IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant: The Chromebook Lab at the Axum Heritage Foundation Library, Axum, Ethiopia

The Chromebook Lab project at the Axumite Heritage Foundation Library in Axum Ethiopia was the first recipient of the American Library Association’s International Relations Roundtable (IRRT) Mission Enhancement Grant, an award of $1,000. Janet Lee, Dean of the Library at Regis University in Denver, and a Fulbright Scholar assigned to Axum, Ethiopia, coordinated the efforts of the lab and the grant. The grant helped support the establishment of a lab comprised of 30 Chromebooks and a portable plug-and-play RACHEL (Remote Area Community Hotspot for Education and Learning) server loaded with the entire Ethiopian secondary school curriculum, plasma videos that accompany the curriculum, and content from other providers such as the Kahn Academy, Hesperian Health Guides, African Storybook, and a range of open-access textbooks.

The funds supplemented the lab through the purchase of a UPS, power strips, and laptop locks. In addition the grant also partially subsidized the travel of a trainer, Ashenafi Kebede, from ETLearns, a non-profit organization that has established 11 such labs in government schools in southern Ethiopia. Ashenafi spent several days training the librarians on the operation of the

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Visits</th>
<th>Pages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>May 2018</td>
<td>1,228</td>
<td>36,829</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>June 2018</td>
<td>1,201</td>
<td>29,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>July 2018</td>
<td>1,042</td>
<td>23,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>August 2018</td>
<td>1,035</td>
<td>23,779</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>September 2018</td>
<td>581</td>
<td>10,288</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>October 2018</td>
<td>787</td>
<td>18,346</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: National Exams are given in May and June and classes resume in late September and October.

Continued on page 2
Chromebooks and the RACHEL server. The Foundation Library was the first community library that has set up and run a Chromebook lab, and all indications conclude that it has been a great success in its first six months of operation.

Immediately upon its opening, the lab was filled to capacity all hours of the day. Not unexpectedly, the Ethiopian curriculum was used heavily by students from the local schools, grades nine through twelve.

In addition to the Ethiopian curriculum, the Interactive World Map, Boundless Books (open-access textbooks), and Fantastic Phonics were popular. Students found the Chromebooks easy to navigate and the information helpful to their studies.

Students use the Chromebook Lab

The Axumite Heritage Foundation is a subsidiary of the Ethiopian Community Development Council. The Council established the Foundation in 1993 in order to restore the ‘Inda Nebri’id, the former Governor’s Palace in Axum, and turn it into a cultural center and library to promote the unique heritage of Axum. The ‘Inda Nebri’id opened its doors as a public library in 2002. Use of the library exceeded the limits of the existing building, and a new library building was needed. After several years of construction, the new building was opened in May 2018 in the same compound as the former library. In addition to the Chromebook Lab, it includes a children’s library, auditorium, large reading room, a computer lab, an Ethiopian collection, several classrooms, an exhibit hall, and several meeting rooms.

The Foundation is planning on installing a lab in a school in nearby Dimbaza, where the Foundation is building a school. The site is without electricity, which will present some challenges, but a solar solution is being investigated.

About the IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant

In 2016, the International Relations Round Table members and supporters established the IRRT Endowment. Interest from the Endowment is used to fund members-initiated proposals for international activities and initiatives which contribute to ALA’s role in international librarianship. Goals for the funding are to provide support for international projects or partnerships; promote a global dialogue about librarianship; increase visibility of international opportunities for U.S. and international librarians; and encourage international collaboration in librarianship. The IRRT Executive Board approved the establishment of the IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant as a mechanism for distribution of endowment funding in 2017. Information about the grant may be found at http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt-mission-enhancement-grant.

###

Congratulations to the Axumite Heritage Foundation Library on the establishment of the Chromebook Lab!

We encourage applications for the next IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant. Check the IRRT website for details.
Message from the Editors

We wrap up this year with a report on the recipient of the first IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant: The Chromebook Lab at the Axumite Heritage Foundation Library, and several conference reports. Experiences from the 2018 IFLA World Library & Information Congress are shared as well as the CALIS and BALIS conferences in China, and the ECIL conference in Finland.

In our regular features of profiles of international librarians, libraries, and partnerships, we bring you the Riecken Community Libraries of Honduras and Guatemala, the partnership between the Arizona Library Association and Japan Library Association, and the work of a fellow librarian in Vanuatu. We round out the issue with Africa’s libraries in the medieval world.

We are always interested in news to share and inspire, and look forward to your submissions!

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.

IRRT Officers
Chair
Muzhgan Nazarova
Librarian, Asian & Middle East Division, Library of Congress
mnaz@loc.gov

Vice Chair/Chair-Elect
Richard Sapon-White
Catalog Librarian, Oregon State University
richard.sapon-white@oregonstate.edu

Past Chair
Loida Garcia-Febo
Principal, LGF International Strategies, and President, Information New Wave
loidagarciafebo@gmail.com

Secretary/Treasurer
Jeremiah Paschke-Wood
Manager of Reference Services, University of Arizona Libraries
jeremiahpaschkewood@gmail.com

Councilor
Sandy Hirsh
Professor and Director, School of Information, San Jose State University
sandy.hirsh@sjsu.edu

Member-at-Large
Julia Gelfand
Applied Sciences & Engineering Librarian, University of California, Irvine
jgelfand@uci.edu

Member-at-Large
Florence Mugambi
African Studies Librarian, Northwestern University
florence.mugambi@northwestern.edu

International Leads (ISSN 0892-4546) is published quarterly by the International Relations Round Table of the American Library Association in March, June, September, and December. IL is indexed by Library Literature and Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA). The IRRT mailing address is: International Relations Office, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611.
Message from the IRRT Chair

By Muzhgan Nazarova
mnaz@loc.gov

The year end brings no greater pleasure than the opportunity to express to you season’s greetings and good wishes. May your holidays and new year be filled with joy.

Charles Dickens

As we come to the end of the year, I want to thank you all for your service and devotion to international librarianship.

Much gratitude to the members of the IRRT Executive Board who also serve as liaisons to IRRT committees:

Richard E. Sapon-White, Chair-Elect, Liaison to Orientation and Sister Libraries
Jeremiah Pascheke-Wood, Secretary/Treasurer, Liaison to Pre-Conference, Visitor’s Center
Loida A. Garcia-Febo, Past-Chair, Liaison to Nominating, Connections
Julia M. Gelfand, Member-at-Large, Liaison to Posters, Reception
Florence Nthiira Mugambi, Member-at-Large, Liaison to Publications, Papers
Sandra Hirsh, Councilor, Liaison to ALA Council
Delin Guerra, Staff Liaison.

My recent trip to Kazakhstan

I was invited by the National Library of the Republic of Kazakhstan to participate and present at the All Kazakhstan Congress of Librarians in commemoration of the 20th anniversary of the city of Astana. I conducted a master class named “Cataloging Process at the Library of Congress: Resources and Training.”

I was surprised that Kazakhstan is strictly following the Russian Standards (GOSTs) both in acquisition and cataloging. Though my master class was well attended and received by the participants, it was unfortunately mostly all new for the Central Asian colleagues. However, there are a couple of institutions in Kazakhstan, including Nazarbayev University library in Astana, which use MARC 21 and RDA. The colleagues from Russia expressed special interest in our authority work and as contributors to the VIAF (Virtual International Authority File).

This collaboration grew from brief introductions to the Kazakhstan National Library’s delegates at the IFLA 2016 World Library and Information Congress in Columbus. Later I kept in close touch with Alia Shuratovna Saidembaeva, who is the Head of the National Bibliography Service of the National Library of Kazakhstan since 2012, and who is also a member of IFLA’s Bibliography section’s standing committee. I was touched by the incredible hospitality of the hosts, including the staff and the Director of the National Library, Mr. Zh. Sendumanov, as well as by the commitment to their profession and work, and the ability to do so much with limited resources. The Central Asian/Kazakhstani hospitality is second to none. I enjoyed trying different dishes like horse meat and drinking camel milk.

The trip to Medeu, the world’s largest high-mountain skating rink and a high-altitude sports complex near Almaty, located at an altitude of 1691 meters above sea level was unforgettable. My visit to Tanbaly, a UNESCO World Heritage site, where I saw petroglyphs (images of animals and people) dated at 12-14 centuries BC was quite interesting. I met colleagues from the National Library of Russia in St Petersburg, the Russian State Library in Moscow, the National Library of Belarus, and the Ministry of Culture of Turkey.

Continued on page 5
2019 ALA Annual Programs & Planning Committees—Calls for Participation

I invite you to submit proposals to the programs for the 2019 ALA Annual conference, 20-25 June. The following are the planned programs and calls for participation.

IRRT Papers and Projects Session call for proposals is open. A great opportunity to exchange information about library services and projects around the world. Felicia Chan, National Library Board of Singapore, is co-chair of the International Papers committee. She was featured in I am an ALA International Spotlight for November. The deadline for submissions is 18 January.

IRRT Poster Session call for proposals is now open. Poster Committee co-chairs are Katherine Dow and Clement Chu. The deadline for submissions is 8 February.

Leaning International: Stories from the Field (International Connections Committee—ICC) — very close to my heart - I was co-chair in 2012. This program will host a panel discussion featuring American librarians sharing their experiences of working overseas.

An International Leaders Forum: Leading a Vision for a Global Community of Libraries (ICC). ICC together with ALA President Loida Garcia-Febo will invite international leaders to share their vision on the concept of “global community of libraries” and discuss opportunities and challenges for implementation.

Best Practices from the World – A Photo Gallery (ICC), will solicit photos from libraries around the world to demonstrate this year’s ALA Presidential theme of “Libraries=strong communities.” Photos will be on display at the Convention Center during the conference.

IRRT Chair’s program will showcase my 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. Program co-chairs are Jeremiah Paschke-Wood and Christina Riehman-Murphy.

Bringing Global to Local: The Horner Fellowship Arizona-Japan Librarian Exchange (The Sister Libraries Committee). The Horner Fellowship Committee (AzLA) will share about the evolution of the fellowship, the experiences and benefits for fellowship recipients, and the impact on communities served. Committee co-chairs are Alexandra Houzouri Humphreys and Carol Brey.

IRRT Preconference. Co-chairs of the Committee are Gloria Creed-Dikeogu and Barbara Marson. More details will be announced soon.

International Visitors Center Committee is co-chaired by Camille L. Callison and Margaret Spires.

IRRT Reception Committee is co-chaired by Laverne Page and Farzaneh Razzaghi.

International Librarian Orientation is co-chaired by Peter Bae and Gene Hayworth. They are seeking volunteers to emcee the donations giveaway and to present the ALA overview.

Call for nominations—IRRT Executive Board

The IRRT Nominating Committee, co-chaired by Laila H. Moustafa and Elise Aversa, is seeking nominations for the Executive Board positions. IRRT members are encouraged to apply.

IRRT Grants

Calls for applications to the grants supported by IRRT are also available:

Presidential Citation for International Innovation

IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant

Humphrey/OCLC/Forest Press & Bogle Pratt

Indeed we are global. I am happy to share some important facts about IRRT gleaned from its membership statistics:

- 1,661 total members (as of October 2018)
- 1,476 personal members, of which 763 (almost 52%) are international librarians
- 185 organizational members, of which 163 (88%) are international libraries

I wish you all a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful, healthy, productive and prosperous New Year.
International borders are artificial, human-created boundaries that separate nations. While they help define the limits of jurisdictions, they need not disconnect us from our neighbors, both near and far.

In my professional life, I have attempted to bridge borders in order to learn from librarians in other countries as well as to share my own professional perspectives on the international stage.

International exchanges, international conferences, and international mentoring opportunities have enabled me to connect with librarians around the world. There is so much that we can learn from one another!

One such way to grow internationally is through a sister library relationship. Oregon State University Libraries and Press (OSULP), my place of employment, established such a relationship with the Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta (FUNAAB), Nigeria, several years ago. OSULP hosted a FUNAAB librarian for a week in 2016 during which she rotated amongst our various departments, learning about our latest initiatives.

Subsequently, we had a morning-long Skype meeting of our two staffs. (For our colleagues in Abeokuta, the meeting was, of course, in the evening!) While maintaining our connections as sister libraries has had its challenges, we have persisted in developing our collaboration.

OSULP was recently awarded a grant from the Engineering Information Foundation to support three of our staff members to travel to FUNAAB next year to provide consultation and training activities. The efforts involved in solidifying our connections have not been too onerous, but they do require dedication and tenacity.

If you are looking for ways to be more involved in international librarianship, I strongly encourage you to consider becoming a sister library. Whether you work in a school, academic, or public library, you can find a sister somewhere in the world.

I heartily recommend the IRRT Sister Libraries web pages at http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtcommittees/irrtsisterlibrary/sisterlibrary to inspire you and help you get started. Success stories, resources, and even lists of libraries seeking U.S. partners can all be found on the site.

Call for nominations: IRRT Executive Board positions

The ALA International Relations Round Table Nominating Committee, co-chaired by Laila H. Moustafa and Elise Aversa, is pleased to solicit nominations (and self-nominations) for the positions of:

- **Vice Chair/Chair Elect** serves a one-year term, followed by a one-year term as chair and another year as Past-Chair. (7/1/19-6/30/20; 7/1/20-6/30/21; 7/1/21-6/30/22)
- **Member-at-Large** serves a two-year term. (7/1/19-6/30/21)
- **Secretary/Treasurer** serves a two-year term. (7/1/19-6/30/21)

For a full description of position responsibilities, visit the [IRRT website](http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtcommittees/irrtsisterlibrary/sisterlibrary).

Elected Officers must be able to attend all ALA Midwinter and Annual Conferences for the duration of their commitment.

 Officers serve on IRRT’s Executive Board if elected. The terms will begin immediately after the 2019 ALA Annual Conference.

Requirements:

1. Candidates must be current ALA and IRRT members.
2. Must have served for at least one year on an IRRT Committee

Please submit your CV and a short statement of interest (approx. 100 words) to irrt.nominating.chair2018@gmail.com
By Clement Lau, Associate Dean, Georgia Southern University Libraries, USA
claus@georgiasouthern.edu

From 13-22 September 2018, I had the opportunity to conduct presentations, attend a library conference, tour libraries, and meet with local librarians in China. The major event of this trip was an invitation to present at the China Academic Library and Information System (CALIS) National Agricultural Information Center’s annual meeting, which was held from 18-20 in Kunming City of the Yunnan Province.

CALIS is a national academic library consortium funded by the Chinese government to establish a nationwide educational information system to support resource sharing initiatives. There are four national information centers under CALIS: arts & science, engineering, agriculture, and medicine. The Agricultural Information Center is hosted by the China Agricultural University Library (CAUL) in Beijing. The Center and the China Agriculture Related Academic Library Alliance (a consortium of 59 agriculture, forestry, and aquaculture academic libraries) co-organize an annual membership meeting each year and this year was its 20th anniversary. Yunnan Agricultural University Library is the local host of this meeting.

Presenting with me was Erika Linke, the Associate Dean & Director of Collections and Information Access from Carnegie Mellon University. Erika presented on “Trends in Academic Research Libraries in North America” while I presented on “Academic Library Value Assessment and Return on Investment.” In addition to presenting at the Kunming meeting, we were given another opportunity to present the same to two different groups in Beijing.

Our first presentation was made on the day after arriving in Beijing at CAUL. The audience was a group of 20+ students and faculty of the CAUL’s library information and archives management master degree program. Erika made her presentation in English which was interpreted in Mandarin for the audience, and I delivered mine in Mandarin. After our presentations, both of us answered questions from the audience, which included trends in American librarianship, library management issues, and pursuing a doctoral degree in LIS in the United States. Three graduate students provided us a quick tour of the Library after this event.

We flew to Kunming City in Yunnan province the next day. Yunnan is situated in southwest China and borders Vietnam, Laos, and Myanmar. The province is in the middle of the Yunnan–Guizhou Plateau and is surrounded by mountains. Kunming, located at an altitude over 6,200 feet above sea level, is the capital and largest city of Yunnan.

Because we arrived two days before the meeting began, we were invited to tour the Yunnan Agricultural University Library and the Southwest Forestry University Library. During the tours, we exchanged ideas and experiences with the local library management teams about academic librarianship, use of space, public services, staffing, and licensing electronic resources between the two countries.

Despite several unexpected challenges, most notably typhoon Mangkhut that affected the Southern and South-Western China region, over 120 participants representing 46 member libraries throughout the country, and about 40 representatives form 19 library service vendors attended the meeting.

The meeting began in the morning of 18 September. As a common practice, government officials and high rank university officers delivered their remarks at the meeting’s opening ceremony. After their remarks, the attendees and guests took a group photo together. The Academic Reports section began with four invited speakers. In addition to the two American speakers, the other two were library directors from the Alliance. One topic was about library transformation and reform while the other was on trends in modern library services.

After the buffet lunch, the afternoon section was presentations made by the vendors who sponsored this
meeting. Even though some presentations contained marketing pitches, I found some were useful to know what vendors were doing to match their customers’ needs.

This vendor presentation arrangement is perhaps uncommon in the U.S., but not so in China. Most vendors do not sponsor meal or special events individually for selected customers. Instead, because most Chinese library conferences typically include lunch and dinner in the registration fee, vendors and their customers get many opportunities to engage with each other. Many Chinese reps are willing to spend time with their customers one-on-one to build relationships and to understand their customers’ needs. Their approach to customer engagement reflects the difference between the American and Chinese business culture.

On the second day, attendees were divided into four focus groups based on the geographical region of their libraries to discuss the business of their libraries and the Alliance. I took advantage of the invitation to attend the business meeting because it was a great opportunity to learn about the challenges and trends that Chinese academic libraries face.

Funding, space, materials prices, human resources, and government regulations were the top concerns. I continuously heard that there is a general lack of recognition of library contributions to the university by their administrators. Another major challenge they encounter is staffing, which includes issues such as an aging workforce, lack of new blood, low salaries, rigid bureaucratic personnel system, and increased competition for capable employees between libraries. Libraries located in remote and non-metropolitan areas feel more pressure to recruit and retain capable employees as they often lose their best employees to libraries in major cities due to better salaries and benefits. Sounds familiar to American libraries?

As a guest, I should have listened quietly and not participated in their discussions, but when asked about my American library experience on staffing issues, I offered several suggestions. One example to address recruitment and retention issues could be sending individuals for training outside the library or even abroad. I suggested that they participate in the ALA IRRT Sister Libraries program which could help their staff, especially the younger generation, gain a different professional experience and enhance their skills from language to service through exchanges with their partner libraries abroad.

After the conclusion of the group reporting session in the early afternoon, the next section was an award ceremony to honor the winners of best publications and excellent services competitions. The annual meeting was officially closed after several brief remarks and the meeting flag was passed from the current host library to the next.

On 21 September, Erika and I went to Beijing Normal University Library to present our topics at the 3rd Beijing Academic University Library Directors Forum hosted by Beijing Academic Library & Information System (BALIS). BALIS is a Beijing-based regional information resources sharing consortium with a membership of 95 academic libraries. About 30+ library directors and senior management staff attended this presentation. Again, there was a Q&A session afterwards that covered many topics beyond our presentations. Our PowerPoint presentations are available at BALIS Training Center’s portal under the heading Resources.

According to the comments as reported in the local library newsletters, the participants felt that they not only learned about the latest developments of American academic libraries, but also gained more in-depth knowledge and understanding of American academic librarianship. Such exchange and conversation was helpful as this would inspire deeper thoughts as they reflect on their own development and innovation.

This trip allowed me an opportunity to gain more insight into emerging trends and challenges the Chinese academic libraries face. As it turns out in our conversations, with the China libraries continuing to develop, we share many similar problems as well as solutions. For example, how do we contain rising journal prices? During the meetings, I met old friends and made new ones. More relevant to IRRT is that I was able to introduce our Sister Libraries program to the local librarians, providing them an opportunity to connect with the US libraries for the betterment of international librarianship.

####

Clement Lau leads a session at BALIS.

Clement Lau is a long-time member of IRRT and is currently serving on the Sister Libraries Sub-Committee.
Raymond Pun, doctoral student in educational leadership at California State University (CODEL), is the recipient of the 2018 American Library Association (ALA) Achievement in Library Diversity Research Honor. As part of its ongoing support of the propagation of library-based diversity research, the Diversity Research Grants Advisory Committee and the ALA Office for Diversity, Literacy and Outreach Services (ODLOS) are pleased to recognize his contributions to the profession and his promotion of diversity within it. Achievement is defined as a body of work or a groundbreaking piece whose dissemination advances our understanding of or sparks new research in the areas of equity, diversity, and inclusion. ODLOS began designating this honor in 2004.

Pun has conducted numerous research projects and published a series of collections, articles, and digital/print pieces in support of diversity, inclusivity and social justice in the LIS profession. Most recently, he co-edited the book *Asian American Librarians and Library Services: Activism, Collaborations and Strategies* with Janet H. Clarke and Monnee Tong. This is the first book on Asian-Pacific American librarians' experiences and perspectives in the field. Pun and his co-editors mobilized authors to contribute their stories to reflect a diversity of experiences in the field and to provide first-hand accounts of APA librarians conducting innovative outreach services to support their communities.

**IFLA 2018: IRRT Board Reports from Kuala Lumpur**

*Richard Sapon-White, IRRT Chair Elect*

This past August, I had the pleasure of attending my third IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. As with the two previous WLICs, the opportunity to engage with fellow librarians from around the world is an experience that is equal to none. Attendees from 110 countries made presentations on cutting edge developments in their libraries as well as drafting, debating, and approving international standards that will affect all of us for years to come. Outside of the conference, my visits to museums, parks, restaurants, and shopping centers immersed me in Malaysian life, enriching my knowledge of that part of the world.

With so many programs to choose from, I felt like the proverbial kid in a candy shop. As a cataloger, I was drawn to sessions on BIBFRAME, the metadata scheme that will eventually replace MARC. Presenters from the Bibliothèque nationale de France, however, were not so sure that MARC was dead yet. The IFLA sections concerned with metadata (Cataloging, Bibliography, and Subject Analysis and Access) held a joint session reviewing developments in many aspects of metadata. This included announcement of the revised Guidelines for National Bibliography in the Digital Age, due out in 2019; revision of the Guidelines for Authority Records and References (GARR); and a report on the revision of ISBD to reconcile it with the Library Resource Model (LRM).

IFLA also instituted a day of lightning talks, with presentations from around the globe. I provided one of these talks, speaking on Oregon State University Libraries’ project to create subject heading authority records for Oregon Indian tribes. After my talk, attendees from Australia and Nigeria commented on how our project made them rethink some of their own practices. Many of the papers presented at the conference are available on the IFLA WLIC website.

I also attended my first meeting of the Working Group on Genre/Form Terms, to which I had been appointed earlier this year. Members of the working group hail from the United States, Spain, Serbia, Sweden, France, the United Kingdom, Brazil, Poland, Egypt, and the Czech Republic. We set priorities for our work this coming year, including creating an annotated list of genre and form vocabularies. I enjoyed having a chance to finally meet the working group members face-to-face.

Opportunities to learn about Malaysia abounded both inside and outside the convention center. For lunch, I went twice to a Buddhist monastery near the conference site. As a vegan, I had scoped out this particular place online and knew I could eat anything I wanted there.

Their restaurant was done buffet style under a very large tent behind their main building. I got in line with the several dozen locals ahead of me, and slowly worked my way down several long tables filled with steel trays of food. I picked up my plate and started piling on whatever looked interesting. I have no idea how they charged for the food! The cashier took two seconds to look at my plate and quickly rang up a price in Malaysian ringgits as she needed to keep the line moving. I couldn’t complain – I paid the equivalent of US $2.50 to $3.50 for my lunches – and the food was absolutely delicious.

In the bottom floors of the famous Petronas Towers is a shopping center where I spied a booth selling all manner of durian products. Durian is a fruit well-known for its pungent (even odious) smell. I had to buy some, though – after all, I was in Malaysia! Once I got it home, I did have a small taste of this durian “paste” that I had bought, but my wife would not touch it. Not wanting to waste food, I offered it to my Indonesian student worker, but he told me he didn’t like durian. Fortunately, a Malaysian student on campus gladly accepted this gift from her homeland.

I also spent time in the Museum of Islamic Art, the National Museum, and the Perdana Botanical Gardens, where I did some bird- and monitor lizard watching.

I encourage anyone and everyone to attend the IFLA World Library and Information Congress in the future (2019 in Athens, 2020 in Auckland, N.Z.).

*Sandy Hirsh, Councilor*

Sandy Hirsh, Director of the San Jose State University School of Information and IRRT Councilor, was very...
busy at the IFLA WLIC in Kuala Lumpur. She co-chaired the Continuing Professional Development & Workplace Learning (CPDWL) standing committee, and hosted a booth representing the San Jose State University School of Information in the exhibit hall.

Sandy spoke in two sessions. She presented high level findings from an IMLS-funded project focused on exploring possible applications of blockchain technology in libraries. As part of this project, a Blockchain National Forum was held on 6 August 2018 in San Jose, California. Sandy shared some of the findings from the forum in Session 199: Blockchain – is it worth the fuss? - Flash. She also presented in Session 185: Investing in the Library Workforce: Case Studies in the Effective Use of the 2016 IFLA Guidelines for Continuing Professional Development on 28 August. Her presentation title was: Supporting the CPD Guidelines: The Library School/iSchool Perspective.

She also served as a coach in the inaugural Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Coaching Sessions. The session offered career and professional development coaching for an individual or a small group through a drop-in session. The focus of the coaching is to help develop the individual’s career and professional development and/or develop the individual’s understanding of how involvement in the work of IFLA can help one’s career and professional development.

Additionally, she served as the Discussion Leader for “Competencies for future success: Libraries and Librarians” in Session 196: Knowledge Café 2018: Continuous Learning for Successful Info Pros in the Knowledge Economy.

A couple of highlights from the conference… The standing committee that Sandy co-chairs won the inaugural 2018 IFLA Dynamic Unit and Impact Award. On the last night, she also enjoyed getting together over dinner with fellow past and current IRRT board members at the conference!

The CPDWL—co-chaired by Sandy Hirsh—wins the inaugural “Dynamic Unit and Impact Award”

---

**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](mailto:ala.intl.leads@gmail.com)

---

**Connect with IRRT**

Email: ala.intl.leads@gmail.com

Web: [http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt](http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt)

Blog: [http://www.alairrt.blogspot.com](http://www.alairrt.blogspot.com)

Facebook: [https://www.facebook.com/International-Relations-Round-Table-244416388965473/](https://www.facebook.com/International-Relations-Round-Table-244416388965473/)
IFLA 2018: IRRT Member Report from Kuala Lumpur

By Marie Paiva, Research and User Services Librarian, Marriott Library, University of Utah
marie.paiva@utah.edu

In August 2018, I had the opportunity to attend the IFLA meetings in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. The theme of the conference was, “Transform Libraries, Transform Societies” as libraries are playing a critical role in the development of Malaysia.

I attended many discussions and papers, including poster sessions, presented at the African satellite section and met many librarians from around the globe. The IFLA delegates also had a chance to visit libraries in the area, an opportunity I took advantage of. The National Library of Malaysia has vast holdings with its cultural treasures. Our group was shown many reading rooms where computers were quite visible and then moved on to see Malaysian materials written in the traditional Jawi script.

One of the nicest libraries was the Bentong Public Library, located in a smaller town and serving both students and the general public. Students greeted us with drumming and later we were offered a wide array of local fruits, and treated to the fine hospitality.

The library director showed us the Bentong Public Library system. Patrons could use a smart phone and the QR codes to obtain more information on their collections.

In Kuantan, Pahang, we visited the Islamic International University of Malaysia’s Medical Faculty Library. The staff were very friendly and made us feel at home. This library serves students and the community at large as it is the only medical and health sciences campus in that state.

Finally, we also visited the State Library of Pahang in Kuantan. It was built earlier in 2018 and had great features including the Science Discovery Centre, much natural lighting, and colorful areas. We observed a school group with a librarian presenter showing how to make paper. The students were captivated by the project.

It was impressive to visit all these libraries and get a chance to observe library staff at work and see users interact with resources in Malaysia.

Marie Paiva has been a member of IRRT since 1998, and currently serves on the IRC’s Africa Sub-Committee of ALA.

Have you participated in an international conference? Consider sharing about your experience with IRRT readers!

Library staff at the Islamic International University’s Medical Library

The Bentong Public Library Director demonstrates using a QR code
Conference Report: European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL)

By Loriene Roy, School of Information, The University of Texas at Austin, loriene@ischool.utexas.edu

The European Conference on Information Literacy (ECIL) is an essential gathering for anyone interested in the role of information literacy in making a difference in the world. Held annually since 2013, ECIL will now be scheduled every other year, starting in 2020.

ECIL 2018 took place from 24-27 September 2018 in Oulu, Finland. The 270 participants started each day by listening to a keynote or invited addresses. The bulk of the program was almost 100 papers presented in concurrent panels, most related to the conference theme of information literacy in everyday life. In addition, there were 15 workshops, 38 best practices presentations, 11 PechaKucha, 19 poster sessions, and a new doctoral forum. Attendees were from 44 countries. Events took place at Hotel Lasaretti, a former hospital located near the Oulujoki River.

Keynote presentations addressed the place of pervasive games, the status of educational reform among K-12 students in Finland, information literacy in refugee camps, and using social media to share information about life-threatening conditions. While the program was intensive, frequent breaks and free evenings promoted networking and planning for trans-border collaborations.

The gala dinner was also a celebration of the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Department of Information and Communication Studies at the University of Oulu. In addition to program events, each ECIL offers opportunities to visit sites of local interest including local libraries, a local tour of the city, and half and full day excursions. For Oulu, this included a free tour of the Oulu City Library and, for a fee, a walking tour of the city and a bus tour that brought guests north to the Ranua Wildlife park, a science museum in the town of Rovaniemi, and across the Arctic circle to Santa Claus Village.

The next ECIL conference will take place from 21-24 September 2020 in Bamberg, Germany. Following past protocol, several calls for participation will be issued, beginning in Fall 2019. Those whose abstracts are accepted will receive invitations to present and may submit full papers for review for possible publication in the conference proceedings. Proceedings are published by Springer as separate monographs, usually by the January after the ECIL conference. The ECIL 2018 website is located at http://ecil2018.ilconf.org/ and includes links to program abstracts.

Have you attended an international conference lately? Consider sharing your experience with fellow IRRT members by writing a brief report.
Manuscripts, art and culture: Medieval Africa as a global force

By Florence Mugambi, florence.mugambi@northwestern.edu


Much is being done and written about the prized ancient manuscripts from Timbuktu, Mali and from other parts of West Africa. The news about the manuscripts were somewhat gloomy in 2012 when Al Qaeda militants from northwest Africa took control of most of Mali and threatened to destroy them. Publications such as the The Bad-Ass Librarians of Timbuktu give accounts of how librarians in Timbuktu came together to save the endangered manuscript collections.

For many centuries, the manuscripts remained Africa’s best kept secret with many, including explorers, traders, colonizers, and Africans themselves believing that Africa had no written history. Presently though, knowledge of the existence of the manuscripts is pervasive thanks to the efforts of locals, librarians, archivists, archaeologists, philanthropists, and various organizations such as UNESCO, who have committed to restoration and preservation projects of the treasured writings.

Following a meeting convened by UNESCO in 1967, a resolution was passed calling on the government of Mali to establish a center for the preservation of Arabic manuscripts in Timbuktu. The Ahmed Baba Centre for Documentation and Research (CEDRAB) was instituted in Timbuktu in 1973 primarily with funding from Kuwait. Currently known as the Ahmed Baba Institute of Higher Learning and Islamic Research, it holds about 30,000 manuscripts, collected through the efforts of outstanding individuals.

Years following, more libraries have been constructed to house family and private collections of owners and collectors who were reluctant to give up their manuscripts to the government-run center. At present, additional initiatives include digitization projects of the manuscripts.

As preservationists work on restoring the deteriorating manuscripts, scholars are studying the manuscripts from different viewpoints.

To Kathleen Bickford Berzock, associate director of curatorial affairs at The Block Museum of Art at Northwestern University, it is about the place the manuscripts and other material remains occupy in West Africa’s global reach in the medieval period. Manuscripts from Timbuktu emphasize the role that the shared language and culture of Islam played in the expansion of African exchange networks, she says. She points to the fact that the legacy of medieval trans-Saharan exchange has largely been omitted from Western historical narratives and art histories, and certainly, from the way that Africa is presented.

Berzock has curated an ambitious international exhibition titled Caravans of Gold: Fragments in Time: Art, Culture and Exchange Across Medieval Saharan Africa, that will showcase the splendor and power of the lost kingdoms and commercial centers of Africa, using centuries-old artifacts from sites around the Sahara Desert and artwork from West and North Africa (Mali, Nigeria, and Morocco), Europe and the Middle East that reveal the reach of Saharan networks.

Northwestern University’s Melville J. Herskovits Library of African Studies, founded in 1954, home to about 5,000 manuscripts from West Africa, and today the largest separate Africana collection in existence, will also contribute a number of texts from and about Africa to the exhibition.

Caravans of Gold will debut at the Block (Evanston, IL) 26 January through 21 July 2019, before traveling to the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto (Fall 2019) and the Smithsonian’s National Museum of African Art in Washington, D.C. (Spring 2020).

For more information on the exhibition visit https://www.blockmuseum.northwestern.edu/news/9_27caravanstemplate.pdf
International Library Partnership Profile: Arizona Library Association and Japan Library Association

By Alexandra Humphreys, Associate Librarian, Arizona State University Library,

Horner Fellowship Brings Together Arizona Library Association and Japan Library Association

The Sister Libraries Committee of the IRRT seeks to foster cultural understanding and exchanges of ideas and practices among libraries from various countries—important goals in today’s intolerant reality. The Sister Libraries Success Stories webpage lists some of the accomplishments of global partnerships between U.S. and international libraries, but few of these partnerships link two library associations. A notable exception is the Arizona Library Association (AzLA) and the Japan Library Association (JLA).

The Horner Fellowship was established in 1989 with an endowment generously provided by Dr. Layton “Jack” and Marian Horner to foster cultural and informational exchanges between libraries from the state of Arizona and Japan. The purpose of the Fellowship’s committee is to facilitate reciprocal exchanges between library personnel from Arizona and Japanese library associations.

The Horner Fellowship is awarded annually, with the Arizona Horner Fellowship Committee and the Japan Library Association’s Relations Committee selecting Fellows in alternating years and facilitating their stay in the respective countries. Since 1989, 17 AzLA members have traveled to Japan as Arizona Horner Fellows or Special Project awardees, and 11 Japanese librarians have visited Arizona as Japan Library Association Horner Fellows.

The exchange forges special connections between American and Japanese librarians. Horner Fellows come from public, academic, rural, special, private, and all types of libraries. Their interests range from haiku poetry, puppet theater, manga books, teaching literacy skills in school libraries, services in academic libraries to serving diverse populations. During their stay, many librarians from both countries find surprising differences and similarities between the countries and library systems. American and Japanese librarians are enriched by their new experiences, and can apply personal and professional benefits in their libraries and communities.

The most recent participant in the Horner Fellowship exchanges is Yuko Hoshino, a graduate student from Tokyo, who is interested in library services for disabled patrons. During her visit to Arizona in October 2018, she visited AzTAP, Arizona’s assistive technology program, Arizona Talking Book Library, and many disability services at Arizona universities, community colleges, and other libraries. Yuko is taking back an array of new experiences that she will be able to use in library settings. She may even become a future mover and shaker in the world of Japanese libraries.

The value of this partnership extends beyond professional benefits—it also has societal value—as a way of spreading and exchanging cultural awareness and democratic values. Sharing culture is a way of preserving it; sharing knowledge is a way of enriching it.

Libraries are ideal places to connect, share, and learn.

Editors’ note: Alexandra Humphreys is the Co-Chair of the IRRT Sister Libraries Committee. For more information about the committee, please visit its website at http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtcommittees/sisterlibrary/sisterlibrary. There you will find information about setting up a partnership and a list of libraries looking for partners.

Is your library part of an international partnership, or a “Sister Library”? Share your experiences and inspire others.
International Library Profile: Riecken Community Libraries, Honduras and Guatemala

By Paco Alcaide Canata, Regional Director of Riecken Foundation, paco@rieckenlibraries.org, www.riecken.org

Even if we have a better life, it will always be poverty without the inclusion of women: Riecken community libraries empower women in Honduras and Guatemala

Photos Credit: Riecken Community Libraries

Guatemala and Honduras are low to middle income countries. In rural areas, approximately one out of five people live in extreme poverty, or on less than US$1.90 per day. These conditions of poverty and social exclusion are one of the biggest obstacles to moving forward in the development of the country. Rural population has been excluded from access to health, education, and the possibilities of development in general. The population of an average community is composed mostly of subsistence farmers, growing corn, coffee or other crops, on small family plots. Many people are indigenous, members of racial and cultural groups historically excluded from access to higher education and high-paying jobs.

Over half of both countries’ population is rural, indigenous (especially in Guatemala), lives in poverty, and is disproportionately young. Honduras and Guatemala have the highest illiteracy and school dropout rates in Central America, with rural areas disproportionately affected. It is estimated that more than 30 percent of the people above the age of 15 cannot read or write; 54 percent live in rural areas and 53 percent are under age twenty. Young people represent 39% of total population; rural women of Honduras and Guatemala are synonyms of social exclusion; despite the significant increase in educational coverage at the primary level, only 59 of every 100 girls go to the primary school.

It is a sad reality that Riecken community libraries are trying to change.

In both countries, the public educational day is divided, so afternoon students might use the library in the morning and morning students in the afternoon. Teachers use the library to prepare lessons. Being dynamic and responsive to each community’s needs, a Riecken Library tailors services to its community and is open on weekdays, typically serving 100 people.

Aunque logremos una vida mejor, siempre será pobreza si no se incluyen a las mujeres: las Bibliotecas comunitarias empoderan a las mujeres en Honduras y Guatemala

Créditos de fotos: Riecken Community Libraries

Guatemala y Honduras son países de ingresos medio-bajo. En el área rural, aproximadamente una de cada 5 personas vive en pobreza extrema, o con menos de US$1.90 por día. Estas condiciones de pobreza y exclusión social son uno de los mayores obstáculos para avanzar en el desarrollo de ambos países. La población rural ha sido excluida del acceso a la salud, la educación y las posibilidades de desarrollo en general. La población de una comunidad promedio está compuesta principalmente por agricultores de subsistencia, que cultivan maíz, café u otros cultivos, en pequeñas parcelas familiares. Muchas personas son indígenas, miembros de grupos culturales con identidad propia e históricamente excluidos del acceso a la educación superior y los trabajos bien remunerados.

Más de la mitad de la población de ambos países es rural, indígena (especialmente en Guatemala), vive en la pobreza y es desproporcionadamente joven. Honduras y Guatemala tienen las tasas más altas de analfabetismo y deserción escolar en América Central; se estima que más del 30 por ciento de las personas mayores de 15 años no pueden leer ni escribir; el 54 por ciento vive en áreas rurales y el 53 por ciento es menor de veinte años. Y los jóvenes representan el 39% de la población total. Las mujeres rurales de Honduras y Guatemala son sinónimos de exclusión social; a pesar del aumento significativo en la cobertura educativa en el nivel primario, 59 de cada 100 niñas asisten a la escuela primaria.

Es una triste realidad que las bibliotecas comunitarias de Riecken están tratando de cambiar.

En Guatemala y Honduras, las bibliotecas comunitarias, dada la débil infraestructura educativa, apoyan directamente la educación pública; los estudiantes de la continues on page 17
people daily, or nearly 400,000 users, over 80% of which are school age children and young people.

The Riecken Foundation, dba Riecken Community Libraries, was established in 2000 and has built and supports a network of 65 libraries: 12 in Guatemala and 53 in Honduras. The Riecken model depends on three legs of support: 1) community volunteers; 2) Riecken; Foundation and 3) local government. Each library is self-governed by a volunteer board of community members. Beyond construction and equipment, Riecken also provides communities with innovative programming such as in reading, health, technology, or youth activities. Each Riecken community library serves all ages, and its functions vary from internet searches for school projects to reading programs to health services provided by visiting health brigades. Community libraries’ resources, programming and services are intended for all community members; however there is a heavy programming emphasis on developing skills and motivation for reading in children and young people. Riecken libraries are located in medium-sized rural towns with an average population of 8,000 residents, of mixed ethnicities.

How are libraries empowering women?

The Riecken model is based on the idea that when girls in rural communities strengthen their leadership skills and abilities, and are provided participation to promote the women and children rights at the community level, there will be an increase in positive community development and improvement of quality of life in the communities. When girls learn to self-organize and work in a coordinated manner, they increase their community standing. Right’s promotion activities that they generate will likely be more sustainable and have greater impact; and reading and technology will be our toolkits to do that.

Riecken Community Libraries, with the invaluable help tarde pueden usar la biblioteca por la mañana y los estudiantes de la mañana, por la tarde. Los maestros usan la biblioteca para preparar las lecciones. De forma dinámica, y acordes a las necesidades de cada comunidad, las Bibliotecas Riecken adaptan los servicios a su comunidad y están abierta los días de semana, atendiendo a 100 diarios, o casi 400,000 usuarios, más del 80% de los que son niños y jóvenes en edad escolar.

La Fundación Riecken, conocida también como Bibliotecas comunitarias Riecken, se estableció en 2000 y apoya una red de 65 bibliotecas en Honduras y Guatemala (12 en Guatemala y 53 en Honduras). Nuestro modelo de biblioteca se basa en componentes, interrelacionados entre sí: 1) Voluntarios de la comunidad; 2) Fundación Riecken; y 3) Gobierno local. Cada biblioteca está gobernada por una junta voluntaria de miembros de la comunidad. Además de la construcción y el equipamiento de la biblioteca, Riecken también ofrece a las comunidades una programación innovadora como lectura, salud, tecnología o actividades para jóvenes. Cada biblioteca comunitaria Riecken atiende a todas las edades, desde bebés hasta personas de la tercera edad, y sus actividades varían desde búsquedas en Internet para proyectos escolares hasta programas de lectura y servicios de salud proporcionados por brigadas de salud visitantes. Los recursos, la programación y los servicios de las bibliotecas comunitarias están abiertos a todos los miembros de la comunidad; sin embargo, hacemos énfasis en la programación para desarrollar habilidades y promoción de la lectura en niños y jóvenes. Las bibliotecas Riecken están ubicadas en poblaciones rurales de tamaño mediano con una población promedio de menos de 8,000 personas, con etnicidad mixta entre poblaciones indígenas y no indígenas, especialmente en Guatemala.

¿Cómo las bibliotecas comunitarias empoderan a las mujeres?

Nuestra propuesta se basa en la idea de que en la medida en que las mujeres de comunidades rurales fortalezcan sus capacidades y habilidades de liderazgo y se ofrecen espacios de participación y emprendimiento a nivel comunitario, ellas podrán propiciar oportunidades de desarrollo y mejoramiento de su calidad de vida. En la medida en que las mujeres aprendan a organizarse y trabajar de forma coordinada, aumentan su proyección comunitaria. Los proyectos y actividades de promoción de sus derechos que ellas mismas organizan, tendrán más posibilidades de ser sostenibles y de tener un mayor impacto en el mejoramiento de su calidad de vida. La mediación en lectura y el uso de la tecnología serán nuestras herramientas para hacer eso.

La Fundación Riecken, con el invaluable apoyo de Fundación BFB, ha impulsado un proyecto multianual para

image: Women artisans empowered by the library of San Juan Chamelco (Guatemala). They sell their products in local fairs.
of **BFB Foundation**, have a multiyear project to promote the participation and leadership of rural women via community development projects (e.g., business development, political and social initiatives). Libraries are supporting women groups in their communities by providing training and support for development of business or community development projects and they use safe spaces for the women’s groups to develop a specific community or business project meet.

The goal of each project is to eventually become self-sufficient by the end of the program. Some groups choose more than one project to suit the various interests of the group members. In 2015 the project directly benefitted 77 women in trainings and meetings. In 2016 the project reached 701 women. And in 2017 the project worked with 669 women. Beyond direct participation in the groups or business activities, many other women in communities were able to participate in trainings and discussions.

Riecken Community Libraries offer safe spaces where anyone can come to read, have access to technology, and participate in dynamic programs relevant to the community. Our unique partnerships with local communities, municipal government and the Riecken Foundation maximize all resources.

**Community Libraries empower young people**

Vilda, a young woman from San Carlos Sija (Quetzaltenango, Guatemala), walks 20 minutes every Monday to the library to attend workshops. When she was a kid, she suffered bullying because she is Deaf-Mute. Vilda only studied until the third grade because teachers thought that because of her disability, she was not going to be successful. Fortunately, Vilda’s grandmother involved her with the library project and gradually she adapted through support from the development center. Today Vilda, despite her disability, has developed individual and collective skills as well as her self-esteem. She participates in the activities promoted by the group of women who have helped her sell her products with family and friends in her community.

Riecken libraries have a broader goal of promoting free expression, individual empowerment, community service and volunteerism, as well as access to computer technology and the internet. All of the libraries work to create a love of reading in children and youth; offer a place for parents, particularly young mothers, to promote the participation and the leadership of the women in their communities. Estos grupos de mujeres también reciben capacitación y apoyo sobre las posibilidades de desarrollo de un proyecto de desarrollo empresarial o comunitario concreto. Las mujeres utilizan las bibliotecas comunitarias como un espacio seguro para desarrollar un proyecto comunitario o emprendedor específico.

La elección de cada proyecto fue decisión de cada grupo de mujeres. El objetivo de cada proyecto es llegar a ser autosuficiente al final del programa; hay que animar a los grupos a experimentar con posibilidades. Es habitual que las mujeres elijan más de un proyecto para satisfacer los diversos intereses de los miembros del grupo. En 2015, el proyecto benefició directamente a 77 mujeres en capacitaciones y reuniones. En 2016 el proyecto llegó a 701 mujeres. Y en 2017 el proyecto trabajó con 669 mujeres. Más allá de la participación directa en los grupos o actividades comerciales, muchas otras mujeres de las comunidades pudieron participar en capacitaciones y discusiones.

Las bibliotecas comunitarias Riecken ayudan a resolver estos problemas, ofreciendo lugares seguros donde cualquier persona puede leer, tener acceso a la tecnología y participar en programas dinámicos relevantes para la comunidad. Nuestro modelo de biblioteca, producto de la cooperación horizontal entre la comunidad, el gobierno municipal y la Fundación Riecken, maximiza todos los recursos disponibles.

**Las bibliotecas comunitarias empoderan a las jóvenes.**

Un ejemplo de cómo las bibliotecas empoderan a las jóvenes es Vilda, de San Carlos Sija (Quetzaltenango, Guatemala).

Ella camina 20 minutos, todos los lunes desde su casa hasta la biblioteca y eso no le impide participar en los talleres. Cuando era niña, sufrió acoso escolar por ser sordomuda. Ella solo estudió hasta el tercer grado, debido a su discapacidad. Vilda tuvo que dedicarse a las tareas domésticas en su hogar. Sin embargo, la abuela de Vilda la involucró en el proceso del proyecto de la biblioteca. Hoy, Vilda, a pesar de su discapacidad, ha desarrollado habilidades individuales y colectivas, así como su autoestima y su destacada participación en las actividades promovidas.
meet and learn best practices in early childhood development and nutrition; provide at-risk youth -- whether in school or out of school -- with a place to safely meet, engage in productive activities, and develop critical thinking skills. The libraries also serve as places for women to become empowered with literacy, numeracy, leadership, and business skills.

Offering books, programs relevant to the needs of the communities served and access to technology whenever possible -- Riecken libraries connect people in Guatemala and Honduras to each other and to the world. They help prepare a generation of local leadership, and open minds and imaginations to a world of possibilities otherwise inaccessible to these underserved communities. Riecken’s library work has resulted in engaged, growing communities that are building the capacity for prosperity and democracy.

With support from USAID/ASHA (American Schools and Hospitals Abroad) to upgrade the books, technology and furniture, Riecken community libraries will continue to help transform a single building block -- a community library with free computers, internet, print resources and programs -- into a springboard for democracy building, local leadership development, women’s empowerment, civic engagement and social justice in Honduras and Guatemala. Riecken community Libraries are a demonstration and promotion of American principles of inclusiveness and equality, civic engagement, free expression and independent inquiry.

Learn more about the work of the Riecken Foundation and how community libraries are changing lives in Honduras and Guatemala.

Las bibliotecas Riecken tienen la misión de promover la libertad de expresión, el empoderamiento individual, el servicio comunitario y el voluntariado, así como el acceso a la tecnología e Internet. Todas las bibliotecas trabajan para crear el amor por la lectura en niños y jóvenes; ofrecer un lugar para que los padres, especialmente las madres jóvenes, conozcan y aprendan las mejores prácticas en el desarrollo y la nutrición de la primera infancia; proporcionar a los jóvenes en riesgo, ya sea en la escuela o fuera de ella, un lugar para reunirse de manera segura, participar en actividades productivas y desarrollar habilidades de pensamiento crítico. Las bibliotecas también sirven como lugares para que las mujeres se empoderen con alfabetización, aritmética, liderazgo y habilidades empresariales.

Ofreciendo libros, impulsando programas relevantes a las necesidades de las comunidades y facilitando el acceso a la tecnología cuando es posible -- las Bibliotecas Riecken conectan a las personas en Honduras y Guatemala entre sí y con el resto del mundo. Las bibliotecas ayudan a preparar una generación de líderes locales; abren las mentes y la imaginación a un mundo lleno de posibilidades, siendo imposible de otro modo para estas comunidades marginadas. El trabajo de las bibliotecas comunitarias ha dado como resultado comunidades comprometidas y en crecimiento que están desarrollando prosperidad y democracia. Además, en este punto, contamos con el apoyo de un socio invaluable.

Con el apoyo de USAID / ASHA (por sus siglas en inglés, American Schools and Hospitals Abroad), mediante la dotación de libros, computadoras y mobiliario, las bibliotecas comunitarias Riecken transforman un sencillo edificio: una biblioteca comunitaria con computadoras, internet, libros y programas de libre acceso. - en un trampolín para la construcción de la democracia, el liderazgo local, el empoderamiento de las mujeres, el compromiso social y la justicia social en Honduras y Guatemala. Las bibliotecas comunitarias Riecken son una demostración y promoción de los principios estadounidenses de inclusión e igualdad, compromiso cívico, libre expresión e investigación independiente.

Conozca más acerca del trabajo de la Fundación Riecken y cómo las Bibliotecas comunitarias están cambiando vidas en Honduras y Guatemala.
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.

An Interview with Reysa Alenzuela, University of the South Pacific, Vanuatu

I am a Filipina Librarian working at The University of the South Pacific Emalus Campus in Vanuatu. I serve as a Senior Librarian and School of Law Librarian. As a Senior Librarian, my thrust is to enhance research and instruction services in the library. Information literacy and research skill development instruction are some of my core functions.

We provide these kind of instructions not only at the main campus (Port Vila), but also in other centers situated in Malekula, Espiritu Santo, Torba and Tanna and in Fiji, where a huge number of law students need to enhance their skills in legal research. For the Law component, I collaborate with the School of Law to monitor the research impact and enhance the research output of Faculty. I also assist in enhancing the visibility of the School of Law journal.

Being in the profession for almost 20 years where I have worked in different countries (Philippines, South Korea, U.S., Central Asia) on various positions, I go beyond the daily routine of managing the library. In Vanuatu, I provide training for Library staff in other islands about the basics in managing the library.

The struggle with training lies in the fact that Vanuatu is a trilingual country – Ni Vans (colloquial for Ni Vanuatu) speak English, French, and Bislama. I have trainings where some participants are Francophones and non-English speakers.

Library staff in this part of the Pacific region mostly have zero library background and very few have received a certificate or diploma in Library and Information Science. Going to the islands is also a challenge. The flights are not frequent and may often be affected by weather (cyclone season is November- April but may come earlier and have a few until May).

I also work closely with the Vanuatu Librarians Association to promote the role of libraries in digital/information literacy and to advocate for stronger support for libraries and librarians. Recently, VLA participated in the Asia Pacific Internet Governance Forum with participants coming from over 20 countries across the region.

There are more projects in line in the near future. We look forward to having international collaborators who can help us build libraries so that the schools in far flung areas could have access to information and reading becomes truly ingrained in the 85 islands in Vanuatu.

Participants in a library training session led by Reysa Alenzuela.