

HELPFUL ORGANIZATIONS FOR SISTER LIBRARIES

ALA Sister Libraries

<http://www.ala.org/rt/irt/irtcommittees/irrtsisterlibrary/sisterlibrary>

American Corners

Library partnerships with U.S. embassies. For information, email U.S. Embassy or Consulate.

IFLA – www.ifla.org

Contact library associations in specific countries via the International Federation of Library Associations & Institutions (IFLA).

Rotary International – www.rotary.org

Members have contact with organizations around the world.

Sister Cities International – www.sister-cities.org

Look for a library partner in your city's sister city, if you have one!

U.S. Peace Corps – www.peacecorps.gov

Information on volunteer exchange efforts throughout the world.

TIPS FOR FINDING A SISTER LIBRARY

- Find people or organizations in your community that have relationships with other countries.
- When you travel, visit libraries and meet their librarians & staff.
- Contact international students at nearby library schools & international librarians at conferences to explore opportunities for partnerships.
- Build upon an existing international partnership such as community or religious institutions or in an academic setting, a study abroad program or a department with international research initiatives.

WAYS TO PARTICIPATE

Participants in the ALA Sister Libraries program choose the level of involvement with their Sister Library based upon the mutual needs of the libraries. Sister Libraries should make commitments at levels that are comfortable for both participants. Some relationships will be informal, while others may involve formal contracts and ceremonies.

ALA encourages Sister Library relationships at all levels of commitment. Contact the ALA International Relations Office for more information.

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SISTER LIBRARIES

An initiative of the American Library Association
International Relations Roundtable



“Libraries build community, but today’s community is a global one. Many of today’s library users have immigrated from other countries. Many routinely travel for pleasure and conduct business abroad. Becoming a Sister Library is an opportunity to build relationships with libraries in other cultures that can help us learn, understand, and better serve our own community.”

Sarah Ann Long
President 1999-2000
American Library Association

To promote the concept of a global community of libraries, the American Library Association (ALA) encourages U.S. libraries to form relationships with libraries in other countries as part of the Sister Library program. This tip sheet provides ideas and resources to help you arrange this type of partnership.

WHY BECOME A SISTER LIBRARY?

- Promote awareness of libraries and their international reach.
- Improve access to published information in both countries.
- Raise awareness of issues and needs facing libraries in various countries.
- Offer opportunities to learn more about a region or country represented by an immigrant group in your community.
- Share techniques and technologies to help solve problems.
- Broaden both your own and your staff's view of the library profession.
- Increase staff and community knowledge of other cultures.
- Share information, resources, expertise, and training between libraries.

GETTING STARTED

- Analyze your library's needs – how could your library benefit?
- Identify your library's resources – what could you offer a Sister Library?
- Determine the level of commitment that you and your institution can make and who will be responsible for overseeing the project.
- Determine your budget for this program.
- Get approval and financial backing from your institution (i.e., board, administration, advisory group).
- Get your community involved. First involve the library community (staff, trustees, friends and volunteers). Then involve the public or your school, university, college or institutional community.
- Organize a local committee.
- Be flexible. Take into account each library's objectives and expectations in shaping the relationship.
- When working with librarians in non-English speaking countries, have a staff or community member fluent in the language of the Sister Library who can serve as your liaison.
- Answer e-mail promptly and encourage your Sister Library to send e-mail to you.

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

- Organize a pen pals program for library staff and users to learn from and about each other.
- Initiate contact via e-mail to discuss issues and concerns.
- Arrange to exchange displays of books & cultural materials.
- Arrange for short-term exchanges of professional staff.
- Organize a delegation of staff and community members to visit your Sister Library.
- Arrange to fax or email articles to your partner.
- Explore what your Sister Library needs in the way of books and journals and try to donate what's needed.
- Donate useful books or journals.
- Exchange staff newsletters.
- Exchange local newspapers, cultural materials, bibliographies, artifacts and displays of interest.
- Create a bulletin board display with photos of your Sister Library, its staff and users. Send a scrapbook, slide presentation or CD of your library to your Sister Library.
- Set up an evaluation mechanism to help both libraries celebrate their successes and learn from their mistakes.
- Offer to assist in purchasing material that is difficult to find in the other country.
- Publicize your Sister Library status via your library newsletter and at speaking engagements with the Rotary, Chamber of Commerce and other groups with an international focus in your community. Provide interviews and photo opportunities with local media.

THE SISTER LIBRARIES COMMITTEE CAN HELP

The ALA Sister Libraries program website is designed to help libraries find partners. Visit the page **Become a Sister Library!** to find out how to become a Sister Library & find information about libraries seeking partners. Visit us at:

<http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt/irrtcommittees/irrtsisterlibrary/sisterlibrary>

Questions? Need help?

Email the Sister Libraries Committee: sister.libraries@gmail.com