



Inspiring and empowering: an upcoming LIS generation joining IFLA

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Meeting:

95 — *Strategies for library associations: include new professionals now!* — Management of Library Associations with the New Professionals Special Interest Group

Abstract:

After the idea of opening doors to IFLA's community for students of Library and Information Science (LIS) was born at the IFLA conference 2009, over the next two years more than 50 students became members of different IFLA units through getting "adopted" by active IFLA members or members of IFLA units worldwide. The program has been very successful. More than 70 "adopters" were willing to pay the IFLA membership student fee for one year and to introduce LIS students in IFLA activities. In 2010, 79 % of the new student members of IFLA came in through the "Adopt a Student!" program.

As per 2012, the students' participation in the "Adopt a Student! 2.0" program has been upgraded and filled with new content for involving LIS students more effectively into tasks and affairs of IFLA units. Students will be assigned with an active program within the IFLA professional units. Applicants are asked to submit an outline describing their special interests in international librarianship and/or a current or planned project.

The goal of the paper is to communicate the updated "Adopt a Student! 2.0" program to the international community of librarians as well as to all IFLA Units and LIS students in order to foster a fruitful collaboration among them.

The paper is presented in two parts: the first one will give a brief introduction to the "Adopt a student! 2.0" program, which is to prepare and encourage the new LIS generation to participate in IFLA. The second one will tell some success stories of students who already took part in the program.

¹ <http://www.ibi.hu-berlin.de>.

Importance of professional communication and exchange

Besides “information”, one of LIS (Library and Information Science) main issues is “communication”. Information and communication are two pillars on which libraries are based. Also, IFLA President Ingrid Parent’s theme “Libraries: A Force for Change” is about information and communication because the force for change is concealed in both of them. This does not only mean to do a good job inside the walls of your own library. It is also about discussing and speaking about your goals, your ideas, and your visions to those outside the library walls.

Doing a good job in one’s home library is okay. But communication with colleagues outside one’s own library, participating in national and international networks, thinking outside the box, looking beyond one’s own nose will bring new ideas, surprising experiences, and – last but not least – friends! Participation in international networks is the first step to internationalize an upcoming career.

Against this background, it is important to encourage the upcoming LIS generation to explore the international world of librarianship, attend international conferences, participate in international networks, and ask for internships far from home. After that they will come home with many new ideas, visions, and goals. They will not only benefit for their professional career but for their life.

IFLA Education & Training Section

The Section focuses on education and training for library and information science professionals. It is also keen to encourage LIS students to participate in IFLA conferences. Education and training for library and information services concerns all IFLA Divisions and requires cooperation with them and other international and inter-regional associations which have a related mission.

The section is in complete consent with both IFLA Past-President Ellen Tise and the current President Ingrid Parent as well as with the Governing Board that we should try and draw LIS students’ attention to IFLA’s activities and network. The idea of “adopting” students of Library and Information Science (LIS) through IFLA units and IFLA members was warmly received and endorsed by former and current IFLA Presidents and IFLA Governing Boards.

The idea of involving LIS students into IFLA issues means new and innovative forms of knowledge sharing, working collaboratively across the generations – online and onsite, preparing a new generation of LIS professionals for leadership positions, encouraging LIS students to take over management positions.

Adopt a Student!

When the idea of opening the doors to IFLA’s community for LIS students was born in 2009, over the next two years more than 50 students became members of different IFLA units worldwide through getting “adopted” by active IFLA members or members of IFLA units. The program has been very successful. More than 70 “adopters” were willing to pay the IFLA membership student fee for one year and to introduce LIS students in IFLA activities. In 2010, 79% of new student members of IFLA came in through the “Adopt a Student!” program. Students and sponsors from all over the world were matched around the world. Students from Canada, China, Fiji, Finland, Germany, Hong Kong,

Iran, New Zealand, Romania, UK, and USA are now connected with sponsors from Australia, Canada, China, Finland, France, Germany, Japan, New Zealand, Norway, Spain, Switzerland, Taiwan, UK, and USA.

The goal is to draw LIS students' attention to IFLA through sponsoring IFLA student membership for one year. Private or company sponsors play the role of LIS students' mentors through taking over the fee for a one year IFLA student membership. Sponsors should make contact with their students to open the door to IFLA for him or her! They should stay in touch and encourage them to take part in IFLA activities, e.g. to apply for the IFLA LIS Student Paper Award, to serve as a conference volunteer, to follow IFLA Sections' activities and to take part in discussions through suggestions.

LIS students will benefit through:

- A free one year subscription to the IFLA Journal.
- Being informed about current research and developments in the field of LIS and in the world of libraries.
- Keeping up to date with the latest trends in the field and future expectations.
- One free Section registration included in the IFLA student membership.
- Having the opportunity to directly contact library professionals and experts, to exchange experiences and to broaden their horizons.
- Sharing specialised expertise by participating in the work of the Sections.

Program participants have created an international platform on LinkedIn² that gives all participants the possibility to share their impressions and experiences.

Some Success stories

Simona-Marilena Bursasiu from Timisoara, Romania, was adopted by Barbara Lison from Bremen, Germany, who is now also serving for the IFLA Governing Board. Through the support of her sponsor, Simona-Marilena was invited by the German National Library Association to take part in the German National Library Conference in May 2012 in Hamburg. In a special IFLA session during the conference, she will speak about her personal experiences with this kind of sponsorship to encourage both more sponsors and more LIS students to take part in the program.

Nicole Stroud from Batesville, AR, USA, published an article about her experiences in the IFLA SET Bulletin 2011/13:

My relationship with my mentor, Dr. Christie Koontz, has resulted in many firsts! During the past year I had the opportunity to help edit a book, I wrote my first grant, and I was fortunate to be selected to participate in an Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) funded project.

Dr. Koontz's invitation to assist her in editing the second edition of the IFLA Public Library Service Guidelines was a wonderful learning experience, in which I discovered examples of public library service around the world. Did you know mobile library services in Chile include book boats, backpacks and bicycles? And that in Ethiopia donkeys "power" bookmobiles? Through this project, I experienced international collaboration, learned about indexing, and was able to share my knowledge about digital libraries. What an enjoyable introduction to IFLA!

After beginning work as the director of a literacy council in the rural southern part of the United States, I had to quickly learn about grant-writing. Dr. Koontz guided me through the process, explaining unfamiliar concepts, and offering advice and ideas.

² <http://www.linkedin.com/groups/IFLA-Adopt-Student-Network-3009013>.

³ <http://www.ifla.org/files/set/Bulletin/set-bulletin-jan-2011.pdf>.

Because of Dr. Koontz's encouragement, I recently applied and was accepted to participate in an IMLS funded program, "Discovering Librarianship," coordinated by the American Library Association. Through this program I will work to recruit ethnically diverse individuals to the library profession in the United States.

Thanks to IFLA and Dr. Koontz, my first year after graduating with a library and information science degree has been very lively and educational. And like many young professionals, I am identifying and prioritizing funds for travel and conferences. IFLA, due to this Adopt a Student Program is high on my list!

Shaked Spier from Berlin, Germany, published an article about his experiences in the same issue of the IFLA SET Bulletin:

This summer I had the pleasure of attending the IFLA annual conference.

As a participant in the "Adopt a Student!" program, I presented a poster describing the program during the poster session, presented the program on the newcomer session and met my mentor, Christel Mahnke from Goethe Institute in Jakarta. The IFLA conference was mine and Christel's second meeting, the first being on the German Bibliothekartag in Leipzig in March. On both occasions we had a chance for a very interesting professional and personal exchange (or networking, as it is often referred to in the conference).

The yearly IFLA convention encompassed three major themes for me. First, were the poster and the presentation of the "Adopt a Student!" program, which were a wonderful opportunity for me to network with professionals as well as with students from around the globe. As a student who enjoys a very fruitful mentorship courtesy of the program, I had not just the chance to share my experiences but also to demonstrate the program's benefits "live". After all, it doesn't happen every day that a student and a first-timer on IFLA is presenting a poster, talking on a session in front of 700 people (Newcomers session) and participating in standing committee meetings. I was especially glad to see university lecturers from around the world take the info-material to distribute among their students, and at the same time, register themselves as a mentor in the program.

Second, were the activities of the Knowledge Management Section, in which Christel and I are members. Apart from the interesting sessions of the KM section (as well as the joint ones), I also attended the standing committee meetings and dinner, in which I witnessed some live IFLA dynamics. I learned a lot about IFLA, how the institution is built, how it works behind the scenes, what the sections actually do, and inevitably, some of the inside politics. I can't say that I now know everything about IFLA, but I will admit that I am eager to learn more. More about my insights and experiences with the KM-Section are available in the coming edition of the KM-Section newsletter.

Furthermore, I believe that this is one of the biggest advantages of having a mentor in IFLA (but certainly not the only one). Of course, not all mentors are standing committee members, but the "ultimate IFLA experience" is also a subjective issue and the program's strength is in bringing students and professionals with shared interests together, so that the exchange between them will be productive and interesting for both sides. It is not a one direction (professional -> student) sharing, but an exchange, from which the professional has just as much to gain.

Third, was my participation in the different discussions and sessions of FAIFE. Next to knowledge management, the different social issues surrounding information (freedom of expression for example) are my passion and interest. I discuss them widely on my blog Drawer2.0 and take part in public debates regarding censorship, freedom of expression, etc. The connection with FAIFE and some of its members has proven itself to be a fruitful one as well, as I currently take part on the FAIFE Media Plan and Newsletter.

I think I have heard the word "networking" during the conference week just as often as the word "library", and probably not without reason. Because all in all, I haven't encountered just an interesting professional community, but a warm and welcoming group of people. People who enjoy socializing and discussing issues other than... libraries. The stack of business-cards on my desk and the number of new Facebook-friendships are proof that IFLA may connect us professionally, but one can gain there some good friends too.

Adopt a Student! 2.0

As of 2012, the students' participation in the program has been upgraded and filled with new content for involving LIS students more effectively in tasks and affairs of IFLA units, hence the program's new title "Adopt a Student! 2.0". Students will be assigned with an active program within the IFLA professional units. Applicants are asked to submit an outline describing their special interests in international librarianship and/or a current or planned project.

All IFLA professional units will be asked to take part in the program through open their activities to LIS students from all over the world. They should invite LIS students to actively take part in their activities like supporting section's communication tools, caring for the section's website, being actively involved in any kind of project.

As the program was such a success through bringing in new IFLA members to all IFLA units, it will be taken over from the Education & Training Section's administration and responsibility directly to IFLA Headquarters and the IFLA Membership Officer.

Conclusion

The "Adopt a Student! 2.0" program offers very interesting opportunities for LIS students to become a "Global Librarian" or a "Global Information Professional". Communicating in a broader view of librarianship will prepare them for their professional future and open their eyes for an international career. Including LIS students in international networks, IFLA will not only help the LIS community "become younger" but also give the LIS future generation the chance to expand its professional future perspectives.

For further information please visit the IFLA Education & Training Section website.⁴ The "Adopt a Student!" brochure is published in official IFLA languages as there are: English, German, French, Spanish, Chinese, Arabic, as well as Italian and Turkish. Furthermore, we are currently expecting translations in Russian and Portuguese.

Authors

Petra Hauke PhD acts as Assistant lecturer at the Berlin School of Library and Information Science at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany. She has served as editor and has authored numerous special library publications. She has taught on a wide range of library-related subjects at Humboldt-Universität, Berlin, and as a host of other universities. Her career spans more than 30 years of expertise in both public and special libraries. Petra Hauke is active member of the IFLA SET Standing Committee since 2005. There she serves, amongst others, as the coordinator of both the "IFLA LIS Student Paper Award" program and the "Adopt a Student!" program. Her goal is to encourage LIS students to join IFLA conferences and to take part in international activities and networking. Therefore, she has accompanied LIS students from her class "Turning an idea into a book" to present their successful book projects at IFLA conferences since 2005 as well as at the Europe-based BOBCATSSS conferences since 2006. For further information please visit <http://www.ibi.hu-berlin.de/institut/personen/hauke>.

⁴ <http://www.ifla.org/en/set/adopt-a-student>.

Shaked Spier is a postgraduate student of Library and Information Science at the Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany. Prior to his studies, Shaked gained experience as Knowledge Manager at the Israeli Air Force. Currently, Shaked is a member of the IFLA Knowledge-Management Section and FAIFE. Fields of interest: Knowledge Management, Information Ethics, and Philosophy of Information. Participant in the IFLA “Adopt a Student!” program since 2009. For further information please visit <http://drawer20.wordpress.com> and <http://de.linkedin.com/in/sshaked>.