

Report from IFLA World Library and Information Congress

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by: Aditya Nugraha – anugraha@petra.ac.id

My name is Aditya Nugraha and I am the Head of Library of Petra Christian University, a medium-sized private university with approximately 8.000 students located in Surabaya, East Java, Indonesia. I got an ILFA Attendance Grant, which had enabled me to travel to Singapore and attended the IFLA World Library and Information Congress.

I found IFLA World Library and Information Congress to be enlightening, both professionally and personally. Besides acquiring new knowledge from the speakers and presentations, I also got to meet and know colleagues from around the world.

What I found to be most interesting about IFLA and the Congress were:

1. the IFLA's atmosphere of networking and passing the torch to the next generation of leadership;
2. the give and take culture, which emphasizes volunteering & involvement at IFLA as a starting point for personal and professional developments;
3. the very international nature of event (as its name suggests) with participants from so many countries; and
4. the breadth of topics covered in the Congress.

I am impressed by the various best practices and fresh ideas from colleagues all around the world in tackling problems in the field as well as improving access to information and relationship with library users. What I found particularly enlightening is best practices in using social media in reaching out to college-level library users and how to create an engaged community of users by utilizing the social media properly, which means 'talking the language of social media'. My library has been trying to engage our college-level users. However I realized that we only use the social media with the mindset of traditional media. We have not yet talked in the 'language' of the social media that the Digital Natives generation can connect to.

I was also very impressed by the concept introduced in the congress on libraries as place-makers and the need for libraries to formulate "mobile strategy" (utilization of mobile devices by library users). I believe that I should take back home these issues and share them with my colleagues in the hope that we can put them into practice to enhance our existing products and services. Other ideas or topics that I found also interesting are:

- Dancing @ Your Library
- Student Learning Centre at Ryerson University (www.ryerson.ca/about/masterplan)
- Exploring the Future of eBooks



I was giving a short speech at the Grant Reception session at the Exhibition Area

The Poster Sessions and Exhibition were also interesting in complementing the plenary & parallel presentation sessions. Many ideas were shared and absorbed in the both events. It was also a great experience to join the Library Tours. I joined the tours to the library@esplanade and library@chinatown. Both libraries offer many interesting aspects of public library management and services. library@esplanade showcases how public library can be situated in a cultural center with collections and services targeted to specific audiences. library@chinatown showcases volunteerism in running the library and how public library can be situated in a very busy mall, which has made it a community hub where people came together to do various activities. I am particularly amazed by the fact that this library is run fully by volunteers. The Library Tours had provided me with real world examples of best practices in library services and librarianships. The Cultural Night was of course very entertaining. It provided a time for all the participants to relax and enjoy the great food and various performances offered. I really enjoyed the relaxed and joyful atmosphere of the event. It had certainly added a valuable point to the whole Congress.

The only thing that I found a little bit discouraging about IFLA Congress is the very expensive registration fee, which – I believe – has prevented many librarians and information professionals from Indonesia from attending it. I know quite a number of Indonesian librarians, who cancelled their plan to attend due to their inability to ‘justify’ the rate of registration fee to their university administrators. The 2013 IFLA Congress in Singapore was actually a perfect opportunity for Indonesian colleagues to come due to the geographical closeness of the Congress venue, which made the costs of travel and accommodation relatively affordable. However the Registration Fee rate had been unfortunately one factor preventing them from attending, despite of the travel grant provided by the Government of Singapore, which covered the accommodation and local transport. My attendance to this Congress was facilitated by the IFLA Attendance Grant that I got.

Lastly, I believe that IFLA WLIC had particularly broaden my worldview of international libraries and librarianship. Practically, it has also broaden my international network of colleagues.