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International Librarians Networking Program: Report from IRRT-Sponsored Group E of the 2020 ALA Emerging Leaders

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The [March 2020 issue](#) of *International Leads* introduced the truly remarkable members of Group E of the 2020 class of ALA Emerging Leaders (EL) pictured below:



From left to right: Shayla Boyce (Branch Manager, Cleveland Public Library), Jesse Caldwell (Teen Librarian, Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County), Damiana Fortenberry (Library Associate, Gwinnett

County Public Library), Lauren Frazier (Children's Services Librarian, Monterey Park Bruggemeyer Library), Zoë McLaughlin (South and Southeast Asia Librarian, Michigan State University Libraries), and Érica Saito (Library and Information Specialist, International Food Policy Research Institute).

This year's group focused on the [International Librarians Networking Program \(ILNP\) project](#) that was originally planned by the IRRT-sponsored Emerging Leaders 2019 Group G, but was not implemented because of time limitations. EL 2020 Group E took up the task to build on the ground-work done by Group G and launch an initial partner group.

When the article for the March issue was submitted, Group E was completing the marketing campaign and recruiting the participants; see the copies of the colorful flyers in different languages in the March issue. The group took advantage of different social networking tools and international professional email lists to post the announcement and spread information about the call for applicants.

More than 450 library workers from 70 countries applied to participate in the program. Group E planned originally to have a first cohort of 30-50 collaborating peers, but the overwhelming interest prompted the group to accommodate as many participants as possible. More than 80 pairs of library employees were identified. Applicants were surveyed to confirm their ability to participate and subsequently [50 pairs from 46 different countries](#) were admitted into the program. The participants came from Asia, Africa, North America, South America, Europe, and Australia. The participants also represent a full range of libraries, from national and academic to public and school.

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International Librarians Networking Program, continued

Once pairs were formed, Group E members began the process of sending monthly emails with questions and topics for discussion, as well as encouragement to pursue interests unique to the individual partnership. Each pair was also assigned a liaison from Group E to facilitate further communication and manage any problems that might occur. One responsibility of the liaisons was to take care of participants in case a partner needed to leave the program, matching the remaining partner with another participant, which occasionally resulted in groups of three.

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to present a major barrier to any sort of travel, but it has been heartening to see through this program how productive relationships can be established even at a distance. Pairs have found that they have much in common and have been able to collaborate in developing ideas for programming for underserved youth or using digital spaces to connect with the library community.

Mid-program Survey

Participants showed their satisfaction with the program in the results from a mid-program survey, calling the experience “eye-opening,” “quite amazing,” and “innovative.” Participants provided recommendations on how the matching process could be improved, noting the importance of considering the same level of education and experience as well as common interests. There were also suggestions to consider the countries of origin and match someone from a developed country to a partner from a developing country to have more productive exchange. There were suggestions of increasing the number of matched partners to three or more, which has already been experimented by Group E. All members of Group E received very valuable suggestions of being more active as liaisons and step in when needed, mostly when one of the partners was not responsive or engaged.

There were a lot of suggestions to have a joint online meeting for the opportunity to meet the other participants. Some of the survey respondents suggested extending the program beyond 4 months, and/or hold it twice a year. Future rounds of the program would benefit from a more robust matching strategy to account for communication needs and expectations described above. A continued emphasis on representing as broad a range of nationalities as possible will help this program maintain its international focus and allow for ever-strengthening relationships and exchange of knowledge, skills and experiences across borders.



Participants joined from 46 countries on every continent except Antarctica.

This first round of the ILNP program ended in late August. A detailed report will be presented to the IRRT Executive Board in late October and to the Emerging Leaders program at ALA’s 2021 Annual Conference in Chicago. A proposal concerning the creation of a separate designated subcommittee within IRRT to run this program and provide sustainability will be submitted to the IRRT Executive Board by the end of 2020.

Reflections by Group E Members and IRRT Advisor

It is important to mention that this program was a first pilot and Group E did not have any specific guidance or data of previous cohorts to build on. EL Group G passed along all the materials of their research and the groundwork towards preparation of the program, but Group E had quite a difficult task of marketing, recruiting participants, launching the program and seeing it through in the original time frame (February through June 2020). However, they agreed to extend the timeline and stay with the program beyond August to complete the project. They truly built a strong foundation for this work to move forward in the future and bring new cohorts of international library professionals to collaborate and share their knowledge and experiences.

Several important characteristics of the project are summarized below, with details in the members’ own words.

The project ran during the COVID-19 pandemic, which had personal and professional impacts on the group members and participants but did not pause the project. Regular weekly meetings to discuss and progress the project demonstrated their dedication.

It’s been difficult and interesting, to say the least. Our group had some interesting situations going on with our group members in addition to COVID-19 difficulties, as two of our group members went through the

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International Librarians Networking Program, continued

program expecting their first child. Organization and frequent communication were the two things that I would say kept us on track the most. We met almost every Friday evening since January in order to ensure that we were able to communicate clearly with one another and kept records that we shared with one another so everyone knew what was going on at any given moment.

Even though the Emerging Leaders program ended in June, Group E unanimously decided to work together until this first cohort's experience had completed.

As a group it was important that the pilot wasn't abandoned in the middle of the program. When the group decided that each team member was going to be a facilitator for their assigned pairs, then our team had an honest conversation about what each person could commit to.

Group E selected a team leader (Érica Saito) to coordinate the project, but even though specific roles and responsibilities were not designated, they emerged quite naturally from the strengths and talents of each member and built to a common goal. *It is very fortunate that the team hasn't had any issues working together. The team doesn't have defined roles, but each group member stepped into roles based on their talents. Érica stepped up as the group leader, and she has worked diligently to keep the project on track. Lauren has kept us all connected via Zoom. Jesse crafted all of the marketing flyers. Damiana and Zoë have been the voice of the program by crafting almost all of the emails that were sent to participants. These brief descriptions barely describe all of the roles each member has played over the last seven months. Our team is very lucky to have so much talent.*

The large pool of more than 450 candidates prompted Group E to accommodate 100 applicants and divided the pairs among themselves. This was a large undertaking that required a lot of effort, and future rounds of partnerships should have fewer pairs.

Staying organized using spreadsheets and other tools was a big part of what helped me help participants going through the program. Pairs were formed initially with the idea of diversity in mind. We wanted to match library professionals with similar professional experience, so we tried to

pair those in certain types of libraries with others who had self-reported experience in those libraries. Aside from that criteria, we tried very hard to keep the geographic diversity of the pairs intact. It was important to us that each individual in the program was given the opportunity to meet someone from a different country in order for there to be the maximum potential for professional learning.

Group E demonstrated many strengths that contributed to their success: time management, accurate planning, high work ethics, always testing before actual actions were taken, and mutual respect. There were also several lessons learned to help the leaders of the next time this program is run.

The success of the program exceeded any expectations we had going into this project. Very early on when we were drafting the marketing plan, we questioned if anyone was even going to be interested. Needless to say the response was phenomenal, and the participants' excitement and dedication blew us all away.

One of the most important outcomes of a pilot program is assessing where the pain points are. I think one of the most common pain points we have heard about is our matching of participants and communication between them. We may be able to improve on how we match participants together and how we can keep them engaged with each other. Improvements can include creating a more detailed survey for possible participants so we can learn more about them and requiring more frequent communication between facilitators and participants.

Immaculate record keeping is going to be the best tool at anyone's disposal to keep things going smoothly and keep productivity in motion. I also think being clear as a facilitator about what expectations there are in regards to how frequently partners should be communicating with one another can reduce a certain level of surprise or disappointment from participants.

The reflections and lessons learned by Group E will pave the way for future cohorts to experience the benefits of these partnerships.

###

Congratulations on a successful project



Muzhgan Nazarova, IRRT Advisor to Group E

[INLP Partner Story]

Mulugeta W/Tsadik, Librarian from Hawassa University in Ethiopia, was partnered with Gwen M. Gregory, Clinical Associate Professor and Head, Resource Acquisitions and Management Department, University of Illinois at Chicago, and reflected on his experiences in the program on his [blog](#).

Message from the Editors

Welcome to the third issue of 2020. We hope you all are staying healthy in this on-going pandemic. Did you participate in “ALA Virtual” this year? Although it was certainly not the same as attending in person, hopefully many of you took advantage of the many online sessions to refresh and recharge your professional spirit in these trying times.

This issue has reports from several interesting webinars, including one about libraries re-opening during COVID-19; Councilor report from ALA Annual (ALA Virtual this year); and most importantly a summary of the work of our Emerging Leaders group on their International Librarians Networking Program.

We have new IRRT Officers and want to take a moment to acknowledge them. We welcome Jim Neal as Chair Elect, and Yan (Grace) Liu as new Member-at-Large. Thank you to Richard Sapon-White and Florence Mugambi for their service as Chair and Member-at-Large, respectively, this past year.

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

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 over 10 years of experience as a librarian. She has a strong interest in literacy & establishment of libraries in rural communities of developing countries. She is the chair-elect of the Africana Librarians Council, coordinate organization of the African Studies Association.



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Message from IRRT Chair



Alexandra Houzouri Humphreys

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Welcome to another challenging year for international librarianship. The trials of the second half of the 2019-20 academic year are not behind us, but hopefully we will now have the necessary experience and tools for success until we return to normalcy.

Despite recent obstacles, IRRT had a busy year, including two programs presented at the ALA Virtual meeting. The IRRT Chair's program featured two library leaders, Christine Mackenzie, IFLA President, and Merve Yavuzdemir, Branch Manager of Foreign Relations for the Turkish Republic, both of whom spoke about social changes in their respective communities. The second IRRT program, entitled "Expanding Worldviews: How Libraries Create Awareness of the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Inspire Change," was organized by the International Papers and Projects Committee. The presenters discussed the role of libraries in achieving UN Sustainable Development Goals, such as gender equality, quality education, health, and others.

Due to the pandemic, the Pre-Conference Committee that was scheduled to present at the ALA Annual Conference shifted to virtual mode and hosted [a three-part series of webinars](#) in July and August. In June, the Webinar Committee's quick reaction to the pandemic resulted in a series of sessions on reopening libraries around the world. This would not have been possible without the dedication, hard work, and ingenuity of the members of the above-mentioned committees, the presenters, and the IRRT staff. You will find more information about last year's activities in the recap by Richard Sapon-White, the immediate IRRT past chair, whose organizational skills helped navigate these virtual events in the midst of the pandemic crisis.

Additional Updates

IRRT committee chairs worked on updating the IRRT Manual last year. After some additional revisions, it will soon be ready for you on the IRRT website: <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt>.

The Nominating Committee will soon start to work on a slate of candidates for several IRRT Executive Board positions, such as secretary/treasurer, round table councilor, member-at-large, and chair-elect. If you are interested in serving in any of these positions, contact Muzhgan Nazarova (minazarova@gmail.com), Chair of the Nominating Committee.

The Emerging Leaders 2020 group project titled "International Librarians' Networking Program" was scheduled to run through June, but due to high enthusiasm it extended its work through 31 August. More information about its activities can be found in the lead article of this issue.

For more information on our activities, check the IRRT [website](#), [blog](#), and [Facebook](#), all maintained by the Publication Committee.

The IRRT Executive Board continues to conduct monthly Zoom meetings. I would like to take this opportunity and welcome our new Chair-Elect and former ALA President James Neal, and our new Member-at-Large Yan (Grace) Liu, a 2018 member of the ALA Emerging Leaders. Richard Sapon-White continues his IRRT engagement as Past Chair, as does IRRT Secretary/Treasurer Julia Gelfand, Member-at-Large Mark Mattson, and Round Table Counselor Sandy Hirsh.

We are one of the largest Round Tables in ALA and we look forward to working with you to make things happen!

Message from IRRT Chair Elect



Jim Neal

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It is an honor to participate in the work of IRRT. I have been a member for over twenty years, and have been very involved in library international programs and services throughout my career. IRRT, through its innovative and leading projects and activities, has sustained and advanced the partnership of ALA's members with library colleagues throughout the world.

We face a radically changed world and the requirement that we explore and implement new ways to communicate, learn and share across the global library community. ALA is confronted with deep financial and organizational challenges. The four core sources of funding, that is conferences, membership, publishing, and fundraising, are threatened. Forward Together outlines a path to rethink and refresh the governance and organization of the Association.

Libraries of all types around the world face budget reductions and the mandate to reconceptualize our services, spaces, and access to information. It means we need a new vision of how the world's libraries and the library professional organizations will work together.

During my tenure on the IRRT Executive Board, I will work with our members to maintain our strong programs, and to encourage new thinking and planning for our future priorities and strategies. I look forward to a thriving IRRT future.

###

*Jim is University Librarian Emeritus at Columbia University.
He was ALA President from 2017-2018.*

Call for IRRT Executive Board Nominations

The IRRT Nominating Committee is looking for people who are passionate about international librarianship and are willing to serve as Executive Board members. Responsibilities will start at the ALA Annual 2021 convention and continue through 2023.

IRRT's Executive Board meets monthly through virtual meetings to discuss IRRT related issues which includes those that arise through the various committees and the ones related to international aspects of ALA work as a whole, and work on solutions. Face-to-face meetings take place whenever ALA conference will be non-virtual.

Preference is given to candidates with prior committee experience within IRRT and a track record of contribution to the IRRT mission.

Vice Chair/Chair Elect (2021-2024)

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

According to 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.

Member-at-large (2021-2023)

Secretary-treasurer (2021-2023)

The Member-at-Large and Secretary-treasurer positions last two years contributing information and wider perspectives from the field.

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.

Nominate yourself or someone you know by sending an email to the Nominating Committee Chair, Muzhgan Nazarova, at minazarova@gmail.com. Nominations for Executive Board are only accepted via email.

###

Not ready for an Executive Board position yet? There are many other opportunities to serve in IRRT Committees.

IRRT Committee Opportunities: <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtcommittees/committees>

Committee volunteer form: http://www.ala.org/aboutala/committees/volunteer/frm_vol

IRRT Thrives in 2019-2020: Successes Amid Challenges

By Richard Sapon-White, IRRT Immediate Past Chair

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As IRRT Chair in 2019-2020, I would like to provide you, our members, with a quick review of some of our successes last year. Despite the advent of the COVID-19 pandemic and the cancellation of ALA Annual, IRRT was still able to deliver quality programming and continue our many services for our members.

The IRRT Executive Board took a number of actions that will strengthen the round table and enable us to grow. After a year and a half as an ad hoc committee, the Board approved making our Webinar Committee a standing committee. Providing web-based programming on timely topics is now more important than ever. See below for some of the webinars we were able to provide this past year.

The board finalized the text for a revised IRRT Officers Manual. The manual is currently being formatted and should be posted to our website this fall. Thanks are due to our committee members and chairs as well as our board for completing this necessary task.

Other board actions include: approving revised criteria for the Mission Enhancement Grants; again sponsoring Emerging Leaders (this year's project is reported in this issue of *International Leads*); and the decision not to host a meet-and-greet for international visitors at ALA Midwinter due to low attendance in the past. (Please note: Midwinter meet-and-greet has nothing to do with the always well-attended International Reception we host at ALA Annual and which all look forward to each year!)

When ALA Annual was cancelled and transformed into ALA Virtual, our committees worked together to bring speakers and programs virtually to IRRT members, the ALA membership, and the world at large. Both the IRRT Chair's Program and the International Papers and Projects Session were presented during ALA Virtual. Working with the Webinar Committee, the IRRT Preconference changed into a series of three webinars offered in July and August. All focused on the theme of libraries as social change engines. If you missed any of the webinars – or any of the other IRRT webinars offered earlier this year, including six about the COVID-19 pandemic and libraries – you can still watch them anytime at <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/initiatives>.

Finally, on 30 June, the ALA Citation Awards for Innovative International Projects were presented virtually. In addition to celebrating these pioneering projects, members of the International Visitors Committee wrapped up the festivities with an online trivia game with an international twist. What a fitting ending to a successful year!

I would like to thank again all of our hard-working committees, chairs, and officers for making this year a special one. A very special thank you to our ALA Office liaison, Delin Guerra, and IRO director Michael Dowling. You all rock!

Wishing everyone a healthy and productive year in 2020-2021.

Connect with IRRT

Email: ala.intl.leads@gmail.com

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

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

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/International-Relations-Round-Table-244416388965473/>

Libraries re-opening during COVID-19: Webinar report

Gina de Abwis and Laila Moustafa, Co-Chairs of IRRT Webinar Committee (ginadealwis@gmail.com)

The IRRT Webinar committee organized in June an informative and timely series of five free webinars on the topic of libraries' responses to COVID-19. The webinar series was titled "Libraries Reopening: A Perspective of Best Practices from around the World in the Time of COVID-19."

The webinar series comprised nine presentations over five days and included academic and public library perspectives from Australia, Germany, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and Sweden; insights into how the countries in the IFLA Latin American Section are addressing concerns; an overview of prevention and sanitization of library items and facilities and the situation in the Arab region; and a brief look at re-opening strategies adopted by 32 countries and territories based on a repository of documentation collected by IFLA.

The webinar series was well received by the LIS community. The presentations and the interactions demonstrated the resilience and innovativeness of the librarians in coping with the COVID-19 pandemic whilst grappling with preparing for the new normal, the 'new settings.'

The recordings of the webinars may be accessed at the [ALA IRRT Webinar Website](#). Other useful resources include [Australian libraries responding to COVID-19 pandemic](#); and, the Appendix to the IFLA Library Re-Opening Strategies Around the World that includes a [List of Plans from 32 countries and territories](#).

Please note: The best practices for libraries during the COVID-19 pandemic presented in the webinars may differ from those in your country, state, or library. IRRT does not specifically recommend or endorse any of these practices.

Date	Presenter/ Affiliation/ Topic
4 June 2020	<p>Labibah Zain, Head, College Library, State Islamic University, Yogyakarta, Indonesia. "Re-opening Library Toward New Normal Era: Case of UIN Sunan Kalijaga Library, Yogyakarta, Indonesia"</p> <p>Dr. Juan Miguel Palma Peña, Latin American and Caribbean section, IFLA & National Autonomous University of Mexico, Mexico. "Libraries and COVID-19: Cases and Perspectives of Latin America"</p> <p>Vanessa Little, Executive Branch Manager, Libraries, ACT, Australia. "Australian Libraries: COVID-19 Responses"</p>
5 June 2020	<p>Stephane Ipert, Director, Qatar-IFLA Preservation & Conservation (PAC) Center for Arab countries & Middle East, Qatar National Library, Doha-Qatar "Arabic Libraries at the Time of the COVID-19: How to Avoid Contamination"</p> <p>Stephen Wyber, Manager, Policy and Advocacy, IFLA, Netherlands. "Re-Opening the Doors, Around the World: an International Perspective"</p>
11 June 2020	<p>Catharina Isberg, Director, Helsingborg City Libraries, Helsingborg, Sweden. "A Public Library During Corona: an example from Helsingborg City Libraries"</p> <p>Anya Feltreuter, Library Director, Mjölby Public Library, Mjölby, Sweden. "COVID-19 in Mjölby Public Library"</p>
16 June 2020	<p>Prof. Dr. Ulrich Johannes Schneider, Director, & Ms. Caroline Bergter, Public Relations Officer, Leipzig University Library, Germany. "Leipzig University Library in Corona Times"</p>
17 June 2020	<p>Peter Sudorku, University Librarian; Dr. Esther Woo, Deputy University Librarian; Michael Cheng, Associate Librarian (Engagement and Lending Services); & Tina Yang, Associate Librarian (Learning & Research Services), University of Hong Kong. "Libraries Reopening: Perspectives and Practices at The University of Hong Kong"</p>

UN SDGs and World Refugee Day : Webinar report

Webinars have taken on a new importance during COVID-19, as a means to transmit information and share experiences. Two very timely webinars on important topics took place in June.

UN Sustainable Development Goals

On 9 June, the ALA Task Force on United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) hosted a webinar titled “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.” [The webinar is available to watch online.](#)

Loida Garcia-Febo, ALA Chair, UN 2030 Sustainable Development Goals Task Force and ALA Immediate Past President, hosted and moderated the webinar. Library association leaders in Australia, France, and Germany presented inspiring stories about how libraries in these countries are helping communities meet the UN SDGs and the websites they have created to share these stories.

The speakers were:

- Athanasios Giannakopoulos, Director, The Dag Hammarskjöld Library at the United Nations, New York
- Vicki McDonald, State Librarian and Chief Executive Officer, State Library of Queensland, Australia. Australian Library and Information Association President 2017-2018. Chair, Professional Committee at IFLA
- Raphaëlle Bats, International Relations Officer of the National School of Libraries and Information Sciences (Enssib), CFIBD Governing Board member
- Hella Klauser, Internationale Kooperation, German Library Association, Deutscher Bibliotheksverband e.V., Kompetenznetzwerk für Bibliotheken

World Refugee Day

On 18 June 2020, the [Mortenson Center for International Library Programs](#) and the [American Library Association](#) hosted a webinar – “[From Refugee to Librarian: In our own words](#)”, moderated by Clara M. Chu, Director, Mortenson Center for International Library Programs, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Li-

brary. The webinar was scheduled to coincide with the United Nations’ World Refugee Day on 20 June, which honors the courage, strength, and determination of women, men and children who are forced to flee their homeland under threat of persecution, conflict, and violence.

The abstract of the webinar stated: As librarians we have worked to create welcoming spaces and services for refugees. We have learned about them in order to support their resettlement and integration. The refugee stories we read about come from the communities we serve. How about the refugee stories that come from our own professional and academic community? In this webinar, we give voice to refugees who have become librarians or library educators. They will share their journey from persecution to resettlement to professional career, giving the listener a glimpse into their experiences of struggle, resilience, hope and belonging.

The panelists were:

- [Constantia Constantinou](#), H. Carton Rogers III Vice Provost and Director, Penn Libraries
- [Touger Vang](#), Director, Montgomery Community College Library

Co-sponsors: Mortenson Center for International Library Programs, ALA Office for Diversity, Literary and Outreach Services, ALA International Relations Office, ALA Services to Refugees, Immigrants, and Displaced Persons (SRIDP) Sub-Committee, and ALA International Relations Round Table.

Learn more about how your library can get involved by visiting [ALA’s World Refugee Day page](#) as well as the [Mortenson Center for International Library Programs](#).

###

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

IRRT Councilor Update—ALA Annual 2020

By Sandy Hirsch, IRRT Councilor

(sandy.hirsch@sjsu.edu)

This column reports on some of the major topics addressed at ALA Council meetings at the 2020 ALA Annual Virtual meeting “Community Through Connection” and how I, as your IRRT Councilor, represent IRRT interests.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the ALA Annual conference was held virtually for the first time in ALA’s history with nearly 7,400 people participating. ALA Council meetings were also held virtually and were well attended. Since the Council meetings were held before and after the conference – rather than during the conference – Councilors were able to also attend ALA conference programs. See [Council documents here](#).

During Council meetings, one of the major topics of discussion was the ALA budget. As part of ALA Treasurer Maggie Farrell’s budget update (ALA CD#13.2/3), she discussed the financial challenges facing ALA and reviewed preliminary strategies for remedying the deficit, such as staff furlough days. Council was particularly concerned about staff furloughs and asked several questions about how ALA might reduce or eliminate these. At Council III, Maggie also shared ALA financial questions and responses (ALA CD#48). An Operating Agreement Workgroup will be appointed at the June 30th Executive Board meeting and they will bring forward recommendations for Council to consider in 2021. There will be a special Council meeting held in early fall for a budget update.

ALA Council engaged in historic votes with regard to ALA divisions. ALA Council voted to dissolve ALCTS, LITA, LLAMA divisions and to approve a new division called Core: Leadership, Infrastructure, Futures. ALA Council also voted to dissolve ASGCLA division and to allocate ASGCLA components to respective ALA Units.

In addition to these important focus areas, ALA Council spent a significant amount of time discussing the timeline and next steps for Forward Together: Steering Committee on Organizational Effectiveness (SCOPE) (ALA CD#42). After much discussion, Council approved an amended resolution whereby Council takes responsibility for the decision making on the Forward Together process. ALA Council requested that the ALA Executive Board present the SCOPE Report with specific action items and a draft timeline to ALA Council along with consolidated feedback from the various

conversation sessions, hearings, and email commentary prior to a fall meeting. The President will call at least one meeting of ALA Council in the Fall prior to the Midwinter Meeting to discuss changes to the structure of ALA governance and plans for a Constitutional Convention. ALA Council also requested the Forward Together Working Group and the Forward Together Fiscal Analysis Working Group to provide regular, ongoing formal updates to ALA Council for discussion prior to ALA Annual Conference in Chicago in 2021. ALA Council requested that the timeline include scheduling a Constitutional Convention before and during the ALA Annual Conference in Chicago in 2021.

In addition to these major topics, Council also discussed and took action on the following.

ALA Council I

Council heard a report from Executive Director Tracie Hall who reviewed Executive Board Actions since the 2020 Midwinter Meeting (ALA CD #15.2).

Nominations for the 2020-2021 Council Committee on Committees and 2020 Planning and Budget Assembly Election were presented (ALA CD#12).

Council received the Resolutions Committee Report (ALA CD#10.2) from Mike Marlin. We discussed two resolutions. A resolution on Protecting Privacy and Safety in Coronavirus-related Library Policy (ALA CD#43) was approved. A resolution on Developing Library Security Policies in keeping with ALA Policy (ALA CD#45) was discussed but was withdrawn so it could be worked on further; a revised version of this resolution was brought forward at Council III and was approved.

Tracie Hall announced the retirement of former ALA Interim Executive Director Mary Ghikas after three decades of service to the American Library Association. She also announced that Mary Ghikas was the recipient of the prestigious Joseph W. Lippincott Award.

ALA Council II

Council voted to add language to the Constitution (ALA CD#25.1) which clarifies that both Council and membership meetings may be held electronically and that voting through electronic means may take place at those meetings.

Council heard a report from the Committee on Legislation (ALA CD#20.3).

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IRRT Councilor Update—ALA Annual 2020, continued

Council heard a report from the International Relations Committee (ALA CD#18.2). A few highlights:

- Most of the international programs have been postponed until Annual 2021 to provide an opportunity for presenters to attend an Annual Conference in person.
- Under the leadership of ALA Past-President and IRRT Past-Chair Loida Garcia-Febo, the newly created Task Force on the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals 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.
- ALA International Relations Roundtable (IRRT) Webinar Committee ran a series of six free webinars (June 4-June 17) focusing on perspectives from libraries around the world dealing with COVID-19.

Council heard a report from the Intellectual Freedom Committee (ALA CD#19.6-19.10). The Resolution Condemning Police Violence Against BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People Of Color), Protesters, and Journalists (ALA CD#19.9) was approved by Council.

Council also received the Freedom to Read Foundation report (ALA CD#22.1).

ALA Council III

Council began the meeting by passing 16 memorial resolutions and 11 tribute resolutions, including ones for Mary Ghikas (ALA CD T#8) and ALA Staff (ALA CD T#10).

The Tellers Report presented the election results for the Committee on Committees (COC) and Planning and Budget Assembly (PBA) (ALA CD#12.1).

LeRoy LaFleur, Melissa Cardenas-Dow, Leslie Preddy, and Eric Suess were elected to one-year terms on COC. Sam Helmick and Jack Martin were elected PBA chapter councilors, and Louis Muñoz Jr., Kymberly Keeton, and Susan Gregory were elected PBA councilors-at-large.

Council referred a resolution Condemning US Media Corporations' Abridgement of Free Speech to the International Relations Committee and Intellectual Freedom Committee and asked them to report back at the 2021 Midwinter Conference (ALA CD#46).

Council did not support a resolution on Financial Autonomy and Collaboration among ALA Management, Divisions, Roundtables (ALA CD#47).

Council passed an amended resolution on Developing Library Security Policies in keeping with ALA Policy (ALA CD#45).

Tracie Hall shared recent ALA Statements on [Affirming rights of transgender people](#) and [Taking responsibility for ALA's past racism](#) and pledging a more equitable association.

You can read more about what happened at ALA Annual (including other Council actions) here:

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/ala-council-holds-first-virtual-session/>

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/council-ii-ala-divisions-dissolved-merged/>

<https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/council-iii-memorials-resolutions-scoe/>

If you have any questions, please reach out to me through the IRRT Executive Committee.



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 Susanne List-Tretthahn, Austrian Library Association, Austria

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

Susanne: Thank you very much Ray. I work for the Austrian Library Association and head the Department for Education and further Education. We provide library training and further training in specific topics of the library work for librarians working in public libraries as well as for trainees and students. We design – together with partners in the library field – trainings for librarians, organize and coordinate them, and handle the financial part. We also advise librarians on the courses they can take.

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

Susanne: I started my career working for a bookshop in the center of Vienna. After my traineeship in the book trade I went to University to study Comparative Literature and German Studies. I worked for the University of Klagenfurt on a project about the Austrian writer Robert Musil, worked for small publishing houses, and did an internship at the Austrian National Library. After the internship I decided I wanted to further specialize and did my library training by studying Library and Information Studies at the University of Vienna and the Austrian National Library. After finalizing my exams I applied for a job at the Library Association and started there almost six years ago.

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

Susanne: I think we are facing a lot of topics in the library field and most of them we face together, like copyright law, especially regarding e-books and e-lending, a hot topic in Europe at the moment. For my field of work in education we are working on providing guidelines and frameworks to make sure librarians get the best training they possibly can. We updated the curriculum for volunteer librarians last year and the one for trainee librarians this year. Another topic for us is e-learning where we started with our first course “Digital Library” this summer. We are looking to expand the offer.

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

Susanne: I think it is always important to keep an open mind and to learn from each other. I have seen that one can take a lot of courses, but visiting conferences, getting in touch with colleagues, talking to each other, learning from other projects, libraries and librarians can do so much more.

I am quite passionate about public libraries and the services they provide as well as the people working there. I would love to see a change in the perception of working in a library – being a librarian – as a profession in the public eye worldwide. After all we live in a globalized world.

This is also why I like working on projects of the IFLA NPSIG – you get a lot of opportunity to work quite 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?

Susanne: At the moment we are looking to extend our international programs for librarians. We started in 2017 with a cooperation in Scotland followed by a cooperation with ALA one year later which was highly successful and enabled us to send one librarian for a one month experience to a public library in the US. We followed up by a project in Finland. At the moment we are exploring options all over Europe to see where the travels will take us and the Austrian librarians!

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Susanne is a Member of the VOEB Commission for Education and further Education since 2017. She is a new Associate of the IFLA New Professionals Special Interest Group.



Susanne List-Tretthahn (© BVÖ/Andreas Lochmatter)