

LINK: A Network for North-South Library Development

Librarians and information workers all over the world share many common problems and experiences. Many workers, especially in the "South" have developed library techniques to suit local conditions. Their solutions, however, may be applicable elsewhere. To facilitate the sharing of these ideas, some interested librarians in the United Kingdom got together in 1988 to form LINK.

LINK is a network that intends to be an informed, experienced and realistic forum that will raise awareness of "Third World" library issues within the information-related professions of the "North." It aims to link librarians and libraries in the "South" with colleagues worldwide, for their mutual benefit, and to provide support, briefing and continuing information to individuals who intend to do information work in developing countries.

Specific objectives and activities of the group include:

- Raising awareness among professional bodies and related organizations in the information world.
- Raising awareness among individual librarians through personal contact, and other activities, such as talks, articles and meetings.
- Raising awareness among staff and students of UK library schools.
- Providing information and support to individuals before, during and after their work overseas.
- Supporting students, librarians and information workers from developing countries who are in the UK and librarians and information workers in developing countries.
- Producing a newsletter to inform, connect and support participants' activities and provide a forum for discussion of professional issues.
- Producing a directory of network participants and other resources that can facilitate the main aims of the network.

Who are we?

Most of us are librarians who have worked alongside local colleagues in libraries and information centers in developing countries, trying to provide basic services and solve problems on a day-to-day basis. Much of this experience, though not all, has come from "volunteer" projects associated with organizations like VSO, UNAIS, APSO, and CUSO. Returning home

is not the end of our interest and involvement in Third World library development. We want to keep these issues visible, and also contribute in various ways to further development and improvement of libraries and information centers worldwide.

LINK also seeks to raise the political awareness of library and information workers around the world and provide the opportunity to discuss professional and political issues that arise from our work.

If you are interested in these issues, or have useful experience or ideas to share, we would like you to participate with us in some or all of the network's activities. Contact us at: LINK, c/o Gillian Harris, 64 Ennersdale Road, London SE13 ENGLAND, e-mail: 101450.2167@compuserve.com.

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Lynn Andersen is the director of the Durland Alternatives Library on the Cornell University campus, Ithaca, NY. Her work with the library focuses on building coalitions with community social activists and making library resources available for their work on issues of justice, human rights, peace, diversity, and the environment. At present, the library staff and advisory board are working to bring literacy training, books, poetry and cultural programs and continuing education funding to a juvenile detention center in the Ithaca area.

Sanford Berman, PLG member and former Head Cataloger at Hennepin County Library, co-edits *Alternative Library Literature: A Biennial Anthology* (McFarland).

William F. Birdsall is Executive Director of Novanet, a consortium of Nova Scotia academic libraries, and of the Council of Atlantic University Librarians. He has published articles on the politics of librarianship, professionalism, information technology, telecommunications, and public policy. His book *The Myth of the Electronic Library* was published in Japan in 1996. He recently co-edited with Karen Adams, *Understanding Telecommunication and Public Policy: A Guide for Libraries* (Canadian Library Association, 1998).

John Buschman is Acting Chair of Talbott Library at Rider University and Collection Development Librarian. He is co-editor of *Progressive Librarian* and the editor of *Critical Approaches to Information Technology in Librarianship* (McFarland, 1993).

Jennifer Cram, former President of the Australian Library and Information Association and Associate Editor for Australasia for *Counterpoise* (1996-2000), has wide experience of managing public, academic and corporate libraries. Jennifer is a frequent invited speaker at conferences in Australia and abroad, and is widely published on a range of topics including library service design and delivery, performance measurement, social justice implications of library structures and services, and libraries and the Internet. Her current position is Manager, Library Services for Education Queensland.

Michael Donovan, librarian and artist, is a union organizer for UNITE.

Zoia Horn has worked on public, high school, university and special libraries – most recently the DataCenter and the Center for Investigative Journalism. Jailed during the Vietnam War in conjunction with the Harrisburg 7 trials she became an *cont. p. 80*