



**International  
Federation of  
Library  
Associations and Institutions**



# **IFLA Guidelines for Libraries Supporting Displaced Persons**

**Refugees | Migrants | Immigrants | Asylum seekers**

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With contributions and support from the working group on Libraries Supporting Displaced Persons of the IFLA Equitable and Accessible Library Services Section

First Edition

November 2024

Endorsed by the IFLA Professional Council



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Suggested citation:

Gerasimidou, D. Bolt, N. Rakočević Uvodić, M. Okerson, A. (2024)  
*IFLA Guidelines for Libraries Supporting Displaced Persons: Refugees, Migrants, Immigrants, Asylum seekers*, International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and Goethe-Institut. Available at: <https://repository.ifla.org/handle/20.500.14598/3696>

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# Preface

## Acknowledgements

These guidelines have been sponsored by the IFLA Equitable and Accessible Library Services Section (EALS) (formerly-named as Library Services to People with Special Needs - LSN Section) and the Goethe-Institut. The writing team was led by Despina Gerasimidou (Greece) with contributions from Nancy Bolt (USA), Helen Chan (Hong Kong), Ingrid Källström (Sweden), Maela Rakočević Uvodić (Croatia), Anne Siebens (Germany), Anna Kolozwksa (USA), Anette Mjöberg (Sweden), Grace Liu (Canada), Ann Okerson (USA).

Early in our work we conducted a survey, and we ran an open consultation on the very first draft of the Guidelines. Feedback was sought across the IFLA community for different drafts of the Guidelines, specifically the following Sections: Academic and Research Libraries, Acquisition and Collection Development, Cataloguing, Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning, Education and Training, Libraries for Children and Young Adults, Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities, Library Services to Multicultural Populations, Literacy and Reading, Management and Marketing, Metropolitan Libraries, Public Libraries, and School Libraries.

We conducted nine in-depth interviews with the following libraries: 1. Brooklyn Public Library, NYC (USA), interview by Grace Liu; 2. Brussels Library of Sint-Jans-Molenbeek (Belgium), interview by Ingrid Källström; 3. Denver Public Library (USA), interview by Nancy Bolt; 4. Klintehamn Bibliotek, Gotland (Sweden), interview by Anette Mjöberg; 5. Libraries Australian Capital Territory (Australia), interview by Nancy Bolt; 6. Los Angeles Public Library (USA), interview by Anna Kozłowska; 7. Swedish Library Association - Experts network for libraries' work with multilingualism and new arrivals (Sweden), interview by Anette Mjöberg; 8. The International Library of Stockholm (Sweden), interview by Ingrid Källström; 9. Upplands Väsby Library (Sweden), interview by Ingrid Källström.

Multiple supporting groups of individuals provided input and direction, took part in workshops, conducted in-depth interviews, and reviewed several drafts of the work. These consisted of the following individuals: **I) From the EALS Section:** Anne Barnhart (USA), Dunja Marija Gabriel (Croatia), Helen Chan (Hong Kong), Ingrid Källström (Sweden), Janet Lee (USA), Lisa Krolak (Germany), Marie Engberg Eiriksson (Denmark), Misako Nomura (Japan), Samira Zahra (Germany). **II) From other IFLA sections:** Merideth Fletcher (Canada, IFLA Cataloguing Section), Razina Akhter (Bangladesh, IFLA Children & Young Adults Section), Anette Mjöberg (Sweden, IFLA Public Libraries Section), Corinne Hill (USA, IFLA Public Libraries Section), Leslie Kuo (Germany, IFLA Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section), Oddbjorn Hansen (Norway, IFLA Library Services to Multicultural Populations), Saskia Boets (Belgium, IFLA Libraries Serving Persons with Print Disabilities Section). **III) From other library organisations:** Anna Kozłowska (USA, representing the ALA Subcommittee for Serving Refugees, Immigrants and Displaced Persons), Adriana Blancarte-Hayward (USA), Amber Hayes (USA), Grace Guoying Liu (Canada), Helen Boelens (Netherlands), Linda Bruyninckx (Belgium), Mare Maticevski (Australia), Nicanor Diaz (USA), Nilsson Torbjorn (Sweden), Oriana Acevedo (Australia), Sharon Han (USA), and Virginia Vassar Aggrey (USA).

## Background

These guidelines grew out of a small chapter on services to refugees inside the IFLA Guidelines for library services to people who experience homelessness (August 2017) of the IFLA EALS Section (formerly-named as LSN Section). This worked as an inspiration for IFLA EALS, which decided to create the first-ever IFLA guidelines for libraries supporting displaced populations.

## Purpose of the Guidelines

The guidelines aim to be a practical guide for libraries that support or wish to support displaced communities. They will serve as a vehicle to expand the traditional role of libraries and librarians.

The guidelines are aimed at library professionals at large: librarians, library administrators, educators, management, schools, governments responsible for libraries and library programmes. For the purpose of these guidelines, we consider library staff and management as one. The guidelines do not focus specifically on library management matters, but on how a library as a whole can support displaced communities.

Since these are international guidelines, one size cannot fit all. There will never be one library system or model applicable to address all displaced communities across the world. The situation varies among countries and even among libraries in the same country. The guidelines touch upon a big spectrum of matters and recommendations, which each library should examine based on their library-specific needs, priorities, and feasibility.

## The role of libraries in a world of global displacement

How can libraries serve the world in a world of displacement? In the face of the largest [global refugee crisis](#) since the second world war<sup>1</sup>, library support to displaced persons is one of the most vital things that we as a library community could provide right now. Library professionals should not limit themselves to what they traditionally know as librarianship, but rather allow themselves to enter a new space of learning.

Imagine that you want to improve your and your family's life, and you are prevented from doing so in your own country. There can be many reasons why people face forced displacement: armed conflict, climate change, work, political reasons, COVID-19 pandemic<sup>2</sup>. Libraries play a crucial role as **trusted community spaces** and **welcoming sanctuaries for all**, regardless of the displacement or limbo state people might find themselves in, and no matter what kind of intersectional vulnerability they may face at the same time, like gender identity, childhood, third age, or disability.

Apart from being a safe haven for all, libraries also contribute to the **two-way integration process**; not only do they help displaced individuals recover from their traumas and integrate into the host communities, but they also allow both displaced and host communities to learn from each other and understand their differences. This way libraries justify one of their fundamental values to serve the community as a whole, welcoming all cultures, all traditions, all languages. Through the

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<sup>1</sup> For statistics about the forced displacement, check the [UNHCR Global Trends Report 2023](#), released in June 2024.

<sup>2</sup> COVID-19 is characterised as the great disrupter in migration and mobility by McAuliffe et al 2021 in [IOM's report](#).

**appreciation of cultural diversity**, they contribute to social cohesion in multicultural societies and the peaceful co-existence of people.

Libraries play a pivotal role in empowering displaced individuals, safeguarding human rights, and fostering cultural understanding. Their responsibility as allies in safeguarding cultural memory and heritage benefits both host and origin societies, promoting positive social interaction. Their contribution and this handholding are so important in building inclusive societies that recognise the inherent dignity and rights of all individuals, regardless of their displacement status.

## Legal and policy context

Several internationally endorsed documents serve as foundations for the establishment and support of library services to displaced populations. Reflecting the human rights and guided by [IFLA Core Values](#) and [Code of Ethics](#), these guidelines showcase how libraries can practically champion their core mission for **universal and equitable access to information, ideas, and works of imagination** aiming at social, educational, cultural, democratic, and economic well-being.

When supporting displaced populations, libraries safeguard cultural diversity, promote multicultural understanding, and leave no one behind. They thus align with both the UN 2030 agenda, and [Mondiacult 2022 declaration](#), UNESCO's landmark to better profile culture as a global public good.<sup>3</sup> IFLA has an active role in [putting libraries in this discussion](#).

According to the [Global Refugee Forum 2023](#), refugee numbers have doubled since 2016, while in the case of SDG 4 on education, close to half of school-age refugee children are out of school. These outcomes emphasise the crucial role of libraries in upholding human rights for displaced persons on an equal basis as other people, something also reflected in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Human rights are inherent to all human beings and can neither be given nor taken away from all of us. We all have them simply because we exist as human beings, regardless of our nationality, migration status, gender identity, age, religion, language, traditions, cultural diversity, or any other status. The principles of universality, equality, and non-discrimination are the cornerstones of international human rights law.

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#) Art.1: All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights.

One of the most important factors in rebuilding lives is access to information and education resources, and libraries play a key role in addressing this growing need, especially when it comes to displaced people. Libraries are the most appropriate institutions to ensure that displaced persons exercise their **right to access to information** without discrimination, offering information on healthcare, housing, education, job opportunities, and fair asylum procedures. Many international and regional human rights conventions protect the right to information, and especially in an era of misinformation and disinformation, this is more needed than ever before.

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<sup>3</sup> Watch UNESCO's side-event in the [Global Refugee Forum 2023](#), "[Culture Beyond Borders](#)".

The right to access to information is founded on the broader **right to freedom of expression**<sup>4</sup>, emphasising its importance in fostering the latter.

[International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights](#) Art. 19.2: Everyone shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of his choice.

The library environment can indeed serve as the third place for displaced persons to freely express their cultures, practices, languages, values and modes of life. This freedom to exercise their culture not only helps in their integration and resilience, but also enables them to exercise their **right to identity**, their **cultural right** in its broad definition, their **right to the city**, and their **right to the library**. Libraries as third places empower displaced individuals to participate in the cultural life of both the host and origin communities, enjoy the arts, share in scientific advancement and its benefits –all essential in building the sense of confidence and well-being of every individual, shaping their cultural identity.

[International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights](#): Cultural rights are an integral part of human rights and, like other rights, are universal, indivisible and interdependent. The full promotion of and respect for cultural rights is essential for the maintenance of human dignity and positive social interaction between individuals and communities in a diverse and multicultural world.

## Disclaimers

The guidelines can be read either as a whole document, or in separate, standalone chapters. Therefore, some topics (training, partnership, policy and others) are intentionally repeated across chapters. This is done on purpose for those many people who will choose to read one specific chapter and not all.

The guidelines use United Nations (UN) terms and phrasing. It is important for librarians to familiarise themselves with the wider discourse, in order to be able to integrate into broader efforts that better facilitate and meet the needs of displaced persons.

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<sup>4</sup> Also adopted in the [UN Convention on the Rights of the Child](#) (Art. 13) and the [Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#) (Art. 21).

# Glossary

**Displaced persons/people/communities/populations:** Persons who have been forced or obliged to flee or leave their homes or places of habitual residence (whether in their own country or across an international border), in particular as a result of or in order to avoid the effects of armed conflict, situations of generalised violence, and human rights violations or natural/human-made disasters. In the context of these guidelines, we refer as a whole to all these different groups: asylum seekers, immigrants, migrants, and refugees.

**Asylum seeker:** An individual who is seeking international protection. In countries with individualised procedures, an asylum seeker is someone whose claim has not yet been finally decided on by the country to which they submitted it. While every refugee is initially an asylum seeker, not every asylum seeker will ultimately be recognised as a refugee.

**Immigrant:** From the perspective of the country of arrival, a person who moves into a country other than that of their nationality or usual residence.

**Migrant:** A person who moves away from their place of usual residence, whether in a country or across an international border, temporarily or permanently, and for a variety of reasons. Migrants leave their country not only because of a direct threat, but also to find work, study, reunify with family or for other personal reasons. Some leave because of poverty, unemployment, natural disasters, or other circumstances. These migrants can return home because they do not fear persecution in their countries.

**Refugee:** A person who, due to a well-founded fear of persecution for reasons of race, religion, nationality, or membership in a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of their nationality and is unable or, due to such fear, is unwilling to receive protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of their former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, due to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.

**Host community:** A community that hosts large populations of refugees or internally displaced persons, whether in camps, integrated into households, or independently.

**Host country:** The country in which a non-national stays or resides, whether legally or irregularly.

**Host language:** The language spoken in the host country or host region.

**Origin country:** The country where an asylum-seeker, refugee or migrant comes from and of which they possess nationality. In the case of stateless persons, the country where they have their habitual residence.

**Origin language:** the language spoken by displaced persons, as part of their own culture and identity. This includes both heritage or native languages, and primary or secondary languages.

# Guidelines

Find selected examples in the [Appendix A: Examples](#). The numbers align with those in each section.

## Services & Programmes

Guidelines on library services and programming to support displaced persons.

### 1. Language

- 1.1 Develop a language access plan. Aim to build the ability to support people in many languages.
- 1.2 Look at the backgrounds of the staff you are going to hire or the volunteers you work with.
- 1.3 Create a Volunteer Language Bank, a group of librarians that are certified and formally trained for translation and simultaneous interpretation.
- 1.4 Recruit displaced persons from your area who speak both host and origin languages to provide some translation services. For example, ask them to help you translate parts of the library's website and make library services more convenient and successful for displaced persons.
- 1.5 Create a multilingual collection of both physical and digital resources in the host and origin languages. Language barriers are a challenge, especially in survival-focused environments like camps, where culture and education may be neglected. Identify all the origin languages, by cross-checking the countries of origin and the language data per country. Consult the [Translators without Borders](#), and the [UNESCO World Atlas of Languages](#). It is important to determine which languages are not being served at all and whether some communities are under-represented or not represented at all. Work with experts from humanitarian aid organisations and/or displaced communities to create book collections in multiple languages.
- 1.6 Have an easy-to-read or multilingual website: website resources should have depth –the language should be available beyond the main library page. Use pictograms, symbols and images, and translate the website in the main origin languages. Hire displaced persons to help you in that. Language accessibility is critical.
- 1.7 Buy a lot of materials in the origin languages, for example, driving licences books in Arabic. Use IFLA and your international network of library professionals, if you find it difficult to identify books or other resources in the origin languages. Ask colleagues from around the world.

- 1.8 Translate library brochures into the core origin languages to produce a bi/multi-lingual library brochure. Make sure to communicate the right message to the displaced persons. Depending on their country of origin, displaced persons may or may not even be familiar with what a library has to offer –or that they are welcome to use the library.
- 1.9 Use free translation tools or purchase professional packages. In many cases, the critical communication link of language is often broken. Train especially the front door staff how to use free translation tools, like [DeepL](#) or the free glossaries of the [Translators without Borders](#).
- 1.10 Curate contextualised learning materials and resources, easy-to-read leaflets and pictograms. Symbols, cartoons, and visual communication in general can help to spread the message for the signage and the library services. If you create a brochure from scratch, start by including the basics: 1) visual elements, 2) what the library offers, 3) a map showing how to come to the library e.g. from the refugee camp, 4) opening hours, 5) introduce some of your staff (with first names and photos) and be sure to indicate if any of them speak any of the origin languages.
- 1.11 Build an emergency preparedness culture. Create emergency pamphlets (mini lexicons) that translate and transliterate key phrases from the origin to the host languages.
- 1.12 Facilitate the purchase of pocket dictionaries as gifts with money raised and donated by charities, grants, private foundations, or local citizens.
- 1.13 Provide materials to displaced individuals so that they can receive information in their origin languages. For example, there are radio networks that offer indigenous language programming.
- 1.14 Hold weekly Language Exchange groups or language cafe conversation groups to allow displaced persons to practice the host language.
- 1.15 Offer both host and origin language lessons. Offer one-on-one language tutoring and everyday-conversational language classes.
- 1.16 Host creative writing groups or book clubs in easy English (or your host language). Ask librarians and displaced persons to read easy-to-read books together in book-circle/ shared-reading meetings.
- 1.17 Provide multilingual storytelling events for displaced people to tell their stories with an interpreter.
- 1.18 Promote ways (hosting events, promoting research, establishing scholarships) of advancing study of language endangerment or indigenous languages to raise awareness of language diversity and its importance to human rights. Check the [Endangered Languages Archive](#).

- 1.19 Host a writer's residency in origin languages, promoting your library's multilingual collection on sociolinguistics, philosophy and anthropology.
- 1.20 Develop a documentation project on the diversity of languages used in your city/region/country and its evolution throughout the years. Documentation is one of the tools that libraries can use to give back to society.

## **2. Information**

- 2.1 Promote the rights of displaced people by distributing "Know Your Rights" cards in different languages, and reports published by UN agencies, as the UN Special Rapporteur on the Human Rights of Migrants.
- 2.2 Provide resources to help people manage their daily lives. Create packets of information and handouts -preferably translated into the origin languages. Note: we don't recommend creating a separate space that houses resources, books, and leaflets for displaced persons only. There is a fine line between a positive space to enhance specific service and a space that feels like negative segregation. Some examples of resources might be: "New in town? Here is basic local information": 1) Contacting migration authorities, 2) Locating housing, 3) Job searching, 4) Applying for school, 5) Leisure/Recreational activities, 6) Accessing social services, 7) Language training, 8) Food services, 9) Using banks and getting currency, 10) Getting health assistance, 12) Pharmacies, Hospitals and medical centres".
- 2.3 Create a list of free medical clinics in your area to be used by anyone who does not have access to the healthcare system.
- 2.4 Collect resources of particular interest to displaced people, preferably in the origin languages: 1) information about legal requirements related to the status of refugees, 2) required forms, 3) basic information about ratified conventions in the host country. For example, recommend they use the "[Status of Ratification Interactive Dashboard](#)" to see at a glance maps of the ratification status of human rights treaties, or the status of a country with regard to the treaties. 4) basic principles of National and International Law regarding labour law, human rights, women's rights (rights of pregnant women), children's rights (education rights), migration, and asylum law (family reunification). Although libraries should be careful about offering legal advice themselves, they can partner with bar associations or local immigration NGOs able to provide legal advice.
- 2.5 Gather as much information as possible about relevant services and how displaced persons can access them. Collect brochures and flyers from other related organisations and make them available in the library. Partner with local refugee/migrant organisations to have a constant flow of flyers in the library.
- 2.6 Provide access to: 1) book collections, such as self-help books, local maps, advice, and tips, 2) special collections relating to their own cultural group and background, 3) local

and national news, 4) news from around the world and especially from the countries of origin, and 5) host and origin language learning materials.

- 2.7 Create a program, where librarians and displaced persons read newspapers together at conversation tables.
- 2.8 Document the history of displaced persons for cultural memory and heritage keeping. All libraries, and especially research libraries, play an important role in supporting research about displaced populations by acquiring relevant collections and collecting primary materials when possible. Engage with students and faculties about these timely issues through outreach activities.

### **3. Helpdesk**

- 3.1 Offer one-stop-shop helpdesk services or initiate daily/weekly/monthly walk-in hours. For example, help printing and - to the extent possible - filling in different kinds of forms or booking appointments or help answer questions on a variety of topics, including: 1) job search & job applications, business and career assistance, 2) host language learning, 3) housing questions, 4) citizenship (green card), 5) healthcare, incl. mental health, 6) translations, and 7) government forms, etc.
- 3.2 Be honest and admit when you cannot answer a question, but take the time to let them know: "We cannot give legal advice, but we can help you make an appointment". The handholding and support libraries can offer to displaced individuals is much appreciated.
- 3.3 Create the possibility for a general appointment, i.e., "I have questions". Sometimes displaced people don't want to make an appointment for a specific topic, because they feel shame about being a displaced person or are a victim of domestic violence. This general appointment will allow them to disclose minimal personal information or just meet with someone and talk.
- 3.4 Arrange library tours for displaced persons with interpreters in their origin language to explain how the library can help them. Involve displaced persons who are already regular library patrons.

### **4. Events**

- 4.1 Organise an event/webinar where you give voice to refugees who have become librarians or library educators, thus collecting refugee stories that come from our own professional and academic community.
- 4.2 Host talks, events and exhibitions in support of [Refugee Week](#), Black History month, International Mother Tongue Day, etc.
- 4.3 Organise events to celebrate [World Refugee Day](#) – 20 June.

- 4.4 Host cultural integration celebrations like Divali, Eid.
- 4.5 Host talks by displaced persons. Invite them as speakers to major events, like libraries' annual congresses.
- 4.6 Arrange ethnocultural clubs, game clubs, music, arts, dance, literature clubs, and storytelling clubs.
- 4.7 Organise a cultural awareness festival every year; for example, a two-week anti-racism festival each year. Include open evenings with music, food, dress traditions, cultural games and classes on different cultures, history, customs, and traditions. Showcase the rich cultural wealth of the displaced communities. This way libraries can bring the displaced individuals together to celebrate their own culture without marginalising, abandoning, or diminishing it.
- 4.8 Organise day trips to cultural institutions such as the Migration Museum or the Museum of Modern Art. Involve both locals and displaced persons in the same group for each tour.
- 4.9 Curate exhibitions of current displaced artists and promote their work.
- 4.10 Curate exhibitions with artworks made by unaccompanied asylum-seeking or migrant children to sensitise the host community. Consider touring those exhibitions in other libraries.
- 4.11 Curate physical or virtual exhibitions around the topic of displacement. Consider promoting/touring those exhibitions on a national, regional, and international level.
- 4.12 Curate physical/virtual exhibitions with famous refugee leaders in literature, science, culture, or politics in your own country or internationally. Design communication campaigns and educational programmes. Some ideas: [Famous refugees Refugee week](#), [Famous refugees Wikipedia](#), [Traces Project UK](#).
- 4.13 Promote campaigns of trustworthy community agencies that raise money or in-kind contributions, like toiletries, clothing, books, maps, phone chargers, board games, medicine, and food for displaced communities. You may also partner with them to collect these in the library.
- 4.14 Facilitate handwork/craft groups to be attended by both displaced persons and host communities. Help those who attend to get to know each other.
- 4.15 Open the library on a closed day to welcome displaced persons and build trust with them, highlighting the library as a culturally safe place. Consider working with refugee partner organisations for this purpose via outreach models.

- 4.16 Organise cooking evenings. Invite the community for a group lunch or dinner. Offer cooking lessons in the library with families from both the host and origin countries. Ask both displaced people and host communities to exchange recipes, test each other's food, and co-curate a cookbook.
- 4.17 Facilitate mothers' and fathers' storytelling group. Ask mothers and fathers to collect and share cultural stories. Do a podcast series of displaced person stories in accessible formats as a gateway to diversity and space for others.
- 4.18 Facilitate human libraries. Give both displaced people and host communities the opportunity to share stories and ask questions. Use the [UNESCO Model of Story Circles](#). This methodology involves a group of people sharing personal experiences in a circle for purposes of mediation, restorative justice, and for developing intercultural competences. Also, use [UNHCR Social Connections Handbooks](#).
- 4.19 Organise movie nights in the library. Show films or documentary screenings around a refugee topic. Movies do not necessarily need to be about displaced persons and their problems: just a typical movie from their country of origin. Facilitate discussions after the movie.
- 4.20 Facilitate a theatre group in the library. Make an open call, asking both displaced people and host communities to participate.
- 4.21 Put on a few short theatrical performances in multiple languages, e.g. English, Arabic, Farsi, Nepali, Swahili, Vietnamese, and other origin languages.
- 4.22 Theatrical plays and games also make good reading aloud events for children. Facilitate multilingual reading aloud events in or outside your library.

## **5. Courses**

- 5.1 Offer vocational training courses (professional language, job search, labour market integration)
- 5.2 Offer courses on basic principles around the host country's legal system (e.g. labour law, migration and asylum law etc.) and international human rights (women rights, rights of pregnant women etc.)
- 5.3 Partner with your local bar association and hold legal forums in refugee camps to increase legal literacy.
- 5.4 Offer citizenship test preparation courses and driving licence theory courses
- 5.5 Offer arts and craft classes or programmes in which people work together: for instance, fixing things or other practical tasks. Offer a space for individuals to express themselves without a language barrier.

- 5.6 Get ideas from other GLAM, like [Libraries of Sanctuary](#) or [The Network](#).
- 5.7 Get ideas from or take part in art in [UNESCO Master Class Series against Racism and Discrimination](#).
- 5.8 Ask library schools to include modules about library services to displaced persons in their curricula. This can be done on a library association level or as a library recommendation.
- 5.9 Partner with library schools and invite LIS students to your library for an onsite visit and discussion on how your library supports or plans to support displaced individuals. This might help build relationships with LIS students who might be interested in writing their essay on your case study or becoming an intern or volunteer at your library.

## 6. Hate Speech

- 6.1 Challenge hate speech. Sometimes there is tension between host communities and new people coming into them. Assist with integration of displaced persons into a community's culture, and at the same time help host community residents understand the culture of the displaced people. This can be done through discussions and celebrations of cultures.
- 6.2 Use the [UNESCO Framework for Enabling Intercultural Dialogue](#).
- 6.3 Become informed by reading the UNESCO Global Analytical Report "[We need to talk](#)". Note the [operational definition of the Intercultural Dialogue](#): "a process undertaken to realise transformative communication that requires space or opportunities for engagement and a diverse group of participants committed to values such as mutual respect, empathy, and a willingness to consider different perspectives."
- 6.4 Get more ideas about opening these complex discussions from campaigns run by UNESCO, other UN Agencies, or other humanitarian organisations that respond to this challenge: for example, [Fight against Racism & Discrimination](#).
- 6.5 Be a reporting point for hate incidents and hate crimes to empower ALL people, even the most silenced voices. Follow the protocols of your local government to do that. Be safe spaces for all and assist in lowering the tension and removing hate speech from any debate.
- 6.6 Libraries in the last few years have made a philosophical turn from neutrality to advocacy. Be consistent, confident, and not controversial when you take a stand confronting this important contemporary societal issue. Have ready-made answers prepared before you are challenged.

- 6.7 Create monthly themed book displays, with both light-hearted (e.g. Eurovision) and topics of a stronger agenda (e.g. racism, hate speech, or holocaust) to raise awareness.
- 6.8 Campaign to remove hate from the debate.
- 6.9 Create a respect and love toolkit.
- 6.10 Create a video to welcome displaced persons to the library. Present the library in an accessible format for people who may not read.

## **7. Community**

- 7.1 Offer working space inside the library to humanitarian aid organisations. Many organisations are new and have no budget for offices. Raise awareness around what the library could offer and invite them to visit the library on a regular basis.
- 7.2 Team up with local agricultural associations and institutions, if your library is located in a rural area.
- 7.3 Partner with the bar association in your area. Offer free notary slots or legal clinics inside the library on specific days. Librarians and lawyers working together is a promising relationship.
- 7.4 Team up with local anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations who are developing networks and actions advancing a democratic and participative society.
- 7.5 Join forces with the municipality in informing newcomers about what the library offers. Offer an introduction course to the library.
- 7.6 Work with displaced persons directly. Recruit refugees for translation services. See displaced people as library partners in the service design and evaluation process. Include a statement in your library's mission about its commitment to serve displaced people.

## **8. Local citizens**

- 8.1 Create a platform or a program through which citizens can donate money for free customer online passes that enable displaced persons to use library online services.
- 8.2 Encourage and connect citizens with refugee-related NGOs to become library volunteers.
- 8.3 Host naturalisation ceremonies in your library, welcoming displaced persons to your community. Hold "People meet people" events that bring together both host communities and displaced persons. Create teams of one host community person and one displaced person to manage such sessions in the library.

- 8.4 Invite citizens to become volunteers in your library, through well-designed and attractive offers. Celebrate their work by giving them visibility via online published videos in which they describe their experience as volunteers.
- 8.5 Transform citizenship-related library courses that are addressed to displaced individuals into courses that are also for local citizens who don't know a lot about civic literacy or crucial matters like voting, fake news, and so on. Create a library game with "Know your Rights" cards or a quiz titled "Could you pass the citizenship test?". Aim for a multiplier-effect by creating an all-inclusive civic engagement programme.
- 8.6 Organize crowdfunding campaigns (Kickstarter) to support your library's multicultural programmes. Organize donation campaigns that focus on the vulnerability experienced by women and girls in matters of sexual and reproductive health, including menstrual processes.
- 8.7 Provide volunteer opportunities for individuals to assist with citizenship preparation.
- 8.8 Host events where senior citizens and displaced individuals meet, for the purpose of developing language skills and also to connect with and integrate into the host community.

## **9. Technology**

- 9.1 Offer free access to the internet and devices inside the library.
- 9.2 Provide access to free wi-fi outside the library, e.g. in parking lots or in refugee camps.
- 9.3 Computers or other electronic devices should include updated resources to complement and support: 1) formal and informal education, 2) legal inquiries, 3) training programmes, 4) job searching strategies, 5) recreation, through eBooks, games, videos, etc., 6) local, national, and global current affairs, 7) health and self-care, and 8) e-government services etc.
- 9.4 Offer classes in computer and internet use. Guide displaced people in the establishment and use of an email account.
- 9.5 Assist displaced persons in filling out online forms.
- 9.6 Assist displaced persons in the use of technology, for example to communicate with relatives in their country of origin; to search for separated family members; to access information about status, jobs, and other community resources.
- 9.7 Be available online for everyone. Libraries have a responsibility to support all people.
- 9.8 Provide digital access to national and international news related to immigration and migration.

- 9.9 Provide digital access to news from the displaced persons' countries of origin.
- 9.10 Dedicate part of the library's website to the services offered to displaced persons, without spotlighting - and thus segregating them.
- 9.11 Introduce the front desk staff on the website (photo, name, and a quote) preferably in the main origin languages.
- 9.12 Incorporate languages and non-Latin scripts used by displaced persons when creating/updating descriptive records for their materials and when providing subject access. Speak to your library software vendor to determine what functionality their tools provide to support multilingual cataloguing and client discovery in other languages.

## **10. Outside the library**

- 10.1 Go where displaced populations live or gather to undertake outreach work.
- 10.2 Offer library courses outside the library, in places like restaurants, laundromats, or churches where displaced populations gather.
- 10.3 Create pop-up library spots inside refugee camps or asylum centres, offering free Wi-Fi access and free courses and events. For example, offer free courses in weaving and sewing in refugee camps and then create an exhibition in the library.
- 10.4 Provide local agencies that work with displaced persons with a library brochure in multiple languages. Ask them to include it in the welcome kit they give to displaced persons. Ask for a line/paragraph about the local library to be added in the welcome guide they offer to displaced persons.
- 10.5 Visit displaced communities by going to their open gatherings, meetings, and events: for example, in churches, associations of displaced people, immigration service agencies, or apartment complexes. Take the library's promotional materials (flyers, posters) where the displaced persons are. Design different flyers using pictograms, in multiple languages and for different target groups: e.g., use different languages for parents, kids, the elderly etc.
- 10.6 Take your mobile library to places where displaced populations gather or live, like refugee camps, associations, organisations, and asylum centres. Establish deposit libraries there. Create pop-up libraries that offer origin and host language classes/conversational groups.
- 10.7 Reach out to displaced persons via text messages where possible and invite them to specific library events.
- 10.8 Partner with other institutions and advocate outside the library for refugees.

- 10.9 Leave library leaflets in multiple languages in trams, bus stations, trains, restaurants, laundromats, churches, or synagogues.
- 10.10 Create QR codes of the library leaflet in multiple languages. Print the codes in a library brochure and hang the codes in public spaces etc.

## Library policies

Guidelines on library rules and policies, when supporting displaced people.

### 11. Have a policy of dignity and respect for everyone

- 11.1 Establish a policy of dignity and respect for everyone's identity and culture.
- 11.2 Staff attitude matters, and a welcoming and friendly approach can make library users feel included and seen.
- 11.3 However, staff may have serious concerns about serving displaced people, frequently based on stereotypes. A negative or hostile attitude towards displaced persons can make it difficult for library staff and users. Challenge stereotypes if you hear them in routine library operations.
- 11.4 Adopt a zero-tolerance policy against negative and hostile attitude towards displaced persons, bearing in mind the pitfalls it might have.
- 11.5 Build trust and friendship with patrons. Introduce yourself as a librarian and ask the name of the library patron. Giving your name to a library user who is a displaced person helps to create a respectful and equal relationship. This approach can add to a positive and welcoming and supporting library environment for all, lessen tensions, and clear up any misunderstandings.
- 11.6 Advise staff to read and apply the [Bias-Free language guidelines](#) made by the American Psychological Association, especially the ones around the [Racial and Ethnic Identity](#) and the [Socioeconomic Status](#).

### 12. Privacy policy

- 12.1 Patron privacy should be protected to the greatest extent possible in all print and electronic records and communications.
- 12.2 Individual circulation records must never be shared with anyone other than library staff. Any records of loans should be disposed of securely on a regular basis to ensure displaced persons' privacy.

## **13. Equitable access policy**

- 13.1 Libraries are committed to serving all library users equally. Adopt a policy to state that all people using the library are treated equally and that legal status is not a requirement or necessary for library service. Being an asylum seeker is not an illegal status by definition. Library management must address any unconscious bias that may be displayed by staff or the host community.
- 13.2 Include services for displaced persons in the library's strategic plan and mission statement. Such a statement could be: "Cooperating with our multicultural community to create equitable opportunities for support, learning, discovery, and connection" or in your strategic planning use the phrase "Our library values diversity".
- 13.3 Assess who is impacted by library policies. If they disproportionately affect displaced persons, consider alternatives.

## **14. Inclusive communication policy**

- 14.1 Work on visual communication, like symbols and images, with easy-to-read texts or multilingual leaflets. Create inclusive brochures and pictograms to visually communicate both the library services and the signage inside the library building.
- 14.2 Use positive language to communicate rules and policies to your users, including displaced persons. For example, rather than listing all the behaviours that are not allowed, provide a simple and short list of what is allowed.
- 14.3 Use as many ways as possible (different mailing lists, social media, ethnic media, handouts, advertisements in local papers, chat groups, ad campaigns on bus benches, buses, big billboards etc.). Different ways of spreading the information will attract different target groups.
- 14.4 Use the word of mouth. This is the best way to spread information and promote library activities. Talk to people, either directly or ask key organisations to stimulate word of mouth among the target groups themselves.
- 14.5 Work in a flexible way with displaced communities, showing cultural appreciation, for instance around religious holidays as Ramadan.

## **15. Library card policy**

- 15.1 Clearly say that the library is a trusted and welcoming place for all, not a police station, and that many library services can be accessible to all, regardless their official documents.
- 15.2 Be flexible regarding issuing a library card and implement changes that make the library a welcoming environment that includes everyone.

- 15.3 Accept alternative documentation such as local immigration non-profit issued ID cards (e.g. papers from the Migration Boards).
- 15.4 Accept membership in relevant refugee organisations as a means to access library services.
- 15.5 Refer displaced persons to relevant organisations to get their IDs as soon as possible.
- 15.6 Issue temporary library cards (e.g. for 3 months).
- 15.7 Introduce 'lite' membership, which could be guest or limited access cards for temporary visitors who lack all necessary documentation or have difficulty producing proof of address. Allow computer use and access to digital resources and e-services.
- 15.8 Waive the even small costs, if your library charges for a temporary or permanent library card. Seek financial assistance from host community individuals, partners, or a government grant to cover those costs
- 15.9 Create a programme where citizens could donate money for free customer online passes which enable displaced persons to use the library online services.

## **16. Staff hiring policy**

- 16.1 Hire staff from the displaced communities to work in the library's multicultural/diversity department. Identify gaps in languages or other skills your staff should have and prioritise those for your next job openings.
- 16.2 Ask the interviewees about their experience from volunteer work e.g. in the Red Cross. Library management should consider this as a plus in the hiring process and be transparent and proud of it.

## **Training staff**

Guidelines to train library staff on how they can better support displaced people.

### **17. Choose the right training topics**

- 17.1 Create multicultural collections, easy-to-read websites or visually communicated library signage; guide displaced persons to enter the job market or sporting and leisure facilities, e.g. through practicing the host language(s), conversation tables; create FAQs on issues for housing, finances, [reuniting families](#); show where to direct displaced persons.
- 17.2 Cross-cultural communication skills training. Staff and volunteers should be reminded of the values of equity and respect in library service. Invite staff members to offer their definitions of equity and respect. Discuss what is more important: to be nice or to give the right answer?

- 17.3 Cultural awareness training. Staff/volunteers should be trained on population-specific cultural characteristics and the cultural roadblocks displaced people face. Possible topics include how to support displaced individuals during religious holidays, such as Ramadan. That kind of training allows people to understand cultural complexities and is a great way to establish a practice of cultural humility and appreciation, especially for staff who are not displaced individuals themselves.
- 17.4 Survival languages training: knowing enough when one doesn't know how to communicate in the host language. Highlight the use and advantages of symbols and visual communication, such as pictograms, which are useful for both the signage of the library building and library services. Provide incentives to your staff to develop and learn such survival and visual tools.
- 17.5 Unconscious bias training. Train library staff to avoid bias against displaced persons. Such biases can have a negative impact on patrons. Stereotypes and biases should be openly addressed in training, using research and data.
- 17.6 Sensitivity training on Nonviolent Communication, Discrimination, and Diversity. Understanding the diversity of experiences is aided by reflection on our own cultural practices.
- 17.7 Privacy training. When using the library, displaced people may be particularly concerned about the protection of their privacy. Library staff should understand local and national privacy laws and be able to explain this information clearly to displaced persons who use the library. If the displaced person is not a legal resident in the host country, privacy issues may be crucial in preventing deportation.
- 17.8 Consider offering first aid training, mental health, and psychosocial support courses on how staff might best handle patrons' physical and psychological traumas, stress, stigma, culture shock, etc. Start by exploring these resources: [UNHCR](#), [WHO](#), [IOM](#).
- 17.9 Self-care training for library staff. Providing services to people who have experienced trauma and whose lives are in difficulty can be stressful for library staff, and they will likely need support and resources for self-care as they do this work. Encourage staff during such training to talk about their experiences and concerns. Compassion fatigue and burnout are real challenges as in any helping profession, and library staff can be particularly impacted, especially when working with communities that have been traditionally underserved, marginalised, or socially excluded.

## **18. Prepare before the training**

- 18.1 Create a taskforce of staff members to develop and deliver a training plan.
- 18.2 Assess the needs of library staff. Survey/interview library staff members to identify gaps in their ability to effectively serve displaced people. Use this information to identify the type of training that would be of most use to the staff. For example, start with languages that staff

- members speak. For example, you may have staff members who speak Arabic - train that staff member in patron-facing services or to work on translations.
- 18.3 Find free and online resources made by other organisations. Choose the most relevant ones and adjust them for inclusion in your training courses.
  - 18.4 Find training programmes from relevant departments of the Ministry of Justice in your country or in collaboration with organisations that work in this sector.
  - 18.5 Map the key organisations that work with displaced persons and identify what kind of support they provide to displaced persons. Prepare a guide for staff members' use with information on these various players. Consider developing this guide even further by deploying a plan to build trusted relationships with these organisations (e.g., check when they have events and attend those).
  - 18.6 Work closely with key organisations that support displaced persons (for example, multicultural officers from the local city council and other governmental or non-governmental agencies) from developing to delivering your staff training program. Invite them as observers or presenters in library trainings. Ask them if your staff members can observe or participate at their training courses. Invite them for job shadowing in the library, to get them familiar with library services. Hold meetings with them to exchange experiences and establish cooperation. Ask for their ideas about how library staff can be trained to best support displaced people.
  - 18.7 Decide who from among staff and volunteers needs to be trained and in what areas. Offer generic and shorter training to the whole staff, to address any widespread biases and improve a potentially hostile environment. Offer specialised and in-depth training to the front desk staff and specialist librarians, e.g., the multicultural librarian or the diversity change manager.
  - 18.8 Hire an external trainer to provide training on those topics, if you have the resources.
  - 18.9 Work with your library's external partners to share each other's expertise, in case you lack resources for external facilitators.
  - 18.10 Involve displaced persons in your staff training programmes. Recruit them as speakers and participants at your training sessions. Ask them to share their stories and ideas during the training.
  - 18.11 Work closely with psychologists and social workers for designing and delivering staff development training related to how to handle the mental wellbeing of forcibly displaced people, trauma, hate speech, etc. If you lack resources, consult for-free city council services.
  - 18.12 Work closely with Human Resources professionals to design and deliver training related to self-care for library staff members themselves.

18.13 Organise joint meetings with other libraries or library-related organisations working on similar training topics.

## **19. Follow up after training**

19.1 Offer a forum for staff members to reflect on their experiences and concerns. Offer suggestions and ideas for addressing these concerns. Staff attitudes when serving displaced persons in the library can vary greatly.

19.2 Form committees to continuously evaluate and explore different ways to best serve displaced persons, e.g., different ways the library can reach out to refugees.

19.3 Make plans to keep staff training in this area as part of overall library strategy, in order to sustain the organization's intelligence and tools.

19.4 Open a library job position for a Multicultural Librarian. For better coordination, impact, and sustainability, be open to the creation of new job positions or library departments dedicated to multicultural and diversity issues. There are many possible job titles and examples. If library leadership is planning to create a new library department to focus on designing and delivering multicultural programming, make sure to engage library staff in the discussion. Staff buy-in is important for these kinds of services.

19.5 Evaluate and optimise training content and methods, not only at the end of the process, but also mid-term, during the realisation of the training.

19.6 Offer regular, continuing education. Invest in it. Hold sessions as many times as necessary, depending on your local refugee influx. Two times per year can be a good rhythm to keep staff well trained and engaged.

19.7 Train the trainers. Get the trained staff to train other staff members or volunteers.

## **Building partnerships**

Guidelines to build a strong library collaboration network for displaced persons.

### **20. Cooperate with key players that serve displaced persons**

20.1 Become integrated into the community that you aim to serve. Make every effort to partner with the organisations that serve displaced communities and talk with them to keep up to date on developments. They are not librarians, but they have important information and insights that the library needs.

20.2 Conduct research to identify the key players in the field both locally and beyond, documenting the type of support each one provides. Include local, national, or

international initiatives and civil society organisations that you would like to cooperate with to deliver the best possible services. Document these for internal library use.

- 20.3 Network and establish partnerships with agencies in the humanitarian sector, refugee welcome offices, migration ministries, governmental or non-governmental organisations, human rights institutions, refugee associations, municipality offices for displaced persons, etc. Such organisations lead the work in this sector. The library will benefit from good cooperation and personal contacts in those communities of expertise.
- 20.4 Hold meetings with partners to establish cooperation. Reassure them that you are approaching them to enhance their work, not to replace them. Build trust. Help them understand what the library could offer. Invite them to visit library events. Invite them for job shadowing to get them familiar with the library services.
- 20.5 Search for relevant training courses and ask if a few of the library staff could join.
- 20.6 Determine if serving displaced persons is a goal of the local government. If yes, show willingness to support their goals and ask for i) funding opportunities and ii) official data about displaced populations. The combination of what is needed and what the host community already provides will help you understand where gaps exist.
- 20.7 Network with community leaders and political officials who are responsible for the displaced populations. Invite them to your staff trainings and make a presentation. Plan with them one or regular visits to refugee camps. Make suggestions for cooperation, e.g., offer a deposit collection in the refugee camp, story hours for children, multicultural programming for displaced elderly who may suffer from depression or other mental health issues as a result of displacement, offer space for displaced people to meet, offer working space for the organisation, especially for the non-governmental organisations - many are new and have no possibility for offices.
- 20.8 Cooperate with diaspora groups, which can be a potential pathway to access displaced persons.
- 20.9 Cooperate with local organizations to inform newcomers about what the library offers. Offer a sort of an introduction course to the library services.
- 20.10 Attend their conferences or some of their open events (physical, digital, hybrid).
- 20.11 Ask them to distribute your surveys to displaced persons or include library-related questions in their surveys.
- 20.12 Write grants together with local groups and take part in their consortia. Form coalitions to advocate for funding. Be proactive and initiate conversations about the way libraries serve displaced persons.

## **21. Cooperate with the displaced persons themselves**

- 21.1 Follow participatory approaches. Empowerment must come from displaced persons themselves, actively participating and leading projects and discussions. Work together to create appropriate services and effective programmes. Understand what they need and look for ways the library can be supportive.
- 21.2 Visit refugee camps and discuss their needs. Make site inspections, observe, organise interviews, and think of service ideas your library could realistically deliver.
- 21.3 Create bi/multi-lingual questionnaires in the origin languages and distribute them to the displaced communities.
- 21.4 Conduct focus groups and do interviews to identify their needs regarding the library and the displaced community.
- 21.5 Recruit refugees for translation services.
- 21.6 Hire staff from displaced communities to work in the library's multicultural/diversity department. Identify the gaps in languages or other skills your staff should have and prioritise those for your next job openings.
- 21.7 Engage displaced persons in the planning phase of your inclusive library services. Many service providers (including library staff) may think it is easier to plan for - rather than with - the patrons they serve. The people you serve need to have a voice even in the planning phase.

## **22. Cooperate with GLAM institutions**

- 22.1 Have conversations with other library systems to learn about the work their people are doing in similar fields.
- 22.2 Organise joint meetings and trainings with other GLAM institutions (galleries, libraries, archives, museums) that work on providing similar services. Exchange ideas, operational challenges and solutions.
- 22.3 Barter the services of facilitators or trainers, to expand capacity.
- 22.4 Check out the training or patron programmes offered by other libraries, museums, and archives on a local, national, and international level.
- 22.5 Have your staff conduct research to identify how other GLAM have incorporated the values in their mission and strategy and what kind of new library positions/departments they have developed specifically for multicultural and diversity services.
- 22.6 Write and present conference papers with other relevant organisations.

- 22.7 Bid for grants together with other library-related organisations. Take part in consortia. Form coalitions that advocate for attention and funding for services to displaced populations.

## **23. Cooperate with other organisations or individuals**

- 23.1 Ask the governmental and non-governmental organisations to advise you on a list of individual experts they work with. Most organisations would be happy to expand their networks and give work to their external advisers.
- 23.2 Identify talented providers of relevant training and ask for their ideas: how should your library staff be trained to best serve displaced people? What could they do to help your library towards that goal?
- 23.3 Work with independent researchers, archivists, and/or artists whose work is focused on immigration.
- 23.4 Create partnerships with bar associations, legal aid organisations, translation enterprises, restaurants, hospitals, laundry businesses, etc. Partner with the bar association to offer free notary services for specific days and time slots inside the library. Team up with local agricultural associations and institutions, if your library is located in a rural area, to offer bilingual story times.
- 23.5 Work closely with schools. Displaced children can be conduits of information to their parents and other family adults, carrying messages about library services and invitations and thus encouraging a visit to the library.
- 23.6 Join forces with local anti-racist and anti-fascist organisations who are developing networks and actions towards a democratic and participative society.

## **Assessing needs of displaced persons**

Develop guidelines to conduct a needs assessment. Needs vary from country to country and from library to library, even in the same country. If there is a clear prevalence of a specific displaced population in your area, focus on it (e.g. asylum seekers).

### **24. What you need to find**

- 24.1 How many refugees, immigrants, migrants, and asylum seekers are there in your area? What is the legal status of each group in the host country?
- 24.2 From which countries do they originate? What languages do they speak? Create a list of the displaced persons' source countries and the language data per country. Consult the [translators without borders](#) data for that.
- 24.3 Are there any services currently provided in any origin language? Are there any displaced communities that are not covered at all by any service provision?

- 24.4 What are the ages and other variables of the target groups? How many families, children of what age, unaccompanied children, women, men etc.?
- 24.5 Where are they settled? Which phase are they at, culture-shock or adjustment phase? What are their needs?
- 24.6 What are the goals of the local government and the humanitarian organisations?

## **25. How to start collecting some information**

- 25.1 Do desktop research.
- 25.2 Participate in open meetings/events of humanitarian aid organisations, and keep notes that will inform the needs assessment.
- 25.3 Visit refugee camps to do site inspections, observe, conduct interviews with focus groups and distribute questionnaires translated in origin languages.

## **26. Ask the displaced persons themselves**

- 26.1 Ensure the displaced persons are heard. Participatory approaches lead to smarter policies and more impactful programmes. The library should safeguard the confidentiality of information for everyone involved.
- 26.2 Host "Refugee/Immigrant Community Dialogues" in the library, leading to three outcomes: i) staff listen and learn from the displaced communities, ii) staff become empowered to develop responsive and community-specific solutions, iii) displaced persons and staff strengthen their relationships.
- 26.3 Visit shelters, camp or diaspora communities to talk with displaced people.
- 26.4 Work together with them to create appropriate services and effective programmes. It can be challenging for some displaced persons to know what they want from the library or what the library could provide. Some people come from places where access to public libraries may not exist and an understanding of the idea that libraries offer free services is not present. At other times libraries can be viewed as government institutions, leading to issues of trust. Understand what displaced persons need and look for ways the library can be a cultural hub that will empower them to exercise their human and cultural rights.

## **27. Ask the community**

- 27.1 Request statistical data from governmental or non-governmental agencies regarding the number of displaced populations entering your area and the existing services such as placement, legal regulations, and support services. If the data show a significant number of displaced persons, then planning to serve community members equally well is the library's obligation.

- 27.2 Discuss with local government whether serving displaced persons is one of their goals. If yes, the library can show its willingness to partner and support those.
- 27.3 Visit school districts or reach out to the school system, offer library cards to students, and ask them to invite their parents to visit the library. Displaced children are likely to be learning the host language. Thus, they can be conduits of information to their parents and other family adults, carrying messages about library services and invitations to visit the library.

## **28. Ask the experts**

- 28.1 Establish partnerships with humanitarian agencies that serve displaced populations, e.g., welcome offices, relevant ministries, governmental or non-governmental organisations, human rights organisations, or National Human Rights Institutions, displaced persons associations, churches, and schools.
- 28.2 Write grant proposals together with relevant organisations, such as consortia. Many organisations welcome partners. Sometimes there may be resistance to working together – some organisations can be apprehensive about losing their relevance. Reassure them that you are approaching them to enhance their work, not to replace them.
- 28.3 Talk with staff from other organisations to understand the extent of their services; ask to attend some of their (open) meetings, or visit refugee camps with them, to determine how the library can best help, e.g., offer programmes in the library, a deposit collection in a refugee camp, a story hour for children, or space for displaced people to meet.
- 28.4 Create coalitions to advocate for more attention. Others outside the library field may not be aware of what libraries can offer to displaced persons. Be proactive and initiate conversations.

# **Evaluating services to displaced persons**

Guidelines on how to evaluate the library services to displaced populations.

## **29. What kind of evaluation to do**

- 29.1 Do both internal and external evaluation.
- 29.2 Get feedback from library staff & collaborators (internal) and from displaced persons patrons and non-patrons (external): what worked well and what could work better?
- 29.3 Library staff should be cognizant of the need to protect patron privacy. Do not use methods that automatically identify the respondent. Do not use any patron names without specific permission. Some displaced people may fear deportation or retaliation from their country of origin, if their existence in the host community is known. For this

reason, they may resist participating in library services or evaluations without an assurance that their privacy is protected.

## **30. What to evaluate**

- 30.1 Evaluate ongoing needs, methods the library uses to establish existing and new services, programming offered to displaced persons, training offered to staff, and relationships with key organisations.

## **31. Circulate evaluation forms**

- 31.1 Document the use of library services by counting the number of loans circulated at refugee camps, pop-up libraries, or the number of people attending library programmes or using library computers onsite.
- 31.2 Circulate anonymous evaluation forms. Ask relevant government agencies and NGOs to contribute by sharing their views on the impact your library services have had to displaced persons. Also distribute your survey to displaced persons, asking them to include library-related questions in their own surveys and share the results with you (for example in the question: "How did you find out about the library?").
- 31.3 Offline evaluation forms: distribute them inside and outside the library, in places where displaced people live and gather (refugee camps, refugee associations, NGOs, apartment complexes). Online evaluation forms: distribute the link, or have it open on the library's computers so that the patrons fill them in.
- 31.4 Translate evaluation forms: Use multiple choice questions, which can be particularly helpful in multiple languages. Translate them into the origin languages. Be ready to receive answers in other languages and to translate them into the host language. Recruit displaced persons as interpreters to assist you in the translation process.

## **32. Keep a record of impactful stories**

- 32.1 Assess your library services to displaced persons by observation and gathering stories. Get testimonials and collect anecdotal information related to library services to displaced persons.
- 32.2 Include such stories in your evaluation report and in the library's annual report.
- 32.3 Share some testimonies with your donors, community leaders, and political and government officials to advocate for the library's programmatic support to displaced persons.
- 32.4 Monitor and evaluate what others think about your library services to displaced persons e.g. the promotion, accessibility, and welcoming nature of the service.

- 32.5 Conduct interviews & focus groups with displaced persons. Ask the relevant government agencies and NGOs to help you reach out to displaced people. Conduct exit interviews after individuals have completed their naturalization interview.
- 32.6 If there are staff dedicated to serving refugee patrons, ask the staff to count the number of displaced persons they serve and to ask them specific questions: where they come from, which languages they speak, how much they liked your library's programme and why, and what else would they like the library to offer to them.
- 32.7 Ask the staff to be alert, i.e., to observe and document any story they hear about the library's impact on any displaced person.
- 32.8 Archive humanitarian aid organisations' annual reports that mention any collaboration with your library and compile these into nice stories.
- 32.9 Submit your library story to the [Library Map of the World](#). Use this toolkit to help you: "How to tell your story: elements of compelling evidence-based storytelling" ([EN](#)).

### **33. Produce an evaluation report**

- 33.1 Libraries should evaluate and measure their impact in order to better advocate for their work to community leaders and political officials. Impact data will raise/sustain funds for the launch and continuation of displaced persons-related programmes.
- 33.2 Create an evaluation report annually or bi-annually. Libraries should showcase their impact to governmental/political officials and other community leaders.
- 33.3 Create an executive summary to showcase the work to the general public.
- 33.4 Create a short version of the evaluation report in a form of a pamphlet and distribute it inside the library as a celebration of achievements by your staff.
- 33.5 Identify the strengths and weaknesses of the displaced persons-related programmes, policies and strategies. For example, networking with key humanitarian aid organisations is a strength and can raise the profile of the library service. A weakness might be the lack of continuing staff development training, especially to challenge negative attitudes and instill confidence. Another weakness might be policies that are inflexible, such as address requirement barrier to show an ID in order to issue a library card.

## **Challenges and solutions**

Guidelines to tackle four common library challenges when supporting displaced persons.

### **34. Complex political situation**

The political situation and governmental rules and policies change over time, while they also

differ per country.

- 34.1 Identify countries with a similar political ecosystem to yours. For example, Croatian libraries find it hard to support asylum seekers, as they stay only briefly in their country (transit country). Find where else librarians face this challenge and connect with libraries from such countries to exchange views. Use the "[Status of Ratification Interactive Dashboard](#)" to see at a glance maps of the ratification status of human rights treaties per country.
- 34.2 Acknowledge that the political situation has an economic impact on services. In many countries there are no funds for support, integration work, and competence-building for displaced persons. If this is the case, seek alternative funding streams.
- 34.3 Recognise that library work cannot substitute political solutions but can play a pivotal role in providing support during crises. This is important to highlight in discussions with community leaders or political officials. Advocate to include the diverse social role of libraries in policymaking, especially with regard to the cultural rights of displaced persons.
- 34.4 No matter what the diversity of the local political situation, the matter is global, and there are international laws that safeguard human rights for all people. Every human being is born with human rights. Human rights are universal and valid world-wide. See the "[Appendix B: Human rights and legal matters](#)" for an overview of the universality of the issue. See also recommendations in the chapters "[Assessing the needs of displaced persons](#)" and "[Cooperate with key players that serve displaced persons](#)".

## 35. Lack of long-term planning

Libraries often experience a lack of mandate to continue the work related to displaced populations, resulting in the lack of long-term planning, i.e., 5-10 years' time.

- 35.1 Explore the underlying reasons. Often this happens because specific services are offered within granted or local government programmes that conclude within a specific timeline. The long time governments can take to plan programmes can be catastrophic, since data change quickly. Don't wait, don't overthink in planning: be active, do things.
- 35.2 Deploy a micro business plan for displaced-persons related services, incorporating them into the library strategic plan. Use the [SOAR Model Analysis](#) to assess your organisation's current position before you decide on any new strategy. Ensure you set SMART goals and use them to achieve your long-term objectives. Using such business tools, you will be able to get measurable results and data that will help you build and sustain these services into your library's 5-10 year strategic planning.
- 35.3 Build partnerships with various agencies and foster essential relationships to make this programme part of the library's ongoing services. Involve agencies and displaced persons in your planning meetings. Visit their meetings to get ideas.

- 35.4 Build a culture of emergency preparedness and resilience. Train information professionals on leadership qualifications and competencies to be better prepared before, during, and after emergencies that lead to a big influx of displaced persons.

## **36. Lack of funding**

Funding is the biggest barrier that libraries face to serve displaced communities.

- 36.1 Synergise: be open, connect, and build partnerships.
- 36.2 Do not be shy! Ask for funding and keep in mind that you might need to contact 50 organisations before you get one positive answer. And that is ok!
- 36.3 Create your own fundraising policy. Build systematic, convincing arguments for an effective fundraising strategy. Raise funds from city/ministry grants or private philanthropic foundations. Be mindful: the donors must not determine or change your policy. Stay focused!
- 36.4 Activate the "Friends of the Library" for raising funds for such social causes.
- 36.5 Run crowdfunding campaigns (for example, Kickstarter) to raise money and awareness!
- 36.6 Initiate or participate in national/regional/international projects that support displaced communities. Remember that every library has an organisational structure, the network, and the means to get in contact with companies in order to offer support to vulnerable societal groups, such as displaced people. For example, ask the social responsibility department of a tech company to donate access to digital applications or new computers, and/or printers and tablets to the library, so that you are better prepared to build a support programme to displaced communities.
- 36.7 Use no-cost strategies. Use the library's existing resources (time, staff, and expertise). Think of creative ways to build trusted and stable relationships with volunteers who can help you elevate the work with displaced persons.
- 36.8 Advocate to turn those services into a standard library programme that will get standard funding every year, to ensure sustainability now and in the future.

## **37. Xenophobia**

There can be resistance and discriminatory attitudes from library staff.

- 37.1 Respond with sensitivity. Don't force staff to work on a project with displaced persons if they are not ready to. First involve those who are interested - or experts. Make sure this project is a success and celebrate it properly. Show results and impact to all staff.
- 37.2 Get librarians more used to feeling uncomfortable. Library staff must become comfortable with a mindset of continuous learning and adjusting, building on elements that we may not fully understand, with communities that we don't know well. This can be the case especially for a white librarian who is not a displaced person. A flexible

approach will help staff to become less attached to older models of working, not limiting themselves to what has been traditionally understood as the job of librarianship.

- 37.3 Attend training programmes of other GLAM, for example [UNESCO's Master Class Series against Racism and Discrimination](#), [UNESCO's Story Circles for Building Resilience through the Development of Intercultural Competencies](#). Get ideas from [UNESCO's Fight Racism & Discrimination](#).
- 37.4 Offer [training](#) opportunities to all or some staff members (train-the-trainer). Suggested training themes: bias training, cultural awareness training, conflict resolution training, change management training, and human rights training (right to identity etc.). Refugees at the moment are being dehumanised all over the world, which leads to their marginalisation and identity undermining. Stereotypes and prejudices have great impact on overall social dynamics. Training will help inform staff members.
- 37.5 On a regular basis, organise civic engagement events in the library, e.g., a citizenship class. Include both displaced and host communities to promote a more equal form of co-existence.
- 37.6 Become informed about [xenophobia](#). Based on the [Declaration on Racism, Discrimination, Xenophobia and Related Intolerance against Migrants and Trafficked Persons](#), no universally accepted definition of xenophobia exists at the international level, but it can be described as attitudes, prejudices, and behaviours that reject, exclude, and often vilify persons, based on the perception that they are outsiders or foreigners to the community, society, or national identity.
- 37.7 Become informed about anti-discrimination laws at the national level. If so, train your staff about them. If not, you may wish to advocate to have such laws. How could libraries be involved to combat negative or un-equal treatment? Check more [here](#).

# Case studies

A closer look at three case studies from three different countries and regions.

## Australian Capital Territory Libraries - Australia

[Libraries of the Australian Capital Territory \(Libraries ACT\)](#), provide services to people from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. They help displaced persons showcase their diverse cultural heritage via participating in Canberra's social, cultural, economic, and civic life. This contributes significantly to promoting and strengthening community harmony, in a city where diversity is celebrated and embraced.

Libraries ACT have an impressive [multilingual book catalogue](#), for which they received the 2020 ACT Multicultural Award in the category of *Outstanding Excellence Award for Diversity and Inclusion*. The libraries also offer free membership to anyone living, working, or studying in the ACT. All that is required is proof of identification and residential address. Asylum seekers may not have formal identification documents, so the ACT Government has introduced an [ACT Services Access Card](#) for ease of access to ACT government services, including Libraries ACT. Anyone can access the library's free WIFI, computers, printers, and photocopiers. These are valuable resources for displaced persons, who are also able to attend any of the free programmes, including:

- **English conversation classes:** Fun and welcoming classes for displaced persons to practice English and make social connections.
- **Help with technology:** Anyone can ask friendly library staff for help with a range of digital topics, including iPhone basics, privacy, and security.
- **Children's programmes,** including Bilingual Storytimes, Story Times, Giggle and Wiggle.
- **Adult programmes,** including self-help, author talks, expert talks.

Libraries ACT members can access a huge range of resources, including resources for learning English, in both physical and digital formats, music, movies, eBooks, e-Audio Books, books, magazines, DVDs, and CDs. There are also [LOTE \(Languages Other Than English\) collections](#) in multiple languages. The outreach team works with communities who might have barriers to accessing library services, resources, and programmes. The team consists of a Multicultural Learning Coordinator, Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Coordinator, Disability and Inclusion Coordinator, and Family Literacy Coordinator. Joanna Bragg, Multicultural Learning Coordinator, talked to us about the 2020 ACT Multicultural Award:

"Through networking and outreach activities, we engage with more vulnerable communities to build awareness of our programmes, resources, and services and listen carefully to community representatives to ascertain current needs and service gaps. We partner with government, non-government organisations, local schools (primary, secondary, adult), settlement services and other groups to develop innovative programmes to meet these needs and connect the community to the library. COVID-19 meant that we had to cease all our face-to-face programmes from March 2020 to May 2021. To overcome this, we delivered online English conversation classes via Zoom, and our children's programmes were also available online. The library also set up a Mystery-Box service, which enabled people who were unable to visit the library because of COVID-19 to regularly receive a box of books. During this time, Libraries ACT also won the 2020 ACT Multicultural Award in the category of Outstanding Excellence Award for Diversity and Inclusion, recognising the value of the library's Bilingual Storytimes and the team who present them."

## Brussels Libraries Sint-Jans-Molenbeek - Belgium

The [library of Sint-Jans-Molenbeek](#) is in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, a young and diverse municipality in Brussels with about 100K inhabitants and 185 nationalities. It is one of the poorest municipalities in Belgium, and a transit zone where many refugees arrive. Once registered in the immigration register, refugees move to other cities or towns in Belgium where living conditions are better.

In order for the library staff at Sint-Jans-Molenbeek to determine the needs and the characteristics of their patrons, they access the database BISA (Brussels Institute for Statistics and Analysis) of the municipal population service, which collects demographic figures of the population and their geographical distribution.

The library offers the following services to displaced persons:

- Foreign-language collections
- Multilingual read-aloud sessions
- Reading promotion project 'Boekenbende aan huis' (Molenbeek at home), in which readers (often students or volunteers) read at home for 8 to 10 weeks to children from high schools who have their own origin language, different to the host one
- Purchase of O Mundo books (small world library with children's books) and materials in different languages
- Use of library spaces for lessons
- Internships
- Sign-up as a member
- Free use of internet and computers
- NT2 collection (which is "Dutch as second language") for alpha groups (illiterate)
- Available space for creation and innovation
- Custom guided tours with interpreter and dialogue tables
- Activities/meeting moments in and outside the library

**Foreign language collections:** Much of Belgium's Arab-speaking population lives in the municipalities of Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, Sint-Joost-ten-Node, and Sint-Gillis –all in Brussels. Therefore, there is a great need for Arabic books. Helpfully, the library receives an additional subsidy from the Flemish Community Commission for foreign-language collections, promotional materials, and participation in the Brussels library network.

Together with an expert group and the Foyer Association, the three libraries developed an Arabic collection. The group took the different backgrounds, life visions, and levels of study of the community into account in making choices both about collections and activities. The library also has an English-language collection and in the future wants to develop a Polish collection.

**Partnerships:** In order for the library to provide such services, it partners with several organisations, like the Integration and Civic Education Agency, ambassadors, primary and secondary schools, colleges, other Brussels libraries, Brusselleer (Centre for basic education for adults), the Bonnevie community centre, BRom, the Bonnevie Community, the Commissioner for refugees and stateless persons, daycare centres, CVO (Consortium for Vocational Education for adults), Sint-Jans-Molenbeek Municipal Services, Foyer Non-Profit Organisation, Dutch language

house, the Community centre Vaartkapoen, OBiB/the Flemish Community Commission, (Support for Libraries in Brussels), the Flemish Community, Wijkacademie Molenbeek, and more.

Libraries promote their programmes through the library website, WhatsApp, Facebook, flyers, posters, during library visits, and through their partnerships with ambassadors, Molenbeek Municipal Info, and other organisations.

Linda Bruyninckx, librarian at the library of Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, spoke to us about their challenges: "Communication remains a challenge. Many of our visitors speak little or no Dutch. The library staff has followed training such as 'easy communication and writing'. Dutch is spoken to create practice opportunities for them. If their knowledge of Dutch is insufficient, we speak French, English, or Spanish with them. Of course we faced challenges due to the pandemic. For many refugees, the take-away system that we deployed was an extra threshold. Those who found the way to the library were assisted on site."

**Dual learning with low-skilled young people and refugees:** The dual learning programme at the library of Sint-Jans-Molenbeek, supported by [ESF](#) and the [Flemish Community](#), promotes the access to, and integration of vulnerable immigrant youngsters aged between 15 and 18 years into the Belgian labour market. They receive part-time training linked to an internship that will enable them to find a job. Together with the Foyer Association Integration Centre and Group Intro (training centre in Sint-Jans-Molenbeek), the library started a project for vulnerable Roma youths in 2015. For this, the library received the "Sustainable Employer" label in 2017 and 2018.

Linda spoke to us about the dual learning programme for Roma and refugees: "Working with young people from the Roma culture is not so obvious. It is a closed culture that strongly maintains its own traditions, with an important place for the family and mutual solidarity. In addition, Roma people traditionally place little value on education, which makes school absence particularly high. Girls are often married at a young age, and marriage outside the community is discouraged. As a result, the unemployment rate is also very high. Integration in Belgium is therefore often difficult. However, thanks to the good cooperation with the Training Centre and the Roma Department of the Foyer Association, a positive evolution has been noticed in recent years."

For several years now, the library has been working with refugees more and more. Currently a young Syrian, Mohammed, works in the library. Two days a week he attends classes at the Centre for Learning and Work and the other days he comes to work in the library. His goal is to obtain a diploma of secondary education through dual learning. In the first phase, behavioural attitudes are taught at work (coming on time, notifying people when you are sick, talking to each other...) and once the mutual trust relationship has been created, work is done on competences. The big difference between Roma youngsters and young refugees is that the latter are often supported from home to achieve something in life. The cooperation with Mohammed is also different because he could already read and write in his mother tongue. At the same time, he is more open to the Belgian culture, which can probably be explained by his education in his country of origin.

Linda continued: "If we look at the results achieved, we can see great differences among the Roma youth. Some of them worked in a shop. One became a guide in the Foyer Association migration museum. Through their internships they encountered other communities that have broadened

their world. At the same time, they were sad, because they knew that potential opportunities were not yet achievable for them - but perhaps would be for their children. All girls stopped working after their marriage, with the important difference that they married at a later age and that they chose their partner themselves. The Moroccan youngster Ibrahim, who has been working in the library for the last two years, is the first who obtained a secondary diploma. This gives us hope and motivates us even more to organise internships in the library for vulnerable youngsters.”

## **Denver Public Library - USA**

The Denver Public Library (DPL) has been focusing on providing dedicated services to refugees with the Plaza Programme since 2005. The mission of [DPL's Department of Cultural Inclusivity](#) (formerly called 'Services to Immigrants and Refugees') is to work with Denver's multicultural community to create equitable opportunities for learning, discovery, and connection.

The secret of their success is that they have been focusing on delivering their so-called “Cultural Inclusivity Services” since 2005. Since then, the programme has grown substantially, and now provides online and in-person services in 11 branches with 40 staff paid by a combination of city funds and a Denver Foundation Grant. Interestingly, paid staff members represent many of the cultural populations residing in the Denver area.

The city funds staff members in top positions at the programme, and the rest of the staff are funded by the Foundation on a five-year cycle. This five-year budget planning gives the library the benefit of developing programmes over time. The use of both public and private funds gives the library the flexibility to run the programmes timely and effectively, as the grant funded programmes have fewer restrictions than the government funded ones. While there is planning for the next five years, the DPL does not stop planning for the time after five years from now. The long-term goal is for the programme to be fully funded in five years by the city, and the leadership team works towards that goal. Currently, they use the existing funds to execute, evaluate, and measure the impact of their cultural inclusivity services. In the meanwhile, they use the data collected to gain additional support and stable funding, advocating to their city officials about the importance that such library programmes have in the society.

The Plaza Programme in the branches is free and open to all, with no registration required. It is a place where refugees from all over the world can connect with resources and meet new people. These programmes are designed to be free, open, and welcoming, with as few barriers as possible. They are drop-in sites open to adults, families, and children – people of all ages. No personal information is collected from users to protect their privacy. The Plaza Programme applies a needs-based approach, focusing on providing spaces and services for newcomers to Denver that are based on needs expressed by users.

Services currently offered include:

- Free library registration and library cards
- The DPL Plaza Programme is free and open to all refugees, with no registration required
- English language classes and discussion practice
- Citizenship classes
- Free use of computers, computer training, printers, and photocopiers

- Connection with community resources for housing, health, employment, sporting, and leisure/recreational services
- Assistance in finding a job, starting a business, and homework help
- Use of tools such as sewing machines, audio, and video recording equipment, 3D printers, and coding classes
- Bilingual stories, songs, rhymes, arts and crafts classes, and more for babies, young children, and their parents, offered in English and Spanish
- Legal advice on immigration and assistance from social workers
- Cultural celebrations such as Dia del Nino, Lunar New Year, Welcoming Week, and World Refugee Day
- Staff who speak 13 languages of people in the Denver metropolitan area
- Guides for newcomers in 13 languages; these provide an overview of library services and jargon to new users of a library

In addition, a special part of the library's website, [Mementos from Home](#), features immigrants' recorded stories about items they brought with them when they left home and what those objects mean to them.

Additionally, the library distributes a quarterly newsletter, *Conexiones* which highlights Spanish programming at the library and is developing a website, Facebook page, and a core resource collection in Spanish and other languages. These services are highlighted in the branches where there is a larger number of Spanish-speaking users.

Nicanor Diaz, the Immigrant Services Manager, and Virginia Vassar Aggrey, who runs the Plaza Programme, described how the team worked even when the COVID-19 pandemic struck: "The library closed physically, as did most libraries in the state. We quickly began to plan how we could continue to offer services in an online and remote environment. Amongst the solutions we found, people can now schedule an one-on-one appointment with a library staff member to discuss any topic of interest or need, like questions about citizenship, homework help, and help with technology. One user wanted help in preparing for a driving test. The library also offers Online English Conversation Groups five days a week and an online Citizenship Study Group one day a week. These are free and people are encouraged to sign up and participate. But the two major barriers in providing service during the pandemic were access to technology and how to use technology. Many people relied on the library for internet access. With the library closed, this access was limited as were computer classes."

The DPL case study was illustrated on [IFLA's website](#) to celebrate World Refugee Day 2020.

# Appendix A: Examples

Find below selected examples. The numbers align with those in the previous sections. The examples were generated from the global survey and the interviews conducted for the guidelines.

## Services & Programmes

### 1. Language

#### 1.1

- It is very good if staff/volunteers speak another language. Actually, language skills and personal experience of being a refugee/immigrant in Sweden are more important than the work experience. **Upplands Väsby Bibliotek, Sweden**

#### 1.3

- Based on the library's language access plan, we have a Volunteer Language Bank Language Access Team, which is a group of librarians that are certified and formally trained for translation. They assist with translation of printed materials ranging from library card applications to programme fliers, they also have assisted with simultaneous interpretation for live events. **Brooklyn Public Library NYC, USA**

#### 1.5

- We've provided books in other languages for migrant workers for many years. We also do displays and buy extra book stock for Refugee Week. **Herefordshire Libraries, UK**
- Our schools' collections are constantly updated and selectors actively purchase books to reflect the diverse communities across New Zealand, both in topics covered and languages (e.g. Pacific Island languages). **National Library of New Zealand**
- Get handy ideas on multilingual collections by LESLLA, an organisation that aims to support adults who are learning to read and write for the first time in their lives in a new language. **LESLLA: Literacy Education and Second Language Learning for Adults**
- Check out the online multilingual collection to read and listen for free in 12 languages. This service, called "The World Library Norway and Sweden" is run by the Libraries in Malmö and funded by the Royal Library, the National Library of Norway, and the Swedish Cultural Council, as part of the Strengthened Libraries initiative. **World Library, Norway and Sweden**

#### 1.6

- It is important that there are staff who have expertise in different languages, such as the International Library / Multilingual Loan Centre in Sweden, so that the libraries can get advice / tips when it comes to purchasing media in other languages, or to borrow books from a distance. [Sollefteå bibliotek, Sweden](#)

#### 1.7

- We have been involved in the Welcoming Community project in 2019, in which we dedicated some of our resources to creating a [Community Languages Collection](#) with around 100 items placed in two sections of shelves close to the library's front entrance. The items target populations specific to our area and include a collection of books and

DVDs in languages local to the area: Arabic, Nepali, Somali, Spanish, German, Norwegian, and native languages Ojibwe and Lakota. **Grand Forks Public Library, USA**

- We need books. **Multilingual library, Greece:** [weneedbooks.org](http://weneedbooks.org) & [library.ifla.org/id/eprint/2811](http://library.ifla.org/id/eprint/2811)
- **Books Unbound** organisation, for enriching your collection with cartoon books for displaced populations: [books-unbound.org](http://books-unbound.org).

1.8

- We have access to the [Intran Service](#), which we can use to translate materials for us when we are targeting particular communities. Mostly English, others via INTRAN. Some Arabic. **Norfolk Library and Information Service, UK**

1.9

- The communities got a state contribution to a project called Multi language project for all libraries on the island. So the library can buy literature in other languages, language courses to learn Swedish, digital services, and also hire an interpreter for some programmes. **Klintehamns library on the island Gotland, Sweden**
- In 2015 we became the first NYC library to offer [Language Line](#) allowing staff to have access to telephonic interpretation in over 100 languages. We also use a handheld, mobile translation device, the [Travis devices](#), which we are currently in the process of rolling out system-wide to all 60 branches. Furthermore, we use the FM Transmitter – this kit is part of our traveling technology for staff to use for live events, in order to provide simultaneous translation. **Brooklyn Public Library NYC, USA**

1.10

- Check out the [inclusive brochure](#) made by the Public Library Ghent De Krook in Belgium and the [multilingual dictionary](#) for families with [symbols used to describe emotions](#) in a school in Flanders.
- Use cartoons to communicate library services: [Books Unbound](#).

1.16

- TEDx talk about shared learning: [How Shared Reading Can Help Us Connect](#) by Jane Davis MBE. **TEDx Liverpool, UK**
- I helped coordinate [We Speak NYC](#) groups, formerly known as We Are New York. We also offer Fairytale writing workshops in Spanish, Russian, and English, where participants are nannies and caregivers. **Brooklyn Public Library NYC, USA**

1.17

- [Multilingual magic: Story time books and videos for all kids](#). **Royal Library, Netherlands**
- Multilingual storytime in 17 languages. **Brooklyn Public Library NYC, USA**

## 2. Information

2.1

- We distribute in all of our libraries our "Know Your Rights" cards in 18 languages, in order to inform people about the rights they have without citizenship. The cards are also available online. Helping people become more educated in that topic is really important

overall. The idea started from the city library of the Los Angeles Public Library in cooperation with the Mayor's Office. **Los Angeles Public Library, USA**

2.3

- I know many libraries in the US can provide health resources and information, but it is much harder to provide access to healthcare. Medical school students volunteer at local free medical clinics, and it would be a good resource to pull together free clinics in the US for refugees and migrants that do not have access to healthcare. **University of Arizona, USA**

2.8

- [A Million Stories](#) is a two-year intercultural storytelling project, co-funded by the Creative Europe Programme of the European Union. **Roskilde Libraries**

### 3. Helpdesk

3.1

- The only time I assisted with any immigration paperwork, I read the letter the individual had gotten back from rejecting his green card renewal. This individual cannot read nor write in English or Spanish but can speak both languages and sign his name. Being unfamiliar with the process of the green card renewal, I read the letter, printed the documents and gave suggestions as to how to go about the hard point: he claimed he had paid his fees, but was denied renewal because payment proof was not provided. I asked my superior at the City Office, and they told me not to assist, because I work for the local government. I asked on the listserv of library directors in the state of New Mexico how far they extend their help with immigration paperwork and related issues and was told that they only print off forms; otherwise the individual must provide their own interpreter if they need one and their own help for filling out the applications. Helping more than that may be crossing a line of the boundaries of local government employees helping beyond the services we are designated to provide. I see that it was outside of my job to help in the way this individual needed help. I cannot make phone calls for people, and I cannot petition for their cause. Eventually the individual was able to find someone in town who was familiar with the need, and they got it settled. But it took a while for him to find the help he needed. We are a very rural community, and it is hard to travel to a place and it can be very hard to be of assistance in these matters. **Albert W. Thompson Memorial Library, USA**
- Some issues that were already impacting displaced communities before Covid-19 have increased exponentially: health, food insecurity, housing, and impact on businesses. In addition to the resume assistance, the library offers business and career assistance, as for example access to the [PowerUP competition](#) programme. **Brooklyn Public Library NYC, USA**

3.2

- Communities need more than just information to survive. They need that connection, the support, and the handholding. The handholding is so important. Our clients come to us because we walk them through this process. Just having somebody care a little bit more to

help them, and not just referring them to somebody else, that customer service aspect is undeniably one of the most important things that we do. **Los Angeles Public Library, USA**

## 4. Events

4.1

- "From Refugee to Librarian: In our own words": ALA and the Mortenson Center for International Library Programmes (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library) hosted this webinar to celebrate World Refugee Day.

4.6

- Monthly Literature Club with Russian writers and poets. **Sheepshead Bay Branch, Brooklyn Public Library NYC, USA**

4.9

- Check out the [minority artists art contest](#) and the exhibition catalogues per year. **UN Human Rights Office (UNHCHR)**

4.10

- Check out the library exhibition: [Painting the Border: A Child's Voice](#). **Roger Williams University Library, Rhode Island, USA**

4.15

- We opened our central library on a closed day to host classes for refugee Syrian families who have relocated into the county. One of our youngest library assistants was communicating with one of the Syrian teenagers via Google translate on their phones. The Syrian refugee said "Thank you for opening the library for us. I feel safe here." **Herefordshire Libraries, UK**

4.16

- In the past we organised cooking lessons in the library with families from Greece and Syria. **Veria Central Public Library, Greece**
- Watch the recording of the event [Food Culture from Near and Far: Stories of Identity and Belonging \(A Welcoming Week Online Panel Discussion\)](#), **Mortenson Center for International Library Programmes (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign Library) & UNESCO Centre for Global Citizenship**
- Publication: [Migration of Culinary Traditions in the Region](#). **IOM**

4.19

- Movies by [Dr. Ammar Azzouz](#), University of Oxford, UK

4.22

- The [Brussels Reads Aloud Festival 2019](#) organised by the Brussels libraries, aiming to give more space to the origin languages spoken in Brussels through multicultural storytelling and multilingual reading hours in many places, like on trams while in operation. Watch [this video](#) to see reading aloud in the tram and check the [visuals](#) for the Festival

specifically made by the Brussels author and illustrator Marjolein Pottie. **Brussels libraries, Belgium**

- Organisation that produces [theatre in Arabic for an Arabic audience in Sweden](#). Their aim is to present Arabic drama by Arabic playwrights, which is seldom done in Europe. "We build and develop Arabic culture in Europe with emphasis on human rights, gender equality, democratic rights, etc.". **Arabiskateatern, Sweden**

## 5. Courses

5.4

- We offer one-to-one help with homework, IT-help, free legal assistance, language cafe, job cafe, possibility to meet housing authorities, coaching in how to apply for a job, services in how to understand your economy, group study in how to obtain your driver's license (a success!) You'll find programmes attached to this mail. "Hjälp till självhjälp". ("Helping people to help themselves"). **Upplands Väsby Bibliotek, Sweden**

## 6. Hate speech

6.4

- [Practical guide around hate speech](#). **The Dangerous Speech Project**
- Toolkit made in response to the spread of antisemitism on the internet: [Online antisemitism: a toolkit for civil society](#). **Institute for Strategic Dialogue and B'nai B'rith in partnership with UNESCO**
- Article "[Civil society must work together to address antisemitic hate speech online](#)" **UNESCO**

6.5

- Libraries in Norfolk are a reporting point for hate incidents, as described in the [Stop Hate](#) police campaign. **Norfolk Library and Information Service**

6.7

- Book [Domicide: Architecture, War and the Destruction of Home in Syria](#) of Dr. Azzouz.

6.8

- [Remove hate from the debate](#) campaign by the State of New South Wales through Multicultural NSW (Australia). **State Library of New South Wales**

6.9

- [Respect and Love Toolkit & Resource Guide](#). **San Fransisco Public Library USA**

6.10

- A [video](#) made by Uppsala library, explaining in different languages how users can find all the help they can get at the library. The [library website](#) is in different languages. **Uppsala Public Library**

## 7. Community

### 7.1

- We supply meeting rooms for Settlement Services International to orientate new arrivals. They use a mixture of Arabic, Kurdish, Kurmanji, and Sorani. **Armidale Regional Council Libraries, Australia**

### 7.2

- Our services are pretty specialised, in that our outreach to seasonal migrant farmworkers is devoted to the Florida Agri-Business Child Development Head Start, a local agency. We provide monthly bilingual preschool storytime programmes throughout the year and weekly programmes in conjunction with the library's Summer Reading Program. We developed the first bilingual Bookstart programme in New York State in 1999, to teach parents to choose, use, and make books for their children. The population served is largely "invisible" to the surrounding community. Additionally, due to border restrictions, many migrants are now considered "settled," though their work continues to be seasonal. **Florida Public Library, USA**

### 7.3

- Libraries in New South Wales partner with the free [Legal Aid Refugee Service](#) that provides free legal help for refugees. **State Library of New South Wales**
- When the federal decision to end Temporary Protected Status for Haitians was enacted, the library responded by hosting TPS clinics. **Brooklyn Public Library NYC, USA**

### 7.6

- Collaborating with Denver's multicultural community to create equitable opportunities for learning, discovery, and connection is one of Denver's Public library aims. Check out the library's [Mission and Strategic Plan](#). **Denver Public Library, USA**

## 8. Local citizens

### 8.4

- [Drop in and Draw sessions](#) from volunteers. **Norfolk and Norwich Millennium Library**

### 8.5

- There are more opportunities for people to learn about how to activate their citizenship, how to be good neighbours, and how to handle things that come up in everyday living in Los Angeles. That would provide a bigger platform for the whole community. Many have been here their whole lives, but they have a lot of assumptions about how government works or the role of a citizen. I don't think there's been a time where it could be any more important for people to have that understanding. **Los Angeles Public Library, USA**

## 9. Technology

### 9.8

- [Newspapers from home countries](#). **Armidale Regional Council Libraries, Australia**

9.10

- [Refugee & Immigrant Services & Empowerment \(RISE\)](#). **Kansas City Public Library**.
- [New Americans](#). **Los Angeles Public Library**

## 10. Outside the library

10.1

- One size does not necessarily meet all needs and it can be difficult to reach some refugees, particularly women. **Kent County Council Libraries, Registration and Archives, UK**

10.2

- Our library is very interested in providing more services to diverse groups in our community. We are considering offering more English classes in other places- restaurants, laundromats, churches, synagogues. We hold Legal Forums and clinics at 2 local churches on immigrant rights and new legislation. **Port Washington Public Library, USA**

10.7

- The municipal employee we cooperate with visits the Norwegian language courses to inform us about the [language café](#), and she also sends out text messages to many refugees/immigrants about the language café. **Asker Library, Norway**

10.8

- Partnership work with the Friend Ship on school projects exploring the issues of persecution, identity, having to flee your home, and the importance of sanctuary. Pupils taking part were encouraged to develop a sense of empathy and understanding of others. **Norfolk Library and Information Service, UK**

## Library policies

### 11. Dignity and respect policy to everyone

11.3

- "While there hasn't been outright hostility from staff, it has been difficult to get some staff members to care or understand the complexity of some situations, e.g. people using outdated, offensive language." **Public Library, USA**

### 14. Inclusive communication language

14.2

- The Belgian [Public Library of Ghent \(De Krook\)](#) uses visual communication in the [multilingual dictionary](#) for parents, with [symbols used to describe emotions](#).

### 15. Library card policy

15.9

- We do not require official papers for electronic access or student cards. For adult hardcopy material borrowing privileges we will accept alternative documentation such as a local immigration non-profit issued ID card. **Prince George's County Memorial Library System, USA**

- The Berlin public libraries created a special user category for refugees. ID requirements are more flexible for these users. The annual library card fee is waived. Borrowing is limited to 10 books at a time. This makes it possible for the library to charge no overdue fees and no replacement/damage fees. The reason for this decision was that newly arrived refugees usually have to change addresses at short notice, because the government decides where they are housed. Thus, the libraries decided to give automatic fee amnesty for any books not returned. This user status applies only to refugees, not to immigrants and migrants. **Berlin Public Libraries, Germany**
- We are fully inclusive, and no-one has to prove who they are or where they live. They can then be given an Instant library card and borrow up to 3 items. **Kent County Council Libraries, Registration and Archives, UK**
- "Asylum seekers are the biggest issue. Because they have no documentation or official status in Australia, they lack any government documentation - in our library network we treat them in the same category as homeless people. We offer full access to facilities and services (especially technology) but with limited loans and limited membership requiring annual renewal (versus standard membership of three years). **City of Sydney Libraries Newtown, Australia**

## 16. Staff hiring policy

16.2

- We have hired staff who can speak Somali and Tigrinya. **Motala library, Sweden**
- Paid staff recruited from the refugee community develop the programmes our library offers to refugees. **Denver Public Library, USA**

## Training staff

### 17. Choose the right training topics

17.3

- The staff got training in culture clashes in the Arabic culture and possible snags. **Klintehamns library on the island Gotland, Sweden**

### 18. Prepare before the training

18.3

- I did go through the Department of Justice's Accreditation and Recognition Training Program. It was not necessary in order to perform the functions of my job, but my entire team did go through the training. We signed up through CLINIC (Catholic Legal Immigration Network Inc). We all passed the test. We did not apply to become representatives, but we did take that training. **Office of Civic and Community Services, Los Angeles Public Library, USA**

18.4

- [ALA Libraries Respond: Immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers](#)

## 19. Follow up after training

19.4

- Job titles: Multicultural Customer Specialist; Multilingual librarian; Multicultural Learning Coordinator; Multicultural Liaison; Outreach Librarian; Coordinator of Immigrant Services; Immigrant Services Manager; Diversity and Literacy Librarian; Diversity Change Manager; Inclusive Services Consultant; Supervisor of Outreach and Diversity.

19.5

- The Immigrant Services team is made up of 3 full-time staff members. We have part-time staff to support the formal citizenship classes. Volunteers lead both the English conversation groups and the citizenship prep groups. **Brooklyn Public Library NYC, USA**

## Building Partnerships

### 20. Cooperate with key players that serve displaced persons

20.2

- The [Library Referral spreadsheet](#) was produced by the library's Intercultural Services Department. It identifies organisations in the county and what kind of support each one provides to immigrants. **Prince George's County Memorial Library System, USA**

20.3

- In 2014, BPL applied and was selected to host two Immigrant Justice Corps Community Fellows in IJC's inaugural year. The programme offers free high-quality immigration legal services to low-income immigrants. The IJC fellows speak Kreyól and Spanish and provide services in two library locations. **Brooklyn Public Library NYC, USA**

20.7

- [Multicultural programming for elderly populations.](#)

### 22. Cooperate with GLAM insitutions

22.3

- [The Network](#) and their [newsletters](#) support GLAM and others who work to tackle social exclusion and towards social justice.

22.7

- [Lib4refugees](#): a NAPLE, EBLIDA, and PL2030 collaboration.

### 23. Cooperate with other organisations or individuals

23.3

- The digital project [LET ME GET THERE: Visualising immigrants, transnational migrants and U.S. citizens abroad, 1904-1925.](#)

23.5

- We have students from the IT-programme of our neighbourhood school. We trained them in customer service and gave them some guidelines for working with customers' IT-related

issues. Don't forget: volunteers need to be managed and trained. **Upplands Väsby Bibliotek, Sweden**

## Assessing the needs of displaced persons

### 28. Ask the experts

28.3

- The Council's 'People from Abroad Team' is based in the library. This team delivers community-based social work to people who face additional barriers to accessing traditional services because of their immigration status. All Syrian refugees that the "People from Abroad" team has supported, have become library members and are actively encouraged to use our facilities and join in with the social activities we offer. **Norfolk Library and Information Service, UK**

28.4

- Public libraries in Australia are just one part of the organization i.e., the council which offers a range of migrant and refugees services. Public libraries should not be considered in isolation of the organization they function in providing services. Modern libraries should have moved away from being silos within their own organisation. **Inner West libraries, Australia**

## Evaluating the services to displaced persons

### 32. Keep a record of impactful stories

32.9

- [Toronto Public Library and government cooperate to support refugees.](#)

### 33. Produce an evaluation report

33.2

- [Evaluation Report: Services to migrants and refugees.](#) **Australia**
- [Evaluation of the Libraries: Opportunities for Everyone innovation fund.](#) **UK**
- [Libraries of Sanctuary Resource Pack.](#) **UK**

## Challenges and solutions

### 35. Lack of long-term planning

35.2

- The Outreach Department was developed out of the Brooklyn Public Library's Strategic Plan to ensure access for everyone, which includes services for older adults, families affected by the justice system, immigrants, and people experiencing homelessness. Our department engages with the public to identify needs and develop services to meet them. **Brooklyn Public Library NYC, USA**

35.4

- A community-based organisation called *Northern Settlement Services* operates from a Council-owned building across the street from us. We worked with them to include some of their clients in our activities. **Central Coast Council Library Service, Australia**
- We so far have provided mostly passive programming (books, information) and computer help to anyone who asks. We are currently looking into providing more active programming and have met with a local organisation - The Global Friends Coalition - and participated in some of their programmes. **Grand Forks Public Library, USA**

## 36. Lack of funding

36.7

- "The secret of success is that we have been focusing on delivering the [Cultural Inclusivity Services](#) since 2005. Since then, the department has grown substantially and now provides services to refugees in 11 branches with 40 staff, who are paid by a combination of city funding and a foundation grant. Interestingly, the paid staff represent many of the cultural populations residing in the Denver area." **Denver Public Library, USA**
- We are a fully nonprofit community library (no funding from any city/county), manage with NO paid employees (all volunteers), and operate solely with donations from various supporters and community people from a community whose median income is at or below the poverty level. Nonetheless, our service and outreach are not limited to one ethnic group, race, party, or religion. Anyone that comes in is deemed to be worthy of respect and assistance if desired. **Rio Abajo Community Library, USA**

36.8

- We surveyed participants in one of our programmes to find out what type of services they would like to see at the library and their response was "citizenship preparation." We piloted the volunteer-led groups in 2013 and they were extremely successful, which led to the programme becoming one of our standard programmes." **Brooklyn Public Library, USA**

## 37. Xenophobia

37.2

- "I think that as a profession, we are very aligned with feeling safe and comfortable. We almost require it to move forward. I want to get librarians more used to feeling uncomfortable, to sit with their mistakes and to be able to be embarrassed and move on." **Los Angeles Public Library, USA**

37.5

- "If you live in a place that is anti-immigrant, there's no reason why you should not have programmes that serve all of your communities. Start small by doing something that's very affirmative, like hosting a citizenship class. If you can't do that in your own library space, find a network to refer people to. Try to provide balance in your library system, if you are in a place that's more conservative or very concerned about offering services to people who are non-residents or non-citizens. We serve everybody. We welcome everybody. We serve all residents. "Residents" is a very inclusive phrase. You live here. You live here part-time, full-time, guest-time, whatever it is." **Los Angeles Public Library, USA**

# Appendix B: Human right treaties and legal terms

Basic human right treaties and legal terms that library professionals should be aware of in regards to displaced populations.

## Human Rights

The Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) is the leading UN entity on human rights. The [Universal Declaration of Human Rights \(available in hundreds languages and dialects\)](#), was adopted in 1948 by the United Nations and is the first human rights document to recognise the equal rights of all people worldwide. It brought human rights into the realm of international law, and, since then, the United Nations has diligently protected human rights through legal instruments and on-the-ground activities. Although the document is not legally binding, it forms the foundation of the nine legally binding human rights treaties of the United Nations listed below:

1. International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (1965)
2. International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (1966)
3. International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights (1966)
4. Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (1979)
5. Convention against Torture (1984)
6. Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989)
7. Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families (1990)
8. Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (2006)
9. International Convention for the Protection of All Persons from Enforced Disappearance (2006)

An international human rights treaty is not binding on a country unless its government ratifies it. By ratifying, a country takes on an obligation to respect, to protect, and to fulfill the human rights set out in the treaty. Many human rights treaties have been ratified by a majority of the 193 UN Member States. The International Convention on Migrant Workers, however, has so far been ratified by only 56 states (as of October 2021). This Convention explicitly spells out that all human rights guaranteed in the core human rights treaties apply to migrant workers and their families, including those in irregular situations. Use the [Status of Ratification Interactive Dashboard](#) to see maps of the ratification status of human rights treaties, or the status of a country with regard to the treaties.

Further reading:

- [OHCHR: Migration and human rights](#)
- [OHCHR: UN Special Rapporteur on the human rights of migrants](#)
- [OHCHR: Core international human rights instruments](#)

## Global Compacts

The “Global Compact for Refugees” and the “Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration” are international agreements approved by the UN General Assembly in December 2018 to better protect refugees and migrants and to better support host countries. Both build on existing international law and on the UN 2030 Agenda. The Compacts emphasise the human rights of all migrants and refugees and call on all countries to guarantee their protection. The Compacts are not legally binding. However, by signing them, member states agree to a set of common rules and commit to cooperate with one another.

Further reading:

- [UN Refugees and Migrants](#)
- [Global Compact on Refugees: Digital platform](#)
- [IOM: The Global Compact for Migration](#)

## Refugees and Asylum-seekers

The [1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and its 1967 Protocol](#) is the key international treaty on the protection of refugees. The Convention defines the term “refugee” and outlines the rights and obligations of refugees, as well as the legal obligations of States to protect them. The 1967 Protocol removed geographical and temporal restrictions from the Convention. The agency of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has been mandated by the United Nations to advocate for compliance and implementation of the Refugee Convention.

The Refugee Convention

- defines the term “refugee” as an individual who is outside their country and unable or unwilling to return due to a “well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion”.
- establishes the core “non-refoulement” principle that refugees should not be forcibly returned to a territory where their lives may be in danger. The rights of refugees contained in the 1951 Convention include: the right to work (Articles 17 to 19), the right to housing (Article 21), the right to education (Article 22), the right to freedom of religion (Article 4).

The international Refugee Convention is complemented by regional treaties that also address the rights of refugees. An “asylum seeker” is a person who has applied for refugee status and has not yet received a final decision on their claim. While they are waiting for a decision, asylum seekers have limited rights in their country of asylum. Asylum-seekers in the European Union who do not fall within the definition of the Refugee Convention can get “subsidiary protection” for reasons that include war, violence, conflict, and massive violations of human rights.

Further reading:

- [United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees \(UNHCR\)](#)
- [UNHCR Protection Manual](#): Legal database of international and regional treaties and declarations as well as reports and statements that address the rights of refugees

## Migrants and Immigrants

No international convention comparable to that for refugees exists for migrants. Migrants' rights are implicitly or explicitly expressed in public international law instruments, e.g. international labour law. The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) is the principal intergovernmental organisation working in the field of migration. The International Labour Organisation (ILO) has developed international standards specifically addressing labour migration and migrant workers' rights. Important subcategories of migrants that librarians should have in mind are international migrant, labour migrant, irregular migrant.

Further reading:

- [International Organisation for Migration \(IOM\)](#)
- [International Labour Organisation \(ILO\)](#)
- [Migration Data Portal: Migrant rights](#)
- [UN DESA](#)

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