

## LIBRARIES AND PEACE: SOME CURRENT ACTIVITIES

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The information set out below was collected with a view to a poster presentation at the 2016 IFLA World Library and Information Congress. I was unable to produce the poster in time due to illness and logistical problems, but here is a selection of the information kindly sent to me by IFLA colleagues, with some additional notes and sites.

### **BIBLIOHUB (Netherlands/Romanian/Italy)**

This is the product of a Dutch-Romanian partnership in library design. See <http://www.bibliohub.org/about/>. In Italy the Associazione Italiana Biblioteche (AIB), the Italian Library Association, launched a crowd-funded project to place “culture boxes” in peripheral areas where services can be provided to promote socialization among marginalized groups, including **immigrants** and **refugees**. For information and images see: <http://www.takingcare.it/en/bibliohub-device-for-culture/>. The culture box is a mobile library/cultural centre in the form of a large trailer which opens up to reveal an attractive space with books (available for borrowing) as well as internet-enabled computer workstations and a large video screen, providing a play space for kids and a meeting place for adults.



Image from Taking Care website (link above)

## CAPI Library for Peace and Conflict Studies, Ibadan, Nigeria

CAPI stands for the Conflict Awareness and Prevention Initiative. CAPI is a non-governmental, non-profit organization founded in 2004 in Nigeria. It has undertaken a wide range of activities, which includes library and information services encompassing a **research** library, a section for children and young adults, and **information** for peace **advocacy**. There does not appear to be a current website, but information is available from Roselyn Subair, at rosesubair7<at>@gmail.com.

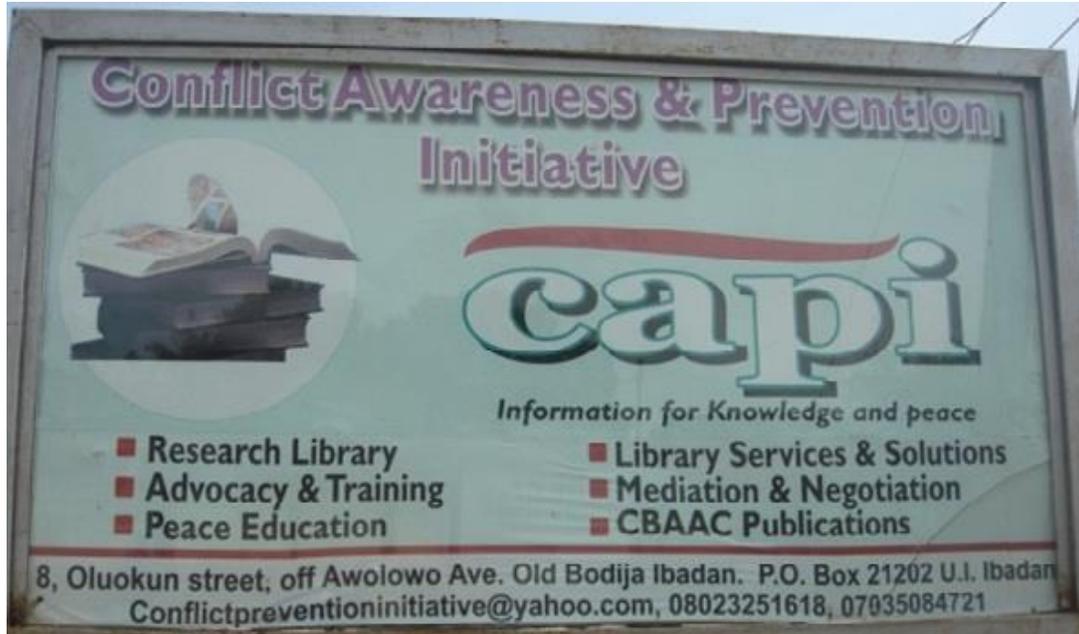


Image provided by Roselyn Suhair

For a recent survey of peace-related activities of Nigerian academic libraries, see: Tinuade, A. O., & Fadekemi, O. O. (2015). Conflict resolution in Nigeria: the role of academic library. *International Journal of Library Science*, 4(1), 13–20. <http://doi.org/10.5923/j.library.20150401.03>

Searching on the web for CAPI turned up another organization with the same acronym, Change Agents for Peace International (<http://www.capiinternational.or.ke/>), which is active in Kenya, Rwanda, Burundi, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. The Burundi programme ([http://www.capiinternational.or.ke/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=78](http://www.capiinternational.or.ke/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=52&Itemid=78)) includes a library, but no details are given.

## Centre for Conflict Resolution (CCR) Peace Library, Cape Town, South Africa

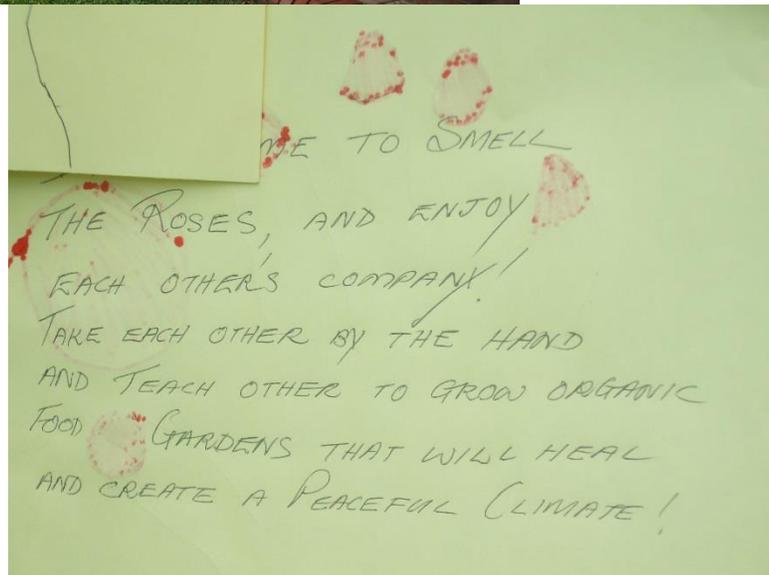
The Peace Library is a specialist **research** library that focuses on the fields of conflict management, negotiation and mediation, and broader peace issues, with a strong pan-African focus. It collects a range of materials that are made available to the public free of charge in order to facilitate peacemaking and capacity building on the African continent. Outreach activities are an important part of its work. For more information and access to its online catalogue see <http://www.ccrlibrary.org.za>. (Information and images from Martha de Jager, mdejager<at>ccr.org.za)



## eThekwini Libraries Peace Programme, South Africa

eThekwini Municipal libraries comprise a Central Reference Library, departmental libraries and around 90 circulating branch libraries serving Greater Durban. See [http://www.durban.gov.za/City\\_Services/ParksRecreation/libraries/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.durban.gov.za/City_Services/ParksRecreation/libraries/Pages/default.aspx). At the Botanical Library, Mohini Padayachee (Mohini.Padayachee@durban.gov.za) initiated a programme to create awareness around plants and their relationship to religion and faith, also to promote peace and nation building via social cohesion. The first Seeds of Unity Programme held in Durban, took place in February 2014 to coincide with World Interfaith Harmony Week. World Interfaith Harmony Week was established in 2011 by the United Nations as an annual event to be observed during the first week of February. (See <http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com/>.) Due to the overwhelming support for the programme, a second Seeds for Unity Programme was held in May 2014.

The pictures (courtesy Mohini Padayachee) show prayer flags, with messages of peace by all the programme attendees.



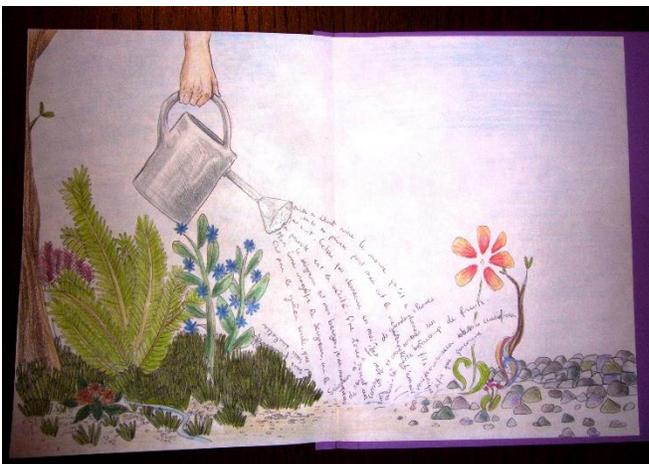
## IFLA

Several IFLA groups are, or have recently been, involved in several activities relevant to the promotion of peace:

The IFLA Continuing Professional Development and Workplace Learning (CPDWL) Section and the New Professionals Special Interest Group (NPSIG) jointly organized a webinar on “Library services to **Immigrants and refugees**”, which took place on 31 March 2016. An archive recording is available at <http://www.ifla.org/node/10483?og=82>.

The IFLA Public Libraries Section responded to the **refugee** crisis in Europe by compiling a document, “Responding! Public Libraries and Refugees”, available at [http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/public-libraries/publications/library\\_service\\_to\\_refugees\\_0.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/public-libraries/publications/library_service_to_refugees_0.pdf). The document describes examples of projects from a number of European countries, and provides many links to websites where more information can be found.

The Religions: Libraries and Dialogue (RELINDIAL) Special Interest Group (<http://www.ifla.org/relindial>) is “dedicated to libraries serving as places of **dialogue** between cultures through a better knowledge of religions.” Two books on **interfaith and intercultural dialogue** have resulted from the group’s meetings. First: the Dupont, O. (Ed.). (2014). *Libraries serving dialogue*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Saur. (IFLA Publications, 163); second: Courau, T.-M., & Vandermarcq, F. (Eds.). (2016). *Libraries at the heart of dialogue of cultures and religions: history, present, future*. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing. Among a variety of RELINDIAL projects and activities, one is of special interest here: the Cartonera Project. The idea derives from a movement born during the 2001 economic crisis in Argentina, when people started making handmade books from cardboard and recycled paper. RELINDIAL intends to use this activity as a means of sharing and **learning about other religions**. The latest project draft is available here: [http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/relindial/documents/relindial\\_cartonera\\_project\\_en.pdf](http://www.ifla.org/files/assets/relindial/documents/relindial_cartonera_project_en.pdf),



Here is an example of a cartonera produced at the Médiathèque Drômoise des Sciences Religieuses, in Valence, France. See [www.mediatheque-valence.cef.fr](http://www.mediatheque-valence.cef.fr). Photo kindly provided by Sophie Vasseur, [sophie.vasseur@catholique-valence.cef.fr](mailto:sophie.vasseur@catholique-valence.cef.fr)

## KRIS (Kristiyano-Islam Peace Library, Zamboanga City, Philippines)

KRIS is a non-profit non-governmental organization based in Manila, devoted to making **education** more accessible to Filipino youth living in poor and conflicted communities. It has scholarship programs and learning projects, and is putting up libraries in areas that are affected by conflict (particularly areas occupied by Muslims and Christians). The organization's concept is to use these libraries as havens of exposure where young people from different backgrounds can come and read, study, and learn together. In the process, it is hoped that they build **friendships** and **overcome prejudices** perceived. See <http://www.krislibrary.com/our-libraries.html>.



Photos provided by Arizza Nocum,  
arizza.nocum<at>gmail.com



## My Book Buddy Foundation (Netherlands)

The My Book Buddy Foundation is a Dutch foundation which was set up in 2010. It has encouraged 376 primary schools in 21 countries throughout the world to start 2291 classroom libraries, thus providing library books to approximately 150,000 children. Since the latter part of 2015, My Book Buddy has also done its best to support school libraries for the **refugee children** who are flooding into Europe from the Middle East. Thus far, the Foundation has provided assistance to 37 migrant and refugee receiving centres, to support approximately 8000 children. (See the website at <http://www.mybookbuddy.nl/>. It is in Dutch, but the images speak for themselves, and there is a button on the right-hand side of the page to invoke Google Translate, which does a reasonable job. The last video on the page is in English.)

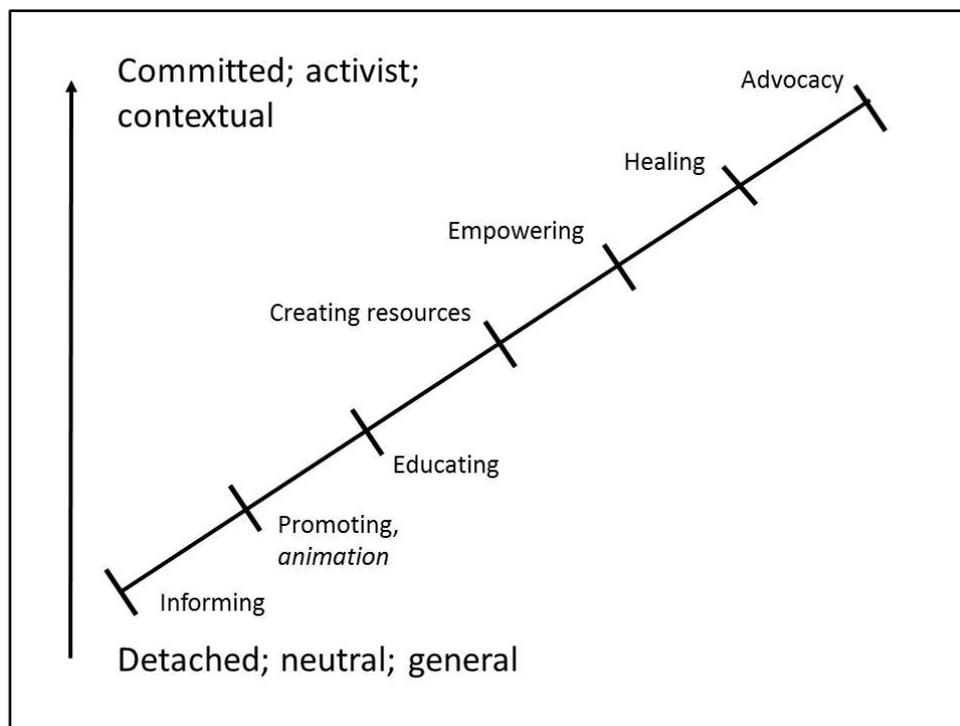


Image from the My Book Buddy website. My thanks to Helen Boelens (helenboelens<at>>xs4all.nl) for alerting me to this and other projects, and to Cathy Spierenburg (cathy.spierenburg<at>planet.nl) for the information. An article on the project to provide school library support to refugee children will appear in the forthcoming issue of the *IASL newsletter*, of the International Association of School Librarianship (accessible to members only).

## Afterword

As I indicated in my message on IFLA-L, I've recently been reflecting on the roles of librarians in making, keeping and promoting peace. This gave rise to a "lectio magistralis" delivered at the University of Florence last month, entitled "Libraries, internationalism and peace". (It is available on open access, in Italian and English, on the Casalini Libri website at <http://ilibri.casalini.it/3104661>. There is a brief outline on my blog at <https://peterlor.com/blog/>.) A shorter, less theoretical version was published in *Focus on international library and information work*, vol. 47, no.1, pp.4-8, 2016. That will be available on open access in about six months' time.

In the "lectio magistralis" I presented a taxonomy of sorts of the roles that librarians can play in promoting peace. It is pictured in the following diagram:



When I try to situate on the diagram the programmes and projects that were listed above, it seems to me that they cluster into three groups: (1) promoting peace through interreligious and intercultural dialogue, (2) services to refugees and immigrants, and (3) education and research for preventing and healing conflict. They don't map neatly onto the diagram, which suggests that further conceptualization is called for, so more ideas and more examples will be welcomed. In the mean time I hope that this compilation will elicit more examples and insights, and that it will provide a stimulus for sharing and learning.