

LIBRARIES AND HUMAN RIGHTS

CARING FOR THE WHOLE COMMUNITY

SPEAKERS, BIOGRAPHIES AND ABSTRACTS OF PRESENTATIONS





MARTYN WADE FROM THE UNITED KINGDOM

BIOGRAPHY

Martyn Wade was National Librarian and Chief Executive of the National Library of Scotland from 2002 – 2014, during which time the Library was transformed into a major cultural and heritage venue. Martyn has been a professional librarian for almost forty years, focusing on breaking down barriers to the use of library, information and archive services in order to widen the use of their collections. He is also interested in the value of historic library collections, as well as intellectual freedom and freedom of expression.

Martyn is Chair of the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals – the UK professional body for library and information workers. He is a Trustee of a number of library and cultural bodies and contributes to the work of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions where he is Chair of the Committee for Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression.

He is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, and became an Officer of the Order of the British Empire for services to Culture in Scotland in 2014.

ABSTRACT

Librarians, Libraries, and Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights

“Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.”

This is a core ethical concern of professional librarians, and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions’ FAIFE Committee supports and advises on its work in this area. This paper highlights FAIFE’s recent work on issues such as internet access and net neutrality and describes the development of the FAIFE network which will enable activists across the world promote and support the role of librarians and libraries in the right of freedom of access to information and freedom of expression.



BARBARA SCHACK FROM FRANCE

BIOGRAPHY

Barbara has been leading Libraries Without Borders' strategic development and international growth since 2012, driving the creation of overseas branches and the global coordination of LWB's Ideas Box: a comprehensive portable media centre, with an in-built power source, powerful, standardised, customisable and easy to use. The Ideas Box is a major innovation for improving access to information and culture for all, even in crisis situations. With previous experience in profit, non-profit and international organisations, Barbara strives to identify creative approaches to addressing educational challenges globally.

ABSTRACT

Following the devastating 2010 earthquake in Haiti, Libraries Without Borders (LWB) conducted an emergency program in Haiti to help local organisations distribute books and educational resources to internally displaced persons. At this time, several aid agencies in Europe and North America asked us: is what you're doing really a priority?

LWB's years of dedicated humanitarian assistance in Haiti, and now in countries affected by the Syrian crisis, have demonstrated that our action in crisis and post-crisis situations is crucial. Whether through books, computers, legal assistance or training, access to information and cultural resources empowers individuals and gives them the tools to reconstruct what has been lost.

On this basis, Libraries Without Borders has created the Ideas Box, a portable media centre, fully furnished, weather proof and ergonomic, with its own energy source. This provides tools for Learning, Playing, Connecting & Creating, with the overall objective of empowering communities to create their own solutions to the challenges they face.

LWB now implements emergency programs in East Africa, the Middle East, Colombia, Europe. And we have tested and confirmed that libraries are game changers for dignity, agency, empowerment, which are at the root of Human Rights.



BRITTA SCHMEDEMANN FROM GERMANY

BIOGRAPHY

Britta Schmedemann specialises in library services for adults at Bremen Public Library. She holds a degree in Library and Information Management from Hamburg University of Applied Sciences and has headed the largest branch of Bremen Public Library before assuming her current position. She is a member of the Commission on Intercultural Library Work at the German Library Association.

ABSTRACT

Bremen Public Library – culture on the move

The welcome culture in Germany - Library services for immigrants and refugees

Public libraries reflect the societies in which they exist: if society changes, its libraries are directly affected too. The growing number of migrants and refugees poses new challenges to society and places new demands on its libraries. Where do the people come from? What experiences of libraries do they already have? What can libraries contribute to the welcome culture and integration? Since September 2014 the city library of Bremen has worked together with all the temporary accommodation services in Bremen, as well as with residential services for unaccompanied children, classes which offer access to schools, as well as integration and German language courses. On the basis of this cooperation and experience, Britta Schmedemann brings with her various concepts arising from the welcome culture. This doesn't mean doing everything in a new or different way – often it's a question of looking at things from a different perspective and making adjustments. The existing competences and resources provide a good basis – both in big city libraries and in small community libraries!



HELENA TOPA VALENTIM FROM PORTUGAL

BIOGRAPHY

Helena Topa Valentim is a lecturer in the Linguistics Department at the Faculty of Social and Human Sciences of the New University of Lisbon, and researcher at the University Linguistics Centre (CLUNL). As a researcher her work focuses on the field of Semantics, participating in project work groups looking at grammar and text in language teaching.

ABSTRACT

Languages and books in the quest for human rights

It is accepted that the way language works reflects human rationality. The main issue lies in what kind of rationality is formed in relation to language and to which we are still in need of a definitive answer.

With this presentation, it is my aim to account for the way in-depth knowledge of linguistic symbolic cognitive ability can become a quest for human beings. This path can take us further into the discovery of some of the fundamentals of human rights.

To discuss how language works, we will have to highlight the prime language's manifestation: the language not only in its multiplicity and variety but also in the deformability of the forms and of the values that we have founded.

Finally, I intend to infer that the contact of children with written texts and books may, therefore, be an adventure that will enable an experience simultaneously cognitive and ethical, by allowing a journey into the kaleidoscopic of potentialities of the language activity.



PAZ FERNÁNDEZ FROM SPAIN

BIOGRAPHY

Paz Fernández has been Library Director at the Fundación Juan March (Madrid), a non-profit cultural organisation, since 2008. Her academic education includes a BSc in History and an MSc in Library & Information Sciences. She has over 30 years of work experience in libraries such as the Islamic Library at the Spanish Agency for International Development (Ministry of Foreign Affairs) and the Documentation Service of the Spanish Centre of International Relations. In addition to this, Paz has coordinated the work for the Spanish Code of Ethics for Librarians and Information Professionals (2013) and has taught Management Documentation Systems at University Carlos III of Madrid. Paz is author of several academic publications and attends conferences regularly.

ABSTRACT

The right to privacy versus the right to access information: a real-life case of the right to be forgotten

According to a ruling of the European Court of Justice, providers of digital resources should address requests for the 'Right to be Forgotten' made by those who feel harmed by the appearance of their name in relation to past information made available by search engines. This paper reviews the implications of this ruling for researchers and for information professionals. It presents responses given by professional organisations, and shows the difficulty of balancing adherence to legislation and professional ethics through examples of cases drawn from the newspaper archive on the Spanish transition to democracy.



LOIDA GARCIA-FEBO FROM THE USA

Photo: @ Peter Schaaf

BIOGRAPHY

President of Information New Wave, IFLA Governing Board Member, ALA Executive Board Member. Garcia-Febo is an international librarian and consultant, researcher, speaker and writer on topics such as human rights, access to information, advocacy, diverse populations, new professionals and continuing professional development. She is President of Information New Wave, an international charity seeking to enhance the education of minority groups in the USA and in developing countries. She is an expert on strategising services for diverse and multi-ethnic groups. Garcia-Febo is Principal at LGF International Strategies where she help organisations, libraries and professional associations to carry out global research, strategise international relations, access to information, services to diverse populations and communities. Additionally, she is an expert on coordinating educational events, leadership programs and developing curricula for the above-mentioned subject areas.

ABSTRACT

Diversity and Ethics: to foster dialogue about inclusion and ethics in libraries

The idea of human rights, particularly as expressed in the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948), requires us all to recognise and acknowledge the humanity of others and to respect their rights. In particular, Article 19 sets out rights of freedom of opinion, expression and access to information for all human beings.

(IFLA Code of Ethics)

Librarians across the world face ethical dilemmas daily– “What would you do in that situation?” Fostering dialogue about inclusion and ethics in libraries recognises the roles of libraries in serving our diverse communities and dealing with a variety of issues. This paper features an overview of resources such as the IFLA Code of Ethics and case studies to enter into dialogue to promote ethical thinking towards our colleagues and communities.



DR. MARINO SINIBALDI FROM ITALY

BIOGRAPHY

Marino Sinibaldi is a prolific author and since the 1980s has been a writer and presenter of important and celebrated radio and television programmes for RAI (the major Italian National Broadcasting Network and the Italian equivalent of the BBC). He has experienced, witnessed personally, related and broadcast some of the most important cultural events in Italy over the last thirty years. In 2009 he was appointed Director General of RAI 3, the most important cultural channel of the National Italian Television Network.

He has published numerous essays on literary criticism with some of Italy's foremost publishers Einaudi, Bompiani, Baldini & Castoldi, and on the history of culture and mass communications with Feltrinelli, Zanichelli and for the prestigious Enciclopedia Treccani.

As a journalist he is co-founder of the journal Linea d'Ombra, and he contributes to numerous newspapers and magazines.

His interest and passion for books and the library world dates back to the seventies, when he started working as a librarian. He has a wealth of experience in this profession having worked for several libraries in Rome including the Biblioteca di Storia Moderna e Contemporanea (Modern and Contemporary History Library).

ABSTRACT

Books and Freedom

The censorship of books in Italy has had a long and chequered history for a variety of different reasons and has involved numerous important and celebrated Italian personages over the centuries. Not even the advent and birth of democracy, which has clearly liberated and freed up of all forms of the circulation of ideas, has been entirely successful in bringing this about: the low numbers of readers in Italy (not more than 41% of the population) is proof enough of this. However, will new technologies succeed in achieving this while up until now, the Italian educational system, media and the publishing industry have all, at least partially, failed.