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## Relindial-Cartonera: Development of intercultural and interreligious dialogue in Drôme

*English translation of the original paper: Relindial-Cartoneras: développement du dialogue interculturel et interreligieux en Drôme*

Translated by: the author, Sophie Vasseur

*The text of this document has been translated into English and differences from the original text may occur. This translation is provided for reference purposes only.*

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### Abstract:

*Following the Congress of the French Christian Libraries Association, I was asked to give life to the IFLA project Relindial-Cartonera in the South East of France.*

*Presently working in the “Médiathèque Drômoise des Sciences Religieuses”, I am working hard to have different religions and culture books and readers in my library holding and make sure they meet each other.*

*For this project of Cartonera, I have developed a lot of relationships between the library and diverse religious representatives (the imam, the rabbi, and the pastor of my town). I am working also with the network of the private schools.*

*When I presented the project Relindial-Cartonera to them, they welcome it as a concrete application of interfaith dialogue, which is so necessary nowadays.*

*For me becoming a member of the pilot team of the project was obviously a great opportunity.*

*The high school students I worked with were so enthusiastic when I asked them to create the first cartonera !*

*I am deeply honoured to be able to share this fascinating experience at the next WLIC IFLA in Columbus for my first participation. By allowing me to listen to testimonies, it would enable us to improve our processes.*

*The IFLA congress is in harmony with this idea. Relindial-Cartonera is an essential step in my commitment to transmitting religious culture, which is part of my job as a Librarian and Secretary of the A.B.C.F.*

*This activity is really crucial in our world : cultures are already living together, but they need to meet in friendly gathering around knowledge, to avoid misunderstanding that leads to violence. The IFLA SIG project Relindial-Cartonera can help this goal and must be supported.*

**Keywords:** Religions, Interfaith, Dialogue, Cartonera, Children

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## **Introduction**

From the opening of the library, we felt that we could not stay self-centered. So we immediately joined the Association of Christian Libraries of France (ABCF in French). We have also created a small libraries network called ABCF Rhône-Alpes, which allows us to meet and share easier on a smaller scale and on a more regular basis making it possible as a network. We are also constantly in contact with the cities' libraries and the surroundings. It is also important to be open to other professional activities. It always develops positively.

So when the opportunity arises to participate in a project larger and further expands on the outside, I think there is no hesitation because it can enlarge the library.

## **Some history ... Creation of the library as a place opens to the public**

On October 22nd, 2011 the Drômoise media for Religious Studies is inaugurated and open its doors to the public. It was closed since 2006 because of repairs. Before this time, the library was not very used. It was exclusively used by seminarians, fathers professors of philosophy, theology, holy scripture, literature ... until the seminary closure in 1973. Then dedicated to a restricted public: teachers, researchers, curious (Christian or not) and no specific acquisition rules were established.

In 2004 Bishop Lagleize decides to bring together in one place the bishopric of services, diocesan services and movements of the diocese throughout the city, and so was born the House of the good shepherd.

Bishop Lagleize wanted to make the library the centerpiece to the new diocesan house. It aims to be a resource for people especially in church services or training in the diocese.

The library is fitted out in 4 spaces:

- The reading area with recent books, general, of reference. Every book is in free consultation. Books are sorted by topic, authors or listview. The local fund which includes regional publications or written by local writers. The youth corner for the very young, middle or older! Books on each religion are proposed to them.
- The book supply in which all books are in our catalog but with a partial notice. They can be available or borrowed.
- The news' area where you can consult at least 50 journals, borrowed as well.
- The heritage area created to maintain all the ancient books (before 1830) in good conditions. This area is closed to the public and is currently in inventory.

An additional area is an integral component of the library, the NICEE area (new cultural and ecclesial identities). The Church and Cultural Pole is in charge of the entertainment with the library.

This area is dedicated to event presentations that occur in society and in the church life. These are the expression of our various communities, the diocesan life, and maybe our universal Church.

At the beginning, the library was opened in September 2010 on an experimental basis to all staffs of the Church of the Diocese, at all the laity in ecclesial mission, students in training at the FOCALÉ (Christian Formation for lay leaders in the Church).

However, according to the wishes of the bishop, the library also aspires to become a place of openness, confrontations and encounters between cultures and religions. It is this profound idea that the library was named "library Drômoise of Religious Sciences". Media

library because it offers several media such as books, CDs, DVDs; Drômoise because the adjective “diocese is too coded for a general public and if we have used “department” it could have brought some confusion with community equivalent. Why Religious sciences? Because of the increase of intercultural and interreligious dialogues particularly in the Drôme department.

We are really concerned to provide a place accessible to all, not just Catholics of the diocese but really all curious people from the religious fact and religions.

### **Funds**

The library specializes in Religious Sciences: Holy Spricture, Theology, Spirituality, Church History, Patrology, religious art, etc. It also contains a local fund for the history of our region. It aims to submit works on all religions to keep his opening goal on intercultural and interreligious world. The fund is open to all public even younger have their own area with books more accessible to them in order to help them discover different religions and answer to their questions.

Are also available some CDs (essentially classic, sacred music of different liturgies).

### **The desire of openess**

With the aim of opening to the outside, the library joins the Association of Christian Libraries of France. It was essential to us, from the beginning, that to work properly and evolve, we had to meet people of the job on a regular basis. We are stronger together! In my job, being open minded is essential. When, in October 2015, I was asked to join the ABCF bureau to be the secretary, I did not hesitate! The ABCF Association is a great opportunity to have regular exchanges with similar professionals. We have then created, at a small scale, a ABCF Rhône-Alpes network that allows us to work closer together and to have more concrete exchanges such as the counting shared of journals that we try to spread to other members of ABCF.

Being a member of the ABCF bureau is a great opportunity to open the library to inter professional dialogue.

It is in this context that I had the chance to meet Odile Dupont and Magali Hurtrel-Pizarro, respectively responsible member of the IFLA SIG Relindial. They showed me their Relindial-Cartonera project and requested that the library become part of the pilot team. Being very attached to what the library is a place where different religions and cultures are represented and meet this project attracted me right away. For the promotion of interreligious dialogue, the library can thus be fully involved.

### **Presentation of the project Relindial Cartonera**

The technique of Cartonera was born in Argentina in 2001 in economic crisis. Paperboard and recovered paper used to manufacture, entirely handmade, unique or limited edition books. The Relindial group has expressed interest in the dissemination of such a project. The goal would be, through book making, raise awareness of the dialogue between religious and spiritualities, create social ties and provide access to the culture of the other. Also to be, Relindial made contact with the French association “Coexister” which seeks to strengthen ties within the society by showing how different beliefs can be an asset. The Cartonera’project is the subject of collaboration with the “solidarity” branch of the association.

The presentation of this project during the last WLIC IFLA in Cape Town, (South Africa), from August 2015 was successful. The African librarians are looking for tools to help them create bridges between the diverse communities of their societies.

Relindial is seeking means (human, logistical, financial) to help build bridges between the different communities of our societies, relay for its communication and supports for literacy development and more generally of knowledge.

For simplicity, low cost and environmental friendliness, Relindial-Cartonera is a peace projects that it easy and rewarding to support.

### **Additional activities with youth**

With the objective that the library is part of the pilot team Relindial-Cartonera project, I first launched in a test on a smaller scale. Besides librarian in my “free time”, I am host to the chaplaincy of public education at high school level. We choose with young people issues they want to address and prepare them with 2 to 3 young people for the next meeting of the group. They chose in December: believing in joy. With all the events that the world offers us, we (leaders) find it revitalizing to everyone to find hope and joy in what is within our reach. Their choice was also to bring each a phrase from the Bible illustrating the theme for them. Following this, the subject may be common to all faiths, I could not avoid presenting their draft Relindial-Cartonera and I offered them to create the first Cartonera. The enthusiasm they have expressed to me and the fruit of their creation is an encouragement more than revealing in the idea to open this interreligious and intercultural dialogue is really expected and needed. I remain convinced that ignorance of the other, fear of the unknown are the basis of what our society and world are today.

### **The first steps of interreligious dialogue**

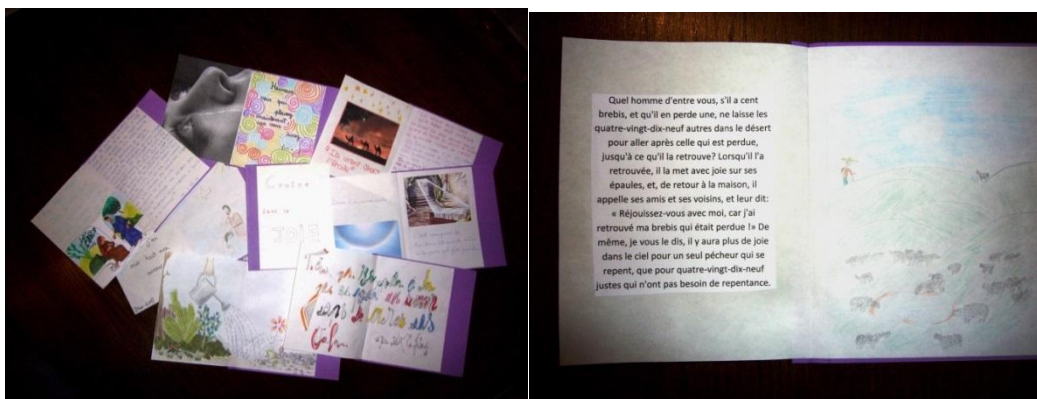
With the position of the library in the heart of the city and diocesan services, I was able very easily to be put in touch with the person in charge of interreligious dialogue in the diocese and enter into direct relationship with the imam, rabbi and the pastor Valencia. I presented the project Relindial-Cartonera to think how we could move toward together. They have the project of an interfaith exhibition and do not know how to interest youngster in this project. An opportunity is offered by the creation of Cartonera to gather everyone around the project. Everyone thinks about a way to set up according to the groups they encounter. I suggested two different ways to support them: either by creating animations in which we would work from Cartonera made each according to his confession, either by helping them to create these little books during an animation. The goal is that we continue to meet and share all those involved in the creation of Cartonera. Expected fruit of resulting from sharing are deepening each in his faith that he will have at heart to present and explore the other leads to better mutual understanding, thus to a pacification of social relations.

### **The first Relindial-Cartonera Mediatheque**

The experience with my group of chaplaincy for the creation of the first Cartonera showed me personal wealth that can be drawn by the exchanges. I think whatever the subject, there is always something positive that comes out. And youngsters are still open minded, very welcoming and respectful to the feelings of each other. And also very curious to discover and understand the other.

The result of their creation on the theme “Beleiving in joy”.

To stay in the first idea of Cartonera, create books from cardboard of waste paper, I provided them with sheets made from scrap paper. The sheets are not yet connected but current which, however, can give a global view of the great diversity of their creativity and also their sensitivity.



We can see right away that everyone is different but that the whole project has been successful.

## **Other considered Cartonera**

The theme believe in joy is a true gateway to the interreligious dialogue, as it is itself unique to each and common to all. However many other topics can be addressed as the festivals that punctuate life in each community. It can also be envisaged encounters between adults or even a group of women on a chosen theme. For example, here at a meeting, a group of women did work on the Psalms.

## **The expansion of the project to school animations**

I also met and presented the project to all the principals of the Valence's Catholic teaching. Although these schools are catholic schools, they have the advantage of having classes attended by children of all faiths. Greater opportunity thus offered to dialogue about our differences, what separates us and unites us. With these schools, we already offer animations either in connection with an exhibition or conference, or with an external speaker; or completely tailored to their desires. These events are an opportunity for fruitful exchanges and also mostly the discovery of the library that offers books adapted to each (age, reading level, all religions).

Many possibilities are offered on the outside with the Relindial-Cartonera project. As already said, the library is at the heart of the Diocesan House, we also collaborate with animators in pastoral health care, prison and secondary schools, disabled ... it always springs rich exchanges and is an opening to the other still greater.

## **Conclusion**

“Alone we go faster but together we achieve more”. The project corresponds fully to that mindset. Relindial Cartonera is an essential step to my commitment to the transmission of religious culture. Working at the Dromoise media for Religious Studies and as a secretary for the ABCF are a great openness to dialogue and exchanges with teenagers. With their questions, youngsters push us forwards and their curiosity of other one without any preconceptions is positive.

## **Acknowledgments**

I would like to thank Odile Dupont who showed me the Relindial- Cartonera and who requested that the library become part of the pilot team, Magali Hurtrel-Pizzaro also instigator of this project and who was present to the Congress last year in Cap.

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