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Editorial

The first thing I must do is apologise to those of you who may have received a wrongly bound copy of the last issue of *Focus*. Our printers have sent us an apology for their mistake. Not all copies were affected, but because the printers shrink-wrap the copies to be sent by post, we did not discover the problem until after they had been mailed out. But all the pages were there, so, if you did receive a bad copy, I'm sure you will have been able to find your way around it!

This issue of *Focus* has, again, something for everyone. There's an outline of the work of eIFL, Electronic Information for Libraries; an exploration of the role of public libraries in multicultural relationships; a report on the Commonwealth Professional Fellowships Award; a couple of book reviews; and, if you don't know what a 'short-story slam' is, you can find out on page 96.

The increasing amount of work being done by ILIG's committee is becoming more evident in the number of pages given over to ILIG events and awards. There's a report on the half-day seminars, a report from the Anthony Thompson Award winner, and summaries of the business that took place at the AGM and committee meeting. You can 'meet' the committee who are responsible for these achievements at the end of this issue.

Roger Stringer

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eIFL.net: Past and Future
Its Mission and the Richness of Its Network

Isabel Bernal and Rima Kupryte*

eIFL.net (Electronic Information for Libraries) is a dynamic network of national library consortia serving millions of end-users in 47 developing and transition countries in Africa, Central, Eastern and South-eastern Europe, the former Soviet Union, the Middle East, and South-East Asia.[1]

Currently embracing 4,400 libraries around the world, eIFL.net was established in 1999 by the Open Society Institute[2] to help libraries and their users in the former Soviet Union countries that could not afford to pay the rising prices of subscriptions to electronic journals and databases.

Building on the achievements of its beginnings, in 2003 eIFL.net became an independent foundation, legally registered in the Netherlands and headquartered in Rome, Italy. Ever since, with limited resources yet a great amount of dedication, eIFL.net has managed to broaden its mission, diversify its agenda, embrace new countries, address pressing challenges that member libraries face in a holistic way, get actively involved in the latest trends and movements in the library and information profession, and multiply funding and strategic partnership with like-minded initiatives worldwide.

eIFL.net strives to make a difference by promoting sustainable access and the exchange of knowledge through libraries, with the ultimate goal of assisting societal and economic development in developing and transition countries.

eIFL.net's mission rests on the belief that fair access to research resources in least-advantaged countries is fundamental for the development of civil and democratic societies, their economic growth, and their inclusion in a fast-changing world where technologies have become a primary conduit of knowledge and a basic tool for a participatory global network.

In the pursuit of such goals, libraries are placed at the forefront as public spaces with the key role of acting as the starting point from where citizens can have access to information on an equal basis and in a trusted and neutral setting.

By achieving the eIFL.net mission, member libraries will become effective advocates for information use and knowledge management. In addition, eIFL.net seeks to contribute to long-lasting effects in member countries, by facilitating global accessibility and visibility of their local intellectual output, past and current, by helping improve education, science and research, and by increasing the capacity of students and researchers to gain access to and participate actively in the international research community. For this ground-breaking work, eIFL.net Managing Director, Rima Kupryte, has been recognised with the IFLA Medal 2008.

After an initial phase, where the focus was put on enabling access to scholarly online material through multi-country negotiations on behalf of its member libraries and on

* Isabel Bernal is Program Assistant, and Rima Kupryte, Director, of eIFL, contactable, respectively, at <isabel.bernal@eifl.net> and <rima.kupryte@eifl.net>. eIFL's Web site is at <http://www.eifl.net>.

[1] The complete list of member countries is at <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/country>.

[2] <http://www.soros.org>.

eIFL.net Managing Director, Rima Kupryte (left), with IFLA President, Claudia Lux, at the IFLA Medal award ceremony during the 74th IFLA Conference in Quebec, Canada, August 2008.

helping them get collectively organised in national library consortia, eIFL.net shifted to a holistic, participatory and creative approach in order to empower local library communities in member countries to voice the priorities of their agenda for library modernisation.

By taking into account their main needs, interests and challenges, eIFL.net has progressively incorporated new work programmes devoted to building capacity on a number of issues, such as open-access publishing and balanced copyright laws for libraries.

A common characteristic in eIFL.net member countries is a low level of inter-library co-operation, and a scarcity of financial resources for libraries. Member local library consortia participate in all or some of

eIFL.net programmes to the degree that these programmes match their priorities and most pressing needs.

Some countries already had a strong tradition of library infrastructure when they started to co-operate with eIFL.net, as was the case of many countries in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union; others, on the contrary, had been somewhat isolated from the information-society revolution of the last decades, and it has been through eIFL.net that they have started to organise themselves under the umbrella of local consortia, to learn about electronic resources and many other new concepts, such as open access, institutional repositories, free and open source software, exceptions and limitations in copyright laws for libraries, and so on.

On top of that, in quite a high number of eIFL.net countries, uneven Internet connectivity and the high prices of e-resources, frequent electricity outages, an insufficient number of usable computers, untrained staff in libraries with poor physical infrastructure, low sensitisation of library issues at a public policy-making level, and constantly shrinking budgets are great challenges to the library profession.

However, in spite of these differences, all member countries have experienced continued progress over the years, as eIFL.net has been providing the required assistance to local library consortia in their development. In addition, eIFL.net really works as a network where communication, expertise and knowledge flows in all directions.

Boosting co-operation, knowledge-sharing and exchange of experiences within the membership has been extremely useful and educational: in fact, eIFL.net often sponsors the participation of representatives of member library consortia in local and regional initiatives organised by other member countries with similar topical priorities or

specific common challenges. What is more, the network can count on a growing pool of friends of eIFL.net, renowned professionals worldwide who are always willing to contribute their knowledge and commitment to supporting greater access to knowledge in developing and transition countries.

eIFL.net programme areas

At present, eIFL.net offers five work programmes that are closely interrelated, thus creating a comprehensive agenda aiming to facilitate enhanced access to quality scholarly electronic resources and to enable the visibility and accessibility of local content internationally. For each eIFL.net programme, local library consortia designate an eIFL.net co-ordinator in charge of guaranteeing a constant communication flow between the two ends, and of spreading the news, opportunities and initiatives coming from eIFL.net. Therefore, local library consortia act as the fundamental channel of dialogue and information between eIFL.net and its participating countries, with the objective that all members of local consortia benefit, and, consequently, with the ambition to foster a nationwide impact.

1. eIFL Negotiations

The negotiation for affordable and fair access to commercially produced electronic resources at highly discounted prices – and, on some occasions, totally for free in the case of its poorest member countries – has always been at the core of eIFL.net, and it continues to be a leading service, given that access to research information traditionally depends on the ability to pay, which has an adverse impact on developing and transition countries.

eIFL.net's negotiation techniques, well known at an international level, the use of an eIFL.net model licence and a model contract for every agreement reached with a new publisher, as well as its decision-making approach, whereby local library consortia in member countries speak up their priorities as regards the acquisition of new content, lie behind its success.

Over the years, eIFL.net has signed agreements with first-class scholarly publishing houses and aggregators, covering all disciplines and with a growing list of offers to study.[3] Besides conducting negotiations, the programme also provides members with related services, such as training in electronic resources management, negotiations and usage, and a series of studies on specific issues, such as e-resources usage analysis and savings.

In total, more than 1,800 libraries within the eIFL.net network participate in the Negotiations programme, 19 databases and 33,300 e-journals on Science, Technology, Social Sciences and Humanities disciplines have been licensed, and a recent eIFL.net study estimates that participating library consortia saves an overall 95% in e-resources licensing per year. Likewise, since 2003 eIFL.net has conducted more than forty national and regional workshops on programme-related issues across its network.

2. eIFL Consortium Building and Development

The consortium-building programme has been another cornerstone of the eIFL.net agenda since its beginnings,[4] in the belief that a strong consortium or alliance of libraries enables its members to provide more services, more effectively and economically.

In practice, eIFL.net helps reduce the many barriers that access to knowledge meets in developing and transition countries by

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[3] A list of all content licensed is at <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/services/negotiations>.

[4] <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/services/consortium>.

supporting the building and development of sustainable local library consortia, providing training, advice and consultancy on consortium management, by organising country trouble-shooting visits and training sessions on techniques to best advocate, promote and fund-raise.

Local library consortia differ, depending on the size of their country, the degree of past inter-library co-operation, their mission and agenda of activities, the support of external stakeholders, etc. Some of them are led by the driving force of a national library;[5] others are a conglomerate of academic and university libraries only,[6] while quite a number embrace as many types of library as possible.[7]

In some cases libraries become collectively organised mainly to have co-ordinated access and to share the cost of e-resources,[8] while in still other cases, consortia are steadily diversifying their agendas and launching inter-library initiatives in 'hot' library fields, such as digitisation,[9] or the building of open repositories.[10]

In total, eIFL.net has established partnerships with 47 consolidated or emerging national consortia, and held more than 40 national and regional workshops in all eIFL.net regions. A total of 4,400 libraries participate in the programme and, on average, around 500 training sessions take place in the eIFL network every year.

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[5] e.g. KOBSON in Serbia, <http://nainfo.nbs.bg.ac.yu/kobson/page>.

[6] For instance, NULIB in Nigeria, <http://www.nulib.net>.

[7] For instance, Informatio Consortium in Ukraine, <http://www.informatio.org.ua>, and BIC in Bulgaria, <http://www.bic.bg>.

[8] As happens with COSEC in Slovenia, <http://www.nuk.uni-lj.si/cosec>, and SANLiC in South Africa, <http://www.cosalc.ac.za>.

[9] Such as the Poznan Foundation of Scientific Libraries, <http://www.pfsl.poznan.pl/eifl>.

[10] As it is the case with KLIC in Kyrgyzstan, <http://www.bik.org.kg/en/index.html>, and ELCA in Armenia, <http://www.elca.am>.

3. eIFL-Open Access

Open Access – free online availability of research literature – has been extremely beneficial for developing and transition countries. It increases scientists' and students' capacity both to access and contribute to the global research community. In the digital environment, libraries are no more reading rooms and collections of books on the shelves. From importers of knowledge they turn into exporters of knowledge, publishers and educators.

The eIFL Open Access programme (eIFL-OA) builds a global network of open repositories, Open Access journals and open educational resources; provides training and advice on Open Access policies and practices, and empowers library professionals, scientists, scholars, educators and students to become Open Access advocates.[11]

eIFL-OA has established eIFL.net as a major player and advocate for Open Access policies and practices both in the international and national arenas. To name but a few, eIFL.net has signed the Seoul Declaration calling for open access to publicly funded research, the Cape Town Open Education Declaration, and the Salvador Declaration on Open Access from the developing world perspective.

An Open Access mandate for publicly funded research has been passed at the Ukrainian parliament and is being discussed in Lithuania. The Academy of Science and the Department of Science and Technology in South Africa has funded an Open Access approach to journal publishing. The Chinese Ministry of Science and Technology mandated Open Access to research data, and Hong Kong Universities proposed an Open Access policy for publicly funded research.

eIFL-OA facilitates the global exposure of local cultural and educational content

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[11] <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/services/eifl-oa>.

through training and support in repository set-up and the promotion of interoperability standards. A federated repository for over 100 open repositories from developing and transition countries created by eIFL.net led to greater visibility of scholarly publications, international co-operation and community building.[12]

After three years, eIFL-OA has emerged as the leading programme promoting and advocating Open Access in developing and transition countries to increase the visibility of research output and incorporate it into the global knowledge pool. A growing number of open repositories and Open Access journals has increased the accessibility of local content and improved access to information. Enhanced access to research helps to accelerate innovations; it is vital for education and has a direct impact on the development of societies.

4. eIFL-IP

Also starting in 2005, eIFL's Intellectual Property Programme 'Advocacy for Access to Knowledge: Copyright and Libraries' (eIFL-IP) is today a strong advocate for balanced copyright laws for libraries in the international arena.[13]

Its work as an effective advocate for fair access to knowledge and strong exceptions and limitations for libraries has received support from a growing number of established funders in the field of intellectual property and access to education worldwide. These include the Open Society Institute, UNESCO's Information for All Programme,[14] the Ford Foundation,[15] and the MacArthur Foundation.[16]

Raising awareness on latest trends in the profession, eIFL.net General Assembly 2007, Serbia, November 2007.

eIFL-IP partners with lead organisations and advocates of fair policy and practice in copyright law. It is a natural ally in the A2K (access to knowledge) movement, an umbrella body that has brought together groups from a diverse range of interests – such as consumer and disability organisations, the open-source software community and public-health activists – united by the desire for fair access to knowledge and knowledge-based goods, especially with regard to copyright laws and other legal instruments.

It sits on the Advisory Board of IFLA's Copyright and Legal Matters Committee,[17] and co-operates with EBLIDA.[18] As an official observer at the World Intellectual Property Organization,[19] eIFL-IP frequently participates in meetings where discussions focus on international copyright-law issues, copyright exceptions and limitations, the establishment of a Development Agenda for WIPO, and the need for an international treaty on Access to Knowledge.

Last, but not least, in conjunction with the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard Law School,[20] eIFL-IP is developing a curriculum on copyright issues for librarians, which will be ready in 2009.

[12] <http://eifl.cq2.org>.

[13] <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/services/eifl-ip>.

[14] <http://portal.unesco.org/ci/en/ev.php-URL_ID=1627&URL_DO=DO_TOPIC&URL_SECTION=201.html>.

[15] <http://www.fordfound.org>

[16] <http://www.macfound.org>.

[17] <http://www.ifla.org/III/clm/copyr.htm>.

[18] <http://www.eblida.org>.

[19] <http://www.wipo.int/portal/index.html.en>.

[20] <http://cyber.law.harvard.edu/home>.

At a country level, eIFL-IP provides training and legal assistance in library-related IP issues, and produces educational resources for developing countries, which can be applied to the general library community. Since 2005 more than 200 librarians from 55 developing and transition countries have been trained in copyright issues.

The eIFL network boasts some forty-five specialist trained copyright librarians; three regional copyright training events were held in 2005 and 2006 with the attendance of librarians from all eIFL networks, and in 2008 the first eIFL-IP Global Conference took place,[21] where copyright librarians from eIFL countries and international copyright experts engaged in a productive dialogue, an experience that will be replicated in 2009.

eIFL-IP has also produced the popular *eIFL-IP Handbook on Copyright and Related Issues*, freely available for all,[22] and at IFLA 2008 the eIFL-IP basic, draft copyright provisions for libraries were first presented, which will also be available online.

5. eIFL-FOSS

eIFL Free and Open Source Software (eIFL-FOSS)[23] started in 2007, after a series of eIFL.net surveys and feedback from member countries that highlighted a great interest in technology-related issues, particularly as far as FOSS solutions are concerned, as the UNESCO IFAP award-wining success story on FOSS usage by the University of Birzeit in Palestine shows.[24]

eIFL-FOSS advocates the use of FOSS in libraries by building a network of librarians in member countries who can serve as FOSS champions, by raising awareness and understanding of FOSS use in libraries through case studies, briefing notes and discussion, and by promoting engagement with the international FOSS development and user communities.

In this initial phase, eIFL-FOSS has been focusing on two projects, one aiming to build capacity in the migration or installation of integrated library systems (ILS) based on Koha and Evergreen, for which a pilot workshop was conducted in June 2008 with the participation of eIFL-FOSS co-ordinators from Armenia, Georgia, Mali, Malawi, Mongolia, Palestine and Zimbabwe.[25]

In addition, eIFL-FOSS has provided a home to the Southern African Greenstone Support Network, an initiative funded by the Koha Foundation, which delivers training in the installation of open-source Greenstone software technology for the building of digital libraries in Southern Africa.[26]

The pilot project involved participation from a regional centre in Namibia and national centres in Lesotho, Malawi and Zimbabwe in 2007 and 2008, while the second phase, which has just kicked off, will include more countries, such as Kenya and Tanzania.

Conclusions and future developments

In a period of less than ten years eIFL has had many achievements, and has leveraged a relatively minimal amount of resources to generate a great deal of results that include the creation of a network of consortia, the development of core programmes that support sustainable access to knowledge by library users in developing and transition countries, and – last but not least – the

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[21] <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/news/press-area/2008-04-15>.

[22] <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/services/eifl-ip/issues/eifl-handbook-on>.

[23] <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/services/eifl-foss>.

[24] Read the success story at <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/news/press-area/2008-06-09>.

[25] For more details on the eIFL-FOSS ILS project, see <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/services/eifl-foss/ils>.

[26] <http://www.sagreenstone.unam.na>.

[27] A complete overview of the project is available at <http://www.eifl.net/cps/sections/services/eifl-foss/greenstone>.

building of a core team of volunteers from member countries, staff and consultants who consistently demonstrate dedication and impact.

In order to ensure the continued relevance of its mission, and its sustainability as a growing global network, the eIFL.net advisory board and staff team have held intensive consultations with its membership and experts and practitioners worldwide to discuss how some of the most important changes related to access to knowledge through libraries will be affecting eIFL and the member consortia. A scan of the eIFL.net operating environment highlighted key aspects:

- The Millennium generation is user-centric and Google-oriented in its research habits. There will be an increase in equity of access, with free and open knowledge. Technological changes will enable significant changes to information access, including mobile technologies and low-cost content. Economic, political and legal conditions will continue to affect information access in each country.
- In parts of the world there is significant questioning about the relevance of libraries. This is particularly true because in many places users turn primarily to the Internet for the information that they used to get in libraries. Therefore, the assumption that libraries are universal is not true, as they are not on the agenda in many countries.
- Some of the major issues and challenges – and opportunities – for libraries around

the world are: financing; bandwidth and technology; a continuing need for physical spaces for people to learn, and to access and create knowledge; the cost of production affecting scholarly communications, with dramatic changes in information production, reading and learning; and increased opportunities to move beyond just access and to be able to focus upon content creation.

These broad discussions about a refreshed development strategy for eIFL over the next three years confirmed the continued relevance of its mission, as 'eIFL.net promotes sustainable access and exchange of knowledge through global leadership of libraries to improve the development of society and economy in developing and transition countries'.

The core conclusions focus the future of eIFL development on the potential of its unique global network to achieve impact by enhancing the ability of librarians in member countries to be effective advocates for access to knowledge, and by underlining its convening power to strengthen the evolving importance of libraries and librarians within developing and transition countries through a continued and expanded capacity-building programme.

Thus the global eIFL.net community is confident of meeting the challenges of the changing world of access to knowledge and leveraging the power of its network to level the playing fields for librarians and users alike in member countries.

ILIG Annual General Meeting: 11 February 2009

To fall into line with CILIP's change to a calendar year,
the 2009 AGM is coming eight months, rather than a year, after the 2008 one.
Look for more information on ILIG's Website <http://www.cilip.org.uk/ilig>.

People, Places and Relationships

Helen Carpenter*

Helen Carpenter reports on the findings from her Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travelling Fellowship to explore the role of public libraries in multicultural relationships and reflects on opportunities and challenges in the UK.[1]

Intercultural …

I recently came across an article about intercultural awareness as a key to international business success,[2] which made stimulating points about the need for intercultural communication and competencies. I think the future success of public libraries will depend in part on grasping why these concepts are every bit as relevant and important to libraries as they are to the world of international business.

… international …

There are tremendous untapped opportunities and benefits in developing public library work internationally. Some people may view public libraries as belonging to the past, but I believe that quite the opposite is the case. However, libraries need to transform themselves to meet the demands of a globalised age.

Migration has grown enormously and is often the key driver of development; many people have transnational and transcultural identities. Libraries need to show vision and gain support to demonstrate the vital contribution they make to a sense of belonging in rapidly changing societies. Those library services already on that journey at local level need to make greater efforts to share their experiences and learning with others.

… and multicultural

I do not see 'intercultural' and 'multicultural' as mutually exclusive. For me, both these words are about celebrating and understanding similarity and difference. In the work setting, there is an opportunity to harness the synergy that can come from this to generate new ways of doing things. For my Winston Churchill Memorial Trust Travelling Fellowship I therefore took a very broad understanding of multicultural relationships to include:

1 How public libraries connect as institutions with all relevant stakeholders.
2 How they plan and deliver services that reflect, support and promote diversity.
3 How they enable inter-cultural dialogue and encourage active citizenship in a rapidly changing environment.

One of my interests was also to relate my findings during recent worldwide travels to development of policy and practice in the UK. These relate to four key areas:

1 Organisational structure, culture and workforce, including leadership
2 Strategic partnerships
3 Role of library support organisations
4 Public libraries as spaces for interaction

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*Helen Carpenter is currently working as an adviser for the Paul Hamlyn Foundation on advocacy and dissemination of learning from the Foundation's Reading and Libraries Challenge Fund projects. She can be contacted at <hcarpenter@phf.org.uk>; Tel. +44 (0)20 7609 5674.

[1] A longer version of this article was published in *Public Library Journal* (2008), 23(2). The background to her award of the Fellowship that forms the basis for this article can be found in *Focus* (2007), 38(2), 56–59.

[2] J. Saee, 'Intercultural awareness is the key to international business success', *Global Focus* (2007), 1(3), 56–59. <http://www.efmd.org/attachments/tmpl_1_art_071023fdxi_att_071023omgq.pdf>.

Organisational structure, culture and workforce, including leadership

Governance

It obviously helps if library staff work in an environment where policies strongly support diversity, and which offers both opportunities and incentives for collaborative working.

Coming from a fragmented situation in London, where each local authority has its own library service, I was very struck to find that Toronto has just *one* library service with 99 branches. I am not suggesting that big is necessarily good in itself in relation to innovation, because I'm very aware that it isn't. But it seemed that Toronto had positioned its library service to take a wider, more strategic view with partners, and it had an enviably high profile with residents, including newcomers, and with citywide, regional and national agencies.

Some pointers to weaknesses in the UK can be found in the recent baseline research conducted for MLA and Big Lottery Fund to evaluate the community engagement programme.[3] This highlights six areas for improvement: development of vision and goals; community segmentation; organisational transformation; effective communications; development of 'real' social networks; and a need for improved/clearer methods of evaluating impacts.

Underpinning some of the best work I saw was an open organisational culture designed explicitly to learn from expertise in other sectors, and place public libraries into a bigger picture.

For example, the model of governance in public library services with trustees who are neither employees of the library service nor local authority councillors with political agendas can bring a powerful mix of backgrounds, skills and spheres of influence, as I found out when I met two trustees from the Urban Libraries Council in the United States, both of whom have prestigious backgrounds in education.

While the trustee approach cannot simply be transferred directly, the principle of high-level advisory groups, comprising people from different backgrounds and sectors who can champion library services effectively, could have a strategic impact on positioning public library work within broader public policy in the UK. Critical friends can help stimulate and refresh debate about the future and generate new approaches, partnerships and culture change.

Stronger cross-sectoral connections and alliances at local, regional and national level could also help integrate public library work into Local Area Agreements. Given the move towards shared services and the improvement and efficiency agenda for local government, it could also open up different ways of solving current challenges.

Sharing the vision

Inspirational library leaders are needed who have a vision and can build alliances and make things happen. The vision in Seattle led to a complete rebuilding of all the city's libraries, with an iconic new central library and new branch libraries where there had been none before. Citizens agreed to a significant increase in their taxes (rates) to pay for it. The shape of and approach to library space and activities has changed noticeably over the last ten years. Perhaps it is no coincidence, then, that Deborah Jacobs, the former Director, has recently taken up a new role at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, leading their Global Libraries

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[3] B. Taylor and R. Pask, *Community Libraries Programme Evaluation: An Overview of the Baseline for Community Engagement in Libraries* (London: Museums Libraries and Archives Council, 2008), <http://www.mla.gov.uk/resources/assets/C/community_libs_eval_12857.pdf>.

initiative. This is focused on reducing inequities by expanding and improving public access to technology in libraries.[4] There must be an opportunity for the UK to connect into the Global Libraries initiative and become a part of it – for example, through Web-participation in international debates or linking up directly with libraries in countries emerging from poverty.

Workforce

Responding to demographic change and anticipating and planning for the future has profound implications for workforce development and diversity. I found in my travels that the branch libraries that stood out as very well networked in multi-ethnic local communities were often those whose staff had a range of complementary backgrounds and skills drawn from work experience in different sectors.

I was also interested to see the big role volunteering plays in public libraries, particularly in Canada and the USA, not least because it is not in fact 'voluntary' but is part of what everyone does at school and counts towards school grades. Young people from a wide range of backgrounds, who might not otherwise think of a career in libraries, had the benefit of an insight into library work. I thought it had helped public libraries generate a sense of themselves as proactive places that facilitated exchange and dialogue rather than as passive providers of services to individual consumers.

The value of a diverse workforce has a direct bearing on inter-cultural communication. Language competency alone is not enough to overcome cultural difference. In my opinion, emotional intelligence and sensitive interpersonal and facilitation skills that go beyond verbal expression will become more important in public libraries as they are used for interaction between people from different backgrounds. It will mean rethinking the roles and attributes that are required for work in public libraries, how these are specified, and, ultimately, the entire staff recruitment, training and retention processes.

Strategic partnerships

Much interesting work involving schools, public libraries and settlement workers from different organisational cultures and backgrounds has developed across Ontario, Canada, funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC), a government department.[5] Bringing together a government department concerned with citizenship and integration, the education sector, community organisations and public libraries is exactly the sort of strategic partnership we need in the UK.

One example of work undertaken with the Settlement Workers in Schools programme in Ontario[6] is a video in seventeen languages which explains to students and their parents how public libraries work.[7] It shows how easy it is to get a library card, participate in storytelling, join the Summer Reading Club and get information for school projects. The video is also available via many public library service Websites – for example, in Ottawa.[8]

This idea is something that really deserves to be taken forward in the UK at a strategic

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[4] <http://slog.thestranger.com/2008/04/deborah_jacobs_is_leaving_seattle_public>.

[5] This is outlined in more detail in my report to the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust: entitled *The Role of Public Libraries in Multicultural Relationships*, <http://www.wcmt.org.uk/reports/194_1.pdf>. The report, and the blog I kept while travelling, are linked from the Trust's case study page, see <http://www.wcmt.org.uk/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=9&Itemid=10>.

[6] See <http://atwork.settlement.org/ATWORK/PSR/swis.asp>.

[7] See <http://www.settlement.org/site/ED/GUIDE/videos/your_library.asp>.

[8] See the Ottawa Public Library Website, <http://www.biblioottawalibrary.ca/experience/newcan/newcan_e.html>.

level. A key to success could be to co-commission work across more than one sector, so that it is co-owned from the start. Participation in the process from communities themselves is also vital, and new channels of communication outside the library sector could ensure that messages reach relevant audiences. Interest has already been expressed by a number of library staff via the Welcome To Your Library weekly E-Digest.[9]

Role of library support organisations

We can learn from the library support organisations that I came across during my travels. One such is WebJunction, a US-based organisation, whose Website is a source for shared learning, relevant research, training resources, exchange and good practice.[10] It has clearly been successful in creating virtual communities of interest – for example, in relation to its Spanish Language Outreach Program.[11]

Another excellent example, also in the United States, is the Urban Libraries Council, in this instance not particularly because of its Website, but because of the quality of its publications.[12] The most recent, entitled *Welcome, Stranger: Public Libraries Build the Global Village*,[13] is a case in point. It details five broad strategies that public libraries are using for successful immigrant inclusion and community adaptation:

- Understanding local immigration dynamics
- Bringing cultural and language sensitivity to service delivery
- Building English capacity
- Creating connections to local institutions
- Encouraging civic engagement.

Based on surveys of member libraries, augmented with data from earlier work, the findings show that urban public libraries are in the forefront of the effort to make their cities stronger by welcoming and integrating new residents from all over the world.

There is a need for a much-improved Webspace for sharing this kind of material across the UK, and this is an opportunity that the MLA, CILIP and others need to take up nationally.

Public libraries as spaces for interaction

In Sweden, Denmark and the Netherlands, I saw numerous excellent examples of public libraries as places of exchange between people from different backgrounds.[14]

Developing cultural engagement with people who may not be familiar with the concept of a public library, and who may originate from countries with a much stronger oral than written tradition, involves re-thinking the way public library staff connect with and engage people in a journey of discovery using library resources. Of course, collections can have immense value in giving access to other cultures and in enabling immigrants to sustain contact with culture and language from their place of origin. But on their own, collections do not connect with people.

This is why I believe public libraries need to think differently about how they present and promote what they do. One place to start might be a proper discussion as to why the word 'neutral' has so often been used by the sector in describing itself, and what people

[9] See <http://www.welcometoyourlibrary.org.uk/editorial.asp?page_id=77>.

[10] <http://www.webjunction.org/1>.

[11] <http://www.webjunction.org/slo>.

[12] <http://www.urbanlibraries.org>.

[13] Rick J. Ashton and Danielle P. Milam, *Welcome, Stranger: Public Libraries Build the Global Village* (Chicago: Urban Libraries Council, 2008). <http://www.urbanlibraries.org/files/ULC_WS.pdf>.

[14] Descriptions are included in my report for the Winston Churchill Memorial Trust (see fn. 5).

in and outside the library world understand this to mean. I think it gives rise to misunderstanding, since, for me, in facilitating exchange and interaction, public library staff should not be 'neutral' but dynamic and welcoming. Do we run the risk of using the word 'neutral' without thinking about it, and actually use it subconsciously as a cover-up for disengagement with the wider world?

No public library will be successful by any measures if staff do not consistently and proactively build bridges across the whole spectrum of the communities they serve. By investing in processes that facilitate access and build bridges between people as individuals, rather than because they are perceived to be disadvantaged or are 'labelled' in some way, aren't libraries in fact in a unique position to demonstrate just how important they are to current government policies around community cohesion, building social capital and reducing inequalities?

Monkey Face Revisited

Aidan Baker and Patrick Welsh*

Some Focus *readers may remember the rural libraries of Nicaragua –
1980s, revolutionary, Sandinista, Nicaragua. The libraries were set up in the war-torn
eastern side of the country, and originally co-ordinated by an English priest, Father John
Medcalf. The first one opened its doors in the village of Cara de Mono
(a name which translates as 'Monkey Face'), in April 1986.*

Father John's newsletters were distributed by his sister, Kathy Doust, made their way into campaigning magazines of the time, and were gathered together in the volume A Parish at War.[1] An article on the project in *Focus* ended thus: 'The library building in Cara de Mono sheltered homeless people after Hurricane Joan [in 1988]. The project is still up and running.'[2] What happened after that?

Paddy Welsh, who took over the running of the project from Father John, is still living and working in Nicaragua. Here is his account.

I took over the running of the Rural Libraries project about the end of 1987, when John decided to dedicate more time to his pastoral ministry. By that time the project had developed into the 'Casas de la Cultura' – arts centres. It was running small libraries, and programmes to develop artistic creativity: music, dance, theatre, poetry, painting.

We had cultural festivals twice a year (17 July, called 'Day of Joy', anniversary of the former dictator Somoza's flight from Nicaragua; and Christmas). We held mini-festivals in villages and rural communities, and the best creative works from those were selected to go on to the all-day event that took place in one of the main towns, with dozens of participants, and audiences in their thousands! The idea was not only to encourage artistic creativity but also to enable people

* Aidan Baker <asb12@hermes.cam.ac.uk>; Patrick Welsh <pwelsh60@yahoo.com>.

[1] J. Medcalf, *A Parish at War: Letters from Nicaragua* (Springfield, IL: Templegate, 1989). They were republished by CIIR (now Progressio) as *Letters from Nicaragua* after John's sudden death a few years back and the book is still available from Progressio: <http://www.progressio.org.uk/progressio/s/basket/91715/letters_from_nicaragua/>.

[2] A. Baker, 'Rural libraries in Peru and Nicaragua', *Focus on International & Comparative Librarianship* (1990), 21(2), 34–36.

The Gwanda Slam

Murray McCartney*

Zimbabwe has been enduring an economic crisis for the past decade. Industrial and agricultural production have plummeted, formal jobs have evaporated, and hyperinflation renders today's cash worthless within a week. But not everything is bleak.

The country that twenty years ago boasted chart-topping literacy rates, and schools that were the envy of the continent, is in a state of educational decay.

As domestic budgets get tighter, it comes as no surprise that book-buying slips further down the list of priorities: students can't afford them, schools can't afford them, libraries can't afford them.

How, then, are children to be encouraged to read? *What* are they to be encouraged to read?

A recent event jointly organised by a library and a publisher in the rural south-west of Zimbabwe offers a lively example of what can be done when there is a sufficient supply of imagination, commitment and resources.

Weaver Press was formed in 1998, and remains a minor player in an industry dominated by three large educational publishers. Its twin focus is on Zimbabwean fiction and literary criticism, and academic non-fiction in the fields of history, politics, anthropology and gender studies;[1] several titles in the latter category have been co-published with university and academic presses in the UK and USA.

Although owned by its two founder-directors, and registered as a limited company, Weaver displays some characteristics of a non-profit organisation: in order to maintain prices at relatively affordable levels its fiction list has received subsidy from a Dutch development agency, and many academic titles have enjoyed support from international agencies and foundations.

The company has never wished to enter the highly competitive textbook market. As a literary publisher, however, it is keen that students be exposed to quality fiction, and has published several novels and short-story anthologies that have been prescribed for O and A level English courses; most of these are by local writers; for some (such as Chimamanda Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*) the rights have been bought from the original publisher.

Having survived for ten years, Weaver Press decided to mark its anniversary with a series of events, one of which was a collaboration with the Edward Ndlovu Memorial Library (ENML) in Gwanda.[2]

Edward Ndlovu was a trade unionist and national politician; at his death in 1989 he was a deputy minister, and was declared a National Hero for his contribution to the liberation struggle. A trust was established by his widow, Mary, in 1990 and the Memorial Library opened in 1992.

Gwanda is a small town of around 30,000 inhabitants, and is the capital of Matabeleland South, one of the poorest provinces in the country. Incomes are low, productive activities are few, nutrition is poor and the impact of schooling on people's lives and livelihoods is limited. The traditional response to poverty has been to leave for the cities or for South

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* Murray McCartney is one of the two founder-directors of Weaver Press. He can be contacted at <weaver@mweb.co.zw>.

[1] See <http://www.weaverpresszimbabwe.com>.

[2] The Edward Ndlovu Memorial Library will soon be setting up its own Web site at <http://www.edwardndlovulibrary.org>.

Edward Ndlovu Memorial Library

Africa. To some extent this has brought relief to the area as children send money back to their parents, but it is evident in only some households and is a practice which breaks the cohesion of families and communities and leads to a dependency mentality.

In such an environment, the ENML seeks to contribute to community development in a sustainable way and to assist individuals to improve their standards of living. As well as offering reading rooms, a lending library and a photocopying service at the library in Gwanda town, it also works with 26 rural communities.

Each primary school receives a book box every term with books selected by a teacher and a member of the community. The box remains at the school for a term and is available for use by school children, teachers and community members.

In several communities study circles are being formed with the assistance of community workers employed by ENML to help the adults and school-leavers make use of the books to undertake small development projects.

With a full-time staff of fourteen, and a reasonably secure base of donor funding and book grants, the library is a beacon in an otherwise bleak, essentially rural environment.

In recent years, Weaver Press has responded to declining trade sales by occasionally soliciting grants to send book donations to libraries around the country. The ENML has featured regularly in the lists, and because of the personal friendship between staff of the two organisations, Gwanda was chosen as the venue for an anniversary 'short-story slam' in early October 2008.

The idea of such a 'slam' – based on the brisk and lively tradition of rap poetry presentation – was inaugurated by Weaver Press in 2006 to launch one of its short-story anthologies in Harare. Several of the book's authors were asked to choose a story other than their own and give a one-minute justification of their choice followed by a

'They had taken their preparation very seriously, but what followed had none of the solemnity that might attend such an activity in the school room.'

Novelist John Eppel and writer and historian Pathisa Nyathi look on as Trustee Mr A. B. Naik addresses the Slam

one-minute reading. The winner was chosen on the basis of audience applause, and – measured by participant enthusiasm, if not huge sales – the event was a great success.

For the Gwanda Slam, the library's director was asked to pass copies of four Weaver collections to five schools in the area a month ahead of time, and invite a team (four students and a teacher) from each school to attend.

The morning was given over to presentations from Weaver Press about the business of publishing, and from two authors about the writer's perspective. The atmosphere was informal, and although it took a little while for the students to realise that the purpose of the day was fun, rather than pedagogy, they were soon into the swing of it, asking questions and talking of what they liked to read.

After a substantial lunch – itself a red-letter addition to otherwise protein-poor diets – it was time for the Slam itself, and the participants reassembled around the open-rectangle tables, exchanging excited glances and holding their well-thumbed, book-marked volumes in front of them.

They had taken their preparation very seriously, but what followed had none of the solemnity that might attend such an activity in the school room. Many of the readings were from humorous stories, and elicited

impromptu laughter from the audience; some were a little risqué, and did the same; the ringing of the one-minute 'Time!' bell often cut a reader off in mid-sentence, adding a sense of drama to the enjoyment.

The one-minute 'justifications' varied considerably. To an extent, the exercise represents a minor essay in literary analysis and criticism, and too much can't be expected from students who've had limited exposure to the art.

A few of the presentations (from teachers as much as students) took a slightly 'righteous' line, praising a story for dealing with social issues such as HIV/AIDS, or the abuse of women. Others remarked on narrative excitement, or humour. Some spoke less of why they themselves had enjoyed the story and concentrated instead, in a welcome instance of literary evangelism, on 'Let me tell you why *you* should read it …'

An interesting by-product of the process was the equal standing of the students and their teachers. How often, after all, do they 'compete' equally with each other in a public forum? When does a fourth- or fifth-form pupil get the chance to 'beat' her teacher

At lunch – 'itself a red-letter addition to otherwise protein-poor diets' – Irene Staunton of Weaver Press chats with the library's education officer, Vivienne Moyo.

*Mary Ndlovu with Bulawayo poet
and novelist, John Eppel*

at his own game? The mood of the occasion drew the sting from such questions.

Of the three winners (the prizes were a T-shirt for the reader and a poster for the school), two were students, one a teacher; honour was preserved and good humour ruled the day.

And at the end of the day, what was achieved?

For thirty people to have a stress-free day enjoying themselves is no mean accomplishment in contemporary Zimbabwe, but there was obviously more to it than that.

The history of Gwanda and its environs is bathed in more than just central government neglect. The savage and indiscriminate deployment of military forces to suppress 'dissident' activity in the 1980s has left a bitter taste in many mouths,[3] and any acts of solidarity and comradeship from Harare – whether by a publisher or anyone else – carry an additional freight of meaning because of this.

In its endeavours to link information

resources to development work, the ENML depends on its relationships with a range of community organisations and rural schools. Any activity that can serve to strengthen these relationships – and the Slam day was manifestly one such – gives a boost to the Library's popularity, social standing and membership engagement.

The response of the participants was uniformly positive. They were diverted, to be sure, but more importantly they were for a brief period given respect and recognition: they were able to be active rather than passive; their preparation and presentations were applauded by their peers, their teachers and others; and their enthusiasm for reading was given serious validation.

Having gone through this first experience, there is no reason why the event cannot be replicated, either in a library or in the schools. The expenses for the prototype (fortunately covered by a generous donor) were considerable: airfares for Weaver Press staff from Harare to Bulawayo, the hire of a mini-bus to take a team from Bulawayo to Gwanda, the provision of books, refreshments and prizes. But these are mere frills; the essential ingredients are simple: books, and people.

And from the publisher's point of view? No cost–benefit analysis could possibly make sense of the venture. Increased book sales are hardly likely to follow in any significant measure in the short term; indeed, Weaver Press is likely to receive little more than a boost to its steady stream of unpublishable manuscripts (Zimbabwe is not yet a nation of avid readers, but it has no shortage of budding writers…).

In the longer term, one has to be optimistic that the economy will begin to recover, and that funds will become available for schools to buy books. If teachers then remember Weaver Press, and choose to select its books from those prescribed on the exam syllabus,

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[3] See *Breaking the Silence – Building True Peace: A Report on the Disturbances in Matabeleland and the Midlands 1980 to 1988*, Harare: The Catholic Commission of Justice and Peace in Zimbabwe and the Legal Resources Foundation, 1997 Full text: <http://www.sokwanele.com/pdfs/BTS.pdf>.

well and good. But in the prevailing Alice-in-Wonderland situation this is by no means a bankable proposition.

More broadly, the event needs to be seen in the light of Zimbabwe's long-dormant policy of national book development, the main proponents of which – the Zimbabwe Book Development Council and the Zimbabwe International Book Fair – have ceased to function.

Although it is beyond the scope of a small commercial publisher and an independent community library to assume this mantle in any substantial way, the Gwanda Slam demonstrated that they can at least add a few bricks to the wall.

Monkey Face Revisited

to reflect and make sense of the war they were living through.

By early 1988 John had left the project and other team members had returned to Mexico, Peru and the UK, and I was pretty much on my own. So I decided to push for the formation of a local team to take over the running of the project. If it was to last, it needed to be owned locally.

A young man from Muelle de los Bueyes, singer/guitar player, and a young woman, youth leader, were taken on as new staff members, and we worked together as a team during 1988–1989, as I gradually handed over the reins to them. This meant setting up a steering committee comprising local Sandinistas and, to a lesser extent, the Church – and greater co-ordination with the Ministry of Education and the Sandinista Youth Movement.

It was also obvious that the project could no longer depend upon the solidarity groups that had blossomed in the UK. They had done great work to raise funds and awareness. I developed links with the Catholic development charity CAFOD, and they gave some funding to the project for a few years.

Then came 1990, when the Sandinistas lost the election.

By that time I was spending only a few days a month on the project and had begun to 'systematize' the experience, write it up and articulate some lessons learned. I still have the hand-typed document somewhere!

The project continued to exist until about late 1993 or early 1994. The political climate had changed so much, and many of those who ran the project, or were in some way involved, moved on personally and professionally.

But getting books to people, to maintain literacy levels and develop reading skills and habits, always remained central. I am a founder member of Nicaragua's Association of Men Against Violence. Just a few months ago I was running a men's workshop on gender-based violence in Malpaisillo, on the other side of the country, and one of the participants came up to me and said, 'Are you the same Patricio that ran a library project in Cara de Mono in the 1980s?'

He reminded me how we used to lend books to soldiers on short-term military service – professionals and students from the cities, guarding bridges and other strategic points on the main road. It was great to hear how much that had meant to him and the other guys!

Commonwealth Professional Fellowships Awards at Middlesex University

Alan Hopkinson*

Commonwealth scholarships were introduced in 1959, since when around 25,000 individuals have benefited from the awards, of which around two thirds have been tenable in the United Kingdom. Others have been taken up in Canada, Australia and New Zealand, amongst other countries.

Many of these award-holders have returned to make a significant contribution to their home countries at the highest levels, making the award scheme one of the largest and most prestigious in the world.

The scholarships were originally intended for students from the countries of the Commonwealth to study in the UK, usually postgraduate courses. Alongside these were opportunities for university staff to benefit from travelling to other countries for the purposes of career updating and skills enhancement.

Since 2002, the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission has extended these to other professions, through the creation of the Commonwealth Professional Fellowships programme, under which organisations based in the UK can apply to host key professionals from developing Commonwealth countries within their own organisation. Awards have been offered each year since 2002 and are likely to be offered in the future.

So far Middlesex University has hosted eight Fellows. **Rajesh Chandrakar** was the pioneer. He came to Middlesex University in 2004 from INFLIBNET, a University Grants Commission centre in India which provides central services such as electronic libraries, library automation and MARC records to a selection of universities in India.

An account of his experience in the UK was published in the first issue of *Link*, the magazine of the Association of Commonwealth Universities Library and Information Network.[1] He also gave a presentation on INFLIBNET at an ILIG Informal.[2] He studied the then new RFID implementation at Middlesex University and helped write a paper on this.[3]

In 2005, **Maitrayee Ghosh** came from the Indian Institute of Technology Kanpur where she is an assistant librarian. She spent her time investigating consortia and made visits to some in England and Scotland. Simultaneously, **Adebambo Adewole** came from an agricultural university in Nigeria and investigated resource-sharing. He visited the Royal Agricultural College at Chippenham, as well as the British Library, during his three-month fellowship. Together they wrote 'Online Information 2005: An event for online content and information management solutions'.[4]

In 2007 **Prem Chand** came from INFLIBNET in India, following in the footsteps of his junior colleague, Rajesh Chandrakar. His role in INFLIBNET is licensing electronic resources and so he visited a number of useful institutions, including INASP (the International Network for the Availability of Scientific

[1] Alan Hopkinson, 'Linking librarians: North–South co-operation via the Commonwealth Professional Fellowship scheme', *Link* (2007), 1(August): 4–5.

[2] Rajesh Chandrekar, 'INFLIBNET Centre: A gateway to the academic community of India', *Focus* (2005), 36(1): 23–25.

[3] Rajesh Chandrekar and Alan Hopkinson, 'Introducing RFID at Middlesex University Learning Resources', *Program* (2006), 40(1): 89–97.

[4] Maitrayee Ghosh and Oduwole Adebambo, 'Online Information 2005: An event for online content and information management solutions', *Library Hi Tech* (2005) 23(2): 5–10.

* Technical Manager (Library), Middlesex University Learning Resources, <a.hopkinson@mdx.ac.uk>.

Publications) and EDUSERV, who run ATHENS for hints on authentication systems.

In 2007 also, **Razzak Sorker** came from ICCDR, which is a centre for research in waterborne diseases in Dhaka, Bangladesh, where he is the Webmaster. He was particularly interested in new technology and, as well as INASP, he visited the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, LSE, and the University of NEWI in Wales.

There were three Fellows in 2007, and **Peter Odawa** from Nairobi Hospital Library in Kenya found it useful to see how we run libraries in the UK. He visited the Royal College of Nursing library, and Southampton General Hospital and Southampton University libraries.

All the fellows visited Senate House, University of London, and the British Library. Peter and Razzak also gave valuable help to Middlesex University in helping to introduce a new access-control system, and they also studied RFID and how it had been introduced at Middlesex.

In 2008, **Ntombizandile Mogiba** a senior librarian at Fort Hare University in South Africa, and **Sridevi Jetty**, who is deputy librarian at Jhansi University in India, have spent three months at Middlesex University. They have also spent a week at the University of East London, and made visits to the British Library and Dawsons, the book suppliers, as well as to the Institute of Development Studies at Sussex and the British Library at Boston Spa. This was the first time that the entire group of fellows had been women.

When Fellows have been in the autumn they have visited the Online Information exhibition which is a shop window of digital information.

Awards for 2009

Middlesex University Learning Resources proposes to offer Fellowships for 2009/2010.

To be eligible for a Commonwealth Professional Fellowship, candidates should:

- be Commonwealth citizens,[5] refugees or British protected persons, and must be permanently resident in a developing Commonwealth country;
- have at least five years' relevant work experience in a profession related to the subject of the application, by the proposed start of the Fellowship;
- be available to undertake their Fellowship programme from 5 January 2010 for 3 months.

Middlesex University Learning Resources, which includes the library, welcomes applications from potential fellows who are available to come for three months from 5 January 2010. We will prepare a plan of work experience within Middlesex University Learning Resources and, on the arrival of the successful applicants, a plan of visits to libraries in the UK will be made. The Fellowship includes a sum of £200 towards travel and accommodation for visits outside London.

The Professional Fellowships Programme seeks to enhance the skills of mid-career practitioners in developing countries. Priority will be given to visits that will:

- ensure the transfer of skills relevant to the needs of a Commonwealth developing country;
- lead to practical benefits for the developing country following the Fellowship;

[5] Eligible countries are, at the time of writing: Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Bangladesh, Barbados, Belize, Bermuda, Botswana, British Virgin Islands, Cameroon, Cayman Islands, Dominica, Falkland Islands, Fiji, The Gambia, Ghana, Gibraltar, Grenada, Guyana, India, Jamaica, Kenya, Kiribati, Lesotho, Malawi, Malaysia, Maldives, Mauritius, Montserrat, Mozambique, Namibia, Nauru, Nigeria, Pakistan, Papua, New Guinea, Pitcairn, St Helena, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent & The Grenadines, Samoa, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Solomon Islands, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Swaziland, Tanzania, Tonga, Trinidad & Tobago, Tristan da Cunha, Turks & Caicos, Tuvalu, Uganda, Vanuatu, Zambia.

- have a catalytic effect, either within the developing country concerned or in establishing new relationships with the UK.

Additionally, preference will be given to candidates who have not travelled to Europe or America before. It is unlikely that those who have studied in the UK within the last 15 years will be accepted.

Since the Commonwealth Scholarships Commission operates a separate programme for academic staff, awards are not open to those employed as full-time academic staff or those wishing to undertake an academic programme or research of any kind in the UK.

Each fellowship provides:
- return economy airfare from the Fellow's home country to the United Kingdom;
- a monthly living allowance for the duration of the Fellowship (currently £1,462 per month);
- an arrival allowance of up to £680 at current rates which includes an element for warm clothing;
- a fixed amount for excess baggage for return travel only, dependent on the airport destination;
- a flat-rate allowance of £200 towards reasonable travel for study purposes within the United Kingdom.

At the time of writing this article, details were not available for the 2009 competition, but information on 2008 was still available at <http://www.cscuk.org.uk/docs/Professional FellowshipsProspectus2008.pdf>.

If you are interested, please, in the first instance, contact Alan Hopkinson, Technical Manager (Library Service), Learning Resources, Middlesex University, The Burroughs, Hendon, London NW4 4BT, UK, e-mail <a.hopkinson@mdx.ac.uk> To apply in time for 2010, please submit by the end of March 2009.

Middlesex University will select candidates suitable for the scheme and submit them to the Commission. All candidates have to be accepted by the Commonwealth Fellowships Commission as well as by Middlesex University.

Letter to the Editor

Dear Editor

Hansel Cook (*Focus* 39(2)) is right to point out that libraries are targets in wartime, as evidenced by recent conflicts in Yugoslavia, Afghanistan and Iraq. Hansel suggests some very important 'lessons for the future', including the need to 'protect documents before a conflict, support them during a conflict, and rebuild afterwards.'

But an even more important lesson would be to organise as a library profession to avoid conflict and war in the first place. When I took part in the two-million-strong 'Dont attack Iraq' demonstration in London in February 2003, I saw every professional body represented on this protest march – with the notable exception of the library and information profession.

It is time that we ignored CILIP's Royal Charter and calls for 'political neutrality' as excuses for not defending libraries and library workers around the world. When global conflicts are developing, CILIP and ILIG should put out strong statements opposing any proposed military action.

We stayed silent while libraries in Sarajevo, Kabul and Baghdad were burned and destroyed. Will we do the same when the same fate threatens libraries in Tehran, Pyongyang and Havana?

John Pateman
<johnpateman9@hotmail.com>

Book Reviews

R. M. Sharma, *The Impact of Technology on Asian, African, and Middle Eastern Library Collections.* Lanham, MD: Scarecrow Press, 2006. ISBN: 978-0-8108-5448-2 (Pbk)

This title is part of a new series, *Libraries and Librarianship: An International Perspective*, which is edited by Bob Stueart, former Dean of the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College, Boston, and himself an active and respected internationalist. For it, Dr Sharma has brought together fourteen authors from throughout the world to review developments in their field – four from Asia, four from Africa, and two from the Middle East – with each section ending in a chapter by an American librarian specialising in the field.

One chapter by Ching-chih Chen reviews her own work in the creation of digital image banks, which commenced with a project in China and is now developing global dimensions.

Andrew Wang from OCLC, in a chapter oddly placed in the Asian section, provides a straightforward description of OCLC's structure and the increasing quantity of foreign-language material now recorded in WorldCat, but notes that to date only some 20% per cent of OCLC's members are in the regions covered by this volume.

Murthy and Cholin's chapter reveals the advances that technology has made possible in India's libraries, but the reader cannot help but notice that progress is relative and India's library users remain relatively deprived compared to users in North America and Western Europe.

Le provides a thorough introduction to the library scene in Vietnam, and an objective review of developments and technological applications. Liu and Song provide a seemingly comprehensive but necessarily brief review of developments in China. These have been substantial, often centrally managed,

and the issues that result from that approach are hinted at in a diplomatic way.

Chilana's chapter on the development of South Asian collections in US libraries notes the significance of Web-based resources in opening up information from and about the region.

The Africana section opens with a paper by Johannes Britz and Peter Lor, on a theme that they have almost come to monopolise in the professional press – the need to combat information poverty in the region. In one sense, this paper stands apart from the rest of the volume in arguing that information technology is not the only element in the solution, but it does help to provide a balanced view of the impact of technology that is not so explicit elsewhere.

Kay Raseroka's paper highlights the dilemma faced by academic librarians in Africa (and elsewhere) when government funding for education is declining at the same time that government policies expect increased enrolments in the universities. Donor funding is also scarce, and collaborations and consortia are evolving in an attempt to offset the pressures, but the consequence is a demand for new skills to be acquired by library staff.

Natsis describes a project led by the book's editor linking an American university with the francophone University of Benin, and draws from it many lessons about international co-operation.

Aguolu and his colleagues describe the chaotic state of affairs in Nigeria, one of the notionally wealthiest countries in Africa, where computerisation of the university libraries has remained largely at the planning stage for twenty years, although national efforts to remedy this situation are beginning.

They paint a picture of a country where integrated library management systems are still not universal in libraries in higher education; where electronic-journal services are still largely dependent on CD technology; where enterprising librarians sell access to the Internet and e-mail services to raise funds; and where the library staff are generally ill prepared for the implementation of new technology.

Finnegan's review of the development of the African Librarian's Committee in the USA provides a dramatic contrast, as they try to meet scholars' increasing expectation of access to full-text material.

The chapters about the Middle East also present contrasting pictures. Unusually, one is by Mohammed Aman, whose consultancy activities have taken him to many countries in the Arab world, but who has been resident in the USA for at least 40 years. He dispels many myths about librarianship in the Arab world, but also paints an unvarnished picture of its problems and the gulf that the Arab countries need to cross to join the information society.

On the other hand, Shaheen provides a comprehensive description of the wide-ranging Egyptian implementation of e-government and its implications for professional education and for society generally.

The chapter by Houissa on developments in the USA notes the evolution of computer-generated Arabic script and Web-based services, noting the efforts now being made to digitise texts, which implicitly will benefit libraries in the region when their access to the Internet improves.

The book does not attempt to be encyclopaedic, and inevitably such a compilation cannot cover every country, but the complete omission of Latin America is inexplicable. Nonetheless, the editor is to be congratulated for achieving a compilation that is genuinely international in scope. Overall, however, the papers are uneven in their coverage of the impact of integrated library management systems, electronic information resources, and user services.

The chapters by American librarians imply that they work to support their academic faculty, and make no mention of the interest of the many foreign students in accessing material related to their home countries to support research.

The papers are generally well written, but most fail to provide adequate bibliographic details to support their thesis, and the opportunity to identify key material in foreign languages has been lost. In common with many books of its kind, the book fails to indicate when the papers were completed; internal evidence and the dates of cited texts suggest that that the last papers were completed around the end of 2004.

The final chapter, by the editor, draws on his own international experience as a consultant and summarises his perception of the barriers to the development of technological applications in the libraries in these three regions: principally, resources and funding, and the low levels of literacy in many countries.

The papers presented do, however, combine to leave a broader impression of the issues faced by librarians in the developing world, and the opportunities that technology dangles before them.

Perhaps the one issue that remains unexplored is the impact on library users who have been educated in the industrialised countries and who have returned to relative information deprivation. Understanding why librarians in these regions have largely failed to harness their support for the investment that is required remains a mystery.

Ian M. Johnson
<*i.m.johnson@rgu.ac.uk*>

Hans M. Zell, ***Publishing, Books and Reading in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Critical Bibliography.*** Lochcarron, Scotland: Hans Zell Publishing, 3rd edn. 2008. l, 712 pp. ISBN: 978-0-9541029-5-1.

First published in 1984, with a second edition in 1996, this new, completely revised and fully updated bibliography charts the growth of publishing and book development in the countries of Africa south of the Sahara from 1980 to date, with a concentration on the period between 1996 and the end of 2007.

It contains over 2,500 entries – of which around 1,600 are new – (books, journals, contributions to books, journal articles, reports but excluding unpublished papers) and is arranged in five parts: Serials and reference; General comparative and regional studies; Country studies; Studies by topic (30 headings) and Book industry training/ self-publishing.

There is extensive cross-referencing between entries and sections and informative scope notes. As well as bibliographic citations, the book includes listings of African book professional and allied associations, and a directory of international bodies supporting the book sector in Africa. There are author and subject/geographical indexes and an index of organizations and associations.

But, librarians, beware! The new edition does not totally supersede the earlier one. In order to free up space, quite a large proportion of material cited in the 1996 edition has been dropped. But, even if such material is now a little dated or, because it was unpublished, difficult to locate, it might still be of interest to researchers. So keep that 1996 edition on the shelves!

The change in the title – from *Publishing and Book Development* to *Publishing, Books and Reading* reflects the fact that the bibliography now includes a large number of citations on complementary aspects of book publishing and the book chain. In addition, the annotations and abstracts are more evaluative and critical, pointing out the relative significance and value of the material included. References to book reviews are also given.

A very welcome new feature is that material available online is included (almost 500 documents) and the entire bibliography is published both in print and as a searchable electronic version. This means that the online user can immediately connect from an entry to the full text of an article or report and also follow the cross-references.

The author has indicated the date that the online version was accessed, and file sizes are given. Where appropriate, e-mail contact and Website addresses are provided. Subject searching by key word is also possible, although this facility is somewhat limited and browsing and use of the indexes may prove more effective.

The new edition also contains an introductory essay from 'the father of African publishing', Henry Chakava. He reviews the considerable progress that has been made in African publishing, but concludes that many of the challenges identified at the 1973 Ife Conference remain important: lack of government book policies, use of African languages, illiteracy, poverty, need for investment capital, poor trade and book marketing, and copyright and privacy contraventions. The future of African publishing lies in creating partnerships, both local and foreign, and harnessing the potential of translation.

The core of the book lies in the sections that cover material on specific countries and on book-related topics. Under each country of Africa are listed: Associations and book-related organizations; National bibliographies, books in print and book trade directories; and Books, articles, reports and interviews, related

in general to that country. So this section is part directory and part bibliography.

Topics range from Acquisition of Africa-published material, through Open Access Publishing, Reading Culture and Promotion to Scholarly Publishing and Women in African Publishing. It is important to recognize that topic takes precedence over country, so an article on *Legal Deposit and Copyright in Ghana* is included under the *Copyright* topic rather than under *Ghana*. However, this can be a bit inconsistent: for example, an article on the affordability of school textbooks in Kenya is included under the *Kenya* section and not under *Educational and School Book Publishing*. But the index does make the link, so such entries can be retrieved with no problem.

To quote Henry Chakava, 'African book development is part and parcel of African development and neither can be seen in isolation: the book does not reside where there is poverty but, at the same time, books are basic tools in the delivery of education and socio-economic development.'

This bibliography is therefore an essential starting point for anyone interested either specifically in publishing in Africa or in development generally. Someone interested in the state of publishing in Kenya, for instance, will find references to what has already taken place and pointers to where further research and investigation is needed.

Book-donation programmes are often seized upon as an answer to the book famine in Africa – in this bibliography past and current assistance programmes are described and assessed and following up the references will help to avoid pitfalls in the future.

Open Access publishing is sometimes seen as the answer to Africa's publishing problems – this bibliography includes a selection of articles and papers on the subject, each annotated in detail.

A librarian consulting this bibliography may be disappointed. We all recognize that books and libraries are inextricably linked, and publishers, booksellers and librarians are equal partners in the book chain. But while *Libraries and publishing* is included as a topic, it contains only six entries, which in no way reflects the considerable amount of literature available. This is not a criticism of the bibliography under review, which in the preface clearly states that 'the vital role of library services' has been excluded – and obviously space cannot allow the inclusion of all the complementary aspects of publishing.

However, I do not agree with the author that the literature on library services in Africa is already covered in other bibliographic sources. I think that a companion volume on *Libraries, Books and Reading in Sub-Saharan Africa* would be a valuable new reference source.

Diana Rosenberg
<drosenberg@gn.apc.org>

ILIG Seminars

ILIG held two half-day seminars at the British Library on 14 October 2008
If you weren't able to attend, the reports below will give you an idea of what you missed.

Information Services for Migrants and Refugees

This seminar drew nearly forty participants,
from India, South Africa and Denmark, as well as from the UK.

Hazel Dakers, immediate past president of ILIG, chaired the three speakers: **Helen Carpenter**, project co-ordinator for the national Welcome To Your Library project; **Diana Edmonds** of Haringey Council; and **Amanuel Gebrekidan**, himself a refugee from Eritrea and now working in the Future Media and Technology group at the BBC.[1]

Helen Carpenter began her presentation by stressing the first word on her first slide: 'Connecting'. Libraries are a vital asset to local communities and can help bring diverse people together. Crucially, Welcome To Your Library was seen as 'not just a project, but a different way of working'.

Participating libraries developed ways of helping these groups move from merely 'consuming' library services to active participation through, for example, work placements in Camden and a volunteering scheme in Leicester. Helen described similar projects she had encountered during her Churchill Fellowship, showing libraries working across cultural barriers and with vulnerable groups.

Projects included 'conversation clubs' in Seattle, chess clubs, and a 'magical' storytelling programme on a tiny budget in Copenhagen, Denmark. Studying them provided her with a wealth of good practice that she is using to develop services despite the formal end of Welcome To Your Library.

Diana Edmonds began by describing Haringey as one of the most disadvantaged of London boroughs, and not the kind of place where library services might be expected to thrive, but library visits there have increased by 150%, against a falling national trend, since she took over in 2001.

Since the mid-twentieth century, successive waves of migration have brought different groups to the area, from European Jews before and during the Second World War to today's economic migrants from Eastern Europe. The staff of Haringey information services are of a similar ethnic mix to the borough's residents. Many of them are migrants, some have been refugees, and the library staff have a good understanding of the newcomers' needs.

Haringey is home to speakers of almost two hundred mother tongues. Obviously, no library can cater for that range, so each library holds stock in twenty 'core languages' – a different core for each library – and materials in other languages are made available on request. Language lists are updated often.

Regular events are held at libraries, including book launches and celebrations of cultural festivals and Black History Month. Outside these, there are programmes of seminars and arts workshops. Many migrants, however, are attracted into the libraries by the 180 'People's Network' computers. For all incomers, particularly those from unstable

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[1] Helen Carpenter wrote about the Welcome to Your Library project in *Focus* 38(2), 2007. She was awarded a Winston Churchill Travelling Fellowship in 2007, and reports about that on pages 91–95 of this issue. In the next issue of *Focus*, we expect to have articles from the other two speakers, who will give more detail about their presentations that are summarised here. – Ed.

countries or situations, the Internet can provide an all-important link with home.

Diana Edmonds was recently awarded the MBE for services to librarianship.

Eritrean **Amanuel Gebrekidan,** who came to the UK as a refugee and has made a career here in information and media, provided first-hand insight into refugees' information needs.

Almost by definition, all refugees have fled intolerable situations; all are vulnerable and benefit from specialist support. Many have poor English, many are lonely and isolated, and most have little experience of the workings of European bureaucracy. However, each individual's needs are different, and will change over time.

It is common for needs for information to be unexpressed for a variety of reasons, most often lack of confidence or trust in authority, or language barriers. Refugees gain much of their information from friends from their own ethnic groups, who may know little more than they do.

Information seekers need encouragement to put more trust in figures whose information is more accurate. Information providers exist on account of their users' actual and potential needs. Refugees and asylum seekers have their own specific needs, and librarians need to be made aware of them.

The presentations inspired lively discussion, and delegates left the meeting with a greater understanding of these important, and vulnerable, client groups.

Clare Sansom

Internet Search Techniques:
Current State of the Art and the Next Five Years

Terry Kendrick facilitated this seminar, which attracted forty-eight participants, mostly from the London area, but some from as far afield as Durham and Jersey.

Terry trained as a librarian and worked in public library reference services in the 1970s and 1980s. He then used his expertise in information management to move into marketing, working as a freelance information broker for over 50 organizations in 18 different countries. He is now a lecturer in marketing at the University of East Anglia and runs the marketing and information consultancy Information Now Ltd.

Topics covered were: the current state of the art of Internet search; key tips to better searching; and the future of Internet search and what to expect. He gave loads of practical advice:

• Be more sceptical about the quality of search engine results.

• Try out lots of different search engines; don't be misled into thinking that Google is always the best; it's not!
• There is a huge invisible Web that search engines never reach.
• If you know an authoritative source, go straight to it.
• Use grammar and Boolean operators to narrow down searches and improve relevance. Try to always reduce the number of hits to less than 1,000.

It was an inspirational, informative and entertaining morning – and, as one participant remarked, a wake-up call to the profession. Librarians need to be a few steps ahead of the search engines!

Diana Rosenberg

ILIG's Annual General Meeting
11 June 2008

THE 2008 AGM was the first to be chaired by Gill Harris. In her report, Gill thanked Hazel Dakers, the previous Chair, for all that Hazel had done for ILIG, and said that it gave Gill a hard act to follow.

Gill also thanked Diana Rosenberg, who had stood down as Secretary, and congratulated the new Secretary Anne Powell. And she acknowledged the work of Pete Loewenstein, Ann Irving, Rachel Monk, Luigi Callegari, and Jill Martin, who were leaving the Committee, and welcomed Beth Murphy, Shane Godbolt, Joanna Ball, and Farzana Qureshi, who were joining it.

The Chair's report covered three main areas: awards, events, and publications.

Awards meant the International Award, which is entirely funded and administered by ILIG, and the Anthony Thompson Award, a CILIP award in the management of which ILIG is heavily involved.

It happened that the International Award had been made twice in the period since the 2007 AGM: to Jan Lewis, who runs a prison library in Barbados, and to Gray Nyali, National Librarian of Malawi. Jan Lewis had received her award at the 2007 Umbrella; Gray Nyali had received his in Malawi from the hand of ILIG Committee member Beth Murphy. The 2008 Anthony Thompson Award winner, Raj Kumar Gandharba, was at the AGM in person, and spoke there.

Events included training seminars in Web 2.0 and Copyright, which had been well received by people attending and had raised significant sums to fund the awards. More were planned.

ILIG had fielded three seminars at Umbrella 2007 – on recovering from disasters, on the World Summit on the Information Society, and on distance learning.

Finally, ILIG's programme of Informals was now running successfully to a schedule of four per year, the first year's contribution having included presentations on freedom of information, VSO in Uganda, communication in remote locations, and the study tour to the United States by the latest CILIP/English Speaking Union Travelling Librarian.

Publications included ILIG's main publication in the traditional sense, its journal *Focus*. Additionally, the group's Website was diligently maintained, and the ILIGlist continued to serve as a forum for discussion of matters of concern to members. The group was experimenting with a page on Facebook.

Gill's report ended with an account of the consulations in which ILIG had taken part during the year.

After the AGM, members heard from Raj Kumar Gandharba and CILIP President Bruce Madge. Reports on both those talks appear elsewhere in this issue of *Focus*.

Highlights from the Treasurer's Report

- An overall surplus from four half-day seminars amounting to £9,644.54.
- Around £13,775 now held in ILIG's COIF Deposit Account, earmarked as Awards Reserve Funds. Interest from these monies will be used for the ILIG and the Anthony Thompson Awards.
- Plans for a proportion of the Awards Reserve Funds to CILIP to be held in the M & G Charifunds, where it is hoped it will generate optimum interest.
- Further fundraising seminars and a range of Informals meetings planned for 2008.
- The sum of £376 Unallocated Income in the I&E Account was paid to ILIG in error.

ILIG's financial statements for 2007 appear on the inside back cover of this issue of *Focus*.

Not one speaker, but two

This year's AGM had not one speaker but two! Pride of place, of course, went to CILIP President Bruce Madge, who spoke on international information provision for health professionals. But the winner of the Anthony Thompson Award, Raj Kumar Gandharba, was also present at the meeting, and Raj was given the floor for some of the time as well.

Bruce Madge

Bruce's talk gave some idea of the vitality and diversity of the health information world today.

He began by mentioning a false start – the Global Review on Access to Health in Developing Countries initiative, prepared by the INASP in 2004/5, was not completed for lack of funds. But out of it came the Healthcare Information for All by 2015 campaign (HIFA2015). Launched by the Global Healthcare Information Network, HIFA2015 is attracting a growing list of member organisations, including CILIP.

Bruce found some common themes in the work of many international bodies: the sea change resulting from the arrival of new ICT technology, for instance (conference sessions devoted less to delivery of papers than to questions and answers arising from papers already posted online; shift of health information towards patients).

He praised initiatives such as the São Paulo-based BIREME,[1] with its mission to promote Open Access repositories of health information, and flagged up the UK's Partnerships in Health Information,[2] which works for improvements in health care in developing countries. He stressed the value of co-operation, of simple solutions, and of readiness to face emergencies.

Raj Kumar Gandharba

Raj is a teacher and musician, and Executive Director of Jana Utthan Pratisthan (JUP), a non-governmental organisation that works to further the cause of under-privileged Dalit peoples in Nepal.

He told the meeting about the discrimination and exclusion suffered by many Dalits, even from employers who claim the most inclusive intentions in their advertisements. Having had no prior opportunity of work experience, Dalit applicants find themselves automatically disqualified from many jobs. At most enterprises, there is no record that a Dalit has ever been appointed. JUP aims to change that with its rural Community Learning Centres. Raj told the meeting that JUP was looking to internationalise its agenda.

Questions from the meeting concerned JUP's relationship with Nepalis who were poor but not Dalits. Raj's reply was that, while JUP's programme was focused on the needs of the Dalit community, others who wished to take part in its work would be welcome to do so.

Raj's account of his work, and of his time in the UK as Anthony Thompson Award winner, appears on the next pages.

Aidan Baker

[1] <http://66.102.9.104/translate_c?hl=en&sl=pt&u=http://regional.bvsalud.org/local/Site/bireme/I/homepage.htm&prev=/search%3Fq%3DBIREME%2BSAO%2BPAULO%26hl%3Den%26client%3Dfirefox-a%26rls%3Dorg.mozilla:en-GB:official%26hs%3DzSs>.

[2] <http://www.intute.ac.uk/healthandlifesciences/hosted/phi/index.html>.

A Glance at the UK from Nepal

Raj Kumar Gandharba*

*After winning the Anthony Thompson Award 2008, I was very delighted to make
my first professional visit to UK, for three weeks from 7 to 29 June 2008.
The Award provided me with an opportunity to be exposed to work in related fields.*

MY WORK INCLUDES promoting community learning centres and information services for the rights of Dalits in rural areas of Nepal. During my stay in the UK, I participated in conferences and visited learning centres, libraries, archives, and rights-promoting agencies. We shared experiences with each other and explored new ideas. I was also able to visit very beautiful places which made me mentally fresh. Here, I have briefly described what I learned in UK that might enable the people of Nepal to benefit from the cross-cultural experience.

Geographically and culturally Nepal is quite a beautiful and special country. However, that beauty is marred because of 'untouchability' and other forms of discrimination, which affect many people in the country.

The dominant Hindu society and culture have placed Dalits at the bottom level of society, where they face discrimination and exclusion. Caste-based discrimination is major barrier to developing and transforming the communities. Nepali Dalits are not only victimised owing to caste-based discrimination but also are socially excluded, culturally dominated, economically disadvantaged and educationally disadvantaged. They are often unaware of their human rights and therefore unable to make demands that would improve their position.

There are, of course, many alliances between Dalits and people of other castes; however, it's a stark reality that most of the so-called upper-caste people are not ready to share or relinquish power.

Nepal has been suffering from internal conflict for a prolonged period, and this has further endangered human rights, political and civic rights, democracy and the economic development of the nation. One of the major reasons for this conflict is the lack of active participation of socially excluded communities such as the Dalits.

Against such a scenario it is hardly surprising that libraries were initiated much later than in other countries. In fact, history has shown that the rulers of Nepal feared the provision of too much information and education because it could provoke the people and their absolute rule could be undermined. The libraries that were opened in the 19th century and are still running exist for academic purposes.

There have been initiatives in Nepal that have encouraged access to books and fought to improve literacy, such as Room to Read. However, these are directed substantially towards those who are in the school system and older members of the Dalit Community, or even towards those young people who have dropped out of school and do not have access to these initiatives.

In addition, although the advance of the Internet (introduced in Nepal in 1994) is seen as significant in improving access to information, rural, poor and illiterate Dalit people have almost no access to this revolutionary tool.

To meet the needs of Dalits, Jana Utthan

*Raj Kumar Gandharba, the winner of the 2008 Anthony Thomson Award, is Programme Co-ordinator for Jana Utthan Pratishan, the Academy for Public Upliftment, in Nepal. He can be contacted at <raj.gdv@gmail.com>. For more information about the Award, see <http://www.cilip.org.uk/specialinterestgroups/bysubject/international/awards/ataward>.

Pratisthan (JUP) established community learning centres, which are first such facilities in Nepal specifically for the Dalit community. The learning centres of JUP have been providing a wealth of information in the form of books, pamphlets and bulletins on Dalit issues.

Initially, the learning centres were aimed at the Dalit community so that they were able to increase their awareness, but they have proved popular with students, teachers, officials, professionals, and others who are conducting research on Dalits issues.

In addition, the centres provide information that Dalit leaders and activists need in order to fight against caste-based untouchability and other forms of discrimination.

The learning centres also provide a base for related programmes such as literacy classes, press conferences, fact-finding, media training, showing documentaries and mobilising volunteers.

JUP Nepal intends to extend the network of learning centres across Nepal. They will be responsive to local needs, but all the centres will act as local information points as well as reconciliation centres where local issues or disputes can be resolved.

As many local students are using them, one aspiration is to build an open school and college network to support those Dalit students who, often for economic reasons, have dropped out of school. This thought was really prompted by my visit to the the Open University in the UK, and here I come to my first area of learning from my visit.

The Open University provides an opportunity for people who have been excluded from the education system and could not go to university for various reasons. This could be copied in Nepal, and has particular relevance for the Dalit community, where the drop-out rate from education is very high.

Although the Open University operates at the tertiary level of education, in Nepal the idea could be in the form of an 'open school' in the rural areas for Dalit children who have been excluded from the education system. But there are also opportunities for university-level open study, as so many people are excluded by a lack of flexibility in the way they can study.

My second area of learning was in my visit to a Citizen's Advice Bureau, where I talked to Paul Mefful. This NGO assists citizens to access information about their rights and responsibilities, supports them to claim their rights, and challenges policies that do not benefit citizens.

It is similar to JUP in that it works particularly for those members of society who are struggling to obtain their rights. They run an impressive network of advice centres, and many of the services are run by trained volunteers. This is a more sophisticated and structured model of service provision, but very much mirrors the direction being taken by JUP in its learning centres.

The Peabody Trust was really a very good place for me to see, since it has been promoting community learning centres to disadvantaged Londoners. Through its centres it provides training for jobless people, assisting them to develop their CVs. Their centres are also a place for children to do their homework, as well as for providing IT training for young people.

The mix of services they provide gave me some very good ideas for JUP, particularly given that many Nepali Dalits and parents who are not educated find it difficult to guide the education of their children at home.

As a citizen of a Himalayan country, which is characterised by remote communities, I was very surprised to see the big vehicles carrying books to rural communities in the Lincolnshire County Council Mobile Library service.

In Nepal, taking books to the community in vehicles would be much more difficult: many villages are accessible only on foot, and many of our audiences are illiterate. However, the mobile library made me realise that the idea can be promoted in Nepal in a different way. We can mobilise Dalit youth and provide them with information and documents to raise awareness in rural communities. By undertaking this mobile information centre work, the volunteers can also get experience, which will ultimately help them to find employment. More ideas were triggered for me when I saw the mobile library in Huntingdon providing information and links on health matters.

I met many, many inspirational people while in the UK. I learned something new everywhere I went, and I am only sorry that I can highlight here just a few of those learning experiences. Thank you to all those who shared their time and experience with me.

ILIG International Quiz

On Wednesday, 10 December 2008, we will be celebrating the 60th anniversary of the
Universal Declaration of Human Rights,
adopted by the UN's General Assembly on 10 December 1948.

To mark the occasion, we are planning an end of year seasonal fun event
at the Ewart Room, CILIP, 7 Ridgmount Street.

This will be based on an 'international' quiz, led by ILIG Committee member Doug Knock
as quizmaster, followed by festive refreshments and networking.

Refreshments will be available from 17.30, while the quiz will start at 18.00;
the event will finish promptly at 19.45.

We are looking for teams of 3 to 5 people. A voluntary entry fee of £5 per person,
towards ILIG's charitable activities, would be kindly received.

To keep in with the theme of the evening, please try to make your team name a
human-rights-related one. A small prize will be awarded to the winning team.
Other prizes are also on offer, including one for the winners of the bonus round.

How to enter
If you would like to enter a team, please contact
Doug Knock <douglas.knock@nhs.net> by 5.00 p.m. Friday, 5 December 2008 with:

1) Your team name (themed, remember?)
2) The names of your team members

If you don't have a team, don't panic! You can also contact Doug
if you are an individual looking for a team and we will pair you up.

It would also be helpful if you would be kind enough to add to your e-mail a little information
about yourself (and your team) – for instance, whether you are a member of ILIG or of CILIP,
where you work, and how you heard about this event.

ILIG business

The ILIG Committee met on 15 October 2008.

An important part of the meeting was a discussion of the proposed new arrangements for CILIP's international activities, as being debated by CILIP's Policy Forum. Further information on those arrangements, and on their implications for ILIG, was expected to be ready for the February meeting.

Finances

Treasurer Kathleen Ladizesky reported that the Group's finances were thriving, though less so than previously. Profits from the seminars on 14 October had been healthy, but smaller than for earlier events of their type.

Kathleen also thanked Norman Briggs, her successor-designate as Treasurer, for his help with the finances.

ILIG online

ILIGlist owner Doug Knock reported a net gain of 21 members, making 270 overall.

The ILIG Facebook group had 62 members, which compared favourably with the figure for other groups. The meeting resolved to seek members' opinions of the Facebook page.

ILIG Informals

Glorias Asiimwe's September talk on the African Prisons Project had been a remarkable success.

Planned for 10 December is a festive quiz in honour of the sixtieth anniversary of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

For 2009, it was expected that Rebecca Knuth will talk in April on the destruction of libraries, and Beth Murphy in June on the work of Book Aid International.

ILIG seminars

The seminars held on 14 October had been a great success: Terry Kendrick on Internet search techniques, and Helen Carpenter, Diana Edmonds and Amanuel Gebrekidan on information provision for migrants and refugees. Details of these appear on pages 108–109 of this issue of *Focus*.

Focus

The meeting discussed production problems that had hit issue 39(3), and members agreed to watch out for evidence of poor quality in the journal's printing and wrapping.

They also agreed to look out for potential contributors.

Support for outside bodies

ILIG often receives requests to support outside bodies in some way – most often by donations, and sometimes in other ways. Since ILIG's own resources are limited, the group needs a policy on criteria for support and preferred modes of giving it. Chair Gill Harris and committee member Maria Cotera were given the task of devising one in time for the February meeting.

ILIG at Umbrella 2009

ILIG intends to present three sessions at the Umbrella conference:
- Libraries and the Cultural Olympiad
- The value of partnerships
- Libraries as spaces

Next meeting

The next ILIG Committee meeting will be held on Wednesday 11 February 2009.

Aidan Baker

Meet the Committee

*I thought readers might be interested to know something about the people
who serve on ILIG's Committee, so I asked them for a brief biography.
Here they are, in alphabetical order. – Ed.*

Tracey Ainsley is Honorary International Relations Officer of the Career Development Group (CDG), which includes being the representative for the group on ILIG's Committee. She works as Information Specialist at Northumbria University.

Her interest in international librarianship was sparked after a CDG study tour to Granada. She is now organising the 2009 study tour to Malta in conjunction with the Maltese Library Association (MaLIA).

As a joint venture with ILIG, Tracey is responsible for maintaining the Host directory, a directory of librarian volunteers who offer short-stay accommodation to librarians visiting the UK.

Aidan Baker is librarian of the Haddon Library of Archaeology and Anthropology in Cambridge, and has been a member of ILIG and its predecessors since 1987. He joined when he came back from a coffee-picking brigade in Nicaragua, and wrote up an interview with Father John Medcalf about his rural libraries project there for the *Library Association Record*. An update about this project appears on page 95.

His role in the ILIG Committee is that of minute secretary, and he is also one of the administrators of ILIG's Facebook group.

Joanna Ball is Sub-Librarian at Trinity College Library in Cambridge, which involves overseeing the management of a busy student library as well as looking after the special collections and readers in the Wren Library.

Joanna has been involved with CILIP in various guises for many years, but has only recently become more interested in international work. She has attended several World Library and Information Congresses and is one of the Co-convenors of IFLA's New Professionals Discussion Group.

As an ILIG committee member, she is currently co-ordinating the Group's contributions to Umbrella in 2009.

Norman Briggs's current involvement in international work is as the Managing Director of ILIAC UK Ltd., which was established to further Anglo-Russian co-operation through libraries and information services. Its principal Russian sponsor is the Russian National Public Library for Science and Technology, and its main activity is to support professional visits and conferences in the two countries.

He recently qualified as a Teacher of English to Students of Other Languages and is working on a pilot project to develop a TESOL distance-learning course for information professionals.

Norman is a CILIP mentor and member of the CILIP Membership, Recruitment and Retention Board, and active within ILIG (Treasurer designate), the Local Studies Group, and the BBO District of the SE Branch. He was a founder member of UKOLUG (now UKeIG) back in 1978.

Following her studies in Library and Information Sciences in Granada, Spain, and a few years working as a public librarian in Tenerife, Canary Islands, **Maria Cotera** moved to London where she has worked as a project cataloguer in academic libraries since 1999.

Maria has been an active CILIP member since 2002; currently Vice-President of the Career Development Group, for the last couple of years she has been involved in the organisation of the ILIG Informals and planning for CILIP's Umbrella Conferences.

Maria has organised several international co-operation projects in developing countries including South Africa, Sri Lanka, Cuba and Uganda as a former Honorary International Officer of the Career Development Group, as well as being very active within IFLA, where she is ex-officio member of the Management of Library Associations Section and the lead convener of the Women, Information and Libraries Discussion Group.

Hazel Dakers is the Immediate Past Chairman of ILIG, and now does a little freelance work within libraries and cultural heritage. Before becoming a librarian she lived in Kenya for a year, working for East African Publishing House as an editor.

Hazel is a Fellow of CILIP, with a widely varied career. She has set up a library for the English 6th form at the Lycée Français in Kensington, which she later bi-lingualised.

She says that her greatest challenge was project managing the development of occupational standards and the first NVQs in Library and Information Services for four years, based at the LA (now CILIP).

She later joined the British Library, working there as a project manager in Consultancy Services, HR, Electronic Records Management and Cultural Heritage.

After being a Trustee of Partnerships in Health Information for almost 15 years, **Shane Godbolt** was appointed Director in 2006. Her professional life has been spent in the public sector, both university and NHS.

She has been active in professional affairs and in contributing to the development of health library networks, especially in her last post as an NHS regional librarian. Shane was a founder and former editor of *Health Information and Libraries Journal*.

She says: 'Education and training, especially CPD, has always been my passion and I have contributed to courses for health librarians in the UK and in developing countries in India, Africa and Asia (the Philippines), whilst working with the British Council and other bodies.'

Gillian Harris, the current ILIG Chairman, is Head of Tower Hamlets Schools Library Services, which include a Development Education Centre whose focus is on supporting the global dimension in the curriculum.

She organised a job exchange for herself with a children's librarian in Vermont, USA, in the early 1980s and in the late 1980s spent two years as a VSO volunteer librarian with the National Library Service in The Gambia.

On her return from The Gambia, Gill helped establish LINK: a network for North–South library development, which she has run ever since. She has been a member of the ILIG committee for 16 years.

Alan Hopkinson is Technical Manager (Library) at Middlesex University. He has extensive experience of short-term consultancy work in developing countries, having worked on projects for UNESCO and various UN agencies while employed as Information Systems Manager at the Institute of Development Studies. He has implemented CDS/ISIS in a number of developing countries such as Uganda.

He recently led an EU project to modernise the library in Yerevan State University in Armenia, and has hosted several Commonwealth Professional Fellows, about which he reports on page 101.

Doug Knock has been a member of the committee since April 2007. His interest in international librarianship stems from his love of travel and the first (and best) module of his distance-learning librarianship Masters at Aberystwyth, entitled Information and Society.

He has a background in health librarianship, working at the Wellcome Trust, Royal College of Physicians of London and Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust in Woolwich.

Doug has been ILIGList owner since June 2007 and is a member of the ILIG Informals working group.

Now retired, **Kathleen Ladizesky** worked in Slavonic Acquisition, British Library Document Supply Centre, Boston Spa, and as Librarian of South Island School, Hong Kong. While living in Hong Kong, she was Hon. Secretary of the Hong Kong Library Association (HKLA).

She says: 'At that time we collaborated with libraries and institutions in China, attending Asian seminars hosted by ISTIC, Beijing, and helping organise the first joint conference between HKLA and Zhongshan University. We also made visits to different libraries including the public libraries of Shanghai, Guangzhou and Shenzen.'

When Philip Thomas stepped down as ILIG treasurer she took on that role, a good way to keep in touch with the international library scene.

As a VSO volunteer in rural Zambia, **Beth Murphy** spent two years supporting a school library first hand, and gained a practical insight into the challenges of accessing information where books are scarce. On her return to the UK she completed her MA in Librarianship and worked for eighteen months with the Directory of Social Change on community library development. She has been at Book Aid International since March 2007 in the post of Deputy Head Operations.

Anthony Olden is a Senior Lecturer in Library and Information Management at Thames Valley University, London. He spent eight years on the staff of Ahmadu Bello University, Nigeria.

He travels to Africa regularly, and has made four visits to Somaliland on behalf of the Africa Educational Trust, which works in war-torn areas and has been setting up libraries in schools. He conducted training workshops on Marketing for Librarians for the Tanzania Library and Information Association in 2007 and 2008, and is currently an External Examiner for the University of Ghana.

Anne Powell, ILIG's secretary, works for the International Network for the Availability of Scientific Publications (INASP) as Programme Officer responsible for information delivery, working with librarians and researchers in INASP's 24 partner and 30 network-with-co-ordinator countries to ensure that the deeply discounted or free electronic resources are accessible to and used by researchers.

Her job was an ideal follow-on from her previous work as Head of the Department of Library Science, at Harare Polytechnic in Zimbabwe. She remains a Zimbabwean at heart!

Alice Tyler has worked in both the public and special library sectors, but since 1970 has been involved, on a voluntary basis, with information work in her local community.

She says: 'My chief interest in information is editorial rather than technical – trying to ensure that the information made available is correct, up to date and useful. Today, it sometimes seems as if the technicalities of information transfer have become more important than the information itself!'

Alice joined ILIG more than ten years ago, when she lived abroad. Returning to England in 2004 she joined the ILIG Committee in 2006 as Web Officer. In April 2008 she also became Associate Editor of *Focus*, and is responsible for overseeing the printing, and handles the distribution of printed copies to ILIG's individual members, organisation members and subscribers.

ILIG INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT
for the year ended 31 December 2007

Expenditure	£	Income		£
Nett VAT on goods & services	12.77	Capitation		1,665.00
Nett Cost of *Focus* (3 issues)		Unallocated Income		376.00
2007 (1–3)	2,554.96	*Focus* back issues		28.80
Committee Exes. – 3 meetings	414.31.	Seminars 2006: addl surplus		585.00
AGM & Speaker: nett costs	121.07	ILIG Seminars 2007: nett surplus		
Stationery, Photocopying	24.96	May Web 2.0	4,674.48	
Postage, Phone, Fax, e-mail	175.52	Oct. Web 2.0 & Copyright	4,836.68	9,511.16
Informals 2007	192.32	ILIG ind. members		34.25
ILIG Award	164.00	COIF interest		474.81
	3,659.91			
Surplus for year (excess of income over expenditure) c/f to Balance Sheet:	9,015.11			
	12,675.02			12,675.02

ILIG BALANCE SHEET as at 31 December, 2007

Liabilities		£	Assets		£
Prepayment: *Focus* (v.39, 2008)		30.00	Sundry debtors		579.58
Transfer to CILIP unallocated income		376.00	Balances in hand:		
Estimated addl. Award Funds		6,168.48	Barclays Bank	1,875.41	
Nett VAT to CILIP from Seminars		253.98	COIF Deposit	18,340.24	20,215.65
Accum. Surp. as at 31.12.06	4,951.66				
Plus nett. Surplus for 2006 (c/d from I & E Acc.):	9,015.11				
Accum surplus as at 31.12.07		13,966.77			
		20,795.23			20,795.23

K. A. Ladizesky, *Hon. Treasurer*

Auditors' Report

International Library & Information Group of CILIP

Registered Charity No: 313014   V.A.T. Reg. No.: GB 233 1573 97

We confirm that the Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure account are in accordance with the Cash Book and other records of the Group and that we have examined a sample of the records to check their accuracy.

[signed] H. Llewelyn Evans   _____   N. M. George   _____

Hon. Auditors   *13 February, 2008*

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY
ILIG INFORMALS AND MEETINGS

ILIG Informals are absolutely free.
They provide an excellent opportunity to find out about
international LIS issues in a relaxed setting,
and to meet like-minded professionals.
- ❖ refreshments are provided
- ❖ networking is encouraged
- ❖ everyone is welcome

They are held at
CILIP, 7 Ridgmount Street, London (unless otherwise stated)
on Wednesdays from 6.00 p.m. to 7.45 p.m.

Wednesday, 10 December 2008
ILIG International Quiz
Refreshments from 5.30 p.m. Quiz starts at 6.00 p.m.

Informals dates for your 2009 diary:
8 April, 10 June, 12 August, 14 October, 9 December

ILIG Annual General Meeting: 11 February 2009.

Look for more information in this issue and updates on
<http://www.cilip.org.uk/ilig>
or contact Alice Tyler <a.m.tyler@btinternet.com>
Tel.: +44 (0)116 275 1379
or e-mail <ilig@cilip.org.uk>.