



IFLA Section Equitable and Accessible Library Services

Equitable and Accessible Library Services (EALS) Section

Newsletter May 2026

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1. EALS Section Awarded IFLA's Dynamic Unit and Impact Overall Achievement Award

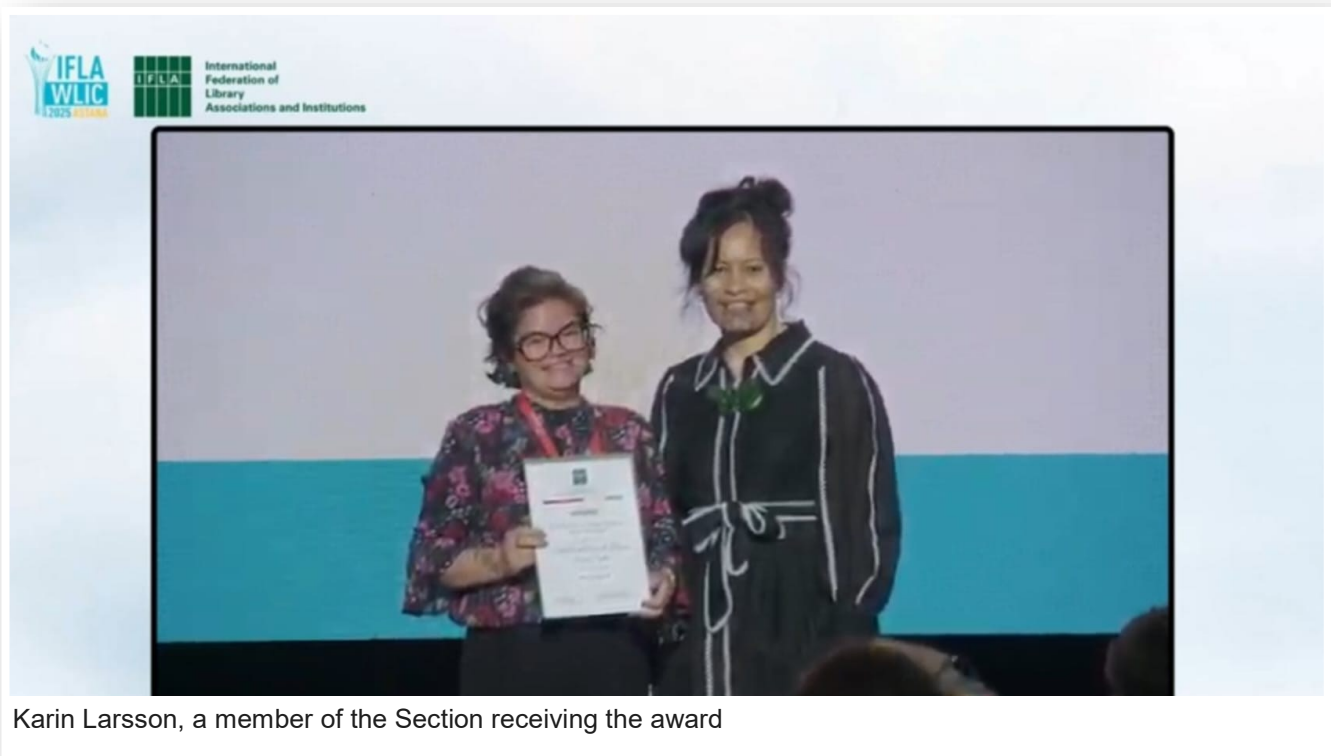
At the 89th World Library and Information Congress of the International Federation of Library Societies and Institutions IFLA WLIC in Astana, Kazakhstan, August 2025, our section was awarded the prestigious Dynamic Unit and Impact Overall Achievement Award (DUIA).

The award recognizes the professional sections with the greatest contribution to IFLA's global work, and is awarded in four categories: Overall Achievement, Quality & Impact of Work, Effective Communication, and Membership Engagement & Leadership Development.

Chaired for the past four years by Maela Rakočević Uvodić, the Section was recognized for its transformation through a name change from 'Library Services to People with Special Needs', demonstrating the importance of language, identity and removing barriers to accessibility. The Section's updated purpose and goals reflect a renewed mission and commitment to inclusion and accessibility of library services.

In the past few years, the EALS Section published three key guidelines: "Guidelines for Library Services to People in Prisons", "Guidelines for Library Services to Displaced Persons" and "Guidelines for Making Libraries Accessible for People with Disabilities". The contributions of the EALS Section also include cooperation with the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UN DESA) on the "Disability and Development Report 2024" which further strengthened their visibility and influence outside the profession itself. The Section held regular virtual meetings, had a strong communications strategy and engaged working groups that actively participated in IFLA publications, webinars and conference sessions. Karin Larsson, a member of the Section and one of the authors of the "Guidelines for accessibility of libraries for people with disabilities", accepted the award in Kazakhstan on behalf of the Section.

- *Jane Garner*



Karin Larsson, a member of the Section receiving the award

2. Language Café in University Zagreb

The Library of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Zagreb, has been successfully continuing the Language Café (JeKa) project for the fifth consecutive year. This innovative initiative has become an example of good practice in the work of academic libraries. The project was conceived by librarians Jasmina Sočo and Lana Zrnić, based on the idea that a library is not only a place for accessing knowledge and literature, but also a space for meeting, social interaction, and support for integration and personal development.

The idea behind the Language Café was to create an informal activity primarily intended for international students and participants of the Croaticum – Centre for Croatian as a Second and Foreign Language. In the welcoming and relaxed environment of the Library, participants gather over coffee, tea, and biscuits while improving their Croatian language skills through thematic discussions, interactive workshops, and cultural exchange. This approach enables language learning beyond formal classroom settings, with a focus on practical communication and everyday language use.



Students gathered for a session a Language Café

Special emphasis is placed on developing communication skills, expanding vocabulary, and building confidence in speaking Croatian. This helps participants navigate the academic environment and everyday life more easily, making their stay in Croatia more meaningful, enriching, and enjoyable. At the same time, the program fosters intercultural dialogue and a sense of belonging within the community.

The continuous implementation of the project over five years confirms its value and positive impact on its users. The Language Café clearly demonstrates how libraries can assume an expanded social role and, in addition to supporting formal education, actively contribute to the creation of an inclusive, empowering, and culturally sensitive university environment, as well as to the promotion of lifelong learning.

- *Jasmina Sočo*



3. Guidelines for Library Services to People With Dementia

In 2026, the IFLA EALS section has formed a working group, co-chaired by Sanjica Faletar (University of J. J. Strossmayer in Osijek, Croatia), and Corinna Haas (German Centre of Gerontology DZA, Berlin, Germany) to update the [Guidelines for Library Services to People With Dementia](#). The first edition of the Guidelines has been published in 2007 by Helle Arndrup Mortensen and Gyda Skat Nielsen. According to the Action plan, the revised Guidelines are expected to be published in 2029. This year, our focus is on building a team.



All information about the project, including the names of current team members together with a link to relevant resources about library services for people with dementia and their caregivers, is available at the Project [website](#). The website will be regularly updated. In

addition, a mailing list has been established to support the working group by offering a collaborative space for the exchange of ideas and experiences (<https://mail.iflalists.org/www/info/dls-wg>).

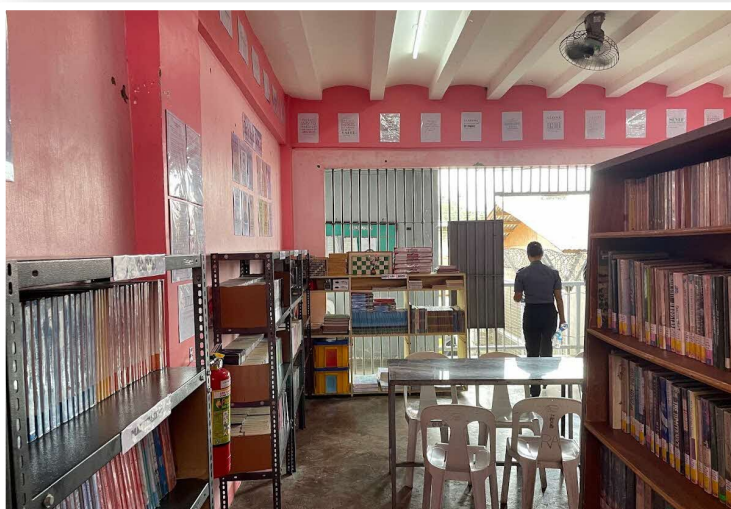
Interested professionals from different backgrounds and work experience with people with dementia (medicine, gerontology, social work, librarianship, arts etc.) from all over the world are invited to [subscribe to the mailing list](#) and reach out if they feel that they can contribute to this project in a meaningful way.

- *Sanjica Faletar*

4. Prison libraries in the Philippines

In December 2025, Associate Professor Jane Garner from the EALS Section worked with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in the Philippines to undertake an evaluation of libraries in thirteen Philippine jails. The UNODC had partnered with the Philippine Bureau of Jail Management and Penology, and the National Library of the Philippines to establish and support libraries in jails where previous library services had not existed or had been insufficient.

The new jail libraries had been in operation for over 12 months, so an evaluation was carried out to understand the role and impact they were having within their jails, and what challenges they were facing in their operation. All thirteen jail libraries have now been visited and evaluated, and a draft report is with the UNODC for review.



Calapan City District Jail Library, Oriental Mindoro, Philip-

The evaluation found the libraries in Philippine prisons are highly impactful and valued by prison residents and custodial staff. They provide opportunities for learning, self-reflection, distraction, and entertainment. Residents of the jails spoke enthusiastically about the positive impact of reading on their mental health and their relationships with each other, their families, and with staff as they share reading time and discussions about books with each other.

The challenges faced by the libraries include difficulties in purchasing reading materials in local languages and finding appropriate spaces within some jails for the library to be located and accessible for visits by residents. The development of stronger partnerships with the National Library of the Philippines and with local government libraries nearby are possible solutions to developing collections, and each jail is doing their best to improve access to library spaces within the constraints of their buildings.

- Jane Garner



5. Cycling for Dyslexia

The bike ride of the Faculty of Philosophy from the University of Osijek, Croatia, has been organized for the seventh time on Sunday, April 12, 2026 in order to raise awareness about dyslexia.



Participants cycling along a picturesque route

Cycling for Dyslexia has been organized annually since 2019 as a support for the national campaign of the Croatian Library Association [I Want To Read Too](#). Next to raising awareness of reading difficulties, the campaign aims to encourage a more intensive cooperation between

relevant institutions and experts, to increase the network of libraries that implement programs for these users, and to invite publishers to produce books adapted to people who cannot read standard, black print.

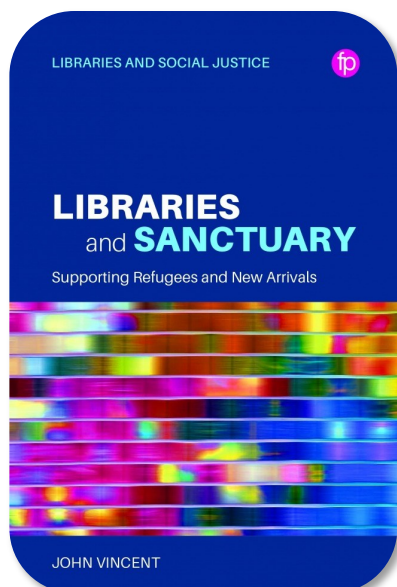
Around 80 librarians, teachers, students and citizens, accompanied by a cycling policewoman, headed on a picturesque route of approximately 15 kilometers from the city of Osijek to Nature Park Kopački rit. City of Osijek provided bicycles for participants who do not own a bike.

Once participants arrived to Nature park Kopački rit, students organized short educational workshops and a competition in the slowest bike ride.

The bike ride was organized by the Faculty of Philosophy in Osijek, the Student Association of Library and Information Sciences Students "Libros", the Student Association of the Psychology Students "Psycho", Osijek City and University Library, Library Association of Slavonia, Baranya and Srijem, the local branch of the Croatian Reading Association, and Polyclinic for the rehabilitation of listening and speech SUVAG.

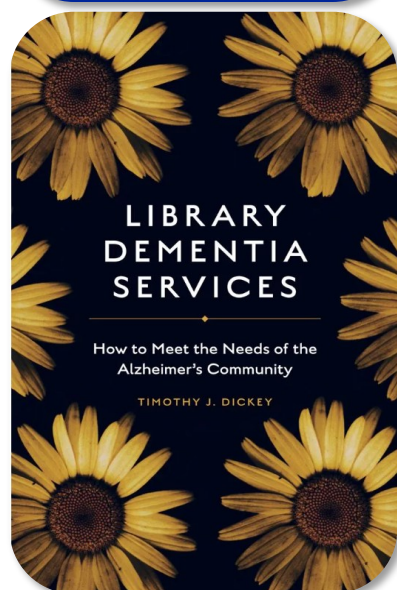
- Sanjica Faletar

6. Book Recommendations



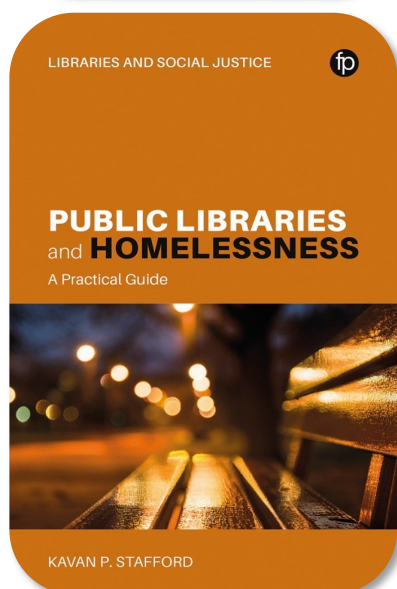
Libraries and Sanctuary: Supporting Refugees and New Arrivals

by [John Vincent](#)



Library Dementia Services

By [Timothy J. Dickey](#)



Public Libraries and Homelessness:
A Practical Guide

By [Kavan P. Stafford](#)

7. Welcoming Our Newest Members



Hello, my name is Montse. I'm librarian and documentalist. I have always worked in information units and I'm currently the librarian and head of the library of a prison located in Catalonia. I began my professional career in specialized libraries, then I spent 13 years in the library of a women's prison and I have currently spent 5 years in a men's prison.

My interests within the profession are very diverse because I'm a very curious person but they are generally close to the information needs in special contexts (prisons, refugees, NGOs, etc.). Whenever I can, I collaborate with university teaching, talks, workshops, conferences, reading clubs, writing articles, etc. I like to create and share knowledge and I feel excited by new projects, especially if they are with multidisciplinary and multicultural teams.

8. The People Behind This Newsletter

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Editorial Board: Kavita Ilangovan, Jasmina Sočo, Jane Garner

Get to Know Us: Curious to learn more? Explore our official website: <https://www.ifla.org/units/eals/>

Drop Us a Note: Have a story to share, feedback to give, or simply want to say hello? Reach out to Jane at jagarner@csu.edu.au.