

## Auburn University Libraries Interlibrary Loan makes research possible in the USA and abroad during COVID-19 pandemic

*Jayson Hill, Director of Communications and Marketing,  
Auburn University Libraries, njb0008@auburn.edu*

Auburn University (located in Alabama, USA) went into remote learning mode, closed buildings, and encouraged working from home to protect all members of the stu-

dent body, faculty and staff in early March 2020. With these restrictions, Auburn University (AU) Libraries' Interlibrary Loans became so very critical to the university's research mission that it could not be limited and the staff of the Interlibrary Loan (ILL) department continued to provide scans of research material to remote learners, near and far.

"Both keeping up with the undiminished requirement for our services that necessitate access to the physical library collections and complying with the university mandate to disperse our employees to protect them from COVID-19 has been a challenge," said Gail Barton, head of Interlibrary Loan. "The result has been a Herculean effort by our staff coming into the library to scan and distributing requests from print materials while still maintaining social distancing and other virus protection protocols."

In addition to fulfilling more than 15,000 ILL requests within the USA from 13 March to 30 September 2020, Interlibrary Loans department received a total of 222 requests from 82 different locations in 18 countries from Canada to Japan. Requests ranged from materials on cancer nursing from the University Library of Southern Denmark, Odense, to a request from Bogazici University in Turkey for a German book, "Assyrien im Wandel der Zeiten." In each case, AU Libraries document delivery was able to provide the item.

Auburn University Libraries was one of the few libraries where staff still had access to the print collection during the pandemic. Most libraries had staff working remotely who were only able to share from electronic resources. Having personnel in key points of the distribution chain caused some interesting distribution.

A professor for small animal surgery working at the University of Munich contacted the Auburn Cary Veterinary Medical Library and requested an article from the publi-



A staff member of the Auburn University (Alabama) Interlibrary Loan department processes a request.

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## Message from the Editors

As we continue to live in the “new normal” of COVID-19 pandemic, we must work harder to maintain connections, especially in our professional lives. The articles in this issue demonstrate how we can use online tools to stay in touch and gain professional and personal fulfillment by engaging with our colleagues. At the same time, the importance of physical access to materials remains high, as the Auburn University Libraries’ Interlibrary Loan department shows.

Also in this issue is the list of candidates for the IRRT Executive Board elections coming up. We thank all the candidates for their willingness to serve IRRT. Calls for contributions to the 2021 ALA Annual conference are also included; perhaps you have a presentation idea?

In other news, the ALA Task Force on the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) shares the work they have accomplished since its formation earlier this year.

We hope everyone stays safe and healthy as we enter the holiday season.

Do you have news about events, projects, initiatives, activities, achievements, grants, conferences? Submit for publication in IL at: [ala.irtt.leads@gmail.com](mailto:ala.irtt.leads@gmail.com).

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## 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 a strong interest in literacy & establishment of libraries in rural communities of developing countries. She is the Chair of the African Librarians Council of the African Studies Association (2020/21); and is a ARL Leadership and Career Development Program Fellow (2020/21).



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## Message from IRRT Chair



Alexandra Houzouri Humphreys  
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The COVID-19 pandemic has affected our lives in many ways, individually and as an organization. Some of us are fortunate to have remained healthy and continue with our work, but others have been severely impacted. We wrap up this difficult year with hopes that you are staying healthy and safe and that things will get back to normal in 2021. Thanks to the work and devotion of IRRT members, despite the abnormal circumstances, we continued our mission and offered an array of programming throughout the year.

IRRT representatives are regularly participating in the Forward Together [Sessions](#) that are held by the [ALA Forward Together Working Group](#). One of the recommendations of this group is to establish a minimum size for each roundtable at one percent of the ALA membership. Our representatives have been following closely these developments and will assess the likely impact of the proposed recommendations on IRRT and other Round Tables. For more information on these and related matters, see the Forward Together [website](#).

The registration for the [2021 ALA Midwinter Virtual](#) has begun. It will be held on January 22-26. The meeting of the IRRT is scheduled for Saturday, January 23, 2021 from 11:00 a.m.–12:30 p.m. CST. All committees will present on their work and accomplishments. We are aware that the work of some committees (e.g., International Visitor's Center) has been crippled by the pandemic. In these cases, we request brief descriptions of each committee's work.

The IRRT Executive Board created a working group led by James Neal, IRRT Chair-Elect, with a charge to encourage participation of IRRT members at international conferences, such as IFLA, and local conferences, such as ACRL (see article on page 5). Due to the pandemic, conferences like ACRL may attract more international visitors, which provides an opportunity for IRRT to engage additional members through participation in

presentations and meetings at these conferences. One recent example was the annual conference of the Croatian Library Association, where three IRRT members presented (see article on page 6).

Due to the impressive results and success of the International Librarians Networking Program, the Executive Board decided to establish a subcommittee to ensure continuity and structure for its future engagement. Muzhgan Nazarova, the advisor for the group, authored a highly informative article in the [September issue](#) of *International Leads*:

Finally, I would like to thank the Webinar Committee for the two [virtual presentations](#) that took place on 18 and 23 November .

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## 2021 ALA IRRT Pre-Conference: Call for presentation proposals

The IRRT invites presentation proposals for their 2021 pre-conference in Chicago, IL, date to be determined. The theme for the pre-conference is Relevance and Effectiveness of Libraries in a Changing World. From the COVID-19 pandemic to issues of social justice to social media influences, libraries continue to face challenges in a rapidly changing world. The IFLA Section for Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning (CPDWL) recognized the need for developing the skills and expertise for a rapidly changing world at its 2019 satellite conference.

Considering these influences, the 2021 ALA IRRT Pre-Conference will include presentations that address opportunities for and examples of libraries' effectiveness and relevance in a changing world. The following broad topics will be considered:

- Libraries Adapting to the COVID-19 World
- Diversity, Inclusion and Social Justice
- Social Media Transforming Libraries
- Library Transformation through Technology
- The Development of Digital Libraries

To submit a proposal, send an email with your attached proposal to co-chairs [Gloria Creed-Dikeogu](#) and [Barbara Marson](#) by **5 February 2021**. Please include your name, institutional affiliation, working title, and 300 word maximum description of your presentation. Proposals and presentations must be in English.

## Message from IRRT Chair Elect



*Jim Neal*  
*jneal0@columbia.edu*

To state the obvious, the world has changed. That holds true for all types of libraries across the world, for library workers in all types of assignments and settings, and for their library associations and cooperatives, at the global, national, regional and local levels.

The combination of the pandemic, economic crisis, and mandate for new commitments to racial and social justice, is requiring us to re-evision, reenergize, and reconstruct our organizations. It is not an option, it is a mandate.

At the core of this transformation is the requirement that we refresh our association governance and member engagement strategies. This is essential, but we need to remember that most library workers are really looking for paths to share, learn and network, and for leadership and impact in key advocacy and policy areas. We need to streamline our structures to focus energy and resources in these areas.

The opportunity has never been richer for what I call radical collaboration. The global library community working together in more innovative and fundamental ways. Building international bridges and conversations and actions. Co-investing and creating complementary capacities and roles.

The International Relations Round Table promotes interest in libraries and librarianship worldwide, coordinates international activities across ALA, and develops programs and activities which further the international objectives of the Association. Our membership includes library workers from around the world.

Given this mission, how can IRRT build an exploration of these opportunities within ALA, and reach out to

other library associations to explore and advance expanded cooperation? I am interested in your thoughts.

### IRRT Member participation in international conferences

With the announcement that the 2021 IFLA Congress will be conducted as a virtual event, the International Relations Round Table will be seeking to promote and enable IRRT member participation and attendance.

We will also be exploring a wider program to embrace other international conferences of interest to library workers.

This initiative has three goals:

- identify and bring to the attention of IRRT members virtual library conferences with the expectation that remote attendance and participation will become an accepted norm.
- encourage and support IRRT member participation in these conferences through submission of paper, panel and poster session proposals.
- assist with the registration fees for attendance at these virtual conferences through a competitive application process, and with a plan to raise funds for this initiative. An ad hoc committee is being formed to advance this program with an initial focus on IFLA 2021.

Watch for more information in early 2021.

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### Call for grant applications

The IRRT Endowment Committee is calling for applications from IRRT members for the 2020-21 IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant. This annual grant is awarded by IRRT for proposals on international activities or projects which contribute to ALA's role in international librarianship.

The winning grant proposal will be awarded up to \$1,000. **The deadline for applications is March 15, 2021.** Details on the application procedures, requirements, and criteria can be found on the [website](#).

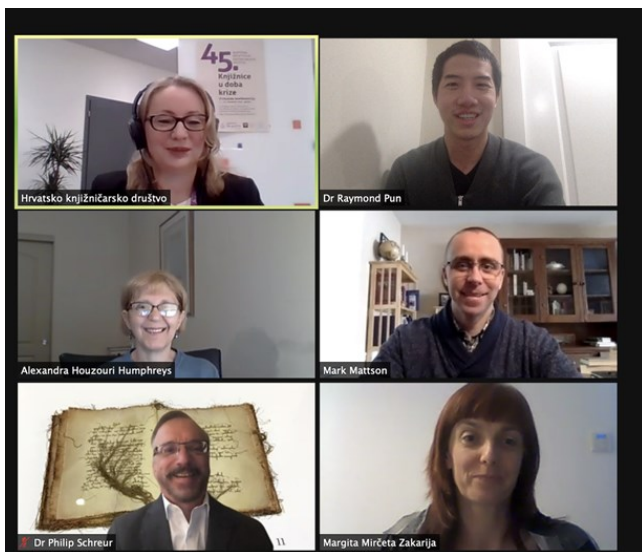
# IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant report:

## IRRT and the Croatian Libraries Association explore linked data

Raymond Pun  
raypun101@gmail.com

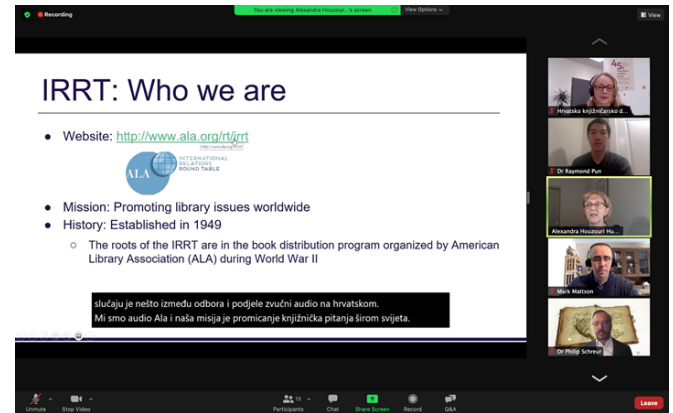
In this report, I share my work as an [IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant](#) Recipient on how ALA/IRRT is collaborating with the [Croatian Library Association \(CLA\)](#).

On 9 October 2020, I organized a virtual session for the 45<sup>th</sup> Croatian Library Conference and General Assembly. The presenters included myself, Alexandra Houzouri Humphreys, Philip Schreur, Mark Mattson, and Margita Mirčeta Zakarija. The session focused on ALA collaborations with CLA with a focus on global projects.



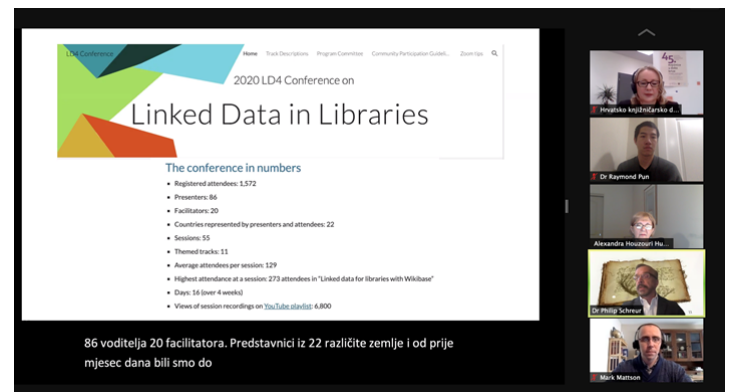
This year's theme of the CLA conference is "Libraries in Times of Crisis." Our session was chaired by Dr. Dijana Machala, President of CLA. The session also used the Microsoft PowerPoint feature to translate our presentation from English to Croatian via live captioning. The session was listed in the ALA IRRT webinar page, where I am also a member of the webinar committee. The session drew over 55 attendees from Croatia and fellow ALA/IRRT members also joined.

IRRT Chair Alexandra Houzouri Humphreys from Arizona State University gave opening remarks and introduced IRRT to attendees. She welcomed everyone in Croatian. Alexandra introduced the history and working projects of IRRT, and emphasized the sister library projects and mentorship program under IRRT.



Screenshot of Alexandra Houzouri Humphrey's remarks.

Afterwards, Dr. Philip Schreur of Stanford University presented on linked data projects and how European collaborations and programs are supporting linked data initiatives for global research and discovery. Philip highlighted upcoming linked data conferences globally and the work on LD4 Conferences held recently online.



Presentation from Dr. Philip Schreur

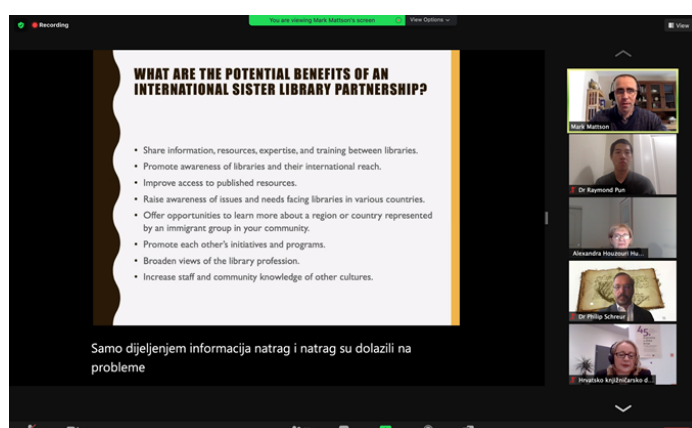
My presentation focused on what the Mission Enhancement Grant would bring to foster linked data learning for an IRRT-CLA collaboration. The purpose is to support professional learning about linked data by hosting a 1-day symposium in Zagreb in Fall 2021, depending on COVID-19 status. Initially, it was meant to be Fall 2020, but this has been postponed in the hope that we will be able to meet in person in 2021. The symposium would invite participants from nearby regions. In addition, the project funded by the Mission Enhancement Grant aims

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## IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant report, continued

to collect recent learning resources on this topic and to share with CLA members. The webinars are being considered to support additional engagement with CLA members. All of this is dependent upon the status of the global pandemic.

Margita Mirčeta Zakarija from University of Split and IRRT Member at Large Mark Mattson from Penn State University spoke about their global sister library partnerships between the two institutions. Mark presented his perspective in English and Margita presented her perspective in Croatian. They highlighted the value of collaboration in supporting global librarianship during this period.



Screenshot of presentation from Margita Mirčeta Zakarija and Mark Mattson. Note the synchronous translation.

The presentations highlighted the value of global collaborations during challenging times. After our presentations, we had a brief time for Q&A. Questions centered on the future of MARC and the future of global partnerships during COVID-19. A recording of the session is available on the [IRRT webinar page](#).

I am thankful to Dr. Dijana Machala for inviting us to present in this session and for CLA for organizing this virtual conference. By building these networks, it is my hope to expand such partnerships for more engagement between ALA/IRRT and CLA.

### About the grant

The IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant was established in 2016 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.

Do you have an idea for an international activity or initiative? You could be the next recipient of this grant. More information and the application form for the next [Mission Enhancement Grant](#) is available on the website.

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### Connect with IRRT

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

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

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

[Facebook](#)



# EIFL and its activities: Webinar report

*Laila Hussein Mousafa, Associate Professor  
Middle East and North African Studies Librarian, University  
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The IRRT Webinar Committee hosted “[EIFL and its Activities](#)” webinar on 18 November 2020. Four speakers from Kenya and Namibia addressed their work with EIFL’s ([Electronic Information for Libraries](#)) Continuous Professional Development (CPD) program.

The four speakers were Caroline Ngacaku, Principal Librarian, Kenya National Library Service (KNLS); Yusuf Ganyana, ICT Officer, KNLS; Kaltuma Sama, Head Librarian, KNLS; and Aletta Dunn, Chief Librarian for public services, Namibia Library & Archive Service (NILAS). Joining them was Susan Schnuer, Capacity Building Manager for the EIFL Public Library Innovation Program (PLIP), from the USA. The moderator was Dr. Ugne Lipeikaite, Impact Manager for EIFL PLIP, from Santiago, Chile.



Clockwise from top left: Kaltuma Sama, Caroline Ngacaku, Ugne Lipeikaite, Yusuf, Ganyana, Aletta Dunn, Susan Schnuer

Kenya has opened almost 48 public library branches since its independence in 1963. These libraries offer various services, but the Internet is often limited and only available at some branches. Additionally, Kenyan libraries face severe budget cuts, which limits their human resources capacity in addition to other resources.

In Namibia, the US Millennium Challenge Corporation (MCC) provides funding to support economic growth. These funds have helped Namibian libraries purchase more books and equipment, such as computers and photocopy machines. With these purchases, Namibian libraries have been able to serve the information needs of the community.

Kenya and Namibia libraries demonstrate the on-going support African libraries need. EIFL’s Public Library

Innovation Program supports community and public libraries in developing countries, including those in Africa, by educating them on how to use technology creatively for innovative services that better meet their communities’ needs. The program started as a pilot from 2018-2020 and worked with the KNLS, which has 62 public libraries. In Namibia, EIFL works with a network of libraries through the Ministry of Education, Arts, and Culture and NILAS, which has a total of 66 public libraries.

In 10 years, EIFL saw the results of its program in Kenya as the government of Kenya invested in services that use information and communication technology (ICT) in public libraries. The project at Laibu Mkononi, for example, focuses on digital access for the remote, socio-economically deprived area by using smartphones or tablets to engage children aged between 6-13 years. The project calls on the public to donate their old unused devices, which the group then refurbishes and loads with offline, open-sourced electronic resources. Users can then borrow the device for up to a month. Another interesting project that was introduced was taking the library to the users, with librarians taking their services to football fields, so that users can borrow materials and read while others are playing football.

In the presentation, the librarians described the professional skills they learned so that they could be trainers and travel within and outside of their country to train other librarians in Africa. The librarian instructors train other librarians in new skills and develop a cohort of local trainers to enable better use of the technology that is of interest to the community they serve.

As part of this initiative, EIFL has provided over 1000 librarians in Africa with training in technology for new service development and supported more than 50 innovative library service projects. Long term, EIFL is interested in a sustainable, affordable, and continuous professional development program that supports public libraries at the national level. They believe that this professional development program should be coordinated by the national government and staffed with local trainers, who can provide training that result in new technology-enabled services in public libraries across Africa.

###

Visit the [IRRT webinar webpage](#) for more information on past and upcoming webinars!



# Occupy Library Conference: Break-through support for libraries and democracy

*Anca Rapeanu, and Claudia Serbanuta, Occupy Library Coordinators, and Loida Garcia-Febo, International Library Consultant*  
Contact: [loidagarciafebo@gmail.com](mailto:loidagarciafebo@gmail.com)

The pandemic is still keeping librarians away from face to face conferences, but it cannot keep them from coming together as a community to exchange ideas and learn from one another. This year's [Occupy Library](#) event went virtual from 22-25 September.

The overarching theme of the free conference was how the success of libraries of the future depends on the way they understand and engage in their local and regional ecology of institutions and initiatives supporting democracy, and meaningful lifelong learning processes of the general public.

The conference brought together over 800 librarians streaming live from over 30 countries. Thousands of attendees have watched the keynote presentations broadcast on Facebook. The conference was powered by Progress Foundation in Romania and amplified to the world through partnerships with the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), Next Library, Aarhus Public Libraries, Goethe Institut - Bucurest, IFLA New Professional Special Interest Group, National Association of Librarians and Public Libraries of Romania (ANBPR), National Library of Romania, and sponsorships from vendors such as Qulto and Solus.

Four keynote speakers were invited to re-inspire attendees, who from the last six months have been trying their best to adapt their libraries to serve patrons during the pandemic. Each day, librarians tuned in and expressed their happiness about the conference and the wealth of speakers which felt like "a ray of bright light in the middle of blurry times."

Dr. Hannelore Vogts, Director of the award-winning Cologne Public Library (Germany), delivered an inspiring talk emphasizing how libraries are a catalyst for change. Her library plan to achieve this goal includes the recognition and integration of cognition, information, engagement, empowerment, and innovation. This would lead and enhance the process of creation, participation, discovery, and experiential learning. She also discussed the importance of the social connections facilitated by libraries between community members.

Renowned artist and activist, Dan Perjovschi spoke about meaningful pieces of art that help people to express ideas and to support movements. His only perma-

nent art exhibit can be found on the walls of The Czech National Library of Technology in Prague where he painted over 200 avant-garde, "comics-style" drawings. His first post-Communist masterpiece is "Library of human stories" - an artwork that influenced his style in the following decades.

Asaf Bartov from the Wikimedia Foundation shared little-known facts from Wikipedia such as the most popular people in regions of the world based on the number of Wikipedia profiles they have. Perhaps one day we can make librarians that special! He also spoke about his Project Ben-Yehuda, an award-winning volunteer-run digital library of public domain of Hebrew works.

Loida Garcia-Febo, Past President of ALA and an international library consultant, brought a powerful call for librarians to unite because "in the midst of the big shift to digital rushed in by the pandemic, librarians are the ones we have been waiting for to position libraries as key players within national and global bodies to develop partnerships to strengthen libraries to provide essential services during the COVID-19 pandemic, its aftershocks and beyond."

Eight Fab Speakers included IFLA President Christine Mackenzie in conversation with Erik Boekesteijn from the Dutch National Library about trends in libraries, and the advantages of working together and having a strong united voice. IFLA Secretary General, Gerald Leitner, shared 10 ideas on how to engage with IFLA, such as powering advocacy with stories included in IFLA's Library Map of the World, which reflect the United Nation Sustainable Development Goals.

Deborah Jacobs, former Director of the Global Libraries Initiative from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and Jessica Dorr, former Deputy Director of Global Libraries, spoke about the lasting impact of their initiative in libraries globally. Eppo van Nispen tot Sevenaer from the Netherlands Institute of Sound and Vision and Boeskesteyn conversed about the F6s theory for changing the library, and how librarians should be part of the conversations on new technologies from the beginning.

Liz McGettigan from Solus UK Ltd reminded librarians to be brave and to embrace the digital pivot due to COVID-19, and to continue to move from collections to connections. Stuart Hamilton, Head of Libraries Development for Ireland and President of the NAPLE forum, rounded up a group of librarians from Europe to discuss the COVID-19 crisis and resilience, and

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# ALA and the UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals

*Loida Garcia-Febo, Chair, ALA UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, ALA Past President (2018-2019)*

Libraries are essential for sustainable development. The agenda for the United Nations' 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) that guide the development efforts of countries around the world was adopted in September 2015 during the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA). I attended the UNGA as part of a group of librarians that for several years advocated for access to information, culture, education and ICTs (Information & Communication Technologies) on behalf of IFLA at the United Nations in New York to be included in the SDGs.

Thanks to IFLA's global library team, librarians advocating for the inclusion of access to information on the SDGs at country's capitals, we successfully secured the inclusion of access to information on Goal 16- Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, specifically on Target 16.10.

IFLA has asked library associations around the world to join in a global effort to highlight how libraries contribute to the SDGs, and ALA responded. Our current President Julius Jefferson had the idea to create a task force on the United Nations 2030 SDGs to develop a multi-year strategic plan to increase participation by libraries in efforts to achieve the Goals. I am happy to Chair the Task Force.

Our efforts to date include a webinar presented last June featuring initiatives from Australian, German, and French library associations sharing stories of libraries helping communities meet the SDGs and the websites they created to show the stories.

So far, the Task Force has made available three charts showing how libraries are helping communities achieve development. There is a general chart and one on how libraries are helping in COVID-19 times. This chart speaks to the challenges brought by the pandemic and the incredible opportunities libraries have to impact our society, communities, and the world. This is reflected by the examples included in the chart from the following goals.

Goal 6: Clean water & sanitation - Libraries are partnering with the city health departments and NGOs to disseminate information about prevention measures to stay safe from the virus.

Goal 10: Reduced inequalities - partner with language

schools and embassies to help people learn foreign languages and acquire new skills.

Goal 11: Sustainable cities & communities - Libraries are partnering with NGOs, the Red Cross and cities to promote safe sustainable practices to encourage those in densely populated urban areas to do their best to follow recommended guidelines such as social distancing and self isolation.

The third chart features programs and services from Los Angeles Public Library (LAPL) speaking to each of the 17 SDGs. This chart confirms that libraries can and are indeed helping the communities they serve in development towards realizing the 17 SDGs. The charts, along with the webinar recording are available on the Task Force [website](#).



In my role as a Chair full of energy, I connect with librarians globally through various initiatives including: conducting a section about the SDGs and libraries during the 4th U.S. - Russia Library Dialogue in September; speaking at the Lib 2.0 Sustainability in Libraries from the San Jose State University iSchool in collabora-

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# IRRT Executive Board nominees for 2021

The IRRT Nominating Committee has prepared a slate of candidates for the upcoming Executive Board election. Responsibilities of the new elected Board Members will start at the ALA Annual 2021 convention and continue through 2023.

IRRT Executive Board meets virtually monthly to discuss IRRT related issues, including those that arise through the various committees and ones related to international aspects of ALA's work as a whole, and work on solutions to address these issues. Face-to-face meetings take place whenever ALA conference is physical.

Preference is given to candidates with prior committee experience within IRRT and a track record of contribution to the IRRT mission. Profiles of the nominees follow the descriptions of the positions in alphabetical order.

## **Position: Vice Chair/Chair Elect (2021-2024)**

Chair-elect (2021-22), becomes Chair (2022-23) and serves as immediate Past-Chair (2023-2024)

Per IRRT bylaws, 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.

## **Candidates: Mark Mattson, Safi S.M. Safiullah**

*Mark Mattson*

Head of Global Engagement Initiatives and International Partnerships Librarian, Penn State University Libraries, 2016 - Present

- American Library Association (Aug 2010 - Present)
- International Relations Round Table (Sep 2016 - Present)
- IRRT Sister Libraries Committee (Co-Chair, July 2018 - Present; Committee Member, 2016 - Present)
- IRRT Webinar Committee (Chair, 2018-2019)
- Member-at-Large IRRT Executive Board (2019 - Present)
- Roundtable Bylaws Standardization Working Group (IRRT Representative, 2020 - Present)
- IRRT International Connections Committee (2017 - 2019)

*Safi S. M. Safiullah*

Manager, Marmalade Branch Library, Salt Lake City Public Library (2015-till present)

- ALA Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) (Chair, 2018-2019; Vice-Chair, 2017-2018; Member-at-Large, 2020-2022)
- IRC Near East and South Asia Subcommittee (Member, 2014-2018)
- Multicultural Services Round Table, Utah Library Association (Chair, 2012-2013)
- Research and Travel Awards Committee, Asian Pacific American Librarians Association (APALA) (Co-Chair, 2010-2011)

## **Position: Member-at-large (2021-2023)**

The Member-at-Large position lasts two years and serves to contribute information and wider perspectives from the field.

## **Candidates: Christina Riehman-Murphy, Allison Sharp**

*Christina Riehman-Murphy*

Reference & Instruction Librarian; Assistant Librarian, Abington College Library, Penn State Abington (2015 - present)

- International Relations Round Table (2017 - Present)
- IRRT Publications Committee (Co-Chair, July 2020 - June 2022)
- IRRT Chair's Program Committee (Chair, July 2017 - June 2020)
- IRRT International Sister Libraries Committee & International Paper Session Subcommittee (July 2017 - June 2019)

*Allison Sharp*

Humanities Librarian, Associate Professor, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 2014-present

- American Library Association (1999-present)
- IRRT International Visitors Committee (2019-2021)
- International Federations of Libraries and Associations and Institutions (IFLA) (2017-present)

*Continued on page 12*



## IRRT Executive Board nominees, continued

- Middle Eastern Librarian Association (2015-2019)
- Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) (1999-present)
- Association of Christian Librarians (2000-2004)
- American Society for Information Science and Technology (ASIST) (2010-2015)
- North American Serials Interest Group (2000-2005)
- Music OCLC Users Group (2000-2004)
- Tennessee Library Association (2000-2018)

### **Position: Secretary-treasurer (2021-2023)**

The Secretary-treasurer position lasts two years and supports the Round Table with internal organization and financial reporting.

#### **Candidate: Erica Salto**

*Erica Salto*

Library and Information Specialist, International Food Policy Research Institute (IFPRI), Washington D.C., (2019 – Present)

- American Library Association (2017-Present)
- ALA Student to Staff Program to participate in 2017 ALA Annual Conference
- ALA Emerging Leader (2020) Team Lead, Emerging Leaders Team 2020, International Librarians Networking Program (Jan 2019-Present)
- Rosemary Allen Little Award Recipient in 2018 by New Jersey Chapter of SLA
- SPIE Student Travel Stipend Award to participate in 2017 Special Library Association Annual Conference

### **Position: Round Table Councilor (2021-2024)**

The IRRT ALA councilor is elected every third year to represent the voice of IRRT at policy-making and governing body of ALA.

#### **Candidates: John C. Sandstrom, Barbara Marson**

*John C. Sandstrom*

Acquisitions Librarian, Professor College Faculty, New Mexico State University Library, Las Cruces, New Mexico (January 2011- present)

- American Library Association (1987-1992; 2001-Present)

- International Relations Round Table (2017 - Present)
- IRRT Chair's Program Committee (2018 – 2020)
- IRRT Nomination Committee (2018 – 2020)
- Rural, Native, and Tribal Libraries of All Kinds (RNTLOAK) (Chair, 2019-2021)
- ALA Awards Committee (2016-2019, 2020-2022)
- ALA Equity Award (Chair, 2019-2020)
- ALA EBSCO Conference Scholarship Award (Chair, 2018-2018)
- ALA Ken Haycock Award for Promoting Librarianship (Chair, 2017-2018)
- ALA Library of the Future Award Jury (2016-2017)

*Barbara Marson*

Program Director, Library Science, Dept. of Interdisciplinary Professions, East Carolina University (2020 – Present)

- American Library Association (ALA)
- IRRT Preconference (Co-Chair, 2018-2021)
- IRRT Publications Committee (2020) Coordinated three IRRT webinars during in July & August based on proposal submissions for the IRRT preconference.

Election ballots will be sent out soon. Please take a moment to vote for the future Executive Board members of IRRT. Your vote counts!

###

Are you interested in participating in IRRT, but not ready for an Executive Board position yet? There are many opportunities to serve in IRRT Committees.

See [IRRT Committee Opportunities](#) and the [Committee volunteer form](#).

## 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*.

### Interview with Seema Rampersad, British Library, United Kingdom

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

**Seema:** I work as a Business Researcher and Service Manager in the Research Service of the Business & IP Centre at the British Library. Our team supports start-ups, growing companies and entrepreneurs to start and grow their businesses. We do also help academics and general customers who want to use our unique business and intellectual property resources and services as part of a national library. My time is spent doing workshops, webinars, one-to-one business information advice, project work, paid research for clients, and reference enquiry work in the reading rooms, as well as remotely on LibAnswers. I have been at the British Library for eight years this month.

We are based in London inside the British Library, and there is a network of other Business & IP Centre across the country. We are currently working on an outreach project called Start-ups in London Libraries (SiLL) where we are running workshops and supporting local SME champions. There are obviously very interesting reference, digital, subject and cultural collections, events and exhibitions that are mind-blowing. We are very privileged to work in such an amazing library.

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

**Seema:** I am initially from Trinidad and Tobago and came to London to study after A Levels. Initially I wanted to study communications and media related courses that were not available at that time in Trinidad. In addition, I wanted to travel around Europe! I couldn't find a course in London for exactly what I wanted to do, so I ended in libraries by accident. I studied Information and Communication in the early 1990s when we were still using search command for online searching and creating DOS databases etc. Although the technology seems so ancient now, the core principles of library and information work are still very relevant in my current role.

I am still learning new skills and this field is always adopting new technology, so it keeps me busy and interested. I started my first professional role in the Business Information Centre at Coopers & Lybrand (later re-branded PwC), which was a great broad experience and grounding in a global company. I also worked at the



Seema Rampersad of the British Library.

Greater London Authority, which was great for urban and current awareness in a team that was very holistic – including database creation, records management, archiving, freedom of information and social media by the late 2000s.

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

**Seema:** As I write, we are six months in the global pandemic and it has been a very challenging time for all sectors, especially the library and information profession. I am currently President of SLA Europe and although we had plans for face-to-face events at the beginning of the year, we have had to change them drastically to all virtual events. Thankfully our great team of volunteers helped with the transition very easily as we were already hosting webinars and meeting virtually. Therefore, the digital transition has been most pertinent in the last few months for professionals.

I was asked to chair the Task Force for Reopening Specialized Libraries for SLA, which is made up of international members. We held virtual roundtable discussions, and created guidelines and a resources list to assist with this huge topic. I also hosted events recently on Protest Music and Social Justice, Economic Data and Entrepreneurship and Crisis Preparedness during COVID-19.

*Continued on page 14*

## Interview with Seema Rampersad, continued

For SLA Europe, we held events on business research, well-being and mindfulness, and knowledge management. Our next event is on 'SOLID and our digital footprint.' The event will cover the conceptual underpinnings of Solid, its socio-technical implications and the implications for librarians and information professionals.

**Ray: Why is international librarianship important in your work as a librarian/information specialist?**

**Seema:** I have always worked in a department that has collaborated with international partners, researchers and customers. I also think it is important to share insights, knowledge and support others beyond borders and territories. I remember the days when we used to post books overseas, and use faxes, letters, and telephone for help with information. It still happens sometimes at the British Library but more so digitally by email, Lib-Answers and web-based resources. We need international partners and information in a connected business world. It is necessary to have access to international data, information, and the support networks that can help one with research and business activities.

For example, if you are manufacturing a product, you may need to source materials or a supplier from overseas; or you may need to check the market for your product. So, we always encourage our customers to look broadly in their own research. In my current role at the British Library, we have projects that are internationally funded. They have been great for innovative topics such as open innovation in this hyper-connected world. Our users and customers are very diverse too and therefore that is reflected in their information needs.

This is also why I like working on projects for the IFLA NPSIG – I get a lot of opportunities to work internationally.

**Ray: Thanks for speaking with us! We appreciate your responses! One last question: if you are working on any research projects, can you tell us more?**

**Seema:** I have just been invited to join the British Library's anti-racism project, which was set up as a result of the current unrest and issues that have been highlighted by the death of black men in police custody in the USA in recent months. The ripple effect to the UK is that there is a new openness reported on the systemic racism in British institutions and life. The topic is very sensitive and challenging as it will take a while to change policies, procedures and most importantly organizational culture and society.

However, as a Trinidadian married to an Italian, I feel I

am half-way there. My background and upbringing are very multicultural, multi-religious, colorful, open and welcoming. I also wanted to mention that I am quite active in my local community in North East London, and with my Caribbean family and friends. We must not forget these local and niche communities as they all make up part of the puzzle, and certainly should be in the bigger picture.

###

Seema is the immediate past Chair of the European chapter of the Special Libraries Association (SLA). More information about [SLA Europe](#) can be found on its website.

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## ALA's UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals, continued

tion with the ALA's Sustainability Round Table; and publishing an article in Chinese American Librarians Association's library journal. I love that librarianship is diverse and brings library workers together to help transform our world.

Next steps for the Task Force include:

- Work with academic and school libraries to produce charts similar to the one by LAPL to show how they are helping communities.
- Gather stories on the website to show how libraries already help communities meet the SDGs.
- Build on the Task Force early work to develop a multi-year strategic plan to increase participation by libraries in efforts to achieve the Goals.

It is especially important for the Task Force to help libraries understand that they are contributing to the Sustainable Development Goals. A main opportunity related to the SDGs, rooted in our current reality of the pandemic, is that this is the time for libraries to build and strengthen partnerships with local and global organizations, and private and public agencies to help societies deeply impacted by covid-19.

We can do this.



## Occupy Library Conference, continued

gave a real-life glimpse of how libraries have re-invented themselves.

Workshops included the EIFL Public Library Innovation Program that explained how innovative ideas and practices travel across borders through peer learning. Participants of that session communicated with presenters in real-time through a mobile app, and took quizzes, live polls, and word clouds. A participant shared, “pandemic: but make it interactive!”

The workshop by Ellen Knudson from the Kettering Foundation and Svetlana Gorokhova from the Russian State Library for Foreign Literature, both from the US-Russia Library Dialogue as well, introduced using deliberative dialogue in work with librarians to enable them to deepen their institutions’ involvement with their communities.

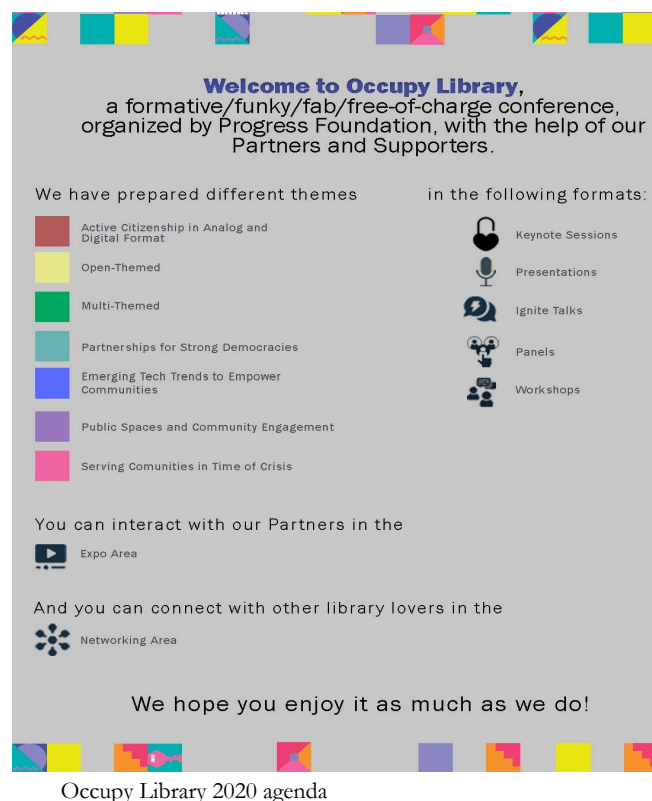
The Peer 2 Peer University hosted a couple of online meetings for the audience focusing on Responsive Community-Based Education, Online and Offline, and sharing the learning circle methodology as it is currently used and adapted to online learning in countries around the world.

IFLA New Professionals Special Interest Group (IFLA NPSIG) members moderated most of the sessions. They also took participants on a deep dive on what the group does and how new professionals can get involved in international library work.

Progress Foundation - the organizer of Occupy Library 2020 - focuses its projects and interest on Eastern Europe and young democracies and puts a lot of effort into creating formats and providing the necessary support for library innovators in the region to shine and share their experiences in this international context, overcoming the language barrier.

The event included numerous ignite-talks and presentations from Moldova, Ukraine, Romania and Croatia, bringing their initiatives to the attention of a global audience.

One such initiative that inspired the audience is the creation of Active Citizens Hubs in public libraries. Mike Waldron conducted a workshop where librarians from Neamț and Vâlcea (Romania), Ungheni and Hânceni (Rep. of Moldova), and Luhansk and Lviv (Ukraine) shared their social action plans to empower their communities in a project implemented with the support of The Black Sea Trust for Regional Cooperation.



Last, but not least, Occupy Library’s message is not only about working together in the libraries, but also about exploring the Civil Society Organizations as valuable partners in our community development work. Regional partners like Black Sea NGO Forum, Ashoka Romania, the Information Society Development Foundation introduced their projects developed in partnership with libraries.

Occupy Library is a break-through global conference that successfully adapted their in-person model to a virtual scenario using a conference platform that allowed speakers to be “backstage.” Attendees visited vendors and mingled in a virtual lounge room where they could network with each other and where IFLA had a booth.

Videos from the keynotes were immediately available, and globally librarians expressed appreciation for that. Attendees were encouraged to use a wide variety of digital tools to bring a sense of community even if they were attending from their living room couch.

This online conference worked very well, it ran smoothly, librarians loved it. It represents the future of library conferences while the world experiences the pandemic.

We cannot wait until the next one!