

# Newsletter of the IFLA Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations

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Lucille C. Thomas, editor

## 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Section

### CHAIR'S LETTER

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Here we are! Soon it will be the 20th Anniversary of the Section! Please come and join us to celebrate it on Tuesday, 15th of August, with the former chairs I hope.

Anniversaries are always an invitation to review and evaluate the past. So let's have a look. In 1980, a Working Group was created, which became in 1986 the "Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations."

The Section initiated six projects:

1. Publication of periodical articles, books, etc. from as many countries of the world as possible,
2. Publication of a newsletter for communication with corresponding members,
3. Guidelines for library services to ethno-linguistic communities,
4. Publication of pamphlets on various aspects of multicultural librarianship,
5. Cooperation with other IFLA Sections and Roundtables
6. Automated systems for access to multicultural and multi-script library material

We can be proud of all the work already accomplished by our Section, and I take the opportunity to warmly thank Marie Zielinska for all the work she did, and to wish her plenty of satisfaction and happiness.

I am sure our meeting in Jerusalem will prepare a thriving future for the new millennium.

Enjoy your summer. Hope to see you soon.

Souad Hubert, Chair  
Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section

### FUTURE CONFERENCES

2001	BOSTON, U.S.A.
2002	GLASGOW, SCOTLAND
2003	BERLIN
2004	BUENOS AIRES
2005	EXPRESSIONS OF INTEREST ARE INVITED
2006	SEOUL

### REMINISCENCE: In the Words of Michael Foster

. . . Let me tell you the story of how it all started. I found the first one or two of the IFLA conferences baffling and unfriendly; I knew hardly anyone, and the whole time seemed to be spent trudging between different meetings, some of which I was thrown out of (they didn't even allow observers at some of them then) and all of which had different, strange faces speaking a variety of languages. Few were very welcoming to a newcomer, I'm afraid. I found the only way to make progress was to attach myself to a particular Section or Round Table and start speaking up.

Working as I did for a library with an international focus, my interests were wide and many of the Section's and Round Tables' meetings were apparently enticing. I was somewhat disillusioned, on attending some meetings, to hear not the very latest, mind-splitting new ideas; rather, some papers were frankly and decidedly stale and barren. This was my first lesson in realizing that various countries have reached different stages in ideas as well as in economic and material development. The situation may also have had something to do with the notable lack of young people present at some of those earlier conferences.

. . . At the Leipzig meeting, feeling a bit out of things as usual, I stumbled by chance across a meeting of the Working Group on Library Services to Ethnic and Linguistic Minorities. Uncertain of my welcome, I there found Fleming Etrup, Chair, with Marie Zielinska and Benedikte Kragh-Schwarz running the meeting; and about 30 more people from twenty countries, including a Turkish gentlemen, who became very warm over the situation of the Kurds. At last, I felt I had found a group where I could contribute something useful. . .

Returning to London, I thought about IFLA, about the way its members met only once a year, and about the primary importance of communication to such a body, if it were to achieve anything. After the next meeting of the Working Group in Montreal in 1982, attended by over 140 people and addressed by Lem Wertheimer, the need for a newsletter became very apparent. Having the facilities and staff available, and the support of my organization, I agreed to start a newsletter, the first issue of which came out in early 1983.

I believe we circulated this newsletter free of charge, because we wanted to attract as many people to our ideas about this new kind of librarianship as possible. It had Marie Zielinska's report of the first two years of progress of the Working Group, and Len Werthimer's paper, both given in Montreal the previous year. It also had the first installment of what was then called the "Publications Checklist".

A second issue of the *Newsletter* came out in August 1983, keeping the same format of the original. A change of status of the Working Group to that of a Round Table, brought about at the Munich meeting in 1983, marked the beginning of a new series for the *Newsletter*: No. 1 in May 1984, No. 2 in May 1985 and the last, No. 3 in December 1985. To mark yet another change of status - from Round Table to that of a full-blown Section of IFLA - at a meeting of the Professional Board in November 1985, it was decided to upgrade the *Newsletter*, and the first issue of the *Journal of Multicultural Librarianship* appeared in July 1986, with greatly increased coverage, and a subscription price of £5. sterling.

SOURCE: *Journal of Multicultural Librarianship* Vol.9, No. 3, July 1991, (ISBN 155N 0950 164)

## REMINISCENCE

By Charles Townley

In August 1989, I landed in Paris for the first time to attend the IFLA conference - also for the first time. I had flown from Washington, D.C. surrounded by a group of well-meaning French expatriates on their way home for the summer vacation. In short, I had a wonderful crossing but got no sleep and arrived in a fog of cigarette smoke and red wine. After finding my way to the baggage area and standing around while others got their bags, I gradually became aware that my bags had gone somewhere else.

At exactly the same time, I spied E. J. Josey, also waiting for his bags. E. J. was an old trusted colleague from the 1970's when I was developing libraries for American Indians. Over the years we had grown closer as we served on American Library Association committees and boards together. E. J. indicated that he too was missing his bags; and to add to the complication, he just had a surgical procedure to replace a knee. As a result, he was moving slowly. As we waited, our topic for discussion was the section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations, to which I had just been appointed as the American Library Association's representative. E. J. gave a glowing report about the work of the Section. He praised the work of Michael Foster and Marie Zielinska. In short,

he made the Section seem like *raison d'être* for IFLA (which, of course, it is). I began to be eager to become involved.

After finding our bags, we took a cab into town. We had further discussion about IFLA and its opportunities. At the Section meeting, E. J. introduced me to the members and later, I was elected treasurer and later still, Chair.

What lessons can we take from this turn of events? First, not every travel impediment needs to be a disaster — especially if it leads you to your friends. Second, IFLA is an organization made up of people as well as organizations. Your colleagues in the Section on Library Services to Multicultural Populations will welcome your involvement. So get in there and make your contribution!  
Volunteer!

## **PROGRAMS**

### **LIBRARY SERVICES TO MULTICULTURAL POPULATIONS WORKSHOP**

DATE: AUGUST 17, 2000

THEME: Library Services to Arab Communities

PRESENTATIONS:

1. "Libraries in the West Bank and Gaza: Obstacles and Possibilities"  
Presenter: Erling Bergan (Bibliotekarforbundet, Oslo, Norway)
2. "Libraries and the Arab Populations of Israel: History, Current Trends and Challenges"  
Presenters: Shmuel Server and Irene Server (University of Haifa, Israel)
3. "Library Services to Arabic Speaking Immigrants and Refugees in Denmark"  
Presenter: Benedikte Kragh-Schwarz (Folkebibliotekernes Indvandrerbibliotek, Copenhagen. Denmark)
4. Speaker from the United Kingdom with a children's perspective (to be confirmed)

## **OTHER SECTION ACTIVITIES**

OFFSITE WORKSHOP: Libraries Serving Multicultural Populations

Dheisheh Refuggg Camp —A visit to the Idbbbbbdada Center (outside Bethlehem) Children's Cultural Center in Bethlehem. There will be bus transport.

### **REGISTRATION INFO**

We will not be able to register on Saturday, August 12, 2000 because of the Sabbath in Jerusalem.

### **STANDING COMMITTEE MEETING**

August 12, 2000 at the Conference Center, Room 308

### **STUDY TOUR: GAZA PUBLIC LIBRARY (whole day)**

Wednesday, August 16, 2000. To register, send e-mail to [florenceponce@culture.fr](mailto:florenceponce@culture.fr)

## LOOKING AHEAD

### IFLA SATELLITE MEETING BUFFALO, NEW YORK AUGUST 14 -16, 2001

(Prior to the Boston IFLA Conference in August 2001)

The Library Services to Multicultural Populations is planning a Satellite meeting in the year 2001 in Buffalo, New York prior to the Boston IFLA Conference. The theme, dates and speakers are being developed for review by the Section at the Jerusalem 2000 IFLA meeting prior to seeking IFLA Board approval.

TITLE: Technology, Globalization, and Multicultural Services

THEME: The impact of the new technologies is pervasive worldwide. Borders shrink, as communication networks and global information become a reality. In this new environment there are many challenges as well as benefits for multicultural services. The Satellite Meeting will examine three areas: technology, user requirements, and content.

The Internet and the World Wide Web have become the dominant technologies for delivering information worldwide. Not surprisingly, libraries around the world are searching for ways to integrate these technologies with existing services. This integration is particularly challenging for multicultural services for technical and pragmatic reasons. For example, Internet technology is not yet fully multilingual, finding and presenting multilingual material poses a number of unique problems. The objective of the Satellite meeting is to examine some of these challenges and approaches that are being tried to overcome them.

TECHNOLOGY - what are the shortcomings of Internet technology for the presentation of multilingual material? Are there plausible solutions on the horizon? How soon will they be available and how much will they cost?

USER REQUIREMENTS - what are some of the special features and requirements of Internet based library services for members of the ethno-cultural communities? These requirements may relate to the presentation of the information (i.e. page layout and hyperlink structure) but also services provided in other languages.

CONTENT - identifying, evaluating, and organizing content for multilingual Internet based library services is particularly challenging because of geographic distribution, the required linguistic expertise, and the uneven advancement of the Internet in countries around the world.

Speakers already committed to participate include Jorge Schement, Professor of Communication at the Pennsylvania State University and a noted researcher in issues related to demographics and multiculturalism. Gary Strong, Director of the Queens Borough Public Library in New York and a recognized leader in multicultural library activities, will speak about special programs in his library. Speakers will report on research results regarding the "digital divide" in the United States and the impact of various age groups and ethnicities. Hosted in Buffalo, New York, the Satellite Meeting will open on the evening of August 14 and will conclude at noon on August 16 with the afternoon free for an optional excursion to Niagara Falls, approximately 30-45 minutes from Buffalo. The conference itself is being held exactly one hundred years after the Pan American Exposition that the city of Buffalo hosted in 1901.

The Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section seeks co-sponsorship of the Satellite Meeting.

Barbara von Wahlde, Local Organizer and Planner  
Associate Vice President for University of Buffalo Libraries

Brooklyn, New York USA 11225  
E-Mail: [lucillecthomas@COMPUSERVE.COM](mailto:lucillecthomas@COMPUSERVE.COM)