

International Relations Committee Report to Council

May 28, 2021

Submitted by the IRC Chair, Ismail Abdullahi

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International at Annual

As of May 28, two hundred and thirty-nine international librarians and library workers from thirty-two countries had registered for Annual. They are joined by fifteen international exhibitors, from Canada, China, France, India, Singapore, and the United Kingdom.

After a hiatus last year, there is again a robust number of international programs and presentations. Programs include:

- “Central American Library Successes in the Face of a Humanitarian Crisis”
- “African Libraries Resources: Access and Equity During Covid-19”
- “Asia and Oceania Libraries: Rewriting the Future of Libraries”
- “Libraries in a Rapidly Changing World: Working Toward Access and Equity”
- “Leaning International: Stories from the Field”

In addition, there will be fifteen international focused poster sessions about aspects of libraries and library services in: China; Ethiopia; Maldives, Pakistan, South Korea, Serbia, Taiwan, and Zambia.

And the *ALA Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects* will be presented, recognizing innovative contributions to international librarianship. The IRRT assists the ALA President in the review and selection of these awards. This year’s winners are:

- *Virtual Library Infolit Race Challenge, Nazarbayev University Library* (Nur-Sultan, Kazakhstan),
- *Caring Calls Project, South Shore Public Libraries* (Nova Scotia, Canada),
- *Lighthouse Heritage Research Connections Project* (Kowloon, Hong Kong),
- *VIRL Connects Team, Vancouver Island Regional Library* (Nanaimo, BC, Canada),
- *Red River College Library* (Winnipeg, Canada).

ACRL Strong International Participation

ACRL Virtual 2021 also attracted a large number from outside the United States. One hundred and seventy-four attendees from twenty-one countries participated. And the exhibition was enhanced by exhibitors from Belgium, Canada, France, Netherlands, and the United Kingdom.

IFLA

During late winter and early spring, the IRC continued to review and recommend ALA members to Executive Board for positions in IFLA leadership and within IFLA sections. ALA nominated forty-nine members in total. Unfortunately, ALA Past-presidents Loida Garcia-Febo and James Neal were not elected as IFLA President-elect and IFLA Governing Board Member, respectively. Information on section and division nominations were not yet available at the time of this report.

IFLA will hold a Virtual World Library Congress this August 17-19 after canceling last year's Congress. The IRRRT has launched a pilot program to promote and enable support for IRRRT member attendance and participation in international library conferences.

The first initiative will provide competitive grants to cover the early bird registration for the virtual IFLA Congress to be held August 17-19, 2021. Awards will be announced ahead of the IFLA early registration deadline. Preference will be given to IRRRT members and those who would be attending their first IFLA conference.

Disaster Assistance to University of Cape Town Library

Thanks to support from ALA members a \$5,000 donation from ALA's Disaster Relief Fund is being sent to assist in rebuilding and re-establishing the Jagger Library and its Africana collection after the devastating fire that swept through on April 19.

U.S. Russia Dialog

Activities and connections continue during this last year of the grant to ALA from the U.S. Russia Foundation. On June 3, a webinar entitled "Russian and US Libraries Supporting the Well-Being of Individuals and Communities" will share strategies for how libraries in both countries can support their communities, including the social and emotional well-being of library users and library staff, as we start to emerge from isolation and libraries reopen.

International Webinars

Following up on Council's Midwinter "Resolution in Support of Broadband as a Human Right" a joint IFLA/ALA webinar was held on the topic on May 4th. "Broadband as a Human Right" attracted over a hundred attendees from twenty countries.

A May 27 webinar provided information on another post disaster effort going on “Out of the Ashes, Beyond Buildings and Books: Rebuilding of the Reading Room at the Lubuto Model Library in Lusaka, Zambia.” The ALA Disaster Relief Fund will be providing a donation.

In June, a three-part webinar discussion series will take place on Linked Data organized by the IRRT Webinar Committee, and outgrowth of last year’s Mission Enhancement Project on the Croatian Library Association’s interests in linked data projects and work.

IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant

The IRRT Endowment Committee selected its third winner for the International Relations Round Table Mission Enhancement Grant. This year’s winning project is “3D Printing Technology Training in the San Juan del Sur Nicaragua Public Library”. The project expands the use of the 3D printers with a week-long training event—by a professional 3D printer trainer in Managua—for library staff members and local high school educators, in both the use and maintenance of the printers.

ALA Task Force on United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG’s)

February’s *ALA Connect Live* with ALA President Julius C. Jefferson, Jr. was on Sustainability, and featured the Task Force, which presented a set of resources, new downloadable bookmarks for libraries to use. The first set of bookmarks focus on SDG goals 4 (Quality Education), 5 (Gender Equality), 10 (Reduced Inequalities), and 16 (Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions).

“Resolution on U.S. Enterprises' Abridgement of Free Speech”

Since Midwinter, the IRC Chair and two members continued as part of the Joint Task Force with the IFC and the movers of “Resolution Condemning U.S. Media Corporations Abridgement of Free Speech,” 2019-2020 ALA CD #46, to create a revised resolution to bring to Council.