

International Relations Committee Report to Council

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Submitted by the IRC Chair, Robin Kear

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International at Midwinter

One hundred and sixty-two librarians from twenty-four countries are attending the meeting in Seattle. There are thirty-eight exhibitors from outside the U.S., which accounts for nearly 12% of the exhibitors. Companies exhibiting are from Canada, China, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, United Arab Emirates, and United Kingdom.

Through ALA's reciprocal arrangement with IFLA, a stand promoting IFLA and the upcoming Athens Congress is in the lobby area. As part of President Garcia-Febo's year-long international initiatives, it also features IFLA's [Library Map of the World](#). The Map highlights the size and breadth of global community. Those visiting the stand are encouraged to visit the website and share their stories of how they contribute to the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's.) To seed interest the IRRT hosted a webinar on January 17, "[The Library Map of the World and the Art of Storytelling](#)."

In light of the Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) efforts, IRC is beginning discussions to examine the structure of ALA international units.

IFLA Updates

WLIC Congress Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia-

Two hundred and thirty-five U.S delegates, the majority ALA members, participated in the IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, in August 2018. In addition, dozens of ALA members from outside the U.S. attended. The total attendance was 3,500, the largest since Lyon in 2014. IRO coordinated the U.S. Caucus, and Reception on behalf of the seven U.S. Associations of IFLA. President Loida Garcia-Febo emceed the Caucus. ALA's exhibit stand as always was very popular. President Garcia-Febo, President-elect Wanda Brown, Executive Director Mary Ghikas, and many members for volunteered to represent ALA at the stand.

President Garcia-Febo signed a three-year Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with the African Library and Information Association and Institution (AfLIA) to cooperate and collaborate on professional development and other agreed upon initiatives.

ALA IFLA Nominations-

Currently there are forty-four ALA representatives serving on IFLA Section Committees. Some will be continuing their service through 2021.

From August through December 2018, the International Relations Office worked with over a dozen units of ALA (divisions, round tables, offices, and committees) to finalize and bring forward candidates for review by the International Relations Committee to serve on IFLA Section Committees for 2019-2023. Twenty-seven qualified ALA members were then nominated by the ALA Executive Board. IRO also fielded additional requests from colleagues around the world for ALA nomination to be placed on the ballot for IFLA President-elect and IFLA Governing Board. The IRC brought recommendations on these to the Executive Board.

IFLA/ALA Webinar Series-

On January 10 the first session of the 2019 webinar series "[New Librarians Global Connection: best practices, models and recommendations](#)" was held. Entitled "Library services to teenagers in the digital age," it featured librarians from Finland, the Netherlands, and the U.S., and was moderated by President Garcia-Febo.

Global Vision, Idea Store and Strategic Planning-

Building on the two-year [Global Vision](#) effort in which 30,000 librarians and library workers contributed to, IFLA has already received 8,500 submissions since August 2018 for the [Idea Store](#) which will launch soon. Taking in all this input, the IFLA Governing Board has started work to develop a new strategic plan and directions. This will be followed by a review of IFLA's governance and organizational structure. The three U.S. members currently serving on the IFLA Governing Board are Michael Dowling, Patrick Losinski, and Ann Okerson.

Policy Activities-

In 2019 IFLA will be engaged with The High-level Political Forums at the United Nations. The Sustainable Development Goals of focus will be on education, employment, inequality, climate change, and access to information.

IFLA continues to participate at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), and will be participating this year a series of regional meetings in Singapore, Nairobi and Santo Domingo to talk about what libraries need in terms of copyright reform.

Gates Global Libraries Program-

After 21 years, the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Libraries Program ended. IFLA, on behalf of the entire global library field, thanks the Foundation, and Global Libraries Director Deborah Jacobs, and her staff, for their immense impact to libraries around the world.

Sharjah Library Conference

The International Relations Office helped coordinate a successful 5th Sharjah Library Conference in November in collaboration with the Sharjah International Book Fair (SIBF) and Combined Book Exhibit (CBE). ALA develops the professional content for the conference.

The conference attracted 287 librarians from sixteen countries in the Middle East and Africa, including many of the 100 plus ALA members in the region. The conference kicked off with two full-day workshops, one on networking school librarians, and other “The ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education.” ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo provided the keynote at the conference, “Libraries = Strong Communities.”

Rania Osman, Head of Libraries of the Future Section at the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, updated everyone on the progress of the library’s translation of RDA into Arabic. The conference ended with a discussion on how libraries in the Middle East and North Africa can play a significant role in helping their countries achieving their aspirations set for the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. This year’s Library Lounge and Exhibit included Diamond sponsor OCLC, Platinum sponsors Ingram Content Group and the American Psychological Association, and Gold sponsors Overdrive, EBSCO, Follett and Baker and Taylor, and Taylor & Francis. The IRO Director traveled on to Oman to present on ALA to library school students and faculty at Sultan Qaboos University.

ALA-FIL Guadalajara Free-Pass Program

One hundred and fifty ALA members from twenty-two states participated in this year’s ALA-FIL Free Pass Program to Guadalajara Book Fair at the end of November. Half the attendees were first-time participants in the program. Ninety-six percent of participants purchased materials for their collections, spending over \$400,000 in total. President Garcia-Febo attended, meeting with Mexican Library Association colleagues and presented to full audience at the Coloquio organized by the University of Guadalajara. The title of the presentation was “Libraries Transform: Privacy and Open Access.”

Libraries Transform

As of December, over 700 libraries from 104 countries have signed on to the Libraries Transform initiative. This represents 6% of the total participants.

American Library in Paris

Damon Austin, Director of Library and Media Services at DeMatha Catholic High School (MD) has succeeded John Berry as ALA’s representative to the Board of Trustees of American Library in Paris. Damon will be assisting the library in revamping its youth services program. The Library will be celebrating its centennial anniversary in 2020.

Japan Library Fair and Forum

ALA was featured at the 20th Japan Library Fair and Forum held October 31- November 7, which was by 30,000 people. ALA's stand showcased posters and recent books. President Garcia-Febo provided a welcome message for display at the booth, along with a follow-up message to be included in the promotional material for the Fair and Forum's tour group to Annual in Washington this summer.

Korea Library Conference

The IRO Director attended the 55th Korean Library Conference, October 24-26 as part of the ALA-KLA collaborative agreement. President Garcia-Febo provided a video for the opening ceremony that was very well received. KLA's translation of the 9th Edition of the "Intellectual Freedom Manual" debuted at the conference.

New EBSCO ALA Annual Conference International Sponsorship

The IRC thanks EBSCO for creating a new international sponsorship, which provides \$2,500 for international librarians to attend the ALA Annual Conference. The inaugural recipients for this summer's conference in Washington, D.C. are: Elizabeth Wangari Mwangi, Amref Health Africa, University of Nairobi - Nairobi, Kenya; Olivia Kerubo Ongera, South Eastern Kenya University, Kitui, Kenya; and Marie-Eve Berthiaume, HEC Montréal, Quebec, Canada.

PLA Africa Leadership Project

PLA has been partnering with the African Library & Information Institutions & Associations (AfLIA) since 2016. This work, funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, supports leadership capacity development across the continent. PLA worked with AfLIA to develop a [leadership academy](#), based on PLA's model. The first AfLIA cohort met last January and are just wrapping up their year-long engagement with the program.

As a capstone to their experience, the AfLIA leaders will make an exchange trip to Chicago in March. This is scheduled to coincide with the next [PLA Leadership Academy](#). Participants from both groups will spend the first day together exploring what leadership means to them personally and within the library context. The AfLIA leaders will then set off for two days of site visits to Chicago Public Library, Skokie Public Library, Columbus (WI) Public Library, and the Madison Public Library. PLA continues to support AfLIA as they launch their second leadership cohort this month.

ALCTS Online Course Grant for Library Professionals from Developing Countries

The goal of this long-standing effort is to help library professionals from developing countries stay current with the latest trends and developments in technical services areas and enhance their professional knowledge and skills in librarianship and information science. ALCTS will provide twenty grants, one free seat to each session of its various fundamental courses from January through August.

ACRL International Perspective Webinars

ACRL has launched this new webinar series. October's webinar featured the Oxford Bodleian Business Librarian, and the next webinar on January 21 will focus on libraries in Vanuatu and other Pacific Islands.

Global Perspectives on Information Literacy: Fostering a Dialogue for International Understanding

ACRL's Student Learning and Information Literacy Committee (SLILC) in November published a new white paper, [Global Perspectives on Information Literacy: Fostering a Dialogue for International Understanding](#). It includes chapters written by information literacy experts from around the world, including Africa, Canada, Europe, Oceania, Asia, Latin America, and the Middle East, and seeks to share individual international perspectives that demonstrate how information literacy is viewed, taught, and conceptualized internationally.

RDA Toolkit

The RDA Toolkit now has nearly 2,500 total subscribers, with 945 being international subscriptions. International subscribers purchase more users per subscription than U.S. subscribers. The largest countries of subscribers and users are Australia, Germany, Finland, and the United Kingdom.

The RDA Toolkit is currently translated in 8 languages, plus a Danish policy statement. Hungarian and Arabic translation are expected by 2020. RDA staff are working with Servico Nacional de Aprendizagem Comercial on the final stages of an agreement for a Portuguese translation of the RDA Toolkit. This past August the RDA Working Committee for Latin America was created. The RDA team met in Mexico City in November to discuss RDA and its future in Latin America. The week-long event was held at the Biblioteca Nacional de Mexico and included an RDA workshop, overviews of the 3R Project and the Library Reference Model, and presentations by cataloging leaders from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, and Mexico.