

The American Library Association and German Library & Information Association Partnership: A Celebration

By Sharon Bostick, Fred Gitner, Hella Klauser, and Heidi Madden.

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In August of 2014, the American Library Association (ALA) and the German Library & Information Association (Bibliothek und Information Deutschland, BID) signed a [landmark agreement](#) to work together to create opportunities for networking and information exchange between librarians working in many types of libraries in the United States and Germany. The resulting project “Partner Country USA 2016-2019” was scaffolded on the major annual library conferences, Leipzig

Bibliothekskongress (2016 and 2019)¹, and ALA Annual Conference (Chicago 2017, and New Orleans 2018).

BID, the umbrella organization for the major German library associations, launched the partner-country initia-



tive in 2007. The goal of the partner-country project is to bring together professionals with international perspectives on the issues libraries have in common worldwide. Past partner-countries have included Denmark, Spain, and Turkey; the Netherlands will succeed the US in 2019. Two subcommittees within BID and ALA handled the organizational details that helped shape the programming, the Library & Information International (Bibliothek Information International, BII), and the International Relations Committee, Europe Subcommittee, of the ALA International Relations Office (IRO).

The first conference attended by an American delegation was the [6th Bibliothekskongress 2016 in Leipzig, Germany](#). The Leipzig Bibliothekskongress has special significance within annual German library conferences because it returns to the city of Leipzig every three years. BID organizes the Leipzig meetings, which highlight BID’s international initiatives. Regular [Bibliothekartage](#) (Librarian Days) are organized by the Professional Library & Information Association (Berufsverband Information Bibliothek e.V. BIB) and the Association of German Librarians (Verein Deutscher Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare VDB), and take place in other cities in the interim years. The Leipzig meeting occurs in the same week as the Leipzig book fair, a fair that considers itself a Lesemesse, a Reading Fair, because it offers many author events and readings. The 2016 book fair featured Don Winslow, Aleksandar Hemon, and Ellen Israel Goldberg

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from the US.

The theme for the Leipzig 2016 conference was “[Library Spaces - Real and Digital](#).” Participants from the United States, ALA President Sari Feldman and more than a dozen American librarians, gave presentations on topics like the research commons spaces and services, American library space design, notable German-language collections in American libraries, scholarly publishing services, change management, and diversity and inclusion. Their PowerPoint presentations are archived at the open library science platform [BIB: OPUS Publikationsserver](#), and select contributions were published in a special edition of the journal *o-bib: Das offene Bibliotheksjournal*, volume 3, number 4, 2016. The BIB library science journal [Buch und Bibliothek \(BuB\)](#) extended the information exchange by soliciting articles from American librarians on topics of interest, including the ACRL Information Literacy Frameworks, makerspaces, gaming in libraries, and German Studies in the US. The open [BuB Archive](#) now offers the full text of those articles.

Events around the conference created opportunities for librarians to talk informally, and to visit libraries and landmarks in the conference cities. The American visitors to Leipzig enjoyed a reception hosted by the mayor, and a dinner at the famous Moritzbastei, built in 1551. Visitors toured the University of Leipzig Library, Bibliotheca Albertina, one of the oldest library buildings in Germany (built in 1543); and the Leipzig branch of the German National Library ([Die Deutsche Nationalbibliothek](#)), which now includes the German music archive. At the German National Library, they viewed an exhibit on the history of the book, and at the Museum für Druckkunst Leipzig, the Museum of Printing, they saw historic book production machinery that is still in working order.

Delegations of German librarians attended the ALA Annual Conferences in Chicago (2017) and New Orleans (2018). “Willkommenskultur,” a culture of welcoming refugees, infused the discussion of space at ALA Annual Chicago 2017, where German librarians gave well attended talks on topics including: Libraries in Germany - Venerable book-museums or modern information facilities; Serving Refugees: Experiences from German Libraries; German Academic Libraries - New Trends in Management; and Libraries Support Research in Germany.

These conference encounters created a lasting sense of international community and shared values. Members of the German delegation wrote several (much-appreciated) articles reflecting on the conferences.² Some aspects that

stood out to the German visitors were the size of ALA, international celebrity guests (Hillary Clinton and Sarah Jessica Parker), and the number and diversity of presentations.

Social events of note were the ALA International Reception held in the Winter Garden of the iconic Chicago Public Library, and the architectural cruise through the heart of Chicago, where they were invited guests of the European Studies Section, Association of Research Libraries ([ACRL ESS](#)). The 2018 ALA Annual conference in New Orleans deepened everyone’s understanding of German librarians’ refugee service initiatives, with talks on [Learning German in the virtual classroom](#), and Library Building Design in Germany.

Additionally, the BII collaborated with the Goethe-Institut’s Librarian in Residence program to offer experts from Germany an opportunity to deepen the dialogue with American colleagues through a four-week stay in the United States. The focus of the residency was different for each year, and included library programs for refugees (2016), the UN Sustainability Agenda 2030 (2017), and space design in American academic libraries (2018). Stipend [recipients](#) reported on their findings at subsequent German library conferences, and on the [BII website](#). ALA offered additional opportunities for finding project partners through its [German-US Librarian Exchange](#) platform.

Webinars are a natural tool for international collaboration, and organizers held several successful virtual meetings. The October 2016 webinar provided information about the existing Sister Libraries partnerships, and encouraged libraries new to the idea to explore possible collaborative projects. The International Relations Round Table (IRRT) organized a May 2018 webinar as part of its online initiatives; the topic was Libraries in Germany serving immigrants and refugees. In April 2019, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) collaborated on a webinar to encourage libraries to consider the [Benefits of International Exchange Programs](#).

The connections created by the partnership agreement also contributed to another project, planned independently: the Frankfurt Symposium, held in the Frankfurt, Germany in 2017 that drew 120 librarians from 10 countries. [New Directions for Libraries, Scholars, and Partnerships](#) was sponsored by the Chicago-based Center for Research Libraries (CRL) and two of its global projects, the Collaborative Initiative for French Language

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ALA-BID Partnership, continued

Collections (CIFNAL) and the German-North American Resources Partnership (GNARP). BII and BuB helped with publicity in Germany, and BII provided welcome stipends for American attendees. A more detailed summary of the symposium is provided by the conference organizers in [Wenn alle Wege nach Frankfurt führen / When all roads lead to Frankfurt](#).

The long reach of the US/Germany partnership project even extends into the next decade, as the Frankfurt Symposium will be followed by an international workshop in Fiesole, Italy on the [New Shape of Sharing: Networks, Expertise, Information](#) (May 11 - 14, 2020). Topics include new models for collaborative collection development and services, awareness of a growing range of content and format types, and the evolving role of libraries and librarians in the research process.

2016-2019 witnessed extraordinary professional development opportunities for many library science professionals from Germany and the United States. Participants learned to understand each other's organizational structures, infrastructures, and acronyms, and found it invaluable to talk in person about the nature and organization of our both similar and varied work environments and challenges.

At the formal celebration and closing ceremony, held in March 2019, at the [7th Bibliothekskongress in Leipzig](#),

BID President Dr. Heinz-Jürgen Lorenzen and ALA president Loida Garcia-Febo thanked everyone for the many successful initiatives and diverse outcomes. Together, they welcomed Germany's new partner country, the Netherlands (2019-2022), passing the baton to Matthijs van Otegem of the Netherlands Library Forum (FOBID).

Our partner program experience will continue to inspire international dialogue at our standing conferences, and there is hope of reconnecting at our respective annual meetings, or in Fiesole, Italy, in 2020.

Footnotes:

1. Jansen, Guido, and Susanne Riedel. "Die Transatlantischen Beziehungen Stärken. Das BII-Projekt 'Partnerland USA 2016 – 2019' Startet in Leipzig. Zahlreiche Vorträge Und Diskussionen." *Buch und Bibliothek*.2 (2016): 92-5.
2. Klauser, Hella. "Partnerland USA: deutsche Delegation auf der ALA-Jahreskonferenz." Web. <<https://b-u-b.de/ala-jahreskonferenz-2017/>>. Klauser, Hella. "German Delegation Returns Energized from the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago." *International Leads*. 31.3 (2017): 1-3. Brahms, Ewald, et al. "Bericht über die 2017 American Library Association Annual Conference and Exhibition, June 22-27, Chicago." *o-bib: Das Offene Bibliotheksjournal*, 4.3 (2017): 113-21.

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From left to right, ALA Past President Loida Garcia-Febo, BID President Dr. Heinz-Jürgen Lorenzen, former BID President Barbara Lison, and FOBID President Matthijs van Otegem at the 7th Bibliothekskongress in Leipzig.

Message from the Editors

In this issue:

IRRT Leadership changes hands every June at ALA Annual. We welcome our incoming Chair, Richard Sapon-White, and Chair-Elect, Alexandra Humphreys. Learn more about their plans for IRRT in their columns.

The leaders of a three year long partnership project between ALA and the German Library & Information Association (BID) reflect on the partnership aimed at strengthening professional ties between the associations and their members.

A report from IRRT's sponsored ALA Emerging Leaders group that took on the challenge of setting up an International Librarians Mentorship Program.

Global features : LIS in the Maldives, interview with a librarian from Australia, and the Illinois Fire Service Institute Library.

Happy reading.

Have an article idea, news or activities to share?

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

Meet the Editors

Rebecca Miller

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



Florence Mugambi

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



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Message from the IRRT Chair



Richard Sapon-White
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Greetings, IRRT members and friends!

Welcome to another exciting year of IRRT programs and activities promoting international connections in the library world. I hope you will take advantage of all we have to offer: webinars, conference programs, connections with colleagues abroad, and keeping informed with this great newsletter.

The theme I have chosen for this year is **“Libraries as Social Change Engines Around the World.”**

Our work as librarians has real impact on the lives of our users and the living conditions of our communities. Social change does not come easily, but access to information empowers people to improve working conditions, increase political participation, and eliminate poverty. I have been inspired to choose this topic by IFLA’s work on libraries, development and the United Nations 2030 Agenda (<https://www.ifla.org/libraries-development>).

I would encourage you to look at the agenda, IFLA’s Library Map of the World, Development and Access to Information (DA2I) initiative, and other information resources linked from that page to learn more. I am looking forward to a year of great programming to motivate us all to strive for positive, meaningful progress in our communities and the wider world.

The IRRT Executive Board has already met twice as of this writing. In addition to planning the programming mentioned above, in the coming months, we will be discussing the following:

- changes to how we use the time at conferences for our all-committee meetings, ensuring that our limited time together is used as efficiently and constructively as possible;

- revisions to improve and clarify the Mission Enhancement Grant guidelines
- updating the IRRT Officers Manual

My future columns should inform you on our progress on these topics.

New Executive Board Members

Please join us in welcoming Mark Mattson (Member-At-Large) and Alexandra Humpreys (Chair Elect) to the IRRT board.



Mark Mattson
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Mark Mattson is the Global Partnerships and Outreach Librarian at Penn State University. His areas of interest include international sister-library partnerships, comparative and international librarianship, the history of international librarianship, global citizenship programming, libraries and intercultural dialogue, international student services, the contribution of academic libraries to campus internationalization efforts, and librarianship in service of global priorities and goals.

Mark has been active in IRRT for several years as a member of the Sister Libraries Committee and International Connections Committee. In addition to his work within IRRT, Mark is also a personal affiliate of the International Federation of Library Associations. Mark enjoys visiting international libraries both within and outside Penn State's Global Engagement Network and fostering connections between librarians around the world.

Mark serves on the board as Member-at-Large.

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Welcome Mark!

Message from the IRRT Chair Elect



Alexandra Housouri Humphreys
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I have been a member of the ALA International Relations Round Table since 2014, and it continues to be a remarkable and rewarding experience. Having lived in Asia, Europe, and the United States, and with fluency in several languages, my career continues to center on international matters, with special interest in developing countries.

I work with international students and scholars, and I have provided leadership for various organizations and other entities with international scope. One was my four-year presidency of the Arizona Chapter of the Fulbright Association, where I obtained several substantial grants for the organization. I also chaired the Horner Fellowship Committee, an exchange committee focused on librarianship in Japan and the state of Arizona, and I presented an invited address at the 100th All Japan Library Conference in Tokyo.

I also chaired and co-chaired the ALA Sister Libraries Committee, co-authored a book chapter on globalized librarianship published by the ACRL in January 2019, and have made presentations at library conferences related to international librarianship.

As an education liaison librarian at Arizona State University, I provide library support to the Center for Advanced Studies in Global Education in the ASU Teachers College.

I am delighted to work with Richard Sapon-White and the rest of the IRRT Executive Committee. Richard and Muzhgan Nazarova, the Past Chair, were involved with the Sister Libraries Committee as liaisons last year and two years ago, respectively. Mark Mattson also continues as an invaluable member of the committee.

This year is the sixtieth anniversary of the first meeting of the International Relations Round Table (IRRT), which took place in Washington, D.C. on 23 April 1949. The Round Table on Library Service Abroad was for-

mally launched at that time, and the name was changed to its current form in 1956. Today, the primary mission of the IRRT remains the same throughout the world: to promote international understanding through librarianship.

The IRRT always seeks to bolster its membership so we can continue to develop new ideas and provide a strong presence in our local and global library communities. Please consider volunteering for one or more of our committees (<http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt-committee-volunteer-form>).

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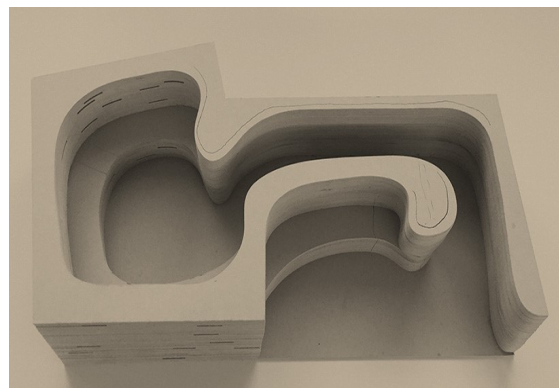
Welcome Alexandra!

Through *International Leads*, we highlight projects, programs, inventions, innovations and memorable moments created by the library world. Thought to be an institution whose relevance may be in the past, the libraries' enterprise is finding ways to re-invent itself, remain relevant, excite, inspire, and meet society needs.

For example, in spring 2020, Deichman's main library (Oslo's public library service) will relocate from an 86-year old building to a brand-new facility and new name, *Deichman Bjørvika*.

In the Silent Room, a special room on the fourth floor, visitors will have the opportunity to experience a one-of-a-kind art project known as [Future Library](#).

Future Library is a collection of manuscripts that will remain unread until the year 2114. Each year a new author contributes a text to the collection, which will ultimately consist of 100 literary works. In the Future Library room, visitors will be able to look at the manuscripts and reflect upon them, but not to read them.



Silent Room lined with wood from the forest.

Library & Information Services in the Republic of Maldives

By: Dr. Gina de Alwis, Independent LIS Researcher, Singapore
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Planning a new research project on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) in Asian countries led me to connect with the Faculty member teaching Library and Information Science at the Maldives National University (MNU). A few emails later, I found myself committed to serving as a resource person at a workshop jointly organised by the National Library of Maldives (NLM), the Maldives Library Association (MLA) and the Maldives National University (MNU). The workshop targeted senior LIS professionals and aimed to obtain their inputs for the Bachelor in Library & Information Studies (BA-LIS) program currently under development at MNU. The visit also provided me with a valuable opportunity to connect with senior librarians through one-to-one interviews to gain insight into the current status of the Library & Information Services (LIS) sector in the country.

About the Republic of Maldives

Maldives is an archipelago of 26 atolls and 1,190 low-lying small coral islands of which 190 are inhabited by a population of under 400,000. The country is famed for its exotic island resorts. Malé, the Republic's capital serves as the country's resource hub and is one of the most densely populated islands in the world.

Growth in the tourism sector has helped uplift Maldives to an upper middle-income country and [high human development \(HDI\) category](#). For many decades, the fishing and tourism sectors were the [key income drivers](#), but were overtaken by the construction industry in 2014 mainly due to the government-initiated infrastructure projects focused on moving inhabitants of the smaller islands to Greater Malé.

The Maldives Library System

The country's library system totaled 294 libraries in 2012, comprising the National Library of Maldives (NLM), over 200 School Libraries, 7 Academic Libraries and 13 Special/Research Libraries.¹ The bulk of the school libraries are under the purview of the Ministry of Education; located in the outer atolls, they range from spaces for libraries to a single cupboard or a few shelves of books. The Maldives National University, established in 2011, operates a library system comprising the main library in Malé and seven campus libraries out of Malé and in the atolls.

Two organizations closely inter-connected with the LIS

sector are the National Archives of Maldives (2012) and the Information Commissioners Office set up in 2014. The latter is mandated to appoint an Information Officer to the government offices.

Maldives Library Association (MLA)

The [Maldives Library Association](#), established in 1987, has crafted an ambitious Strategic Plan for the period 2012 – 2015.² The interviews I conducted revealed that the association has been undergoing challenging times due to resource constraints and has not been successful in realizing the objectives set out in the plan.

LIS Education and Training in the Maldives

Until the early 1990s the main school libraries in Malé were largely manned by professional librarians recruited from overseas, mainly Sri Lanka. The MLA offered the first Basic Course in Librarianship in 1989, which NLM continued offering from 1991 onwards, under the guid-



Dr. Gina de Alwis, center, with officials of the Maldives Library Association.

ance of expat trainers.³ The NLM continues to offer a 12-week Basic Level course on Fundamentals of Library Skills annually.

A unique collaboration between the MLA and the Sri Lanka Library Association (SLLA) was the basis of the first formal LIS education program in the Maldives (6). The three-year Diploma course in Library and Information services (DIPLIS) offered via distance education and administered by the SLLA was launched in 1995 with 30 participants. Due to many constraints, the final

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LIS in the Maldives, continued

year was completed in 2003 with just seven graduating.⁴

LIS education in the Maldives reached a key milestone with the Maldives National University (MNU) launching two locally developed programs, the Advanced Certificate in 2010 and the Diploma in 2012. The curriculum for the two programs were developed by the MNU library staff with additional teaching support of practicing librarians. It was only in 2018 that a full-time LIS teaching faculty was appointed under the Faculty of Arts. A Bachelor Degree program in LIS is projected for launch in 2020.

Continuing professional development opportunities available locally are confined to three short courses of one to two days duration offered annually by the NLM. The MNU library offers an in-house professional development program of a few days annually targeted mainly at the staff based in Malé due to cost constraints.

Utilization of Information & Communications Technology (ICT) in the LIS Sector

In 2007 the MNU library implemented the Integrated Library System (ILS) Liberty3, the only library to do so to date. The National Library of the Maldives has also implemented Liberty3, but operates with a few selected modules. Two key ICT projects that were launched in 2011 with multi-agency support broke new ground in the country. One is the implementation of Koha, an open source ILS targeted at school libraries and implemented in 20 schools over two years. The second project also launched in 2011 is the [Maldives Digital Library Project](#) using the Greenstone Digital Library (GSDL) open source software, which enabled the Dhivehi language interface. The MNU Library has been actively involved in the digitization program and [successfully digitized six local collections by 2012](#).

These two projects are a key milestone in the LIS roadmap for the following reasons: they are the first multi-agency driven LIS projects implemented in the country involving LIS stakeholders including the Maldives Greenstone Network (MGN) as well as government agencies, the MOE Education Development Centre, National Centre for Information Technology (NCIT), and the Department of Heritage. It is indeed admirable that the MLA was initially the key driver of the mammoth KOHA project. However, the [project could not proceed](#) beyond the 20 initial installations, due to the high turnover of both library and technical staff, lack of requisite IT infrastructure, and other constraints.

In 2011, the NLM joined the Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL) network and explored the formation of the Maldives Library Consortium with the MNU library and a few private higher education providers. The key objective of the consortium was to provide the tertiary education community with access to a range of electronic resources through a cost-effective model. However, the establishment of the consortium did not become a reality as there was no commitment from higher education providers.⁵

The MNU Library persisted with their digital library efforts and launched [Saruna](#), their digital repository, in 2018.

Key Insights

In the last two decades, the Maldives LIS sector, while remaining more or less static in many areas and [still in a state of development](#), successfully introduced the concept of the digital library; launched *Saruna*, the MNU Library's digital repository; and continues to offer the two LIS programs at MNU.⁶

Areas for consideration for future development of the LIS sector:

1. *Reaching out to the key policymakers to create awareness of the role of the LIS sector in the country.*

A recurring theme that surfaced during my interviews was the fundamental need to inform key policymakers of the role of libraries and librarians in general and specifically in the digital age, viz a viz the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. The LIS stakeholders need to give top priority to leading a concerted awareness building effort at the national level through branding/image building and remove negative perceptions of the profession.

2. *Absence of a formalized structured career pathway for the LIS profession*

A second recurring theme is the absence of a formalized document detailing a structured competency-based career pathway for LIS professionals. This lack is a barrier not only to attracting potential candidates to the LIS programs, but also for retaining those in the profession. This is all the more pressing given the impending launch of the Bachelor degree program in LIS in 2020. Such documents are issued by the Civil Service Commission.

If these two key aspects can be activated and managed simultaneously, it will greatly enhance the LIS sector and clear the pathway to managing other challenges.

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LIS in the Maldives, continued

3. School libraries

The majority of the libraries in the Maldives are school libraries, but sadly this sector has been the most stagnant. Interviews revealed that discussions are being initiated with key policymakers. It may be timely to explore outside the box models, a paradigm shift, that may be more cost-effective or have wider reach and be more appealing to policy makers. Some examples include the concept of teacher-librarian or school cum public library that may be more suited to the atolls.

The World Bank funded [Maldives Urban Development and Resilience Project](#) of 2018 aims at integration and sustainable development of the Greater Malé region through consolidation of 70% of the urban population and relocation of social, economic and institutional activities to Greater Malé. The idea behind the development strategy is to consolidate the support and services now extended to populations in widely dispersed and sparsely populated islands. Perhaps this is an opportune time for MLA and NLM to take these developments into consideration for future planning.

The profile of the pool of qualified LIS professionals currently active in the industry include 1 PhD, 1 Masters, and 1 Bachelor in LIS (all trained in Australia); around 5 personnel with a LIS Diploma, either from Australia or Sri Lanka; and 34 Diploma holders from MNU since 2013. Unfortunately, a few who received government scholarships for graduate study overseas have since left the LIS profession or secured employment overseas. It is this small band of professionals who keep the profession together despite the many challenges. I foresee that their unwavering efforts should lead to the development of the LIS profession in the Maldives in the next few years.



Dr. Gina de Alwis, 2nd right, with Chief Librarian Mr. Hussein Haleem and senior staff of MNU Library.

Special thanks to Dr. Aminath Riyaz, Assistant Professor, LIS Program, Faculty of Arts, MNU, for initiating and supporting my visit and to the committed band of LIS professionals for sharing very readily during the interviews.

Footnotes

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By 2019 Emerging Leaders Team G: Kelly Grogg, Adrienne Keane, Georgina Rivas-Martinez, Trina Rivera, and Stacey Shapiro

Project Overview

Team G of the 2019 ALA's Emerging Leaders Program was tasked with implementing a pilot program for international peer-mentorship within the International Relations Round Table (IRRT). This program was modeled on the International Librarians Network (ILN) peer mentor program, which ended in 2017.

Project goals were: 1) Facilitate the international exchange and partnerships between library professionals in different countries, 2) Establish and build global networks among information professionals, 3) Support knowledge and information exchange among colleagues around the world.

The team initially met in January at ALA Midwinter and begun planning for the project which involved establishing communications guidelines, division of tasks and assigning responsibilities. This was followed by research, program design based on the research and reaching out to partner organizations. The deliverables included creating application, evaluation, website wireframes, social media marketing materials, email script, blog, [final report](#) and poster.

Research involved 1) reviewing the publications of the now defunct but successful ILN program, which became the basis of the pilot program. 2) reviewing the scholarly literature on virtual/online mentorship programs, as well as peer vs. traditional mentorship to help structure the pilot mentorship program. 3) examining existing successful mentorship programs within ALA (ALSC, REFORMA, LLAMA), as well as the New Jersey-based MentorNJ.

Pilot Program

The plan is to match participants manually for the pilot program, while exploring automated matching in the future. The strategy for marketing the program includes creation of a website <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtmentorprogram>, a blog, bookmarks, email contact lists, and use of social media with Canva branding for use across platforms.

The upcoming group of IRRT Emerging Leaders will be working on soliciting participants, possibly in the winter of 2020. A call for participants will be circulated.

Eligibility requirements include reliable internet access, English fluency, and ability to commit one hour per week for 4 months.

Finally, the team came up with two recommendations for sustainability: 1) Funding - that IRRT fund a part- or full-time permanent position to run the ILMP. 2) Partnerships - that IRRT continues to explore and pursue partnerships with MentorNJ, the IRRT Sister Libraries, IFLA, and other organizations.

The full report is available on the [IRRT website](#).



News Briefs

IRRT Webinar

Hosting International Visiting Librarians in US Academic Libraries: The Korea Foundation Librarian Intern Program

On 14 June 2019, the second IRRT Webinar presented an international library internship partnership between the Korea Foundation, a South Korean based organization with several global offices, and two participating host university libraries in the United States in the form of the [Korea Foundation Library Internship Program](#).

The speakers were Minjeong Kim, Director of the Korea Foundation Global Office in Washington, D.C., Yunah Sung, Korean Studies Librarian/Head of Technical Services at the University of Michigan-Asia Library, and Ellie Kim, Korean Studies Librarian at the University of Hawaii at Manoa. They spoke about the library internship program and their partnership. In addition, two Korea Foundation Library Interns from these host university libraries shared their experience interning abroad.

A recording of the webinar is available at <https://ala.adobeconnect.com/p1sf1hgbnlkf/>

ACRL Webinar

Academic Libraries in Sri Lanka: An Overview

Sep 30, 2019 09:00 AM in [Pacific Time](#)

Speaker: Hasitha Koralage is an academic librarian at the Sri Lanka institute of Information technology (SLIIT), one of the largest private universities in the island. Hasitha is a chartered librarian and active member of the Sri Lanka Library Association including serving as Assistant Education Officer, which is a council and executive committee position in the same body from 2017-2018. He obtained his post qualifications from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

The free webinar will be recorded and stored in the ACRL International Perspectives' ALA Connect page.

IRRT Member News

Dr. Ismail Abdullahi, prolific scholar and renowned LIS professional - as well as long-time IRRT member - was honored by the African Library & Information Associations & Institutions (AFLIA) with its first ever **lifetime achievement award**. AFLIA noted in particular Dr. Abdullahi has been a "great advocate for African libraries and librarians, a library professional par excellence."

Congratulations, Dr. Abdullahi!

Call for IRRT Chair-Elect and Member-at-Large Nominations

The IRRT Nominating Committee is looking for people who are interested in international librarianship and can commit to one virtual meeting per month.

Two positions will become available, starting at the ALA annual 2020 convention and running through 2022:

1. Chair-elect (2020-21), becomes Chair 2021-22
2. Member-at-large (2020-22)

Position of Chair-elect is a three-year commitment in which one serves as chair-elect, chair and past chair. In the first year, one learns about the work of the Executive Board under the tutelage of the Chair and the past-Chair. Each of these roles lasts one year, ensuring smooth continuity and the confidence of having the support of a knowledgeable Board to share in decision making.

The Member-at-large position lasts two years, contributing information and wider perspectives from the field.

Executive Board of the IRRT meets to discuss issues that arise through the various committees and work on solutions. In person meetings are at ALA midwinter and annual conferences each year. Preference is given to candidates with prior committee experience within IRRT and a track record of contributing to the work/mission of IRRT.

Nominate yourself or someone you know by sending an email to the Nominating Committee Chair, Elise Aversa, at eaversa@luc.edu. Explore other committee opportunities at <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt-committee-volunteer-form>.

Connect with IRRT

Email: ala.intl.leads@gmail.com

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

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

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

IRRT Councilor Update

By Sandy Hirsh

This column reports on some of the major topics addressed at ALA Council meetings at the 2019 ALA Annual, and how I, as your IRRT Councilor, represent IRRT interests.

Here are some highlights from the ALA Council Meetings.

ALA Council began its first meeting with a two-hour facilitated discussion on “Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion through Social Justice Lens: The role of the ALA Council.” This discussion was facilitated by DeEtta Jones and was held, in part, to address an incident that occurred at a Council Forum meeting at the 2019 ALA Midwinter. Some of the session goals included understanding the role of EDI in decision making, exploring and agreeing on our shared aspirations for how EDI does and should impact the work of ALA, and knowing about and accessing tools that support individual and group development.

ALA’s Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) is working to align ALA’s organizational structure, policies and rules with the association’s values, key action areas and strategic directions. Preliminary recommendations were presented by Lessa Kanani’opua Pelayo-Lozada, chair of SCOE. After the presentation, Council engaged in a thoughtful discussion that focused primarily on the recommendations for a remodeled Executive Board and its committees.

- SCOE has gathered extensive feedback and is planning to present recommendations to ALA Executive Board in October 2019 and bring final recommendations with financial and legal and constitutional/bylaws analyses to Council at ALA Midwinter 2020. A member vote is planned for Spring 2021.
- Some council members raised concerns about the elimination of ALA Council, which is replaced instead by three primary committees (Nominating & Leadership Development, Policy Development, and Finance & Audit), leadership assemblies (including a Roundtable Leadership Assembly), and volunteer engagement committees, task forces, and advisory committees. IRRT would participate and have representation through this newly formed Roundtable Leadership Assembly.
- Some of the concerns focused on how roundtables and divisions would have a voice in this new struc-



ture. Some councilors also wondered how these changes might impact the ways that dues are handled (note that financial arrangements were not discussed as part of the preliminary recommendations). There were similar concerns raised by state chapters in terms of their voices being heard in this new proposed structure.

- For more information on the work of SCOE and to stay up to date, follow the ALA Connect Group: “Organizational Effectiveness (SCOE) Project: Discussion Forum” (<https://bit.ly/2ZGwxiC>). You can also email SCOE Chair, Lessa Pelayo-Lozada: lessa-lozada@gmail.com.

ALA Past President Courtney Young is chairing the ALA Executive Director Search Committee, which is working with a search firm Isaacson Miller. The search re-opened in April 2019. A new executive director will be named in October 2019 and will start in January 2020. Mary Ghikas will provide orientation and support the transition process through 2020 annual conference.

Other resolutions, actions, and updates during Council included:

- Extensive debate on the *Resolution in Defense of the Free Speech of Supporters of the Movement for Palestinian Rights* (CD#49). It was referred to Committee on Legislation, International Relations Committee, Committee on Intellectual Freedom and they were asked to report back at Midwinter 2020.
- Extensive debate about the *Resolution on Renaming the Melvil Dewey Medal* (CD#50). The resolution to re-

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name the Melvil Dewey Medal and to remove Melvil Dewey's association with the award was approved.

- Among other Committee on Organization updates, the Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgender Round Table (GLBTRT) announced its new name Rainbow Round Table (RRT).
- Revisions to several interpretations of the *Library Bill of Rights* (#19.7-19.11, #19.13-19.19) were presented by Julia Warga, Chair of the Intellectual Freedom Committee. These were all approved.
- Freedom to Read Foundation (FTRF) President Charles Brownstein reported on the foundation's activities, including that FTRF is celebrating its 50th anniversary.
- Chair of the Committee on Legislation (COL) Mario Ascencio shared highlights about public policy activities. You can find out new tools and resources at: ala.org/advocacy and ala.org/census.
- Resolutions on Library Service for Children in Detention at Migrant Detention Centers and on Digital Content Pricing for Libraries passed.
- A proposal for new division combining Library Information and Technology Association (LITA), Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS), and Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) was discussed. They are finalizing on the new division's name.

Committee reports

Past-IRRT chair Robin Kear and now chair of the International Relations Committee, reported that 531 librarians from 69 countries attended the 2019 ALA Annual conference.

IRO Director Michael Dowling was elected to the IFLA Governing Board for 2019-2021.

ALA nominated twenty-two members to various IFLA Section Committees for 2019-2023; 16 of these were appointed to sections.

ALA Past President Loida Garcia-Febo will begin a four-year term on the IFLA Management of Library Associations Section.

IRO continued ALA's partnership with IFLA by hosting

two webinars this spring 2019: April's webinar focused on "Benefits of International Exchange Programs, and May's webinar focused on "Enhancing your strengths through coaching." The programming is created by IFLA's Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning Section (CPDWL) and IFLA New Professionals SIG (NPSIG). ACRL Executive Director Mary Ellen Davis is coordinator of the series this year for CPDWL. The webinars are available at <http://npsig.wordpress.com/webinars/>

IRO worked with the IRRT Webinar Ad Hoc Committee to present two webinars aimed to promote interests, programs, and activities on international librarianship. The April 2019 webinar focused on the "Librarians without Borders-Guatemala" program and the June 2019 webinar focused on "Hosting International Visiting Librarians in US Academic Libraries: The Korea Foundation Librarian Intern Program."

Additional information is available at <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/initiatives>

You can read more about proceedings at ALA Annual (including the actions that Council took) at the following websites:

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/council-approves-renaming-dewey-medal/>

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/council-ii/>

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/council-iii-memorial-tributes-resolutions/>

Questions?

Sandy can be reached through the IRRT Executive Committee.

A check in with Librarians from around the world

Raymond Pun is an IIRRT 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 Andrew Finegan, National Library of Australia

Ray: Thanks for interviewing with us! Can you briefly tell us about your role in the library institute?

Andrew: I work in the Trove Branch of the National Library of Australia, as a Trove Outreach Officer. This is a varied and multifaceted role, which includes core outreach duties, such as creating online content, and delivering presentations and workshops that connect the Library's community with its digital services, especially digitisation, delivery and discovery via Trove. I also coordinate Trove's digitisation partnership program, using a customer relationship management system to track and analyse workflows, and monitor the quality and impact of Trove on its community of partners and stakeholders.

Ray: How did you get into librarianship and what (if any) formal education or training did you receive?

Andrew: After completing an undergraduate degree in Literary and Medieval Studies, I had to consider how I might be able to work my interests into a career. As a student, I had also worked in providing technical support with IT facilities at my university, and so librarianship seemed to be a good intersection between my interests in cultural heritage and my skills and experiences in guiding people in the ways they use technology. I enrolled into a Master of Library and Information Management course, and started volunteering in a small special library with a non-profit health organisation. From there, it did not take long to get a library officer position in a public library, which set me on my somewhat-winding path of librarianship.

Ray: What is a library trend/library hot topic in your country currently?

Andrew: We live on a huge continent, and there are many people who live relatively isolated lives in regional and remote parts of Australia. Digital inclusion can be an issue for many of these communities, which have not had access to the kind of Internet or phone connections that we often take for granted, and so public libraries can definitely help in providing those kinds of services and help branch that digital divide. Furthermore, as the technology improves, new opportunities emerge for libraries to extend their services and provide digital



Andrew Finnegan (and friend)

access to collections for those who are geographically isolated.

Ray: Why is international librarianship important in your work as a librarian?

Andrew: There are many issues that libraries face overseas which echo those that we encounter here in Australia, but the response to those issues can vary greatly. Whether they are technological trends, and how libraries are enhancing their online and physical spaces to engage with our communities, or the growing interest in critical librarianship topics such as decolonising our practices and exercising cultural humility, these are all areas of our work that we need to improve. Being connected to these trends and communities internationally, is a constant reminder of the opportunities we have to improve our practices in Australia.

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Andrew Finegan is a Trove Outreach Officer at the National Library of Australia. More information about Trove—a database of digital resources about Australia, including books, images, newspapers, maps, and music—can be found at the [Trove website](#).

Illinois Fire Service Institute Library

International library profile

By Diane Richardson, dlrichar@illinois.edu

The [Illinois Fire Service Institute Library](#) at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) was founded in 1990 by Dr. Lian Ruan as an in-house technical library. The Illinois Fire Service Institute has a history that dates back to 1925 with the establishment of the Illinois Fire College, which is still held annually and is America's oldest annual fire college. With the passing of the Illinois Fire Service Institute Act, effective July 1980, the Illinois Fire Service Institute became the statutory fire academy for the State of Illinois. It is operated as a continuing education and public service facility by the University of Illinois.

In 1998 when the library joined the Lincoln Trails Library System, a regional library system that was administered by the Illinois State Library, the IFSI Library started its outreach program that provided library and information services to over 1000 fire departments around Illinois and the general public at no cost. The library's collection contains approximately 72,000 items. The main topics of the materials are firefighting, hazardous materials, fire investigation, fire education, vehicle extrication, leadership, and emergency management.

In addition to serving fire service organizations, firefighters and other emergency responders, IFSI staff and instructors, University of Illinois faculty and students, the library hosts visiting international scholars, 20 currently, who use the library resources to conduct scholarly research, attend and give professional presen-



The Illinois Fire Service Institute Library.

tations in library and information science topics at IFSI and the UIUC, and network with other information professionals. An example of this type of professional development offered to visiting scholars is the Information Literacy Workshop held in March, 2019 hosted by IFSI and put on by Lisa Janicke Hinchliffe, UIUC School of Information Sciences Professor and University Library Coordinator for Information Literacy Services and Instruction.

The library also serves IFSI Research, which carries out primary scientific studies on issues that have a direct impact on firefighters work, health and safety.

Major accomplishments of the IFSI Library: 1) In 2011, the \$9-million building for the Learning Resource & Research Center was dedicated and the IFSI Library found its permanent home in the state-of-the-art building. 2) The IFSI Library was named as a Finalist for the 2015, 2016, 2017 IMLS National Medal for Museum and Library Service (The National Medal is the nation's highest honor given to museums and libraries for service to the community). 3) The library has received a series of grants from the Illinois State Library and other agencies to develop innovative services and robotic programs for firefighters.

The accomplishments of the IFSI Library's Head Librarian, Dr. Lian Ruan, also stand out. She received awards and honors, including the University of Illinois Chancellor's Academic Professional

Excellence award, the SLA Diversity Leadership Development Program award, the Outstanding Contribution Award of the Association of University and College Libraries, the Library Society of China, JCLC Advocacy Award at the 2018 Nation-



Firefighters from Hong Kong visiting the IFSI Library.

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International library profile, continued

al Joint Conference of Librarians of Color, CALA President Recognition Award and Illinois Academic Librarian of the Year Award by the Illinois Library Association. Dr. Ruan was named as one of [150 for 150](#) (celebrating the Accomplishments of Women at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). She was also honored by the Illinois Firefighters Association.

Also of note, the IFSI Library created and continues to grow the [Illinois Firefighter Line of Duty Deaths Digital Image Collection Database](#), the most comprehensive listing of Illinois firefighters who have died in the line of duty and includes incident summaries, digital photographs and fire department records, and oral history interviews. Collaboration with the School of Information Sciences at UIUC has also been a major accomplishment. The IFSI Library has employed, mentored and trained over 60 University of Illinois School of Information Sciences (iSchool) graduate students. Almost half of these students have been international students.

The IFSI Library's efforts to serve and collaborate with international users and organizations is a particular source of pride. Dr. Ruan has fostered a close relationship between the IFSI Library, the Chinese American Librarians Association (CALA), and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). In her roles as Executive Director for CALA and Information Literacy Section, Standing Committee member for IFLA, Dr. Ruan spearheaded two IFLA Global Vision Planning sessions hosted by the IFSI Library in 2017.

In 2005, Dr. Ruan started a major collaborative effort between UIUC, the IFSI Library, and China's libraries with Chinese Librarians Scholarly Exchange Program (CLSEP) to offer a platform for the communication and cooperation between the libraries of the two countries and provide excellent networking opportunities with the University's faculty, librarians, and students. The Program is designed for Chinese librarians' professional development and tailored to those with aspirations for significant leadership roles in their organizations. To date, 384 Chinese librarians have participated in this program, which features speakers from across the UIUC campus; state and national organizations - the Illinois State Library, Library of Congress, National Library of Medicine,

American Library Association; and university libraries - Yale, Princeton, Columbia, MIT, Harvard, Stanford, and University of California at Berkeley. Librarians have the opportunity to visit these libraries. The CLSEP has been held every year since 2005.

A major challenge facing the library is the fact that there are more than 42,000 firefighters located throughout Illinois, of whom 70% are volunteers. Providing library and information access to all these firefighters in a timely manner is daunting. In an attempt to address such challenges, a branch library in Peoria has been established and Marvin Roderick, a Peoria Firefighter and IFSI Library Advisory Committee member, trained as the librarian.

We collaborate with the University of Illinois Main Library to use to develop online resources that can reach firefighters 24/7 as well as an extensive audiovisual collection. The Library staff continually visits IFSI onsite classes to present information about the library, its resources and services, to both national and international student attendees. Library posters describing the library's collection, services, and points of access are mailed to Illinois fire departments and public libraries in underserved areas of the state. IFSI librarians have given presentations at state, national, and international conferences to create awareness of the library's resources and services.

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Do you work for an American library that has international involvement? Share your story with colleagues in the next International Library Profile!



Firefighters from Hong Kong learn about the resources at the IFSI.