

CALL FOR PROPOSALS – ALA Annual (Virtual) 2021

The American Library Association's International Relations Round Table Papers and Projects Committee invites proposals for an On-Demand presentation at the 2021 American Library Association Annual Conference, scheduled to take place virtually from June 23-29, 2021.

The International Papers and Projects Session provides librarians with an opportunity to exchange information about library services, collections and projects throughout the world. The program also serves to stimulate the interest of U.S. librarians in international library matters. The 2021 International Papers and Projects theme is ***Strengthening Societies: Libraries as Critical Institutions in Helping Communities Manage Change***.

A pandemic is just one (albeit a very challenging one) scenario that can affect the fabric of society. Natural disasters, economic downturns, political instability, violence, etc., can all cause collective trauma. The aim of this session is to explore the role of libraries in keeping their communities strong and resilient, from disaster recovery, stepping up to address inequality, providing social and mental support, facilitating conversations and actions, whether it is social justice or bridging understanding, all the way to preparing for longer term changes in the way we deliver services and content.

COVID-19 has brought about unprecedented change globally, impacting the lives of millions of people, necessitating new ways of interacting, learning, working, as well as how we conduct economic exchanges. Some of the changes were revolutionary—cultural shifts, such as the pace of the digital migration, while others were mind-set changes—working from home as viable option, home-based-learning, and more. Such great changes in a compressed timeframe can create immense pressure on communities destabilizing them and resulting in collective trauma experienced by all members of the community as they navigate the impact of those changes. We are looking for speakers to share on international and US library projects and issues relating to how their library has played an active role in strengthening the communities they serve.

This session will showcase library projects and papers relating to how libraries serve as critical institutions in helping communities manage change, thus strengthening their societies. To ensure representation from around the world, only one presentation per country will be selected.

Possible topics related to this theme may include-but are not limited to:

- Libraries addressing the digital divide as more services are offered virtually, in particular education, where students may not be ready to learn/or have the tools to learn on a virtual platform
- Libraries as community support structure, from disaster recovery to initiatives that improve community resilience, mental wellness, and the ability to handle disruptions
- Access to libraries and critical services libraries support when the physical location is not accessible (whether closed or hampered by great distances)
- Libraries supporting social justice and/or addressing social/cultural fractures within the community

- Staff training and competencies required to address the above issues and/or administrative and financial strategies to manage sudden change in priorities

We encourage submissions that reflect the diverse way these goals can affect the public sector, the academic environment, special libraries, or other types of information organizations. International library schools may also share how they are preparing their students to meet such needs. International submissions will be given priority, but submissions from the US will be considered as well, especially if they may be of interest to the international community.

SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Proposals and presentations must be written and delivered in English, which is the working language of the program.

Proposals should include:

1. Title of the presentation
2. Abstract (500-800 words)

Note: As this is an on-demand session, your presentation with accompanying slides will be pre-recorded.

3. Presenter's name, title, institutional affiliation, and full contact information (including a valid e-mail address)

4. A short biographical profile of each presenter

Proposals should be submitted electronically (as a single Microsoft Word or PDF attachment) to the International Relations Office via email at intl@ala.org with copies to felicia.adrienne@gmail.com and miranezar@gmail.com .

Deadline for submitting proposals is March 31, 2021

SELECTION PROCESS

Up to five proposals will be selected to present at the ALA Virtual Meeting in June 2021. Notification of acceptance will be emailed by middle of April, 2021

PRESENTATION FORMAT

The International Papers and Projects Session lasts 1.00 hour in total. Presentations should run about 10 minutes each and presenters are encouraged to prepare an engaging presentation, incorporating visual prompts and pictures for the audience.

We would like to invite you to view previous presentation titles listed on [IRRT's International Papers and Projects Session Committee website](#).