

84th IFLA General Conference and Assembly Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia 24th - 30th August 2018



Octavia-Luciana Madge

Associate Professor
University of Bucharest, Faculty of Letters,
Department of Communication Sciences
Bucharest Romania
Representative of EAHIL to IFLA
octavialucianamadge@yahoo.com

The 84th IFLA Congress took place between 24th - 30th August in the vibrant city of Kuala Lumpur, the capital of the multicultural and multi-religious Malaysia. It was attended by over 3500 delegates from more than 110 countries. The Kuala Lumpur Convention Centre which overlooks the iconic PETRONAS Twin Towers and the 50-acre KLCC Park was the host venue for the congress of this year.

The theme of the congress was “Transform libraries, transform societies. Reaching out to the hard to reach”, in close connection with the current goals and work of IFLA which is currently in the process of developing a new strategy by defining a global vision for libraries. Specialists from all continents and all types of libraries have participated in this process (<https://www.ifla.org/node/11900>) with ideas and solutions “to face the global challenges”, as IFLA President, Gloria Pérez-Salmerón said.

The Health and Biosciences Libraries section (HBS) standing committee and the special interest group (SIG) it sponsors, Evidence for Global and Disaster Health (E4GDH), have also contributed. Their members discussed between June and September 2018 about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. A final report gathered the HBS ideas for actions.

There were three key sessions during this year congress for the Health and Biosciences Libraries Section. The first one was the E4GDH SIG's satellite meeting on 23rd August “Evidence for Global and Disaster Health: Where are we now and where do we need to be?” followed by an evening informal (all the presentations and papers are available on the satellite meeting website: <https://sites.google.com/view/ifla2018e4gdh/bios-and-papers>). A second key session took place during the IFLA congress on 28th August, the E4GDH SIG session on “Library roles in disaster preparedness”. This was chaired by Anne Brice, Head of Knowledge & Library Services, at Public Health England, and the SIG Convenor. It included a pre-recorded keynote speech by Professor Virginia Murray from Public Health England on “Disaster risk response: libraries and the Sendai framework” and a pre-recorded presentation from Isla Kuhn from Cambridge University on “Being a volunteer with Evidence Aid”. The third major event was the open session of HBS, scheduled on the morning of 29th August, with the theme “Health information: targeting, connecting, and transforming lives”. It included 6 presentations given by delegates from four continents, Africa, Asia, Australia and Europe and one lightning talk from Sri Lanka (the full papers are available here: <http://library.ifla.org/view/conferences/2018/2018-08-29/967.html>). The full programme of the conference is available online via the 2018 congress website (<http://www.professionalabstracts.com/iflawlic2018/iplanner/#/grid>).

At the first business meeting of the HBS Section, held on Friday 24th August, besides the presentation of the annual report 2017/18 by the chair, the secretary and the information coordinator, there were progress reports

regarding the 13th ICML to be held in 2021 and a forthcoming HBS book on Health Literacy. Matters like the distribution of Standing Committee roles, attraction of new members (the election of new standing committee members has now opened - <https://www.ifla.org/officers-corner/nomination-election-process>) plus a general evaluation and feedback on the E4GDH satellite meeting were also discussed.

Highlights from the annual report and minutes of meetings will be made available on the HBS page (<https://www.ifla.org/health-and-biosciences-libraries>).

At the second HBS standing committee business meeting, held on Wednesday 29th August, there were discussed the feedback from the open session, the Action Plan for 2018/19, the Global Vision strategy, but also 2019 theme and subthemes for the HBS Open Session. Please follow up the Congress site, <https://2019.ifla.org/>, as the theme and the call for papers for the next year Congress which will take place in Athens will be published soon.