



IFLA Building Strong Library Associations mini-congress February 20-24 2012

Report

Representatives from BSLA country projects, core trainers, IFLA's partners, colleagues from German library associations, and members of the IFLA Management of Library Associations section standing committee attended the BSLA mini-congress in Berlin, Germany on February 23-24.

The IFLA Management of Library Associations Section (MLAS) midterm meeting was held following the BSLA meeting from February 24-25.

The meetings provided an ideal opportunity not only for participating BSLA countries to learn from each other, but to network more broadly with other associations and identify opportunities for mentoring on specific topics.

The purpose of the BSLA mini-congress was to:

- **Network** between BSLA countries, including IFLA projects, and the three Global Libraries Countries
- **Review** the BSLA programme, and results
- **Share** strategies and learning between countries, and trainers
- **Develop** strategies to sustain the projects beyond 2012 - including continuing advocacy, training, and monitoring
- **Observe** the work of the IFLA MLAS section, and to network with associations beyond the BSLA group

The meeting was hosted by the ZLB Berlin library, with logistical support from the German Library Association.

IFLA would also like to thank Bibliothek & Information International for providing substantial financial support.

Summary

The meeting met its objectives, providing several opportunities for associations to work on self-defined challenges, and to share success stories since the start of the BSLA programme. Although some participants had the opportunity to meet before on various occasions, this was the first time all BSLA countries and key team members had been together at one time.

A number of cross-association discussions about sustaining the programme, impact evaluation and continued involvement of the trainers were begun at the

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meeting, and will be continued at the IFLA conference in Helsinki and other forums.

Recommendations

1. That the mini-congress format be considered a potential model for future cross-country development activities
2. That the outcomes of the meeting be followed up during the final BSLA review meetings in-country between April and June 2012
3. That participants be encouraged to present papers and posters based on their association presentations at future conferences including IFLA
4. That discussions with current core trainers, and potential trainers from the BSLA countries be followed up to identify future projects, new country projects and activities to keep them engaged with the programme

Mini-congress role within the BSLA country projects

Seven associations with country projects took part in the BSLA mini-congress. Six of these, Botswana, Cameroon, Lebanon, Lithuania, Peru and Ukraine, were projects that commenced in 2010 and though all have followed an individualized programme they are roughly at the same stage within the programme. All six of these projects will have their final workshops and meetings as part of the BSLA programme between April and June 2012. Nepal, whose country project began in 2011, also joined the meeting to learn from the countries one year ahead in the process.

The meeting was timed after each country had held several workshops, meetings and other activities, but before the final review meetings. The mini-congress therefore provided an opportunity for reflection on the BSLA programme as a whole and each country project. Participants were asked to consider:

- What has been successful?
- Where has this programme made a difference to your association, and your library communities?
- How can we learn from each other, from each country involved in this programme?
- What could be improved?
- How will we keep going after 2012?

'3+3' and cross-country observations

The 2010 group of country projects now form a cohort. Three countries taking part in the programme were selected through an application process organized by IFLA's regional sections, Cameroon, Lebanon and Peru. Another three countries, Lithuania, Lebanon and Ukraine, were selected by applications from the Global Libraries Initiative. These two groups are grouped as '3+3' for impact purposes. Impact evaluation in the BSLA programme aims to measure impact at three levels:

1. Country project level

2. 3+3
3. Programme level

The inclusion of 3+3 is informal, and considers:

- What impact would other situations in a country have on a library association? For example, does investment in the library sector impact the association?
- Can we compare any data across countries?
- Are there things we have learned in one country that can be applied somewhere else?
- What challenges are the same for all associations, and what challenges are different?

The meeting in Berlin was designed to begin answering these questions, with further information to be produced together with the final impact reports later in 2012.

Association presentations and outcomes

Each association reported on their achievements to date since joining the BSLA programme. These included increases in membership, success in obtaining government grants, reading campaigns, and advocacy for IFLA's work on Limitations and Exceptions for Copyright.

Some highlights:

In **Botswana**, the association has recorded a 100% increase in membership and largest attendance ever at their last national conference. They have received government grants, and are working more closely with the Minister for Education to support school libraries.

Lithuania Librarians' Association carried out a letter writing and literacy campaign in collaboration with the President, which has resulted in the purchase of 17,000 new books for libraries and a relationship with the association as a trusted partner.

Ukraine Library Association reported on improved, regular communication with members and new services, as well as a 30% increase in membership.

ABADCAM (**Cameroon**) shared how learning from their first workshop in 2011 gave a librarian in Buea the skills to present a plan to save a school library from closure. The association successfully advocated to the Ministry for Culture for 50 new librarians to be trained.

Lebanon has worked to identify contacts and focused on building relationships in government after reorganizing the structure of the association.

Peru has organised rallies to campaign for public library funding, participated in meetings with the national copyright office to advocate for Limitations and Exceptions, and strengthened networks in regional areas beyond Lima.

Cross-country networking

The programme offered a number of opportunities for cross-country networking. Each association was asked to identify one challenge they wanted to work on during the meeting. These challenges were discussed during a Hosted Tables session and provided many practical ideas and perspectives on challenges including:

- How associations can best represent the whole library community
- Engaging the international library community (developing regional collaborations and networks)
- How to sustain the momentum of BSLA
- Retaining members, financial sustainability
- Increasing visibility of libraries to stakeholders for successful advocacy

Strategies to carry out impact evaluation were covered in sessions led by David Streatfield and Sharon Markless, giving countries an opportunity to discuss different approaches to surveys and focus groups, important data to collect, and customizing the impact framework to suit local needs. This session will be followed up through the in-country review meetings from April-June 2012. IFLA will be working with each association to plan their final reports and follow up evidence collection to measure the difference the project has made so far, and make plans to keep collecting impact in the future.

Connecting associations and advocacy to policy-makers

The second day of the mini-congress had a more outward focus, and had the following objectives:

- Connect impact evidence to policy makers: how can library associations make a difference
- Experiences from other library associations – MLAS panel talks
- Initiatives to connect libraries to policy makers: Beyond Access
- Strategies to sustain the BSLA programme in every association

Strategies to link library associations and libraries to development outcomes were the focus of a session on the Beyond Access campaign, of which IFLA is a partner. Meaghan O'Connor of IREX highlighted the contributions libraries already make in education, civic participation, agriculture and other development outcomes, and opportunities for further partnership.

Five members of the IFLA Management of Library Associations section gave short lightning talks during the BSLA meeting, highlighting major campaigns, success stories and strategies library associations in the US, UK, Slovak Republic, Germany and internationally are taking to put libraries on the agenda.

Networking with IFLA Management of Library Associations section

15 colleagues from the IFLA MLAS standing committee attended the second day of the BSLA mini-congress as observers and to network with BSLA colleagues.

IFLA MLAS invited BSLA participants to join their meeting on February 24-25. During the meeting, BSLA participants were invited to give input to MLAS's strategic planning process, submitting a number of ideas to strengthen the relationship between BSLA and MLAS.

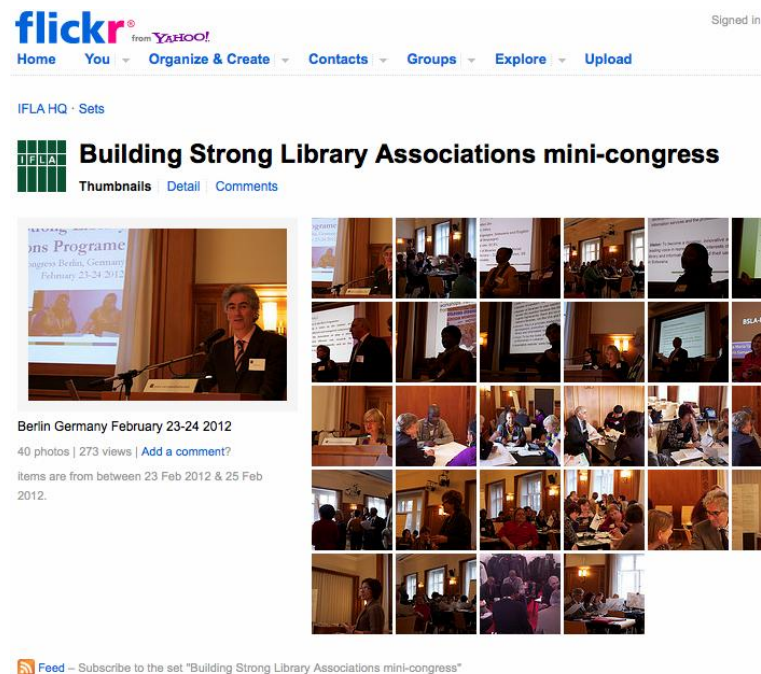
Next activities following the mini-congress

- Final workshops in each country
- Review meetings
- Impact evaluation and final reports
- Presentations at conferences including SCECSAL, IFLA

Commentary and Social Media

Photo set on Flickr:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/ifla/sets/72157629442136241/>



The screenshot shows the Flickr interface for a photo set. At the top, the Flickr logo is visible with the text 'from YAHOO!'. Navigation links include Home, You, Organize & Create, Contacts, Groups, Explore, and Upload. The set title is 'Building Strong Library Associations mini-congress' with sub-links for Thumbnails, Detail, and Comments. A large photo of a man speaking at a podium is featured on the left. To its right is a grid of smaller photos showing various scenes from the congress. Below the main photo, the text reads: 'Berlin Germany February 23-24 2012', '40 photos | 273 views | Add a comment?', and 'Items are from between 23 Feb 2012 & 25 Feb 2012.' At the bottom, there is a 'Feed' subscription link.

Photo set on Facebook (by Doris Samanez, Peru):

<https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.3307779729295.2154413.1112103657&type=1>



The screenshot shows a Facebook photo set. The top navigation bar includes the Facebook logo, a search bar, and icons for home, notifications, and messages. The set title is 'The New dbv-“Face“ for Political Communication and Advocacy'. Below the title is a grid of photos showing people at a meeting, a presentation slide, and a group photo. A large photo of a man speaking at a podium is also visible. Below the photos, there is a text description in Spanish. The text reads: '→ Los pasados 23 y 24 de febrero se celebró en Berlín el Seminario que el Programa BSLA (Building Strong Libraries) IFLA con participación de representantes de Asociaciones Bibliotecarias de Perú, Camerún, Líbano, Botswana, Sri- Lanka, Nepal, Lituania y Ucrania, que han seguido el programa BSLA durante los dos últimos años. En la sesión de tarde se trataron temas relativos a: • La estrategia general de IFLA y sus 5 iniciativas para el periodo 2011-12 • El proyecto de IFLA/OMPI sobre Límites y Excepciones a la Ley de Propiedad Intelectual. • El proyecto de recogida de Estadísticas para IFLA World Report • Información de los grupos de interés de Nuevos profesionales, que organizará un Campamento para Nuevos Profesionales <http://www.ifla.org/en/taxonomy/term/924> y del Grupo de Mujeres, que va a organizar una Conferencia Satélite en Tampere (Finlandia), en ambos casos coincidiendo con la Conferencia IFLA 2012 <http://www.ifla.org/en/about-the-women-information-and-libraries-special-interest-group>

News:

IFLA: Library Associations share successes and experiences at first IFLA Building Strong Library Associations mini-congress in Berlin

<http://www.ifla.org/en/news/library-associations-share-successes-and-experiences-at-first-ifla-building-strong-library-asso>

IFLA New Professionals Special Interest Group: “How to involve the new blood” 11 March 2012 <http://npsig.wordpress.com/2012/03/11/how-to-involve-the-new-blood/>

Twitter:

Comments and links using the hashtag #bsla from: @bibliomist @darrenhoerner @fiona_bradley @ifla_alp @npsig @megoc

Selected tweets:



Valentyna Pashkova makes a great point - this is comparative librarianship in action! #bsla



Appendix 1: Participant list

BSLA Country Team Representatives	
Name	Country
Jerôme Ndjock	Cameroon
Gaorere Kgotla	Botswana
Fawz Abdullah	Lebanon
Alina Jaskuniene	Lithuania
Yaroslava Soshynska	Ukraine
Alim Garga	Cameroon
Kgomotso Radijeng	Botswana
Doris Ivon Samanez Alzamora	Peru
Randa Al-Chidiac	Lebanon
Airida Samaviciene	Lithuania
Yaroslava Tytarenko	Ukraine
Bashu Dev Dhungana	Nepal
BSLA Trainers	
Name	Country
Jacinta Were	Kenya
Ana Maria Talavera	Peru
Premila Gamage	Sri Lanka
Valentyna Pashkova	Ukraine
Winnie Vitzansky	Denmark
Claudia Lux	Germany
Gillian Hallam	Australia
Michael Robinson	Hong Kong
Presenters, Panelists and Participants	
Meaghan O'Connor (IREX)	USA
Leif Martensson (Sweden Library Association)	Sweden
Fiona Bradley (ALP Coordinator)	UK
Wiebke Dalhoff (Policy Officer)	Netherlands
David Streatfield	UK
Sharon Markless	UK
Barbara Schleihagen	Germany
Darren Hoerner (Gates Foundation)	USA
Gerald Leitner	Austria
Maria Cotera	UK
Sebastian Wilke	Germany
Silvia Stasselova	Slovakia
Michael Downing	USA
Barbara Lisson	Germany