Worldwide technological advances are increasing individual awareness of economic and educational conditions in distant places. This has prompted huge numbers of people to make use of mobile devices, gain access to virtual resources and social media and seek to cross borders, either to escape oppression or to seek out better opportunities. Libraries everywhere are finding that the communities they serve are no longer homogenous local groups, but encompass a diversity of language, culture, class, race and religion. International responses to these escalating changes by bodies such as the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) include the development of initiatives within libraries to improve the quality of life of people, promote social justice and fight against inequalities.

In *Linking literacy and libraries in global communities* Asselin and Doiron examine models of contemporary libraries in nations representing developing, transitional and developed countries and economies. Australia, Brazil, China, Finland, Kenya, Malaysia and Canada are represented, among others. These international case studies are integrated with research studies that examine the worldwide evolution of contemporary libraries and their contribution to building literate communities and supporting the learning needs of individual members.

The work is blended into nine chapters examining different aspects of the work of libraries as agents for building literacy and establishing a culture of reading. Libraries established as learning commons, for example, provide access to digital and multimedia applications and a collaborative atmosphere of sharing, exploring and discovering new knowledge. Those set up as community-learning centres often have multiple access locations throughout the community and provide services which serve the multiple cultures of the actual community. At the same time, as agents of social change, particularly in marginalised areas, the libraries feature the preservation and development of indigenous resources as a partner in improving the lives of community members. Mobile libraries are seen as a solution in really remote areas, as they exploit innovative funding options, including ‘Books-by-Elephant’ in Thailand. The book is well set out, well indexed and contains a comprehensive bibliography of recent publications in the field.

The international library community is participating in massive global changes which are only serving to emphasise the growing recognition in many countries of the role of libraries in the ‘improvement and uplifting the quality of lives of the people’. This book, blending authoritative research results with applicable international case studies is a useful resource for teachers, librarians and administrators in the field and for students aiming for careers in these areas. It is a positive and inspiring contribution to the promotion of the value of libraries in building globally literate communities.