

International Relations Committee Report to Council

June 8, 2020

Submitted by the IRC Chair, Emily Drabinski

Committee Members: Emily Drabinski (Chair), Bobby Bothmann, Min Chou, Susan Considine, Megan Heady, Joyce Jelks, Katherina Yoke Peng Lee, Haipeng Li, Evviva Weinraub, Janice Welburn, Damon Austin, Eugenia Beh (Intern), Eboni Henry (Board liaison) Michael Dowling (Staff liaison)

International at ALA Virtual Event

With cancelation of ALA Annual, creation of Virtual Event, the planned international activities and attendance have been pivoting as everything else has. International registration for Annual was expected to be around 600, which would be approximately 4% of registration. As of June 1, fifty-eight colleagues from fifteen countries, including Canada, had registered, equal to 3% of registrations. IRO continues promoting the Virtual Event to international members through the [ALA International Newsletter](#) and various international lists.

Most of the international programs have been postponed until Annual 2021 to provide an opportunity for presenters to attend an Annual Conference in person. The International Relations Round Table will be hosting two pre-recorded programs with live Q&A sessions.

[Libraries as Social Change Engines Around the World - International Relations Round Table \(IRRT\) Chair's Program](#)

June 24, 2020, 2:30pm – 3:15pm (central)

Program will be a panel of library innovators will share their experiences either responding to or leading social change in their communities. IFLA President Christine McKenzie, from Australia will be a panelist, and will be up at 5:30am to participate and answer questions.

[Expanding Worldviews: How Libraries Create Awareness of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Inspire Change](#)

June 26, 2020, 11:15 AM – 12:00 PM (central)

Program will highlight library projects from Kazakhstan, Guatemala, and Singapore.

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

Under the leadership of ALA Past-President Loida Garcia-Febo, the newly created Task Force (ten members, including two international members) has been very active during the past five months, even with the disruptions caused by the pandemic.

The Task Force is beginning to prepare a multi-year strategic plan to increase participation by libraries in efforts to achieve the UN 2030 SDG's. The Task Force has created a [website](#) that will serve as the resource site.

On the website is a chart the Task Force quickly created visualizing how “Libraries are helping communities meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals in the times of COVID-19.” A second more general chart will be up on the site soon.

The Task Force is hosting its first webinar on June 9, *“Libraries Contributing to Meet the UN Sustainable Development Goals: a call to action to end poverty, protect the planet and improve the lives and prospects of everyone, everywhere.”* It will highlight inspiring stories from libraries in Australia, France and Germany presented by leaders of library associations in those countries. It will help U.S. librarians connect the dots between their existing services and the way they are already meeting the SDGs.

Libraries Reopening: A Perspective of Best Practices from Around the World in the Time of COVID-19 (ALA Webinar Series)

ALA International Relations Roundtable (IRRT) Webinar Committee, co-hosted by the International Relations Office with Program Delin Guerra coordinating, is running a series of six free [webinars](#) (June 4-June 17) focusing on perspectives from libraries around the world dealing with COVID-19.

The webinar series will help ALA members and others learn from libraries in Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, Mexico, Qatar, Netherlands, Sweden and Australia on how they addressed and are currently addressing the reopening of libraries during the challenging time of COVID-19.

IFLA Activities and Updates

World Library and Information Congress (WLIC)

On April 7th the IFLA Governing Board voted to cancel the WLIC scheduled for August in Dublin, Ireland due to the COVID 19 pandemic. IFLA is not creating an alternative online virtual event due to many factors, including the challenge of simultaneous participation in time zones around the world.

IFLA WLIC 2021 will still be held in Rotterdam, Netherlands, but due to continued issues with the convention center in Auckland, New Zealand Dublin will host the IFLA WLIC in 2022. A global competition (except for Europe) will be held later for bids for the 2023 WLIC.

IFLA Governance Review

Michael Dowling and the other 18 members of the IFLA Governing Board (GB) have been working virtually over the past five months to discuss and refine a proposed governance restructuring. The proposal will be sent out around June 15 to begin a two-month consultation and feedback process before bringing to IFLA members for a vote in October.

The IFLA Sections that ALA nominates for (approved by the Executive Board) will remain as they are, so the IRC and IRO will be connecting with ALA units in July to start the nomination process for the next group of ALA representatives to IFLA Sections.

COVID-19 and the Global Library Field

IFLA has been tracking and providing information and resources for the global library community through its [COVID-19 and the Global Library Field](#) website. ALA has assisted and contributed to these efforts, and librarians in the United States have benefited from learning and sharing how everyone is working to provide services and reopen.

IFLA Webinars

IRO continues to serve as host for IFLA's series, "New Librarians Global Connection: best practices, models and recommendations." Working toward the next one July 14 ["Mindfulness to Manage Workplace Stress and Microaggressions"](#)

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

The second meeting scheduled for September in Russia has been postponed indefinitely. The participants (which includes President-elect Julius Jefferson and Past-President Loida Garcia-Febo) have been meeting virtually, updating each other on their challenges related to COVID 19, and hope to hold a virtual event this fall. ALA is requesting to extend the grant through 2021 so that a second in-person meeting can take place.

Sharjah International Library Conference

Right now the Sharjah International Book Fair is still on for this November. IRO is meeting with our partners next week to discuss options and contingency plans for the conference.

Guadalajara Book Fair Free Pass Program

ALA

ALA International Marketing Group

Has been promoting out ALA discounted opportunities to ALA products and services to international audiences.

ALA Presidential Citation for Innovative International Library Projects

Four *ALA Presidential Citations* were selected this year from China, Canada, Taiwan, and Croatia. An article featuring this year's winners will be included in the July issue of *American Libraries*.