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# ALA Disaster Relief for Nepal: Impact on Libraries

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# ALA Disaster Relief for Nepal: Impact on Libraries

On April 25, 2015 Nepal suffered a 7.8 magnitude earthquake, followed by a series of aftershocks in the following days. Hundreds of thousands of persons were left homeless, with an estimated 8,800 deaths and 23,000 injuries.

Emergency relief was immediately issued and focused on saving lives, and providing water, shelter, medical care, and food to those areas affected by the quakes.

Schools and libraries in the earthquake areas were hit hard.

According to a Ministry of Education Report on Nepal Libraries, almost all of the big and national libraries were damaged, including the Kaiser Library and the Tribhuvan University Library. More than 450 public libraries were damaged, 300 severely. 7,000 schools with libraries were damaged, compounding the problem of providing lessons and materials to students. The report states that librarians, professional associations, and supporting organizations joined forces to commit to library recovery

in Nepal with an eight-point document. Among their objectives: to gather and publish reliable data about damaged libraries; to recover as many library resources as possible; to provide temporary relief library services; to appeal to government, corporate and non-profit sources for emergency relief; and to build earthquake-safe libraries in the future.

It is now two months after the earthquakes. Those of us with friends and colleagues in Nepal have been in contact to inquire about their safety and welfare. In addition to our service on the IRRT Executive Board as Chair and Chair-Elect in the coming year, we have both been fortunate to travel to Nepal in 2013 and 2015 to meet and interview Nepalese library colleagues, plus to learn more about the country's professional library associations and non-profit library development groups. During our visits, we met dedicated and personable library and development workers, plus we toured more than a dozen libraries, including the

Tribhuvan University Library and the Kaiser Library—both damaged in the quakes. Our time in Nepal and interactions with the library community enabled us to provide contact and background information to the ALA International Relations Office and motivates us to ask our U.S. colleagues to contribute to the Nepal library relief efforts. In our experience, the Nepal library community is a close group that works together to advocate for libraries, to improve access to professional development, and to provide the best resources and services with the limited funds at their discretion. **They deserve and need assistance from their colleagues throughout the world.**

In response to the earthquakes, the American Library Association (ALA) has initiated the [ALA Nepal Disaster Relief Fund](#). The website includes instructions on donating by credit

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card or mail, plus additional information about libraries in Nepal. The International Relations Office is working to compile a list of Nepal libraries for potential partnership with U.S. libraries. Those interested in becoming a Sister Library with a earthquake affected library may contact Michael Dowling, Director of the ALA IRO, [mdowling@ala.org](mailto:mdowling@ala.org).

Of related interest, Deborah Jacobs, Director of Global Libraries at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Tina Sciabica, Executive Director of READ Global, will be speaking at the IRC Chair's Program at ALA Annual 2015, San Francisco. The program is entitled: Libraries Creating Positive Change: Championing Access to Information Globally, and will be held Saturday, June 27, 3-4 pm, Moscone Convention Center, 3012 West. The American Library Association is partnering with READ GLOBAL (a beneficiary of funding from the Gates Foundation), other NGOs and government organizations in Nepal to collect

monetary donations, which will be sent to continue leading the relief effort.

For those interested in more information about library damage and relief in Nepal, we provide a list of Facebook pages and web sites from various professional library organizations within Nepal, the U.S. Embassy-Nepal Library, and three non-profit agencies working for library development within Nepal: READ Nepal (in conjunction with INGO READ Global), Room to Read, and the Nepal Library Foundation.

- [Nepal Library Association](#)
- [Nepal Community Library Association](#)
- [The Nepalese Association of School Librarians](#)
- [American Library at the U.S. Embassy and American Corners](#)
- [READ Nepal](#)
- [Room to Read](#)
- [Nepal Library Foundation](#)

~Beth Cramer and John Hickok,  
IRRT Executive Board members

## ALA awards 2015 Presidential Citations to International Libraries

The International Relations Round Table (IRRT) announces four recipients of the ALA Presidential Citations for Innovative International Library Projects for 2015.

- The **Outreach Worker Service and Digital Literacy as a Core Service** programs at the Edmonton (Alberta) Public Library, Canada.
- The **Taiwan Resource Center for Chinese Studies** at Taiwan's National Central Library.
- The **NLB Mobile Application** created by the National Library Board of Singapore.
- The **Science and Technology Academic and Research-Based Openly Operated Kiosk Station (STARBOOKS) Project** of the Department of Science and Technology of the Republic of the Philippines.

Recipients will be recognized by President Young at the 2015 ALA Annual Conference in San Francisco during the IRRT's International Librarians Reception on Monday, June 29, 7:00 pm—9:00 pm, San Francisco Public Library, 100 Larkin Street.

[Full press release](#)

**Donate blood for the relief of earthquake victims**



# Blood Donation

**Date: May 23, 2015**



**Organized By:**  
**NEPAL LIBRARY ASSOCIATION**

Nepal Library Association conducted a blood drive and has created a 17-member taskforce for disaster relief (Facebook).