

YALSA Board of Directors Meeting  
ALA Midwinter Meeting, San Diego  
January 7 – 11, 2011

**Topic:** IFLA Representative Report

**Background:** Leslie Farmer is currently serving a two year term as YALSA's representative to the International Federation of Library Association's Literacy and Reading Section. She has provided a report below.

**Action Required:** Information

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IFLA LITERACY AND READING SECTION

LITERACY AND READING WITH LIBRARY SERVICES TO MULTICULTURAL POPULATIONS

The Literacy and Reading Section partnered with the Library Services to Multicultural Populations to examine the principles and perspectives of literacy and reading programs.

Maija Berndtson, Library Director of the Helsinki City Library, provided an overview, framing literacy in light of the Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services and Intellectual Freedom and Sean Combes' IFLA paper on multimodal literacy. She asked how librarians apply these statements in everyday work, citing the efforts of her local library. Her main point is that libraries should not only promote multiculturalism, providing resources for many cultures, but also facilitating interculturalism so people can learn about each other's cultures. She concluded that "Libraries are a key strength in any country to enable local people to participate in the local society and become citizens of global information and multicultural society."

Ray Doiron (University of Prince Edward Island Faculty of Education) and Marlene Asselin (University of British Columbia Faculty of Education) developed pathways for creating a culture of reading, which included:

**Principles**

- Improve the reading environment in the home, the school and the community at the same time,
- Improve the image of reading so it is more than simply school-focused.
- Access – local language books, local authors and illustrators, relevant topics
- Choice – reader interest and reader level
- Long-term Strategy – not a single event but a planned series of initiatives over time.

**Perspectives**

- Learning and literacy development occurs within social and cultural context.
- Individuals engage in social interactions and appropriate the practices of their cultural group.
- Individuals strive to become insiders/full participants

- “children from homes where parents were literate were more likely to enjoy reading and to be encouraged to read than in homes where parents were illiterate” (Obua-otua, 1997).
- Implications for libraries as cultural institutions

They shared sample stories about reading experiences, and noted several projects from different parts of the world. Details may be found at <http://doironasselinifla.pbworks.com/>. Their presentation provided a useful framework to examine the ensuing beneficial practices, which could be considered as case studies for reading and literacy culture.

Ruth Fassbind-Eigenheer of Switzerland’s Bibliomedia, highlighted the country’s multilingual status as well as the high percentage of migrants in certain regions there. She noted the importance of both materials and knowledge: courses, advice, information and exchanges. She explained Bibliomedia, which functions as a library of libraries, networking and loaning materials in many languages to libraries throughout the country. Senior citizens create translations for children’s books so that they become, in essence, multilingual texts. Books without Borders (VBOGS) represents a grassroots effort to organize and coordinate communication and contact between several intercultural libraries. Mondomedia provides cross-cultural training for librarians.

Jamie Campbell Naidoo, University of Alabama School of Library and Information Science, spoke about two Latino-based reading and literacy programs: Dia (el dia de los ninos/El dia de los libros – Children’s Day/Book Day) and Noche de Cuentos (Storytelling Evening). The Dia/Day project brings together many cultures through sharing of books that reflect those cultures. April 30 is the official “day,” but the dia spirit – and cultural literacy -- can be celebrated throughout the year. Likewise, May 20 is World Storytelling Day; on that evening families are encouraged to tell stories about their own culture, so that it promotes family literacy. REFORMA is a driving force behind Dia and Noche, and Dr. Naidoo shared several programs that carry out this cultural literacy imperative.

Briony Birdi, University of Sheffield Department of Information Studies, research minority ethnic genre fiction in UK east Midland public libraries. She found that British Black and (British) Asian (south subcontinent) literature was read by an overlapping population, so that, in particular, marketing Asian literature would attract both reader populations. She also found that displays and librarian recommendations were the most powerful ways to promote these materials.

Ratna Banyopadhyay, University of Calcutta/Colkata Department of Library and Information Science, discussed the Bengal Library Association (BLA) project for reading promotion. BLA found that reading interest and library attendance declined because of inconvenient library hours, school demands, lack of multimedia availability, and a lack of opportunities to discuss reading. In response, BLA planned and implemented a variety of activities that attracted various populations to the library: health/medical speakers, career guidance, storytelling, debates about reading, competitions, book fairs, and public recognitions. As a result, library attendance and reading increased.

Ingrid Atlestam, from the Vastra Gotaland Regional Library, talked about the need for easy browsing access to materials for multicultural populations. New immigrants prefer accessing non-fiction materials that help them survive in their new country and keep in touch with the news from their prior land. Language and services information were highly valued. Long-term residents from other countries preferred fiction from their home culture. She

noted the URL <http://www.librariesforall.eu>, which helps European libraries address the needs of migrant populations.

The more than 200 attendees attested to the interest in the session's topic, and the presentations more than met expectations.