Chapter 12
Collaboration in Editorship:
"Global Perspectives on School Libraries"

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ABSTRACT

This chapter presents a year-long collaboration by two editors, one in Italy and one in Canada, that resulted in 2011 the IFLA Publication No. 148 titled Global Perspectives on School Libraries: Projects and Practices. Supporting the work of the two editors were the members of the Joint Committee of two international school library groups, the School Libraries and Resource Centers Section of the International Association of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA SLRC) and the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL), and the staffs of IFLA Headquarters and of IFLA's publisher, De Gruyter Saur. The 300-page book included 30 chapters, written by 50 authors from 20 countries across 6 continents. The topics addressed in the book included: school library education and implementation models; promoting literacies through the school library; school libraries for all; expanding the reach of the school library through technology; government initiatives for school library development; and organizations for school library advocacy and development. The whole process—from designing the publication to disseminating it—is described, including some lessons learned along the way, useful for planning joint work of a similar nature. Future steps in the collaboration between the IFLA SLRC Section and IASL collaboration are introduced as well.
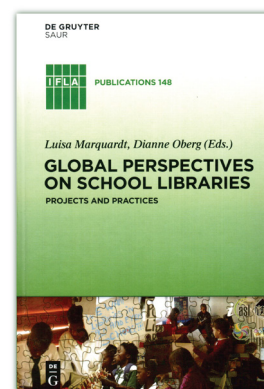
INTRODUCTION

For decades, the two international school library groups, the School Libraries and Resource Centers Section of the International Association of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA SLRC) and the International Association of School Librarianship (IASL) have been working to increase their collaboration, not always successfully. In 2006, the two groups signed a formal memorandum of agreement, establishing a joint committee that was tasked with finding ways to facilitate collaboration. The first collaborative initiatives spearheaded by the Joint Committee were jointly-sponsored satellite meetings in Italy in August 2009 and in Jamaica in August 2011. The 2009 satellite meeting, *Reading in the Digital Age: Educating the Passionate and Critical Reader through the School Library*, was scheduled in the time between the IFLA conference in Milan and the IASL conference in Abano Terme and held on the University of Padua campus. The 2011 satellite meeting, *School Libraries: Best Practices for e-Learning,* was scheduled in the time between the IASL conference in Kingston, Jamaica and the IFLA conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico and held at the University of the West Indies.

The publication of *Global Perspectives on School Libraries: Projects and Practices* (Figure 1) was another concrete step towards strengthening the school library profession and increasing the awareness of school library stakeholders throughout the world. Completing any book is not an easy task, but the difficulties faced in completing this book were increased, on one hand, by the number, the diversity and the richness of the chapters we received and, on the other hand, the parameters set by a page limit and a tight schedule. Some but not all of the projects and practices presented in the book are innovative, unique, employing the most enhanced ICT. The book also gives attention to projects and practices addressing the challenges of supporting basic literacy, including projects

Figure 1. Global Perspectives on School Libraries

and practices from contexts where many children cannot or do not access formal instruction on a regular basis.

From the beginning of the project, the co-editors of *Global Perspectives on School Libraries* hoped that the book would be information-rich and inspiring, that it might widen the horizons of school librarians and foster their professional development, and that it might inspire public librarians and other cultural professionals to see the potential of the school library as vital and effective in the learning process and in the personal, cultural and social development of young people. We knew for certain that the book would not be possible without the contributions of the authors and the collaborative efforts among colleagues of the two associations.

INITIAL INVITATION TO PUBLISH

The initial invitation to develop a book on some aspect of school libraries around the world came about through two serendipitous events. First, the book chapter on school libraries in Europe written by one of the editors was inadvertently omitted from a book on international librarianship, and the sponsoring association for that book graciously offered to make amends for that accident with

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