

Being a country ambassador of International Librarians Network (ILN), attending the IFLA World Library Congress (WLIC) has always been my dream. I have always followed librarians through their ventures in different activities. And I always looked forward to be a part of the movement. I, therefore, am very grateful to IFLA Academic and Research Libraries' Section, SAGE and Ex Libris for making it possible for me to attend WLIC 2015. As one of the winners of ARL attendance grant, it has been an esteem privilege to have the opportunity to sit and interact with so many great minds and it has truly been a vivid learning experience.

I started my journey as an observer with the Standing Committee (SC) of Academic and Research Libraries section. Meeting with the Standing Committee members was an amazing experience, especially Eliz Nassali State, Vicki McDonald, Janet Fletcher, Mariellen (Mimi) F Calter. This was not a meeting of people but a meeting of cultures.

As I am an employee of East West University library, my prime intention was to attend the discussions based on academic and research topics. Apart from this, the other topics which gained my attention were librarians contribution to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) related to women, the importance of literacy and reading in the creation of strong societies and technology facilitating access to information.

My major takeaways were attending sessions which opened my eyes to a whole new prospective, ideas and methodologies of our profession. Among them a few I would like to mention are; a presentation, "Open Research Data: A Challenge or an Opportunity" presented by Daniel Hook, was an innovative segment, but the most fruitful time was the question answer sessions. Another was Repositioning libraries in the Asia Pacific region - evolving strategies, innovative services - Asia and Oceania, The Special sessions, Expo Pavilion/Tech Lab sessions were really motivating.

Due to clash of the timings, I failed to attend some sessions and had to make some tough choices as all the topics interested me.

The Poster sessions were really praise worthy. This session educated me to a great extent. The exhibition stalls of the conference offered a large variety of options and ideas about the development of libraries, current trends of library operations so that the resources of the libraries are enriched. I got to understand about the various functions of community libraries in South Africa. This was really astonishing.

I really enjoyed the IFLA-Cape Town Book Project, the Knitting Librarian Project in support of the 67 Blankets for Nelson Mandela Campaign. The cultural evening was really exotic and provided us with different types of cuisine.

It was an honour, when I was declared as a fellow of the Jay Jordan IFLA/OCLC Early Career Development Fellowship Program for 2016. When Nancy Lensenmayer, Program Director, OCLC Education and Professional Development announced my name at IFLA highlights session, everybody congratulated me. It was nice to meet the IFLA President Sinikka Sipilä, IFLA President-Elect Donna Scheeder, IFLA Secretary General Jennefer Nicholson, Dr. Sarah Kaddu, OCLC Fellow. They congratulated me for the fellowship as well. For a moment there, it felt like I am dreaming. It was actually more than a dream come true.

I would like to deliver my heartfelt thanks IFLA Academic and Research Libraries' Section through which I got acquainted to a lot of brilliant minds from all over the world. I do believe that networking is very essential for professional development and IFLA is the best platform for networking. And I would give anything to attend such an enlightening conference among such wonderful people again. it would be an honour to attend this conference again.



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