Creating Platforms for Knowledge Sharing through the Zimbabwe International Book Fair Africa

By Collence Chisita

Toward the end of July and beginning of August, the beautiful Harare Gardens is turned into a shrine with thousands of local people and international visitors paying pilgrimage to a book fair. The high attendance of the August 2011 fair reflects the Zimbabwean people’s high regard for knowledge and the sacrosanct nature of knowledge artifacts whether print or electronic. The Zimbabwe International Book Fair Africa (ZIBFA) is Africa’s premier book fair attracting readers, writers, illustrators, publishers, booksellers, academicians, librarians, and policy makers from all over the world. The main theme for this year’s event was “Books for Africa’s Development”. It brought together various stakeholders who presented papers on a wide range of topics including reading, e-inclusion, access to information, legal access to copyright and the threat of piracy, and information technology.

During the opening session on the first day, keynote speakers, who included the Chairperson Doctor Xavier Carelse and Professor Hege Rooning, highlighted the importance of books in Africa and the challenges that developing countries are facing in the context of escalating cost of books coupled with the digital divide. Other attention-grabbing issues explored included book policies and cultural diversity as tool to spur development; HIV/AIDS and stigma; use of herbs, nutrition and health; African librarianship; legal and ethical issues in book production, distribution and consumption; and Information and Communication Technologies for the twenty-first century.

Talent Nyathi’s presentation highlighted the predicament of the African rural child and the village library project in particular. The rural urban divide addresses the issue of a high concentration of libraries in urban areas thus leaving

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Message from the Editor

Have you caught up on your “to do” list after ALA Mid-winter conference in Dallas? Did you miss a meeting because it is difficult to be in two places at once? Good news! This issue of International Leads gives a summary from the Chairs of both IRRT and IRC. Catch up on all of the important committee reports and take a sneak peak at programming for ALA annual in Anaheim.

I have never been to a book fair and this one in Zimbabwe looks like a winner. Collence Chisita presents the highlights of the Zimbabwe International Book Fair Africa (ZIBFA) in his interesting overview of the 2011 ZIBFA.

Leslie Farmer, California State University, provides her expertise in professional development to library colleagues in Honduras as a beneficiary of a Fulbright grant. In addition, she reviewed a proposal for a master’s degree program in library and information science. Read the details in her article, “Honduran Librarians Seek Improved Libraries and Training.”

Congratulations to Hwa-Wei Lee, Dean Emeritus of Ohio University Libraries for the much deserved honors received in China. He has had an impressive career.

The ALA Annual Conference in Anaheim is shaping up to be an exciting event filled with many opportunities for discovery. It is time to book your registration and hotel. See you in Anaheim!

~ Janet Lee

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.

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This challenging situation has resulted in librarians taking the initiative to develop mobile donkey-drawn libraries. Nyath’s presentation was complemented by Malapela, the Medical University Librarian who emphasised the value of providing relevant books to children “For many children in Africa, the gift of books is truly a gift of hope”.

One of the interesting and touching presentations looked at technology and social inclusion. Carla Leonardi and Nozipho Kanda explored the challenges that people with visual, physical and other disabilities encounter with regard to access to information. The two writers concurred on the need to provide assistive technologies to enable those with visual and physical challenges to play a critical role in the mainstream socio-economic activities of the technology driven world.

Legal issues relating to book production, consumption and promotion were tackled by local publishing sales director, Cletus Ngwaru and Greenfield Chilongo. The two presenters called for an intensification of the anti-piracy law as a way to promote intellectual property. Piracy has become a thorny issue with people taking the liberty to pirate music, literature, computer software even though law enforcement agents have declared war on such a heinous crime that threatens to pauperise all those with legal rights to intellectual property.

Collence Chisita, a Senior Lecturer in Information Science and Libraries and Fungai James Tichawangana, author, photographer and Information Technology specialist called on institutions and every Zimbabwean to exploit the opportunities of Information and Communication Technologies. Collence noted how ICTs have transformed libraries from storehouses to access points for the retrieval of information. He added that ICTs have freed the mind from boring and monotonous tasks, thus leaving them with more time to concentrate on strategic issues requiring a higher cognitive level. Collence further urged writers to blend culture and technology to create local content so that the developing countries will contribute to the global information order on cyberspace.

The high attendance and the enthusiasm shown by participants at the 2011 Zimbabwe International Book Fair just reflects the high regard that Zimbabwean’s have for knowledge. Despite the economic challenges, interest in reading and literacy has not declined but is being sustained through the efforts of ZIBFA and all those who have an interest in promoting and sustaining a reading culture. This just confirms William Shakespeare’s assertion that vibrant minds seek knowledge and indeed, if people can choose, Zimbabwean’s seek knowledge, peace and progress.

“Lord! ... He hath never fed of the dainties that are bred of a book; he hath not eat paper as it were; he hath not drunk ink: his intellect is not replenished, he is only an animal, only sensible in the duller parts. ... If minds are truly alive they will seek out books…” William Shakespeare (Loves Labors Lost 1V.2)

Collence Chisita is a Senior Lecturer in Information Science and Libraries at Harare Polytechnic School of Information Sciences.
Honduran Librarians Seek Improved Libraries and Training

By Lesley Farmer

In October I was given a Fulbright grant to help librarians in Honduras with professional development. I participated in the 6th library conference held by the Association de Bibliotecarios y Documentalistas de Honduras (ABIDH), which was held 28-39 September, 2011, in Tegucigalpa at the Universidad Pedagógica National Francisco Morzan (UPNFM). About eighty librarians from all types of settings attended the plenary sessions and workshops. I also reviewed the National Pedagogical University’s proposal for a master’s degree program in library and information science, which is the first time that such an academic program has been considered in Honduras. Training tends to be done by the Ministry of Culture for school librarians, and the ABIDH provides in-service training.

Honduras has almost eight million people, with the majority under nineteen years old. About eighty percent are functionally literate, with the upcoming generation about ninety percent literate (about one percent of the total population are graduate students in state universities). Only sixty percent of children graduate from grade school, and the reading culture is not very prevalent. Both public and private schools exist, and several informal educational pathways exist. Seven percent of Honduras’ GDP is invested in education, but eighty percent is allocated for wages, leaving less than twenty percent for infrastructure. Mobile telephony is nearly ubiquitous, which is potentially a major consideration for library services in the country.

According to the research leading to the master’s degree program proposal, “Honduras’s education system needs to promote technical-pedagogical conditions that enable people to progress in democratic life and, with the importance of globalization, make decisions in the field of professional practice for well-prepared and qualified human personnel in their contribution to the improvement of society.” To that end, there are plans to incorporate both physical and virtual libraries. However, in 2009 Honduras had 135 public libraries. While school libraries exist, they are sometimes merely small collection warehouses. The Tegucigalpa Bi-National Center sponsors field trips from public schools to see their library and get training.

Honduran libraries have much potential if they will take a broad enough perspective and leverage emerging technologies, as well as gain instructional expertise to pro-actively insert themselves in the middle of lifelong educational opportunities. The master’s program can provide both the foundation and the intellectual infrastructure to jumpstart this potentially significant contribution to Honduras and Central America.

Lesley Farmer
Professor
California State University,
During his recent trip to China, ALA/IRRT member Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee was honored for his lifetime achievements in his professional field of librarianship. In the “Symposium on the Library Scholarship and Thoughts of Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee” held in Shenzhen, China on November 17, 2011, which was attended by 80 library professionals from Australia, China, Hong Kong, Macau, Taiwan, and the U.S., Dr. Lee was praised for his contributions in the rebuilding of libraries in China since the early 1980s and for his continuing efforts in promoting library cooperation between the U.S. and China. The symposium was organized jointly by Sun Yat-sen University Libraries, Public Library Research Institute, Shenzhen Library, and Guangdong Provincial Zhongshan Library. As one of its co-sponsors, Chinese American Librarians Association sent a delegation to the Symposium led by Executive Director, Mr. Haipeng Li. The Library Association of Taiwan also sent a delegation led by Executive Director, Ms. Wei Peng. The Dean of Ohio University Libraries, Scott Seaman, also attended the symposium.

Dr. Lee began his library career in 1958 at the University of Pittsburgh and was the Dean of University Libraries at Ohio University for 21 years and the Chief of Asian Division at the Library of Congress for 5 years. Throughout his distinguished library career for over half a century, he also worked as the Director of Library and Information Center at the Asian Institute of Technology in Bangkok, Thailand for seven years under the sponsorship of the U.S. Agency for International Development. At his retirement from Ohio University, the Board of Trustees named a new library building as the Hwa-Wei Lee Library Annex. The University also named the first floor of the main library building as the Hwa-Wei Lee Center for International Collections. He was inducted into the Ohio Librarian Hall of Fame by the Ohio Library Council in 1999. His significant contributions to the Library of Congress were also recorded into the Congressional Record upon his retirement from the Library of Congress in 2008.

At the Symposium in China, three publications in his honor were officially launched: The Collected Works of Hwa-Wei Lee (Guangzhou: Sun Yat-sen University Press, 2011. 1600 pages in two volumes); his biography written by Yang Yang, The Sage in the Cathedral of Books: The Distinguished Chinese American Library Professional Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee (Guilin: Guangxi Normal University Press, 2011. 305 pages); and a “Special Issue for the Symposium on Library Scholarship and Thoughts of Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee” in the Public Library Journal (Shenzhen Library, 2011/4. P. 1-92) that contains 17 papers presented at the Symposium.
International Leads

By Sha Li Zhang, Chair

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<th>ALA 2015 International Strategic Plan</th>
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<td>IRC continued its hard work on developing international activities with the goals and objectives in the 2015 International Strategic Plan. ALA units, offices, and ethnic caucuses were invited to contribute action plans to the international goals and objectives. They will also take responsibilities to help carry out the planned activities. At the Midwinter Meeting in Dallas, IRC finalized these activities.</td>
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<th>IFLA Updates at the Midwinter Meeting</th>
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<td>Ingrid Parent, IFLA President, and Donna Sheeder, IFLA Treasurer attended several events and met with ALA members. Ms. Parent shared with the ALA audience her IFLA presidential theme, Libraries – a Force for Change, with five program priorities: digital contents, international librarianship leadership development, outreach for advocacy and advancement of the profession, cultural heritage reconstruction, and multiculturalism. Ms. Parent spoke highly on the contributions and support from ALA and its members on IFLA functions and activities.</td>
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<th>ALA participation at IFLA Conference in San Juan</th>
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<td>More than 400 ALA members participated in the 2011 IFLA Congress in San Juan, Puerto Rico, which was a great support to IFLA. Many ALA members also helped staff the ALA Booth, one of the most popular spots in the Conference exhibit hall. Many international librarians visited the booth and asked for information about ALA’s programs and services. Copies of ALA Read Posters and publications were the sought-after items for international librarians to take home. Molly Raphael, ALA President, and Maureen Sullivan, ALA President-Elect, represented ALA at the Conference. The 2012 IFLA Congress will be in Helsinki, Finland, August 11-17.</td>
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<th>International Book Fairs</th>
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<td>The International Relations Office (IRO) arranged and coordinated three book fairs for ALA members: Ten ALA members attended the Hong Kong Book Fair in July 2011, which helped make the needed materials available to users quickly. The newest book fair was the America Reads Spanish Program in October 2011. The Program was collaborated between ALA and LIBER International Book Fair. Sixty-five ALA members were selected to participate in the Book Fair for purchasing Spanish-language materials. In November 2011, more than 100 ALA members participated in the Guadalajara International Book Fair. It was the 15th anniversary of the ALA-FIL Free Pass Program for U.S. librarians to select and purchase Spanish-language materials at the Book Fair. ALA signed a new agreement to continue the ALA-FIL Free Pass program through 2015.</td>
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<th>Relief fund donations</th>
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<td>The IRO has continued coordinating and receiving donations by ALA members for the Japan Library Relief Fund, Haiti Library Relief Fund, and Chile Library Relief Fund. Fifty-five thousand dollars have been distributed to three projects in Haiti, and $4,000 to Japan. A donation of $2,000 will be sent to Chile, along with over 900 cataloged books from REFORMA.</td>
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<th>Campaign for the World’s Libraries</th>
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<td>The IRO organized another good program at IFLA in Puerto Rico that highlighted efforts in Argentina, Barbados, and Taiwan. Latvia is embarking on the second phase of its campaign in collaboration with its national UNESCO commission.</td>
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<th>Reports from ALA representatives</th>
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<td>Winston Tabb, ALA Representative to American Library in Paris (ALP) reports that, in partnership with the Library of Congress Center for the Book, ALP will participate for the first time in the Center’s very popular “Letters about Literature” program as the first non-US participant. The Program has become popular with American students. Tabb has volunteered to serve on the judges’ panel.</td>
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Message from the IRRT Chair

By Eve Nyren, Chair

IRRT had productive meetings at Midwinter in Dallas. Here is news on the exciting events and milestones ahead:

Annual at Anaheim

In 2008, ALA met for Annual at Anaheim. At that conference, fundraising for the IRRT endowment, celebrating 60 years of IRRT activities, was kicked off. This year, we return to Anaheim with our endowment established. Its first use will be small travel grants to enable international speakers to participate in IRRT programs at conferences, or IRRT members to participate in international conferences. Now we need to look ahead to continue sustainable funding. Jordan Scepanski and H. Lea Wells have done a wonderful job chairing the fundraising group through the foundation of the endowment.

Also at Anaheim in 2008, the first Presidential Citations for International Library Projects were presented at the IRRT International Librarians’ Reception by ALA President Dr. Loriene Roy. One of the recipients was Te Ropu Whakahau. This year in Anaheim, Loriene Roy is the in-coming chair of IRRT, and, thanks to her I am lucky to host Te Ropu Whakahau for my Chair’s Program. It will be eye-opening and fun. Te Ropu Whakahau is an organisation which unites Maori librarians and information specialists in Aotearoa New Zealand. “We aim to teach, strengthen and unite us all no matter where we are, and to advocate for the improved management of Māori workers, Māori materials and Māori clients.” For more information: http://www.trw.org.nz/

The Pre-conference Committee, Chaired by Tim Zou, will present a half-day program; Innovative Practices: Developing Sustainable Programs, Mobilizing Support for your Library!

The International Papers and Projects Committee, chaired by Valeria Gallo-Stampino and Ven Buenventura, will present a program in Anaheim on “Expecting the Unexpected: Libraries respond to Profound change”.

The International Posters Committee, chaired by Robin Kear, will present a forum for librarians from around the world to highlight their libraries and to share their successful ideas with colleagues by presenting a research study, a practical problem-solving effort, or an innovative library program.

IRRT Emerging Leader chosen

Valeria Gallo-Stampino has been selected as the 2012 IRRT candidate in ALA’s Emerging Leaders program. Valeria will receive a small award from IRRT to assist with program costs. Valeria currently works as a librarian at the Online Information and News Division in the Central Branch of the Vancouver (Canada) Library. The project she will work on is marketing the IRRT Presidential Citations. Thank you, Jeanette Pierce and Susan Schnuer, for your work mentoring Valeria and previous IRRT Emerging Leaders!

New IRRT Council Representative

Welcome to Daniel Berdaner, the new IRRT Council representative. Daniel is a Library Director at the Forest Hill Public Library in Forest Hill, Texas.
International Library Cultural Exchange Interest Group in Colorado

The International Library Cultural Exchange Interest Group is the newest Interest Group of the Colorado Association of Libraries. It will build upon the success of existing international interest groups and cultural exchange efforts.

Its mission is to reach out to libraries and librarians in other nations and international populations living in the U.S. by providing more opportunities for cultural exchange and understanding.

It will offer programs at conferences and at community venues, investigate collaborating with Colorado Sister Cities, coordinate and support existing interest groups promoting international programs, acquisitions and services, and investigate funding sources.

The formation this group was spearheaded by IRRT members Ghada Elturk, Boulder (CO) Public Library, Reforma Colorado Chapter president; and Nancy Bolt, who for years has lead the very successful Bulgarian Library Interest Group in Colorado, which will be folded into this new group. Nancy is an active member of the IRRT Sister Libraries Committee.

IRC Report

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Barbara Ford, ALA Representative to the U.S. National Commission for UNESCO, reports that she participated in the International Conference, “Preservation of Digital Information in the Information Society: Problems and Prospects,” held in October 2011 in Moscow, Russia, with 150 participants from 37 countries.

Nancy Gwinn, ALA Representative to the U.S. Committee of the Blue Shield, reports on the Committee’s ongoing preservation work in Haiti. The Blue Shield has helped the Smithsonian with the Haiti Cultural Recovery Center (HCRC) and the training of Haitians, who are now carrying on the preservation work.

Staff thanks

IRC wants to express its appreciation to Michael Dowling, IRO Director, for his outstanding support and assistance to the Committee’s tasks.