Abstract
Bridging the divide between developing and developed countries requires some imaginative solutions. Middlesex University being an international rather than a local university is in the forefront of this and its library service is assisting in participating in exchanges, Commonwealth fellowships, and other activities including using outsourcing in an innovative way to bring the knowledge of how activities are undertaken in India to a wider audience in the UK. This paper will discuss economical methods of inviting visitors from India to the UK and touch on other exchanges and describe ways of benefitting from this.

Introduction
We often hear of the divide between developing countries and developed countries and there are many different aspects of academic librarianship where the divide is very narrow particularly when comparing a country like India with Europe, the US or Australia/New Zealand, not to mention Japan and South Korea. Librarians within these countries can learn from each other even where traditionally education is only going in one direction. Middlesex University takes a large number of students from developing countries and ensures that they get trained up to UK standards. But library science is not formally studied in Middlesex; however there are other ways in which the university Learning Resource Service is helping to bridge the digital divide.

This is a topic which has a very broad scope and there are a number of ways in which attempts can be made to develop ways of exchanging information and experience.

At the same time, economical ways can be discovered of sharing activities of mutual benefit between institutions in the different countries.

This paper will discuss economical methods of inviting visitors from India to the UK and touch on other exchanges and describe ways of benefitting from this.

Internships
There are many ways of achieving an internship. There are a number of foundations which support this activity, giving funding to librarians to make visits often for a specific purpose. For example, a private family trust in the US was interested in supporting library automation in Nigeria and as part of a package to achieve this sent a young systems librarian to the UK for a few weeks familiarisation. She has now gained the confidence to talk authoritatively about library automation and was even part of the staff of the library supplier’s stand when they exhibited at the IFLA Conference in Durban.

It is possible to exchange posts for periods of up to a year and there are various agencies do this such as LIBEX which librarians may join in order to make an exchange with a librarian is another country.

CILIP offers the chance to visit the UK for a few weeks with its Anthony Thompson award. Calls are made for applications periodically - approximately every 2-3 years.

Commonwealth Fellowship Programme
The Commonwealth Fellowship Programme is one of the best for exchanges because librarians from certain Commonwealth countries including India (and other professionals) may attend a fellowship programme in the UK. Host institutions nominate themselves to the programme and are funded to run a programme organising visits to other libraries and providing a programme of work experience in their institutions. It is stressed that this is a fellowship and not a scholarship and applicants cannot normally pursue a course leading to any qualification. The successful candidates receive a salary equivalent to that of a senior library assistant in the UK and a living allowance which enables them to live comfortably as a lodger in a family home or in a low-cost university hall of residence. The programmes are supposed to be of
three months in length and are organised by the UK host organization which has a broad range of possibilities constrained only by the need for these to be acceptable to the funding body. It is important to stress that the fellowship is not for academic study. Ideally the librarian will spend time in different but relevant departments of the host library. There is for example no need for a user services librarian to participate in the technical work of a systems team. On the other hand most librarians would gain by seeing how user support is organised first hand. The programme unofficially tends to give priority to Africa over Asia as far as librarianship is concerned but Middlesex University has had two male and two female librarians from India and six from elsewhere. Although the scheme prefers applications from the least developed Commonwealth countries, candidates from those countries tend not to apply as much as candidates from India. Preference is given to candidates who demonstrate that their work fits into the United Nations Millennium Development priorities and those who give a good account of how what they learn will be cascaded or further disseminated to benefit not just their colleagues but also the rest of the country.

We have had fellows who have investigated the use of consortia in UK libraries, looked at how we manage and promote electronic resources not only at Middlesex University but across the UK Higher Education sector as a whole and looked at the technologies for transferring data between systems and using the latest technology to record books (RFID) in both of which we have a high level of expertise in Middlesex University Learning Resources service.

**TEMPUS Programme**

The TEMPUS Programme of the European Union is another scheme which enables visits to European countries from certain countries in the Mediterranean region and the former Soviet Union and the Balkans. This requires the visits to be part of a large project. These projects are selected jointly by the governments of the benefitting countries and by technical advisers to the European Union Education and Training directorate general. Students may come for up to 3 months during the course of a project. Middlesex University has just embarked on a project in which library school lecturers from Armenia, Georgia and Uzbekistan can spend two periods of six weeks at Robert Gordon University this academic year. The intention of the project is curriculum development in library and information science and the countries are those where there has tended to be a dichotomy between library and information science as it has been traditionally taught and the skills needed for the digital library.

The countries that are eligible to apply are those from Morocco along the Mediterranean coast to Palestine, Lebanon and Syria, Serbia, Croatia, Kosovo and Macedonia in former Yugoslavia and the countries formerly in the Soviet Union.

**New Ways of Collaboration**

### Outsourcing an institutional repository

Around the world the internet is bringing things closer together. We all know how easy it is to look in other people’s catalogues these days either through WorldCat or online access to individual catalogues. Bandwidth in developing countries is improving and cooperative efforts can enable data contained in a library catalogue to be visible around the world. Setting up cooperative catalogues can encourage data of the highest standard to be entered into catalogues, with the purpose that data will be visible around the world. Middlesex University has offices around India and when the research director, Prof. Waqar Ahmed, was looking for more economic ways of populating a digital repository he hit upon the idea of having a team of librarians in India to enter data in the Middlesex University Research repository, as the institutional repository is called. The deputy director of Middlesex’s Mumbai office is a librarian so she was an ideal person to have the responsibility of oversight.

The idea is that Middlesex University’s Learning Resources service will solicit articles and other publications from the academics in the university. These will be mounted on the Research Repository server. Currently there are over 3,000 bibliographic records relating to research at Middlesex University but there are not very many articles in place yet. To get this working requires a large team. To do this we have a newly recruited staff at Middlesex who will oversee the whole enterprise. The Middlesex University office in Mumbai will have a librarian supervising a further two librarians who will catalogue the materials. We are not using classification since keyword searching on the abstracts is possible, though the materials are categorised according to the department from which they emanate at Middlesex University. We are fortunate that the senior manager in Middlesex’s Mumbai office is a qualified librarian and will be supervising this at the management level. The supervising librarian will supervise the intellectual work. She will also liaise with the staff in Middlesex. This project could, if necessary, be extended to doing some cataloguing of the normal Middlesex materials, though this would be more difficult. The aim of the repository is to store on it a digital version of all the Middlesex University academic output. To enable this we have solicited lists of publications from academics usually sent as spreadsheets. Some of these lists originate from the Quality Assurance Agency’s exercise to evaluate UK research, which required spreadsheets including up to four best items for evaluation. The advantage of outsourcing repository material is that the material is all in digital form and usually any bibliographic material is as well.
There is a great deal of work involving contacting the academics to ask for more information or to ask for the digital item itself. There are copyright issues and some materials can only be added if permission is sought for them. Sending emails to publishers to clarify permissions can also be outsourced. Then depending on the publisher’s reply, the academic must be contacted for the appropriate version to mount on the server. Additionally links can be made to the final published version from the server; finding these and their URL and entering them into the record can be done from India. Some of these may be on servers with closed access to all but subscribers, others may be universally available. Copyright permitting, a file will be kept on the server so that if access to the original is lost because we cease to subscribe or because the company hosting the data goes out of business, we have a copy available.

The methodologies for maintaining an institutional repository are more complex than is realised. It is helpful to us to have to think about our procedures in order to streamline them to make them more efficient in this international project. Additionally, by this cooperative activity there will be a body of librarians in India who have first-hand knowledge of the processes and procedures in the UK. They will be able to disseminate their experience to others, when it is needed.

Help desk
In the UK there is an increasing need to provide 24 hour service to library and IT help desks. Libraries are coming together to do this. There have been examples of these for a number of years. In Beyond the virtual shore: an Australian digital reference initiative with a global dimension the authors tell of the collaborative help desk service piloted by University of Technology Sydney with the University of Strathclyde Library and Curtin University of Technology Library. This can be done by a digital reference library help desk. There would be scope in a similar project for participation with universities in India. This would assist the Indian participating institution since training would be provided by the project leaders. It would also give participants a chance for a visit to a university library in another country. So far I am not aware of anything having been set up in India with countries in other parts of the world.

Conclusion
The days are long since gone when assistance to libraries in developing countries meant sending out old or worn out books in the hope that they might be useful. The internet connects the entire world and its bandwidth is increasing in power to strengthen communication. Now we can give assistance to librarians in how best to make deals with the publishers. There are many other new ways in which mutual benefit can be gained between libraries in different countries. These opportunities should not be missed.

Bibliography
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