

Librarians go global: The International Librarians Network facilitated mentoring program

Lorrie Farrall

Clinical Library

Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Hospital

East Kent Hospitals University NHS Foundation Trust

lorrie.farrall@nhs.net

Early in 2013 I saw an invitation for applicants to join the International Librarians Network (ILN) pilot facilitated mentoring program. The idea was to enable librarians from around the world to pair up with the aim of creating a professional network that would cross national borders and enable the sharing of best practice and facilitate innovation and inspiration.

It was envisioned that the partnerships would last for a period of six months and would involve regular contact by email and facilitated online group discussions. At the end of the six months the partnerships would officially end to enable the participants to be linked to new participants in the full program. The program would then continue enabling participants to cultivate a number of international contacts as well as being able to take part in activities to foster understanding of the profession on an international stage as well as encouraging reflection of one's own practices.

I was paired with a Health Sciences Librarian from Dunedin in New Zealand. I enjoyed our regular email correspondence and found that many of the issues that I have observed in the UK (lack of finances, poor recognition of the profession, effective distribution of resources etc.) were replicated in the comments of my antipodean counterpart. The monthly discussion topics gave a useful framework to our discussions and also enabled me to examine my own views and practices as I explained my outlook and experiences.

My 'official' contact expired in August but I would hope that our correspondence would still continue. Unfortunately I have been unable to take part in the subsequent program but the ILN plan to run two a year so I hope to join in again come March 2014.

I would encourage any Librarian to visit the ILN blog at <http://ilnetwork.wordpress.com/> and if you can register for the next program.