

International Relations Committee Report to Council

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Submitted by the IRC Chair, Emily Drabinski

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International at Midwinter

Seventy-seven colleagues from twenty-one countries participated this year. In addition, nineteen companies from outside the U.S., exhibited. Exhibitors came from Canada, China, France, Italy, Netherlands, Spain, United Arab Emirates, and United Kingdom.

The International Relations Round Table hosted international colleagues with a get together on Friday afternoon.

ALA, as a member of IFLA, provided space for the promotion of the IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Dublin, Ireland in August 2020. The space also highlighted IFLA's [Library Map of the World](#) which includes a stories section on how libraries contribute to the U.N. Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's.) Currently there are no U.S. stories included.

To that end, the ALA Executive Board approved a "Task Force on the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals" is to create, and begin implementation of a multi-year strategic plan to increase awareness and participation of the U.S. library community of the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDG's) and how libraries and librarians and library workers around the world are key partners in their communities, societies, and countries in achieving the Goals.

ALA International Membership

ALA currently has 1,756 from 96 countries. Of these a little over 50% are from Canada.

IFLA Update

The IRC was pleased to welcome Helen Mandl, Deputy Secretary General of IFLA, to Philadelphia for her first ALA experience. Along with Governing Board Member Michael Dowling they provided and update on IFLA activities.

Athens was the location of IFLA's WLIC last August, and proved very attractive as 3,333 delegates participated. This included a very large delegation of 401 from the United States.

IRO coordinated the U.S. Caucus, and Reception on behalf of the seven U.S. Associations of ALA's exhibit stand saw constant traffic and the IRC would like to thank ALA leadership and members who volunteered to represent ALA at the stand.

IFLA's membership grew slightly last year and now stands at 1,550 associations, institutions, and personal members. There are 280 U.S. members of IFLA. Currently there are thirty-nine ALA members who were nominated by ALA serving on IFLA Section Committees.

IFLA is also in the midst of its Governance Review with the timeline to bring forward for adoption a revised structure by the end of 2020.

IFLA continues to be the voice for libraries at international venues. IFLA drafted an instrument for discussion on preservation that took place at the World Intellectual Property Organization's Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights on October 7th. This is part of IFLA's larger strategy to get support for a Treaty on Libraries and Archives.

IFLA will has been participating in United Nation regional meetings around the world to highlight the potential of libraries as accelerators of growth and effective actors in the delivery of SDG's development goals. And IFLA would like to encourage U.S. libraries to participate in The UN's SDG Book Clubs.

As a member of the International Committee of the Blue Shield, IFLA worked to create a statement from the Blue Shield expressing its grave concern regarding the threats by President Trump to target Iranian cultural sites as it is prohibited by the Hague Convention of 1954 which the U.S. is a signatory.

IFLA will be unveiling a new Trend Report at the WLIC in Dublin. The Report takes a broader approach and identifies five high level trends shaping the information society, spanning access to education, privacy, civic engagement and transformation.

The U.S.-Russia Dialogue on the Civic Role of Libraries in the 21st Century

Through a grant to ALA from the U.S.-Russia Foundation, delegates from the U.S. and Russian met for the 3rd working meeting of the "US-Russia Dialogue on the Civic Role of Libraries in the 21st Century" at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign at the end of September. The meeting brought together twenty-one library leaders and specialists from five Russian regions and seven US states and the District of Columbia.

Over the course of two days the participants discussed ways their libraries have been working to address many of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs). Participants agreed to take individual and collective actions that help further the realization of the UN SDGs. President-elect Julius Jefferson, and Mikhael Afanasyev, President of the Russia Library Association, represented their respective associations at the meeting.

Sharjah International Library Conference

The 6th annual Sharjah International Library Conference was another successful professional development success with 270 librarians from fourteen countries attending last November. ALA President Wand Brown kicked off the two-day conference with an inspiring keynote, “Taking the Lead: Indispensable Librarians.”

The conference was preceded by three full-day workshops: the ACRL Road Show “Putting the Standards for Libraries in Higher Education into Action”, “New Concepts and Applications for Cataloging” which focused on the revised RDA Toolkit, and for school librarians “Building Empathy, Understanding, and Tolerance through Collections, Curriculum, and Virtual Reality.”

This year included the introduction of Lightning Talks, which is a new presentation concept for the region. ALA collaborates with the Sharjah International Book Fair in this endeavor, and met with the Chair of the Book Authority Ahmed Al-Ameri and his staff here in Philadelphia to discuss plans for the next conference this fall.

ALA-FIL Guadalajara Free-Pass Program

In its 21st year, the ALA-FIL Free Pass Program was an opportunity for ALA members to attend the Guadalajara Book Fair in early December to review and purchase Spanish language materials for their communities. One hundred and fifty ALA members were joined by ALA President Wanda Brown and Executive Director Mary Ghikas. Based on the post-fair survey the amount spent purchasing books and other resources exceeded \$500,000.

Assistance to Libraries in the Bahamas after Hurricane Dorian

ALA, through IRO is currently assisting several libraries in the Bahamas that were damaged by Hurricane Dorian that ravaged the island nation in September. Working with the Bahamas National Library Service and the University of Bahamas laptops, tablets, and books have been delivered. This initial donation through the contributions to the ALA Disaster Relief Fund totaled \$6,000. ALA will be providing additional resources throughout 2020. The IRC thanks all those who have donated to the ALA Disaster Relief Fund.

ALA is in contact with the Australian Library and Information Association (ALIA) and stands ready to assist in recovery and rebuilding of libraries that may be impacted by the fires.

Annual in Chicago

IRO has been promoting this year’s Annual Conference to international members and others outside the United States. Chicago has been a good draw for international colleagues in the past. IRC is pleased to note that a number of international programs proposed by the IRC Geographic Subcommittees were accepted. Programs on African children’s literature and Central American libraries in midst of crisis will join country focused programs from India, Malaysia, and the Philippines.

IRRT Activities

IRRT Chair Richard Sapon-White reported on a number of IRRT activities and initiatives. The IRRT has a new webinar series directed to reach its international members. The IRRT continues to sponsor an Emerging Leader, and for the fourth year in a row one of the projects selected by the Emerging Leaders is an international related effort. The IRRT uses interest from its endowment funds to provide a Mission Enhancement Grant for a member-initiated idea which contributes to ALA's role in international librarianship.

RDA Toolkit

The IRC would like to note and acknowledge the efforts to make the RDA Toolkit the global standard. Of the nearly 2,500 subscribers, 951 are international subscriptions. International subscribers purchase more users per subscription than U.S. subscribers (5.4 to 3). The largest countries of subscribers and users are Australia, Canada, Germany, Finland, and the United Kingdom.

The RDA Toolkit is available in 8 languages with Hungarian and Arabic translations expected by 2021. This past October the RDA Steering Committee (RSC) travelled to Santiago to meet with cataloging leaders from across South and Central America and discuss the establishment of a formal RDA regional group that would join the RDA governance structure. The meeting was unfortunately cancelled due to civil unrest in Santiago at that time. The meeting was rescheduled in December as an online event and significant progress was made toward the stated goal.

Revenue from international subscribers in FY19 was \$511,737

International Revenue FY 2019

Revenue from all international sources for ALA exceeded 2.4 million dollars. ALA's revenue from international sources has remained consistent over the last few years with modest fluctuations. The FY19 total was a few thousand less than FY18. The International Relations Office compiles the annual tally by soliciting totals from many sources including Membership, Publishing, Conference Services, Divisions and other Offices.

IRO continues to organize monthly meetings of a multi-unit the International Marketing Group that is currently doing regional market scans. The two most recent reviews have been of East Asia-South East Asia and Africa.

Resolution Opposing the Free Speech and Intellectual Freedom Restrictions in the Combating BDS Act, Anti-Semitism Awareness Act, and Related Legislation

The International Relations Committee voted 6-3 to advise Council of the majority committee opinion that the resolution relates to domestic policy and therefore is not in the purview of the IRC. The IRC brings no recommendation to Council.

American Library in Paris Celebrates 100 Years

In 1920 the American Library in Paris (ALP) was established under the auspices of the American Library Association and the Library of Congress from the core book collection collected by ALA through American Libraries for the U.S. Armed Forces serving in France during World War I.

Library continues to be a vibrant center for literature, learning, and cultural programming. ALA continues to assist the ALP through representation on the library's Board of Trustees. IRC member Damon Austin is the current ALA representative. To recognize this momentous occasion and the connection of the library and ALA the IRC brings forward to Council the following "Resolution Celebrating the Centennial Anniversary of the American Library in Paris."

[Action Item]

**Resolution Celebrating the Centennial Anniversary
of the American Library in Paris**

WHEREAS, the American Library in Paris was established in May 1920 under the auspices of the American Library Association and the Library of Congress with a core book collection donated by American libraries to United States armed forces serving with its allies in World War I; and,

WHEREAS, ALA continues to be connected to the Library through a representative on the Board of Trustees, and,

WHEREAS, the Library is the largest English-language lending library on the European continent, with 4,500 members representing over 60 countries; and,

WHEREAS, the Library is a vibrant center for literature, learning, culture, and community providing programming and spaces that serve adults, students, children, and teens in newly renovated spaces; and,

WHEREAS, the Library staff of the American Library in Paris provides exceptional programs including the *Evenings with Authors* series, the Visiting Fellowship, writing workshops for all ages, the Young Author Fiction Festival, and the American Library in Paris annual Book Award; and,

WHEREAS, the Library has a long history of fostering cultural and artistic exchange between prominent writers and the global library community, now, therefore

BE IT RESOLVED that the American Library Association and its eleven membership divisions and many offices congratulate the American Library in Paris and its staff on the 100th anniversary of its founding.