

ALA Council Committee Report Form

TO: ALA Council

DATE: January 9, 2026

RE: *(select one)*

- ACTION REQUESTED
- INFORMATION
- REPORT

ACTION REQUESTED/INFORMATION/REPORT: *(add below)*

Action requested from Councilors is to cast their vote to: *(if applicable)*

ACTION REQUESTED BY: *(add committee name)*

CONTACT PERSON: IRC Chair, Julius C. Jefferson, Jr.

STAFF LIAISON CONTACT: Michael Dowling

BACKGROUND: *(add information)*

12th Sharjah International Library Conference and ALA Books Translated into Arabic

The International Relations Office with support from IRC and other ALA units organized another successful conference with our partners the Sharjah Book Authority and Combined Book Exhibits. The conference attracted over three hundred librarians from all sectors from twelve countries. ALA President-elect Maria McCauley keynoted the conference. The conference included two full days of programming and a day of preconference workshops. The well received workshops were “Librarians as Teachers:

ALA Council Committee Report Form

An ACRL Immersion Workshop,” “Beyond the Buzz: Practical AI for Public, Academic, and School Libraries,” and “Using AI to Improve Technical Services: The Role of RDA.”

The conference included presenters from eight countries. IRC member Sandy Hirsh provided a session on “Library 2035: Opportunities, Challenges, and the Path Ahead” and ALA book authors were among the presenters, discussing “Leveraging AI in School Libraries: From Basics to Best Practices,” “Beyond Data Literacy: Creating Inclusive and Collaborative Data Communities,” and “The High-Impact Digital Library: Innovative Approaches for Outreach and Instruction.” Fifteen local librarians added best practices during the poster session. Sponsors and exhibitors included the National Library and Archives United Arab Emirates, Overdrive, and Library Juice Academy.

The conference was the venue for the debut of ALA books translated into Arabic by the Emirate Library and Information Association (ELIA). This collaboration provided revenue for ALA and expanded ALA’s reach to librarians across the Middle East and North Africa. The five translated books included:

“The Rise of AI: Implications and Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Libraries”

“The Playful Library: Building Environments for Learning and Creativity”

“Libraries Build Business”

ELIA plans to translate more ALA books in 2026.

ALA-FIL Free Pass Program

The International Relations Office coordinated 27th ALA-FIL Free Pass program to the Guadalajara Book Fair at the end of November. One hundred and thirty ALA members from twenty states spent three professional days at the Book Fair selecting materials in Spanish language for their communities. ALA President Sam Helmick participated, connecting with members and represented ALA in meetings and discussions. ALA’s booth was a popular destination for those interested in learning more about American libraries and ALA products and services. The new Spanish version of RDA was featured.

ALA Council Committee Report Form

Ukraine Library Relief Fund Donation

Following up on the successful collaboration at Annual Conference in Philadelphia with the San Jose University iSchool that resulted in hundreds of books sent to libraries in Ukraine, members and library supporters continued to donate to the ALA Ukraine Library Relief Fund. In December ALA sent another \$12,000 to the Ukraine Library Association for rebuilding damaged libraries and collections.

IFLA

Over one hundred ALA members from the U.S. and other countries participated in the IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) in Astana, Kazakhstan, August 18-22. This is the first time that the WLIC has held in Central Asia. President-elect Maria McCauley represented ALA. ALA members were able to register for the IFLA member discount through ALA's membership in IFLA.

Dozens of ALA members made presentations, sharing their knowledge with international colleagues. ALA member Leslie Weir, Librarian and Archivist of Canada, became IFLA President at the end of the conference for a two-year term. ALA Past President Loida Garcia-Febo and Past ACRL Past President Lisa Hinchliffe started two-year terms on IFLA's Governing Board. Evviva Weinraub Lajoie, Vice Provost, University Libraries at University at Buffalo, SUNY, was elected Chair of the North America Regional Division.

ALA's booth provided an opportunity to recruit new members, feature ALA products and services, with a focus on promoting the Annual Conference in Chicago.

Promoting Libraries at the International Level

The ALA UN Sustainable Development Goals Subcommittee organized a well-received event at the United Nations High Level Political Forum in New York, July 14-23.

"Imperatives for Growth: Libraries as Catalysts for Inclusive Employment, Skills and Prosperity" highlighted how libraries contribute to Goal 8 Decent Growth and Economic Growth' the topic for Forum.

The Committee partnered with IFLA to make visible on the value of libraries in the information society at the recent UN General Assembly High Level Meeting in December

ALA Council Committee Report Form

in New York. ALA and IFLA were selected to provide one of the few side event sessions "Doing Dynamic Digital Inclusion Locally."

The Committee's December webinar "Libraries as Builders of Peace: Fostering Understanding through Access, Dialogue, and Knowledge" had one hundred fifty-four participants from thirty-eight countries.

IRRT Webinars Reach International Members and Non-members

The International Relations Round Table webinar series continues to be popular with librarians around the world. The November webinar on "European Library Policy" had librarians from ten countries engaging with each other on the topic.