

International Leads

A Publication of the International Relations Round Table of the American Library Association

Volume 14

December 2000

Number 4

Toward Sustainable Library Development: The Inform the World Librarian Volunteer Program

By Phyllis Hytinen

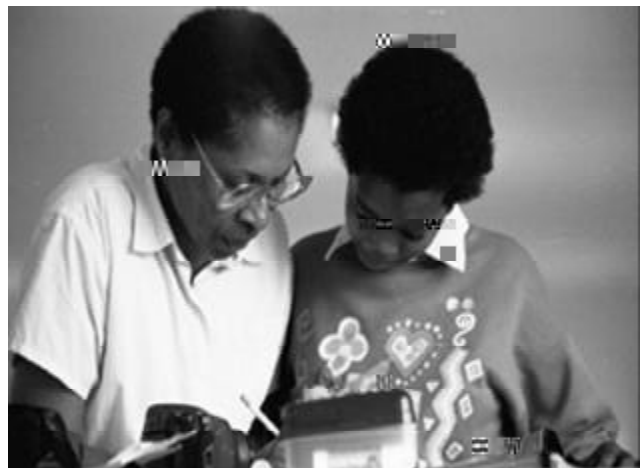
The Inform the World (ITW) Librarian Volunteer Program works with local coordinating organizations by placing U. S. volunteer librarians in the rural African libraries. The volunteer librarians provide hands-on assistance and training to the community volunteers who run the libraries in these areas and often have little or no training in library management. The U. S. volunteer librarians work side-by-side with them solving problems in basic library management. Together, they develop the personal understanding in creating long-term library partnerships after the ITW volunteers return home.

The goal of ITW is to foster sustainable library development. Laura Wendell, founder and director of the World Library Partnership (WLP) that sponsors the ITW Librarian Volunteer Program, puts it this way: "WLP partners with indigenous organizations to support community-based libraries. The partner organizations select placements and prepare communities to host the volunteers who do hands-on projects determined by the needs of their host libraries. They live and work with their host librarians. This experience builds understanding between African and American librarians and forms the foundation for lasting collaborations."

The Book Certificate Programs

The first reaction of people learning of the desperate situation of developing world libraries is to donate books. This may seem like a good solution, but is part of the problem. Donated books from overseas undercut the market for locally produced materials that are essential for creating a long-term answer to the information famine in these developing countries.

Recognizing the need to support writing, production, and selling of local materials, WLP gives local librarians book certificates to purchase books instead. Village librarians and library committees choose materials, develop collections to serve the needs of their village, learn the process of acquisitions, and begin to plan their collection development while seeing the need for an ongoing book budget. Book certificates contribute to the



ITW 2000 Volunteer Margaret Traylor helps a student at a local village of South Africa. (Photo: Maggie Hite, July 2000)

long-term sustainability of libraries by supporting African publishers, booksellers and writers. The book certificate programs help prevent donation disasters.

Inform the World (ITW)

Three elements are essential in the WLP's ITW programs: in-country coordinators, volunteers, and donors. ITW volunteers went to Zimbabwe in 1999, and South Africa in 2000. WLP plans to have ITW librarian volunteers in both Zimbabwe and South Africa for 2001. It works in the way that in-country coordinators place librarians with established village libraries, help book accommodations and transportations, provide a number of personal services, and facilitate workshops, library training seminars, and conferences. They select placements and prepare the host community. The volunteers raise money for travel, purchase of book certificates, and cost of organizing the program. Two part-time WLP employees organize and implement these and other programs, consulting with the WLP Board of Directors. Donors provided the funds.

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ITW Program

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In 1999, WLP worked with the Zimbabwe Book Development Council (ZBDC), Zimbabwe International Book Fair (ZIBF), and Rural Libraries and Resources Development Program (RLRDP). RLRDP has established a network of over 100 small rural libraries in Zimbabwe and has a waiting list of 4,000 eligible communities hoping to establish libraries. They placed the U. S. volunteers in local libraries where they conducted practical service projects, provided training in basic library management and action planning, and shared in debriefing focusing on future collaboration and projects promoting the sustainability of African libraries. WLP donated part of the ITW trip fees to the RLRDP to support their work in library development.

Seventeen volunteers were trained for Zimbabwe in 2000. After one day of cross-cultural training, one day of technical training, and a half day of wrap-up and logistics, the librarians would fly to Harare to receive a day in-country orientation before going to villages for two weeks. After that they would return with their Zimbabwean counterparts to the Zimbabwe International Book Fair in Harare to buy books, meet colleagues and debrief. Due to escalating violence in rural Zimbabwe, WLP decided in May 2000 to move the ITW program to South Africa.

Maggie Hite, Assistant Director of the Inform the World Librarian Volunteer Program, flew to South Africa in June to set up a program using the same focus, goals and structure. She looked for appropriate local initiatives to work with and found two of them: the Center for Educational Technology of the Department of Education, and the READ Educational Trust working with literacy in schools and libraries.

Together they organized the 2000 program in South Africa on July 17, 2000.

The American volunteers and the host librarians did community surveys to determine what resources to purchase. Together, librarians and principals went to Johannesburg and chose their own books at various warehouses. After two weeks in the villages, volunteers and regional coordinators gathered in Pretoria to evaluate their work together. Each group reported and shared ideas about how to continue collaboration.

When volunteers return home to the U. S., they are encouraged to continue assisting their host libraries using the ideas developed during the service projects and debriefing. Volunteers can create a partnership between the host library and the U. S. library; provide ongoing technical advice and training materials, and identify/create additional sources of financial and material assistance (e.g. organize fund-raisers, target in-kind donations).

The WLP is a nonprofit organization dedicated to establishing global understanding by promoting literacy, learning, and access to information. WLP advocates for sustainable and community-based libraries in developing areas of the world. The ITW invites library professionals and students to volunteer in developing countries. Its projects respond to the specific needs of individual libraries and may include activities such as teaching a class on book repair, implementing a simple cataloguing system or leading a donkey driven "book mobile." Most ITW programs take place during the summer and last for four weeks. Volunteers participate in cross-cultural and technical training prior to service may earn academic credit from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. For further information, please see: <http://RTPnet.org/~wlp> (*Phyllis Hytten is Lead Cataloging Librarian at Auburn University Montgomery*)

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International Leads (ISSN 0892-4546) is published quarterly by the International Relations Round Table of the American Library Association in March, June, September, and December. The first issue was published in 1957. IL contains news about international library activities, the international work of ALA and other organizations, and people and publications in the field. IL is indexed by Library Literature and Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) and is sent free to all members of IRRT (dues \$10); non-ALA members can subscribe for \$12 per year by writing to International Relations Office, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, IL 60611. Materials for IL should be sent to *International Leads* Editor, Sha Li Zhang, Wichita State University Libraries, 1845 Fairmont, Wichita, KS 67260, USA, e-mail:

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Message from the IRRT Chair

By **Frederick C. Lynden**

For the ALA Midwinter meeting in Washington, D.C., IRRT members should be aware that committees will meet as usual on Saturday, January 13 from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

The Sister Library Committee, the newest committee in the IRRT structure, has recently undergone a change of chairs. Mary Sherman, current Member-at-Large, has agreed to chair the committee, which is responsible for further developing the program begun by Sarah Ann Long, ALA President from 1999-2000. Long's objectives were stated in the Tip Sheet, The Sister Library Program. The committee will write a charge during the ALA Midwinter Meeting.

In a great example of cooperation between libraries, this fall the Queensborough Public Library in New York formed a Sister Library relationship with the Mayakovsky Central City Library in St. Petersburg, Russia. Gary Strong, Director of Queensborough Public Library and Zoya Chalova, Director of the Mayakovsky Library, announced a sister relationship at the opening of the new Art Branch of the Central Library on September 23, 2000 in St. Petersburg. The White House Millennium Project will present the libraries with plaques. The State Department has already received a grant proposal to exchange staff and the outlook for funding is positive. The Open Society Institute also expressed its willingness to support cooperation. Frequently forming sister library relationships can result in special funding.

Other IRRT committees are already working hard on various projects. At Midwinter, Nora Kondratiev, Chair of the Poster Committee, and her committee will be reviewing proposals for poster sessions for the ALA annual meeting in

San Francisco. The IRRT Reception Committee, headed by Monica Ertel and composed of librarians from the San Francisco Bay Area, has already recommended a site on the bay for a reception for international librarians at the annual meeting. Details are now being worked out.

IFLA will also be on the agenda of IRRT. The IRRT Continuing Education Committee headed by Roman Kochan and the IRRT Orientation Committee, chaired by Inga Filippo, will work on a proposal of Robert Doyle and Barbara Ford to develop an orientation program for the librarians coming to IFLA from developing countries.

The Membership Committee, headed by Karen Starr, has been sending out welcome letters to new members and reinstating members informing them about the structure of IRRT. The IRRT Program Committee, chaired by Artemis Kirk, is having a conference call in November to talk about

European Globetrotters For Libraries: An Interview *(Continued)*

By David Dorman

(Continued from page 4, September 2000)

Q: Let me pick up on a remark Janet made about always trying to look at the collections of the libraries she visits, noting how they are organized and how they developed. Could each of you tell us what you have noticed about how library collections, and perhaps types of libraries as well, differ around the world?

J. Lees: To begin to appreciate the differences in library collections, you have to get beyond the reference and journal collections that are our principal business interests. The globalization of reference and academic journals, both print and electronic, has been a striking phenomenon of the last ten years.

Beyond the obvious differences of open and closed access in the libraries around the world, there remains a cultural difference on how the user is guided through the collection (if at all!). Is s/he left to fend for him/herself? What sort of barriers both physical and intellectual do users have to surmount? Can one enter the library freely - I have on more than one occasions had to deposit my passport just to get to the information desk! Do men and women both have access to the collection at the same or at the different times?

In some countries I sense a real silo approach to information where staff, collections and users occupy distinct spaces resulting in large staff areas where it seems the more senior staff are kept so far away from the collection they might as well be some place else. Here it seems librarians only speak to librarians in a hermetically sealed mission control center and users transmit requests for items to be delivered to them in large "assimilation" areas which underestimate the power of the physical space and the librarian/user dialogue that adds so much to the experience of enjoying and exploiting a collection.

K. Saur: I have visited more than a thousand libraries in five continents, mainly the very big university and national libraries, but also from time to time public and special libraries. Naturally the main reason for my visits is to sell our publications, but also to establish contacts and to discuss editorial issues and author's questions.

At first I always look into the reference book section to see if and how many books I find in orange bindings, our company's color, and I rarely get disappointed. After that I look carefully for the 800 volume "British Library General

Catalogues of Printed Books," the 400 volume "Bibliography of German Language Publications," the "Catalogue of the Herzog-August-Library," or any other voluminous G.K. Saur edition always filling meters of shelving.

Time after time I am impressed by the wonderful library collections, especially in the U. S. libraries, but also at libraries in Australia. In these countries, the library's importance is shown by its central location in the university, and it seems to be much higher than in countries like, for example, Germany. On my visits to Chinese and Russian libraries, I was shocked by the totally outdated collection of yearbooks.

B. Sorensen: Surely, I have seen a lot of libraries around the world. What I look for differs depending on whether it is an "official" visit with a guide, or a "private" visit. If it is an "official" visit I really don't look at collections at all: I find that useless—you can't guess anything anyhow. On such occasions, I notice the "logistics" of the house, the layout and design of the whole library, and statistics.

If it is a "private" visit—and sometimes I find those more friendly—I can take my time and really look at the library, and the collections, if they are accessible. In some parts of Europe, mostly the southern parts, you still have many small public libraries with closed collections, where there is no direct access to materials, and where you need a librarian, a teacher or a priest to guide you. In recent years this pattern has been under great change, so that several countries, Spain, Portugal, and northern Italy, now have several modern, well-equipped public libraries.

My observation is that you have modern, open, accessible-

From ALA's International Desk By Michael Dowling

By the time you receive this issue of IL, around 200 ALA librarians will again have participated in the ALA-FIL Free Pass Program at the Guadalajara Book Fair. This will have been the fourth year of this successful program to provide an opportunity for librarians collecting Spanish language materials to improve their services and collections.

This issue carries a summary by David Easterbrook on this year's Zimbabwe Book Fair and ALA-ZIBF Free Pass Participation. ALA will once again be offering a Free Pass Program for the Book Fair, which will take place next August. The deadline for applications is April 15, 2000. For information and an application form, please link to the International Relations Office (IRO) website at <http://www.ala.org/work/international>

The IRO is handling the applications for the IFLA National Organizing Fellowship Program. John Rast, a library student at Dominican University, is helping us with all of the logistics. We have received over 200 applications from over 45 countries. If you know anyone from a developing country who might be eligible for this fellowship, please have them fill out the application form on the IFLA 2001 website on the IFLA website at <http://www.ifla.org/ifla67/IV/index.htm>

I had the opportunity to attend the Swiss Library Association Meeting in September. Many of the Swiss librarians are interested in doing exchanges in the United States and having their U.S. colleagues come to Switzerland. If you are interested in hosting a Swiss librarian, or doing an exchange in Switzerland, please contact us. (*Michael Dowling is Director*

Library Conferences Around the Globe

VII Jornadas Españolas de
Documentación in Bilbao, Spain
October 19-21, 2000.

ALA MEMBERS AT THE ZIBF 2000

IFLA 2001 Conference in Boston Update

By Michael Dowling

The IFLA 2001 National Organizing Committee (NOC) met at the end of October in Boston to go over the plans for the conference with IFLA President Christine Deschamps and IFLA Executive Officer Carol Henry. Both were pleased with the progress so far and both are expecting a lot of interest in Boston from colleagues around the world.

Discounts For ALA Members

IFLA 2001 will be the first year that IFLA non-members will have to pay a higher registration rate than IFLA members. Fortunately, all ALA members attending the IFLA 2001 Conference in Boston, August 16-25, 2001, are eligible to register at the discounted IFLA member rate since ALA is an association member of IFLA.

The ALA IFLA membership number is **US-0002**. Please include this number in the box for IFLA membership number when you register. All IRRT members were sent an IFLA 2001 Final Announcement in early October. If you have not received a final announcement, you can ask the International Relations Office for a copy, or you can find all the information on

the IFLA 2001 website at <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla67/index.htm>

IFLA 2001 Information at the ALA Midwinter Meeting

There will be an IFLA 2001 Information Session at the ALA Midwinter meeting on Sunday, January 14, 2000 from 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Convention Center, Room 1 & 2. Members of the IFLA 2001 National Organizing Committee will be on hand to bring you up to date on the latest developments. If this time isn't convenient for you, please stop by the IFLA 2001 booth in the Exhibit area. The IFLA 2001 website will answer a lot of questions you might have about the conference. The website also includes a 'Frequently Asked Questions' section. If you still have questions, please feel free to contact the ALA International Relations Office at intl@ala.org

Support Still Needed For Library Fellows

As of November 1, 2000, the IFLA 2001 NOC was 1/3 of the way toward the goal of \$300,000 to provide fellowships for around 100 international colleagues from developing countries who would not otherwise be able to attend the meeting.

If you, or your library, would like to contribute to the fellowship fund, please contact Jim Neal, Chair of the IFLA 2001 Fund Development Committee, at jneal@jhu.edu

Publicity and Promotion

IFLA 2001 materials have been sent to all of the 26 state and regional association meetings this fall. However, we are still looking to get the word out about the conference to as many people as we can. If you are attending a meeting in the next few months or can submit information to library newsletters, please contact the ALA International Relations Office. We'd be happy to supply you with brochures or copy.

Welcome New IRRT Members!

Kate Brown
Tanya Feddern
Alison Foster
Mark Holmes
Sherise Kimura
Zapopan Muela
Eve Okawa
Beth Payne
Mohammad Shahid-Uddin
Ravil Veil

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