

## Explosive Librarians: IFLA's role in inspiring new professionals

At IFLA's Congress in Durban, over 350 people listened to a panel of international speakers discussing 'Developing Library Professionals'. They were in for a treat, as one of the panelists challenged attendees to blow up the reference desk in order to rethink the ways in which libraries work. Explosive, active, dynamic; there is no other way new librarians can deal with the profession's issues.

The NPDG was established in August of 2004 at IFLA World Library and Information Congress in Buenos Aires, Argentina. The group seeks to broaden the involvement of recently qualified professionals in IFLA with more than 400 people from around the globe having joined the NPDG list-serve. Within IFLA, the NPDG is hosted by the Management of Library Associations Section (MLA). The current NPDG convenors are Loida Garcia-Febo (US/PR), Joanna Ball (UK), and Andrew Cranfield (DK/UK). Stuart Hamilton, one of the original cofounders, works at IFLA HQ.

The group has presented successful sessions at IFLA Congresses in Buenos Aires, Oslo, Seoul, and Durban. At Buenos Aires the program centered on a brain-storming session with participants, identifying areas for the NPDG to concentrate on in coming years. Issues raised included; building global information networks between new professionals, helping new professionals get the best out of the IFLA conference, exploring the possibility of job exchange and mentoring schemes, and issues of recruitment and work experience for newcomers to the profession. This input, along with recommendations from the MLAs, formed the foundation of initiatives for the DG.

Oslo's program titled 'New professionals, new experiences, new ways of working' attracted over 90 people who listened an encouraging opening address by IFLA President, Alex Byrne entitled 'The museum of dental practices: engaging with professional change'. Other industry professionals such as Michael Dowling, Director of the International Relations Office of the ALA and Julie Robinson, Director of LIBEX, International Library and Information Job Exchange of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals from UK talked of job exchanges projects underway and available. Dr. Marian Koren, Research and International Affairs, Netherlands Public Library Association, and member of IFLA Professional Committee spoke on becoming involved in the work of IFLA, and IFLA's three pillars structure, while Dr I.M.N.Kigongo-Bukenya, Director of Easlis Makerere University in Uganda, discussed LIS certification in an international context. A social event at IFLA's Literary Club followed, allowing NPDGers to network with librarians from across the globe.

NPDG's program in Seoul focused on 'Dynamic roles for new librarians', featuring Leonard Kniffel, Editor in Chief of American Libraries, ALA magazine, who shared tips and guidelines on how to publish. Jana Varlejs, Chair of Continuing Professional Development and Work Place Learning Section of IFLA chaired an exhaustive discussion looking at issues from an international perspective sparked by responses to a questionnaire.



*Seated from left to right, Joanna Ball, Loida Garcia-Febo, Andrew Cranfield. Standing from left to right, the speakers: Ujala Satgoor, Tracie Hall, Veronda Pitchford during the Durban program*

Durban's program was a huge success with over 350 people listening to a panel of international speakers discussing 'Developing library professionals'. Tracie Hall, Assistant Dean of the Dominican University discussed Diversity and the ways of actively working with senior library decision-makers to promote a more diverse work environment. Ujala Satgoor, Director of a library at the University of Pretoria spoke on becoming a leader in our field and how to develop skills, while Andrew Cranfield, Director of EBLISA, spoke on ways for new professionals to better understand the role of administrators. Veronda Pitchford, Outreach director for the Urban Libraries Council (US) shared ways of developing library skills through job exchanges.

Library associations worldwide host new librarians' groups in an effort to address the needs of those new to the profession. Australia has the strongest group. By creating a New Generation Policy and Advisory Group to work with ALIA's Executive Board, they have developed a winning formula that we wish to see in every library association around the globe. IFLA 2010 will take place in Brisbane and the NPDG cannot wait to share valuable face-to-face time with our colleagues from Down Under. An insightful program about new professionals in conjunction with ALIA is being considered.

The NPDG is currently planning its program for the IFLA conference in Quebec and possible collaborations with other IFLA units for upcoming conferences. The NPDG needs hands, more co-convenors to continue to shape and lead the group. Anyone interested can email Joanna Ball at [jeb30@cam.ac.uk](mailto:jeb30@cam.ac.uk)

For more information on the NPDG, visit <http://www.ifla.org/VII/dg/npdg/index.htm>

To join the NPDG-L, please, visit <http://infoserv.inist.fr/wwwsympa.fcgi/info/npdg-l>

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...gives a voice to the new generation of library and information professionals. If you have any suggestions or topics for this column, please contact the column co-ordinators, Kate Davis, [davis.kate@gmail.com](mailto:davis.kate@gmail.com), or Naomi Doessel, [naomi.doessel@au.ey.com](mailto:naomi.doessel@au.ey.com)