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Carla J. Funk Profile

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Librarians Without Borders: Building In-Country Research and Information Provision Capability

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and **Lenny Rhine** (E-library Training Coordinator, Medical Library Association Librarians Without Borders E-Library Training Initiative) <rhinel@ufl.edu>

Global Commitment

Global commitment for the **Medical Library Association (MLA)** is not a series of talking points or an informative Website, but a program that reflects a deep commitment to internationalism and outreach. One of the keys to understanding **MLA's** global commitment is the association's international strategic statement which underscores the importance of partnerships and the need to build in-country capacity through qualified librarians, technology, and information access. This includes collection development by facilitating free and/or less costly access to a variety of scientific databases through in-country training programs.

- **MLA** believes that the key elements in improved health for all peoples are the ability of each nation to strengthen and build health sciences information capacity through qualified health sciences librarians, implementation of supporting technological infrastructure, and access to quality information.

- **MLA** supports capacity building programs at the association, section, chapter, and individual member areas.
- **MLA** believes that building capacity will be most effective and long-lasting when partnerships are created with groups sharing similar goals, particularly partnerships with international agencies where shared goals intersect with available expertise and infrastructure.¹

As part of this strategy, the **MLA/Librarians Without Borders (LWB)** program was formally established in 2005 as **MLA's** organizational structure for its global outreach. One of the most successful programs is the grant-funded E-Library Training Initiative.

E-library Training Initiative

The **MLA/Librarians Without Borders (LWB)** e-library training initiative was established in 2007² and is funded in part by the generous support of the **Elsevier Foundation**. It provides access to quality health information

training through distance education programs and the mobilization of volunteers for in-country training and workshops. Besides the **Elsevier Foundation**, **MLA** also partners with the **Health Inter-Net Access to Research Initiative (HINARI)** Access to Research in Health Programme, the **Information Training and Outreach Centre for Africa (ITOCA)**, and the **World Health Organization (WHO)** among others. **HINARI** is included in the **Research4Life** program that is a public-private partnership between **WHO**, the **Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO)**, the **United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)**, the **World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)**, and others with 190 science publishers facilitated by the **International Association of STM Publishers**. **MLA** has also worked with other partners to support this program including the **World Health Organization's** European, Western Pacific, and Southeast Asia and Eastern Mediterranean Regional Offices, the **Pan American Health Organization**, and the **Ministries of Health**, universities, medical schools, libraries, and hospitals in the countries and cities where the workshops were held. The partnership's goal is to reduce the gap in scientific knowledge between industrialized countries and the developing world by providing long-term training on the use of online resources through a variety of training modules.³

HINARI was established in 2002 with six publishers including **Blackwell**, **Elsevier Science**, the **Harcourt World STM Group**, **Wolters Kluwer International Health & Science**, **Springer Verlag**, and **John Wiley** that provided free or low cost online access to about 1,500 journals in biomedical and related social sciences to local, not-for-profit institutions in developing countries. **HINARI** has grown to more than 150 publishers offering more than 37,000 information resources.⁴

E-Library Training Coordinator, **Lenny Rhine**, has coordinated the e-library training initiative since its inception. He has taught almost 1,000 people in twenty-nine countries around the world including library staff members, researchers, university faculty, physicians and nurses, medical students, **Ministries of Health**, public health staff, pharmacists, med-



against the grain people profile

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PROFESSIONAL CAREER AND ACTIVITIES: MLS from **Indiana University**; MBA from **University of Chicago**; started as a public librarian and public library director and consultant in the Chicago, IL area; worked at the **American Medical Association** in the library and then in other areas of the association; have worked at the **Medical Library Association** as Executive Director since 1992.

PHILOSOPHY: Stay flexible and don't be afraid to make intelligent changes or course corrections as you move forward, considering all the information available to you to achieve positive outcomes.

MOST MEMORABLE CAREER ACHIEVEMENT: My good fortune in working for **MLA** and its members and contributing to the profession for over 20 years.

HOW/WHERE DO I SEE THE INDUSTRY IN FIVE YEARS: The library profession as a whole, including medical librarians, will continue to face a variety of challenges, and will face these by taking on new and evolving roles in information access and provision using the latest technologies and methodologies. 🌱



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