



*When librarians and their communities can navigate cultural differences effectively, and establish meaningful cross-cultural relationships, they become better equipped to live and contribute to the global society.*

## Go Glocal

**Lesley S. J. Farmer** | [Lesley.Farmer@csulb.edu](mailto:Lesley.Farmer@csulb.edu)

I heard a new term the other day: *glocal*. It relates to the interconnection of global and local issues. This *Knowledge Quest* issue explores global aspects and local implications of school librarianship.

A recent example of glocalization was the 2017 International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) conference held on my campus: California State University, Long Beach. The theme was “Learning without Borders,” which was certainly the case as two hundred school librarians, library educators, and library vendors from around the world participated in a myriad of research and professional-practice presentations. Some of the campus volunteers had never been outside the United States, and they were overwhelmed with the international representation from twenty-eight countries; it was a once-in-a-lifetime event for the volunteers.

The universal professional values that school librarians share helps them gain global competence through their interaction with peers from different countries and cultures—thus this issue of *Knowledge Quest*.

Such conferences are one example of ways that school librarians grow in the profession. In this *Knowledge Quest* issue Jennifer Branch-Mueller writes about her investigation of work habits of school librarian educators on six continents. She found that there were no real differences in terms of faculty research productivity by country; the most important factor was if the institution was research-intensive.

But how often do school librarians share those global values and local practices with one another? And why does this sharing matter? When librarians and their communities can navigate cultural differences effectively, and establish meaningful cross-cultural relationships, they become better equipped to live and contribute to the global society. In this issue, Michele A. L. Villagran discusses cultural intelligence, based on the Cultural Intelligence Center’s model of drive, knowledge, strategy, and action. Such competence not only improves cross-cultural adjustment but also improves personal well-being and increases productivity.

The AASL *National School Library Standards* explicitly address global communities in two of their shared foundations: Include and Engage. The school library is supposed to “represent all members and their places in a global learning community” (2018, 77), and school librarians must provide “opportunities for learners to adjust their awareness of the global learning community” (2018, 76). Furthermore, school librarians and school libraries should encourage participation in such global communities. The emphasis in this *Knowledge Quest* is on diverse viewpoints and contributions.

Former AASL President Nancy Everhart sets the stage by describing three major international associations pertaining to school librarians: the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL), the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), and the International Society for

Technology in Education (ISTE). She notes the benefits of becoming involved in an international organization; among them are gaining access to information and other resources, networking, and attending conferences in places such as Tokyo, Cape Town—and Long Beach.

Deeper involvement and significant impact are detailed by Dianne Oberg. She, as secretary of the IFLA School Libraries Section, and section chair Barbara Schultz-Jones (author noted below) spearheaded a two-year process involving a wide network of librarian contributors from around the world. The result was the 2015 revised edition of *IFLA School Library Guidelines*. These guidelines offer universal principles and reflect current research, practice, and conditions of 21st-century school librarianship.

Emphasizing another area of impact of these associations, Karen Gavigan summarizes recent research that has been conducted internationally, focusing on reports in IASL's journal, *School Libraries Worldwide*, and papers presented at international school library conferences. Some of these studies have specific cultural or national implications, but most of the studies have international implications that could be leveraged locally by school librarians. She also shows how gatherings of school librarians, such as at IFLA's annual congress, can lead to an efficient identification of current research needs, several of which are experienced across national and cultural borders, such as research focused on information literacy.

Of course, nothing beats extended face-to-face authentic experiences with school librarians in another country and culture. Barbara Schultz-Jones has led ten study abroad programs in which participants engage in service-learning projects for a host school library. Review of the program found that "the international aspect of the experience provided participants with a fresh look at how librarianship can be performed, and challenged their expectations regarding what they think libraries should do and how they should operate."

Other international school library projects exist around the world for school librarians. Substantial commitment is required of one special agency: the Peace Corps. Many returning Peace Corps volunteers want to continue their service to overseas libraries (as I did). Connie Champlin, who chairs the International Sustainable Library Development Interest Group within ALA, writes about representative Peace Corps library projects.

We can use the fulcrum of international school librarianship to leverage cultural intelligence and global competency. We can contact relevant school librarians around the world to better understand the library and information experiences of our students and their families who may have immigrated recently. We can call upon the resources of international library organizations, a wonderful example being IFLA's 2016 publication *The World through Picture Books*, to enrich our library collections so that our students can read about their own culture and appreciate other cultures. We can apply school library research that provides effective ways to engage all students in information and digital literacies so that they can appreciate different cultures and contribute to a global society. And we can get to know our school community on a personal level, just as we network with our school librarian peers, to share our values and work.

Go glocal.

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**Dr. Lesley Farmer** is professor of library media and coordinator of the Teacher Librarian Services Credential Program, Department of Advanced Studies in Education and Counseling, California State University, Long Beach. She also coordinates the California State University ICT (Information and Communication Technology) Literacy Project. Among her recent publications are *Managing the Successful School Library: Strategic Planning and Reflective Practice (ALA 2017)*; "Optimizing OERs for Optimal ICT Literacy in Higher Education" in *Handbook of Research on Mobile Technology, Constructivism, and Meaningful Learning (IGI Global 2017)*; and "Collective Intelligence in Online Education" in *Handbook of Research on Pedagogical Models for Next-Generation Teaching and Learning (IGI Global 2018)*. In 2017 she received the AASL Distinguished Service Award. Former chair of IFLA School Libraries Section, she still serves on the section's Standing Committee. Also an active member of IASL, she is chair of the School Library Education Special Interest Group and was the 2017 conference coordinator. She also serves on committees for the Association of College and Research Libraries and the Special Libraries Association.

### Work Cited:

American Association of School Librarians. 2018. *National School Library Standards for Learners, School Librarians, and School Libraries*. Chicago: ALA.