

Library services for immigrants and refugees: actions and principles from a global perspective

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The need for Multicultural Libraries



1. Increasing number of immigrants and refugees
2. In 2015, people lived outside their original countries reached 244 million (UNFPA n.d.)
3. Libraries as a sanctuary to all people who seek information, space and services to adapt to a changing world

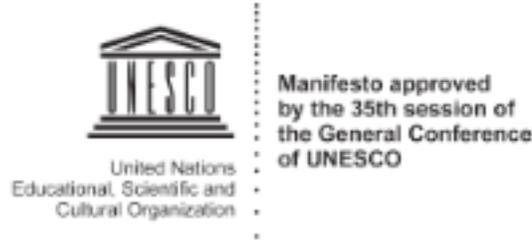


Sock monkey workshop for Syrian refugee youth at the Lillian H. Smith branch of the Toronto Public Library, Mar 11, 2016 (<http://playingforkeeps.ca/fun-video/sock-monkey-refugees>)

The Multicultural Library Manifesto



International Federation of
Library Associations and Institutions



1. Endorsed by IFLA (2006) and UNESCO (2009)
2. “Cultural diversity” or “multiculturalism”: harmonious co-existence and interaction of different cultures
3. Libraries play a significant role as a welcoming space and gateway for immigrants and refugees to the culturally diverse society (IFLA Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section 2015)

What are the actions and implementation of the concept of multicultural library around the world in the last decade?

Principles outlined in the Multicultural Library Manifesto

1. Each individual in our global society has the right to a full range of library and information services
2. Serve all members of the community without discrimination based on cultural and linguistic heritage
3. Provide information in appropriate languages and scripts
4. Give access to a broad range of materials and services reflecting all communities and needs
5. Employ staff to reflect the diversity of the community, who are trained to work with and serve diverse communities

Special attention to be paid to groups that are often marginalized: minorities, asylum seekers, refugees, temporary residents, migrants, workers, and indigenous communities.

As an integral part of any library's full range of library and information services, rather than an isolated or additional part.

Some Challenges

1. Scarcity of published resources in minority languages
2. Demand for service may not correspond to the proportion of population
3. Low demand may reflect inadequate library services
4. Need research into the reasons for the lack or low level of demand
5. In contrast, people from a highly literate multicultural community may make a disproportionate demand on the library service, which can be difficult to meet

Strategies for achieving a robust multicultural library service model

“It is a responsibility of all library authorities to meet the needs of their multicultural communities, particularly for new immigrants and refugees, whose former information search and use experience may become inadequate.” (Loyd 2013)

1. Staff: language skills, good communication skills to work with the community
2. A collection management policy for multilingual and multicultural resources
3. Development of multilingual/multicultural resources with input from the communities that they serve (e.g: use of technology)
4. Understanding the needs of library users: community analysis
5. Participate in the life and welfare of the community: cultural activities, festivals, and the commemorative events
6. Sharing with different library systems

Actions and services around the world

1. Most major urban public library systems in developed countries have partnerships with the government's immigration
2. In response to the Syrian refugee crisis in 2015, public libraries all over the world take up the responsibilities to welcome and provide information and services for refugees to their new home: IFLA, The European Bureau of Library, Information, and Documentation Associations, etc.
3. The Refugee Health Information Network (RHIN - <http://www.rhin.org>)



4. Arizona Public Libraries' services to Spanish speakers
5. Knowledge River program: University of Arizona's School of Information Resources and Library Science - specifically designed to get Latino and Native American students involved in the profession

Arizona Public Libraries Serving the Spanish-Speaking: Context for Changes

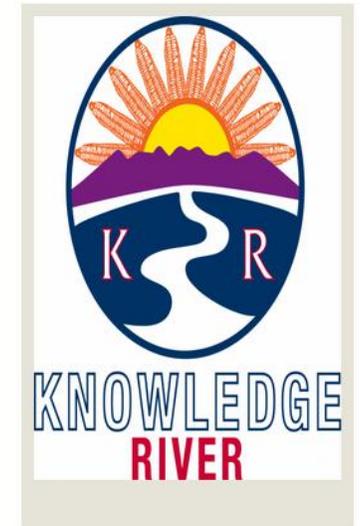
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Hispanic and American Indian Library and Information Issues



6. The Library System of the Municipality of Milan: “Come! I’ll see you in the library.”
7. The Danish Central Library for South Schleswig (DCLS), headquartered in Flensburg, Germany, serves 50,000 ethnic Danes residing on the German side

NEUE ENTWICKLUNGEN

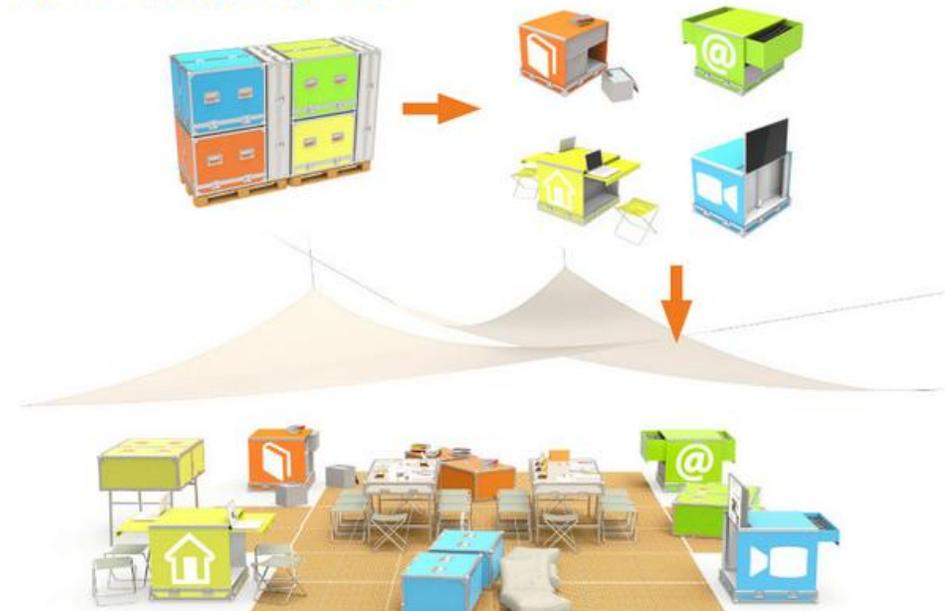
Come! I’ll see you in the Library

**A Project Implemented by Public Libraries in Milan in Collaboration with
“Fondazione Cariplo” and “Fondazione Vodafone” to Foster Social Integration**

8. The website MyLanguage (<http://mylanguage.gov.au>) developed by Australian libraries: multilingual glossary facilitates the generation of professional signage tool for libraries
9. Libraries without Borders brings multicultural libraries (Ideas Box) to refugee camps in 20 countries: Lebanon and Jordan, Indigenous communities in Australia, low-income and immigrant neighborhoods in NYC, etc.



THE IDEAS BOX, A PORTABLE MULTI-MEDIA KIT FOR REFUGEE AND VULNERABLE POPULATIONS



To conclude

Many more examples all over world as libraries carry on the tradition to serve people who need information and library services regardless of their background

The multicultural library concept will continue to evolve

THANK YOU!

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