Books Still Opening the World in Uganda

By Victor Lawrence

In June 2010 I had the opportunity of a lifetime to travel to rural, southwestern Uganda to work with the community libraries established there by an organization called Books Open the World (BOTW). It was the culmination of two years preparation with the libraries that I have worked with in South Florida and allowed me the chance to meet the librarians and managers running the libraries in Uganda, participate with area children and adults in English and literacy classes given at the libraries, and help open two new libraries for them.

I first read about Books Open the World in American Libraries Magazine in the fall of 2007. I learned that it had been established in 2004 by three researchers from the University of Florida, Freerk Molleman, Gosia Arlet and Joel Hartter, who were doing research in Kibale National Park when they realized the need for educational and literacy resources in the communities surrounding the park. Since then they have worked to provide these resources by setting up a network of five small community libraries which offer space to the public for general reading materials, children’s books, English classes for children and adult literacy classes, as well as paying tuition for local women to attend college preparatory schools in the area.

As a reference and instructional librarian working with literacy, English, citizenship, and computer classes in Spanish, their work immediately appealed to me. It seemed natural to me to begin by trying to connect my work at Broward County Libraries with Books Open the World by forming a Sister Library relationship between the two library communities as envisioned by the International Relations Round Table of the American Library Association. In this way, I hoped to raise awareness between the two library communities by initiating several of the activities suggested on the Sister Library Wiki. These included collecting photos and other items about the libraries and communities around Kibale National Park to present to colleagues and library patrons, making displays with the same materials, starting a pen pal program between students from the different communities, and creating points of contact between librarians from both systems.

As the project developed, so too did my desire to travel to Uganda to meet the people working in the libraries and classes there. I flew to Entebbe at the end of May, where I was met by Peter Ahabyona, a Books Open the World manager in Uganda, who was a tremendous help to me throughout my trip. After staying the night near the airport, we went into Kampala the following morning, just under thirty

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Message from the Editor

The children are our future, so it is in our own best interest to equip them well with tools for literacy, critical thinking, and a global perspective. Two of the articles in this issue focus on placing books in the hands of children. Victor Lawrence shares his visit to libraries in Uganda as part of the Books Open The World project. His personal narrative fairly bursts with his passion for this project and the good he’s seen it do.

The second article may not have as passionate a tone, but it still conveys very important information. The International Board on Books for Young People (IBBY) is an international coordinating body of national groups dedicated to promoting literacy in the young. Their many projects are outlined here and you are encouraged to go to the website and find your nation’s group. If there is not currently one for your nation, why not start one?

Shifting gears to an application aspect, two other articles discuss lessons learned concerning fostering leadership in libraries and promoting the library on Facebook. Huynh Thi Trang shares with us her take-away lessons from a visit to U.S. libraries while on a Fulbright Scholarship. Her perspective on leadership in American libraries and how it can apply to Vietnamese libraries is quite interesting. Also, Dr. Rudolph Mumenthaler reports on an experiment using advertising on Facebook to draw users to his library’s website. Although an unsuccessful experiment, his input is valuable because I am sure many libraries have considered how to harness Facebook to connect with users.

It is time once again for ALA Midwinter! This year it will be in gorgeous San Diego, perfect for a January conference. While I will not be in attendance, I wish much success to the program planners and many delightful connections between attendees.

~ Rebecca L. Miller

Call for Submission

Do you have news about...

International library activities?

People in international librarianship?

Upcoming international conferences?

International partnerships between libraries?

Then why not submit it to International Leads? Send your news to intl.leads.irrt@gmail.com for consideration.
We also set a schedule for my visits to write letters and make drawings to the English classes so that they could be brought for the children who come to Yambeho Library. I gave the librarians and supervisors for a meeting at the Kigarama and Kanyambeho libraries early the following week, we got librarians and checked out the collections. In the next few days, where I met the patrons on subsequent visits, and I spent considerable time throughout my stay in the BOTW storeroom located next door to it, getting books organized for future use, and to take to the new libraries we were to open. I also visited the Kigarama and Kanyambeho libraries in the next few days, where I met the librarians and checked out the collections.

I did begin to visit the libraries in the next couple of days. Closest to the park is Kanyawara Library in the small community of the same name located between the park and one of the large tea estates in the area. I was able to meet the librarian there and some of the patrons on subsequent visits, and I spent considerable time throughout my stay in the BOTW storeroom located next door to it, getting books organized for future use, and to take to the new libraries we were to open. I also visited the Kigarama and Kanyambeho libraries in the next few days, where I met the librarians and checked out the collections. Early the following week, we got together with all the librarians and supervisors for a meeting at the Kanyambeho Library. I gave the librarians the stationery supplies that I had brought for the children who come to the English classes so that they could write letters and make drawings to bring back to schools near my home. We also set a schedule for my visits to the weekend classes at all the libraries. We discussed issues of importance to the librarians and established times for them to come to the storeroom to rotate their collections, and to use these times for regular meetings, so they could stay abreast of important news. We determined to try to provide the librarians with computers, where electricity is accessible, to allow them to keep inventories, practice their computing skills and begin to teach these skills to library patrons, especially children. Finally, we brainstormed ideas for activities to attract more people to take ownership of the libraries, like reading contests for children, lectures on relevant topics and a soccer tournament between library communities.

Later that week, Peter and I met with Bonnie Balyeganira, a BOTW supervisor, Richard Tooro who operates a travel agency and heads a nature reclamation project in the area, and Abdullah Manglash, one of the largest landholders in Kasenda, about an hour south of the other libraries, to organize for the library opening there. We determined that I would bring the books at the end of the week to get them shelved and ready for a newly hired librarian once the shelving and furniture had been put in place. The following Monday we would have the opening ceremony with the headmasters and students from the local schools, local government and clergy. It was very exciting to participate in the speeches and ribbon cutting of the ceremony, and afterwards we all continued the festivities back at Richard Tooro’s guest resort, Planet Ruigo, where we discussed many ideas for the future of the library and about our different cultures. Talking with the representatives from the schools impressed upon me the need for textbooks so that the students could come at organized times during the school day or afterwards to use them as they have no access to them at the schools. This is a very important goal for us!

The following week, Peter and I transported books to Kitumba, another town closer to Fort Portal, to organize them on the newly constructed shelves there for the opening of another library shortly after I left. I also visited more English classes, in Kigarama and Kanyambeho, where there were so many students – 102 – that we had to have class on the yard in front of the library. They were wonderful occasions full of singing, game playing and writing letters to their pen pals. Also, at the end of the week we had a ceremony in the Nkingo Library to give certificates to adult students completing a literacy course. It was another memorable experience, with speeches before the ceremony by the librarian, Allen, and others, the ceremony of handing out the certificates to each of the students, and then dinner afterwards. After the dinner, a group of local women played drums and sang traditional songs until everyone joined in the song and dance. I could not have asked for a warmer, more heartfelt send-off to my trip!

Obviously, it was a truly amazing experience and has inspired me to continue to help these libraries and the communities they serve. I have been greatly encouraged through all my efforts by my fellow librarians, the Friends of the libraries organization and the folks at Books Open the World to whom I give many thanks. I think this is a great example of what a library community can accomplish when we work together with concerned people and look outward to our fellow international libraries.

Mr. Lawrence is Reference/Instructional Librarian at North Campus Broward College in Coconut Creek, Florida.

If you would like to learn more about Books Open the World, go to http://www.booksopentheworld.org. More on Mr. Lawrence’s visit can be read at http://www.booksopentheworld.org/newsletter/index-2010.php, including many photos.
Implications of U.S. Library Leadership for Librarians in Vietnam

By Huynh Thi Trang

The Learning Resource Center at Cantho University is the most recent modern learning facility in Cantho City and serves the demanding needs of a diverse population of not only university teachers and students, but also the academic world in the thirteen provinces in the Mekong Delta. Cantho University is responsible for professional training, scientific research, and technology transfer contributing to the regional and national socio-economic development; therefore, the Learning Resource Center plays an important role in providing human resources with high level services to ensure good quality teaching and learning. As a young library leader, I realized that the experiences of library leadership gained in the United States would be indispensable in upgrading my library management and leadership abilities in order to make a difference in change management, strategic planning and personnel organization.

In the quest for change in library management, I conducted a six-month research project on ‘Library and Information Science Leadership in the USA and the Implications for the Mekong Delta Libraries in Vietnam’ as a Fulbright Scholar in four locations: Columbia University (New York City), Simmons College (Boston, Massachusetts), University of Illinois (Urbana Champaign, Illinois) and University of Arizona (Tucson, Arizona). I visited 25 libraries, primarily academic libraries but also some public libraries. In every library, I spent time observing the library services to users, exchanging ideas with the directors about their visions of future library development, and their ways to deal with changes in library services and related topics. Through the in-depth interviews and informal talks with the directors and deputy directors of these academic and public libraries, I gained insights into strategic plans, problem identification and change initiatives. It is worth noting that observing how these libraries perform their activities and services and discussing with 64 library managers about how to manage change, quality control and provide user-centered services enabled me to better understand how library leaders of American libraries manage to reach the goals of their libraries. They practice many different leadership styles, skills and contexts. Also, these in-depth concepts were sharpened by exchanging ideas about management strategies with 13 librarians from 9 countries at the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs of the University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign.

I also learned that in order for change to happen successfully, strategic planning must be characterized by empowerment, team building, and support program. In interviews with library directors, I discovered that they empower their subordinates to make decisions and manage library functions in their departments. This allows the subordinates to practice decision making and gives them a sense of self-responsibility for their own decisions. This style emphasizes the process of involvement and collaboration in providing direction, implementing plans, and motivating people. The team approach practiced at the University of Arizona library using a team model instead of a division model is a significant revolution within this institution. Ms. Robyn Huff-Eibl, the leader of Access and Information Services Team, confirms that the team model promotes an individual’s capacity, increases quality and productivity of work, gives feelings of satisfaction, and raises the level of performance. It is worth noting that the various tuition reimbursement programs provided by many libraries serve as a useful way to encourage staff development and are also an important way to develop library leaders and managers. The concepts of library leadership and library management were clearly elaborated upon in the seven-week Associates Program at the Mortenson Center for International Library Programs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. The 2009 library associates from nine countries (Columbia, Georgia, Japan, Nigeria, South Africa, South Korea, Trinidad & Tobago, Uganda and Vietnam) worked on different library related experiences focusing on how to apply new technologies and explore feasible plans to cooperate and share working experiences with other librarians in the US. More interestingly, project management, web 2.0, fundraising, marketing, advocacy, library services, state and local networks, preservation, conservation, library administration, services for the disabled, and other current practices offered us useful perspectives on librarianship and presentation techniques.

As far as personnel organization is concerned, the Mortenson Center proved to be a good working team example. With a small number of staff (4 full-time and one part-time), they carried out their activities professionally. They kept regular contact with us and provided us with all the necessary documents for our programs. During our time in the program, one full-time staff was always with us to give a hand whenever we needed help and make sure all of us were in the right place and at the right time for each section of the program. In informal discussions, for example, Mrs. Claudia de Four, Trinidad & Tobago, noted how to deal with human resources, especially staff development and

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Library Promotion Using Facebook Advertising: Does It Work?

By Dr. Rudolph Mumenthaler

The ETH-Bibliothek, the main library of the Swiss Institute of Technology, created a Facebook page at the beginning of 2009 (www.facebook.com/ETHBibliothek). The number of fans is growing continuously and reached 750 in August 2010. To better promote its page the library applied several methods recommended in articles and blogs: we invited personal friends to become fans, we connected the Facebook page with the homepage, made surveys and competitions and connected our page with other social media (i.e., Twitter, blogs). Some of these activities had a positive effect, others did not.

A fundamental problem is the connection between the personal Facebook account of the administrator with the institutional page. But not all friends of the administrator want to become fans of the library and not all fans of the library would like to be a friend of the administrator. So it was less useful to send an invitation as a friend to people you do not know personally, even if they are also member of the university. Only a few accepted the invitation, some even felt harassed. It is not the most valuable strategy to invite unknown faculty members to become a fan of the library. Also some messages were interpreted by Facebook as a spam activity, and they threatened to delete the account.

Furthermore the advertiser can decide which price to pay for a view of the ad or for a click on it. Once created the ads are displayed in the frame on the right side of the user profile of the target group.

Facebook provides to the “campaign manager” exact figures about the access, the views and clicks of different ads. The ETH-Bibliothek led several campaigns to test their impact. With one campaign the Facebook page was promoted, with others the Open Access initiative and the institutional repository ETH E-Collection or the new homepage. Most successful was the promotion of the Facebook page to a large target group with about 1 million views and 277 clicks. These clicks cost $50.96 ($0.22 each). The promotion of the ETH E-Collection was focused on a very small target group: people at ETH Zurich. In this case the number of views was smaller (706,000), but the number of clicks was higher (293) at a cost of $53.48 total ($0.20 per click). It is assumed that the ads would have been displayed more often if a higher price for a click had been defined. The click rate generally is very poor: the campaign targeted to students of the university had the highest rate with a click rate of 0.054%. The general campaign was lowest with 0.027%. This means that only every 2,000th user clicks on one of these ads in Facebook!

If we analyze the hits on the respective web pages, the result is not better. There are not more increased connections between these pages. Only 812 visits to the E-Collection website in the first half of 2010 came from Facebook as a referring source. That means 0.1% of all visits (738,518). This particular experience seems to be in agreement with general trends. A study led in Germany in summer 2010 came to the conclusion that most people do not take notice of promotional materials in social networks (Innofact: Werbewahrnehmung und –wirkung im Zeitalter sozialer Netzwerke. Juli 2010). Only 3% of the interviewed people agreed totally to the statement that they appeal to PR on social networks, but 38% said the contrary. Only 18% agreed to the statement that they take notice of promotion in social networks. Only promotion in discotheques had an even worse result. But on the other hand 70% said that they take notice of direct promotion in a shop, and 68% of flyers and print leaflets. Promotion in social networks has got a bad reputation, and I assume that Facebook ads of a nonprofit institution might even diminish its reputation, as currently these ads are often used for less serious products. So a library could find itself in quite ‘bad company.’

As a result of this experience the ETH-Bibliothek stopped the campaigns and removed the ads from Facebook. According to the findings of the cited study the library started a campaign with printed flyers that are delivered directly to beginners at the university. We are convinced that we can reach our target groups of students through more traditional ways of promoting services - even if those services are based upon new technologies and are completely virtual. We are still pleased we dared to make this media break and are looking forward to a lot of new fans among the young students at our university. Using Facebook Ads was an interesting, but not successful experience that we will not retry in the near future.

Dr. Rudolf Mumenthaler is the head of innovation and marketing at ETH-Bibliothek Zurich, Switzerland.
Vietnam

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continuous education. Group discussions, interviews, presentations, mind mapping, group assignments and games were essential as these interactive activities embedded in practice made us active learners. Feedback on what we have learned and potential suggestions or recommendations for further discussions or next sections were highly appreciated and viewed as the keystone of management. It is critical to always evaluate progress in order to bridge any gaps so as to achieve the final goals of the program. Significantly, the Mortension Center provided us with a complete cycle of program management including careful planning, proper time management and efficient administration. My detailed presentation of the special activities of our Learning Resource Center at the Illinois Library Association Conference offered library associates and leaders insightful implications of how we utilize and manage our human resources and provide on-the-spot services for the users beyond a typical library’s regular activities.

Since I have returned to Vietnam, I have presented the concept of library advocacy to my staff and LIM students, published an article on “Emerging library services in the USA” for LRCs’ Newsletter, and wrote up the grant proposal for LRC. Together with ten professional staff, we have submitted two proposals to U.S. foundations for grants. The end of August 2010, I presented my experiences on American library leadership for the library leaders in the Mekong Delta. This shared meeting will allow me not only to promote my Fulbright experiences but also to introduce to these librarians how to apply for Fulbright scholarships so that they can find their own ways to explore additional knowledge about user services and library management in the USA and expand mutual understanding and cooperation between the two countries.

Ms. Trang is Director of the Can Tho Learning Resource Center in Can Tho, Vietnam, and a 2008-2009 Fulbright Scholar.

Has your library been doing exciting things with an international twist? If so, please share your experiences with us! Send a report to intl.leads.irrt@gmail.com.

Photos are always welcome!

IRRT and IRC Meetings and Programs at Midwinter

Friday, January 7, 2011
International Relations Committee I
2:30 pm - 5:00 pm
Location: San Diego Convention Center-Room 33A
IRRT Reception for International Librarians
4:00 - 5:00 pm
Location: To be announced (by invitation only)

Saturday, January 8, 2011
IRC/IRRT All Subcommittee Meeting*
8:00 am - 11:00 am
Location: San Diego Convention Center-Room 25 A/B
*Note: There will be an IRRT Chair Orientation session from 8:00-9:00 a.m., committee meetings from 9:00-10:00 a.m. and committee reports 10:00-11:00 a.m.

IFLA Update
11:00am - 12:00 pm
Location: San Diego Convention Center-Room 25 A/B

Sunday, January 9, 2011
Executive Committee Meeting
8:00 am - 11:00 am
Location: San Diego Convention Center-Room 31C

Monday, January 10, 2011
International Relations Committee II
1:30 pm - 3:30 pm
Location: San Diego Convention Center-Room 23C
The International Board on Books for Young People: Fostering Literacy in Children

The International Board of Books for Young People was begun in 1953. IBBY’s mission is to promote international understanding through children’s books; to give children everywhere the opportunity to have access to books with high literary and artistic standards; to encourage the publication and distribution of quality children’s books, especially in developing countries; to provide support and training for those involved with children and children’s literature; and to stimulate research and scholarly works in the field of children’s literature.

The organization is composed of 72 National Sections and is governed by an Executive Committee of ten people from different countries and a President elected by the National Sections. Every two years a different National Section hosts an International Congress. Several hundred people attend the lectures, panel discussions, seminar sessions and workshops on current congress themes. An IBBY Congress also serves as a frame not only for the General Assembly and other meetings, but also for the presentation of different exhibitions and celebrations such as the Hans Christian Andersen Awards and the IBBY Honour List.

Since 1956, IBBY has sponsored the Hans Christian Andersen Awards given biannually to a living author and illustrator whose complete works have made a lasting contribution to children’s literature. The Award is the highest international recognition given to an author and an illustrator of children’s books. Her Majesty Queen Margrethe II of Denmark is the Patron of the Andersen Awards. The nominations are made by the National Sections of IBBY and the recipients are selected by a distinguished international jury of children’s literature specialists.

The IBBY Honour List is a biennial selection of outstanding, recently published books, honoring writers, illustrators and translators from IBBY member countries. The IBBY Honour List is one of the most widespread and effective ways of furthering IBBY’s objective of encouraging international understanding through children’s literature.

The IBBY-Asahi Reading Promotion Award was established in 1986 during the IBBY Congress in Tokyo. The Asahi Shimbun newspaper company sponsors the Award. It is given biennially to two groups or institutions whose outstanding activities are judged to be making a lasting contribution to reading promotion programs for children and young people. The nominations are submitted by the National Sections of IBBY and may include projects from any part of the world. The jury consists of members of the IBBY Executive Committee. The prize of US$ 10,000 and a certificate is presented to the winners at the biennial IBBY Congress.

The purpose of the Children in Crisis Program is to provide support for children whose lives have been disrupted through war, civil disorder or natural disaster. The two main activities that will be supported by the Fund are the therapeutic use of books and storytelling in the form of bibliotherapy, and the creation or replacement of collections of selected books that are appropriate to the situation. The program not only provides immediate support and help, but aims to make long term impact in the communities, thus supporting IBBY’s goal of giving every child the Right to Become a Reader.

The IBBY Documentation Centre of Books for Disabled Young People was established in 1985 at the Norwegian Institute for Special Education at the University of Oslo under the direction of Nina Reidarson. It remained at this location until the summer of 2002 when it was moved to the Haug Municipal Resource Centre for Young People with Disabilities in Bærum, just outside Oslo. The Centre prepares an annual catalogue of outstanding books for children with disabilities that are nominated by member countries. Copies of the catalogues are available from the IBBY Secretariat.

Since 1967, on or around Hans Christian Andersen’s birthday, 2 April, International Children’s Book Day (ICBD) is celebrated to inspire a love of reading and to call attention to children’s books. Each year a different National Section of IBBY has the opportunity to be the international sponsor of ICBD. It decides upon a theme and invites a prominent author from the host country to write a message to the children of the world and a well-known illustrator to design a poster. The current poster is available on the IBBY website and a catalogue of posters and messages that have appeared between 1967 and 2002 is available from the Secretariat. These materials are used in different ways to promote books and reading. Celebrations are held around children’s books along with other special events that may include encounters with authors and illustrators, writing competitions or announcements of book awards.

More information about IBBY can be found at http://www.ibby.org. Information about the National Sections can be found at http://www.ibby.org/index.php?id=255.
Mortensen Center for International Library Programs Announces New Associates Program

The Mortenson Center for International Library Programs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is pleased to introduce the 2011 Associates Program, Librarians of Tomorrow: Communication and Leadership. This program offers unique, individualized, non-degree training for librarians and information professionals from outside the United States. During this program, Mortenson Associates will focus on cultivating an understanding of diverse communication styles and enhancing effectiveness as leaders and advocates of their libraries and communities, both locally and internationally.

Program Highlights:

- Seminars and workshops which provide an overview of current trends in the field. Library experts will be invited to share their perspectives, offer expertise, and foster conversation on the themes of communication and leadership.

- Tours to a variety of libraries, including academic, public, and school libraries. We may also visit the American Library Association headquarters in Chicago, Illinois, and other sites of interest.

- Small group discussions will allow Mortenson Associates to engage in program content and explore topics with greater depth.

- Networking with a dynamic group of international colleagues.

- Each participant will receive a Certificate of Program Participation upon completion.

- Other opportunities to visit sites of cultural interest.

The 2011 Associates Program dates are from May 30-June 22, 2011. The program will be hosted at the Mortenson Center at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA. The deadline for applying is January 1, 2011. For more information about the program, costs associated with the program, and to obtain an application, please visit our website at http://www.library.illinois.edu/mortenson/associates. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us at mortenson@illinois.edu.

Call for Posters for 77th WLIC in Puerto Rico

Colleagues interested in presenting at a poster session at the 77th World Library and Information Congress to be held August 13-18, 2011, are invited to submit applications.

The theme of the conference may be presented by a printed poster or by photographs, graphics and texts attached on the given panel. All IFLA official languages - Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Russian and Spanish - are welcome. Presenters of a poster session will be expected to be present on Monday 15 and Tuesday 16 August 2011 in order to explain their poster and to hand out available leaflets and other information material.

The deadline is 11 February 2011, after the deadline applications will no longer be accepted. A jury comprised of 2 members of the Professional Committee of IFLA will review all submissions.

The application form can be found at: http://www.ifla.org/en/ifla77/call-for-poster-sessions