



International Leads

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Libraries and School Effectiveness in the Aga Khan Education Service

By Mary Frances Marx, Hasina Kabir Hyderally, and Janet C. Achora

AKES (Aga Khan Education Services) is a simple four-letter acronym that stands for an organization with a long history and the hope, indeed the potential, to “contribute to positive educational change in the wider national community.”

AKES and its foundations were established in the early part of the 20th century by Sir Sultan Mohamed Shah Aga Khan, spiritual leader of the world’s Ismaili Muslims. AKES was formally incorporated in 1981 by Karim, the present Aga Khan, as one of four agencies of the Aga Khan Development Network, supporting educational activities such as schooling for more than 54,000 pupils from pre-school through secondary school in seven countries.

The AKES system is governed by a national service company (NCS) for each country represented, and the service company plans and supports appropriate educational services for that country. At the head of each NSC board is a chairman and the management is headed by a chief executive officer. In keeping with the dictum that a quality educational institution must have a quality library, AKES education officers initiated a study to determine how library programs affect the learning process and to determine the condition of existing AKES libraries. As a result of this study, a Library Development Plan was mandated as part of a “whole school improvement strategy” that would integrate library operations into the curriculum in support of teaching and learning. There was much to be done. One librarian described the facilities in AKES Tanzania in this way:

“...school libraries were mediocre, and not up to the standards of a successful library program. The resources were meager. The arrangement was haphazard. The libraries were being run without the help of basic librarian’s tools of Classification and Cataloguing. They were manned by semi-skilled staff, and though a weekly library time built into the curriculum, teachers did not use the library to enhance their teaching or the students’ learning”

The aim of the program would be to integrate library operations into the school curriculum with the view of supporting the teaching and learning processes.

(The rest of the report centers on Tanzania’s model library program.)

AKES Tanzania began by establishing a five-year plan and forming a Library Development Committee (LDC). Based on data collected from its schools, the LDC targeted staffing, physical facilities, and automation for improvement.

It was recognized that unless professional staff was recruited to run the library programs, there would be no chance for success. Space issues were postponed in favor of staffing and automation, including internet access and online databases.

The Library Development Committee saw several advantages in the immediate use of as much technology as could be acquired:

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- * A modernized approach to collection development and maintenance;
- * Streamlined library processes;
- * More effective data management;
- * Increased access to online sources;
- * Increased familiarity of and facility with information technology;
- * Improved instruction.

Organizationally, the library program would be divided into three phases: 1) design, 2) implementation and monitoring, and 3) assessment. The design phase actively involved the school administration, teachers, pupils, and the library staff, beginning with joint orientation sessions in which participants shared their perspectives and concerns.

After two highly qualified teacher librarians were selected through the auspices of the East African School of Library and Information Science in the Makerere University of Uganda, plans were put to action.

- * A library skills program for teachers and pupils was developed;
- * The library was promoted as a teaching and learning resource with comfortable space to accommodate large numbers of pupils;
- * The SIRS Mandarin Software (with minimum hardware) was selected as the automated library system;
- * A four-day workshop was held to introduce technology to the faculty followed by a series of workshops for teachers and pupils.

This five-year library program plan was monitored for success by school library committees and by an oversight committee, the Library Development and Information and Communication Technology Committee.

Attitudinal changes resulting from the introduction of technology and teacher librarians was almost immediate with about 60% of the teachers using the libraries for assignments and about 80% using the internet to supplement their lessons.

The libraries now have computerized catalogs and automated circulation and acquisitions and accurate management data used for justifying expenses and exercising budget control. The five-year goals and objectives were met.

Understanding the true meaning of information literacy has become a reality in the AKES Tanzania schools and their experiences have become led to general improvements in other AKES libraries and improvements in space and staffing.

AKES Tanzania has a long-term vision of transforming its library system into a virtual library where users can gain access to information from across the world through online databases and the Internet. This vision includes collaboration with other libraries within the AKES network and with professional institutions. Perhaps one day we shall see an AKES virtual network, drawing together AKES schools from seven countries into one virtual educational consortium sharing information, teaching, and learning.

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Message from the IRRT Chair

By Nancy Bolt

Here's what your officers have been doing since midwinter.

1. At the membership meeting in Orlando, the membership approved the revisions in the bylaws.
2. The Membership Committee is revising the membership brochure to reflect the FREE membership in IRRT for ALA members from other countries.
3. The Publication Committee is looking for editors of both *International Leads*, and the *IRRT website*. Applications have been received and a decision will be made at the ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston.
4. Beginning this spring and continuing through the fall, I appointed members to all the IRRT Committees. At this time, all appointments for the 2004 - 2005 year have been made. Vice-chair, Jeanette Pierce will begin to make appointments after midwinter for 2005-2006, her year as Chair of IRRT. Those interested in a committee appointment can do two things:
 - If you are coming to midwinter, attend the all committee meeting on Saturday from 8:00 am - 12:00 and the Executive Board meeting on Sunday from 8:00 - 11:00 am.
 - Watch the IRRT website (www.ala.org/iala/irrt/irrt.htm) for a Committee Interest form. Fill it out and send to Jeanette Pierce at <pierce@jhu.edu>.
5. Jeanette and I are beginning work on the IRRT Organizational Manual. We hope to have a draft for review at ALA Midwinter.

All the IRRT committees will meet in Boston and make plans for the annual conference in Chicago. We invite all IRRT members and all librarians from outside the U.S. to visit us in Chicago.



Hynes Convention Center Boston

IRRT and IRC Meetings at 2005 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston (January 14 - 19, 2005)

IRC Meetings

International Relations Committee I

Friday, 1/14/05

2:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Location to be announced

International Relations Committee II

Tuesday, 1/18/05

1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Location to be announced

Humphry/OCLC Forest Press Award Committee

Saturday, 1/15/05

9:00 am - 11:00 am

Location to be announced

Closed meeting

Bogle Pratt Award Committee

Saturday, 1/15/05

9:00 am - 11:00 am

Location to be announced

Closed meeting

IRC/IRRT Meeting

IRC/IRRT All Subcommittee Meeting

Saturday, 1/15/05

8:00 am - 11:00 pm

Location to be announced

IRRT-Meetings

Executive Committee Meeting

Sunday, 1/16/05

8:00 am - 11:00am

Location to be announced

International Papers Subcommittee

Saturday, 1/15/05

9:00 am - 11:00 am

Location to be announced

Closed meeting

International Poster Session Subcommittee

Saturday, 1/15/05

9:00 am - 11:00 am

Location to be announced

Closed meeting

Additional Meetings

IFLA Update

Saturday, 1/15/05

11:00-12:30pm

Location to be announced

LOCATIONS

Hynes Convention Center

900 Boylston Street

Boston, Massachusetts 02115



International Librarianship: Getting There from Here

By Robin Kear

Before You Go

Do you enjoy traveling? Do you dream of cultures and places you haven't seen? Can you be alone? Do you own well-thumbed Lonely Planet books? Do you wish you were there someone describes a faraway place? Are you comfortable in unknown places and situations? If you answer yes and want to find out if international work is for you:

- Talk to colleagues who have worked abroad and ask what they thought of the experience;
- Do some armchair traveling or try the real thing;
- Read the regular *College & Research Libraries* feature: "Jobs of a Lifetime;"
- Read library journals from other countries look up their national associations;
- Shadow an international librarianship listserv;
- Ask yourself if living and working abroad will make you happy.

Skills That Will Help You Get the Job

Because of expense, you may have to present yourself and your credentials by e-mail and telephone. Here are some skills, knowledge, and aptitudes that will help get that international job.

- Knowledge of a foreign language or two;
- International travel experience;
- Genuine interest in working abroad;
- Knowledge of international issues;
- Work experience appropriate for the position you are applying for;
- Ability to apply practical, basic library and organizational skills for jobs in developing countries;
- Ability to work without the aid of technology in developing countries;
- Membership in one or more international organizations such as IFLA the International Federation of Library Associations), ISKO (International Society for Knowledge Organization) and the American Library Association's International Relations Round Table (IRRT).

The Right Job

For short-term experience (less than one year), consider internships, library exchanges, travel grants, and academic

cruise ships. For positions lasting longer than a year, consider the military, Foreign Service, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), United Nations, universities with international campuses, and foreign universities.

Ways to Get There

The United Nations offers a shortcut for its professional level positions known as the National Competitive Recruitment Examinations Programme. To be eligible, you must be under thirty-two years old and your country and profession must be under-represented in the UN. For the last three years, the United States and librarianship have been under-represented and thus eligible for the NCRE. If you pass the written test and interview, you are placed on a list of qualified applicants for professional librarian positions and almost guaranteed to receive the jobs as they open.

Some jobs in the United States offer international opportunities. Look for libraries that have exchange programs with sister libraries abroad. Some academic appointments allow you to take a semester off for research or professional development.

Things to Keep in Mind

Living in a foreign country may present challenges for you and your family including homesickness and even hostility. You may be exposed to poverty, suffering, and danger. That being said, places are seldom as bad as the outsider imagines. If you are open, courteous, and respectful of custom, you are likely to have a good experience. Choosing to live and work in Kenya was the best thing I ever did and I highly recommend the experience.

Job Listings

IFLA: <http://www.ifla.org/II/lists/libjobs.htm>

This is a good place to find out about long- and short-term positions.

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The ABLE Project

American/Bulgarian Library Exchange

Background

In the June, 2002 issue of *International Leads*, I introduced you to the Colorado/Bulgarian Library Partnership Project sponsored by the Colorado Association of Libraries. Since that time, we were pleased to be a recipient of a grant from the U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Education and Cultural Affairs. We are very excited about the ability to expand our project as a result of this grant.

The ABLE Project allowed us to expand our project in several ways. First, this grant is a collaborative effort of the Colorado Association of Libraries (CAL) and the Iowa Resources for International Service (IRIS). This allows us to expand the project from Colorado to Iowa libraries, increasing the number of American libraries who are willing to have a partner in Bulgaria.

Second, the grant will allow us to bring 18 Bulgarian librarians to the United States for five weeks to give them a good understanding of American librarianship.

Third, it will expand the partnerships from 10 to 18 and also publicize the entire partnership concept. Since the grant begun we have formed 3 partnerships outside of the grant just because of the positive publicity that has been generated. Hopefully, this will also help us sustain the partnerships long after the grant is over.

Last, we are also able to take 18 American librarians to Bulgaria for 2 weeks to strengthen the partnerships and have them experience Bulgaria and its libraries.

The goals of the project are four fold:

1. Increase the capacity of Bulgarian libraries to become community information centers providing online community information services to local government offices and Bulgarian citizens.
2. Increase understanding and support by Bulgarian government and community leaders for the role of libraries in a democratic society
3. Utilize Partner Libraries as a means of sharing information about our two countries.
4. Develop a continuing network of Bulgarian and U.S. libraries that will seek additional funding to upgrade the computer capacity of Bulgarian libraries

Project Activities

The ABLE Project began with a visit in November, 2003 of Project Directors Bob Anderson (IRIS), Nancy Bolt (CAL) and Iskra Mahailova (Union of Library and Information Science Officers- ULISO in Bulgaria) hosting a meeting in Arbanassi, Bulgaria to which 18 Bulgarian public library directors were invited. The purpose was to introduce the project to the librarians and determine their willingness to participate. The new role of a public library as a community information center rather than a "museum of books" was presented and accepted. All 18 libraries agreed to participate in the grant.

In April/May, 2004, 12 Bulgarian librarians came to the United States – 7 went to Colorado and 5 went to Iowa. They spent 5 weeks visiting their American Partner Library and receiving training in five aspects of becoming a Community Information Center (CIC):

- Basics of a CIC
- Collaboration with government and community agents
- Marketing a CIC
- Fundraising for a CIC
- Working with local government

All Bulgarian librarians were required to speak English well enough to function independently in the United States. It was a thrilling and extraordinary learning experience for both the Bulgarians and the Americans.

In September, 2004, five Americans went to Bulgaria to train Bulgarian librarians in how to become a Community Information Center. The librarians had prepared a workbook on the five themes that was translated into Bulgaria (500 copies have now been printed). For two days we did intensive training of the staff of 6 Bulgarian public libraries who had agreed to be pilot sites to test these principles. On the third day we trained 12 Bulgarian librarians to be trainers of their peers. The Bulgarian librarians went on to train their peers around the country. At least 200 Bulgarian librarians have received this training by January, 2005.

International Librarianship

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United Nations Secretariat: <https://jobs.un.org/release1/vacancy/vacancy.asp>

Librarian jobs are listed under Information Management. The UN classification for jobs is G=general, FS=Field Service, P=professional, D=director. For example, P starts with P-1, professional level one, and goes to P-5, professional level five; the pay scale goes up accordingly. (Always apply for the "P" positions not the "G" ones. If you enter the UN system as a G it is almost impossible to move to P.)

NGOs: http://www.careerframes.com/links_main_intl/ngo_links.htm

This Web site is a good place to start looking for jobs in the big NGOs like the World Bank, IMF, OECD, and NATO. They also have international jobs listed by country and type. There are also many smaller NGOs not listed here that look for researchers and information managers. Try <http://www.idealists.org> for jobs and internships at smaller non-profits in the U.S. and around the world.

Civilian Jobs in the Military: <http://jobsearch.usajobs.opm.gov/>

Foreign Service: <http://www.careers.state.gov/>

Peace Corps: <http://www.peacecorps.gov>

A two-year volunteer commitment is required. "Peace Corps Volunteers work in the following areas: education, youth outreach, and community development; health and HIV/AIDS; agriculture and environment; business development; and information technology." There is no library category but many Peace Corps skills and experiences are transferable to our profession.

World Library Partnership: <http://worldlibraries.org/itw/southafrica/saprogram.shtml>

This is a 4-week volunteer program, usually in the summer. In 2004, volunteers will be working in South Africa. Note: This is an unpaid experience. "Since 1998, 125 volunteers have worked with many libraries in Zimbabwe, Honduras and South Africa."

Librarian Exchanges:

http://www.cilip.org.uk/jobs_careers/libex.html a librarian exchange program facilitated by the British group, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals;

<http://www.ala.org/ala/irrt/irrtcommittees/irrtintlex/international.htm>, the exchange committee of ALA-IRRT.

Internships: <http://www.idealists.org> and <http://www.un.org/esa/socdev/unyin/internships.htm>
Unpaid. Airfare is usually not included, food and board sometimes included.

University of Pittsburgh's Semester at Sea: <http://www.semesteratsea.com/>

The University of Pittsburgh's worldwide cruising program hires an assistant librarian each semester but you must have professional experience.

Chronicle of Higher Education: <http://chronicle.com/jobs/>

<http://www.ala.org/ala/education/empopps/employmentopportunities.htm>

<http://www.iss.edu/>

ISKO: <http://is.gseis.ucla.edu/orgs/isko/>

ALA-IRRT: <http://www.ala.org/ala/irrt/irrt.htm>

ALA-IRO: <http://www.ala.org/ala/iro/international.htm>

United Nations National Competitive Recruitment Exam:

<http://www.un.org/Depts/OHRM/examin/exam.htm>

Jobs of a Lifetime: <http://www.ala.org/ala/acrl/acrlissues/acrlrecruiting/recruitingprofession.htm>

IRRT Mentors Program

By Christina Chester-Fangman

For the past three years, I have had the pleasure of serving on the IRRT Orientation RRT Orientation Subcommittee coordinating the Mentors Program for the International Librarians Orientation & Welcome Reception at the ALA Annual Conference. Part of the mission of the IRRT is "to provide hospitality and information to visitors from abroad," that is, librarians from all over the world—from Australia to Zimbabwe—many of whom participate in the mentoring program.

The mentoring program matches international and American librarians who share interests. The mentor (the American) helps the visitor navigate the conference with its overwhelming choices of programs, activities, and special events, and the things to see and do in the conference city.

Another aspect of the mentor program involves the sharing of ideas, goals, feelings, and experiences, both professional and personal. As mentor Elizabeth Jackson notes, "...this is a great opportunity to learn more about another country's libraries and issues." To that end, librarians involved in the program have a chance to see their work through another's eyes, hear about different ways of performing their jobs, and communicate new ideas with each other.

ABLE Project

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Next Steps

In March, 2005, Iskra Mahailova, Bulgarian Project Director in Bulgaria, and Vanya Grashkina, President of ULISO, will come to the United States. They will visit the American Library Association offices in Washington, DC and in Chicago. They will also visit their library partners and friends in Iowa and Colorado.

In May, 2005 12 American librarians from Colorado and Iowa will visit their Bulgarian partners and participate in the ULISO conference that will be devoted to the ABLE project.

Finally, we were thrilled to hear that we have received a second year of funding from the State Department and will be able to bring the final six Bulgarian librarians from the original 18 to the United States.

For more information, contact Nancy Bolt (nancybolt@earthlink.net) or look at the project website at www.cal-webs.org

IRRT Mentors

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Those interested in being mentors and guests sign up through ALA's International Relations Office (IRO). Mentors must be ALA members but do not have to be members of IRRT. Ideally, there is a one-to-one mentoring relationship, but usually one mentor will have several international guests to work with. Not all of the international librarians are fluent in English so they prefer to be partnered with someone who knows their language. Although language can be important when pairing participants, the areas of librarianship in which they work are also important and used by the IRO when matching librarians.

The mentors are given contact information so that if they want to, they can get in touch with their guests and make plans before the conference

Participants may conveniently meet during the International Librarians Orientation and Welcome Reception, an event held early in the conference that includes a presentation of general information about ALA, the conference, the mentors program, and the host city.

Interaction among the mentors and guests varies. Some guests just want someone they can speak with and have questions answered. In other cases, mentors and guests attend conference programs and events together and socialize over meals and other activities

The majority of the mentors find the experience informative and enriching. Some of our mentors have enjoyed the experience so much and found it so rewarding, that they have signed up year after year.

For additional information about the IRRT Mentors Program, please contact the ALA International Relations Office by phone at 1-800-545-2433 ext. 3201 or via e-mail at intl@ala.org.

International Relations Office

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Postage