librarian at the Walworth Barbour American International School, Israel.

Have you attended a conference recently, or plan to attend one in the near future? We invite you share the experience by submitting a report to IL.



A check in with Librarians from around the world

Raymond Pun is an IRRT member and an instruction/research librarian at Alder Graduate School of Education where he coordinates collection development and provides distance-learning services for graduate students in education. He is an active member of ALA, ACRL, SLA and IFLA. He coordinates interviews with international librarians for *International Leads*.

Joseph M. Yap, Nazarbayev University Library, Astana, Kazakhstan



I started working at [Nazarbayev University Library](#), a progressive and developing library, located in Astana, Kazakhstan, in October 2017. I am among the international librarians hired as a subject and reference librarian. My role is to assist and teach patrons on how to become lifelong learners. I develop guides for students and researchers to consult in time of information and research need. I also collaborate with faculty members

in making sure that their students fully maximize the resources of the library. Aside from that, I handle library events. Various workshops are also held to showcase the materials and tools of the library.

Additionally, I provide in-house mentoring to the local staff. Kazakh librarianship is still developing and they need support from foreign librarians. International librarians are doing their best to help improve the way libraries provide assistance to their patrons. Currently, I am involved in developing the Information Literacy Program at our University. Four modules are being developed and these modules will be tested soon with the local library staff. These modules aim to achieve student success at all levels in the university. I also continue to introduce Media and Information Literacy in the workplace. I thank Nazarbayev University Library for giving me an opportunity to work with them and experience Kazakh hospitality and be involved in library projects that would be beneficial for the Kazakh society.

Leslie Kuo, Stadtbibliothek Pankow, Germany



I am an American in Berlin and I came to library work from a background in communications design and community arts non-profits. After working as a library assistant, I completed my MLIS in a library management-focused program for working professionals at the Humboldt University Berlin.

This September I started in a position that is not only new to me, but is completely new in Germany. My public library district (8 branches in former East Berlin) was selected for a new grant program from the German Federal Cultural Foundation (somewhat comparable to the NEA in the United States), which aims to increase

intercultural inclusion in the programs, personnel and public reach of publicly funded cultural institutions such as libraries, theatres and museums. The program funds the position of an intercultural change agent (for a period of four years) at each of the institutions selected. Up to 46 institutions will be funded in three cohorts. My colleagues in the library and I are excited to expand our existing intercultural outreach work, including making our hiring process more inclusive and developing programs and collections in cooperation with community groups.

I also plan to develop new initiatives, such as increasing intercultural competence and foreign language skills among our staff and our patrons. I also look forward to tying in this work with my recent research on immigrant and POC staff lived experiences in Germany, which I presented at IFLA in Kuala Lumpur this past August, as well as with my networks in the ALA, BID (German library staff association) and IFLA, where I serve in the Section Library Services to Multicultural Populations.

International Library Profile: National Library of Singapore

By Rebecca Miller, *International Leads* Co-Editor
rmiller@bibliodiv.com

Recently I had the pleasure to visit the National Library of Singapore. The island city-state of [Singapore](#) lies just south of the Malaysian peninsula, and is home to over 5.6 million residents. It is a highly developed country, with a strong economy and high quality of life. As the population of Singapore places high value on education, it is no surprise that the library system of Singapore is also well developed.



The National Library of Singapore.

The [National Library Board of Singapore](#) oversees 26 public libraries, the National Library, and the National Archives. The National Library building houses the Board's offices and the Lee Kong Chian Reference Library, the premier resource center for materials about Singapore and the region. The Reference Library covers

over 60,000 square meters of space over four floors in the modern, 12-storey National Library Building. With tall ceilings, large windows, and plenty of seating, the environment is welcoming to students and the public, and it was a busy place when I visited on a Saturday.

Many online catalog computers stand throughout the open stacks layout, and every floor has a kiosk to engage with a reference staff member through a video call. There is also a charming permanent exhibit about the history of the library and permanent exhibits of selections from the Special Collections.

The National Library contains over 600,000 physical items and provides an extensive online collection through its multiple electronic book and journal databases. While most of the materials are in English, the Library also contains a special section of print materials in Chinese, Malay, and Tamil to serve all the national

languages of the country. There are also 21 “mother tongue language” reading clubs in Chinese, Malay, and Tamil, to help promote the linguistic and cultural diversity of this multiethnic nation. In addition to the availability of print materials, several electronic resources are also accessible in these three languages. Besides many academic journal and reference databases, the electronic collection includes collections of Singapore music, newspapers, and historical documents, [photos](#), and [archived webpages and websites](#) about Singapore.

As of 2018, Singapore's public libraries had 2.5 million members, recorded 26.6 million in-person visits, and loaned out 39.5 million books (including ebooks), according to the [National Library Board](#).

Singapore residents can enjoy an enhanced mobile app that enables them to access electronic magazines, newspapers, and books. The app also includes a virtual library card, so patrons can do many library transactions, such as borrow and renew books, without needing a physical card.

With its extensive collections and community-oriented programs, the National Library of Singapore is a vibrant contribution to the ongoing development of Singapore.



Inside the Singapore National Library.

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Do you work for a library outside the United States or for American library that has international involvement?

Share your story with colleagues in the next International Library Profile!