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Richard Sapon-White
Oregon State University

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International Librarianship: Resources for Further Exploration

by *Richard Sapon-White*
Oregon State University

“International librarianship” is a term that embraces many different, though related, topics. These include international exchanges of librarians, cooperation between libraries and librarians in different countries, and the development of library services in Third World countries. Because the term covers so much territory, the literature on the subject is extensive. An exhaustive bibliography could not be published in the confines of this journal, and even an extensive one would surely be overwhelming to the reader.

Nevertheless, the Oregon librarian who wants to learn more about international librarianship may need some direction as to where to go next for more information. Consequently, I have chosen to highlight a handful of print monographs and periodicals, as well as some useful Web sites, which can provide practical background and cogent discussion of issues in international librarianship. Many of these resources can also serve as stepping-stones to further learning on the topic through their extensive bibliographies and hypertext links.

In constructing the bibliography, searches were made in *Library Literature*, WorldCat, and the ALA and OLA IRRIT Web sites. Only titles and sites that were well written, current, and that provided in-depth coverage of their topics were selected. Resources were also chosen to give a mixture of both background information and pragmatic tips.

Books

Bonta, Bruce, and James G. Neal, Eds. 1992. *The Role of the American Academic Library in International Programs*. Greenwich, Conn.: Jai Press. (Foundations in library and information science; v. 27)

This tome consists of ten invited papers plus an introduction covering many different kinds of international connections that exist in American academic libraries. These include: the involvement of academic librarians in international library organizations, librarians as overseas consultants, educating librarians from developing countries in American universities, services for international students, and the impact of area studies programs on academic libraries. The article on the “African book famine” should be required reading for anyone concerned about library development in Third World countries.

The wonderful part of this collection is that it draws together so many seemingly unrelated aspects of academic librarianship, showing how the internationalization of higher education has impacted our work. As a complement to *Libraries: Global Reach, Local Touch*, which tends to focus on specific countries, this work emphasizes the multiple roles that academic librarians already play in the global information structure.

Hary, Nicoletta Mattioli, and Francesca L. Hary, 1995. Hosting an international librarian. *College & Research Libraries News*, 56 (3): 162-164.

Although written originally in response to the author’s experience with the ALA Library Fellows Program (currently in hiatus), this succinct three-page document does provide a good, practical overview of what hosting a librarian from overseas is all about. It covers training the visitor, helping him/her feel integrated in the local community as well as in the library, housing, acculturation, and assigning a mentor. Hosting involves a great deal of coordination and a time commitment from both the mentor and the library administration. Knowing what is involved and preparing for the visit are critical steps in insuring a good experience for the host library and the exchange librarian.

Kidd, Tony, and Karen Roughton, 1994. International staff exchanges for academic libraries. *Journal of Academic Librarianship* 20 (5/6): 295-299.

This research article reports the results of a survey of library directors and exchange participants in the U.K., Ireland, Canada, and the United States. The article can give aspiring exchange participants an idea of the nature of exchanges, including financial and housing arrangements, responsibilities of the host institution, length of time needed to arrange the exchange, professional and personal benefits for participants, and disadvantages and drawbacks.

Interestingly, most exchanges were arranged through personal contact, although library associations did facilitate in some cases. The length of time needed for planning the exchanges ranged anywhere from six months to over a year. Both directors and participants mentioned improved motivation of participants once they returned to their jobs.

McCook, Kathleen de la Peña, Barbara J. Ford, and Kate Lippincott, Eds. 1998. *Libraries: Global Reach, Local Touch*. Chicago: ALA.

If one were to choose the best place to start learning about international librarianship, this book would probably be it. Approximately two-thirds of the chapters discuss libraries in particular countries or regions of the world, with representation from Latin America, Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe, and Oceania. Many of the chapters discuss the library history and current conditions in a specific country, which can provide insight to those preparing to visit that country or who are looking for a place in which their skills could be best utilized. While providing a very broad overview on

international library development, the book is not intended to be comprehensive. There are also thematic chapters that discuss issues of importance around the globe, such as information technology in developing countries, freedom of expression, and women in librarianship.

The 14-page bibliography includes serials, monographs, articles, and Internet resources. It is probably the most extensive and current bibliography on international librarianship in print.

Seidman, Ruth K. *Building Global Partnerships for Library Cooperation*. 1993. Washington: Special Libraries Association.

Seidman interviewed six librarians and information specialists about their international experiences. In some cases, the librarians traveled overseas to work on a specific project while others remained at home in the U.S. but cooperated long-distance with someone in another country. Treating each as a case study, she draws conclusions from their experiences about how to get started, defines the characteristics of successful projects, and outlines the direct and indirect benefits of such endeavors. She also discusses factors that support and work against international cooperation. This short book (only 73 pages) is an easy read and still provides an excellent analysis of these international experiences. It also has a good, although perhaps slightly dated, bibliography that covers international development in general, as well as international librarianship and trends in management and information technology.

Internet Resources

Council for International Exchange of Scholars (<http://www.iie.org/cies/>)

The Council is the organization that administers the Fulbright Program, which provides grants to academic faculty and others for a variety of international educational activities (principally university-level lecturing and research, but also including elementary and secondary school teaching). The site describes the various subprograms, their eligibility requirements, and much more. A look at its FAQ on commonly held myths about Fulbrights reveals that Fulbright scholars are not all college professors or administrators; exchanges last anywhere from a few months to a year; and proficiency in the language of the host country is not necessarily a prerequisite. Librarians from many venues do get Fulbrights, so this is a good resource to keep in mind.

IFLANET
(<http://www.ifla.org/>)

IFLANET is the Web site for IFLA, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. Since IFLA is *the* preeminent international library organization, this site is one of the best for information about current international cooperation on a wide variety of library issues. Whether one is interested in the international exchange of bibliographic records, the advancement of librarianship in the Third World, or worldwide cooperation in library material

preservation, this site provides the background as to what IFLA members are doing around the globe. Users can also find the table of contents and English abstracts for issues of *IFLA Journal*, as well as full text of some IFLA sections' and round tables' newsletters. The full texts of some conference papers from past IFLA conferences are also here. Finally, the site has information on future IFLA conferences, the next one being in Boston in August 2001.

International and Comparative Librarianship Web Site
(<http://www.shore.net/~amery/intindex.htm>)

This site is a compilation of links to other Web sites. Sites are divided into six categories: country information, foundations and organizations, sources, education, journals, and listservs. Look under "Country information" for links to about forty national libraries and background on countries everywhere. Or click on "Foundations and organizations" for links to nearly every imaginable library association. "Education" can link you to SLIS sites around the globe, from New Zealand to the Czech Republic. The strength of this site clearly rests in the breadth of links it contains and its well-organized presentation.

International Relations Office of ALA
(<http://www.ala.org/work/international/>)

ALA's International Relations Office, International Relations Committee, and International Relations Round Table form a triumvirate of organizational bodies watching over the international activities of the largest library association in the world. The office's site is undoubtedly the international librarianship site par excellence as it is filled with useful information in many different areas. It includes information on a variety of ALA policies and initiatives, such as the Sister Libraries Initiative, the ALA International Agenda for 2000-2005, and the Guadalajara Book Fair Free Pass Program. Also look to the site for its "Checklist for Preparing for an International Exchange" and "Guidelines for Short Term Visits to the U.S. by Foreign Nationals." There is an international job exchange bibliography, links to sites for international travelers, and a list of foundations and organizations supporting international exchanges and/or short-term travel. The calendar of international events in library science is a good place to look for conferences overseas (and includes hypertext links to conference sites for more information), and useful for figuring out how to submit presentation proposals for international meetings.

The World Library Partnership, Inc.
(<http://rtpnet.org/~wlp/>)

The World Library Partnership (WLP) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to "building global understanding by promoting literacy, learning and access to information." It accomplishes this by sponsoring a number of programs. The WLP Inform the World Program sends librarians and library science students to developing countries to provide training and technical assistance. The WLP Book Certificate Program enables libraries in developing countries to purchase locally written and published books, thereby supporting

booksellers and publishers and providing the libraries with current, new books (rather than donated, outdated ones). Also, WLP publishes *Pamoja*, a simulation game to teach librarians and others about international information flow and development (see accompanying article in this issue for more information); *Libraries for All: How to Start and Run a Small Library*, designed for non-librarians; and the *On-line Library Resource Database*, which provides information on starting and running a library, sources for books, funding, and much more.

In addition to information about WLP and its programs, the Web site has the full text of *Libraries for All* in English, French and Spanish, as well as the WLP newsletter, the *Agbale Record*. The *On-line Library Resource Database* is also available. It has an extensive directory of organizations around the globe that are involved in library development, including book donation programs, library associations, and funding sources. The directory can be accessed by category, region, or keyword.

Periodicals

The periodicals below are useful in gaining an understanding of current events and research in the areas of international cooperation and library development. A brief description provides some background on the nature of each publication. All but the first are indexed in *Library Literature*.

Focus on International and Comparative Librarianship. London: Library Association International & Comparative Librarianship Group, Library Association, 1967-

Published three times a year and indexed in *Library and Information Science Abstracts*. This is the official publication of the International Group of the Library Association (IGLA). In addition to news of the group's activities, there are articles on libraries and librarianship in other countries.

IFLA Journal. Munchen: K.G. Saur, 1975-

This scholarly journal is published six times a year. Contents cover issues and research in international librarianship as well as IFLA news. Abstracts and tables of contents are given at the Web site mentioned above, with full text of some articles from older issues available.

International Cataloguing and Bibliographic Control: Quarterly Bulletin of the IFLA UBCIM Programme. London: The Programme, 1988-

This journal "provides an international forum for the exchange of views and research results" in cataloging and bibliographic control with a distinctly international flavor. It includes conference reports and papers as well as commissioned and unsolicited research articles.

International Information and Library Review. San Diego: Academic Press, 1992-

The journal publishes articles on progress and research in international and comparative librarianship, documentation, and information retrieval. Contributions to the journal come from international organizations as well as librarians in national, academic, public, industrial, and research libraries and information centers. The journal "focuses on three issues: the ways in which information is used as a resource within organizations; the impact that information use is making on societies throughout the world; and the legislative and regulatory implications of an information intensive community." Available on the Internet through OCLC FirstSearch Electronic Collections On-line.

International Leads. Madison, Wis.: International Relations Round Table, American Library Association, 1957-

The quarterly newsletter of this ALA round table contains announcements of IRRT activities, ALA news of international note, articles on libraries and librarianship in other countries, and blurbs on opportunities for exchanges and study trips.

World Libraries (formerly *Third World Libraries*). River Forest, Ill.: Rosary College, 1990-

This peer-reviewed, semiannual journal publishes articles on any topic concerning libraries and information services in developing countries. It also publishes studies on "the impact of library services on governmental decision making in the context of any country." 