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2018 ALA Midwinter Meeting

**International Relations Committee Report to Council**

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Submitted by the IRC (Janice Welburn, Joan Weeks, pro tempore co-chairs)

Committee Members: Leslie Burger (Chair), Mustafa Abdelwahid, Vivian Bordeaux, Valerie Gross, Brian Hart, Robin Kear, Allan Kleiman, Haipeng Li, Alexandra Rivera, Joan Weeks, Janice Welburn, Kenya Flash (intern), Ben Himmelfarb (intern), Michael Dowling (staff liaison)

**International Participation at Midwinter**

ALA welcomed 209 attendees and exhibitors from 22 countries to Midwinter in Denver.

**IFLA Report**

ALA continues its strong participation at IFLA. In addition to all the ALA members serving on IFLA Section Committees, Ann Okerson, Patrick Losinski, and Michael Dowling are serving two- year terms on the IFLA Governing Board. IFLA’s [Global Vision Discussion](https://www.ifla.org/node/11901) continues. In the fall, IFLA asked the global library community to respond through a survey. Over 22,000 responses were received from 213 countries. U.S. participation in the survey was strong with close to 2,000 weighing in. A report is being compiled from all the data received, and the discussion will move forward during a two-day meeting in Barcelona to begin developing concrete action plans, which will be unveiled at the Kuala Lumpur Congress in August.

### IFLA debuted the initial version of the [Library Map of the World](https://librarymap.ifla.org/) at the [Wrocław](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wroc%C5%82aw) (Poland) Congress in August. It is a representative source of basic library statistics and a robust tool providing country-level data and a worldwide comparison of different library performance metrics by region. It will serve as an advocacy tool and platform to stories demonstrating how libraries in different countries contribute to the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals and serve as partners in meeting local development needs. ALA’s Office for Research & Evaluation provided the U.S. statistics for the Map.

Winston Tabb, Head of IFLA’s Delegation to WIPO, informed the IRC that IFLA in partnership with Archives and Museum communities will be introducing a new proposed treaty on copyright exceptions at this spring’s WIPO meeting. The proposed treaty adds museums for the first time. Previous iterations focused only on libraries and archives. ALA is actively involved in this effort through the Library Copyright Alliance.

Three hundred and thirty U.S. librarians and members of the vendor community participated in the IFLA Congress in Wrocław, Poland. ALA thanks the Polish American Librarians Association for its participation and assistance at the ALA Stand. Five fellows from the IMLS IFLA grant presented papers and posters at the Wrocław Congress and were supported by partial grants from the remaining funds raised by the U.S. National Committee for the Columbus Congress. That fund-raising effort was spearheaded by ALA President James Neal.

**IMLS IFLA Fellows Mentor Mentee Initiative**

The year-long mentor-mentee phase of the IMLS IFLA Fellows grant, and the grant itself, coordinated by the International Relations Office, officially ended in August. The grant provided the opportunity for 50 U.S. librarians from diverse communities that received partial grants to attend the IFLA Congress in Columbus in 2016. In the end, 47 of the 50 fellows were provided an internationally experienced mentor to help them become more involved in global librarianship. A majority of the fellows expect to continue working with their mentor.

**SIBF-ALA Library Conference**

Three hundred librarians, many ALA members, from sixteen countries attended the 4th [SIBF-Library Conference](http://www.ala.org/aboutala/offices/sharjah-international-book-fairala-library-conference), November 7-9, 2017, held in conjunction with the Sharjah International Book Fair in the United Arab Emirates. The conference provided attendees a chance to learn, share, and connect with experts from the U.S., Europe, and the region. Topics at the conference included ***Empowering and Developing Staff in the Changing (and Challenging) World of Library Work; Running Effective Open Educational Resources (OER) Initiatives in Your***

***Academic Library; Creating a Personal Librarian Program: Engagement, Effectiveness & Efficiency; Trends and Changes in Global and Regional Metadata Management; Libraries as a Hub for Innovation, Creativity and Learning; and Designing LIS Research focused on Youth.***

ALA President James Neal challenged the attendees in his keynote, *Libraries Transform - Libraries Lead - Libraries Fight*, to continue changing libraries and the library profession to better serve communities and society. At the conference it was announced that the creation of the first-ever library association in the United Arab Emirates was moving forward. Previously, librarians in the UAE were not allowed to form an association. The new association will become a partner with the Arab Federation of Libraries for Information (AFLI), a regional umbrella association joining the global *Libraries Transform* effort.

The conference provides a professional development opportunity for all types of librarians, including school librarians. This year the Emirates Literature Foundation presented its first [School Librarian of the Year Award](https://www.elfdubai.org/en/librarian-award). Three of the inaugural winners were able to outline their best practices to over 50 colleagues.

The conference concluded with a presentation by Dr. Karen Fisher, from the University of Washington Ischool, on her work with the UNHCR Za’atari Refugee Camp in Jordan that houses over 80,000 Syrian refugees. A number of conference attendees expressed their interest in working with Professor Fisher on training staff operating small libraries in the camp.

Sharjah has been selected by UNESCO as the [World Book Capital for 2019](https://en.unesco.org/news/sharjah-named-world-book-capital-2019).

**18th ALA-FIL Free Pass Program to Guadalajara Book Fair**

ALA President James Neal joined 167 other ALA members from 26 states to attend the 30th Guadalajara International Book Fair (FIL) at the end of November.  It was the 18th year of collaboration between ALA and the Guadalajara Book Fair. The ALA members spent $425,000 this year for Spanish-language materials for their collections.

For 37 percent of the members it was their first time participating in ALA-FIL Free Pass Program. They received an advanced introductory webinar, as well as an on-site orientation, to help prepare them for the three “professional days.” For the 7th year, U.S. librarians and publishers in attendance donated books to U.S. Embassy staff to give to a local public library during the Mexican Library Association Conference next spring.

**U.S.–Germany Library Partnership**

Collaboration between the German library community and the U.S. library community continued during this year’s Frankfurt Book Fair. ALA President James Neal provide the keynote, *Scholarly Publishing in a Time of Disruption and Turmoil: The Prospects for Radical Collaboration,* at the annual STM Frankfurt Conference. ALA members, including members of the Europe Committee, through the [German-North American Resources Partnership](https://www.crl.edu/programs/gnarp) (GNARP), helped organize [*New Directions for Libraries, Scholars, and Partnerships: an International Symposium*](https://www.crl.edu/events/frankfurt2017symposium)*,* held at the Germany National Library during the Book Fair. Thirty U.S. libraries participated.

German colleagues organizing the Next Library Conference in September received a grant from the U.S. Embassy to provide fellowship travel grants for six emerging public librarians from the United States to attend the conference. IRO worked with a review panel made up of members of the Europe Committee and others to select the fellows.

**Library Disaster Relief -International**

ALA’s Caribbean Disaster Relief Effort is providing assistance to libraries in St. Martin, Barbuda, and elsewhere, in addition to Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands. Libraries in the United States are being matched with those libraries through the Adopt-A-Library program, and they will be able to receive grants from the funds raised by over 400 donors that have contributed $75,000. The IRC thanks all those helping their colleague recover from the devastations of the hurricanes.

**Libraries Transform – International**

International libraries and associations continue their interest in being part of Libraries Transform. There are now 533 participants in 83 countries. Romania has become the first to start a coordinated countrywide effort. The logo has been translated into Romanian, and it will be featured at the upcoming national conference. As was mentioned above, AFLI will soon be following with an Arabic translation for wide use.

**ALA International Revenue**

In FY17, international revenue accounted for 5 percent of ALA’s total revenue. International membership, conference registrations and exhibits, publication sales, etc., brought in 2.3 million dollars for the association and its various units. RDA’s continued international growth is to be noted, providing ALA additional opportunities for growth. The report on international revenues is gathered yearly by IRO with assistance of all the various units that accrue revenue from international sources.

**International Relations Round Table**

IRRT Chair Loida Garcia-Febo reported on the continued successes of the IRRT to create projects and activities toward ALA’s International Strategic Plan, which is aligned with the ALA Strategic Directions. IRRT again has sponsored an ALA Emerging Leader, and Joi Jackson will work with four of the other Emerging Leaders on the project “Towards Increasing Engagement of International New Professional Leaders in ALA Activities.” This year the IRRT will be awarding the first “IRRT Mission Grant” from its endowment to fund member-initiated proposals for international activities and initiatives, which contribute to ALA’s role in international librarianship.

The Chair’s focus this year is on serving immigrants and refugees around the world, and IRRT is hosting a number of webinars from the U.S. perspective and the international perspective on this critical issue. IRRT programming at Annual in New Orleans will continue the discussion.

**New Orleans will be International**

Promotion and invitations to international members and the global library community are ongoing to encourage them to attend the Annual Conference in New Orleans this summer.

IRO is already coordinating with delegations from China, Japan, and Korea. International programs provide diversity at the conferences, and New Orleans will be no exception. IRC’s geographic subcommittees have put together a varied set of programs. The Africa Committee and PLA are collaborating on the program “Developing the Next Generation of Library Leaders in Africa.” The Near East and South Asia are co-sponsoring the EMIERT Chair’s program,” Arab American Literature- A Librarian’s Guide.” Attendees will be able to also learn about Cuba’s academic libraries and how Central American libraries are serving their communities. They will also learn how libraries in Asia and the Pacific are focusing on equality, equity, and diversity and about library design trends in Germany.

**ALA International Strategic Plan**

The IRC spent a portion of their meetings reviewing the Advocacy and Information Policy sections of the plan. Discussion focused on increasing awareness in the U.S. library community on the global library community, highlighting international projects and activities of other colleagues, and engaging new professionals and library students in ALA’s international initiatives.