

NAVIGATOR: COLORADO LIBRARIES AND THE WORLD

Issue 8

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**INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY AND CULTURAL EXCHANGE
INTEREST GROUP / COLORADO ASSOCIATION OF LIBRARIES**

Colorado Librarians Touch the World



A conference on international librarianship in Colorado? Don't libraries just serve their local populations? Yes, Colorado has an international airport with flights to places like Frankfurt, Mexico City, and Toronto, but are Colorado libraries and for that matter Colorado librarians international? Two enterprising Colorado librarians put out a call to other Colorado librarians to find out and the result was the receipt of a grant from the International Library Cultural Exchange Interest Group of the Colorado Association of Libraries and a conference, "Colorado Librarians Touch the World: An International Librarianship Colloquium," held at the Auraria Library on the Auraria campus on Friday, July 13.

Rita Puig, reference and instruction librarian at Regis University, and Jimena Breton, Assistant Professor and Social Science Librarian at Colorado State University Library, attended the REFORMA conference in San Diego in 2015, a joint conference with Seguimos Creando Enlaces, a yearly conference that brings together librarians from the United States and Mexico to exchange ideas and to build ties. During the conference they had the privilege to meet Asunción Mendoza, dean of the library at La Salle University in Mexico City, and who at the time was president of AMBAC (Asociación Mexicana de Bibliotecarios, A. C.), the equivalent of the American Library Association in Mexico. Since that conference, Rita and Jimena have traveled to Mexico a total of three times to present and share their work. As this relationship strengthened, Rita and Jimena looked for ways to bring their Mexican colleagues to the US to further exchange ideas across international borders.



On the Regis University campus

Last year, the duo applied for a grant from the International Library Cultural Exchange to fund a conference that would not only enable their colleagues to present but also for them to hear presentations from Colorado librarians with international interests and experiences. Through word of mouth and notices on listservs, they called out to fellow librarians seeking presenters and were pleased with the response, the resulting speakers represent different continents, types of libraries, and literacy projects.

Three librarians, Rosa María Mata Peña, Juana Rodríguez Sepulveda, and Asunción Mendoza Becerra, from La Salle University in Mexico City

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Save the dates:

- Colorado Association of Libraries (CALCON) Loveland, CO September 13-15, 2018
- ALA Midwinter, Seattle, WA January 25-29, 2019
- ACRL, Cleveland, April 10-13, 2019
- AfLIA, Nairobi, Kenya May 19-24, 2019
- ALA Annual, Washington, DC June 20-25, 2019
- IFLA, Athens, Greece August 24-30, 2019

Colorado Librarians Touch the World

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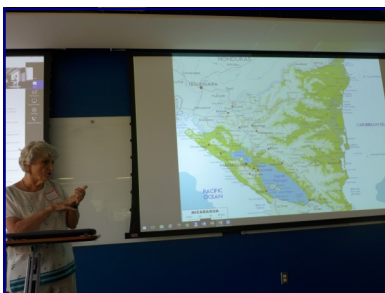
had an opportunity to travel to Colorado and tour several libraries and meet with the library staffs at Regis University, Denver Public Library, Auraria, and Colorado State University. They soon discovered that they had friends and colleagues in common and much to learn and share across the border. They spent two days in exploration and relationship building with possibilities of future presentations and collaboration. They joined their fellow presenters the day of the conference:



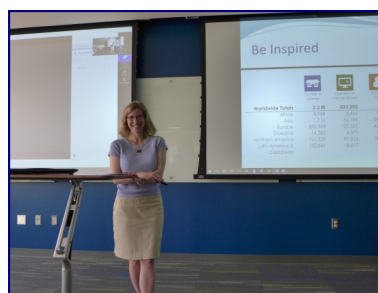
The organizers: Rita Puig, Research and Instruction Librarian, Regis University and Jimena Breton, Assistant Professor and Social Science Librarian, Colorado State University.



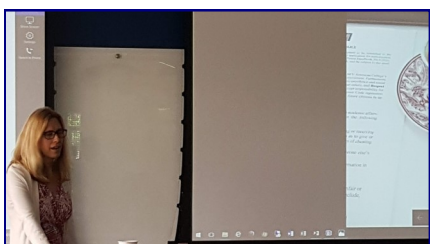
Victor Zúñiga, Systems Administrator, Poudre River Public Library District



Jane Mirandette, San Juan del Sur Biblioteca, Nicaragua



Beth Crist, Youth and Family Services Consultant, Colorado State Library



Michelle Marx



Marta Prado, Bilingual Librarian, Elizabeth Middle School



Nancy Bolt, Nancy Bolt and Associates



Janet Lee, Dean of the Library, Regis University

African Storybook: an ILCE-IG Grant Initiative



The second ILCE-IG grant was awarded to Janet Lee, Dean of the Library at Regis University, in support of the African Storybook project, an international initiative that publishes open access children's books in local African languages. The purpose of the grant was to conduct workshops in Ethiopia where Janet would be a Fulbright Scholar, publish at least one title, and distribute copies in either print or electronic format.

Janet was named a Fulbright Scholar for 2017-18 and assigned to the University of Aksum, in Axum, Ethiopia. Her areas of interest were in open access publishing since she is serving in editorial roles for two open access journals: *Collaborative Librarianship* and *Jesuit Higher Education*. Interest in the African Storybook project was a natural extension of her interest in open access publishing and in her previous interest in children's book publishing in local languages. Janet has conducted a number of workshops in Ethiopia on children's book publishing with author and storyteller, Anne Pellowski. Ethiopia was Janet's country of service as a Peace Corps Volunteer.

Janet heard about the African Storybook project on Facebook (<http://africanstorybook.org>). She became intrigued with the concept of original stories published for children in local African languages, for which it was permissible to translate to other languages, download, read online, save to file, or to print. Through Facebook, she was virtually introduced to Mezemir Girma, an English instructor at Debre Birhan University, in Debre Birhan, and also a bookstore/private library owner who conducts publishing workshops on the side. He is the leading expert on ASb in Ethiopia and has administrative privileges to approve content for upload to the site.

Upon her arrival in Ethiopia for the Fulbright award, she contacted Mezemir and set up a date, the first weekend in November, where they agreed to conduct the first workshop in Debre Birhan at his bookstore/library. Debre Birhan is in the Amhara region, about 120 km northeast of Addis Ababa. At 2,840 meters (9,317.58 ft.), it is nearly twice the elevation of Denver, and a tendency to be chilly.



Mezemir and Janet conducted an all-day workshop in November on early childhood literacy, incorporating children's book publishing through first language materials, in this case Amharic, Afan Oromo, and Tigrigna. The venue was the Ras Abebe Aregay Library, Debre Birhan. It was sponsored by the Ras Abebe Aregay Library and funded by the International Library Cultural Exchange Interest Group, Colorado Association of Libraries. The goal of the workshop was to promote early childhood literacy and to brainstorm on ideas for a future published book for ASb. At the end of the workshop participants had a considerable acquaintance with the ASb, reading aloud and children's literacy.

As part of the workshop, Janet described different types of books: board books, wordless books, cloth books, different types of illustrations, titles in Amharic and Tigrigna, and books for early readers. She also gave a demonstration on reading aloud for story times and several participants read selected books to the group.

They also discussed the importance of early bi-lingual reading as well as the importance for children to hear language spoken and read early and repeatedly during their developmental stages.

Mezemir demonstrated both the users' and administrator's side of the ASb website. He also distributed printed copies of some of the ASb titles. At the end of the conference, he gave each participant a flash drive with the Amharic titles. The flash drives were funded by the ILCE-IG grant.



Participants took time out to brainstorm on a potential story to come out of the workshop. In walking through Debre Birhan, Janet was informed that there were one or two female Bajaj drivers and she proposed that the story be about a female driver. A Bajaj is a three-wheeled vehicle that is the main form of transportation in all towns outside of the capital of Addis Ababa. Fares for a short ride on a predetermined route typically cost about two Ethiopian Birr or about eight cents US. The participants brainstormed on a possible book. Several stories were suggested and one was selected.

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African Storybook: an ILCE-IG Grant Initiative

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Final comments from the participants included increased training, incorporating stories from the countryside onto the ASb website, increased numbers of titles in local languages, creating an association of librarians and others interested in children's literacy, distributing the ASb books in print since many rural schools are without electricity, and consider fundraising ideas to recover costs of printing.

Launch of the Global Digital Library (<https://digitallibrary.io/>)

In April 2018, Janet was invited to the launch of the Global Digital Library in Addis Ababa. The GDL is part of the Global Book Alliance and is incorporating most of the titles from African Storybook. Mezemir was in attendance as was Dorcas Wepukhulu, African Storybook in Kenya, who had presented in Debre Birhan and in Adwa previously. The event was co-organized by USAID, UNESCO, and the Norwegian Agency for Development (Norad). GDL's goal is to make storybooks and other reading materials available in more than 100 languages by 2020. All resources are freely available in digital format (online or downloadable to a device) and in print-ready format. The site contains Ethiopian government-approved reading resources in seven Ethiopian languages (Amharic, Tigrigna, Afaan Oromo, Af-Somaali, Sidama Afoo, Wolayttatto, and Hadiyyisa), three of which are included in ASb.

The formal part of the program included workshops on the GDL, introducing supplementary reading materials, teacher training, and translating existing resources into other languages for personal use (not to be uploaded back into the platform without appropriate vetting). Although the product was greeted with great enthusiasm, there was broad discussion about the difficulties that would be encountered in rural areas due to erratic electricity and internet instability and the lack of printing capabilities and ensuing expense.

Mezemir, Dorcas, and Janet made plans for two follow-up workshops, one in Adama, a Sister City to Aurora Colorado, and a repeat workshop in relatively nearby Debre Birhan. Janet had visited Adama in previous years and had met with Jeglalo Guye, the Executive Director of Adama Sister Cities, both in Aurora, CO and Adama.

Follow up to the November Debre Birhan Workshop

The team gave a day-long presentation at Adama Science and Technology University in Adama on children's book publishing and on the African Storybook project. It was an enthusiastic audience and participants gathered together to write stories that could possibly be turned into books for ASb. Dorcas felt that there were several potential stories to come out of the workshop. Jeglalo was the consummate host and coordinated the events with the city libraries and the university library at Adama Science and Technology University. Janet was quite touched when she entered the meeting space to be greeted by a Colorado flag. Jeglalo made a special trip to the American Embassy to purchase it.



Mezemir, Dorcas, and Janet conducted a follow up workshop in Debre Birhan, where Mezemir has a joint bookstore/library. Out of the two workshops there are approximately ten potential books to add to the African Storybook platform in several Ethiopian languages.

Finding an illustrator for the first book proved to be a little more difficult than expected, but Mezemir was able to engage an illustrator who produced a number of drawings. An example of the illustrations follows. Producing a finished book was part of the proposal to the International Library Cultural Exchange Interest Group grant. Since, her completion of the Fulbright Scholar service in Axum, African Storybook has published "Abebech, the Female Bajaj Driver" in three languages: English, Amharic, and Kiswahili. A translation into Tigrigna is in the works. The story can be found here at: <https://www.africanstorybook.org/reader.php?id=23862&d=0&a=0>



All Politics is Local: An Update on the San Juan del Sur Biblioteca in Nicaragua

Jane Mirandette, Founder of the San Juan del Sur Biblioteca has provided an update on the situation in Nicaragua.



It is very calm and peaceful and very empty in San Juan, everyone in our library community throughout Nicaragua is safe, but very anxious for the future and concerned economically.

Since April 18, Nicaragua has been in turmoil. A new harsher Social Security plan started the objections which quickly became much more about the oppression and years of misuse of power by Daniel Ortega when 30 peacefully protesting students were killed on that first weekend. The new Social Security plan was quickly dropped but the unrest grew to include most of the country with calls for the president and his wife to step down. The Army has come forward to say they will not participate or repress protesters.

That leaves the "Sandinista Youth" who are the one's seen with sawed off mortars and hand-made fire bombs. They are aligned with Ortega. The protestors are armed with blue and white flags and determination to take back their country.

It has been hard to know what to write and how to describe what has been happening. Initially because the news and the reporters and TV stations coverage was repressed, cameras confiscated and fake news being reported. So much social media attention and viral you tube footage has made keeping the truth oppressed impossible now. There have been periods of calm, and times of talks between the Ortega Government and protesters facilitated by the Catholic Church. There are peaceful road blocks all along the Pan American highway in various cities to demonstrate it cannot continue to be business as usual. There has been destruction by the Sandinista youth, mostly in Managua and Granada with stores and market places looted or burned.

On May 30th, Mother's Day in Nicaragua, a massive march led by the mothers of young people killed during the violence on April 18 took to the streets of Managua and were violently attacked resulting in at least 18 deaths and 79 wounded when para-military forces aligned with Ortega opened fire.

The threat to the library, the HJH foundation and most of San Juan del Sur face is severe and economic. The American Embassy required all resident families to leave the country and requested that non-essential staff leave as well on April 22nd. No one has been cleared to return. The State Department has issued a level three warning "Reconsider Travel" to Nicaragua.

Except for the lack of people on the streets in Sunny San Juan without all the social media information and Facebook one would think it was business as usual. Tours and groups and the usual summer season of service work have come to a complete halt. Hotels and restaurants are closed and have laid off many workers as we are in our sixth week of this turmoil, country wide.

Schools have been open in most cities and towns. The mobile library is being allowed to function everywhere. The library remains open and is functioning as a resource center. The Rotary school water and sanitation projects are still functioning but no celebrations or group meetings are allowed in schools for fear of crowds. We believe it is vital to keep the library open and be able to provide the mobile services, especially now during the instability and unrest facing Nicaragua. Without additional funds this will not be possible. The funds needed now are for basics: salaries, rent, electricity and vehicle fuel etc...

No international travel is happening and we are not able to host, plan or promote service group travel into the foreseeable future. The HJH foundation's areas of sustainability besides donations are nonexistent. Donations are really important right now and have always been our major means of support. Please help. If you generally donate to the Program please do so now. If you haven't thought to do so yet, this would be the moment! We are trying to bring a Matching grant into play now but so far have not found a matching donor. Please contribute as though it were a matching grant. We are hopeful this will be the case.

ILCE-IG Activities at CALCON 2018

Join ILCE-IG to celebrate international librarianship at the CALCON conference at the Embassy Suites in Loveland, Colorado on September 13-15.

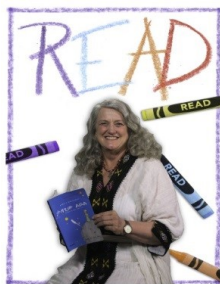
Library Stories from Three Continents: Africa, South America, and Europe

The International Libraries and Cultural Exchange Interest Group is sponsoring a program at CALCON 2018. The session will be held on Thursday, September 13 from 3:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Globetrotting librarians will share their experience with libraries in Africa, South America, and Europe (and may be more.)

Janet Lee spent a year as a Fulbright Scholar in Axum, Ethiopia working with librarians and library users. Janet will speak on *Is a Fulbright in your future? Ethiopia, Land of Origins*.

Jane Mirandette, Founder and Director of the San Juan del Sur Biblioteca, will give an update on the political situation in Nicaragua and how the unrest is affecting operations of the library, fundraising activities, and travel both to and within Nicaragua.



Janet Lee



Jane Mirandette

ILCE-IG Hosts International Reception at CALCON

The CAL International Library and Cultural Exchange (ILCE) Interest Group will again host an International Reception at CAL. This year the reception will be on Thursday, September, from 6:30 pm – 8 pm. Stop by Nancy Bolt's suite in the Embassy Suites for soft drinks, an adult beverage, and an appetizer before you go on to dinner. Stop by Nancy's booth at CAL for an invitation with the room number on it.

Buy International Jewelry to Benefit ILCE-IG

Nancy Bolt will again sell international jewelry and crafts to benefit international librarianship. Your purchase will support a grant for a cooperative project.



Axumite Heritage Foundation Recipient of First IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant



The Chromebook Lab project at the Axumite Heritage Foundation Library in Ethiopia is the first recipient of the American Library Association's International Relations Roundtable (IRRT) Mission Enhancement Grant.

The Axumite Heritage Foundation received a \$1,000 IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant to support a new Chromebook lab in the Foundation Library in Axum. In October 2017, 30 Chromebooks and a portable plug-and-play Rachel server loaded with the entire Ethiopian secondary school curriculum, as well as plasma videos to accompany the curriculum, were sent to the Foundation Library. The goal is for content to be available on the Chromebooks regardless of Internet access. A full list can be found at <http://rachelfriends.org/previews/rachelplus-en/>. Funds from the IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant will support UPS (uninterrupted power supply), supplies, local meetings, and translation services during the coming year.

The Axumite Heritage Foundation is a subsidiary of the Ethiopian Community Development Council (<http://www.eccdcus.org/>). The Council established the Foundation in 1993 in order to restore the 'Inda Nebri'id, the former Governor's Palace in Axum, and turn it into a cultural center to promote the unique heritage of Axum. The 'Inda Nebri'id opened its doors as a public library in 2002.

IRRT member Janet Lee, dean of libraries, Regis University in Denver applied for the grant on behalf of the project. Janet served as a Fulbright Scholar in Ethiopia for the academic year 2017-18. She split time between the library at University of Aksum and the Axumite Heritage Foundation Library.

In 2016, the International Relations Round Table members and supporters established the IRRT Endowment. Interest from the Endowment is used to fund member-initiated proposals for international activities and initiatives which contribute to ALA's role in international librarianship. Goals for the funding are to provide support for international projects or partnerships; promote a global dialogue about librarianship; increase visibility of international opportunities for U.S. and international librarians, and encourage international collaboration in librarianship. The IRRT Executive Board approved the establishment of the IRRT Mission Enhancement Grant as a mechanism for distribution of endowment funding in 2017. Information about the grant may be found at <http://www.ala.org/rt/irrt-mission-enhancement-grant>.

For more information on the Chromebook Lab see Focus on a Project on pg. 8

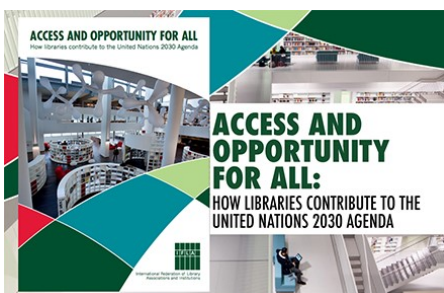
Nancy Bolt on UN/IFLA Committee

Nancy Bolt, ILCE-IG, is playing a significant role in championing the rights of those with special needs worldwide. As Secretary of the IFLA Section on Library Services to People with Special Needs, Nancy was called upon to represent IFLA on the United Nations MEDD (Monitoring and Evaluation for Disability-inclusive Development). The group's purpose was to prepare a "Flagship Report" on how the needs of people with disabilities are addressed in the implementation of the 2015 United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

In the fall of 2017, IFLA conducted a survey of all types of libraries. The survey resulted with 470 complete responses from 92 companies. The results were analyzed and contributed to the United Nations report.

Libraries can play a significant role in helping people with disabilities get access to information through technology, and valuable supporting services.

For a full reading of the UN/IFLA project, please read Nancy's article in the latest issue of International Leads, <http://www.ala.org/rt/sites/ala.org/rt/files/content/intlleads/leadsarchive/201806.pdf>



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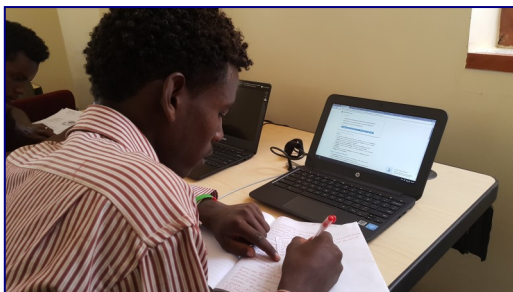
Who We Are

The International Library and Cultural Exchange Interest Group (ILCE-IG) grew out of the American-Bulgarian Library Exchange Project (1996-2011), which sought to create connections and cooperation between American and Bulgarian libraries. The ILCE-IG has extended its scope to encourage projects that foster relationships between Colorado Libraries and those of other countries, to help build and maintain libraries in communities overseas, and to celebrate non-dominant cultures across Colorado.

We're on the web:
ilceig.wordpress.com/

Focus on a Project: Chromebook Lab, Axum, Ethiopia

The Chromebook Lab at the Axumite Heritage Foundation Library continues to be heavily used. Users can access a variety of resources including textbooks, databases, and the Ethiopian curriculum. The lab was funded by Returned Peace Corps Volunteers/Ethiopia, Janet Lee and Bill Graff, founder of ETLeads. It also received the first American Library Association, International Relations Round Table Mission Enhancement Grant. The Chromebook lab opened in May. There were 1,228 visits in May, 1,201 visits in June, and 1,042 visits in July. In addition to the Chromebooks, the library has a large collection of books in English, a new encyclopedia, test preparation books and large tables and study spaces for quiet study.



A student using an open access textbook on a Chromebook



Janet Lee and Ashenafi Kebede from ETLeads in the Chromebook Lab