
2013 African Library Summit and Beyond

By Araba Dawson-Andoh

“Be careful what you wish for.” This saying was clearly in my thoughts the evening of July 1, 2013, when I arrived at the O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg sleep deprived and tired from the long-haul direct flight from Washington Dulles airport. This fatigue had been aggravated by the frenetic pace preceding the journey: four hectic days at ALA annual in Chicago, a flight full of turbulence from Chicago to Washington Dulles and an hour spent trying to locate the boarding gate for South African Airways. It took a shuttle and two train rides to get to the gate and my fellow traveler Esmeralda Kale and I were the last people to board the flight. These thoughts quickly vanished as soon as the African Library Summit 2013 began.

I had been wanting to attend the African Library Summit since its inception three years ago. It is a conference of library and information professionals from all over Africa designed to move African libraries forward.



Araba Dawson-Andoh, Helena Assamoah-Hassan, and Esmerelda Kale at the Summit.

As an African Studies librarian at Ohio University libraries in Athens, Ohio, and a member of the International Relations Committee Africa Subcommittee, I saw this as an opportunity to enhance my knowledge of African library issues, meet African librarians, and learn more about librarianship on the African continent. It would also expose me to African publishers and provide opportunities to establish relationships with vendors. So when I saw the Summit announcement last fall, I made it a goal to attend

in 2013. This goal became a reality with the generous funding from my institution Ohio University Libraries and the Bogle Pratt International Travel Fund.

The University of South Africa (UNISA) in Pretoria, South Africa, hosted the 2013 Summit, July 3-5. The main theme was “African Librarianship—The Horizon and Beyond.” The third Africa-wide library summit’s stated purpose was to “create an opportunity for established

Message from the Editors

With this issue, we extend a thank-you to Lorie Roy for a successful year as Chair. We also thank Eve Nyren, Past-Chair, for her many years of service on the IRRT Executive Board. We welcome a new IRRT Board and include a message current IRRT Chair, Carol Ritzen Kem, as well as some information about IRRT committee volunteer opportunities from our new Chair-Elect, Robin Kear. We want to give a big thanks to past editor of *International Leads*, Janet Lee. As new co-editors, we greatly appreciate Janet's work for the past two years and are grateful for the advice in editing our first issue.

Our feature article in this issue describes Araba Dawson-Andoh's attendance at the African Library Summit in Pretoria, South Africa, this past July. She describes the informative presentations, the networking opportunities, and her visits to vendors in South Africa and Botswana.

Kevin Murphy, one of the new co-editors, wrote an article on his recent trip to Cuba in

February 2013. He writes of his personal experience in Cuba, the connection created between Cuban and American librarians, and his visits to the Havana Book Fair and Cuban libraries.

We also include news items about the ALA 2013 Presidential Citations for Innovative International Projects and extend congratulations to Susan Schnuer on receiving the ALA John Ames/Humphry/OCLC /Forest Press Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions to international librarianship. The International Relations Committee Report to Council was contributed by the Committee's Chair, Nancy Bolt, providing insight into the Association's international relations programs and initiatives.

We look forward to the opportunity to co-edit *International Leads* and to work with you all, readers and contributors.

~Kevin Murphy and Beth Cramer

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Call for Submission

Do you have news about...

International library activities? People in
international librarianship? Upcoming
international conferences? International
partnerships between libraries?

Then why not submit it to *International Leads*? Send your news to intl.leads.irrt@gmail.com for consideration.

leaders to engage on significant issues in support of quality library and information services and librarianship on the African continent.” The aim was to challenge participants to think outside the box, to create a vision for libraries to remain relevant in the 21st century, and to look to the future. Sponsors were UNISA, IFLA, and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation. There were approximately 250 delegates from 33 countries including the United States. Two other members of the IRC Africa Subcommittee attended the Summit: Esmeralda Kale and Natalia Bowdoin.

The day before the Summit officially began was devoted to registration, optional workshops, and an evening opening cocktail hour, with a keynote speech on inspirational leadership by Professor Clapper of UNISA. Thirty emerging leaders, selected from throughout Africa, were recognized at this function. They were all young librarians and had received funding to attend the Summit from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.

The opening ceremony was held on Wednesday, July 3, and presented an impressive display of tradition and culture. Selected representatives of countries present at the conference marched into the senate hall with their national flags accompanied by traditional African drumming. Professor R.M. Phakeng (the Vice-Principal of Research and Innovation, UNISA) and IFLA’s Secretary General,

Jennifer Nicholson, gave opening remarks with Professor Makhanya (Principal and Vice-Chancellor of UNISA) providing the opening address. The keynote speaker was Dr. Andrew Kaniki from the National Research Foundation of South Africa. All the speakers provided insights on the qualities of successful leadership.

The sub-themes of the summit were leadership, innovation, and cooperation and the way forward; with one day dedicated to the exploration of each topic. The first day focused on leadership. Presentation topics included global leadership, development of multicultural leaders, African leadership systems, and African diaspora LIS leadership. All presentations were followed by open discussion. The afternoon featured a panel discussion on the top ten leadership qualities in the 21st century. Innovation was the focus of the second day and presentations included building, leading, and sustaining the innovative

organization; innovation in the knowledge society within the African context; innovation spaces; and sustainable innovation in the knowledge sector. The final day focused on cooperation and the way forward. Topics included libraries and library networks of the future, and challenges and prospects of e-books on the African continent. Esmeralda Kale of Northwestern University Library and I presented a poster on this theme, entitled “Local is Global: Strategic International Partnerships.” It shared and highlighted the benefits of cooperative projects between African institutions and Africa-related library groups in the United States: the Africana Librarians Council, Cooperative Africana Materials Project (CAMP), and the IRC Africa Subcommittee.

Many of the presentations were very informative. Chris Coward of the University of Washington Information School presented on “Innovation Spaces: from Access to Information to Access



Esmeralda Kale, John Tsebe, and Araba Dawson-Andoh

to Each.” It defined innovation spaces as physical places that foster community, collaboration, and creation. He said the notion behind these spaces is that productivity and creativity are stimulated when people and ideas come into contact with one another, not when they are isolated. He gave an overview of different types of innovation spaces including hackerspaces, makerspaces, and co-working spaces. The presentation also provided practical suggestions for libraries that want to create these spaces for their communities. The presentation on the challenges and prospects of e-books on the African continent reported findings from a survey that showed e-books usage in Africa is very low. Problems and challenges included piracy, security and infrastructure, access to electricity, technology, comfort with print, and lack of affordable e-readers.

Some of the summit highlights for me were the accounts of innovative community library projects in Africa such as services for the blind and deaf and ICT training for children from vulnerable communities. An example was EIFL Public Library Innovation Program (EIFL-PLIP) Manager, Ramune Petuchovaite’s presentation on innovation. EIFL is an international non-profit organization based in Europe that provides access to knowledge in developing and transition countries. Her presentation “Public Libraries: Generating-Implementing-Sustaining” was

illustrated by one of the EIFL-PLIP funded projects, “Mobile Library Internet Service for Development.” This project was implemented by the Ghana Library Authority/Volta Regional Library, with the Director of the of Volta regional library in Ghana presenting. Other highlights were the several networking opportunities with library leaders from Africa including Kay Raseroka, former IFLA President and retired Director of University of Botswana Library; Victoria Okojie, Chair of IFLA Africa section and the Librarians’ Registration Council of Nigeria; Helena Assamoah-Hassan of Ghana; John Tsebe, National Librarian of South Africa; and other national librarians from Namibia, Zambia, Tanzania and Nigeria.

In tune with African culture, there was a lot of celebration and food in the evenings including cocktails, a gala, and a buffet dinner. The celebrations were intertwined with endless speeches and award presentations. One of the awards went to Kitengesa Community Library in Uganda for their social inclusion project, “Including the Deaf Among Those Who Hear.” The award was given by EIFL-PLIP in recognition of the library’s initiative in starting the program for over 100 children in a deaf school. The program has played a vital role in ending the isolation of the children by allowing them to share space with regular library users in computer classes, English language lessons, and playing

games.

After the summit I turned to my other goal for embarking on the trip: visiting African publishers and establishing relationships with vendors in South Africa. Pierre Malan of SABINET, a South African journal aggregator invited Esmeralda and me to tour the SABINET offices in Pretoria and meet with some of the officials including Rosalind Hattingh, the Managing Director. I traveled to Cape Town where I visited Clarkes Book Store, a distributor of African publications. I am now looking forward to setting up an approval plan with Clarkes for my library. Ohio University Libraries is a depository for Botswana materials so I took advantage of its proximity to South Africa and traveled to Gaborone, Botswana, to establish personal relationships with our partners there.

My overall experiences at the summit and beyond—the networking, establishing connections with vendors and colleagues in both South Africa and Botswana, and the knowledge I gained has contributed immensely to my professional and personal growth. My gratitude to the Bogle Pratt International Travel Fund Committee and others who made this trip possible is immeasurable.

For more information about the African Library Summit: <http://www.unisa.ac.za/default.asp?Cmd=ViewContent&ContentID=28174>

Message from the IRRT Chair

Welcome to the 2013-2104 year of IRRT activities. As chair of the round table this year I have the pleasure of working with great board members and dedicated committee volunteers and meeting many of you at conferences or through electronic contacts. This year has already seen some early change as two new co-editors for *International Leads* were appointed to two-year terms, Beth Cramer and Kevin Murphy. Look for their continued work in the months to come. An ad hoc Endowment Committee is reviewing progress toward our required minimum fund level of \$50,000 (we are more than one-half way to our goal) as well as our possible future use of interest generated from the fund. They will present a preliminary report at midwinter and there will be more information in future issues of *IL*. Chair-elect Robin Kear is our appointing officer for the year. You will find her message and call for volunteers for appointment to one of our twelve standing committees in this newsletter. Please consider applying for appointment for

the 2014-2016 cycle and joining other IRRT members as part of the round table leadership core.

Information about plans for the mid-winter meeting in Philadelphia in late January and the Las Vegas ALA conference in June 2014 will be shared in future newsletters. This should be a very good year for IRRT and I am glad you are part of it as a member of the largest round table in ALA.

Again welcome to IRRT. I am honored to serve as chairperson for the 2013-2014 year.

Dr. Carol Ritzen Kem
IRRT Chair

Message from the IRRT Chair-Elect

Welcome to another year of IRRT activities and events! At the ALA 2013 Annual Conference in Chicago, IRRT was well represented with excellent programs, papers, posters, international visitor's center, a great pre-conference and an outstanding reception. All these events were planned and presented by our round table volunteers. Other table

volunteers provided support to IRRT through membership on the publications committee, the membership committee and a variety of other round table committees.

You are invited to join round table member leaders and apply for appointment to an IRRT committee for July 2014 - June 2016. Information about the work of our committees can be found here:

<http://www.ala.org/irrt/irrtcommittees/committees> (Attendance at conferences is not mandatory to participate in the work of most committees.)

IRRT is now using the ALA committee appointment form. You can also complete the form from the committee's webpage.

For priority consideration, please complete the ALA online committee volunteer form by Wednesday October 30, 2013. I plan to complete most committee appointments by the end of November.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Robin Kear
IRRT Chair-Elect

IRRT is Presenting at the Library 2.0 Conference

IRRT will be providing a 1-hour presentation on "Internationalizing Your Library" at the Library 2.013 Conference this month. The presentation—hosted by IRRT Executive Board member John Hickok—will be **Friday, October 18, at 2:00pm PST**. Beneficial for all librarians wanting to bring more international elements to their libraries, this presentation will walk participants through the IRRT Website, highlighting IRRT tools and resources for helping in this process. Whether it is increasing ethnic cultural collections to reflect changing demographics of library users, or establishing a foreign Sister Library to promote cross-cultural awareness, or developing outreach services to international users (students or immigrants), this presentation will offer tips and suggestions to help. To attend the presentation, you must register at the conference (free) here: www.library20.com/2013

ALA Presidential Citations Awarded, 2013



Silvia Gstrein, Coordinator of the EOD network (University of Innsbruck Library); Maureen Sullivan, ALA Past-President (receiving the award on behalf of Osu Children's Library Fund); Amed Demirhan, Director of Library, American University of Nigeria; and Loriene Roy, ALA Past-President.

The International Relations Round Table ([IRRT](#)) formally honored the three recipients of the ALA Presidential Citations for Innovative International Library Projects for 2013 at IRRT's international librarians' reception, held on Monday, July 1, during ALA's 2013 Annual Conference in Chicago. These awards recognize the following exemplary projects:

The **AUN e-Library Project** at the American University of Nigeria Library for transitioning toward a digital library collection that is more cost effective and increases the number of resources available to students and faculty, <http://library.aun.edu.ng/>

The **eBooks on Demand** by the European Network of Libraries for providing digital access to rare and obscure

documents found in 32 libraries in 12 European countries and for creating the eBooks on Demand (EOD) search engine of 3.1 million items that includes a request option that allows participating libraries to request digitization, <http://books2ebooks.eu/en>

The Osu Children's Library Fund for building the **Accra College of Education Community Library** in Accra, Ghana, and for developing a sustainable funding model through a partnership with the Ghana Education Service (GES), <http://www.osuchildrenslibraryfund.ca/about-oclf/libraries/>

The recipients were selected by a team of IRRT members in consultation with ALA President Maureen Sullivan. Jeannette Pierce, chair of the selection committee, said that "each project represents library

services that are innovative, sustainable, and valuable to the communities served. It is a delight to recognize these projects and share them with the global library community."

Susan Schnuer Receives Award for International Librarianship

Susan M. Schnuer is this year's recipient of the American Library Association (ALA) International Relations Committee's John Ames/Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award. Schnuer was recognized at the international librarians reception held on Monday, July 1, 2013, during the ALA annual conference.

Schnuer received the award for her outstanding contributions to international librarianship. Since 1992 she has been affiliated with the University of Illinois' Mortenson Center for International Library Programs and has been essential in the development of its programs and new initiatives.

Schnuer has served in various capacities within ALA, including the chairmanship of the International Relations Round Table (IRRT) and various leadership roles with International Relations committees and programs. In 2011, she was recognized as an IRRT Notable Member.



Susan Schnuer

American Librarians Tour Cuba

By Kevin Murphy

In February of 2013, I took advantage of easing travel restrictions for travel to Cuba, a nation long off-limits to U.S. citizens. The trip, though brief (eight days counting our arrival and departure days), was abundantly rewarding for our 16-member entourage. United States citizens all, we hailed from such dispersed states as Arizona, Maryland, Wisconsin, and Hawaii. The tour, arranged by Toronto-based Authentic Cuba Tours, was targeted at bibliophiles. Over half of us were librarians, and the balance was educators and academics.

The Obama administration now permits U.S. citizens to travel to Cuba provided certain conditions are met. As Treasury Department guidelines state, "Each traveler must have a full-time schedule of educational exchange activities that will result in meaningful interaction between the travelers and individuals in Cuba." Called "people-to-people" travel, it excludes typical tourist activity.

On the first full day of our trip, we attended the Havana International Book Fair, Cuba's premier cultural event. This annual celebration is held in February at the old Spanish fortification of San Carlos de la Cabana, overlooking Havana Harbor.

Cross-cultural experiences challenge our sense of what is "normal" and "expected," and the Book Fair was no exception. Compared to every American



Cuban National Library staff and the American tour group wrap up with a photo session.

book fair I have attended, the Havana International Book Fair was more meditative than celebratory. People waiting to hear an author's lecture were soft-spoken and generally subdued. We found little of the boisterousness typical of Americans. The Fair lacked the concentrated, even packed, quality of every book fair I have attended in the United States. Partially, this was because the grounds of the fortress are sprawling. One could walk considerable distances in near silence and see nothing that said "book fair," only to turn a corner to see people browsing at book displays and sipping refreshments at a canteen.

The children's area had a different tone than the rest of the Book Fair, with children and young adults dancing to piped music. Applause and a generally festive atmosphere contrasted with the adult areas. Nearby rooms contained children's books and activities

appealing to children, such as a pantomime performance.

Purchasing a book proved challenging. Cuba uses a two-tiered currency system: the standard peso that Cubans use and the convertible peso (called CUCs) used by tourists and foreigners living in Cuba. Most of the Book Fair attendees are Cubans who use the standard peso. We came with CUCs, not pesos, and most vendors would not accept CUCs. The U.S. dollar is not accepted currency in Cuba, and credit cards issued by U.S. banks are invalid.

If you plan on attending the Book Fair, my advice is to bring standard pesos instead of CUCs. In addition, find a tour guide that will accompany you throughout the Fair. An even better arrangement might be an English-speaking Book Fair representative to accompany your group.

The next day we visited Ediciones Vigia, a publishing collective where books are written and illustrated by hand, limiting the production of each title to 200. Its director greeted us enthusiastically and spoke about Ediciones Vigia's history and operations.

Back in Havana, we visited the National Literacy Museum, which tells the story of Cuba's mission to eradicate illiteracy. Before 1959 Cuba's literacy rate was about 65 percent, due to limited access to education and a lack of instructors in rural areas. Consequently, the Castro government dubbed 1961 the year of education and sent literacy brigades into the countryside to construct schools, train new educators, and teach the peasantry to read and write. The campaign was a success. In 1961, 707,212 adults were taught to read and write, raising the national literacy rate to 96 percent. When an area was declared free from illiteracy, literacy flags were raised. Examples of these flags are on display at the Museum.

The literacy campaign, like other aspects of Cuban life at that time, was not spared politically-driven violence. There was Conrado Benítez, a volunteer teacher murdered by counter-revolutionaries during the campaign's pilot stage. His name became a rallying cry, and soon literacy instructors working in rural zones were known as Conrado Benítez brigadistas. There is the photo of the campaign's oldest student, who, at 106 years of age, learned to read and write. Remarkably, the youngest teacher was only eight years old.

We visited three libraries during our travels in Cuba. Our first encounter with a Cuban library was at Casa de Las Américas during the third day of our trip. Casa de Las Américas was founded in April, 1959, just months after the successful conclusion of the revolution. They work to develop and extend Cuban socio-cultural relations with Latin America, the Caribbean, and the world by offering support to writers, sculptures, musicians, and other artists.

We also spent an afternoon with staff at the Cuban National Library, the Cuban equivalent of the Library of Congress. My recollection of the initial stages of our group conversation focused on the wide gap that existed between Cuba's urban and rural sectors at the time of the 1959 revolution. Such yawning gaps in education, health, and other factors—typical of many developing countries—were targeted for remediation when the Castro government took power. The government reorganized the libraries with remediation in mind as libraries and schools were built in rural areas, often in areas that previously had no access to either type of institution. The Cuban National Library was created to coordinate this centralized library system.

Our conversations became increasingly open-ended as we discussed such subjects as the educational value of books like *Abraham Lincoln: Vampire Hunter* and efforts to bring widespread broadband internet connectivity to Cuba. I think everyone in the room realized the rather remarkable nature of what was happening: citizens of

the United States conversing with citizens of Cuba. Before leaving we were given an in-depth tour of the library's facilities.

The following morning we journeyed to Cienfuegos, on Cuba's southern coast, where we visited the local provincial public library. After introductory comments, we visited the rare books and archives department, where we saw books published as long ago as 1759, along with decades-old Cuban newspapers. We then learned about the library's organization and circulation. The Cienfuegos Provincial Library is the headquarters library for the province, also named Cienfuegos. It administers seven municipal libraries and 19 branch libraries. This provincial public library system is one of a number of such systems overseen by the Cuban National Library. The Cienfuegos Provincial Library System has 265,230 card-holding patrons and owns a total of 344,030 items. They provide services to seniors, hospitals, remote villages, the prison, and the business community.

Cienfuegos essentially wrapped up the tour's bibliographic aspects. A few days later each of us was back on United States soil, but with a cornucopia of memories. Cuba's standing as one of the most unique countries in Latin America makes this island nation an excellent travel choice for the intellectually curious. More information can be found at kevworl.d.blogspot.com

International Relations Committee Report to Council

Submitted by Nancy Bolt

International Librarians and International Activities at Annual

Almost 600 international members and colleagues from 80 countries traveled to Chicago to participate in this year's conference. The International Relations Round Table (IRRT) welcomed them with an orientation, and continued to provide assistance at the International Visitor's Lounge, and through the IRRT mentoring program.

More than 40 international colleagues have enlightened attendees on a wide variety of topics this year. Some of the many international-focused programs included "Ebooks in Europe," "Libraries Transform Lives in Brazil," "Public Libraries in China Today," "International Inter-Library Loan," and a preconference, "**Innovative Library Services and Programs in Digital Era.**" In addition, 20 international poster sessions yesterday afternoon featured ideas and best practices from countries such as Germany, Peru, Nigeria, and Taiwan.

WIPO Treaty for Improved Access for People Who Are Blind, Visually Impaired, and with Other Print Disabilities

At Midwinter Council passed a resolution supporting a World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Treaty to assist the Library Copyright Alliance in its efforts to get the U.S. delegation to WIPO to support a treaty that will achieve the goals of libraries. Despite early predictions of failure because of strong opposition from the motion picture association, supporters of the treaty prevailed and the treaty was passed. Carrie Russell, ALA's representative to WIPO, commented: "By passing what is an exception to copyright, WIPO demonstrated that there is international support for balance in copyright law. We applaud the world delegates for approving a treaty that makes it possible for every visually impaired person around the world to have fair access to reading materials."

ALA Representation at IFLA

The International Relations Committee (IRC) was thrilled to learn that ALA member Donna Scheeder, from the Library of Congress, was elected the new President-elect of IFLA. Scheeder will serve as President-elect for two years and as President for two years. She will be the first IFLA President from the U.S. since Robert Wedgeworth finished his term in 1997. She will be only the third U.S. President in IFLA's 85-year history.

The IRC would also like to congratulate ALA Councilor Loida Garcia-Febo on her election to a two-year term on IFLA's Governing Board. She will join fellow ALA U.S. members Lynne Rudasill, Russell Lynch, and Clara Chu on the twenty-member board. The IRC is also pleased to report that 23 of 25 members nominated by ALA through various units were elected to four-year terms (2013-2017) to IFLA Section Committees.

Canada

Following expressions of concern by Canadian members at Midwinter, the IRC worked with ALA President Maureen Sullivan to send a letter to James Moore, Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, supporting the Canadian Library Association's (CLA) request to have the Library and Archives of Canada's (LAC) revisit its *Code of Conduct* order. The order could be used to restrict LAC staff from teaching and speaking at conferences and other public engagements. ALA President Sullivan received a response from Minister Moore that stated the *Code* does not preclude LAC staff from engaging in external activities/speaking engagements on their "personal time." At the same time that the letter was received, the head of the LAC resigned. When a new leader of LAC is appointed, ALA will seek further clarification on LAC's *Code*.

IRC Nominations

IRC nominated and the Executive Board approved three appointments to three international committees. John Berry was appointed as the ALA representative to the American Library in Paris. This library builds a collection and offers programs in Paris about the US. Fred Stielow was appointed as the ALA representative to the US National Commission of UNESCO. Nancy Kraft was appointed to the US Committee of Blue Shield that focuses on preservation of historical artifacts, particularly in disasters.

Creation of International Relations Coordinating Group

Following the Advocacy Coordinating Group model, IRC has created an International Libraries Coordinating Council, which held its first conference call. Members of the group represent IRC regional subcommittee groups, IRRT, CALA, ALCTS, ACRL, and REFORMA.

Costa Rica Library Tour

In collaboration with People to People, a library tour to Costa Rica is being offered this fall, November 30-December 7. ALA Past-President Camila Alire will be the leader of the delegation for those interested in a professional travel experience. This is the first of three travel opportunities in the next three years. For more information on the tour, visit <http://www.ala.org/offices/people-people-library-tour-costa-rica>.
