Emerging Leaders 2020

Group Report

Project Group E: International Librarians Mentorship Program in Action

Project Host Unit: ALA International Relations Round Table

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Acknowledgements

We would like to thank Delin Guerra, Joan Weeks, Muzhgan Nazarova, Richard Sapon-White and the rest of the ALA International Relations Round Table Executive board for the guidance, suggestions and support. We also would like to thank Group G from the 2019 Emerging Leaders Class; Without your previous work, this program would not have been successful.

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Brief History and Background

The International Librarians Network (ILN) based in Australia sponsored a successful peer-mentoring program for several years, but closed operations in 2017 due to a lack of funding for staff support. The 2019 Emerging Leaders (EL) GroupG worked closely with International Relations Roundtable (IRRT) to plan a peer mentoring program that was aligned with IRRT values and replicated the successes of the ILN in a sustainable way.

The EL 2019 group conducted extensive research on existing mentorship programs. Through a literature review, they identified the following elements as essential for success:

- Agreements on appropriate conduct between mentors
- Clear expectations on how often to communicate
- Prompts to guide discussion from the program organizers
- A thoughtful matching process

Utilizing this research, Group G created the first draft of the International Librarians Mentorship Program (ILMP). The goal of the program was to assist librarians from around the world to network and expand their skills in librarianship through a cooperative and collaborative program.

Members of Group G launched the ILMP website and the ILMP blog - a space where international librarians interested in collaborating with peers from different countries could come together, obtain information about the project, and submit an application.

Group G built the foundation of the ILMP program, and established the necessary guidelines and resources for the programs' success. However, due to the time limitations of the Emerging Leaders Program (January-June), Group G did not have enough time to market and launch the program.
Two members of Group G are serving on an ad hoc IRRT committee to assist the 2020 Emerging Leaders with administering the program.

All the details and documentation about the International Librarians Mentorship Program planned by Group G can be found on the International Relations Round Table (IRRT) site: http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram

http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram/about-networking-program
http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram/communications

Goals and Anticipated Outcomes

Building on foundational work conducted by 2019 EL Group G, 2020 EL Group E was tasked with executing the program designed by the 2019 Emerging Leaders Group G.. The expected goals of this project were to:

- Facilitate the international exchange and partnerships between library professionals in different countries; Establish and build global networks among information professionals; Support knowledge and information exchange among colleagues around the world;

- The Emerging Leaders group will work with the IRRT Executive Board to launch the program, including: Initial marketing and advertising, Outreach and recruitment of candidates; Assisting in application process; Selecting the candidates; Running the program based on the recommendations received from Group G;

- Prepare a short brochure with a description of the program for marketing and educational purposes; Create marketing tools and recruiting messages to attract peer mentors to participate in the pilot program; Enhance the existing website for the pilot program; Develop an evaluation survey instrument; Oversee the running of the program;

- IRRT's expectation will be to see the successful recruitment of applicants, have the application process completed, have the participants selected, and have the program launch. There is an existing blog on the project website which is ready to be populated by the stories and postings of participants;

- The ELs will have a lot of information to share about the whole process of conducting the program as well as many success stories gathered from participants. All of this can be easily reflected on a poster.

Marketing the International Librarians Networking Program

One of the first changes that Group E made was the renaming of the program to International Librarians Networking Program (ILNP). Group G proposed the word mentorship which suggests the participants would be paired with a more seasoned professional instead of their peers. Using the term “networking” more accurately reflected the intentions of the program.

Group E created fliers (Appendix 3) that could be shared on various online platforms. The fliers were translated and published in several of the world's major languages including English, Spanish, Portuguese, Chinese, Korean, Arabic, Russian and Japanese. By translating the flyers, Group E hoped to attract more candidates internationally and generate more interest. All the translations were made by Group E members or volunteers recruited by Group E.

The fliers were distributed on different social networks such as Facebook (for example: ALA ThinkTank, IFLA New Professionals Special Interest Group, Infotecarios, Mortenson Center, etc), and email discussion lists (ALA IRRT list).

The program was officially announced in March 2nd, 2020 and was heavily promoted in social media using the text below:

Facebook: The International Relations Round Table (IRRT) is proud to announce the launch of the International Librarians Networking Program! Connect with librarians from all over the world and share your knowledge, information, and experiences related to librarianship and library services.

If you are interested in applying for this exciting opportunity, please fill out the application by **March 31, 2020.**

http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram/how-to-apply

Twitter: Good news! The International Relations Round Table (IRRT) is happy to announce that the International Librarians Networking Program (ILNP) is accepting applications. Sign up here: http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram/how-to-apply

Participant Selection and Matching Process

Thanks to the successful marketing campaign, the ILNP had an overwhelming response with 488 submissions from 70 countries. Google Form was used as an application tool which interested participants could fill out and submit (please see the map in Attachment 4 on page 22).

The first step was to evaluate the responses to rule out any applicants that did not meet the minimum qualification requirements as well as any duplicate responses. The minimum qualifications are as follows:

- Have access to Internet or email account
- Able to communicate once every two weeks
- Have a desire to build professional connections and learn from peers and colleagues
- Be able and willing to commit to a collaboration for 4 months
- English skills preferable but not mandatory

The original plan was to accept 25 pairs with a total number of 50 participants. Due to the large number of applicants, Group E decided to increase the number of pairs to be accepted into the program. To accommodate more applicants, each Group E member committed to taking a higher number of pairs, bringing the tentative total to 47 pairs from 46 countries.

A special selection process was developed by Group E to ensure that the same guidelines were followed consistently to create and match the pairs.

The Networking Pairs matching procedure developed by the Group included the following steps:

1. Sort the applicants by areas of interest.
2. Within applicant groups that have similar interests, applicants will be sorted into what kind of library they work in/want to work in. From there, language and country of origin is looked at next to create the matches. Within one Networking Pair, at least one common language needed to be spoken, and two different countries represented. The group did their best to avoid matching two people from the same country so that fostering international connections could be prioritized.
3. Within these smaller groups, the group looked at which applicants applied first. Group E members attempted to prioritize this group of applicants. However, they looked at all

parts of the application when matching Networking Pairs, and created the Networking Pairs using a holistic approach taking into account representing as wide a range of countries as possible.

4. Those not chosen for the first wave of the program will be prioritized for consequent waves of the program.

Once the matching procedure was created, a spreadsheet with the names of the applicants along with all their information was created and sorted by their first listed interest in the application (emerging technologies, management, metadata, academic libraries, etc.). Once this was done, each group member took a portion of the spreadsheet and created the pairs using the above process with the applicants they had in their piece of the applicant pool. As stated in the matching procedure, Group E prioritized having as many countries represented in the program as possible.

After the pairs were finally selected, Group E wanted to ensure that all the selected participants were still interested in the INLP, as the COVID-19 pandemic impact had increased worldwide in the time since the applications were originally submitted. A Google Form questionnaire was sent out to the selected participants asking if they were still interested in participating in the program, and if not, if they wanted to participate in the program at a later date.

One hundred and fifty three applicants responded to the COVID-19 Participation Inquiry, and 144 were still interested in participating in the program. The results of the survey were used to replace any participants who either no longer wanted to participate in the program, or who did not respond to the survey. This was a good first step to make sure selected participants were able to check their email and were responsive to communication.

The results of the participation inquiry created the need to rematch some participants whose chosen match either did not respond or did not want to participate in the program. Group E decided to rematch as many as possible from the participants that had already been contacted, otherwise an additional participation inquiry would need to be sent out to any newly chosen participants. At the end of the program, Group E ended up with 47 pairs and 1 trio.

Communication with the pairs

Group E sent an email to each participant to let them know who they were paired with, along with a carbon copy to their liaison. Each member of Group E and IRRT lead served as communication liaisons, and their role was to assist the participants if they encountered any problems. For example, if one member of a pair was not responsive or if the participant was not happy with their partner, they could contact their communication liaison. Group E made every attempt to accommodate these kinds of requests.

After the introductions were completed, the participants received monthly emails with a selection of conversation topics in order to facilitate conversation among pairs. It was not mandatory to limit the discussions to those topics. The prompt emails were sent with the intention to provide guidance for the participants' interactions with the understanding that they had the flexibility to further explore other topics that they were more interested in.

At the beginning of the program the participants were also asked to define how many times they were planning to meet (weekly, biweekly, etc) and which tool would be best for them to use in order to communicate with one another (Email, WhatsApp, Facetime, Skype, Zoom, etc).
After the pairs were finalized they started their regular communication schedule and exchange of ideas.

Mid-Program Feedback

A Mid-program Survey was created by Group E to get preliminary feedback from the program participants and to learn more about how the pairs were connecting to one another. Following the matching process, some participants reached out to their liaisons with different concerns about their partner. One of the major concerns was unresponsiveness and, in single cases, lack of common topics of interest. To address those concerns, several participants were rematched including some rematching done prior to the survey.

Fifty three program participants responded to the survey. The responses illuminated the communication successes and issues that some participants were experiencing in their pairs.

When asked how often the partners communicated with their match the answers were:

19.2% Weekly

15.4% Once every two weeks

23.1% Monthly

28.8% Not often

Of the fifty three respondents, only three individuals had not received responses from their partners.

The participants were also asked to provide feedback about their satisfaction with the program. This is how some of the respondents commented:

“Yes indeed, it has met my expectations.The experience has been quite amazing.
If partners come with an innovation how could we put it across for funding as we continue with the program. For example we want to come up with our digital journal as a platform for kids interaction. Some of the topics include Education, Innovation, Environmental Conservation, hygiene, diseases, hobbies and topical problems affecting the society etc. Also if partners come with a unique education innovation and would like to roll it out inform of outreach. For example me and my partner had our unique reading programs for kids. How to implement has been a challenge but we are still trying out with the resources we have. We were happy to be given a third partner from Canada. And her contribution is awesome! We are really learning a lot especially in terms of the effects of COVID-19 in education having the impact in both Canada and Kenya.”

“Yes, it has been great to connect with a colleague overseas when I can't even connect with a colleague in the next state due to border closures in Australia”

“It was a bit rocky at first as my initial pairing never responded. You all were fantastic in finding another pairing for me”

“Perhaps receive more frequent emails regarding the program, goals, etc. Sometimes we were wondering....what next?”

The following suggestions on how the program can be improved in the future were made by the respondents:

- To improve the partner matching process based on professional experience and interests;
- To find the ways to make people more engaged during the program
- To increase the engagement of the liaisons, and enhance communication with the participants and initiating more discussion topics
- To reach out to all participants to facilitate better communication and outreach. Participants suggested utilizing Whatsapp, Online Video Calling, or another digital platform.

While certain shortcomings of the program were revealed during the evaluation and while reading the feedback, the participants were eager to continue their participation and make the program grow.

While it was not possible to implement all these useful recommendations right away, some minor adjustments to the management of the program were done. That was very helpful for participants and contributed to the success of the program.

Final Participant Evaluation

A final survey developed by Group E was distributed among the participants during the last week of the program

42 participants responded to the survey.

- 95% of the participants replied that they receive enough information and appropriate guidelines to benefit from the program;
- 97% of participants think the objective of the program was clearly defined.

In general, the respondents felt that their expectations were met. Some participants noted that the COVID-19 pandemic might have affected the program in the sense that some participants didn’t respond at all or responded with less frequency. The respondents also suggested trying to match the participants with more similar backgrounds, but as we explained in the matching process section, this was not always possible.

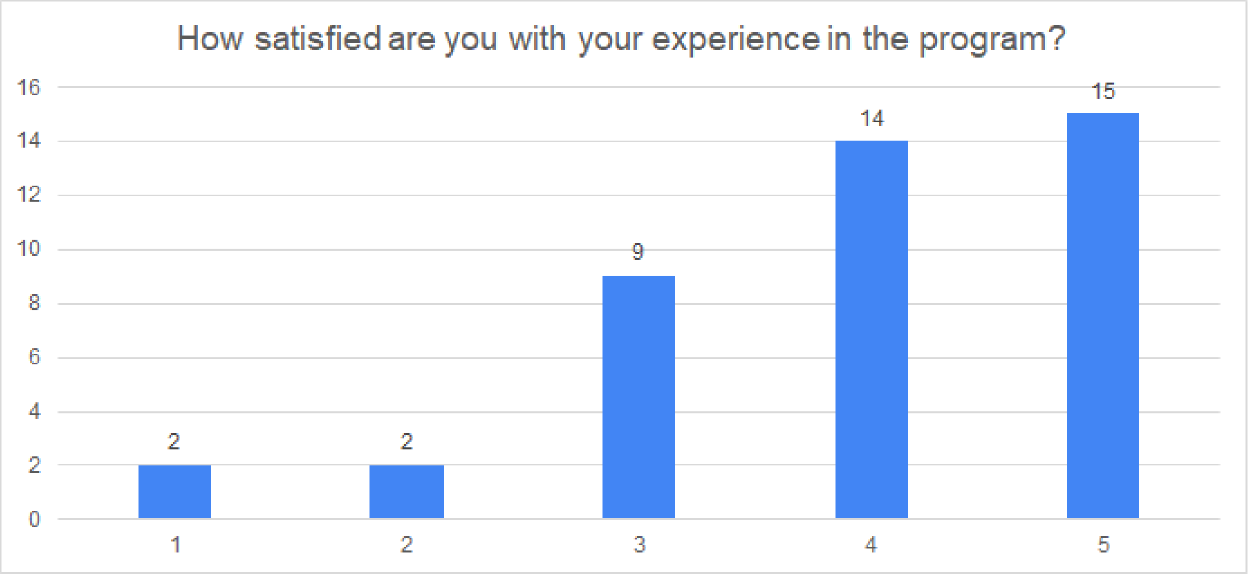
When we asked the participants about the most interesting topic they discussed during the program, the responses were quite different. Some examples of topics include differences of libraries in different countries, libraries working in a virtual environment due to the pandemic, professional development, and projects occurring within their libraries.

The following suggestions on improving the program in the future were put forward by the respondents:

- Extend a duration of the program because four months is not enough time;
- Send more videos and articles instead of only sending the prompts to facilitate the conversation and engagement between partners;
- Liaisons to be more involved in the process and communicate with the pairs on regular basis to discuss the progression of the program; especially in cases when one of the partners is not responsive
- Expand the network instead of working with only one partner;
- Have a virtual meeting for all participants;
- Have group assignments distributed among the participants.

The participants were asked about their satisfaction with the program on the scale from 1 to 5, 1 meaning Not satisfied and 5 Very satisfied. The results of the responses are provided in the chart below.

All the 42 participants would recommend the program to other library professionals. 38 respondents were satisfied with the program on the scale 3 to 5.



Testimonials

The testimonials provided by some of the participants of the program are available on the IRRT webpage.

Impact Factors

In March, the program kicked off with a marketing campaign. During that time, the number of cases of COVID-19 began to rise exponentially around the world. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a negative impact on the personal and professional lives of the participants in our program. Although COVID-19 presented a unique challenge for everyone, the project continued.

Some participants had internet connectivity issues and some had change of work/life plans. This impacted the matching process. The program, being a pilot, lacked a well developed system of rematching in case one participant needed to leave the program.

Group E also felt the application form lacked questions that would have allowed the group to gather more detailed information about each participant and learn more about their professional background. This information would have allowed Group E to create better matches among participants.

Some challenges Group E also faced were the high number of participants the group accommodated in the program and a high number of pairs handled by some group members. It was harder to manage the communication with participants and it didn't leave more time to the group to work on more improvements.

Success Factors of the Pilot Project

The key success factors of Group E which allowed for a successful program:

- Broad marketing and advertising campaign;
- High level of commitment and dedication;
- Regular weekly meetings to discuss a progress;
- Organization and frequent communication which kept the group members on track;
- Clear communication with one another and keeping records shared with one another

and on Google drive;

- Designated Project leader/coordinator;
- Working towards common goal by using the strengths and talents of each member;
- Time management;
- Accurate planning;
- High work ethics;
- Mutual respect;
- Taking advantage of technology (automatic email sending, Spreadsheets generating etc) to automate some processes;
- Always testing before actual actions were taken;
- Always following up after the actions were taken;
- Taking responsibility and high load of work to accomodate a bigger pool of candidates;
- Willingness to regroup the pairs in situations when one of the partners didn't respond;
- Spending additional time to follow up with the applicants who didn't respond to acceptance emails.

Recommendations for the Future

For the past two years the International Librarian Networking Program has been managed and run by ALA Emerging Leaders groups. The Emerging Leaders program runs between ALA's Midwinter and Annual conferences, leaving the International Relations Round Table's Emerging Leaders group with approximately five months to learn about the program and its history, make any changes necessary, implement the program, and prepare a report to be presented at ALA Annual on the program. While this has allowed for the program to be planned and piloted, this is not a sustainable model going forward. The Emerging Leaders program timeline does not allow for enough time for the group to both become acquainted with the program and run it to its full potential.

Instead, we proposed the formation of a committee or sub-committee under the auspices of IRRT to manage the program year-round. The proposal was submitted to IRRT Executive Board at the Board's November 2020 meeting. Group E members made a short presentation about the program and referred to the materials published about the program. The previous Emerging Leaders group proposed a committee of seven members, dividing tasks between a webmaster, activity coordinators, marketing coordinators, and others covering miscellaneous duties. This is one model that could be followed, though it is not a model that we followed rigorously when running the pilot round. With this in mind, we proposed a formation of a new committee or subcommittee to decide amongst its members how best to allocate tasks.

The ILNP would be much better served if its management is passed off to a committee or subcommittee that can support the program year-round, allowing for an extended implementation timeline, the potential for running two iterations of the program in one year, and enhanced continuity as committee members may be able to serve for multiple years.

The Executive board unanimously approved the formation of a subcommittee within IRRT. One of the requests that the Board put forward is to have at least two members participating in the program now continue in the subcommittee. The group leader and IRRT liaison agreed to continue in the subcommittee.

Conclusion

Based on the details of the ILNP provided in the present report and the feedback received from participants from the mid-program and final surveys, the program was quite successful and created opportunities for library professionals from different parts of the world to communicate, network, exchange ideas, and engage in discussions.While the participants encountered certain challenges, including the impact of pandemic, most of them were able to complete the program and benefit from it.

As the first group launching the first cohort of this program, Group E was able to gather valuable data on advantages and shortcomings of the program which will be used by a newly formed subcommittee to make the program more successful and advance it further based on the lessons learned.

Appendix A

International Librarian Networking Program: Mid-Program Evaluation

1. How did you find out about the program?

2. Was the application process easy to navigate?
   a. Yes
   b. No

3. What improvements could be made to the application process?

4. Have you communicated with your program partner?
   a. Yes
   b. No

5. How often do you communicate with your program partner?
   a. Weekly
   b. Once every two weeks
   c. Monthly
   d. Not often
   e. Other

6. How do you and your partner communicate?
   a. Email
   b. Video Call
   c. Social Media
   d. Texting/SMS
   e. Other

7. Do you feel that you and your partner have a shared professional background or shared interests?
   a. Yes
   b. No

8. Have you learned something new about librarianship from your partner?
   a. Yes
   b. No

9. Has the program met your expectations so far? Please let us know how the program can be improved.

10. Would you be interested in sharing your experience to be included in the final report for the Spring-Summer 2020 Cohort? Your name and personal information can be excluded.
    a. Yes
    b. No

11. Full name and email address

Appendix B

International Librarian Networking Program: Final Program Evaluation

1. Did you receive enough information and appropriate guidelines to benefit from the program?
    a. Yes
    b. No

2. Was the objective of the program clearly defined?
    a. Yes
    b. No

3. What did you hope to gain from participating in the program? Do you feel your expectations were met?

4. How did you and your partner set ground rules and expectations, and which ground rules and expectations made the program most successful for you?

5. What was the most interesting topic that you and your partner discussed?

6. What changes would you like to see in the program in the future?

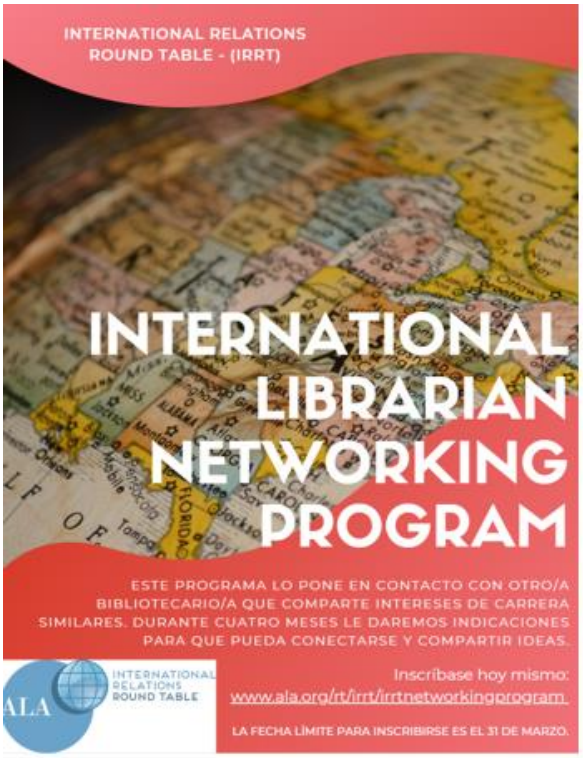
7. How satisfied are you with your experience in the program?
    a. 1 (Not satisfied)
    b. 2
    c. 3
    d. 4
    e. 5 (Very satisfied)

8. Would you recommend this program to other library professionals?
    a. Yes
    b. No

9. What name do you want to be included on your certificate? Which email address should we send the certificate?

Appendix 3

Marketing materials: Brochures in different foreign languages



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
ROUND TABLE - (IRRT)

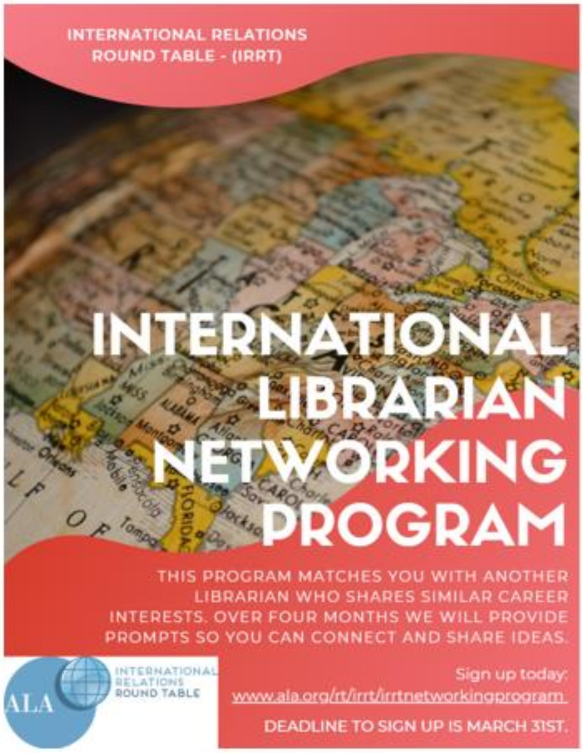
INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIAN NETWORKING PROGRAM

ESTE PROGRAMA LO PONE EN CONTACTO CON OTRO/A BIBLIOTECARIO/A QUE COMPARTE INTERESES DE CARRERA SIMILARES. DURANTE CUATRO MESES LE DAREMOS INDICACIONES PARA QUE PUEDA CONECTARSE Y COMPARTIR IDEAS.

Inscríbase hoy mismo:
www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram.

LA FECHA LÍMITE PARA INSCRIBIRSE ES EL 31 DE MARZO.

ALA
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ROUND TABLE



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
ROUND TABLE - (IRRT)

INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIAN NETWORKING PROGRAM

THIS PROGRAM MATCHES YOU WITH ANOTHER LIBRARIAN WHO SHARES SIMILAR CAREER INTERESTS. OVER FOUR MONTHS WE WILL PROVIDE PROMPTS SO YOU CAN CONNECT AND SHARE IDEAS.

Sign up today:
www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram.

DEADLINE TO SIGN UP IS MARCH 31ST.

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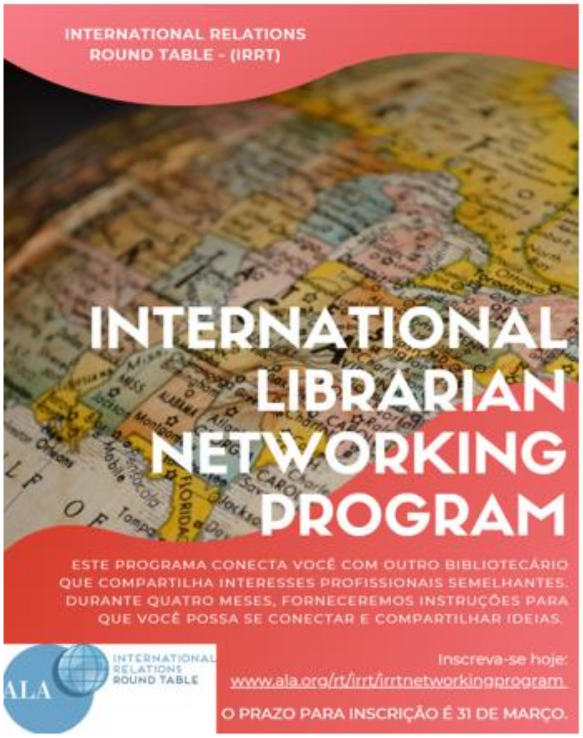
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ROUND TABLE



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
ROUND TABLE - (IRRT)

INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIAN NETWORKING PROGRAM

ESTE PROGRAMA CONECTA VOCÊ COM OUTRO BIBLIOTECÁRIO QUE COMPARTILHA INTERESSES PROFISSIONAIS SEMELHANTES. DURANTE QUATRO MESES, FORNECEREMOS INSTRUÇÕES PARA QUE VOCÊ POSSA SE CONECTAR E COMPARTILHAR IDEIAS.

Inscreva-se hoje:
www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram.

O PRAZO PARA INSCRIÇÃO É 31 DE MARÇO.

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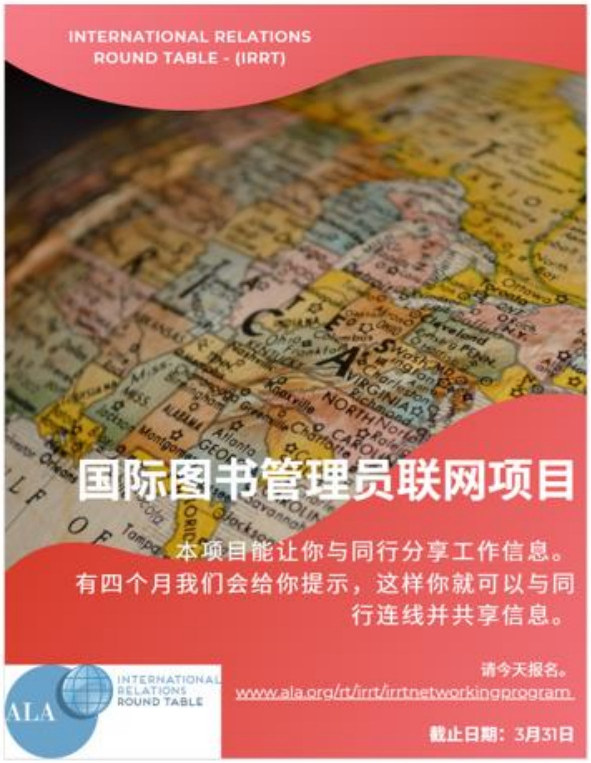
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ROUND TABLE



INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
ROUND TABLE - (IRRT)

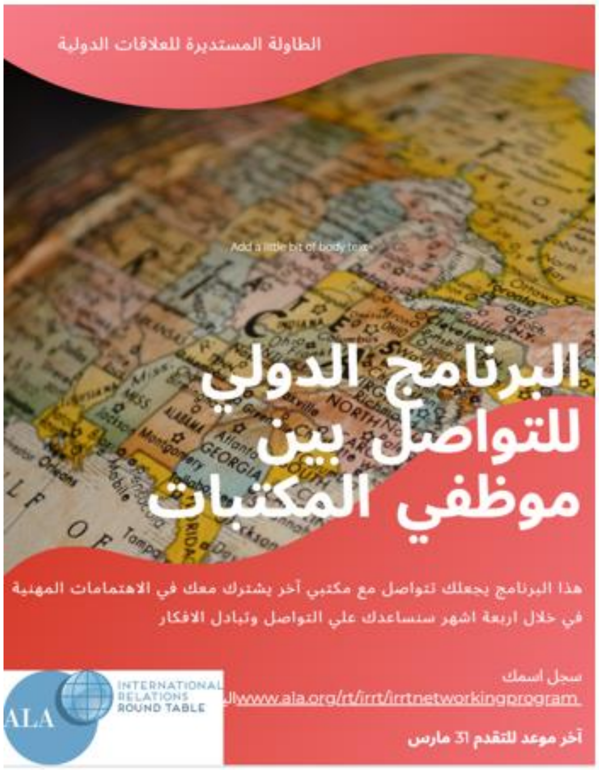
国际图书管理员联网项目

本项目能让你与同行分享工作信息。有四个月我们会给你提示，这样你就可以与同行连线并共享信息。

请今天报名。
www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram.

截止日期：3月31日

ALA
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS ROUND TABLE



الطاولة المستديرة للعلاقات الدولية

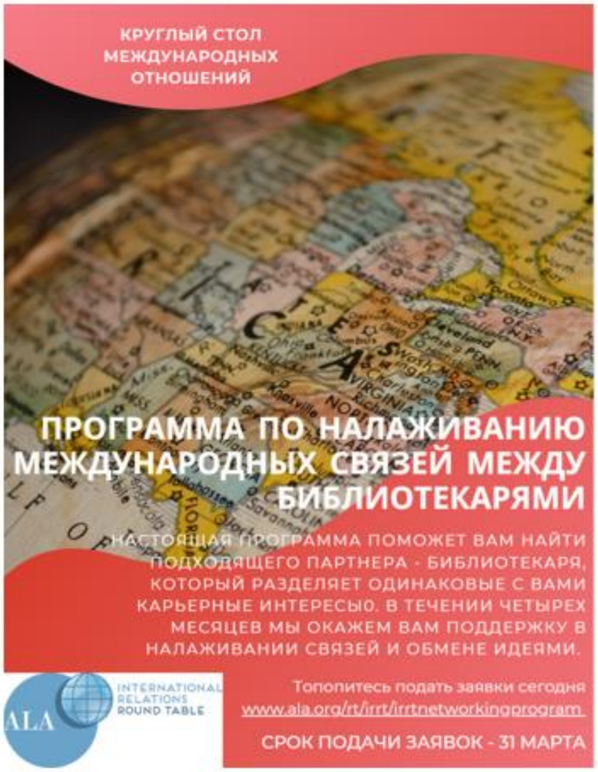
Add a little bit of body text

البرنامج الدولي للتواصل بين موظفي المكتبات

هذا البرنامج يجعلك تتواصل مع مكتبي آخر يشترك معك في الاهتمامات المهنية
في خلال اربعة اشهر سنساعدك علي التواصل وتبادل الافكار

سجل اسمك
الwww.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram

آخر موعد للتقدم 31 مارس



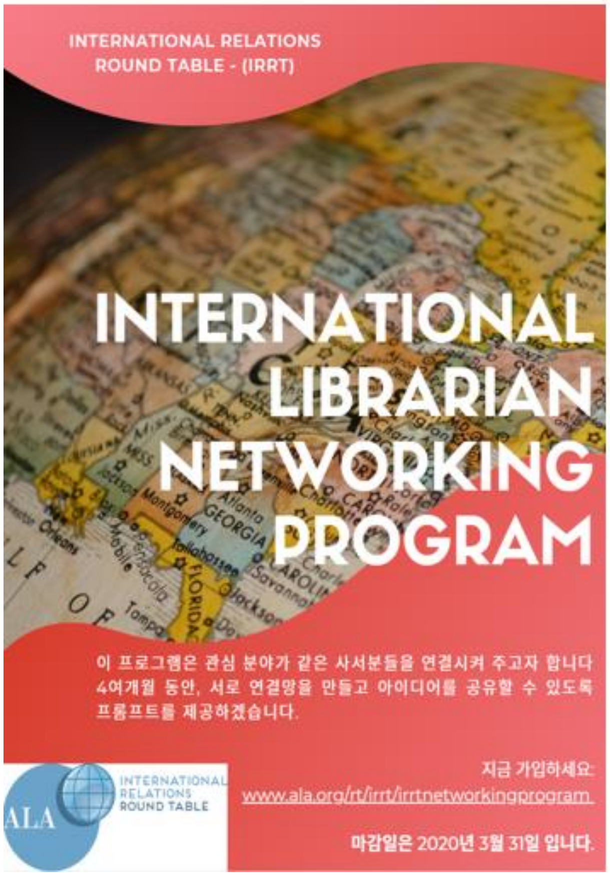
КРУГЛЫЙ СТОЛ
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ
ОТНОШЕНИЙ

ПРОГРАММА ПО НАЛАЖИВАНИЮ МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫХ СВЯЗЕЙ МЕЖДУ БИБЛИОТЕКАРЯМИ

НАСТОЯЩАЯ ПРОГРАММА ПОМОЖЕТ ВАМ НАЙТИ ПОДХОДЯЩЕГО ПАРТНЕРА - БИБЛИОТЕКАРЯ, КОТОРЫЙ РАЗДЕЛЯЕТ ОДИНАКОВЫЕ С ВАМИ КАРЬЕРНЫЕ ИНТЕРЕСЫ0. В ТЕЧЕНИИ ЧЕТЫРЕХ МЕСЯЦЕВ МЫ ОКАЖЕМ ВАМ ПОДДЕРЖКУ В НАЛАЖИВАНИИ СВЯЗЕЙ И ОБМЕНЕ ИДЕЯМИ.

Топопитесь подать заявки сегодня
www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram

СРОК ПОДАЧИ ЗАЯВОК - 31 МАРТА



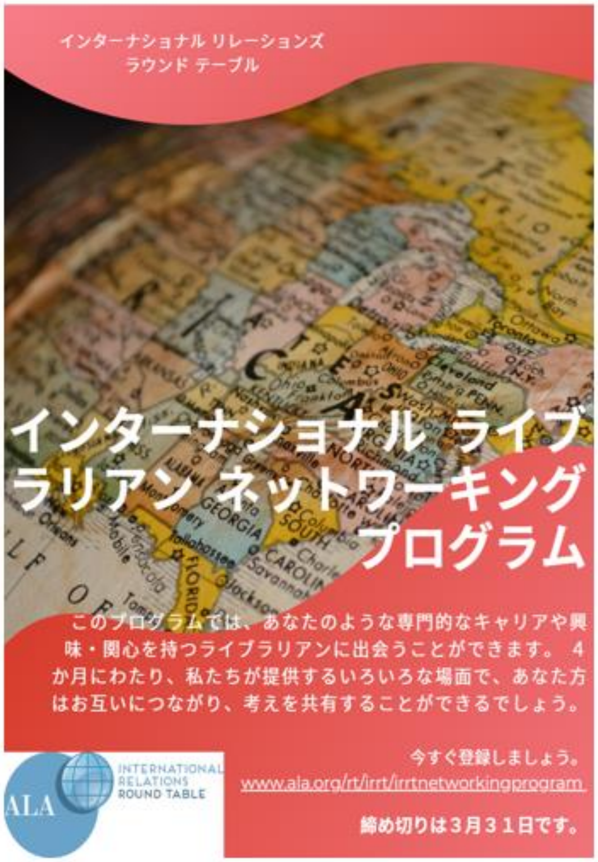
INTERNATIONAL RELATIONS
ROUND TABLE - (IRRT)

INTERNATIONAL LIBRARIAN NETWORKING PROGRAM

이 프로그램은 관심 분야가 같은 사서분들을 연결시켜 주고자 합니다 4여개월 동안, 서로 연결망을 만들고 아이디어를 공유할 수 있도록 프롬프트를 제공하겠습니다.

지금 가입하세요:
www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram

마감일은 2020년 3월 31일 입니다.



インターナショナル リレーションズ
ラウンド テーブル

インターナショナル ライブラリアン ネットワーキング プログラム

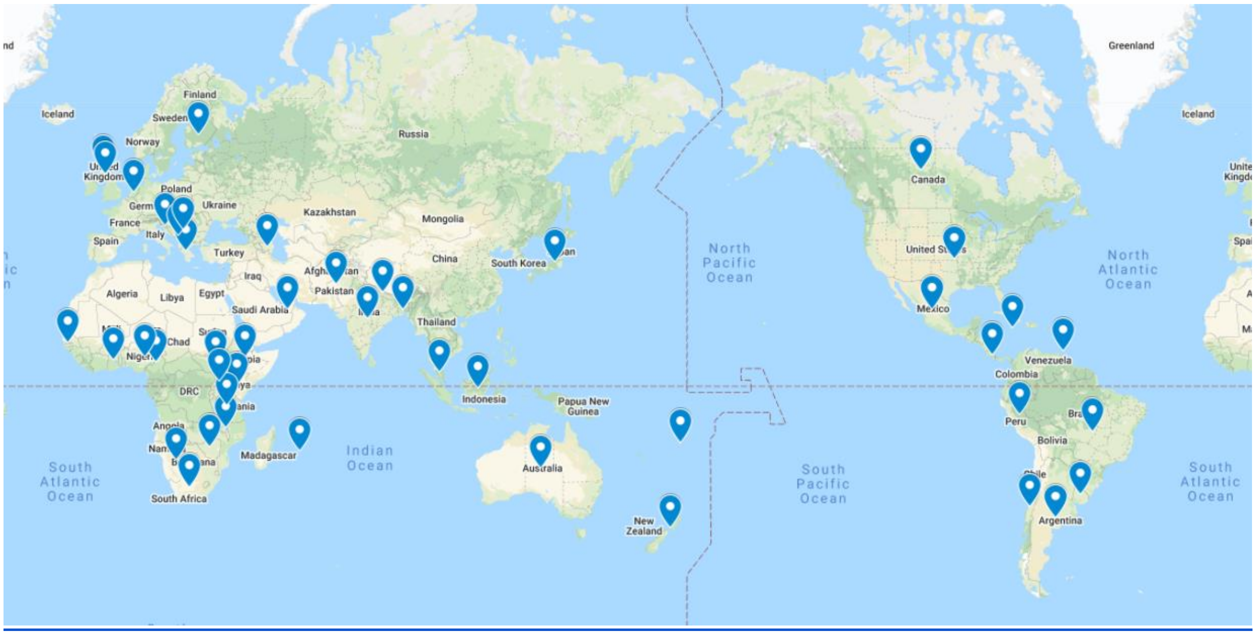
このプログラムでは、あなたのような専門的なキャリアや興味・関心を持つライブラリアンに出会うことができます。４か月にわたり、私たちが提供するいろいろな場面で、あなた方はお互いにつながり、考えを共有することができるでしょう。

今すぐ登録しましょう。
www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtnetworkingprogram

締め切りは３月３１日です。

Appendix 4

Countries of the origin of the applicants/participants


Greenland
Iceland
Finland
Sweden
Norway
Russia
Kingdom
Poland
Ukraine
France
Italy
Spain
Kazakhstan
Mongolia
Turkey
Iraq
Pakistan
China
South Korea
Algeria
Libya
Egypt
Saudi Arabia
Thailand
Chad
DRC
Angola
Madagascar
Indonesia
Papua New Guinea
Indian Ocean
South Atlantic Ocean
Australia
New Zealand
North Pacific Ocean
South Pacific Ocean
Canada
United States
Mexico
North Atlantic Ocean
Venezuela
Colombia
Peru
Bolivia
Chile
Argentina
South Africa