

# Report on Benefits from Attending IFLA/ WLIC 2018, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

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## First Episode

1. PhD Candidate, Knowledge and Information Science, Kharazmi University, Tehran, Iran (niknia.m@gmail.com)
2. Archäologisches Institut - Universität zu Köln
3. Niknia, Massoomeh (2018). Towards sharing Persian Name Authority data in the Virtual International Authority File (VIAF). Paper presented at IFLA WLIC 2018 – Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia – Transform Libraries, Transform Societies in session 153 - Poster Session.
4. Emrani, Seyed Ebrahim and Niknia, Massoomeh (2017). the role of the educated professional librarians in the redefinition of mission, duties and role of the National Library of Iran. Paper presented at IFLA WLIC 2017 – Wrocław, Poland – Libraries, Solidarity, Society in session 112 - Poster Sessions.
5. Soltani, Poori (1931-2014), Mother of modern librarianship in Iran

Today is 16th of April. At 16:50 o'clock, I am on my way to the Archeology Institute of University of Cologne<sup>2</sup>. I need new photos of the objects of excavation report with the best quality for my PhD project. I am checking my iPhone to find the best route but suddenly I see a new message on the screen which shows I have a new email but I can't believe this email "IFLA WLIC 2018 Kuala Lumpur - Congress Participation Grant - Congratulations!" belongs to me. It is incredible for me and I am almost crying. I am in the street and calling my Mom; immediately she becomes happy and congratulates me.

## Second Episode

I am on my way to the printing shop. I printed the poster<sup>3</sup> two days ago on 14th of August. I decided to make some badges with the picture of Iranian tiles. The files of the picture of Iranian tiles are in my USB pen drive and I am thinking if these gifts are appropriate for my poster visitors. I am in doubt. Suddenly I remember my previous poster at IFLA/WLIC 2017<sup>4</sup>. We decided to share the valuable works of Poori Soltani<sup>5</sup> in the field of modern librarianship in Iran with our colleagues around the world. Nevertheless, I could not attend IFLA/WLIC 2017 and we just sent our poster with my friend to the congress. That was a big regret in my professional life.

Therefore, I am thinking that IFLA/WLIC 2018 is another opportunity to appreciate Poori's works for the modern librarianship in Iran. Very quickly, I design her photo in my MacBook on the bus. I am reaching to the printing shop and asking them to print and make the badges

very carefully. I am checking their works to make sure there are no mistakes, I ask them please correct it. During this process of checking, I remember Poori's manner when she was checking each word seriously in Persian subject headings.

### Third Episode

Today is 26th of August; I am attending the session 115 at the ballroom 2 in KLIC and listening to my Iranian colleagues, suddenly I received a message from one of my friends, who is giving me the information about a woman who is sitting in the second row of this hall. My friend told me she is Poori's friend. I cannot describe my feeling. I am almost crying and just moving to sit beside her and I am preparing one of the badges for her.

Now the session has been finished. I am introducing myself to Julianne Beall<sup>1</sup>. It is unbelievable for her to meet someone from Iran and talking with her about Poori. She is wearing the badge and I can see she is trying not to cry.



In addition, I received a tweet, which mentioned me. A colleague who was interested in organizing issues came to the exhibition hall and found my poster. She kindly described my poster and invited some other like-minded people to visit it.

Overall, today was very fruitful for me because in the morning, I attended the Newcomers

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and this really helped me a lot in knowing how to get around and was happy to realize that many other participants were a bit apprehensive just as I was. I knew that, may be, I was not going to be able to participate in all the activities that I wanted but, at least, I wanted to receive all the best I could. This session helped me to identify the best way to organize the activities and follow only my research interests. At the end of the session, I met the IFLA's president, Gloria Pérez Salmerón and Gerald Leitner, IFLA Secretary General. Holding my poster bag, they realized I am going to present my poster and they told me "Wish all the best".

#### Fourth Episode

Today is 27th of August. According to the congress program for the second day, I should present my poster in the Exhibition hall. I met Julianne in the morning, gave the information about my poster, and invited her to visit it at noon.

At 12:30, Julianne came and kindly visited my poster. She told me I am excited to see a metadata related poster here. In addition, Christine Oliver<sup>1</sup> and her friends came to visit my poster. I met Christine for the first time at the "Diversity of Data: RDA in the International Context" conference which held on 23rd of August at the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia (UTM) in Kuala Lumpur. She was the first lady who asked about the pattern of my dress. I explained this pattern is one of the oldest patterns of Persian carpets. She encouraged me for such a great choice for my dress.



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### **Fifth Episode**

Today is 28th of August and in the afternoon the closing session will be held. After attending the meetings from morning until afternoon, I went downstairs to attend the closing session. During the Ms. Glòria Pérez-Salmerón's speech, I found her as a strong lady when she said I'm an idealist and with this way of thinking I try to imagine and make the better world. Her belief of common language of nation: "Language of Accessing to the information" and "change engine" was quite respectable and contemplative and the way that she made her speech was very educative for me.



### **Reflection**

IFLA/WLIC 2018 witnessed the participation of over 3100 delegates from the 122 member states and 70 exhibition booths. Many other pages can be written about my experience in IFLA/WLIC 2018. Apart from this introduction of the impressive moments for me in IFLA/WLIC 2018 (the five episodes), participating in the Congress for the first time created a great opportunity for me to communicate and network with my colleagues around the world and those with similar research interest. The fact that the congress is for librarians is one of those features that made this event very productive and effective.

As a PhD candidate in Library and Information Science, I would like to say that the benefits of attending IFLA/WLIC are enormous, so librarians should afford to attend this professional forum, which brings together world librarians and specialists to discuss profession development issues under one special theme.

For attending the sessions, my priorities centered on the presentations and discussions on including hot topics in knowledge and information organization. I had been able to attend various sessions and business meetings in this subject area as an observer such as cataloguing, bibliography, subject analysis, access, etc.

I had been able to access a variety of information topics and discussions through various sessions such as LRMoo<sup>1</sup>, RDA, etc and in one-business meetings, Pat Riva<sup>2</sup> mentioned my PhD project presentation in CIDOC-CRM Cologne meeting<sup>3</sup> as a practical research in the field of CIDOC-CRM.

Attending IFLA/WLIC is a learning process and I was able to visit various presentations as well as the exhibitions and therefore:

- Listened to many experienced professionals in the area of knowledge and information organization to know more about the challenges and recent solutions in the area;
- Observed how team-working helps IFLA to afford its missions;
- Discovered how young and experienced professionals are working together;
- Found how professionals can share their regional ideas in the international level and how IFLA appreciate such ideas and introduce them to the other colleagues all over the world;
- Explored new effective technologies, tools, methods, models and strategies for using in many parts of library profession by visiting exhibition and attending in expo-pavilion sessions.

Along with this serious scheduled plan, there were also fun plans like librarian fashion show, some guided tours in the Kuala Lumpur, matches, and games. As a first timer participant, I like the newcomer session with the great informal talks by the IFLA president and IFLA secretary general. By attending this session, I felt more relaxed and learned more about the IFLA sections and responsibilities.

Besides all of the wonderful keynote presentations and speeches, the congress had another

1. Library Reference Model-object oriented
2. Associate University Librarian, Collection Services, Concordia University Library/Chair of LRMoo Working Group, IFLA
3. Niknia, Massoomeh (2017). The application of CIDOC CRM in modeling grey archaeological literature in Iran. Paper presented at: The 40th joined meeting of the CIDOC CRM SIG and ISO/TC46/SC4/WG9 and the 33rd FRBR - CIDOC CRM Harmonization meeting, Cologne, Germany.

feature that added great value to the event. It was the lightning talk's sessions. The idea was that each presenter made a 3-minute presentation and had to convey his or her message.

In summary, I must admittedly confess that from attending IFLA/WLIC 2018, one of my dreams came true and I was able to do something very little in honor of Poori Soltani and the congress has opened a new but wonderful opportunity for me to make my professional network wider.

Next year will be the 85th year of the WLIC. Although the conference was really well organized, there are some suggestions that might be useful for the next year conference:

- Seeing the profile of each participant on the application of the WLIC was very helpful but if there were some forums or mailing lists for the grant winners before the congress it would have been more useful for sharing ideas and knowing each other.
- It would be better if participants suggest some topics for the workshops in advance or perhaps choose some topics they are interested in from a list using an online poll.

Overall, holding a congress annually and bringing the professional from all over the world is a lot of hard work for a good cause and the efforts of the organizers are much appreciated. I hope to be able to be part of these communities and participate in the future conferences maybe as a volunteer!

### **Acknowledgement**

I can remember that in my report of SWIB 2017 conference<sup>1</sup>, I had written, "The conference was like a small version of IFLA congress for me which I hope I could participate one day in future." I am excited to write the report of IFLA/WLIC 2018 participating report and have a memorable badge of IFLA/WLIC 2018 with the signatures of the great people who I met them.

I am using this opportunity to express my gratitude to the IFLA/WLIC 2018 organizers committee for managing this well-organized congress. I express my sincerest thanks to the Malaysia Convention & Exhibition Bureau (MyCEB) for the award of the participation grant.

1. Semantic Web In Libraries (SWIB 2017), 4-6 December 2017, Hamburg, Germany (<http://swib.org/swib17>)