

Libraries Around the Globe: During and Post Pandemic

This around-the-world visit takes us to the Botswana International University of Science and Technology Library in Palapye, Botswana and in some parts of Central Asia—Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajikistan.

Botswana International University of Science and Technology (BIUST) COVID-19 Trends: Implementing Circulation and Reference Services

The COVID-19 pandemic had an impact on many service provisions; products and resources; and even user trends. BIUST library was inevitably forced to reconfigure its services to meet its users' information needs. In its efforts to curtail the spread of COVID-19 the

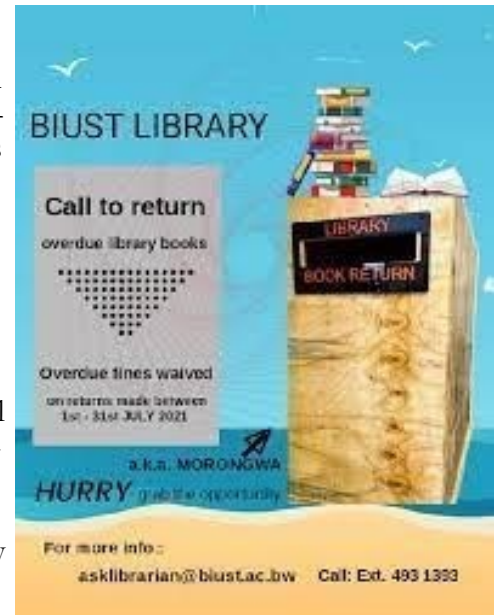
BIUST library swiftly moved from providing in-person and physical space services to virtual planning and services.

The pandemic acted as a catalyst that accelerated the use of technology and virtual operations, a situation that may otherwise have taken more steady and over calculated steps. The

pandemic imposed a faster and non-negotiable change. The adopted changes revolved around the provision of e-services and restricted access to the print collection. The thematic changes noted below are mainly from the observations from the front desk service team.

Know your customer. Steps were taken to unpack the user profiles in order to customize and make personalised quick services that meet the direct needs of the user. This particularly influenced the creation and arrangement of thematic or targeted services, events, and access to given resources.

The library adopted and implemented the use of online communication tools such as email; institutional intranet, WhatsApp groups, short message services (SMS), mobile phones to help to reach out to users in their respective locations. These communication platforms enhanced document delivery and timely feedback. Moreover, the platforms enabled a broadened customer engagement by all library team members without restricting that to circulation desk staff and faculty liaison librarians. Management was also able to have a bird's eye view



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of most front desk processes. This helped with faster and more direct decision-making on issues as they emerged.

Restricted access to print resources: the section that holds the print collection was not accessible for users to browse through and pick up items of interest. On the positive side, this enabled library customers to use the catalogue to identify information resources they needed and send to librarians to retrieve books on their behalf through the asklibrarian@biust.ac.bw platform which proved to be timely. The library team embarked on more user education programs towards this end.

“*Morongwa*” is a vernacular term that means “messenger.” It is a book drop box that the library team designed through the support of the Faculty of Engineering for users to drop book returns in.

University Librarian Ayanda Lebele adds:

“When government imposed social movement restrictions in March 2020, we were a few weeks into ending the 2019/2020 financial year. Library annual performance plans are also set in alignment with the financial year. As the director, I had to manage a panic stricken team to close the performance reports and start on new ones under very adverse conditions. A non-negotiable budget cut was imposed; team members needed ICT tools to work from home; and we all had to learn new applications. Although there was no disaster management strategy, order was restored. The library leadership strengthened communication between team members and all other stakeholders; existing personal and professional strengths guided the alterations and operationalization of workflows. Most importantly, the BIUST library team remained connected with its key stakeholder community amidst the disconnected environment. For this I am very proud and today, we are progressively reorienting both ourselves and the users to the new normal.”

Students are back to the resident halls and learning is in blended mode. The research communities have intensified their activities and the university is rolling out a vaccination program. The library team is now gravitating towards controlled access to some collections, extending opening hours for reading space. More librarians are coming back to their desks and getting an opportunity for a stolen brief corridor celebration with those who got married, had babies, and graduated from their study programs during the pandemic. Other than that, all other meetings, commemorations and celebrations are still virtual.

Winnie Jamara, Emang Pheko and Ayanda Lebele, BIUST

Nazarbayev University Library, Kazakhstan

The transition to online education since March 24, 2020 was not a problem for the library because since its inception in 2010, the library has paid great attention and financial resources to the procurement of e-books and subscription to internationally recognized databases, as well as the development of virtual services provided primarily through the [library's web portal](#). Electronic Document Delivery service are also provided to NU researchers through a partnership with University of Wisconsin in Madison, Duke University, University of Pittsburg and the US Library of Congress. Cambridge University Press, Eastview Information Services, Elsevier, Gale, Project Muse, World Scientific Publishing and other major publishers have opened access to their valuable information resources, too.

The transition of Nazarbayev University to distance education mode and the need to monitor the state of the pandemic in the city, country and world caused the creation of the ["COVID-19"](#) section on the library web portal. NU's work in a distance mode at the beginning of the 2020 Fall semester caused the creation of a section ["Library Orientation"](#) in which information introducing NU Library's services and resources to new students and faculty, i.e. those materials that were previously used during face-to-face orientation sessions, were posted. Also, a brochure “Online resources for distance learning-2020” was prepared and sent to NU's Schools.

Working online led to a joint discussions with IT specialists on the development of the self-made integrated library system and the development and implementation of ILS changes was monitored using the [JIRA](#) tool.

Since the library's reading rooms were closed, the home loan service was provided to students and teachers of the university. Teachers had the opportunity to submit requests for printed books via the library's web portal, and librarians delivered the ordered books to them at their place of residence. Students who lived on campus or in Nur-Sultan city where the university is located could order books via the library web-portal and pick them up at a point at the entrance to NU campus on the working days. Students who lived outside Nur-Sultan city could order textbooks via the library web-portal and the textbooks would be delivered to them by DHL service free of charge (it was paid by NU). If students ordered books (non textbooks) the books were delivered by Kazakhstani post service and the delivery was paid by students themselves.

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To disinfect the returned literature, 3 MiTAC IDSmart Sterilizers using the sterilizing effect of ultraviolet rays, killing germs and cleaning books from dust and small waste through a filter during the sterilization process were purchased. It takes 30 seconds to sterilize 3 books, the sterilization rate is 99.99%.

Moreover, agreements were reached with public and university libraries in other cities of the country where NU students lived so that the latter would be given the opportunity to work in reading rooms if such libraries are open to the public. In 2020, to inform the NU academic community about the resources, services and events of the library a Telegram Bot: @nulibrarybot was developed and launched into operation in July.

Some of the activities that took place during the pandemic are: "Third Library InfoLit Race Challenge (Virtual)." The library also conducted a number of online events "Staying at Home" and "Relieving the Stress" in cooperation with the NU Psychological Counseling Center, as part of Stress Relief Week program. In addition, a large number of leisure and cultural events were held by the library for students. There were also online presentations of books authored by professors of Nazarbayev University.

One of the main activities of the NU library is the transfer of the best international and national experience in the field of information and library services among Kazakhstani librarians. The IX Eurasian Academic Libraries Conference (EALC), organized jointly with the Association of Libraries of Higher Education Institutions in the Republic of Kazakhstan, was held on the zoom platform from September 30 to October 2, 2020. More than 230 specialists, heads of libraries, as well as representatives of suppliers of information resources from 26 countries of the world, including 145 from Kazakhstan, took part in the conference. Moreover, NU Library held the webinar-training "Modern Academic Library: Management, Resources, Technologies and Forms of Service" as an event of the annual School of Library Technologies, to improve the skills of librarians of Kazakh-



stani universities on December 9-10, 2020. The webinar covered two topics: (1) Open Science and Open Access: Institutional and Data Repositories; (2) Marketing, SMM and a Librarian. On the first day of the webinar, it was attended by 316 librarians and on the second day, 323. The heads and specialists of university libraries from many cities of Kazakhstan took part in the webinar: Aktobe, Almaty, Arkalyk, Atyrau, Karaganda, Kostanay, Nur-Sultan, Pavlodar, Petropavlovsk, Taraz, Taldykorgan, Uralsk and others. At the end of each day of the webinar, a test was held to consolidate the knowledge gained by the participants.

In order to popularize inclusive education and create conditions in educational institutions of the country for effective work of students, including those with special educational needs, in the digital environment NU Library initiated the project "Digital Inclusion", which was supported within the framework of the republican competition "Digital Citizenship" conducted jointly by the Center for Analysis and Research of Cyber Attacks, the Youth Information Service of Kazakhstan Public Foundation, and Kaspersky Lab, and which was successfully implemented throughout 2020. At the NU library itself, online meetings "NU Disability Talks: Inclusion Projects in Museums and Access to Arts for Persons with Disabilities" were held with the aim of creating a tolerant environment for people with special educational needs.

Since August 2021, NU has switched to a hybrid form of education; some of the students, teachers and staff are on the university campus, while the other part study and work remotely. Online library services and resources have increased in demand among library users, and platforms such as Zoom and Google Meet have become the usual communication environment. The advantages of online services, resources and tools will remain attractive in the future, even if communication in it becomes more traditional, as it was before the pandemic. And the task of librarians is to use their potential to the fullest. The plans of the library include a transition to a new Library Services Platform (LSP), and

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special attention will be paid to the support of virtual services and online resources.

Piotr Lapo, Acting Director, Nazarbayev University Library

Scientific Library of Jusup Balasagyn Kyrgyz State University, Kyrgyzstan

In the pandemic, the transition of the [Scientific Library \(SL\) of Jusup Balasagyn Kyrgyz State University \(KSU\)](#) to remote access services happened relatively calmly due to the fact that all the basic infrastructure for such work has already been created in previous years. From December 1, 2020 to February 28, 2021, a trial access to the Wiley Online Library platform with the collection of Wiley journals in all scientific areas was provided. In March 2021, Taylor & Francis Group, having a significant catalog in the field of STM provided 644 open access electronic publications for the KSU.

In addition, the SL website contributes to the creation and development of a unified information space of the Association of Electronic Libraries with 17 universities, 3 college libraries and 1 public library of Kyrgyzstan as its current members, and also ensures effective interaction of specialists from different libraries with each other and with library users.



Maya Dzhaikhanova, Director SL-KSU

Scientific Library of Khujand State University named after Academician Babadzhan Gafurov - Tajikistan

An analysis carried out by the library in 2020 showed that during the pandemic, the number of students' visits to reading rooms decreased several times. At the same time, the number of visits to the electronic library has increased compared to previous years. Accordingly, the library has taken a number of measures to support remote work with readers. The number of available e-books has been increased from 35,000 to 50,000. Also, measures were taken to prevent readers from getting infected with this terrible virus. In order to maintain social distance, the number of seats in the

reading room was halved. The use of not only books on a home loan, but also from the reading room was allowed for reading at home.

Close attention was paid to compliance with a number of sanitary and hygienic rules, for example:

- checking the temperature of employees and visitors at the entrance, wearing masks and gloves, etc.;
- providing visitors and employees of the library with detergents and disinfectants;
- regular wet cleaning of premises, including all surfaces, equipment, etc., with disinfectants;
- social distancing of library staff and visitors.

During the pandemic, the following areas of the library's activities have been implemented:

- informing the staff about the current epidemiological situation from reliable, official sources;
- motivating employees and users to ensure their own and other people's safety, for example, stay at home if they feel unwell, consult a doctor in such cases, etc.;
- providing digests with useful links to up-to-date and reliable information about COVID-19 for users on the library website;
- assistance in increasing the media literacy of users in order to avoid possible misinformation on the Internet;
- creating library pages on Facebook and Telegram, and using the QR code to enter these pages;
- presentation of new library acquisitions through social networks.

For three years now, the university library has been providing services under the "kartoteka.ksu.tj" software application, which is constantly being improved. The [application has the Web](#) interface and can be used by all users, both students and library staff. It has the following menu: Home page, Electronic catalog, Thematic index, Book collection, Rating, List of debtors, and Contacts. The user can find the desired book by name or its author name in the search box. When the user clicks the button "Electronic catalog", a list of electronic catalogs opens, which consists of 2 parts: an electronic catalog in Tajik and an electronic catalog in Russian. The user can select the desired thematic area from any part. For example, when the user clicks on the item "Linguistics" from the Tajik catalog, a list of sub-subjects opens, in which the desired sub-subject is selected,

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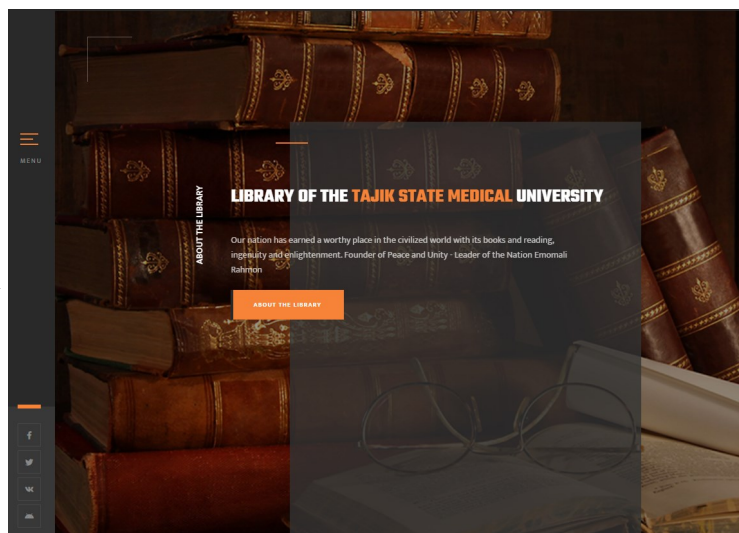
and a list of books related to the sub-subject opens. This makes it much easier for the user to find the desired material. When you click on the "Thematic index" button, a list of thematic indexes opens, which currently includes 55 main headings, such as "National Security and Science", "Twenty Years of the Study and Development of Natural, Exact and Mathematical Sciences", "Bobojon Gafurov - World Scientist and Patriot" and others. It indexes more than 660 articles on various topics in total. The Book collection provides access to two parts; the traditional print book collection and the electronic book collection. The Rating consists of several other components: Books Rating, Readers Rating, Departments (Faculties) Rating, and so on. For example, the Books Rating provides information about which books are most in demand. The Readers Rating provides readership ratings with the names of students and teachers, library readers. The Debtors List provides a list of students and teachers who did not return a book to the library on time, with the date of deliver and the date of return of the book. The Contact button provides a window for contacting the library administration.

The next improvement of the program is planned. The user can find out in the OPAC about the availability of the book he/she needs in the library collection, and if it is already occupied by another user, then receive information about when he/she will return it. Development of a mobile library application is planned. With the help of their mobile phones, readers will be able to obtain information about the library's services and resources, order the desired book and determine the time when he/she will pick it up from the library. The following events will also be conducted:

1. Implementation of RFID technology in the library.
2. Creation of a single (plastic) library card for library readers.
3. Purchase of special scanners (ElarScan) for digitalization of the library collection.
4. Recording video lessons of experienced university teachers with the help of professional video cameras and their inclusion in the electronic library (the Video lessons section).
5. Create audiobooks in mp3 format.

Dilbar Samadova, Director Scientific Library the Khujand State University named after Academician Babadzhan Gafurov

Avicenna Tajik State Medical University, Tajikistan



The official announcement of the pandemic was made in Tajikistan in June 2020. It was the end of the academic year at Avicenna Tajik State Medical University and therefore the quarantine introduced at the university did not significantly affect the work of the university library. At the same time, the experience of university libraries in other countries on the transition to a remote mode was studied and the work of the library was rebuilt in accordance with the new requirements. A new form of serving readers has been implemented. Mobile application "Online resource (e-books)" was created for university students. Its beta version is available on the [library website](#). Currently, media content (online video resources) for students are being developed. They are to minimize human contact and fully automate the library.

Lola Boltaeva, Director of Avicenna Tajik State Medical University Library, Tajikistan

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Has your library made an extra effort to provide library services during the pandemic? Have your libraries been preparing for the post-pandemic era? We would like to feature your activities in a future issue.

Email us.

Message from the Editors

We rotate the “Message from the Editor” in each issue and we welcome you to Vol. 35 #4 of *International Leads*. For those of us in academic libraries, this has been a challenging term as most of us are operating on a hybrid basis, welcoming our communities back into our spaces but also conducting a lot of work remotely while we get settled into what the “new normal” may be for the foreseeable future. This issue brings you insights about how many libraries around the globe are treating operations in the post-pandemic environment; a sharing of how some of the IRRT sponsored librarians experienced the 2021 IFLA Conference and some take-aways they had; interviews with IRRT Board members and other librarians, and activities taking place in IRRT and other units through various other programs; how libraries in Brazil are responding to the concerns of funding science there.

We hope you find this issue inspiring and newsworthy and we wish you a very happy, healthy, safe and pleasant holiday season wherever you are.

Julia, Reysa and Michele

Meet the Editors

Reysa Alenzuela

Reysa is the Head Librarian of the Oriental Institute of the Academy of Sciences in Czech Republic. She has over 20 years of experience as a librarian and has been working as an international librarian for almost a decade. She is a Member of ALA IRRT.



Julia Gelfand

Julia is the Applied Sciences & Engineering Librarian, University of California, Irvine. She has been a member of IRRT most of the 45 years she has been involved in ALA and has been working with international colleagues most of her career.



Michele Fenton

Michele is a Monographs Catalog Librarian, Indiana State Library, Indianapolis, Indiana, USA. Michele is active in the Black Caucus of the American Library Association, the International Relations Round Table, and the Library History Round Table.



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Message from IRRT Chair



Jim Neal
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The theme for IRRT during 2021-22 is: Global Libraries Are Community Leaders in Our Pandemic World. There are three subthemes: Global Libraries Reopening and Refreshed, Global Libraries as Advocates for Information Policy Change, and Global Libraries as Agents of Social Justice.

I would like to focus here on the second subtheme. The pandemic has raised our awareness and understanding of the need for information policies that support the ability of libraries to serve their communities. What are the persistent and new policy issues that libraries around the world must focus on? How can we strengthen our ability to influence legislative and legal change, and participate in the political process on the local, national and global levels?

The range of policy issues of relevance to libraries is extraordinary: intellectual freedom and the rising challenges to the books and other resources we make available in our collections; privacy and the threats that we and our users face on protecting their identities; civil liberties and the constraints on freedom of action and speech; funding for libraries, and for education and research programs; copyright and the importance of fair use and the exceptions that enable libraries to carry out their services; the expansion and quality of access to the internet and the challenges of the digital divides in our communities; telecommunications policy and the growth of social media monopolies and issues like net neutrality; government information and the importance of guaranteeing that records of the work of our governments are openly and readily accessible; the survival of school libraries which are so essential to our library ecosystem; and there are many more specific to local, national and global contexts.

Libraries must be at the core of the debates on information policy issues, as their success and effectiveness will increasingly be the ability to influence, interpret and

apply new policy directions. By information policy, I mean those laws, regulations and programs established by governments and other organizations that define the strategies for the advancement and management of such things as technology, telecommunications and electronic information. It permeates all other policy areas, such as: education, foreign relations, science, culture, health, and perhaps most fundamentally, commerce, workforce development and business. Information policy is increasingly recognized as central to economic progress and social change.

What is the political advocacy role of the library? We must be a knowledgeable resource for our communities. We must be effective political and legislative advocates for community interests. We must be educators of our communities on priority issues. We must be able to document the impact of legislative actions and legal decisions. We must be promoters of community and national coalitions, to secure strategic partners. We must enable successful models which support our political agenda. This means we have focused priorities, policy experts who can represent our interests, local and national grassroots advocacy networks, appropriate corporate partnership, and a capacity for engagement and stories that present our perspectives.

Some pressing questions. How do we select what is important to work on? How can we effectively work across local, national and global arenas? How can we focus on funding, legislation, regulations, court cases, doctrines, treaties, trade agreements? How can we expand and improve research on how our advocacy efforts are working? How can we build more capacity for advocacy? How do we move beyond specific library policy areas, and expand involvement in economic and social matters? How can we be more effective and successful? What advocacy techniques are of declining or increasing importance?

The fundamental premise is that global libraries are in a revolution fueled by rapid advances in technology and a divisive political environment. Thus the roles, capabilities, and expectations of libraries are changing rapidly. Libraries provide myriad benefits, and thus contribute to the missions of governments and institutions at all levels. However, decision makers and influencers often have a mental model of libraries from historical experience. Thus the library community must reach out to raise awareness of new roles and capabilities to advance how libraries contribute to economic and social health in the digital age. If there is not an understanding of how libraries can help with national policy challenges, they are less likely to provide increased financial support, want to collaborate with libraries, or advance policies of importance to libraries.

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Message from IRRT Chair, continued

Libraries must be advocates for the public interest on important information policy issues. The strategy must not be to step away from the challenge and the ambiguity, but to provide the leadership, advocacy and expertise that produce policies that are balanced, rational and sensitive to political, economic and social traditions and futures. There is HOPE, POWER, and ACTION through collaboration.

###



IFLA - WLIC 2021: Impressions from ALA IRRT Grantees

Compiled by Julia Gelfand

This international initiative launched by Jim Neal, current Chair of IRRT, was directed to encourage and attract IRRT members to participate in more international activities. This pilot project celebrated many firsts as it supported the registration of primarily first-time attendees to participate in the first entirely virtual IFLA Conference, making it possible for librarians to attend and interact with colleagues from throughout the world without leaving their homes or offices, giving them a taste of a truly global experience. This year, IRRT was able, through the generosity of its sponsors, Sage Publications and Overdrive plus several private donors, to make 18 awards to IRRT members in both the US and abroad to participate. The cultural hospitality and centrality was not as strong but many librarians shared what they gained and over the next couple of issues we will cover their insights and benefits from this opportunity. What stands out in all reports was the community building such meetings reinforce and foster. Considering the isolation and challenges everyone has faced due to the pandemic this was a refreshing return to connecting, learning and sharing together.

Several themes emerged from reports most of the recipients submitted. This cohort was part of the 2800 registrants from 160 countries who attended the virtual conference. They built upon the 2021 IFLA World Conference theme, “Let’s work together for the future.” Themes of cooperation, inclusivity, diversity, sustainability and the SDGs, multiple literacies, misinformation, digital divide, assessment, technological advances reinforced the conference’s five sub-themes of “Libraries Inspire, Include, Enable, Innovate, and Sustain.”

Ophelia Chapman, Business & Communication Librarian at the University of North Carolina, Wilmington, NC, USA shared how she learned from the experts around the world. “Interacting with diverse delegates affirmed that as librarians we all share the same values: a commitment

to free and equal access to information and the belief that we work to preserve the sum of human intellectual knowledge are important.” She participated in the extracurricular social events and “found Trivia Night particularly enjoyable, inclusive and fun!”

Aditi Gupta, Science & Engineering Librarian at the University of Victoria in Canada highlighted how impactful she found the opening session when President Christine McKenzie acknowledged indigenous lands where she lives and works and ended with this powerful statement, “Libraries are important as they protect the sum of human intellectual knowledge.” She learned about how the [Media and Information Literacy Alliance](#) was created by UK Information professionals Jane Secker and Virginia Rodes to support [UNESCO’s Global Media and Information Literacy Alliance](#). Aditi also noted, “The experiences of the world during the pandemic really came forth where everyone seemed to share a common theme that we are not alone and we can all work together for the future of libraries!”

Feng-Ru Sheu, Instruction Librarian at Kent State University in Ohio, USA was impressed about “how well accommodations were made to cover differences in technologies, geography, language, accessibility and time zone considerations...and how inspiring the sessions were.” Like many other recipients the sense of going outside of the familiar, “to see things from different perspectives, especially when I become so focused on my daily routine or local practice. It was a great stimulation and the connection with other people brought me energy.”

Jensen Adams, Energy & Sustainability Officer at the Kansas City Public Library (Missouri, USA) attended his first WLIC after a career shift to libraries. Even though he has worked as a sustainability professional in other sectors, he found that “IFLA had embedded the SDGs in policy, programming and the WLIC content.” He attended the showcase by the Wikimedia Foundation of Global

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IRRT announces the call for proposals for its Mission Enhancement Grant. In 2016, IRRT members & supporters established the IRRT Endowment. Interest from the Endowment will be used to fund member-initiated proposals for international projects that contribute to ALA's role in international librarianship. Goals for the funding are to provide support for international projects or partnerships; promote a global dialogue about librarianship; increase visibility of international opportunities for U.S. and international librarians, and to encourage international collaboration in librarianship.

Examples of proposals that could be considered for funding include, but are not limited to:

- Support for travel that is necessary to advance an international project
- Funds to collaborate sister library projects
- Funds to support the development and distribution of training or publicity materials in support of an international project

The amount available for grants may vary each year. IRRT may choose to use available funds to provide one or more grants of varying amounts. The maximum grant amount per proposal will be \$1,000.

Proposal process:

Please visit the IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant website to learn more about the criteria and proposal process and to download the proposal form. Proposals are due no later than January 3, 2022 and will be reviewed by the IRRT Endowment Committee.

IFLA WLIC ALA IRRT Grantees Impressions, continued

Volunteerism focusing on environmental literacy and other sessions about sustainability and climate change, including the IFLA President's Session on climate. He writes, "The virtual format has allowed me to pause during sessions, reflect on parallels with sustainability and return to presentations that are rich with meaning."

JiHye Lee, Electronic Resource Librarian at Nova Southeastern University Library in Ft. Lauderdale, FL, USA shared how much she enjoyed participating in the Q&A sessions by "sharing experiences, asking questions, and receiving possible solutions." "The 2021 IFLA Virtual Congress was a successful event to help people connect and collaborate with each other during the ongoing global pandemic and I learned a lot, got inspired and motivated. It was great to see diverse groups of people working together toward the same goals, sharing new ideas and strategies, and bringing different perspectives to the field."

Jalesa Horton, Head of Access Services at Southern Methodist University, Dallas, TX, USA wrote "This conference did not disappoint. It was so interesting to see that it wasn't just a conference of librarians talking to other librarians. I enjoyed hearing other aspects of the library space. From architects to consultants, I was able to understand how space is so much more than the library square

footage. We are seeing evolution in web design and a special capacity to accessibility and sustainability, to increase and strengthen the relationships we have with our patrons. I am most eager to see how access to materials on a global scale will continue to expand with controlled digital lending and other resource sharing services."

From New Zealand, **Rebecca Kennan**, Cataloger at Dunedin Public Libraries found that "Libraries change lives – that was the inspiring message I took away from IFLA WLIC 2021." "From open access to digital inclusion, decolonization to systematic oppression, picture books to professional development, a huge range of topics were addressed and discussed openly. We still have a lot of work to do, but it is incredibly heartening to hear how much librarians around the world care about self-reflection, innovation, and providing the best possible services to our communities."

Boutsaba Janetvilay, Catalog/Metadata librarian at California State University Fresno, USA, found "it was enlightening to learn about evidence-based research on the trending initiative by OCLC on 'Reimagine Descriptive Work-

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Message from IRRT Chair Elect



Safi Safinullah

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The International Relations Round Table (IRRT) was established with the purpose of “promoting interest” in library issues, removing barriers to information access, and creating “interest” among people and nations. Established in 1949, the IRRT provides many opportunities for librarians to remove existing gaps in our societies. The IRRT works with the International Relations Office of the ALA (IRC) and [IFLA](#) to assist libraries around the world. Specifically, the IRRT offers many opportunities to bridge gaps between libraries in America and worldwide, supporting its purpose “to promote interest in library issues and librarianship worldwide” and to help library staff “connect with librarians around the world.” Its 14 committees create environments for libraries to exchange ideas, services, and programs.

The COVID-19 pandemic disrupted library activities across the world. Librarians sprung to action on the chance to remain resilient and acquire new skills, services, and programs to connect patrons. As a nation of immigrants, many of us came from other countries and continue to have family and connections in those countries. Whether we are first, second, or third-generation Americans, we remain connected to our roots, often in areas where libraries are in need of more resources and accessibility. The best way to satisfy this need is to engage in the IRRT forum, where we can serve on one of the 14 committees such as the International Librarians' Orientation/Mentoring, the International Sustainable Development Interest Group (ISLD), and many others. The IRRT gives us all the opportunity to make a direct impact in bridging community gaps. For instance, ALA recently decided to remove the word “aliens” from the Library of Congress Subject Headings, thereby promoting a more inclusive library community.

One way the IRRT is establishing a library network is through its Sister Library program. The IRRT founding li-

brarians created a Sister Libraries Committee to promote connections between local and international libraries, to foster stronger worldwide relationships. This committee collaborates with other task forces to develop activities and learning experiences to make these connections come to life. The program also focuses on awareness, as the committee strives to inform the public and governing agencies about the importance of libraries, which in turn contributes to removing community barriers to information access.

Another way to get involved is to register your organization as a Sister Library. We at the IRRT hope to increase the amount of Sister Library interactions within the next year and bridge existing communication gaps. If you and your library are interested in becoming a Sister Library, please add your organization’s name to our Sister Library list by completing this [form](#) or emailing sister-libraries@gmail.com. To see all of the libraries that are seeking partners, feel free to browse our [online list](#). As famously stated, working together for the “good of humanity and the Earth, we can accomplish great things.”

I urge my IRRT librarian colleagues to visit the [IRRT’s website](#) to find out how we all can get involved to bring our vision for an inclusive global library community to life. If you have any questions about IRRT’s committees/work, please contact me at ssafinullah@slcpl.org, or reach out to any of the IRRT’s Executive Board Members.

###

Connect with IRRT

Email: ala.intl.leads@gmail.com

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

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

[Facebook](#)

IRRT Member Selected for the Michael P. Malone International Leadership Award by the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities

At the July 2021 meeting of the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities Commission on International Initiatives (APLU CII), Mark Mattson, Head of Global Engagement Initiatives, and International Partnerships Librarian at the Penn State University Libraries, received the Michael P. Malone International Leadership Award (Innovation Track). The Malone Award “honors the legacy of the late Michael P. Malone, a champion of international education and one-time chair of the APLU Commission on International Education” by providing “national recognition for individuals who have made significant contributions to international programs, either through innovative practices or life-long impact” (APLU Website). Mattson was recognized for his work supporting international populations at Penn State University; advancing international academic library partnerships as key infrastructure for institutional partnerships; developing intercultural programming at the university; as well as his research in and promotion of international librarianship.

Mattson credits his success to his Penn State Libraries colleagues and the ALA International Relations Round Table (IRRT): “I would have been able to achieve very little over the last 5 years without the encouragement and support of the entire Penn State Libraries, which has wholeheartedly embraced this work. Likewise, the collegial support of the international librarianship community that I have found within IRRT, IRC, and the ALA International Relations Office has been invaluable.” Mattson has been active within IRRT since 2016, serving on the Sister Libraries Committee (as Chair from 2019-2021), the International Connections Committee, the International Librarian Networking Program Ad Hoc Committee, the Endowment Committee, and the Membership Committee. He also served as the inaugural Chair of the IRRT Webinar Committee, represented the IRRT in the ALA Roundtable Bylaws Standardization Working Group, and served as Member-at-Large for the IRRT Executive Committee from 2019 to 2021. He will represent IRRT in the ALA Membership Taskforce, beginning in December 2021.

Mattson hopes the recognition of a librarian for the Michael P. Malone International Leadership Award will raise awareness, within higher education, of everything libraries have to offer beyond traditional library roles. In his remarks at the APLU CII meeting, he advocated for the inclusion of libraries in international education, stating: “In closing, I would like to take this opportunity to

Call for Submissions

Do you have news or stories about ...

- ◇ **International library activities?**
- ◇ **People in international librarianship?**
- ◇ **Upcoming international conferences?**

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IFLA WLIC ALA IRRT Grantees Impressions, continued

flows’ because often we are trapped in our own local institutional practices that we do not envision outside of that scope.” This conference clearly expanded her scope and she specifically identified a couple of “mind-opening” sessions, the “LIS Education and Information Literacy in the Developing Country” and “Transforming Current Thinking into Smart Policy: The increasing role of libraries as intellectual hubs,” and she found the Knowledge Hub and knowledge creation cycle as parts of evidence-based strategies particularly engaging and transforming work in libraries.

The next issue of *International Leads* will include more insights from the remaining awardees of this grant. What we can tell is summed up by one recipient, “the importance of grants like this is immeasurable, none of this learning would have been possible without the IRRT grant.” And before these librarians immerse themselves in more IFLA intensive commitments they got a good flavor of the programming and essence of being internationally connected in professionally and personally rewarding ways without having to invest in a huge financial and time commitment. All look forward to attending conferences in person soon, but hope that when it is not possible to attend, that IFLA will continue with planning a hybrid approach that is inclusive of those who can’t be there.

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Interview with ALA IRRT Executive Board Member: Grace Liu



Grace Liu (gliu@wcupa.edu) is the Business Librarian at West Chester University of Pennsylvania, USA. This is her second year as Member-at-Large on the IRRT Executive Board. This interview was conducted virtually with Julia Gelfand.

Julia Gelfand (JG): Can you share with us a little of your background that inspired you to become a librarian? Where did you grow up and attend university, and what kind of library positions have you held?

Grace Liu (GL): I grew up in Nenjiang County, Heilong Jiang Province, in the northeast of China. I went to college in the capital city of the province at Harbin Engineering University and thought about being a lawyer after graduation. I received a Bachelor's and a Master's degree in law while the first job I landed after graduation was a library research assistant position in the Beijing Office of a US-based international law firm - Morrison & Foerster LLP. This position inspired me to become an information professional, so I later joined LexisNexis China as a content developer and then pursued a Master's degree in library and information science in the United States at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign.

JG: Your involvement in IRRT has been through the Emerging Leader structure before being elected to the Board. What have you learned and liked most about your engagement in IRRT? What are the positive things that you share with prospective IRRT members?

GL: My involvement in IRRT has been three years since I was selected to work on the IRRT-ALA Emerging Leader project - *Towards Increasing Engagement of International New Professional Leaders in ALA Activities*. For the project, our team reached out to 1,720 IRRT members and collected 284 IRRT member responses for their professional goals and needs, obstacles to engaging with ALA programs, their professional development needs, and their suggestions for IRRT member engagement. I then served as the co-chair of the International Connections Committee with the hope to bring some of our member suggestions to life. So, we initiated the International Library Leader's Forum at the 2019 ALA Annual Conference and [the Best Practices from World Libraries Photo Gallery](#) project. What I enjoyed about my engagement in IRRT is that I meet many great and passionate people. Many of our members bring years of experience and global perspectives to ALA/IRRT. And IRRT, in turn, provides great platforms and opportunities for our members to make an impact on library services around the world.

JG: As a Business Librarian, what connections do you make between that work and how you conduct your responsibilities in IRRT? Are there any alignments?

GL: I find my background as a business librarian, my MBA degree, and my experience in business strategic planning allows me to bring more strategic thinking to the work of IRRT. Since I am also serving as a Member-at-Large at RUSA-BRASS Executive Board, I have brought much of my experience at IRRT to the BRASS executive discussion as well.

JG: The Member-at-Large position is charged to liaise with different committees and work on different assignments. What have been your favorite assignments and what other ideas do you have for IRRT in the future?

GL: As a Member-at-Large, I got the chance to know the broad spectrum of IRRT committee activities. I think our committee services bring great value to our IRRT members and ALA members. I appreciate the IRRT webinar committee dili-

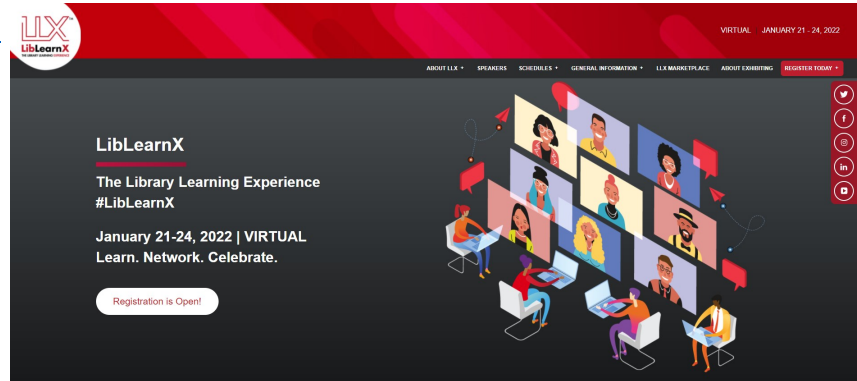
Continued on page 13

Upcoming International Library Conferences, Meetings & Events

14-15 January 2022 – [16th International Conference on Digital Libraries \(ICDL\), Rome, Italy](#)

17-22 January 2022 – [18th Annual Library leadership Institute: “Leading in the Virtual World: Beyond Web of Things](#), Hong Kong

21-24 January 2022 – [LibLearnX: The Library Learning Experience \(LLX\) Virtual](#) – Replaces the ALA Midwinter Conference



28-29 January 2022 – [20th MANLIBNET Convention and International Conference on Libraries of the Future: Emerging Trends](#), Bhubaneswar, India

8 February 2022 – [Priorities for Tackling Fake News and Improving Media Literacy](#) – Online only

22-23 February 2022 – [Researcher to Reader Conference](#), London, UK

Continued on page 24

Interview with ALA IRRT Executive Board Member, continued

gently organized webinars around the year. I appreciated that the International Connection Committee continued the Best Practices from World Libraries Photo Gallery project in 2021 and documented the practices and stories from libraries around the world in continuing to serve our community during the global pandemic. As one of the initiatives of the current IRRT Chair, Jim Neal, IRRT is working on increasing our members' and ALA members' engagement in global library conferences and activities. I am hoping the IRRT can further strategize and strengthen our positions in connecting ALA to the world. One of the ideas coming out of the IRRT member survey was to host an international library leader's forum and we tried to organize an in-person event at ALA Annual 2019. I believe a virtual international library leaders' forum may be a better format for us to engage library leaders around the world and increase ALA's impact at the global level.

JG: Global librarianship has seen a large coming together most recently due to the pandemic and libraries around the world sharing how they have connected with their user communities. Do you have any insights about that you wish to share? How has your work life changed? What lessons were learned and what has been most interesting to observe?

GL: There is so much to learn from our international library colleagues and so much to share as well. I am hoping that we can create a platform that facilitates deeper knowledge/practice sharing and conversations between ALA members and librarians around the world. One example could be translating the ACRL Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education to other languages. I think there is no lack of ideas. We have received many great ideas from the IRRT member survey and it would probably take us years to make some of the wonderful ideas into reality. But we need more strategic effort to identify the priorities and shape them around our visions for the future and develop a plan for our actions. In terms of lessons learned, I think the pandemic reminds me that we should never take small things for granted - from the air we breathe, the relationships we count on, to the possibilities we still have for making positive changes.

JG: Thank you for participating in this interview and for all your service to IRRT.

Sharing Programs in Pandemic Times - The NCL's "2021 International Workshop for Professional Librarians"

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This article aims to present a special series of online lectures conducted by the National Central Library (NCL), Taiwan, endeavouring to ensure continuity of library's exchange and learning programs in pandemic times. NCL's "2021 International Workshop for Professional Librarians" consists of three pillar-programs for the utmost effectiveness of sharing and training activities. The lectures are scheduled from September 23rd to November 9th. NCL invited 9 speakers include experts, scholars, and experienced practitioners in Library and Information Science field from England, the US, the Netherlands, Denmark, Norway, Germany and Greece to share their successful experiences, wishing to enhance librarians and library practitioners' capabilities and facilitate their knowledge exchanges. The themes of 2021 online workshop include: Development of Librarianship in 2021, Cases Sharing from NCL's TRCCS Partners and Dialogue between Libraries and Digital Humanities. 9 online lectures were given by Dr. Roly Keating, Chief Executive of the British Library, who spoke on "The British Library in a Changing World," Dr. ShuYong JIANG, Associate Professor of Library Administration, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, who spoke on "Existing Threads Weave into a Web of New Services", Knut Skansen, Director of Deichman Public Library, Oslo, who spoke on "Repositioning the public

library: a case study of Oslo Public library-Deichman", Mr. Marc Gilbert, Curator of Chinese Special Collections, Leiden University Libraries, who spoke on "From Underground to Digital: Unofficial Poetry Journals at the Leiden University Libraries", Dr. Mia Ridge, British Library's Digital Curator for Western Heritage Collections, who spoke on "Working towards mutual benefit: Digital Humanities and the British Library", Ms. Inga-Lill Blomqvist, Librarian and Web-coordinator, NIAS-Nordic Institute of Asian Studies, who spoke on "Nordic Cooperation and the Challenge of Online Resources for Asian Studies", Ms. Barbara Lison, IFLA President and Director of Bremen Public Library, who spoke on "IFLA- Supporting the Role of Libraries in the 21st Century", Dr. Alex Gil, Digital Scholarship Librarian at Columbia University Libraries, spoke on "The Library's Secret Sharer: Digital Humanities and the Question of Centralization", and Dr. Filippos Tsimpoglou, Director General of National Library of Greece, who spoke on "Systems thinking on the future of digital development of National Libraries. The case of Greece." All detailed lecture resources can be browsed and downloaded on the [Workshop Website](#).

IRRT Member Award, continued

encourage all of you, as senior international officers at your institutions, to engage with your libraries. ... Libraries are often an overlooked, but extremely valuable resource for all university community members. We are more than just books, databases, and information literacy. We are geospatial services specialists, statistical experts, copyright and publishing consultants, digital humanities instructors, virtual reality resource points, and so, so much more. In fact, nowadays, even global engagement and international partnerships librarians exist!"

For more information about the award visit: [APLU news](#) or [Penn State site](#)

###



[NCL Director-General Dr. Tseng giving welcoming remarks](#)

Initial Idea and Quick Technical Equipment-- To Break through the Barrier by Pandemic and Retain Library Services

In May 2021 when the NCL, Taiwan has no other option but close the on-site services for library patrons due to the outbreak of confirmed COVID-19 cases in communities in Taiwan, the NCL adopted a slogan revealing library managers and librarians wishes and well advocated among library communities in the world, that is, "Although library is closed, we want to make services go on." NCL Director-General Dr. Shu-hsien Tseng asserted that this concept

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Sharing Programs in Pandemic Times, continued

should not be just applied to regular book circulation and reference services for users, but should also be applied to whatever activities the Library has been conducting at normal times, for example, lecture activities. Therefore, it became an urgent matter that staff at different division in the Library should quickly learn to operate different kinds of webinar software utilities and facilities. Director-General Dr. Tseng played an instrumental role to coordinate information technicians and librarians of different divisions to complete an inventory about the available software and facilities, and to purchase necessary software and devices.

Three Pillar-Programs Which Comprising the Lecture Series-- An Integrated Program to Maximize Learning Opportunities

In order to facilitate exchange and learning during the pandemic, the NCL tried to conduct an online lecture series "2021 International Workshop for Professional Librarians." Meanwhile, this lecture series were planned to comprise three pillar-programs, namely the "2021 International Workshop for Professional Librarians" program, the "Online Forums in Development of Librarianship in 2021" program, and the invited keynote speeches of the "13th Conference on Cooperative Development and Sharing of Chinese Resources."

From 2009, the NCL has launched "International Workshop for Professional Librarians" program, and has been holding the event once every two years. The aim of this workshop is for enhancing academic exchanges among East Asian Libraries and Chinese Studies Institutes. The theme of this year of the workshop is "Successful Library Cases in the World."

"Forums in Development of Librarianship" program also has been conducted for years. In the past years the NCL would invite director-general, CEO, chief managers, etc. of eminent successful libraries to share their experiences and vision to the library communities in Taiwan. The NCL continues the program and has planned to have four lectures for this program this year. The "13th Conference on Cooperative Development and Sharing of Chinese Resources" was the conference that the NCL took the rotated duty to host this year. While countries all over the world are taking different precautionary measures for COVID prevention, to make the aforementioned three programs possible, the NCL had to take Web alternatives. Dr. Tseng pointed out and reminded that Web solutions in fact brought us opportunities to expand the scope of the NCL's exchange, sharing, and training programs. Whereupon, an integrated three-pillar lecture package was initialized, and associated promotion strategies were formed.

The Workshop Series Impact

The total count of attendees for the 9 online lectures is 1,033, The NCL also conducted online survey for each lecture, and have received 70% of attendees giving feedbacks. 37% answered "Very satisfactory" and 53% answered "Outstanding" in the Likert scale. Besides, this activity received many positive written feedbacks. For examples, "Very beneficial to all the professional librarians especially [during] this time of pandemic," "Very timely in the current situation," "An avenue for keeping professional librarians updated on the trends and issues in the profession especially now that the pandemic is not yet over. Kudos to the organizers...", "Very timely and helpful in our field of expertise, it gave us [in-]depth knowledge and opportunities to widen our horizons as information professionals and it harnesses our skills as information provider and care giver!"

Conclusion

The organization of this online lecture series the NCL conducted was initialized from the Director-General Dr. Tseng's quick response thinking to tackle with the pandemic restrictions, and the result has indeed gone beyond a physical site of a library. Taking online solutions has made the lectures sharable virtually across boundaries. It allowed unlimited attendees and received participants from various countries. The recorded lectures are always available for librarians and practitioners to visit or revisit at the NCL's Facebook. The keys to success for this program include having experts and scholars who shared knowledge and excellent experiences, quickly getting equipped with necessary utilities and webinars skills, and utilizing the available contact information and every possible avenue to advertise about this program, etc. Although feedbacks from attendees in general show that this program is recognized as one which could broaden professional librarians' horizons, there are also suggestions that deserve our attention including more stable connections, reaching out to more librarians, need for more topics about the shifting roles of librarians after pandemic, and more interactions among the groups, etc. The feedbacks from attendees will be a driving force for NCL to make endeavors toward excellence in the future.

###

Do you have innovative ideas or programs in your library? Share with us.

First Virtual International Conference on Library and Information Science

Hasitha Koralage

Email: hasithako@sltc.ac.lk

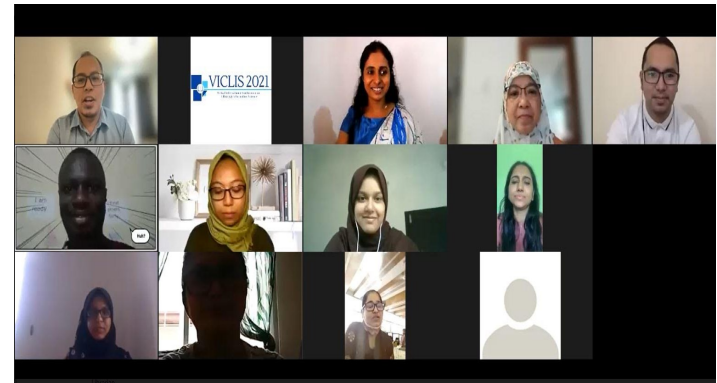
Sri Lanka Technological Campus hosted its first-ever virtual international conference on Library and Information Science (VICLIS2021) in collaboration with the Department of Library and Information science, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka, the National Science Library, and Resource Centre (NSLRC) of the National Science Foundation of Sri Lanka, and the Department of Library and Information Science University of Kerala, India. The conference was held on the 23rd of August 2021, under the theme of 'Challenges of Library and Information Science Profession in New Normal Context.



Chief Guest Christine Mackenzie (Middle) and Keynote Speakers Prof. Anne Goulding (Left and Dr. Raymond Pun (Right)

The VICLIS2021 aimed to bring together the Library and Information Science (LIS) professionals, researchers, and LIS students to exchange and share their experiences and research findings on all aspects of Library Science. This free conference also provided a premier interdisciplinary platform for 104 research presenters from 10 countries namely Bangladesh, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Philippines, Thailand and Sri Lanka as to present and discuss the most recent innovations, trends, and concerns as well as practical challenges encountered and solutions adopted in the fields of Library Science during the pandemic and post-pandemic situation.

The Chief Guest of the event was Mrs. Christine Mackenzie, former president of the International Federation of Library Association and Institution, IFLA. Keynote speeches were delivered by Prof. Anne Goulding, Professor of Library and Information Management, School of Information Management, Victoria University, New Zealand, and Dr. Raymond Pun, President of



Speakers, Moderators and Participants during the plenary and technical sessions

the Asia Pacific American Librarians Association, APALA.

Eng. (Mr.) Ranjith Rubasinghe, the Founder President and the CEO of the Sri Lanka Technological Campus (SLTC) in his brief welcome address at the inauguration session stated that the VICLIS2021 is a landmark event hosted by Sri Lanka Technological Campus, as this is the very first conference on Library and Information Science organized by a Non-State university in Sri Lanka.

There were nine (9) parallel technical sessions conducted under seven (7) sub-themes namely, Leadership, professional ethics, and accountability in librarianship, Social networking and library services, Collection development, resource sharing and accessibility, Emerging technological trends in libraries, Library and allied services for differently abled users, Re-designing the library and information centers, AND Novel issues, challenges, and remedies during the pandemic period at the conference. Over 350 participants from 20 countries have participated in the conference. VICLIS2021 technical sessions were chaired by the local and International LIS experts.

###

Choa Chu Kang Public Library Reopens With a Passion for Sustainability

Felicia Chan

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On Thursday, 28 October 2021, the Singapore Public Libraries welcomed the reopening of a larger Choa Chu Kang Public Library (CCKPL) with an improved environment and new features that pushed the boundaries of what a community library can be. Themed (Re)Connect with Nature, the library melds design with tech, creating an experiential communal space that promotes environmental awareness and interest in sustainable living.

The new library features extended hours where selected library facilities are made available to patrons beyond regular operating hours, to a Community Wall, a Climate Action Corner, Indoor Garden, and Hydroponics Showcase, the renovated library aspires to be more integrated in the life of the community, with a focus on nature. The Climate Action Corner displays information on climate change to educate and provide inspiration on minimising one's carbon footprint. Patrons can also access real-time environmental and nature-related information through a Live-Statistics Display. These include weather forecasts and air quality information, environment and nature-related news from organisations such as World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) Singapore and Singapore Geographic, updates of biodiversity activities in Singapore from sources like National Parks Board, along with some fun trivia about nature and nature-related e-book recommendations from our digital collection. The aim is to cultivate environmental awareness and literacy by showing the intricate links between humans and their local environments.

The library also features an Augmented Reality (AR) Learning Trail. Visitors can interact experientially to see how rubber tapping was done in the past or have a closer look at the endangered Samba deer. Developed in collaboration with Nanyang Technological University, Singapore, this provides a unique digital experience that encourages patrons to interact with the library's physical spaces while immersing in AR



Teens Hangout, Reading Area



content that can broaden patrons' knowledge on wildlife species and natural landscapes in Singapore.

The library also offers many new eco-themed programmes throughout the year to raise awareness of environmental issues and inspire everyone to adopt sustainable lifestyles. Examples of programmes range from talks on food technology and food waste, community co-solutioning to reimagine and reinvent spaces to promote sustainable living with solutions presented as prototypes or an exhibition within our library spaces, and sustainable art installations produced by commissioned artists to raise awareness of various sustainability issues.

CCKPL is one of the next-generation libraries being launched in conjunction with LAB25 (Libraries and Archives Blueprint 2025). The blueprint outlines the National Library Board's (NLB) evolving roles and priorities for the next five years in response to changing needs of the community. To help the community learn and pick up new skills, The NLB is also developing a Learning Marketplace, an omni-channel platform of physical and digital hubs and nodes. Choa Chu Kang Public Library is part of this network and features curated spaces, collections, and programmes to inculcate an interest in nature, biodiversity, and sustainability.

We would like to invite our international colleagues to view our new library [here](#). And more about NLB's LAB25 [here](#).



Study Area and Extended Hours Zone

IRRT International Librarians Networking Program: Stories from Participants of 2021 Cohort

Noorjahan Shaikh, Arjun Sanyal, Anthony Martinez

Librarianship is a fast-changing field that increasingly demands a global, proactive, and holistic perspective. The Hegelian dictum—the truth is the whole—applies rather aptly to libraries as essential institutions that are part of a broader social milieu. Such holistic thinking requires holistic practices to engender a prosperous and sustainable future. To that end, in the summer of 2021, 50+ current and future librarians in countries across the globe came together virtually to participate in the second cohort of the International Relations Round Table's (IRRT) International Librarians Networking Program (ILNP). This unique opportunity afforded participants the opportunity to further their professional acquaintances globally, broaden their professional horizons, and envision new frontiers for librarianship. Three of those participants, Noorjahan Shaikh, Arjun Sanyal, and Anthony Martinez were especially affected by their time in the program, each in ways unique as the countries and cultures they call home.

Noorjahan Shaikh is an academic librarian and head of the Department of Library and Information Science of Abeda Inamdar Senior College (AISC) in Pune, India, as well as a Counselor for BLIS and MLIS programs at IG-NOU Army Education Project (IAEP) Study Centre. In the ILNP program, Noorjahan was paired up with librarians Carmen Lei from China, and April Manabat from the Philippines. The trio were able to connect via email, WhatsApp and Zoom to exchange information and ideas. As all members of the trio are working in academic libraries, they have found plenty of common ground for discussion. Their conversations revolved around their innovative ideas over the past year including programs executed during the COVID-19 pandemic in their libraries and internationally, tools they created to promote libraries to Gen Z users, and best practices of information literacy programs for students and faculty. The group also compared and contrasted their respective roles and responsibilities and how to support their students' understanding of research concepts. Thinking even more holistically, the discussion not only focussed on provision of services and library support, but also on the health and wellbeing of library users and library staff. This shared concern for each other as both people and librarians led to a tight bond between Noorjahan, Carmen and April. Even with their official time in the INLP ending, all three still plan to collaborate on future projects like organizing an international conference, writing articles on the information literacies of their respective countries, and much more. All three extend



their thanks INLP Liaison Officer April Moyo for their encouragement and motivation throughout the program.

Arjun Sanyal is an Assistant Librarian at the Central University of Himachal Pradesh (CUHP), India and a former Assistant Professor at the Centre for Library and Information Sciences (now School of Library and Information Science), Central University of Gujarat, India. Arjun is a firm believer in the concept of Continuing Professional Development (CPD) as well as in the fact that being a librarian is not something done merely out of professional interest, but to make a difference in the lives of others. Hence, for Arjun, the ILNP was a fantastic opportunity because not only was he paired with a wonderful kindred spirit, library and information science graduate student Anthony Martinez, but because their partnership was a mutually enriching experience. During the months-long virtual networking program, Anthony and Arjun bonded over the shared belief that library professionals around the globe need to work together for the materialization of a utilitarian socio-informational world that furthers the idea of social harmony and social justice. As firm believers in social justice being inextricably intertwined with the vision and mission of libraries globally, Arjun and Anthony found themselves on fertile ground, professionally and intellectually. Especially in the light of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) #16, which speaks of the need to nurture the development of a peaceful and egalitarian social milieu predicated upon the idea of sustainable development and social justice. A charge to which libraries are essential. Arjun and Anthony not only discussed the larger picture relating to what the role of libraries will be in the future, and how library professionals might go about bracing themselves in this uncertain, yet intriguingly challenging scenario. They also discussed issues relating to potential collaborations between Indian and U.S. libraries and how such collaborations can reinforce their respective learning and research ecosystems. Furthermore, both found it rather enjoyable to discuss and celebrate their professional achievements, including awards they had won and the opportunity to speak at webinars hosted by reput-

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There must be something in the water: Colorado's Trifecta : Race 1

Janet Lee, Nancy Bolt, Jane Mirandette

This is the first of three excerpts that define the trifecta noted in the title – subsequent issues will include the next two segments and explore the outcomes of the bet that Colorado could be so lucky to offer such talent. The John Ames Humphry/OCLC/Forest Press Award is presented annually to a librarian or person who has made significant contributions to international librarianship. This year, the recipient is Janet Lee, Dean Emerita, Regis University, Denver, Colorado. She joins fellow Coloradans Jane Mirandette (2015) and Nancy Bolt (2016). Not since 2013 have three individuals from the same state received the award when Susan Schnuer joined fellow librarians Barbara Ford (2008) and Nancy R. John (2002) representing Illinois, the land of Lincoln. What makes Colorado unique? Is there something in the Rocky Mountain spring water that arouses the thirst for discovery, call of service, and a sense of purpose? Or is it the western spirit that draws them to the call to



(L-R) Jane Mirandette, Nancy Bolt, Janet Lee at CAL conference in Colorado

exploration and travel to the four corners of the world. Each of the awardees has taken a different path to this award: a businesswoman and hotel proprietor; a State Librarian and consultant; a Peace Corps Volunteer and academic. Each has focused on a different part of the world, in fact, in three very different regions: Central America, Southeast Europe, and the Horn of Africa.

The lure of adventure: Jane Mirandette

The lure of adventure and a business venture brought

Jane Mirandette from Loveland, Colorado to the small beach town of San Juan del Sur on the Pacific coast of Nicaragua in 2001. The Hotel Villa Isabella, which she purchased, attracted surfers, foreign tourists, and weekend vacationers from Managua, the capital city. Because Jane had grown up with a tradition of reading, a gift from her grandmother, she filled the shelves of a small patio with a variety of books for the guests. Soon children and adults from the town became aware of the books, visited the patio area, and read voraciously. In 2003, she founded the Hester J. Hodgdon Libraries for all Foundation in honor of her grandmother.

Like many countries, Nicaragua had no lending libraries, especially in small towns like San Juan del Sur. Even in the government libraries, books were kept behind a desk for reading within the building. She created a lending system, and the readership grew and grew, expanding to a small building across the street from the hotel and then to its present location, a much larger building a block or so away. Books are checked out and returned!

This expanded even further as Jane created a mobile library project in 2003, taking tubs of books for checkout to surrounding schools on a regular schedule. Students pick out several books for checkout and return them on schedule, in order to check out more.

A chance encounter at a Managua restaurant with a Denver architect brought new connections. He had just completed the design of a branch library for the Poudre River Library Public District in Fort Collins, CO. He introduced Jane to the library administration and soon thereafter a Sister Library Partnership ensued. In addition to the standard book donations, the library director authorized use of server space and assistance from a Spanish-speaking IT professional who installed and runs the library catalog from Ft. Collins. Thus, not only is the San Juan del Sur Biblioteca online, but all the school library collections, checkout provided by a mobile laptop. Each student is granted his/her own barcoded ID.

Jane also discovered the rich resources of the American Library Association and made it a point to attend its annual and mid-winter conferences. She networked with library colleagues and publishers and purchased/accepted donations from the many English and bilingual publishers at the exhibits. These books are now cataloged, and hand carried to Nicaragua on her frequent trips and with her many volunteers. She also became involved in the International Sustainable Library Develop-

Continued on page 20

IRRT ILNP 2021 Cohort, continued

ed library associations. These moments of interaction cemented an enduring relationship between Arjun and Anthony who will not only support each other's professional development in the foreseeable future but also look forward to meeting each other in-person for more intriguing discussions.

Across the Atlantic in the United States, Arjun's INLP partner **Anthony Martinez** enthusiastically joined the program as a graduate student at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign's iSchool. Despite being at different points in their respective library journeys (one already working as a librarian, the other training to become a librarian), Anthony and Arjun found much common ground over the course of the program. Early on in their interactions, it became clear that regardless of their respective positions, the ability to support one another's professional development and ambitions knows no bounds. During their frequent Zoom calls and emails, Anthony and Arjun discussed the myriad challenges related to growing in the profession. Throughout the program, each asked the other for ample advice regarding various professional development opportunities such as where to search for funding sources. Like Arjun, Anthony also enjoyed all the occasions they had to celebrate their respective professional accomplishments during the course of the program. Independently, each received competitive scholarships to aid in the advancement of their careers. The Alan Hopkinson (IFLA) Award from the CILIP International Library and Information Group for Arjun, and the Association of Research Libraries Kaleidoscope Program for Anthony. Sharing in these moments made for a real connection between the two participants, first as colleagues and then as friends. As both, Anthony and Arjun will continue to support each other's professional development by looking over cover letters, CVs, etc. as they reach for new opportunities in the years to come. Each also looks forward to someday spending some time with the other in-person. Either as guests at their respective institutions, attendees at an international conference, or ideally, both!

Arjun, Anthony and Noorjahan owe a huge debt of gratitude to the IRRT International Librarians Networking Program Team for their painstaking efforts in orchestrating this program. It is because of these wonderful people enabling the articulation of ideas for an egalitarian, empowering world that some truly beautiful and enriching relationships blossomed.

###

ALA IRRT 2022 CHAIR'S PROGRAM Call for Proposals Soon!!!

The past year has demonstrated the essential role of libraries in leading change and building on innovation to respond to continual needs within their communities. The disruptions we have been experiencing for the past several years have impacted all our lives. We live in a world marked by a global health crisis, a global environmental crisis, social, political, and economic disenfranchisement, disinformation, and movements toward authoritarian policy. The IRRT 2022 Chair's program will be a panel of 2-3 library innovators who have acted as agents of leadership for their communities by leading change, advocacy or social justice initiatives through outreach, services, programming, or other actions and are able to talk about the impact of the response. The panelists, representing libraries around the world, will share their experiences as agents of leadership through their work innovatively serving their community, advocating for policy change, and acting as agents of social justice at a grassroots level, or systemically. Watch out for our call for proposals in December.

Colorado's Trifecta, continued



Jane Mirandette reading to children in San Juan del Sur, Nicaragua (2001)

ment Interest Group. ISLD, an interest group of the International Relations Round Table of the American Library Association, was officially formed in 2002. Prior to that, a number of Returned Peace Corps Volunteers/Librarians met informally over lunch on Saturday at Midwinter and Annual conferences, inspired by RPCV/ALA President Barbara Ford and her vision to showcase international library projects. They expressed their frustration at a lack of a formal venue to come together and ISLD was formed. Jane was soon to become a regular presenter at the annual conferences.

Next the race of Nancy Bolt to be featured in the March issue.

###

Libraries: Drive Prosperity, Fight the Regression



Lillian Maria Arango de Rezende Alvares
Email: lillianmariaalvares@gmail.com

“...the network of 2000 Brazilian scientific and technological libraries can help to connect diverse and dispersed individuals and communities to facilitate communication, collaboration, and co-production...”

The Brazilian presence in science and technology is directly linked to federal and state teaching and research institutions, which since the 19th century have significantly contributed to the country's economic and social development.

These diligent learning and innovation organizations, which on countless occasions throughout their history have revealed their value, depend to a great extent on the support of the federal government, today under the leadership of Jair Bolsonaro. The resources, already scarce and insufficient to handle all that Brazilian science needs to prosper, were contingent by surprise in the second half of 2021, with the blocking of US\$ 121 million for investment, of which there is an expectation of releasing US\$ 51 million by the end of the year.

Without truly understanding the damage caused by the recurrent lack of investment in research and development – today and in the long term, at the institutional and individual level – the decision-makers of this administration are the ones responsible for the government machinery that generates information that influences public debate, including the social valuation of science. There is no doubt that after almost $\frac{3}{4}$ of the current administration, widely characterized and documented by the harassment of institutions of culture, environment, education, science, and technology, the

country is under the aegis of ignorance, insensitivity, lack of empathy, and constant lie, to the detriment of scientific advancement, technological fruition, true knowledge, and reliable information.

Nevertheless, Brazilian institutions are strong, resilient. They have a reasonably sophisticated network of installed physical infrastructure, which includes approximately 2000 libraries dedicated to research and development, distributed throughout the country, following the cartography of Brazilian science and technology. S&T libraries are in federal universities (600), state universities (490), public research institutes (200), and federal educational institutes (580). This network of libraries is ramified in all Brazilian states: they are in the interior and on the coast; are in the capitals and small municipalities; in large and small institutions; with large and small collections; with many and few employees; with or without virtual access to major scientific publishers. They are there, attentive to the needs of the community they serve, gradually returning to the role they played in the past, as a result of Open Science and the guiding principles of Fair Science for managing scientific data.

In parallel with ecology, I believe that like the mycelium in a huge underground mesh for exchanging nutrients with the roots of some plants, the network of 2000 Brazilian scientific and technological libraries can help to connect diverse and dispersed individuals and communities, to facilitate communication, collaboration, and co-production, helping to

win the final days of this government, so that hope about the future of science and scientists in Brazil returns in the abundant symbiotic relationship between research, teaching, and government.

###

Brazilian Science in Danger

President cuts federal science budget by 90 percent. Researchers fear a brain drain.

By Anna McKie for Times Higher Education // November 11, 2021

Brazilian academics have said they are losing hope over the future of science in the country after another devastating blow to research funding.

Many projects already underway will have to stop, and there is likely to be significant brain drain after President Jair Bolsonaro signed a bill that reduces the federal science budget by 90 percent, experts told *Times Higher Education*.

Renato Janine Ribeiro, president of the Brazilian Society for the Advancement of Science, said the cuts, which diverted 600 million reais (\$108 million) earmarked for the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation to other departments, will cause “serious damage.”



IRRT International Librarians Networking Program: Stories from Around the World

Raymond Pun is an IRRT member and a librarian from the Bay Area, California, USA. He coordinates interviews with international librarians for International Leads

Interview with Svetlana Gorokhova, Academic Secretary, Mayakovsky Library and Advisor to Director General, Library for Foreign Literature

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

Svetlana: I have worked in the library field since 1989 when I joined Margarita Rudomino State Library for Foreign Literature (Inostranka) as a graduate student at the famous Moscow State Linguistic University. Inostranka is a library institution specializing in foreign literature and needed multilingual staff and at that time, LIS institutions were not providing language education. So, majority of Inostranka staff came from linguistic and diplomatic areas. I believe this fact opened the professional horizons for all professional communities involved. Since then, I came a long way of becoming Head of International Relations and further – Director for International Activities. My library has always been a catalyst for Russian libraries' involvement into global library processes – IFLA activities, international professional exchange, providing space in Russian libraries for expert knowledge on world literature and culture; promoting Russian literature and culture abroad through system of dialogues and exchange practices. As half of my family was based in St. Petersburg, I moved there in 2020 and now, along with being part of Inostranka, I work for Vladimir Mayakovsky Central City Public Library (Mayakovka). My responsibilities include supervising the work of Headquarters of the Russian Library Association Section for International Cooperation; international project activities; professional development programming; work of the US-Russia Library Dialogue, etc. As the RLA Board Member I am part of the Annual Russian Library Congress Planning Committee, leader of the panel “Library Associations of the World”.

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

Svetlana: As I mentioned before I came to the librarianship from the philological field and didn't receive any formal LIS education. Back in 1990s, Russia came through the series of deep social changes, the Soviet Union collapsed, society was going through the years of turbulence and uncertainly, the borders were still



Svetlana Gorokhova

closed, formal education was a relative frame as people were looking for any job available, learning secrets of new profession “on the go”. In general, formal humanitarian and higher education opportunities in Russia would give you a very good quality of life, so I didn't feel like I was misplaced in the library field. Linguistic University gave me a great knowledge of foreign

literature and language and history of the USA and the Great Britain. Of course, to move forward and to be able to provide good quality of services to our patrons, I have to go through series of courses, both domestic and international. I also organized about 27 professional groups and programs both for Russian regional and foreign librarians, taking them into leading universities and LIS institutions around the world, enjoying a first-class education opportunity.

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

Svetlana: I would single out several hot library topics in my country now. The first one – definition of the role/place of the library in modern society. Traditionally in Russia libraries were defined as institutions of intellectual development, a temple of knowledge. Quiet place with great book collections. And there are specialists that stick to this concept. But there is a large professional community who realizes that times has changed, that libraries are not the only sources of information and knowledge, that libraries exist for people and need to meet their needs turning into community spaces and communication hubs and development nourishing points. Both groups are struggling to find a good balance between two tendencies. Another hot point – open access to information for all, this is especially true for the pandemic times when access might

Continued on page 23

Interview with Svetlana Gorokhova, continued

be limited by technical insufficiency (broad band internet access) and copyright issues. And, of course, the issues of moving into digital world, being competitive, having enough digital skills to be competitive.

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

Svetlana: International librarianship is the essence of my professional life. I do believe with all my heart that it is extremely important to provide professionals with the opportunity to see beyond the frames of their own institution, city, and country. Specialists can evaluate their activities and their lives as humans only if they can relay them to and compare them with different worlds and cultures and systems of values. I do believe in dialogues, in sincere interest, and thirst for knowledge and new dimensions of professional activities provided by broad picture of international librarianship. That is why I try to build these kinds of connections between LIS specialists of the world for more than 30 years. And this experience is rewarding. I enjoy every minute of it.

Ray: Thanks for speaking with us! We appreciate your responses! One last question: if you are working on research projects, can you tell us more about it?

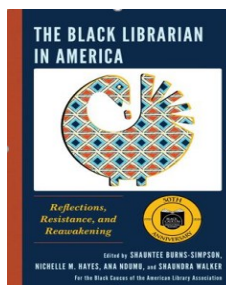
Svetlana: I am involved into several projects: launching the Russian Map of Library Leadership (we plan to create a Russian database of library innovative projects where libraries lead the communities they serve), we also started a series of professional events to study the ways libraries communicate with their communities and how the result of this communication is indicated in the services they provide to their patrons. I am also part of the “Green libraries” project – an international conversation we have with various groups of specialists and partners trying to identify universal forms of library participation in the process – starting from domestic library regulations and norms and finishing with endorsement of national laws and regulations. Life is full of interesting tasks and challenges, and you meet them with great enthusiasm if you do in life what you really like doing.

###

Bio: Svetlana Gorokhova, international librarian from Russia, in 1989 joined M. Rudomino State Library for Foreign Literature (Moscow, Russia) – federal institution of culture specializing in foreign literature and international professional exchange. Went all the way up from field reading hall consultant to Director for International Activities. Served as IFLA Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section SC member (2009-2017) and IFLA Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning SC

member (2017 – 2021). Russian Library Association Board Member; Chair of RLA Section on International Cooperation. Currently combines her work at the Library for Foreign Literature (Moscow) and work in main Saint-Petersburg library – V. Mayakovskiy Central City Public Library (Academic Secretary for International Activities). Co-chair of the US-Russia Library Dialogue. Professional interests: international library activities; professional development across borders; libraries serving their communities; UN SDGs and libraries. (SLA). More information about [SLA Europe](#) can be found on its website.

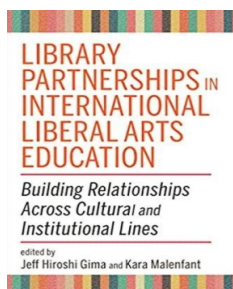
New Resources



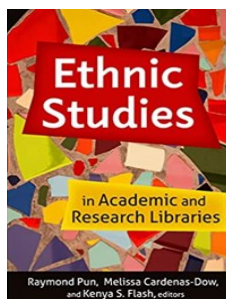
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Upcoming International Library Conferences, Meetings & Events, continued

2-6 March 2022 – [Music Library Association 91st Annual Meeting](#), Salt Lake City, UT

8-10 March 2022 – [17th IFLA Interlending and Document Supply Conference](#) – Sharing to Heal: Resource Sharing Through the Pandemic and Beyond

17-20 March 2022 – [Leipzig Book Fair](#) – Leipzig, Germany

20-23 March 2022 – [International Coalition of Library Consortia \(ICOLC\) Meeting](#), Columbus, OH

23-25 March 2022 – [Public Library Association \(PLA\) 2022 Conference](#), Portland, OR

28-29 March 2022 – [Coalition for Networked Information \(CNI\) Spring 2022 Membership Meeting](#), San Diego, CA

28-30 March 2022 – [UKSG 45th Annual Conference](#), Glasgow, Scotland, UK



International Leads

Holiday Cheers!

Let's toast to fresh starts and new beginnings. Happy 2022!

