

BACHELOR THESIS

Concepts and services for asylum seekers in public libraries using the example of Germany and Norway

Submitted by

Vanessa Brall

Matr.-No.: 26590

First Examiner: Prof. Dr. Martin Götz, Media University Stuttgart

Second Examiner: Synnøve Baustad, Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø

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Abstract - English

The goal of the following bachelor thesis is to introduce concepts of public libraries concerning asylum seekers. As an example the thesis is using public libraries in Germany and Norway.

Therefore, the reader will be introduced to the general situation, living conditions and preconditions of asylum seekers in both countries as well as to preconditions of libraries and librarians concerning monetary and territorial aspects and education of library staff. Important international library representatives as well as local actors will be introduced and the importance of cooperation between libraries and other organizations will be examined.

In the main part practical methods, services, offers and ways of how libraries can help asylum seekers will be elaborated and possibilities how asylum seekers can actively participate in the library will be explained. Challenges which can occur will be detected and elaborated. Furthermore, the public library of Bergen in Norway and the public library of Duisburg in Germany will be presented as best practice examples.

Keywords: Asylum seeker, Germany, Multicultural Library Services, Norway, Public Library, Refugees

Abstract - German

Das Ziel der vorliegenden Bachelorarbeit besteht darin, in die Arbeit mit Asylsuchenden in öffentlichen Bibliotheken einzuführen. Exemplarisch werden öffentliche Bibliotheken in Deutschland und Norwegen beleuchtet.

Es werden die generelle Situation von Asylsuchenden, die Lebensbedingungen und die Voraussetzungen, die Asylsuchende mitbringen, erläutert sowie die monetären, personellen und räumlichen Voraussetzungen in öffentlichen Bibliotheken ausgeführt. Wichtige internationale Repräsentanten des Bibliothekssektors sowie lokale Akteure werden vorgestellt und die Bedeutung von Zusammenarbeit zwischen Bibliotheken und anderen Organisationen wird besprochen.

Im Hauptteil werden praktische Methoden, Dienstleistungen, Angebote und Wege wie Bibliotheken Asylsuchenden helfen können, vorgestellt. Zusätzlich wird gezeigt, wie Asylsuchende aktiv in die Bibliotheksarbeit miteinbezogen werden können. Herausforderungen und Probleme, die entstehen können, werden ermittelt und beleuchtet. Als Best Practice-Beispiel werden weiterhin die Stadtbibliotheken in Bergen in Norwegen und Duisburg in Deutschland vorgestellt.

Schlagwörter: Asylsuchender, Deutschland, Flüchtlinge, Multikulturelle Bibliotheksarbeit, Norwegen, Öffentliche Bibliothek

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List of Abbreviations

AMIF	Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund
BAMF	Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees)
BOB	Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek (Bergen Public Library)
CEFR	Common European Framework of Reference for Languages
DBV	Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (German Library Union)
DFB	Det flerspråklige bibliotek (The multilingual library)
EBLIDA	European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation
ICORN	International Cities of Refuge Network
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
IMDi	Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet (Directorate of Integration and Diversity in Norway)
LIS	Library and Information Science
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
UDI	Utlendingsdirektoratet Norge (Norwegian Directorate of Immigration)
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

1. Introduction

These days we open our newspapers and often get to read about people fleeing to Europe: “Record 218,000 refugees, migrants [sic] entered Europe in October”¹, “The huge refugee crisis that’s already displaced 220,000 people”² and also “How to make the integration of refugees into the labour market work”³ are just some of the current headlines.

How does that relate with public libraries? The German Library Union (*Deutscher Bibliotheksverband*, abbreviated DBV) states:

“[Libraries] are meeting points and promote the dialogue between all generations, cultures and religions. They support the process of development of social and tolerant civil societies. Libraries are an effective tool for municipalities to support integration and to support the civil engagement.”⁴

If it is a task of public libraries to support integration, shouldn’t we develop services and concepts to work with refugees and asylum seekers these days? Are there already concepts and services existing and how are they implemented?

These are questions I want to explore in my bachelor thesis. As an example I am using two countries with a developed library system: Norway – one of the richest countries of the world⁵ – as well as Germany which plays a major role in receiving fleeing people in Europe.⁶ I will present and examine concepts and services in both countries and at the end of the thesis present one library in each country as best practice example. I decided for Bergen Public Library in Norway which has a

¹ Frisk, A.; Mehler Paperny, A. (2015): Record 218,000 refugees, migrants entered Europe in October

² Yu-Shi Lee, E. (2016): The huge refugee crisis that’s already displaced 220,000 people

³ European Parliament (2016): How to make the integration of refugees into the labour market work

⁴ Kommunale Landesverbände Baden-Württemberg; Landesverband Baden-Württemberg im Deutschen Bibliotheksverband (2009): „Die Öffentliche Bibliothek als öffentliche Aufgabe“, p.3. Translated by the author

⁵ Refer to Greenfield, B. (2012): The world’s richest countries; Pasquali, V. (2015): The richest countries in the world

⁶ Refer to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (2015): Mid-year trends 2015, p. 5

broad offer for asylum seekers as well as overall for the multicultural population in Bergen and was nominated as best library of the year in 2015 for conducting many events.⁷ As second library I will present Duisburg Public Library which is a leading library concerning multicultural library services and services for asylum seekers as well as refugees in Germany.⁸

The topic of the present thesis must be differentiated from the topic of „multicultural library work“ which has already been explored thoroughly in the specialised literature. The topic of multicultural library work is targeting not only asylum seekers, but all people with a migrant background in a society. While multicultural library services do overlap in some ways with services for asylum seekers, they are not the same. Asylum seekers have special preconditions, for example they did not voluntarily decide to leave their home country, mostly come from a very different culture and mostly do not have knowledge about the local culture. Multicultural library work can be seen as a generic term.⁹

While refugees might already live several years in Germany or Norway and have a good command of the local language, asylum seekers are usually new and might not be able to understand the local language. The thesis is focusing on the latter one, but the mentioned services and concepts can be relevant to refugees who are relatively new in Germany and Norway as well.

Because we are talking about a topic which is highly topical, where new important decisions are sometimes made within a few days and where changes happen fast, I am using many internet sources and journal articles to provide a thesis based on the current situation. Along the way I am also going to introduce several practical examples and mention libraries which offer specific services to show the implementation of services and concepts in the reality.

⁷ Refer to Norsk Bibliotekforening (2015): Dette kan bli Årets bibliotek 2015

⁸ Refer to Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 519ff

⁹ Refer to IFLA: The IFLA multicultural library manifesto; Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2015): Interkulturelle Bibliotheksarbeit

2. Asylum seekers and their situation in Norway and Germany

2.1 Definitions of the terms “asylum seeker” and “refugee”

The word “refugee” is commonly used in our daily life nowadays, although some people are not aware of its exact meaning. Already at the “Convention relating to the Status of Refugees” in 1951, where also Germany and Norway took part,¹⁰ it was defined like this:

“[Someone] owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of that country; or who, not having a nationality and being outside the country of his former habitual residence as a result of such events, is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to return to it.”¹¹

An asylum seeker is someone who claims to be a refugee and who applied for asylum in another country, but his/her case is not concluded yet. Therefore, the applicant is not an official refugee until the decision about the case is made.¹²

In comparison to that a migrant is usually someone who changes his place of residence to another country for at least 12 months.¹³ In general migrants are not threatened for their life and they choose to move to another country voluntarily, sometimes only for a period of time, sometimes for longer. There is a vari-

¹⁰ Refer to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees, p. 2ff

¹¹ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Convention and protocol relating to the status of refugees, p.14

¹² Refer to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Asylum-seekers; Refugee Council: Who's who?; NSW Government, Department of Education (2015): Who is a refugee?

¹³ Bundesministerium des Inneren; Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2011): Migrationsbericht des Bundesamtes für Migration und Flüchtlinge im Auftrag der Bundesregierung. Migrationsbericht 2011, p. 13

ety of reasons such as for example better economic perspectives, to escape poverty, family and social reasons or to have access to better health care.¹⁴

¹⁴ Refer to United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees: Refugees; Anderson, B.; Blinder, S. (2015): Who counts as a migrant? Definitions and their consequences; Nuñez, C. (2014): Why people migrate; BBC: Migration trends; Bundesministerium für wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ): Flüchtling, Asylbewerber, Binnenvertriebener, Klimaflüchtling, UNHCR

2.2 Refugee situation in Norway and Germany

Both Norway and Germany have very different external preconditions when it comes to refugees.

While Germany is just a bit larger than Norway (ca. 360 000 sq km vs. 325 000 sq km), Germany has more than 15 times as many inhabitants.¹⁵ Looking at the total number of asylum applications Germany is one of the largest recipients with 476 649 asylum applications alone in 2015.¹⁶ Moreover, there are 211 052 refugees living in Germany and 39 610 people who were granted asylum during 2015.¹⁷ When we take into account that Germany has currently 80 854 408 inhabitants (as of July 2015),¹⁸ refugees make up ca. 0,26 % of Germanys population while asylum seekers which came in 2015 make up ca. 0,59 % of the total population.

Norway has a total population of 5 207 789 (as of July 2015)¹⁹ including around 188 000 refugees living there in 2015 which make up approximately 3,6 %²⁰ of their total population. There were 31 145 people who applied for asylum in 2015 which make up ca. 0,59 % of the total population like in Germany.²¹

This illustrates that refugees are not only an issue in Germany and therefore also in German libraries, but also in Norway and Norwegian libraries.

¹⁵ Refer to Central Intelligence Agency (2015): Europe: Norway; Central Intelligence Agency (2015): Europe: Germany

¹⁶ Refer to Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Aktuelle Zahlen zu Asyl, p. 4

¹⁷ Refer to Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015, p. 53

¹⁸ Refer to Central Intelligence Agency (2015): Europe: Germany

¹⁹ Refer to Central Intelligence Agency (2015): Europe: Norway

²⁰ Refer to Østby, Lars (2015): Flyktninger i Norge

²¹ Refer to Utlendingsdirektoratet (2016): Statistikk og analyse

2.3 Refugee policy in Norway and Germany

In both countries you are permitted to apply for asylum by the time you enter the country or when you are at the border. While in Germany you are sent to the nearest reception centre, Norway has only two places where all asylum seekers are sent first: The *Ankomstsenter* in Østfold and since November 2015 the *Ankomstsenter* in Finnmark. After one or two days the asylum seekers will move to an ordinary reception centre (*Mottaksenter*). There are also special accommodations available for persons with a greater need of protection (e.g. minors, pregnant women or especially traumatized people). Asylum seekers can, moreover, choose to live privately, but in that case they are usually not entitled to receive economic support.²²

Later on they will have their asylum interview. After that the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (*Utlendingsdirektoratet*, UDI) will decide about the asylum case. It states that it takes a few months until there is a final decision. Exceptions exist for people from specific countries e.g. such as countries where inhabitants can receive help from their own authorities. In that case the decision will be already made within 48 hours. A slightly different procedure works when you are an unaccompanied minor who applies for protection.²³

In Germany asylum applications are submitted to the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (*Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge*, BAMF) and like in Norway asylum seekers will have an asylum interview which is the base of the decision whether the asylum seeker will be accepted as refugee.²⁴

Both Norway and Germany grant a preliminary right to stay in their countries until the asylum application is processed. If the asylum application is rejected the

²² The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2014): The organisation of reception facilities for asylum seekers in Norway, p. 5; Norsk organisasjon for asylsøkere: Informasjonsfilmer for asylsøkere; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration: Protection (asylum); The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2015): Asylmottak (ulike typer)

²³ Refer to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration: Protection (asylum); The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2015): Asylmottak (ulike typer)

²⁴ Refer to Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2015): Protection (asylum); The Federal Ministry of the Interior (2015): Asylum and refugee policy in Germany; Federal Office for Refugees and Migration (2011): The legal consequences of the decision

applicants in both countries will usually be sent back to their home countries. Exceptions apply if there are reasons for e.g. a deportation ban. So protection can still be granted, but that might happen under different conditions.²⁵

When the asylum seeker arrives in Germany he/she first needs to stay for at least six weeks, but not longer than three months in a special reception centre (*Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung*, comparable to the Norwegian *Ankomstsenter*).²⁶ Currently there are several of these special reception centres²⁷, but it was recently decided to centralize this more. Therefore, three to five main *Erstaufnahme-einrichtungen* are going to be established.²⁸

After staying in that special reception centre the government of every federal state of Germany can decide on its own how to handle the accommodation of the asylum seekers: They can be housed in ordinary reception centres (*Asylbewerberheim*), but also in own flats (so-called “decentralized accommodation”).²⁹ After the decision about their case is made or 24 months after arriving in Germany asylum seekers can decide on their own to live in a private flat.³⁰ But as in Norway there are also places for people with special needs (see mentioned above).³¹

There were 96 collective open reception centres in Norway in 2012 which could accommodate up to 15 484 individuals. That makes an average of 161 people per reception centre.³² It can be assumed that due to the current refugee crisis the

²⁵ Refer to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2015): Protection (asylum); The Federal Ministry of the Interior (2015): Asylum and refugee policy in Germany

²⁶ Refer to Müller, A. (2013): Die Organisation der Aufnahme und Unterbringung von Asylbewerbern in Deutschland, p. 12 ff; The Federal Ministry of the Interior (2016): Asylum and refugee policy in Germany

²⁷ Refer to Fischer, K.; Haerder, M.; Rahmann, T.: Asylsuchende strömen nach Deutschland

²⁸ Refer to Norddeutscher Rundfunk (2016): Asylpaket II - darüber stimmt der Bundestag ab

²⁹ Refer to Müller, A. (2013): Die Organisation der Aufnahme und Unterbringung von Asylbewerbern in Deutschland, p. 12 ff; The Federal Ministry of the Interior (2016): Asylum and refugee policy in Germany

³⁰ Refer to Landeszentrale für politische Bildung Baden-Württemberg (2016): Flüchtlinge in Baden-Württemberg

³¹ Refer to Müller, A. (2013): Die Organisation der Aufnahme und Unterbringung von Asylbewerbern in Deutschland, p. 12 ff

³² Refer to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2014): The organisation of reception facilities for asylum seekers in Norway, p. 7

numbers increased. Unfortunately there are no official statistics about the size or number of reception centres in Germany available.

Within the first three months after applying for asylum the asylum seekers in Germany are only allowed to take a “job opportunity” working for public agency or an institution serving the public good for 1,05 € per hour. Otherwise they have no work permit. After these three months asylum seekers can get a restricted work permit or an unrestricted work permit depending on different circumstances.³³ In Norway asylum seekers may apply under specific circumstances for a temporary work permit, if they already had their asylum interview.³⁴

Asylum seekers in Germany and Norway receive benefits to ensure their livelihood though. Mainly these benefits will be given as non-cash benefit, e.g. as shelter, heating or clothing.³⁵ Additionally there will be pocket money. For a single person in Germany the pocket money is 135 € (ca. 1 275 NOK³⁶) per month when living in a reception centre and 216 € (ca. 2 040 NOK³⁷) per month when living on his own.³⁸ While Norway has much higher living expenses, a single asylum seeker in Norway receives besides free shelter, food and non-cash benefits 750 NOK (ca. 79 €³⁹) per month and 2 340 NOK (ca. 248 €⁴⁰) when not living at a reception centre.⁴¹ While a loaf of bread costs on average 1,37 € (12,67 NOK) in Germany, the price is on average 2,66 € (24,55 NOK) in Norway.⁴² So taking into account the much higher living expenses in Norway, asylum seekers can afford much less there.

³³ Refer to Netzwerk Bleiberecht Stuttgart-Tübingen-Pforzheim: Wie bekomme ich eine Arbeitserlaubnis?, p. 3ff; Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Zugang zum Arbeitsmarkt für geflüchtete Menschen, p. 3ff

³⁴ Refer to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2015): Protection (asylum); Norsk organisasjon for asylsøkere: Informasjonsfilmer for asylsøkere

³⁵ Refer to Müller, A. (2013): Die Organisation der Aufnahme und Unterbringung von Asylbewerbern in Deutschland, p. 24ff ; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2014): The organisation of reception facilities for asylum seekers in Norway, p. 13

³⁶ As of 19th March 2016

³⁷ As of 19th March 2016

³⁸ Refer to Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz (2016): § 3 Grundleistungen

³⁹ As of 19th March 2016

⁴⁰ As of 19th March 2016

⁴¹ Refer to Utlendingsdirektoratet (2016): § 4 Beregning og satser for basisbeløp

⁴² Refer to Numbeo (2016): Cost of living in Germany; Numbeo (2016): Cost of living in Norway

With this knowledge we can assume that the financial situation of asylum seekers is not so easy. Taking into account the much higher living expenses in Norway, asylum seekers will, furthermore, have a much tougher budget there than in Germany. Furthermore, the asylum seekers in both countries might not have a job and even if they have they might not earn much (see “job opportunities” in Germany). Asylum seekers might have more time to spend though.

In Norway asylum seekers over the age of 16 usually have the right to participate for 250 hours in a free language course.⁴³ In contrast in Germany asylum seekers with a “good perspective to stay” are entitled to take part free of charge in integration courses while others have to wait until their asylum application is processed.⁴⁴

⁴³ Refer to Utdanningsdirektoratet (2015): Andre lover og regler

⁴⁴ Refer to Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): FAQ: Integrationskurse für Asylbewerber

3. Working with asylum seekers in public libraries

3.1 Does it make sense for libraries to concentrate on asylum seekers?

It is a legitimate question to ask, if it makes sense for libraries to use their resources for asylum seekers considering that they might only stay a certain time in town before they have to move to another place or before they even leave the country again.

In Germany the duration of the procedure for granting the right of asylum differs from province to province. In 2015 the fastest decisions were made with an average duration of only 3,3 months from the date of application until the final decision, the longest period was 7,9 months in Schleswig-Holstein. On average asylum seekers had to wait 5,3 months in 2015.⁴⁵ But it is planned that applications for asylum are processed faster, the German government therefore introduced new laws about that in October 2015 and March 2016.⁴⁶ Yet it has to be considered that it takes already a while until the application for asylum is made. The migration researcher Dietrich Thränhardt estimates that the real duration of the asylum application is on average one year.⁴⁷

In Norway the average duration until an asylum application was processed in 2013 was around 11 months.⁴⁸ But it depends on the country of origin. For example while Syrians have to wait up to eight months until they are given an appointment for the interview Ethiopians and Somalis have to wait up to 12 months for that.⁴⁹ After the appointment the asylum seeker has to wait again for several months, in some cases that can be longer than 8 months.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ Refer to Norddeutscher Rundfunk (2015): Am schnellsten ist Mecklenburg-Vorpommern; Deutscher Bundestag (2016): Dauer von Asylverfahren

⁴⁶ Refer to Presse- und Informationsamt der Bundesregierung (2016): Kürzere Verfahren, weniger Familiennachzug; Bundesministerium der Justiz und für Verbraucherschutz (2015): Asylverfahrensbeschleunigungsgesetz

⁴⁷ Refer to Leubecher, M. (2015): So wird die Dauer von Asylverfahren verschleiert; Norddeutscher Rundfunk (2015): Am schnellsten ist Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

⁴⁸ Refer to Arbeidernes Ungdomsfylking: Asylprossessen

⁴⁹ Refer to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Information for Ethiopians and Somalis from Ethiopia who have applied for protection; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigra-

While in Germany in 2015 48,5 % of the asylum seekers were granted protection as refugee, the number varied a lot in the past years. So for example in 2014 25,8 % got accepted as refugees and in 2013 only 13,5 %. A smaller number was additionally allowed to stay for subsidiary protection or because of a deportation ban.⁵¹ The situation in 2015 in Norway was similar: Out of 11 884 applications from asylum seekers 5 411 persons received asylum which makes a positive quote of almost 46 %. Also here a smaller percentage was additionally granted the right to stay.⁵² All in all that means that in 2015 almost every second person who applied for asylum was accepted as refugee or got permission to stay and will continue being part of the German or Norwegian society.

Therefore, libraries focusing on asylum seekers do not only focus on temporary residents, in many cases the asylum seekers will live a long time, if not their whole life in the target country as e.g. refugees. And even those who are not declared as refugees might continue living there for several months or years or sometimes their whole life. Therefore, libraries can play an important role in the society by helping to integrate thousands of people.

Last but not least the Norwegian library law says that the public library is a place for “everyone who lives in the country”. This also includes asylum seekers, even if they might only be temporarily living there.⁵³

tion (2016): Information for Syrians and stateless people from Syria who have applied for protection

⁵⁰ Refer to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Information for Afghans who have applied for protection; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Information for Sudanese who have applied for protection; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Information for Eritreans who have applied for protection; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Information for Ethiopians and Somalis from Ethiopia who have applied for protection; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Information to Iraqis who have applied for protection (asylum); The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Information for Syrians and stateless people from Syria who have applied for protection; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Information for Somali nationals who have applied for protection; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Information for children under the age of 18 who have applied for protection and who do not have parents in Norway

⁵¹ Refer to Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015, p. 34

⁵² Refer to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Asylum decisions by citizenship and outcome

⁵³ Refer to Lovdata (2014): Lov om folkebibliotek (folkebibliotekloven)

3.2 Preconditions

To approach asylum seekers in the best way, to develop the most effective concepts and to help to integrate them into the society best, we need to know our target group first. But it is not only important to evaluate the external preconditions of the asylum seekers, it is also necessary to look at the current preconditions of libraries and librarians.

3.2.1 Preconditions of asylum seekers

Who are the asylum seekers? Looking at the data we can quickly see that most asylum seekers in Germany are male (69,2 %). Moreover, they are mostly quite young, for example in 2015 71,1 % of the applicants were younger than 30 years.⁵⁴

The statistic from the Norwegian Directorate of Immigration doesn't differentiate so much between the age, but we can see that almost one third (10 254 out of 31 145) are under the age of 18. The percentage of male asylum seekers is almost 77 %, even higher than in Germany.⁵⁵

As shown in table 1 (next page) the majority of people who applied for asylum in 2015 in Germany and Norway came from Syria due to the civil war there. In Norway asylum seekers from Afghanistan made up the second largest percentage with 22,4 % while in Germany only 7,1 % of the applications are made by Afghans. In return asylum seekers from Albania, Kosovo and Serbia counted together almost a fourth of the total asylum seekers while in Norway they only made up a small percentage of only 2 %. This could be due to the short distance to Germany. Moreover, a quite high percentage of asylum seekers came in both

⁵⁴ Refer to Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015, p. 18

⁵⁵ Refer to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Asylum applications lodged in Norway by citizenship, sex and age

countries from Iraq. Especially in Norway asylum seekers from Eritrea made up a higher percentage (9,5 %).⁵⁶

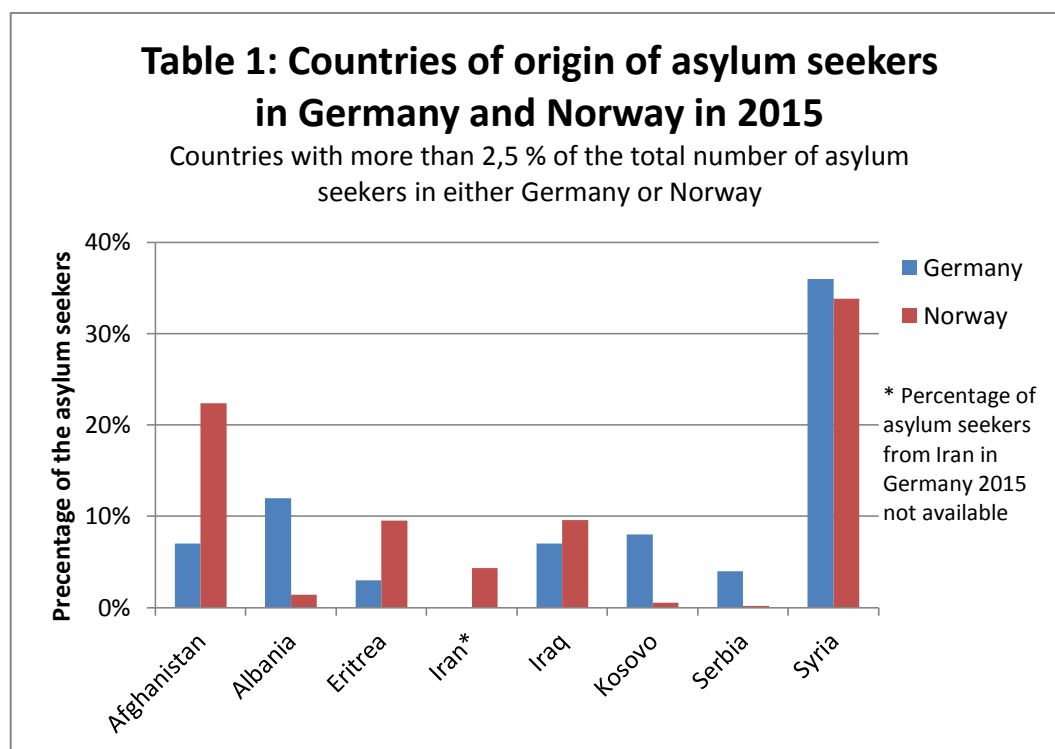


Table created in dependence on Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015 and The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration⁵⁷

Further important countries of origin in Germany are Macedonia (2,1 %) and Pakistan (1,9 %)⁵⁸ and in Norway Iran (4,3 %), Ethiopia (2,2 %), Somalia (1,8 %), Pakistan (1,4 %), Sudan (1,2 %) and Egypt (1,1 %).⁵⁹

The most spoken language is therefore Arabic which is spoken in Syria, Sudan as well as Egypt and partly in Iraq, Eritrea and Somalia. Especially in Norway the language Tigrinya is important as well as it is spoken in Eritrea besides Arabic. Other important languages regarding asylum seekers are Albanian (spoken in Albania, Kosovo and Macedonia), Serbian (spoken in Kosovo), Macedonian, Pash-

⁵⁶ Refer to Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015, p. 17; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Asylum applications lodged in Norway by citizenship, sex and age

⁵⁷ Refer to Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015, p. 17; The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Asylum applications lodged in Norway by citizenship, sex and age

⁵⁸ Refer to Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Das Bundesamt in Zahlen 2015, p. 17

⁵⁹ Refer to The Norwegian Directorate of Immigration (2016): Asylum applications lodged in Norway by citizenship, sex and age

to (spoken in Pakistan and Afghanistan), Dari (spoken in Afghanistan), Urdu (spoken in Pakistan), Kurdish (spoken in Iraq), Somali, Amharic and Oromo (spoken in Ethiopia). In addition to that there are several minor languages spoken.⁶⁰ All in all these languages are often non-Latin languages and on account of that people are not familiar with the Latin alphabet. As a response we can for example see an increasing number of participants in German literacy courses (from 9,2 % to 11,8 %).⁶¹ There is no data available about the knowledge of English or other second languages of asylum seekers. In Germany the voluntary data about other language knowledge than the native language shall be gathered for the next yearly report of the BAMF.⁶² This data can help librarians to decide, if it makes sense to implement more offers in English.

Unfortunately there is no representative study about the level of education of asylum seekers in Germany or Norway. However, the German Federal Office for Migration and Refugees (BAMF) has data about 105 000 asylum seekers in Germany who voluntarily answered about their level of education. This might still give us an impression about who to serve. The German magazine “Stern” published this data in September 2015.⁶³

A quite high number of 13 % said they attended a university before coming to Germany while 18 % said they did their A-levels (equivalent to the German *Abitur* and the Norwegian *Generell studiekompetanse*).⁶⁴ In comparison to that in Germany 28,8 % of the graduates from school have their A-levels and 15,9 % currently attending a university, a university of applied science or a higher education level for a degree.⁶⁵ Furthermore, 30 % of the asylum seekers have a middle

⁶⁰ Refer to Central Intelligence Agency (2016): Middle East: Syria; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): Africa: Sudan; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): Middle East: Iraq; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): Africa: Eritrea; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): Africa: Somalia; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): Europe: Albania; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): Europe: Kosovo; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): Europe: Macedonia; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): South Asia: Afghanistan; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): South Asia: Pakistan; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): Africa: Ethiopia; Central Intelligence Agency (2016): Africa: Egypt

⁶¹ Refer to Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge (2016): Geschäftsstatistik zum Integrationskurs

⁶² Refer to Rich, A.-K. (2016): AW: Anfrage Sprachkenntnisse Asylsuchende [e-mail]

⁶³ Refer to Rösing, P. (2015): Flüchtlinge in Deutschland: jung, männlich, gebildet

⁶⁴ Refer to Rösing, P. (2015): Flüchtlinge in Deutschland: jung, männlich, gebildet

⁶⁵ Refer to Statistisches Bundesamt (2015): Bildungsstand

school education, 8 % have only a primary school education and almost a quarter (24 %) do not have a school education. But it is eye-catching that it looks a bit different, if we only review the asylum seekers from Syria: A quarter attended university, another quarter were doing their A-levels, 23 % have a middle school education, 17 % attended the primary school and only 3 % do not have any school education.⁶⁶ A study about Syrian refugees in Turkey came to another conclusion though, it states that Syrian refugees are on average not well-educated.⁶⁷ There can be different explanations for these different results, one might be that the asylum seekers who start the long and dangerous way to Germany have a higher education while those with worse education stay in Turkey. There is no data collected by the Norwegian Federal Office of Statistics or the UDI about the level of education of asylum seekers.⁶⁸

The Norwegian librarian Essmat conducted qualitative interviews for her master thesis with immigrants from Iran, Afghanistan and Kurdistan who now live in Norway. During the interviews participants from Afghanistan and Kurdistan report that the libraries in their home countries are usually just places for borrowing books and for getting a book you have to ask the librarian, as they are not openly displayed. Moreover, they are very traditional with a forbiddance to eat, drink, talk loudly and the participants describe them as “boring”.⁶⁹ Immigrants in Tromsø agree that they were surprised about the rash of activities happening in the library.⁷⁰ An exception were immigrants from Iran interviewed by Essmat, they described the library in a similar way we use and see libraries in Norway respectively Germany, although they admit that they still do not know enough about Norwegian libraries.⁷¹ Therefore, it can be assumed that asylum seekers usually need to be pointed to the library in both countries.

⁶⁶ Refer to Rösing, P. (2015): Flüchtlinge in Deutschland: jung, männlich, gebildet

⁶⁷ Refer to Ceritoglu, E. et al. (2015): The Impact of Syrian Refugees on Natives' Labor Market Outcomes in Turkey

⁶⁸ Refer to Statistisk sentralbyrå (2016): Hva vet vi om flyktningers utdanning?

⁶⁹ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner p. 53ff

⁷⁰ Refer to Pellicer, D. J. (2009): Bok, håp og kjærlighet

⁷¹ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner p. 53ff

A report shows that in Norway people with a non-western background use libraries more than the rest of the population.⁷² It can be assumed that this result also applies to refugees and asylum seekers. It might be also valid in Germany. Moreover, it is reported that immigrant women in Norway highly trust libraries as institutions.⁷³

All in all it can be said that the target group of asylum seekers is highly heterogenic and that there is not “the one typical asylum seeker”.⁷⁴ Asylum seekers speak many different languages, come with different cultural and educational backgrounds and different experiences and expectations about libraries.

3.2.2 Preconditions of libraries and librarians

The development of concepts and services specifically for asylum seekers poses a challenge for libraries as institutions as well as for librarians as individuals. The following chapter will therefore analyse which qualifications the library staff has to master these challenges as well as which territorial and monetary resources are available.

Qualification of the library staff

There is not the one and only competence which qualifies librarians to work with asylum seekers. A variety of competencies are helpful and necessary.

Knowledge about foreign-language literature as well as knowledge about media which can be used to teach languages, to help learning the local language and to introduce other cultures is only one example. But of course a librarian also needs to know how to impart literature.

Intercultural competences which go along with understanding of cultural diversity are also required to adapt to asylum seekers and to understand them bet-

⁷² Refer to Vaage, O. F. (2009): Kultur- og mediebruk blant personer med innvandrerbakgrunn, p. 35ff

⁷³ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner p. 60

⁷⁴ Refer to Walther, H. (2015): Sprendlingen: Die Bücherei als Ort des Spracherwerbs, p. 113; Cicek, N.; Schneeorst, S. et al. (2015): Willkommen in Deutschland, p. 526

ter.⁷⁵ These competences can be acquired during a stay abroad (e.g. studying abroad, working abroad, seminars abroad, ...). But also language courses help to understand other cultures and the knowledge of the mother tongue of refugees is a big advantage. Looking at this realistically there is probably just a small percentage of librarians who can for example speak Arabic. However, when looking for apprentices or new students we should encourage persons with a migration background to become librarians or library assistants and make them aware of the opportunity of employment.⁷⁶ A Swedish study has shown that a migration background on its own, even without special language knowledge is important as it shows equality.⁷⁷ But also good knowledge about common languages such as English and French can be supportive to communicate with asylum seekers.⁷⁸

Librarians can also benefit much from didactical and pedagogical proficiency which includes knowledge about language learning to support the asylum seekers in the best way.⁷⁹

Classes for students or library staff about multicultural library services or even specifically about libraries and asylum seekers as well as refugees would be desirable.⁸⁰ Unfortunately such offers are not very well implemented yet at universities and offered modules are often just facultative in Germany. But steps in the right direction are made as some relevant modules are existing: For example the Media University Stuttgart offers an optional course for bachelor students called "Library services for different target groups" which also includes the topic intercultural library services and the Cologne University of Applied Sciences offers the

⁷⁵ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 11; Refer to IFLA (2009): Multicultural communities, p. 19

⁷⁶ Refer to IFLA (2009): Multicultural communities, p. 19ff; Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner p. 89; Scheid, E. (2015): Integrationsarbeit ist in Wittlich eine Selbstverständlichkeit, p. 111

⁷⁷ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant women, p. 8

⁷⁸ Refer to Zahnhausen, L. (2015): "Bibliotheken können als feste Anlaufstelle interessant sein.", p. 107

⁷⁹ Refer to Thürsam, M. (2008): Multikulturelle Bibliotheksarbeit, p. 41; Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 11ff

⁸⁰ Refer to Thürsam, M. (2008): Multikulturelle Bibliotheksarbeit, p. 41

course “Introduction in the Intercultural Communication” for bachelor students.⁸¹

In Norway students studying library and information science do not have a mandatory module about intercultural library services either. However, they still seem a bit ahead of the German library education since there is a mandatory module as well as several optional modules where library and information science students can acquire pedagogical and didactical competences. Furthermore, they can learn about foreign-language literature.⁸²

Further education through e.g. seminars and courses is provided in Germany as well as in Norway. In Norway librarians are for example offered to take part in a course to learn techniques for reading circles targeting immigrants while in Germany you can find seminars which state you can acquire intercultural compe-

⁸¹ Refer to Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg (2016): Online-Vorlesungsverzeichnis Sommersemester 2016; Fachhochschule Köln (2014): Bachelor-Studiengang Bibliothekswissenschaft Modulbuch, p. 2ff; Hochschule der Medien (2016): Studieninhalte Bibliotheks- und Informationsmanagement (Bachelor, 7 Semester); Hochschule der Medien (2015): 331216 Zielgruppenorientierte Bibliotheksarbeit; Hochschule für Technik, Wirtschaft und Kultur Leipzig (2015): Studienordnung für den Bachelorstudiengang Bibliotheks- und Informationswissenschaft an der Hochschule für Technik, Wirtschaft und Kultur Leipzig; Hochschule Darmstadt: Studiengang Informationswissenschaft (Bachelor of Science); Fachhochschule Potsdam (2015): Modulhandbuch Bibliotheksmanagement, p.3ff; Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (2014): Fachspezifische Studien- und Prüfungsordnung für das Bachelorstudium im Fach Bibliotheks- und Informationswissenschaft, p. 3ff; Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (2016): Lehrgebiete 21. Matrikel; Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (2014): Fachspezifische Studien- und Prüfungsordnung für den Masterstudiengang im Fach Bibliotheks- und Informationswissenschaft, p. 3ff; Technische Hochschule Köln (2016): Masterstudiengang Bibliotheks- und Informationsmanagement (Master in Library and Information Science - MALIS), p. 6ff; Hochschule Darmstadt: Studiengang Informationswissenschaft (Master of Science); Hochschule für Angewandte Wissenschaften Hamburg (2013): Modulhandbuch Information, Medien, Bibliothek, p. 7ff; Hochschule für Technik, Wirtschaft und Kultur Leipzig (2015): Studienordnung für den Masterstudiengang Bibliotheks- und Informationswissenschaft an der Hochschule für Technik, Wirtschaft und Kultur Leipzig, p. 4ff; Fachhochschule Potsdam (2010): Modulbeschreibungen, p. 3ff; Hochschule der Medien (2016): Studieninhalte

⁸² Refer to Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus (2015): Programplan for Bachelorstudium i bibliotek- og informasjonsvitenskap; Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus (2015): BIBV3500 Vindu mot verden. Oversatt og fremmedspråklig litteratur i Norge; Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus (2015): BIB2300 Bibliotek og læring; Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus (2015): BIBV3500 Barn, medier og bibliotek; Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus (2015): BIB3000 Bibliotekutvikling; Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus (2013): Programplan for erfaringsbasert masterstudium i bibliotek - styring og ledelse; Høgskolen i Oslo og Akershus (2016): Programplan for Masterstudium i bibliotek- og informasjonsvitenskap; Universitet i Tromsø – Norges arktiske universitet: Bachelorgrad i dokumentasjonsvitenskap; Universitet i Tromsø – Norges arktiske universitet (2016): Master i medie- og dokumentasjonsvitenskap; Universitetet i Agder (2016): Skolebibliotekskunnskap, bachelorprogram

tences.⁸³ Further competences which can be acquired are knowledge about teaching library concepts and organisational skills in order to establish events for the target group. It is important that supervisors support their staff to take part in further education seminars to improve their skills.⁸⁴

In addition to the required professional competences for library staff mentioned above personal competences like empathy, sensitivity, open-mindedness and motivation belong to the key factors of successful intercultural library services.⁸⁵

A librarian cannot be an all-round talent though, so he/she should look for help in some cases and the library as an institution should try to cooperate with other organisations (see chapter 3.4 Cooperation with other organizations and institutions).⁸⁶

Monetary

Besides having qualified staff, another factor is that almost every service of the library needs to be financed. So libraries also need to invest some money into the development of concepts and services for refugees.

Like in Germany public libraries in Norway belong to their municipality and are financed by them. The Norwegian library law says moreover that every municipality has to have a public library with a qualified librarian leading the library, while in Germany there exists no such library law.⁸⁷ Libraries usually have a tough budget in both countries though. However, it is always a matter of prioritizing and services targeting asylum seekers should be seen as important task for libraries. Nevertheless, there are methods for libraries to increase their budget.

⁸³ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 12; Fachstelle für das öffentliche Bibliothekswesen Regierungsbezirk Stuttgart (2015): Fortbildungsvorschau 2016

⁸⁴ Refer to IFLA (2009): Multicultural communities, p. 20

⁸⁵ Refer to IFLA (2009): Multicultural communities, p. 19; Thürsam, M. (2008): Multikulturelle Bibliotheksarbeit, p. 41

⁸⁶ Refer to Thürsam, M. (2008): Multikulturelle Bibliotheksarbeit, p. 41

⁸⁷ Refer to Lovdata (2014): Lov om folkebibliotek (folkebibliotekloven); Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 2

The most common funding sources are the national library and library unions, municipalities and authorities, the European Union, organisations, service clubs, foundations and companies as well as personal contacts.⁸⁸ The following pages will explain the current possibilities in more detail.

In Norway libraries can apply annually for a financial support (*prosjekt- og utviklingsstøtte*) for projects and to develop the library. In 2014 sixty-two projects in libraries all over the country were supported with a total amount of 12,1 million kroner (ca. 1,3 million euro⁸⁹). Moreover, there is a fund from the national library to, among other things, develop the library as a meeting place which the library in Smøla for example uses to offer services and media for immigrants.⁹⁰

The German Library Union (*Deutscher Bibliotheksverband, abbreviated DBV*) also funds projects for refugees and asylum seekers in line with the campaign “Reading makes strong: Reading and digital media” (*Lesen macht stark: Lesen und digitale Medien*).⁹¹

Norwegian libraries can also get in touch with their own municipality (*kommune*) as they are able to receive money from the Directorate of Integration and Diversity (*Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet, abbreviated IMDi*). In some cases municipalities will automatically receive money per asylum seeker or refugee they house, in other cases municipalities can apply for projects. E.g. there was recently a call for proposals for projects concerning new arriving immigrants which could have been very interesting for libraries.⁹² Generally libraries should try to seek financial support from their local municipality. In Bremen (Germany)

⁸⁸ Refer to Nasjonalbiblioteket: Andre finansieringskilder; Borries, J. (2015): Sponsoring, Stiftungen, Partnerschaften, p. 522ff; Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2015): Arbeitsbereich EU- und Drittmittelberatung

⁸⁹ As of 06.03.2016

⁹⁰ Refer to Nasjonalbiblioteket (2016): Hvordan søke? ; Nasjonalbiblioteket (2014): 62 biblioteksprosjekter får støtte; Nasjonalbiblioteket (2014): Utlysning av prosjekt- og utviklingsmidler for 2015 ; Nasjonalbiblioteket (2014): Utlysning av prosjekt- og utviklingsmidler til folkebibliotekene som møteplass og debattarena; Martinsen, A. (2016): Språkkafe i biblioteket fredag 4. mars

⁹¹ Refer to Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2016): Flüchtlinge Willkommen!

⁹² Refer to Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet (2016): Tilskudd; Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet (2016): Kommunale utviklingsmidler; Nasjonalbiblioteket: Andre finansieringskilder

for example the municipality funded smaller projects for the uptake and integration of refugees. The public library of Bremen applied and the financing of media boxes for asylum centres got supported.⁹³

Additionally libraries in Norway can apply at the Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) for art and culture projects through the *Gaveforsterkningsordningen* (Gift Enhancement Scheme).⁹⁴ Furthermore, some county libraries (*fylkebiblioteker*) also allocate development funds for local libraries.⁹⁵

Other funding sources for library work with asylum seekers include the organization *Fritt Ord* (translated “Free Word”) which offers support for art and culture projects. They do not specifically support libraries, but the recipients of funding also include libraries.⁹⁶ Furthermore, libraries can receive funding from the *Norsk filminstitutt* (Norwegian film institute) for movies aimed to the public, from the *Norsk kulturråd* for Norwegian literature (here for example books in an easy Norwegian language for asylum seekers) and from the Norwegian UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization) committee (for example for organizing public debates about asylum seekers, the refugee crisis and democracy).⁹⁷

Furthermore, there is funding through the European Union available. As Norway is not part of the European Union⁹⁸ this funding method only applies to Germany. Libraries should check the current possibilities: E.g. the Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Public Library (Germany) received funding for a project called “Welcoming Culture” (*Willkommenskultur*) through the European Regional Develop-

⁹³ Refer to Schmedemann, B. (2015): Bücher und Spiele für Familien in Flüchtlingsunterkünften, p. 200; Die Senatorin für Soziales, Jugend, Frauen, Integration und Sport Bremen (2015): Senat fördert kleine Projekte zur Integration mit weiteren 40.000 Euro

⁹⁴ Refer to Nasjonalbiblioteket: Andre finansieringskilder; Kulturdepartementet (2016): Retningslinjer: Gaveforsterkningsordningen for kunst- og kulturformål

⁹⁵ Refer to Nasjonalbiblioteket: Andre finansieringskilder

⁹⁶ Refer to Fritt Ord (2015): Bevilgninger i desember 2015 (søknader om kr 100 000 eller mindre)

⁹⁷ Refer to Nasjonalbiblioteket: Andre finansieringskilder; UNESCO (2016): Søk midler

⁹⁸ Refer to European Union (2015): EU member countries

ment Fund.⁹⁹ Moreover, libraries could try to apply for the Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF) by the European Union.¹⁰⁰

There is also funding for international collaboration. For example several Norwegian public libraries and county libraries as well as *Det flerspråklige bibliotek* (explanation follows in chapter 3.3.3) worked together with the Polish Information Society Development Foundation on a project starting in 2013 called “Library as meeting place for many cultures”. More information about concrete possibilities for international collaboration especially concerning Norway can be found on the webpages of the *Senter for Internasjonalisering av Utdanning, Norsk Kulturråd, Nordisk Ministerråd* and *Letterstedska föreningen*. Through collaborating with other actors you can generally increase your possibilities and it might be very beneficial for all participants, not only concerning the monetary aspect. Therefore, it will be elaborated more in chapter 3.4.¹⁰¹

Smaller projects or for example new media in foreign languages are, furthermore, often sponsored by local companies or foundations. This can be through monetary aspects, but also through services or noncash benefits. In return these companies or foundations such as the local bank, energy provider or real estate agencies can be mentioned on the website, in press releases or other rewards according to prior agreement. Thereby they can increase their company’s image and their visibility. They might also be willing to support the library without a trade-off, but as donation. Besides local actors publishers might be interested in support the libraries as they can easily present their books and media to a broad audience there. For example the publisher Tessloff donates books and Ting-pens to the public library of Erlangen (Germany).¹⁰²

Moreover, personal contacts can be helpful (for example to an electronic shop owner for computers who can be asked to donate computers), the supporting

⁹⁹ Refer to Ruhnow-Braun, A. (2015): „Willkommen in unserer Bibliothek“, p. 197

¹⁰⁰ Refer to Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Energie: Asyl-, Migrations- und Integrationsfund (AMIF)

¹⁰¹ Refer to Kulturrådet: EØS-midler Polen; Nasjonalbiblioteket: Andre finansieringskilder

¹⁰² Refer to Borries, J. (2015): Sponsoring, Stiftungen, Partnerschaften, p. 522ff; Lenhart, C. (2015): Bibliotheksführung Flüchtlinge, p. 2

associations of the local library (*Förderverein*), social lotteries such as *Aktion Mensch* in Germany which supports social projects (e.g. Aktion Mensch especially mentions that they support projects for refugees and asylum seekers), service clubs such as Lions, Rotary, Kiwanis or Zonta which perform charitable work or in Germany Federal Agencies for Civic Education (*Landeszentralen für politische Bildung*).¹⁰³

The funding sources described above are only current possibilities and might change: New funding sources will appear while others will disappear. Therefore, it is important for librarians to inform themselves on an ongoing basis. For Norwegian librarians the national library offers a summary of current funding possibilities. In Germany the Competence Network for Libraries (*Kompetenznetzwerk für Bibliotheken*) which is part of the DBV offers advice, guidance and support about third-party funds and European Union-funds through a skilled staff member.¹⁰⁴

Territorial

Librarians also have to consider that working with asylum seekers might require space: E.g. space for bookshelves with special media, space for desks where library visitors can work or in some cases a special room for events. Not every library can offer that without some restructuring. Here prioritising can help: Are ten shelves about medicine necessary or are some books already old and not necessary anymore so that nine shelves for medical books would be enough? The leftover shelf can be removed for more space or used for e.g. new media for asylum seekers.

¹⁰³ Refer to Borries, J. (2015): Sponsoring, Stiftungen, Partnerschaften, p. 522ff; Aktion Mensch: Organisation; Aktion Mensch: Menschen in besonderen sozialen Schwierigkeiten

¹⁰⁴ Refer to Nasjonalbiblioteket: Andre finansieringskilder; Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2015): Arbeitsbereich EU- und Drittmittelberatung

3.3 Actors of the multicultural library work

On a local as well as on an international level there are several associations and institutions which influence the work with asylum seekers in various ways. These will be introduced in the following chapter.

3.3.1 International

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services.¹⁰⁵ They have an own section dedicated to services to multicultural populations¹⁰⁶ as well as a section dedicated to public libraries.¹⁰⁷ The latter recently published an inspirational document showing examples from public libraries all over the world dealing with refugees which can be found online.¹⁰⁸

The IFLA developed in 2006 the widely-known IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto which should support and assist libraries all over the world regarding multicultural services by defining principles and setting goals.¹⁰⁹ In 2012 there was additionally a toolkit published which gives advice about practical implementation of the manifesto.¹¹⁰ As services to asylum seekers can be seen as a part of multicultural library services, the manifesto is also useful for libraries wishing to establish or improve services to this target group.

Another important paper published by the IFLA is about guidelines for library services to multicultural communities. It is about the role and purpose of the multicultural library, legal and financial framework, needs of library users, collec-

¹⁰⁵ Refer to IFLA (2015): About IFLA

¹⁰⁶ Refer to International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2015): Library services to multicultural populations section

¹⁰⁷ Refer to International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2015): Public libraries section

¹⁰⁸ Refer to International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (2015): Responding! Public libraries and refugees

¹⁰⁹ Refer to IFLA (2015): Platform for the IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto; IFLA (2015): IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto

¹¹⁰ Refer to IFLA (2015): IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto Toolkit

tion development, human resources as well as marketing and promotion of multicultural services.¹¹¹

The European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA) is an umbrella association for the LIS (library and information science) sector within Europe.¹¹² Similar to the IFLA it provides a compilation of recent library activities in Europe concerning refugees. EBLIDA, moreover, invites libraries to welcome refugees.¹¹³

Members of both mentioned IFLA sections as well as the president of EBLIDA offered together also a Webinar named “Library Services to Immigrants and Refugees” and plan to publish the content as support for librarians and libraries soon.¹¹⁴

3.3.2 In Germany

Germany’s library union (*Deutscher Bibliotheksverband, DBV*) consists of different committees. One of them is the committee for Intercultural Library Services. The tasks of the committee include the development, evaluation and documentation of multicultural library services. This includes the support of the libraries which wish to implement services, development of library standards concerning multicultural library work, planning of consortia and organization of further training for librarians. The committee also represents the multicultural library work to the public through for example presentations. It, furthermore, communicates on an international level and looks for funding for e.g. projects.¹¹⁵

The committee is responsible for the website www.interkulturellebibliothek.de which offers concrete material for multicultural library work, the introduction of

¹¹¹ Refer to IFLA (2009): Multicultural communities p. 3ff

¹¹² Refer to EBLIDA: About EBLIDA

¹¹³ Refer to EBLIDA: Public libraries in Europe welcome refugees; EBLIDA (2015): Press Release. Public libraries in Europe welcome refugees

¹¹⁴ Refer to IFLA (2016): Save the Date: Free IFLA/ALA webinar “Library Services to Immigrants and Refugees”

¹¹⁵ Refer to Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2016): dbv-Kommission Interkulturelle Bibliotheksarbeit

best practice examples and further information regarding multicultural library services.¹¹⁶

It also published an animated video which shows two main characters, an adult and a child, visiting a library. The short film does not use spoken language, so that it can be understood without the knowledge of the German language. Although it focuses quite much on the library as a place for books, it can be recommended. It can also be used outside of Germany and German-speaking libraries, because it does not include German language. It does include the logo of the DBV, but possibilities to integrate the own library logo can be negotiated with the designer. Opportunities to use the video can include a screen showing it in entrance halls of libraries, the usage on library websites or it can be sent beforehand to groups which plan to visit the library.¹¹⁷

Besides the DBV there is the weblog *OeB_multikulturell* (translated Public Library multicultural). It provides up-to-date information to current changes, offers, media advice and more related to multicultural library work and is run voluntarily.¹¹⁸

3.3.3 In Norway

Ninety-eight percent of Norwegian public libraries, school libraries and prison libraries have library users with another mother tongue than Norwegian.¹¹⁹ The most important institution for multilingual library work in Norway caring about these people is *Det flerspråklige bibliotek* (DFB, translated the multilingual library).

Seventy-seven percent of the Norwegian public libraries, school libraries and prison libraries know much about DFB and most of them have been in contact with DFB.¹²⁰ It is not a physical place which can be visited by end customers, but

¹¹⁶ Refer to Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2015): Interkulturelle Bibliotheksarbeit

¹¹⁷ Refer to Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2016): „Bibliotheksangebot für alle“

¹¹⁸ Refer to Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2015): Fachforen, Organisationen, Verbände; Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2016): *ÖB_multikulturell*

¹¹⁹ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek (2015): Brukerundersøkelse, p. 3

¹²⁰ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek (2015): Brukerundersøkelse, p. 3

“a library for libraries”.¹²¹ This means DFB offers various services to Norwegian libraries. Mainly DFB offers the possibility for libraries to buy or borrow multilingual books. Currently DFB offers media in 64 different languages and in total almost 60 000 books, movies, CDs and language courses.¹²²

Available Items in DFB	
Books	51 754
Movies	3 261
CDs	2 100
Language courses	150

Table 2, created in dependence on Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Våre tilbud¹²³

DFB already exists since 1975¹²⁴ and is currently a part of Oslo Public Library (*Deichmanske Bibliotek*) with 14 employees working in that department.¹²⁵ The employees are professional librarians as well as persons who are qualified because of their language competence.¹²⁶

DFB is mostly state funded through the Ministry of Culture (*Kulturdepartementet*) and partly financed by Oslo municipality.¹²⁷ From 1st January 2017 onwards DFB will be a part of the national library (*Nasjonalbiblioteket*) and therefore completely financed by them. DFB is also reacting to the refugee crisis and provides e.g. more money for the purchase of Arabic literature.¹²⁸

The following summary introduces the offers of DFB:

Book packages: Libraries in Norway have the possibility to borrow book packages which can include popular and critically acclaimed books (mostly in the original language), movies, audio books, music and language courses. Therefore, the local libraries fill out a scheme saying e.g. which media they are interested in and DFB

¹²¹ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Det flerspråklige bibliotek – et bibliotek for bibliotekene

¹²² Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Våre tilbud

¹²³ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Våre tilbud

¹²⁴ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: DFBs virkeområde

¹²⁵ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Om oss

¹²⁶ Refer to Tidemann-Andersen, S. (2016): Spørsmål om DFB [e-mail]

¹²⁷ Refer to Tidemann-Andersen, S. (2016): Spørsmål om DFB [e-mail], Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 58

¹²⁸ Refer to Nasjonalbiblioteket (2015): Mer penger til arabiskspråklige litteratur i bibliotekene; Tidemann-Andersen, S. (2016): Spørsmål om DFB [e-mail]

chooses media individually for the book packages. The local library receives the package then, can easily import the catalogue data provided by the DFB and take them into their collection for the borrowed time.¹²⁹

Brochures: DFB offers free of charge posters (see figure 1)¹³⁰, bookmarks¹³¹ and a brochure about DFB for library employees.¹³²



Figure 1: Poster made by Det flerspråklige bibliotek¹³³

Order media: Libraries and other institutions have the possibility to order media via DFB. This includes bilingual books in Norwegian and a second language, in English and a second language and a product called PENpal.¹³⁴ PENpal helps to learn languages by playing sounds as soon as the reader touches specific points in a book or on a poster. For example it starts to play music when the image of a violin is touched.¹³⁵

¹²⁹ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Bokpakker

¹³⁰ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Plakater

¹³¹ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Bokmerke

¹³² Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: ABC om DFB

¹³³ Figure taken from Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Plakater

¹³⁴ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Butikk

¹³⁵ Refer to Mantra Lingua (2016): PENpal

Norwegian courses: More than 150 languages courses are available which can be borrowed by libraries.¹³⁶

Fairy-tale bags: DFB is borrowing “fairy-tale bags”. These bags include bilingual fairy-tales in different languages as well as the audio book in many languages and rag dolls from the fairy-tale. Currently DFB offers four different fairy-tale bags. The target group are kindergartens.¹³⁷

Find your lecturer-project: A temporary offer from October 2015 to December 2016 is the project “Find your lecturer” (“*Finn din foreleser*”). Libraries and other institutions can invite employees of DFB to tell about different topics such as Polish literature and the Polish collection of DFB, information about the purchase, discarding of items and collection development as well as Arabian literature. The lectures take around 40 minutes and are carried out by employees of DFB.¹³⁸

Exhibitions: DFB has material for exhibitions. The material includes books in Norwegian, English and other languages, a roll-up, digital picture frames and decoration material. Current topics are football and female fairy-tale characters. Each Norwegian library can keep the exhibition material for 4 – 6 weeks. The exhibition sets are so popular that they are already booked out years in advance.¹³⁹

DFB is also organizing twice a year a multicultural library meeting for librarians to inform, inspire, exchange and teach.¹⁴⁰

Besides *Det flerspråklige bibliotek* the Norwegian Library Association (*Norsk Bibliotekforening*) plays a role when talking about libraries and asylum seekers. They wrote in 2011 a statement to the Inclusion Commission (*Inkluderingsutvalget*) pointing out how libraries can contribute to social issues coming along with im-

¹³⁶ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Søk

¹³⁷ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Eventyrposere

¹³⁸ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Finn din foreleser

¹³⁹ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Vandrestillingen «Huldra, Laume, Baba Jaga, Dhegdheer»; Det flerspråklige bibliotek: I speak football

¹⁴⁰ Refer to Det flerspråklige bibliotek: Flerkulturelt biblioteksmøte

migrants. Unfortunately this document is not publicly accessible anymore, but can be partly found in an IFLA conference paper.¹⁴¹ The Norwegian Library Association is therefore indeed aware of the importance of libraries in this field.

In 2004 there was also a special interest group ("*FlerKult*") for multicultural library services founded as part of the Norwegian Library Association. The main goals of the group include networking, development and raising awareness for multicultural services in libraries and in authorities, working political and supporting the exchange of ideas.¹⁴² Goals for 2015/2016 also describe "Work with reception centers and work-related migration" among others.¹⁴³ Unfortunately the website of FlerKult is not up-to-date. Nevertheless, it offers a so-called "Idea-bank" (*idébank*) introducing the reader to actions other libraries have taken which can be inspiring.¹⁴⁴ Moreover, they actively organize further education such as recently a workshop at Norway's library conference.¹⁴⁵

¹⁴¹ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 7

¹⁴² Refer to Norsk Bibliotekforening: Om oss

¹⁴³ Refer to Norsk Bibliotekforening (2015): Virkeplan

¹⁴⁴ Refer to Norsk Bibliotekforening (2016): Arkiv: Idébank

¹⁴⁵ Refer to Norsk Bibliotekforening (2016): Nøkkel til Norge

3.4 Cooperation with other organizations and institutions

In chapter 3.2.2 we already elaborated that cooperation between libraries and other actors can bring financial improvement. But besides financial benefits, there are also several other benefits.

Partners can support the library for example with manpower. Especially since the refugee crisis began many people want to help and get involved in volunteer actions for refugees and asylum seekers. Libraries can use that social engagement of people to reach the target group and offer more services and events.

In Norway for example the Red Cross (*Røde Kors*) is often cooperating with libraries. Thereby many libraries offer homework tutoring in their rooms while the team of the Red Cross voluntary executes the help once a week or even several times a week. The Red Cross is responsible for the organization and recruits volunteers for the homework tutoring. The target group is mostly school kids. Anne Berit Helland from Bergen Public Library reports that especially many children with migration background use that service in Bergen and the library in Tromsø reports that the homework help is well visited by immigrants and asylum seekers.¹⁴⁶

More and more libraries in Germany as well as in Norway consider offering language cafés as well. The organization of language cafes varies and thereby also the responsibility of the event. There can be found examples in which volunteer organizations such as the Red Cross or *Det Felles Innvandrerråd* (a Norwegian organization for immigrants) are responsible for the organization¹⁴⁷ while sometimes a group of volunteers which does not belong to a certain organization is taking care of the event while the library or a volunteer coordinator organization

¹⁴⁶ Refer to Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek (2015): Leksehjelp; Sandnes Kommune (2015): Leksehjelp hver tirsdag; Norsk Biblioteksforening (2014): Leksehjelp i biblioteket; Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø (2009): Multikulturprosjektet, p. 2

¹⁴⁷ Refer to Deichmanske Bibliotek (2016): Norsktraining i regi av Røde Kors; Steinkjer Bibliotek (2016): Norsktraining på Steinkjer Bibliotek; Frivillighet Norge: Det Felles Innvandrerråd Hordaland; Isaksen, R. (2015): Biblioteket åpner seg for flyktninger; Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 9

is recruiting volunteers.¹⁴⁸ Sometimes the libraries also work together with the Federal Employment Agency like a branch library in Trondheim.¹⁴⁹ Other libraries care completely independent for language cafes.¹⁵⁰ But the benefits of cooperation with volunteers or volunteer organizations are high: Through volunteers the library has less work with the event, but can benefit from a positive image and will be noticed as important institution for integration. The attendants of the language café will, moreover, experience the library as positive place and the inhibition threshold drops.

Another valuable cooperation partner is the *Volkshochschule* in Germany and respectively the *Folkeuniversitetet* in Norway. These adult education institutions usually do not provide courses for achieving academic degrees, but for general further education accessible for a reasonable price for everyone. Besides courses about e.g. political education, health education or information technology they offer courses for German respectively Norwegian as second language, often for asylum seekers or refugees.¹⁵¹ In Norway additionally the *Voksenopplæring* is often responsible for languages courses for asylum seekers and refugees. It is another adult education institution which offers education for adults who did not finish their normal school education that is to say they did not fulfil secondary school education.¹⁵²

The Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg Public Library developed language learning centres in cooperation with the local *Volkshochschule*. Together they decide which media relevant for immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers to purchase. Currently they focus on foreign languages which can be found mostly in Germany such as Arabic and Turkish, but also English. They offer also guided tours through the library for participants of courses by the *Volkshochschule*. Moreover, integration

¹⁴⁸ Refer to Moss Bibliotek (2016): Språkkafe; Hanssen, L. H.: Språkkafé

¹⁴⁹ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 9

¹⁵⁰ Refer to Frisvold, Ø. (2015): Språkkafé – et nytt bibliotektilbud, p. 16ff

¹⁵¹ Refer to Folkeuniversitetet: Om Folkeuniversitetet; Volkshochschule Frankfurt am Main: Information in English; Stadt Duisburg: Deutschkurse für Flüchtlinge; Deutscher Volkshochschulverband: vhs; Hanik, H. (2015): Stadtbücherei Wörth als Dienstleister in der Flüchtlingsarbeit, p. 115

¹⁵² Refer to Senter for IKT i utdanningen (2015): Voksenopplæring; Trondheim kommune (2015): Norsk for asylsøkere

courses take place in the library.¹⁵³ The *Voksenopplæring* in Sandefjord and Sund (Norway) also organize language cafes in cooperation with the library.¹⁵⁴ In Tromsø (Norway) one of the library employees who is librarian as well as qualified teacher could split her post and works 50 % as librarian in Tromsø Public Library and 50 % as teacher in the *Voksenopplæring*.¹⁵⁵

Further cooperation partners can be reception centres, language teachers, refugee helping organizations, church communities, the Foreigners' Authority of the local municipality, schools, universities, culture institutions like the Goethe Institute and political parties. The Association of German foundations provides a list of foundations which are active for refugees and asylum seekers as well as a list of foundations which look for cooperation partners. In many cases libraries can apply in cooperation for funds which they alone could not apply for.¹⁵⁶ Several libraries also participate in round tables about migration, refugees and asylum seekers.¹⁵⁷

Another factor which should not be underestimated is that libraries can show their importance and significance with cooperation to well-known partners to the responsible body, i.e. the municipality and other institutions of education.¹⁵⁸ This effect might be even increase if the press covers projects of the library and its partners.¹⁵⁹

All in all cooperation can often lead to a win-win situation for all participants. Synergistic effects may occur and leading for the library to advantages which are easy to measure such as more money, better resources, more library visits and

¹⁵³ Refer to Ruhnnow-Braun, A. (2015): „Willkommen in unserer Bibliothek“, p. 198

¹⁵⁴ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 9ff

¹⁵⁵ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 12

¹⁵⁶ Refer to Borries, J. (2015): Sponsoring, Stiftungen, Partnerschaften, p. 522ff; Bundesverband Deutscher Stiftungen: Stiftungen, die sich in der Flüchtlingshilfe engagieren; Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 63; Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 518

¹⁵⁷ Refer to Scheid, E. (2015): Integrationsarbeit ist in Wittlich eine Selbstverständlichkeit, p. 110

¹⁵⁸ Refer to Borries, J. (2015): Sponsoring, Stiftungen, Partnerschaften, p. 523; Schleh, B. (2015): Mit Respekt und Einfühlungsvermögen, p. 655

¹⁵⁹ Refer to Schmidt, M. (2015): Die Familiengeschichte im Schuhkarton, p. 531

active users. But there might be advantages which are not easy to measure such as a better reputation, gain of multipliers, strengthening of the position of libraries in the society, a gain of knowledge, more creativity and it broadens the horizon.¹⁶⁰ These factors might be even more important.

¹⁶⁰ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 14

3.5 Approaching the target group

Reaching asylum seekers and call their attention might not be easy. While some libraries report that male asylum seekers are easier to reach as target group than women others state that they find it more difficult to reach men.¹⁶¹ Here special advertising and eventually offers exclusive for the less represented group might be helpful. Some libraries might find it hard to reach the target group in general. Here is to say that it requires research, preparation, collaboration and patience. Even if services, offers and events for asylum seekers are not accepted very well right away, the library should continue and evaluate.¹⁶²

Practical ways on how to approach asylum seekers include already the interior concept. Through that the library can demonstrate its openness. For example libraries can use different materials such as flags, postcards or maps in their rooms as well as welcome-greetings in different languages. The libraries in Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg (Germany) has not only signs in the library, but also expanded there welcome-greeting signs (saying "Welcome to our library") to different places in the district. So people got to know about the local library for example at the doctors' practice, in schools and kindergartens.¹⁶³ This seems particularly useful as it does not only reach people walking past the library or who are already in the library, but also people who might not have heard about the local library. In general a clear interior concept and signs can give asylum seekers the power to act independently without the need of asking or being exposed to language difficulties when speaking with the librarian.¹⁶⁴

To reach the target group it is also advisable to invite them directly and to get in touch directly with reception centres, refugee help organizations and classes of

¹⁶¹ Refer to Ebert, A. (2015): Sprachlerncomputer hilft bei Integration, p. 521; Schleh, B. (2015): Mit Respekt und Einfühlungsvermögen, p. 654

¹⁶² Refer to Cicek, N.; Schneeorst, S. et al. (2015): Willkommen in Deutschland, p. 527

¹⁶³ Ruhnnow-Braun, A. (2015): „Willkommen in unserer Bibliothek“, p. 197

¹⁶⁴ Refer to Buck, V. M.; Houzé, A. (2014): Healing library anxiety, p. 5ff

asylum seekers, if possible. A branch library in Oslo reports that the participation in their study circles were higher when language classes were invited directly.¹⁶⁵

It is also possible to send book buses directly to reception centres. However, a visit in the library building seems to be more popular as it has among others also the advantage of computers and internet access.¹⁶⁶ But the library staff can go to reception centres and introduce the library and bring fliers, also e.g. at a summer festival of a reception centre.¹⁶⁷ Some reception centres, moreover, organise buses going to libraries.¹⁶⁸

As mentioned in chapter 3.4 there are often a lot of volunteers willing to help. They might be active in local reception centres or community housing and help the residents for example with administrative aspects like visiting the Federal Employment Agency or the Foreigners' Authority. If encouraged, many volunteers will also accompany asylum seekers and refugees to their first visit in the library.¹⁶⁹

Once arrived at the library many of them have their items for asylum seekers, refugees and migrants in special sections named for example (in Germany) "Welcome to Germany" or "Learn German", so they can be easily found from the target group.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 11; Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 518

¹⁶⁶ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 64

¹⁶⁷ Refer to Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 518; Cicek, N.; Schneeorst, S. et al. (2015): Willkommen in Deutschland, p. 527

¹⁶⁸ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 76

¹⁶⁹ Refer to Schneeorst, S. (2015): Empathie zeigen - Bibliotheksangebote für Flüchtlinge, p. 175; Cicek, N.; Schneeorst, S. et al. (2015): Willkommen in Deutschland, p. 527

¹⁷⁰ Schmedemann, B. (2015): Bücher und Spiele für Familien in Flüchtlingsunterkünften, p. 199; Cicek, N.; Schneeorst, S. et al. (2015): Willkommen in Deutschland, p. 529; Hanik, H. (2015): Stadtbücherei Würth als Dienstleister in der Flüchtlingsarbeit p. 115

3.6 How libraries can help

First of all: As libraries are freely accessible for everyone regardless of gender, age and economics, they help to prevent a class-divided society.¹⁷¹ One woman from Kurdistan also states:

“I see the library as a free market which is full of wisdom, possibilities and knowledge. [...] The use of the services has nothing to do with skin colour, nationality, ideological affiliation, or if you are young or old. All are treated equally and all have access to the same services.”¹⁷²

The following chapter will explain which practical measures libraries can take to help asylum seekers with their practical needs, information access as well as with integration within the society.

3.6.1 Registration

While in Norway people do not have to pay to use a library¹⁷³, usage fees are quite common in Germany.¹⁷⁴ Although this usually means just a small fee around 10 to 20 € each year, that can still be a barrier to asylum seekers who have just a limited budget as we have seen in chapter 2.3. To make the library easily accessible for asylum seekers, it is desirable to e.g. give them a voucher saying the first year of usage is free of charge or generally do not charge money from asylum seekers. Some libraries already do this.¹⁷⁵ Besides offering free

¹⁷¹ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 7

¹⁷² Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner p. 64. Translated by the author

¹⁷³ Refer to Lovdata (2014): Lov om folkebibliotek (folkebibliotekloven)

¹⁷⁴ Refer to Vonhof, C. (2009): Benutzungs- und Studiengebühren – Schlaglichter aktueller Bibliotheksfinanzierung, p. 10

¹⁷⁵ Refer to Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2015): Berlin verteilt Bibliotheksausweise an Flüchtlinge; Schmedemann, B. (2015): Bücher und Spiele für Familien in Flüchtlingsunterkünften, p. 200; Zahnhausen, L. (2015): "Bibliotheken können als feste Anlaufstelle interessant sein.", p. 107; Tesch, J. (2015): Flüchten, ankommen, dazugehören, p. 112; Magin, A. (2015): Speyer: "Willkommenspaket" - nicht nur für Flüchtlinge, p. 116

library cards to asylum seekers it might be beneficial to offer free cards to asylum helpers and teaching staff as well to give them access to learning material.¹⁷⁶

Even if the obstacle of the money is overcome, it still might be difficult for asylum seekers to register because they do not have the necessary documents. People living in reception centres in Germany for example only have a certificate saying that they stay in such a reception centre, but they are not registered by law because they should not stay there longer than three months. But libraries usually want to have documents about the identity of the person or at least a confirmation of city registration. Here it helps to design the user regulations as open as possible.¹⁷⁷ In general libraries should present themselves as unbureaucratic as possible to asylum seekers and refugees, if they want to gain them as new library users.¹⁷⁸

3.6.2 Media

Selecting the right media is one of the key factors how libraries can help asylum seekers. As we have seen in chapter 3.2.1, many asylum seekers have higher education and therefore it can be assumed that especially those wish to learn and study. Advantageous media includes media to learn the Roman alphabet as many asylum seekers are not alphabetized in that (see chapter 3.2.1) as well as general media to learn the local language, dictionaries and AV-media. Moreover, picture books are also beneficial for older language learners as they make it easy to understand a story without complicated vocabulary.¹⁷⁹

Other books written in an easy language are not only useful for asylum seekers, but also for e.g. people with limited skills to read longer texts or for other immigrants who want to learn the local language. The library Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg

¹⁷⁶ Refer to Hanik, H. (2015): Stadtbücherei Wörth als Dienstleister in der Flüchtlingsarbeit p. 115

¹⁷⁷ Refer to Schneehorst, S. (2015): Empathie zeigen – Bibliotheksangebote für Flüchtlinge, p. 173ff

¹⁷⁸ Refer to Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 518

¹⁷⁹ Refer to Schneehorst, S. (2015): Empathie zeigen – Bibliotheksangebote für Flüchtlinge, p. 174; Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner p. 70; Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø (2009): Multikulturprosjektet, p. 2; Walther, H. (2015): Sprendlingen: Die Bücherei als Ort des Spracherwerbs, p. 114

(Germany) made very good experiences with easy language books and realised that there is a high demand for them.¹⁸⁰ In Norway, moreover, nine out of ten public libraries state they do provide languages courses and borrow media from DFB.¹⁸¹ In Germany librarians should have a look at the website of the *Fachstelle Stuttgart* (an authority advising libraries in the region of Stuttgart): They created media lists of foreign language media and plan to publish a brochure about libraries and refugees in spring 2016.¹⁸²

Furthermore, advisable media are board games, atlases, travel guides about the local town, pedagogical media targeting refugee helpers as well as virtual offers such as learning media or the “Pressdisplay” which offers current newspapers from around 100 different countries.¹⁸³ In Germany and likewise in Norway exist additionally newspapers in easy German respectively Norwegian. The Norwegian one is named *Klar Tale* and the German one is called *Klar & Deutlich*.¹⁸⁴ Furthermore, in Germany there is a magazine (“Deutsch perfekt”) for German learners.¹⁸⁵

The library can also offer media boxes with the above mentioned media which could be borrowed by adult education centres or reception centres where asylum seekers live to support the language learning process, but also to introduce them to the country they are living in. The latter can especially be supported through picture books showing e.g. doctor visits or German/Norwegian kindergartens.¹⁸⁶

¹⁸⁰ Refer to Schneehorst, S. (2015): Empathie zeigen – Bibliotheksangebote für Flüchtlinge, p. 174; Werner, K. (2015): Die Nachfrage steigt, p. 189

¹⁸¹ Refer to Mangfolds- og migrasjonsbiblioteket (2016): «Nøkkel til Norge» og «Sensur, selvsensur?»

¹⁸² Refer to Fachstelle für das öffentliche Bibliothekswesen Regierungsbezirk Stuttgart: Flucht und Integration

¹⁸³ Refer to Schmedemann, B. (2015): Bücher und Spiele für Familien in Flüchtlingsunterkünften, p. 199ff; Hanik, H. (2015): Stadtbücherei Wörth als Dienstleister in der Flüchtlingsarbeit, p. 115

¹⁸⁴ Refer to Spaß am Lesen Verl.: Klar & Deutlich; Klar Tale: Lettlest innsikt og oversikt

¹⁸⁵ Refer to Spotlight Verl.: Produkte

¹⁸⁶ Refer to Ruhnnow-Braun, A. (2015): „Willkommen in unserer Bibliothek“, p. 198; Schmedemann, B. (2015): Bücher und Spiele für Familien in Flüchtlingsunterkünften, p. 199; Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2015): Bibliotheken in Rheinland-Pfalz heißen Flüchtlinge und Asylsuchende willkommen, p. 148

A woman from Afghanistan states that books help her to understand the local culture:

“One day one of my children wanted to a birthday of a friend. I didn’t know how birthday parties are organised here in Norway. Therefore, I went to the library and found a simple book which was easy to read about it.”¹⁸⁷

Taking media boxes to places where asylum seekers already are can have the advantage that the inhibition threshold is lower because the people do not need to go themselves in the library. But through getting to know the library a bit and the media they might feel animated to go there themselves. Besides giving media directly to asylum seekers and letting them use the media independently, language teachers can also use it and involve it in their language lessons.¹⁸⁸

Media in the language of the refugees is also advisable. Immigrants describe that books, movies, documentaries or music in their native language let them feel connected to their roots and habits and can reduce homesickness. The library is a connector between the new country they live in and the country they formerly lived. One questioned woman also specifies that she feels that her culture is valued when she finds books in her native language.¹⁸⁹

If libraries do not have the wished language, the library could tell the asylum seekers about the interlibrary-loan service. Immigrants in Norway mentioned it as very helpful service.¹⁹⁰ Unfortunately many public libraries in Germany exclude belles lettres (*Schöne Literatur* respectively *Skjønnlitteratur*)¹⁹¹ although there is no such restriction in the official interlibrary-loan regulation and they

¹⁸⁷ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 69. Translated by the author

¹⁸⁸ Schmedemann, B. (2015): Bücher und Spiele für Familien in Flüchtlingsunterkünften, p. 199; Cicek, N.; Schneeorst, S. et al. (2015): Willkommen in Deutschland, p. 529

¹⁸⁹ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner p. 64ff; Zahnhausen, L. (2015): "Bibliotheken können als feste Anlaufstelle interessant sein.", p. 107; Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 517

¹⁹⁰ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner p. 61ff

¹⁹¹ Refer to Bücherei Weyarn: Fernleihe; Stadtverwaltung Offenbach: Stadtbibliothek Fernleihe; Stadt Offenburg: Fernleihe

often charge each interlibrary-loan request.¹⁹² It would be desirable if they make exceptions for literature in other languages as asylum seekers often do not have the possibility to get the literature in other ways and have just a very limited budget. Libraries in Norway do not have these restrictions and interlibrary loans are free of charge like other library services.¹⁹³

3.6.3 Information material

In general it is advisable to offer the user regulations in different languages to ensure that everyone who signs them also understands them. The library union Austria (*Büchereiverband Österreich*) offers on their website a general translation of user regulations into 20 different languages including e.g. Arabic, Farsi or Kurdish which especially might be interesting for libraries working with asylum seekers. Worth mentioning is the translation into easy German as usually user regulations are not written with the easiest words.¹⁹⁴ Flyers about the offers of the local library in foreign languages and in an easy version of the local language are also helpful.¹⁹⁵

Through external leaflets asylum seeker become informed about what happens in the local community.¹⁹⁶ Ministries additionally often offer brochures about e.g. the life in Germany respectively Norway which are available in several languages and can be ordered for the library.¹⁹⁷

3.6.4 Events

Many libraries offer guided tours through the library. The standard version is in the local language where participants will be informed about the library offers, rules and how they can use the library best. These library tours could be offered in other versions as well. For example a library tour in an easy language (using easy words spoken slowly), tours in other languages (in the mother tongue of

¹⁹² Refer to Kultusministerkonferenz (2003): Die Ordnung des Leihverkehrs in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland

¹⁹³ Refer to Lovdata (2014): Lov om folkebibliotek (folkebibliotekloven)

¹⁹⁴ Refer to Büchereiverband Österreich: Benutzungsordnung in 20 Sprachen

¹⁹⁵ Refer to Ruhnau-Braun, A. (2015): „Willkommen in unserer Bibliothek“, p. 197

¹⁹⁶ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 71

¹⁹⁷ Refer to Schleh, B. (2015): Mit Respekt und Einfühlungsvermögen, p. 654ff

asylum seekers, e.g. Arabic or in English or French as common languages) or tours with a focus on how to use the library to learn are possible.¹⁹⁸

When staff of Tromsø Public Library showed asylum seekers and refugees around each tour was individualized. For a group of unaccompanied minors young students from the *Voksenopplæring*, who use the library themselves a lot, helped translating in situations when it seemed necessary. This also helped to create confidence as the students from the *Voksenopplæring* are from other cultures as well.¹⁹⁹ The introduction to the library can, moreover, be connected to a social event like a breakfast in the library.²⁰⁰



Figure 2: Breakfast in the Øvre Eiker Library in Norway²⁰¹

Libraries can also participate in the local summer festival and actively go to places where people are. There is a low barrier and libraries can be associated as something positive and welcoming. Libraries might reach people who normally would not come to the library. The libraries in Berlin Friedrichshain-Kreuzberg

¹⁹⁸ Refer to Schmedemann, B. (2015): Bücher und Spiele für Familien in Flüchtlingsunterkünften, p. 200; Zahnhausen, L. (2015): "Bibliotheken können als feste Anlaufstelle interessant sein.", p. 107; Scheid, E. (2015): Integrationsarbeit ist in Wittlich eine Selbstverständlichkeit, p. 109; Tesch, J. (2015): Flüchten, ankommen, dazugehören, p. 112ff; Walther, H. (2015): Sprendlingen: Die Bücherei als Ort des Spracherwerbs, p. 114; Magin, A. (2015): Speyer: "Willkommenspaket" - nicht nur für Flüchtlinge, p. 116

¹⁹⁹ Refer to Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø (2009): Multikulturprosjektet, p. 2

²⁰⁰ Refer to Schumann-Olsen, B.(2015): Bibliotekfrokost

²⁰¹ Figure taken from Schumann-Olsen, B.(2015): Bibliotekfrokost

(Germany), furthermore, started to organize intercultural family festivals in 2012. Therefore, families and especially children in the catchment area were invited to visit the library outside of the usual opening hours.²⁰² A similar event can be found in Norway: In Fusa the library organized together with other organizations an “international café”. The event included music, dance, international dishes and poetry. Over 50 participants came, including refugees, asylum seekers, Norwegians and other immigrants.²⁰³ The *Fachstelle* in Stuttgart is also offering a list of authors who conduct readings concerning the topics escape and integration.²⁰⁴

Some libraries also offer additional help for gaining the driver’s license. In Tønsberg (Norway) the library conducted an event in cooperation with an organization called Christian intercultural work (*Kristent interkulturelt arbeid*) where participants learnt about street signs, traffic and everything related to the driver’s license. It is an additional offer to the usual driver’s license lessons and does not replace them.²⁰⁵

In addition in several Norwegian libraries a lawyer provides regularly (e.g. once a month) free of charge advice. A Norwegian librarian states that this service is also often used by immigrants.²⁰⁶ Therefore, it can be assumed that it is also an interesting offer for asylum seekers, though they need to get informed about the existence of the service.

As mentioned in chapter 3.4 the homework help is also a well visited event.²⁰⁷

Moreover, libraries can offer an introduction to the use of a computer. This is offered e.g. in the library of Tønsberg and Nøtterøy in cooperation with the *Voksenopplæring*. The offer is part of the introduction program to refugees.²⁰⁸

²⁰² Ruhnow-Braun, A. (2015): „Willkommen in unserer Bibliothek“, p. 198; Scheid, E. (2015): Integrationsarbeit ist in Wirklichkeit eine Selbstverständlichkeit, p. 111

²⁰³ Vangsnes, E. (2015): Internasjonal kafé

²⁰⁴ Refer to Fachstelle für das öffentliche Bibliothekswesen Regierungsbezirk Stuttgart: Flucht und Integration

²⁰⁵ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 68

²⁰⁶ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner p. 68

²⁰⁷ Refer to Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek (2015): Leksehjelp; Sandnes Kommune (2015): Leksehjelp hver tirsdag; Norsk Biblioteksforening (2014): Leksehjelp i biblioteket; Bibliotek og byarkiv

Asylum seekers might organize or actively participate in the realization of events as well. This will be elaborated in chapter 3.7.

3.6.5 Language cafes and reading circles

As previously mentioned in chapter 3.4, language cafes in libraries become more and more popular. In Norway a study from 2015 revealed that 38 Norwegian public libraries already have a language café and 44 have plans for the future about a language café.²⁰⁹

In a qualitative research female immigrants said the worst thing when they came to Norway was the lack of language, so that they could not communicate or understand their surroundings which made it hard for them to participate in the society.²¹⁰ The library as neutral and easily accessible place offers therefore a good place for language cafes. They should not be seen as replacement for language courses, but as a possibility to practice the language skills. While in languages courses the language is systematically taught, there is less time to practice orally. As a language café focuses on spoken language and real conversations, it offers a perfect opportunity to practice everyday language.²¹¹

Language cafes do not only help to develop languages, they also help integrating asylum seekers and refugees, which often attend language cafes, into the society. They get the possibility to exchange experiences, meet other people and get in contact with locals (Norwegians and respectively Germans). Participants confirm that they expanded their social network.²¹²

The number of participants fluctuates and also depends e.g. on the number of inhabitants in the catchment area and if there is for example an asylum centre nearby. Language cafes are often very popular and a branch library in Oslo men-

²⁰⁸ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 77

²⁰⁹ Refer to Frisvold, Ø. (2015): Språkkafé – et nytt bibliotektilbud, p. 18; Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 9

²¹⁰ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 55

²¹¹ Refer to Frisvold, Ø. (2015): Språkkafé – et nytt bibliotektilbud

²¹² Refer to Frisvold, Ø. (2015): Språkkafé – et nytt bibliotektilbud, Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 11; Østby, I.-M. (2015): Språktrening

tions that there are around 40 participants every time²¹³ while the library in Tromsø also states that they have many participants. The library in Tromsø also complemented the offer by inviting group participants to join a day trip together with the leader of the “Multikulturprosjekt”.²¹⁴



Figure 3: The well-visited language café in Stavanger Public Library (Norway)²¹⁵

Especially if there are more participants it should be tried to bring the people with a similar language level together. In the Furuset branch library (Norway) the library employees try to determine the language level of each participant by an individual introduction talk. Stine Åmo, a library and information science student who organizes languages cafes in Oslo, mentions that it is also important to have a main topic for each appointed day, so that it is easier for participants to start a conversation.²¹⁶

The participants also get to know the library through language cafés and will most likely become more interested and use the library in other ways as well. It is also reported that possibly voluntary helpers became encouraged and became volunteers at the local volunteer centre.²¹⁷

²¹³ Refer to Frisvold, Ø. (2015): Språkkafé – et nytt bibliotektilbud

²¹⁴ Refer to Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø (2009): Multikulturprosjektet, p. 2ff

²¹⁵ Figure taken from Stavanger kulturhus (2015): Språkkafé og norsktrening

²¹⁶ Refer to Frisvold, Ø. (2015): Språkkafé – et nytt bibliotektilbud; Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 11

²¹⁷ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 11; Frisvold, Ø. (2015): Språkkafé – et nytt bibliotektilbud

Branch libraries in Oslo also organized reading circles for immigrants with partners. The participants were usually introduced to a short story illustrated through different ways such as role plays, body language and objects. It focused on a dialogical approach and the participants were encouraged to express their ideas about the storyline and future developments. This approach supports creativity, fantasy and improves hope, self-confidence and joy.²¹⁸

Another relatively simple action to support language learning and to support the interaction between asylum seekers and the local population is the library as platform for finding tandem partners. In a language tandem person A might be interested in learning Arabic and speaks Norwegian while person B can speak Arabic and would like to improve his/her Norwegian. These two persons can become tandem partners and help each other. An easy and uncomplicated way to support that as library is to have a notice board where everyone can add a note about the requested language as well as the language he/she offers.²¹⁹

3.6.6 Integration and community

Libraries should provide a meeting place, this is already written down in Norway's library law.²²⁰ And libraries indeed can be seen in Germany as well as in Norway as a meeting place or a so-called third place, that is to say a place between home (first place) and the workplace, school or university (second place). People meet and spend their leisure time at the third place.²²¹

The library is perceived as a neutral place with a low inhibition threshold and through courses, events and activities it provides a place for social participation for asylum seekers as well as for locals.²²² While people have to pay to go to the cinema, a café or other places, visiting and sitting in the library is free of charge.

²¹⁸ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 11ff

²¹⁹ Refer to Schleh, B. (2015): Mit Respekt und Einfühlungsvermögen, p. 654ff

²²⁰ Refer to Lovdata (2014): Lov om folkebibliotek (folkebibliotekloven)

²²¹ Refer to Barth, R. (2015): Die Bibliothek als dritter Ort, p. 426; Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 19ff; Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 516; Oldenburg, R. (1999): The Great Good Place

²²² Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 77

In Norway events and borrowing books are also free of charge.²²³ And as elaborated in 2.3 asylum seekers have a though budget. Besides that visiting some public places as a woman is conflictual in some cultures like Afghanistan. The library usually does not offer potential for conflict in these cultures.²²⁴ As it is not only a third place for asylum seekers, but is also used from locals as third places it creates a good place for integration.²²⁵

Andersson and Skot-Hansen described already in 1994 four roles of a public library, one of them is the role as social centre.²²⁶ And interviewed immigrants in Tromsø agree: They say the social component is a very important one – as important as the role as learning centre.²²⁷

For asylum seekers it is, moreover, a popular place because it provides a good opportunity to become acquainted with the local culture through e.g. events like Easter or Christmas specials.²²⁸ They can also get to know people, meet friends or be alone but still surrounded by people.²²⁹ Immigrant women in Norway state that they also use it for observing accepted practice in the community.²³⁰ Librarians should therefore not be surprised if they see someone just sitting inactively around and they should be understanding.²³¹

The women, furthermore, describe that the library is among other things an encouraging place for them as they do not feel isolated or lonely there. Moreover, they experience the library as calming, safe, but also lively place. The last one is especially important to the respondents because they come from countries (Afghanistan, Iran, Kurdistan) with a strong social life, while western countries (like

²²³ Refer to Lovdata (2014): Lov om folkebibliotek (folkebibliotekloven)

²²⁴ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 77; Pellicer, D. J. (2009): Bok, håp og kjærlighet

²²⁵ Refer to Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 518

²²⁶ Refer to Andersson, M.; Skot-Hansen, D. (1994): Det lokale bibliotek quoted in Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 43

²²⁷ Refer to Pellicer, D. J. (2009): Bok, håp og kjærlighet

²²⁸ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner p. 68

²²⁹ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 63ff; Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø (2009): Multikulturprosjektet, p. 1; Pellicer, D. J. (2009): Bok, håp og kjærlighet

²³⁰ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 63ff

²³¹ Refer to Schneeorst, S. (2015): Empathie zeigen – Bibliotheksangebote für Flüchtlinge, p. 174

Norway and Germany) seem cold and people seem distanced at first.²³² Holtz-Ersahin also mentions that in libraries something similar to “self-help groups” can be developed when immigrants socialize with each other.²³³

Most asylum seekers still have family and/or friends in their country of origin, but it is difficult to keep in touch with them. Libraries can help out: They can provide - preferable free - internet access, which can be used for writing e-mails, video chats or voice call services. Asylum seekers can additionally use the internet to inform themselves about the situation in their country of origin.²³⁴ Furthermore, a computer gives them the opportunity to look for jobs and to write job applications as well as the possibility to use it to learn.

Immigrants in Norway additionally describe that they use the library not only as third place, but also as second place as they arrange meetings with e.g. their refugee guide in the library.²³⁵

3.6.7 Library as a place to learn

Community housing is often loud, it is hard to concentrate and they do not offer good possibilities to learn.²³⁶ The library can then be a haven of silence and provide a place where asylum seekers can finally concentrate. To provide the possibility to use the library as a learning place it is necessary to have enough seating opportunities. Ideal are group rooms and quiet areas. Equipment like computers with learning software, headphones to borrow, free accessible WLAN and smartboards in group rooms support the library as learning centre.²³⁷

²³² Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 63ff

²³³ Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 516

²³⁴ Refer to Schneehorst, S. (2015): Empathie zeigen – Bibliotheksangebote für Flüchtlinge, p. 173ff; Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 75; Scheid, E. (2015): Integrationsarbeit ist in Wittlich eine Selbstverständlichkeit, p. 109; Cicek, N.; Schneehorst, S. et al. (2015): Willkommen in Deutschland, p. 529

²³⁵ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 83

²³⁶ Refer to Berufsverband Information und Bibliothek (2016): Baden-Württemberg fördert E-Learning-Angebot für Flüchtlinge; Schneehorst, S. (2015): Empathie zeigen, p. 174

²³⁷ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 77; Ebert, A. (2015): Sprachlerncomputer hilft bei Integration, p. 521

In the German county Baden-Württemberg libraries received financial support from the Ministry of Culture (*Kultusministerium*) for the development of e-learning facilities for refugees.²³⁸ In Norway there is also an e-learning project called “Online homework”. It is shown that it appeals especially immigrant boys.²³⁹ Courses showing the asylum seekers how to use the library best as a learning place including introducing them to relevant learning software, learning platforms and e-learning offers are advisable.

The library can, moreover, play a role as information centre. As one service the library can provide a link list on their webpage to relevant information for asylum seekers, refugees and immigrants.²⁴⁰ In a later stage the library as a place for information about the labour market might be interesting.²⁴¹

3.6.8 Further ways libraries can contribute

As we have seen asylum seekers have often non-Latin languages such as Arabic as mother tongue. Libraries can take that in considerations and provide PCs with more written codes than just the Latin alphabet. That allows doing researches with e.g. an Arabic or Cyrillic alphabet as well.²⁴²

A librarian, furthermore, reports that immigrants sometimes come with very personal documents (e.g. from the doctor, bank documents etc.) and ask for help. Even if the librarian cannot help directly, she advises the immigrants a person or place where they can find the necessary help.²⁴³ Some libraries e.g. the library in Tønsberg (Norway) offer therefore also advice for minorities about public services²⁴⁴ and member of the DBV committee for Intercultural Library Services Yilmaz Holtz-Ersahin likewise suggests libraries could have a contact per-

²³⁸ Refer to Berufsverband Information und Bibliothek (2016): Baden-Württemberg fördert E-Learning-Angebot für Flüchtlinge

²³⁹ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 8

²⁴⁰ Refer to Tønsberg og Notterøy Bibliotek (2012): For innvandrere og fremmedspråklige

²⁴¹ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 7

²⁴² Refer to Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2015): Interkulturelle Bibliotheksarbeit; Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø (2009): Multikulturprosjektet, p. 2

²⁴³ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 60

²⁴⁴ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 68; Norsk Bibliotekforening (2014): Minoritetsrådgivning

son for asylum seekers and refugees. Libraries could thereby implement a consultation-hour just for asylum seekers and refugees once a week.²⁴⁵ These services help asylum seekers to gain information, thereby get control of their situation and act independently, after most of them depended very much on other people during their escape and suffered from that.²⁴⁶

Libraries can also play an important role in the municipality and act as intermediary. The library in Wittlich (Germany) took the initiative and created a language network for asylum seekers, refugees and helpers. An e.g. Syrian asylum seeker might have problems with a doctor's visit. Then a refugee helper or the asylum seeker himself can contact the library and ask for a translator. The library brings him together with a person speaking Arabic and German. The translators are all volunteers with language skills, but they do not necessarily hold a degree as translator or such. Wittlich Public Library reported that finding volunteers was not difficult.²⁴⁷

Other actions libraries can take include declaring the library as racism-free zone,²⁴⁸ giving discarded items (as long as the condition is still acceptable) to reception centres or refugee help organizations²⁴⁹ and bibliotherapy. Bibliotherapy is using books to treat mental illnesses or emotional disturbances. A librarian in Norway experienced that young asylum seekers have a greater desire to read books about love and closeness and talk about it than comparable young Norwegians. Through books and talking about books they can express their needs better.²⁵⁰

Additional to services and concepts directly targeting asylum seekers and refugees, it is important to strengthen the values of respect, democracy and equality, reduce prejudice against asylum seekers and refugees in the society and contrib-

²⁴⁵ Refer to Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 516ff

²⁴⁶ Refer to Schleh, B. (2015): Mit Respekt und Einfühlungsvermögen, p. 654

²⁴⁷ Refer to Scheid, E. (2015): Integrationsarbeit ist in Wittlich eine Selbstverständlichkeit, p. 110

²⁴⁸ Refer to Norsk Folkehjelp (2015): Rasismefrie soner

²⁴⁹ Refer to Magin, A. (2015): Speyer: "Willkommenspaket" - nicht nur für Flüchtlinge, p. 116

²⁵⁰ Refer to American Library Association (2016): Bibliotherapy; Berg Larsen, E. (2015): Stronger mental health, p. 27

ute to a multicultural society. Libraries can contribute here in different ways, for example through events (e.g. readings), study circles and exhibitions. Arranging an exhibition like the one which can be seen in figure 4 can be an easy task and effective as well.²⁵¹ Examples of public events are the public debates which regularly take place under the name International seminar (*Internasjonalt seminar*) in the library of Tromsø. Topics in the past also included migration, refugees in Norway and integration.²⁵²



Figure 4: Exhibition "On the run" in Bergen Public Library (Norway)²⁵³

²⁵¹ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, p. 8; Tesch, J. (2015): Flüchten, ankommen, dazugehören, p. 112; Wieder, C. (2015): Für Mühen der Flucht sensibilisieren; Schmidt, M. (2015): Die Familiengeschichte im Schuhkarton, p. 531

²⁵² Refer to Universitetet i Tromsø – Norges arktiske universitet (2016): Nyhetsarkiv

²⁵³ Figure taken from Fana bibliotek (2015): På flukt / On the run

3.7 Asylum seekers as culture-mediator

As elaborated in chapter 2.3 asylum seekers have time as resource. With this time they often want to contribute to the society and actively participate in society. The library can give them the possibility to do so.

Wittlich Public Library (Germany) organizes a series of presentation called “I am Wittlicher [inhabitant of Wittlich] and come from ...”. This popular series is organized twice a year and an inhabitant of the town tells about her/his home country and how he came to Wittlich. The library invites people from different countries and inviting asylum seekers would be possible as well.²⁵⁴

To value their personal history, to get in touch with locals and to make them be seen in the society, they can, moreover, participate in “living book”-projects. For example refugees and immigrants participated in the International Week in Tromsø and could be “borrowed” by everyone. Then they told about e.g. their home country and their culture. The library of Wittlich (Germany) has a similar concept.²⁵⁵ The concept also works vice versa which means that Germans respectively Norwegians can be the living books and be borrowed by asylum seekers.²⁵⁶

In addition the library can give asylum seekers the possibility to read in their native language and organize story times in e.g. Arabic or Tigrinya. The story times can also complete other arrangements such as the International Mother Language Day or a Persian story time can take place on e.g. the national day of Iran.²⁵⁷ Here again the mother tongue of the asylum seeker is valued, the library can increase their offer of multicultural events and the asylum seeker can follow a meaningful leisure activity.

²⁵⁴ Refer to Scheid, E. (2015): Integrationsarbeit ist in Wittlich eine Selbstverständlichkeit, p. 110ff

²⁵⁵ Refer to Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant woman, S. 7ff; Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø (2009): Multikulturprosjektet, p. 2; Scheid, E. (2015): Integrationsarbeit ist in Wittlich eine Selbstverständlichkeit, p. 111

²⁵⁶ Refer to Mangfolds- og migrasjonsbiblioteket (2015): Biblioteket – en tverrkulturell møteplass

²⁵⁷ Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø (2009): Multikulturprosjektet, p. 4; Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2016): Vorlesezeit Arabisch – Deutsch (für Kinder ab 4 Jahren)

Asylum seekers can be active as volunteer in different ways. In Østre Toten (Norway) an asylum seeker organizes film screenings in the library. He is responsible for the selection of the movie, has a key to the room and organizes the screenings in the summer when the library closes early in the afternoon. Then there is every evening a Norwegian movie shown as well as an English one. The library is responsible for the marketing. Although Lena, the capital of the municipality has only a bit more than 1 000 inhabitants²⁵⁸, the library reports that the event has around 15 participants each time.²⁵⁹

Besides the mentioned examples above the library can offer internships for asylum seekers. The intern can especially operate as translator, as help with cataloguing and selecting media in foreign languages.²⁶⁰

Giving asylum seekers chances to undertake a task in the library can lead to a win-win situation for both parties. The library can offer further services and events and have a broader multicultural approach. The asylum seekers can have a meaningful and fulfilling task where he/she can take responsibility, use his/her knowledge and become better integrated into society.

²⁵⁸ Refer to Statistisk sentralbyrå (2015): Befolkning og areal i tettsteder, 1. januar 2015

²⁵⁹ Refer to Østby, I.-M. (2015): Filmgruppe

²⁶⁰ Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø (2009): Multikulturprosjektet, p. 3ff; Pellicer, D. J. (2009): Bok, håp og kjærlighet; Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 76; Scheid, E. (2015): Integrationsarbeit ist in Wittlich eine Selbstverständlichkeit, p. 109

3.8 Challenges for libraries and librarians

As discussed thoroughly in chapter 3.5 it can already be a challenge to approach asylum seekers in the right way. Moreover, a reason for failure to appear of asylum seekers and refugees in rural areas might be that they have difficulties to reach their next library. Norway's library law determines that there has to be a library in every municipality. But still the reception centres might be a bit outside of the town or village, so that the local library is not easily reachable. Germany does not have such a library law which determines that libraries are statutory duties, so not even every municipality has a library.²⁶¹ In the administrative region of Tübingen alone (which is located in Baden-Württemberg, one of the richer districts of Germany) 24,7 % of the inhabitants live in a municipality without a library (as of 2014). And even out of the municipalities with a library many of them are not managed by a professional librarian.²⁶² To reach the next library can therefore be complicated and the transportation expenses to go there might be a barrier.²⁶³

In general the evaluation of library services and concepts for asylum seekers can turn out to be difficult. What do libraries define as goal? Often the word "integration" is named, also in the quote mentioned in the introduction. However, often the word integration and the operative goals of libraries are not defined.²⁶⁴ The evaluation of success can be therefore difficult.

Collaboration with partners can be beneficial as seen in chapter 3.4, but it can be time-consuming and exhausting as well, especially if partners have different goals, approaches or a very different working style.

As mentioned in chapter 3.6 books and media in the mother tongue of the reader can be seen as a bridge to the own culture and communicates an appreciation of the language and culture. Unfortunately it is not always easy to order

²⁶¹ Refer to Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2015): Bibliotheksgesetze in Deutschland

²⁶² Refer to Regierungspräsidium Tübingen (2014): Deutsche Bibliotheksstatistik

²⁶³ Refer to Schnee horst, S. (2015): Empathie zeigen, p. 174

²⁶⁴ Johnston, J. (2016): Conversation-based programming and newcomer integration, p. 10

books in foreign languages and requires intensive research.²⁶⁵ A Norwegian librarian describes that it is easy to order Arabic books, but it is difficult to get Kurdish ones. Even if the library manages to order books, Essmat criticizes that the staff most likely does not have much knowledge about them as they do not speak the language. A Persian native speaker also states that she does not read the Persian books because they were already very old. This does not have to be per se bad, as other immigrants reveal that it still helps to reduce homesickness, even if the book has been read by them several times before. Aside from books the subscriptions from foreign newspapers and magazines are not unproblematic as the delivery of these is unreliable.²⁶⁶

Moreover, for asylum seekers the public library often represents the only opportunity to use the internet. Therefore, it might happen that library users have to wait longer to use the computer.²⁶⁷ Some libraries, therefore, already introduced a time limit for the use of computers. Vaagan, moreover, mentions that it can be problematic for female librarians to explain male asylum seekers that they are using the computer to long.²⁶⁸

Furthermore, asylum seekers might move on short notice, within the country or they are deported when they are not granted asylum. Moreover, asylum seekers disappear from reception centres as they are e.g. trying to reach another country. This effects libraries as the asylum seekers might have borrowed media from the library. The items are usually lost and have to be replaced, which results in costs for the library. Grabowsky suggests therefore that libraries can limit the amount of items which can be borrowed. Zahnhausen even brings up the idea that asylum seekers can be allowed to use the library on the location, but not to

²⁶⁵ Refer to Schneehorst, S. (2015): *Empathie zeigen*, p. 174; Essmat, S. (2009): *Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner*, p. 72ff; Werner, K. (2015): *Die Nachfrage steigt*, p. 189

²⁶⁶ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): *Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner*, p. 72ff

²⁶⁷ Refer to Bibliotek og byarkiv Tromsø (2009): *Multikulturprosjektet*, p. 1

²⁶⁸ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): *Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge*, p. 45ff

borrow books and media.²⁶⁹ Thus the librarians can reduce costs of lost items, but this can lead to segregation and be contra productive.

Another problem is that there might be a language barrier between asylum seekers and librarians. Therefore, it might be worth to get in touch with local refugee help organizations or reception centres as they might have someone who can translate. Nevertheless, most of the situations with communication problems will arise spontaneously and there might not be time to call a translator.²⁷⁰ Librarians can try to use creativity and e.g. resources like Google Translator here.

Furthermore, librarians usually do not have a degree as teacher or in German respectively Norwegian as a second language. Therefore, they might be overstrained in some situations or they might overestimate their skills. A German librarian reports, she shows around refugees and asylum seekers in the library. This is usually conducted in German, but she sometimes switches to English or adds a word in English to continue in German again.²⁷¹ Although she probably just wants it to be as easy to understand as possible for the visitors, is it the best way? As a Norwegian language learner myself I find it even more difficult if I have to switch thinking between several languages. Explanations of difficult German words in German and possibly pictures to support the understanding might seem like a better alternative.

The library of Speyer (Germany) writes about its offers for asylum seekers and refugees and names the purchase of Russian-German books (besides Arabic-German and Turkish-German books).²⁷² If we look at the multicultural society in Germany in general, that might be a wise purchase. But if the goal of Speyer Public Library really was to target asylum seekers and refugees, they made a mistake. Russian is not one of the main languages of asylum seekers and refugees

²⁶⁹ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): *Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge*, p. 45; Zahnhausen, L. (2015): "Bibliotheken können als feste Anlaufstelle interessant sein.", p. 108; Cicek, N.; Schneeorst, S. et al. (2015): *Willkommen in Deutschland*, p. 526

²⁷⁰ Refer to Zahnhausen, L. (2015): "Bibliotheken können als feste Anlaufstelle interessant sein.", p. 107

²⁷¹ Refer to Walther, H. (2015): *Sprendlingen: Die Bücherei als Ort des Spracherwerbs*, p. 113ff

²⁷² Refer to Magin, A. (2015): *Speyer: "Willkommenspaket" - nicht nur für Flüchtlinge*, p. 116

(see chapter 3.2.1). It might be challenging to find some time to do proper research additionally to the daily library work, but it is necessary before they start working for asylum seekers and refugees.

Libraries can, moreover, be overwhelming and exhausting for refugees as they can experience language barriers, an overload of information as well as “confusing cultural practices”.²⁷³ Therefore, it is important to create a safe place, act as welcoming as possible, have a sympathetic ear for visitors and try to make the library as easy to understand as possible.

Asylum seekers and immigrants in general might have other values, different sights and are used to do certain things in a different way. It should be, therefore, taken into consideration that things can turn out differently. For example librarians in Bergen report that foreign workshop leaders had a different perception of workshops. They were used to speak in front of their participants instead of actively involving them. This was not planned and unexpected.²⁷⁴

The organization of e.g. language cafés and literature groups can be more demanding than expected, especially at the beginning. This usually becomes better when there is a routine and through exchanging experiences and knowledge with e.g. project partners.²⁷⁵

²⁷³ Buck, V. M.; Houzé, A. (2014): Healing library anxiety, p. 2ff

²⁷⁴ Refer to Undlien, A. K.: Leselyst og språkforståelse – to sider av samme sak, p. 6

²⁷⁵ Refer to Undlien, A. K.: Leselyst og språkforståelse – to sider av samme sak, p. 7

4. Best practice Bergen Public Library (Norway)

Bergen is the second largest city of Norway with around 270 000 inhabitants distributed to eight urban districts. The city has several higher education institutions which attract people from not only Bergen and the surroundings, but also from different parts of Norway and abroad. Bergen is thereby growing and is expected to have 300 000 inhabitants in 2024. Currently almost every sixth person is an immigrant.²⁷⁶

Like in most places in Europe the number of asylum seekers in Bergen is increasing. Recently it was decided that there will be a reception centre for acute cases established in Bergen. The opening is planned for the end of 2016.²⁷⁷ Moreover, there are already three reception centres existing in Bergen and which offer all together room for 380 asylum seekers and refugees.²⁷⁸

Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek (BOB) – the public library of Bergen – has 119 employees distributed to 87,5 positions and is with 130 000 customers well used.²⁷⁹ The library consists of a main library and six branch libraries.²⁸⁰ Two out of their six branch libraries are located next to reception centres. The library is here working closely together with the reception centres and its inhabitants. The multilingual collection got extended and further events are planned here.²⁸¹

Anne Berit Helland is a fulltime employee responsible for multicultural library work at BOB. She holds a degree in library science and moreover studied social anthropology with 90 ECTS and did an additional course named “Norway as immigration country” (*Norge som innvandringsland*) later on. Her tasks include the responsibility for the multilingual collection for adults, acquisition for the multilingual collection for children, internal leadership of projects linked to multicultural

²⁷⁶ Refer to Bergen kommune (2015): Befolkning

²⁷⁷ Refer to Bergen kommune (2015): Oppretter akuttinntak for asylsøkere på Landås

²⁷⁸ Refer to Bergen Byarkiv (2009): Asylmottak

²⁷⁹ Refer to Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek (2014): Årsrapport 2014, p. 1

²⁸⁰ Refer to Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek (2013): Filialer

²⁸¹ Refer to Isaksen, R. (2015): Biblioteket åpner seg for flyktninger; Helland, A. B. (2016): Fwd: Spørsmål om flerspråklige tjenester [e-mail]

tural services, promotion and planning of new initiatives as well as implementation and execution of these.²⁸²

Furthermore, there are other employees with different backgrounds, such as an employee from Iran working partly with multicultural library services. The team is supported by interns, both with Norwegian background as well as with foreign background.²⁸³

Helland and the other employees are given the possibility to use the Erasmus+ stipend for further education. Therefore, several employees learned more about inclusion and the library as informal learning place while visiting the Netherlands and Sweden and their libraries in 2015.²⁸⁴ Further seminars within Norway are also visited by staff members.²⁸⁵

The team of the library can communicate in various languages: Polish, Arabic, Somali, Spanish, Portuguese, Russian, Vietnamese, Persian, French, German and most of the team speaks English.²⁸⁶

Helland says that the library staff has not enough capacity to care as much as they want about refugees and asylum seekers though. But their solution is to work closely with volunteers.²⁸⁷ Therefore, the two-hour long language café is organised by four employees of BOB and *Det felles innvandrerråd i Hordaland*, a volunteer organization. Around 25 volunteers are involved. In general the library is cooperating much with a variety of partners such as the *Voksenopplæring* reception centres, volunteer organizations, authorities such as the UDI and more.²⁸⁸

The language café is split in different groups with around six people each and every group is leaded by a person with Norwegian as mother tongue. The partic-

²⁸² Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 74; Helland, A. B. (2016): Fwd: Spørsmål om flerspråklige tjenester [e-mail]

²⁸³ Refer to Helland, A. B. (2016): Fwd: Spørsmål om flerspråklige tjenester [e-mail]; Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 74

²⁸⁴ Refer to Isaksen, R. (2015): Biblioteket åpner seg for flyktninger

²⁸⁵ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 75

²⁸⁶ Refer to Helland, A. B. (2016): Fwd: Spørsmål om flerspråklige tjenester [e-mail]

²⁸⁷ Refer to Isaksen, R. (2015): Biblioteket åpner seg for flyktninger

²⁸⁸ Refer to Isaksen, R. (2015): Biblioteket åpner seg for flyktninger; Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 75; Undlien, A. K.: Leselyst og språkforståelse – to sider av samme sak, p. 6; Berg, B.; Kermit, P. (2015): Prat, les, klikk, p. 22ff

ipants are talking about a specific topic such as “food”. It is well visited by refugees, but also e.g. immigrants who came to Norway because of their jobs. There are usually around 100 participants. Helland highlights the importance of a good atmosphere and its positive effects such as arising of friendships between participants.²⁸⁹

After applying for financial support at the UDI *Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek* also started a group for immigrant women. Thereby the library worked together with the local reception and competence centre. The group is similar to the language café, but activities can also include singing, reading, playing card games and further activities outside the library. In an evaluation participants described that they have a stronger desire to read after participating in the group.²⁹⁰

Other events are for example exhibitions focusing on languages and other cultures, participation in the “International Week” with multicultural authors, multicultural music events for children, help with homework, debates, writing workshops for multilingual participants, Norwegian training organized by the Red Cross and a laptop club.²⁹¹ Refugees and other immigrants can also contribute to events and take initiative.²⁹² Helland, furthermore, participated e.g. in a public debate about “Multicultural Bergen” and represented the library which shows the importance of the library as intuition of integration in Bergen.²⁹³

In 2015 the library got nominated as library of the year for their broad offer of events (1 604 alone in 2014²⁹⁴) and the exemplary collaboration with volunteers, different organizations and other actors.²⁹⁵

²⁸⁹ Refer to Isaksen, R. (2015): Biblioteket åpner seg for flyktninger

²⁹⁰ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 75; Gundersen, A. (2011): Norwegian libraries and special services for immigrant women, p. 10; Undlien, A. K.: Leselyst og språkforståelse – to sider av samme sak, p. 6ff

²⁹¹ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 75; Undlien, A. K.: Leselyst og språkforståelse – to sider av samme sak, p. 5ff; Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek (2015): Leksehjelp; Redd Barna Norge Region Vest (2015): Barndom på vent - levekår for enslige mindreadrige asylsøkere; Helland, A. B. (2016): Fwd: Spørsmål om flerspråklige tjenester [e-mail]

²⁹² Refer to Helland, A. B. (2016): Fwd: Spørsmål om flerspråklige tjenester [e-mail]

²⁹³ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 75

²⁹⁴ Refer to Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek (2014): Årsrapport 2014, p. 1

²⁹⁵ Refer to Isaksen, R. (2015): Biblioteket åpner seg for flyktninger; Norsk Bibliotekforening (2015): Disse kan bli Årets bibliotek 2015

Moreover, the library participated actively in different projects such as “*Leselyst og språkforståelse – to sider av samme sak*” (translated “Reading delight and language understanding – two sides of the same thing”) with other Norwegian libraries.²⁹⁶ The library also hosts authors as part of the International Cities of Refuge Network (ICORN). The author has an office in the library and works with the library for events.²⁹⁷

Furthermore, the collection of the library includes more than 11 000 items in 30 different languages. This includes Norwegian books which are easy to read as, media explaining Norwegian grammar, foreign newspapers and magazines as well as music from other countries. PCs are available and can be used for 30 minutes (free of charge).²⁹⁸ Information material about the library is in several languages such as Arabic available (see figure 5).



Figure 5: Multilingual flyers in Bergen Public Library²⁹⁹

In general the library is used well by immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers.³⁰⁰

Besides using the offers and attending events which are especially directed to them, asylum seekers also use the service centre of the library which gives them

²⁹⁶ Refer to Undlien, A. K.: *Leselyst og språkforståelse – to sider av samme sak*, p. 1

²⁹⁷ Refer to Undlien, A. K.: *Leselyst og språkforståelse – to sider av samme sak*, p. 3; International Cities of Refuge (2015): Bergen

²⁹⁸ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): *Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge*, p. 75

²⁹⁹ Own figure

³⁰⁰ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): *Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge*, p. 75

the possibility to copy, scan and use computers. Moreover, they can see movies free of charge in the library.³⁰¹ Another important offer is the help with e.g. job applications, applications for kindergartens and basic daily things. This is offered not only in Norwegian and English, but also in Somali, Arabic, Polish and Spanish within a library department which is called “Service centre”.³⁰²

The municipality of Bergen has published an action plan for inclusion and diversity in Bergen. Here the public library is also considered.³⁰³

The library can be seen as best practice example in Norway as it participates in various ways to the integration of asylum seekers. It encourages employees to improve their (intercultural) skills, has a clear responsibility when it comes to multicultural library services due to an own staff member, works with other organizations and volunteers, offers a variety of services and events for asylum seekers and has items as well as information brochures in several languages. The integration in the action plan of the municipality, moreover, shows that the libraries potential and importance is recognized by decision-makers.

³⁰¹ Refer to Helland, A. B. (2016): Fwd: Spørsmål om flerspråklige tjenester [e-mail]

³⁰² Refer to Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek (2015): Servicesenter; Helland, A. B. (2016): Fwd: Spørsmål om flerspråklige tjenester [e-mail]

³⁰³ Refer to Bergen kommune (2015): En by i vekst og endring – Handlingsplan for inkludering og mangfold 2012-2015, p. 13ff

5. Best practice Duisburg Public Library (Germany)

Duisburg is situated in the west of Germany and has almost half a million inhabitants.³⁰⁴ Many nationalities can be found there due to the 160 000 inhabitants with migration background.³⁰⁵ Moreover, there are currently around 4 000 refugees living in Duisburg and it is likely that the number will increase up to 8 500 in 2016.³⁰⁶

The public library of Duisburg is a metropolitan library system with 13 branch libraries, a book bus and the central library.³⁰⁷ It has 129 full-time positions as well as three positions for trainees.³⁰⁸ The library focuses for more than 40 years on multicultural library services and is lately especially focusing on asylum seekers and refugees.³⁰⁹

Yilmaz Holtz-Ersahin is the leader of the department for intercultural library services in Duisburg as well as member of the DBV committee for intercultural library services. He grew up in Turkey so he has a migration background himself and studied history, literature and communication and media science.³¹⁰

In 2011 Duisburg Public Library established an “international children’s library” with more than 6 000 items in 17 different languages. The collection includes many bilingual books.³¹¹ It could be established due to a donation by a foundation.³¹²

There is, moreover, a special section called “Arriving in Germany” (*Ankommen in Deutschland*) which provides media for asylum seekers, refugees and volunteers working with these groups. The collection includes dictionaries, books and media

³⁰⁴ Refer to Statistisches Bundesamt (2015): Bevölkerung, Familien, Lebensformen, p. 30

³⁰⁵ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Interkulturelle Bibliothek

³⁰⁶ Refer to Holtz-Ersahin, Yilmaz (2016): *Ankommen in Deutschland*, p. 2

³⁰⁷ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Herzlich willkommen!

³⁰⁸ Refer to Duisburg am Rhein (2015): Haushaltsplan 2015, p. 1183ff

³⁰⁹ Refer to Holtz-Ersahin, Yilmaz (2016): *Ankommen in Deutschland*, p. 4

³¹⁰ Refer to Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 520

³¹¹ Refer to Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 519

³¹² Refer to Holtz-Ersahin, Yilmaz: Bibliotheksangebote für Flüchtlinge in Duisburg, p. 1

to learn German and to read German, language tests, media to understand the German culture better, advice about laws, books based on personal experiences and various informative leaflets in different languages.³¹³ The library additionally offers a link list with helpful online resources.³¹⁴

Several events which can be interesting for asylum seekers are offered. First of all it offers the “Café Deutsch” (Café German).³¹⁵ German courses and schools with refugee classes are invited to interactive lessons within the library. Holtz-Ersahin draws attention to the point that the participants can get a word in edgeways and are listened to.³¹⁶ Duisburg Public Library is also showing around refugees while explaining how the library works, how it can be used (also for integration) as well as introducing the participants to common library terms.³¹⁷

The library is for the Café Deutsch also cooperating with other institutions which bring knowledge in different languages with them. Together with the *Volks-hochschule* the library is, furthermore, offering so-called “integration readings”. Here participants of integration courses are invited to get to know German literature better. As the requirement is a B1-level in German after the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) this targets rather refugees or asylum seekers who have been for a while in Germany or have previous German knowledge though.³¹⁸

For children the library, moreover, offers storytimes for kids which are conducted in two languages, one of them German. This can be the first contact with German and increase the desire to read.³¹⁹

Furthermore, there is regularly an event organized where immigrants tell about their home country and their way to Germany.³²⁰ Additionally events such as

³¹³ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Wichtige Themen für Sie zusammengefasst!; Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 517

³¹⁴ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Linksammlung für Flüchtlinge in Deutschland

³¹⁵ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Interkulturelle Bibliothek

³¹⁶ Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 520

³¹⁷ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Interkulturelle Bibliothek; Holtz-Ersahin, Y.; Schleh, B. (2015): "Je weniger Bürokratie, umso leichter ist der Weg in die Bibliothek", p. 517

³¹⁸ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Interkulturelle Bibliothek

³¹⁹ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Interkulturelle Bibliothek

intercultural fairy-tale readings and introductions to the topic information and media literacy for women are organised.³²¹

Moreover, the library offers an image video which goes without sound apart from the pronounced slogan of the library at the end of the video.³²² Whether the video is introducing the library in a good way can be discussed though.

There is free WIFI which can be used throughout the whole library.³²³ Through the Library PressReader the library also offers access to more than 4800 newspapers and magazines in more than 60 different languages and media which can be borrowed online also includes items to learn German.³²⁴

Future plans for the library include a plan to implement another service for refugees together with partners. Here volunteers shall support refugees with selecting appropriate media.³²⁵ It is likely that the volunteers are also open to help asylum seekers.

The library understood the importance of cooperation and sharing knowledge. It has, moreover, already a long history of multicultural library services, has named a responsible staff member and is continuously improving itself. It offers various media, but also works as a meeting place and place to learn through for example the free WIFI throughout the library. The library is, furthermore, not only relying on their own budget, but trying to seek out for financial support and could so finance the international children's library. Combined the library can be seen as good example concerning library services and concepts for asylum seekers.

³²⁰ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Interkulturelle Bibliothek

³²¹ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Interkulturelle Bibliothek

³²² Refer to Stadtbibliothek Duisburg (2015): Imagefilm der Zentralbibliothek Duisburg

³²³ Refer to RP Digital: Ankommen in der neuen Bibliothek

³²⁴ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Library PressReader; Stadtbibliothek Duisburg (2016): Startseite

³²⁵ Refer to Stadt Duisburg: Interkulturelle Bibliothek

6. Conclusion

After working intensively with the topic of asylum seekers in public libraries I realized what a broad topic it is and that there are already several services for asylum seekers implemented in different libraries in both Germany and Norway. The importance of these services and concepts could for example be seen through testimonials from interviews Essmat conducted. Offers such as language cafes transform the library into a meeting area while for example selected media helps with learning the local language. In the long run all these services and concepts support integration.

But there is much to learn for librarians and other staff members of public libraries. I therefore agree with Vaagan that the topic should be more focused on at universities.³²⁶ Even if the daily tasks in the library take up most of the time, staff members of libraries should still be motivated to engage themselves in multicultural library services and in services to asylum seekers and refugees as integration might become a core task of libraries.

There are further barriers such as costs, language problems or the distance between reception centres and the public library which might make it difficult to work with asylum seekers. But throughout the thesis ideas and suggestions for how to overcome these barriers are presented.

While knowledge about the target group and good preparation definitely is an important factor to support them as best as possible, it is important to just start doing something and risk failing.³²⁷ Even through e.g. unsuccessful services and events the library can improve itself.

Moreover, there is not the one and only right way to work with asylum seekers. In fact ways to work with asylum seekers can look different and what is successful can differ from place to place as “asylum seekers” is just the generic term for a very heterogenic group of humans.

³²⁶ Refer to Vaagan, R. (2005): Bibliotekene og det flerkulturelle Norge, p. 83

³²⁷ Refer to Undlien, A. K.: Leselyst og språkforståelse – to sider av samme sak, p. 16

When I told someone about the topic of my bachelor thesis in Germany the question was often: “But what do libraries do for asylum seekers?” while in Norway no one questioned that. This attitude affirms the impression I got while writing this thesis: I noticed that it was easy to find Norwegian examples, if we take into account that Norway has much fewer inhabitants and thereby also fewer public libraries than Germany.³²⁸ Norwegian librarians seem to be a bit more willing to take a risk than German ones, try new ways and most of all can convince the public of their importance better.

The justification that German libraries might be in an even tenser financial situation should not be the reason as there are a variety of possibilities to finance offers and often it is first and foremost creativity and engagement that is necessary. The outcome can still be enormous. Nevertheless, it is important to say that there are several German libraries such as Nürnberg Public Library, Hamburg Public Library, the public libraries in Berlin, Duisburg as the elaborated example as well as smaller libraries which already have well implemented services and concepts and seem very dedicated.

To be successful one of the important points is, moreover, to take the topic of multicultural library services in general as well as services for asylum seekers and refugees serious and determine an employee who is responsible for it.

While Essmat concludes in her master thesis that more librarians with a multicultural background are necessary³²⁹, I agree that this would be helpful, but it cannot replace motivation, empathy and willingness to engage oneself in this topic. Thereby knowledge of languages and intercultural competencies are supporting.

The presented ideas and examples from Norwegian libraries can stimulate German librarians and vice versa. The exchange of ideas and knowledge between librarians is important and multicultural library meetings like the ones organised by DFB can support this process. But exchanging ideas and supporting each other should not stop at borders, especially not when we are talking about intercultur-

³²⁸ Refer to Nasjonalbiblioteket (2014): Tabell 1. Folkebibliotek etter kommunestorleik 2014; Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (2016): Öffentliche Bibliotheken

³²⁹ Refer to Essmat, S. (2009): Biblioteket som møteplass for innvandrerkvinner, p. 89

al services. Organisations like the IFLA and EBLIDA help us to look beyond our own country.

Furthermore, a crucial point is to reach out to NGOs, the municipality, authorities or companies to find partners. The extensive advantages are elaborated in chapter 3.4. I just want to highlight that in my opinion one of the most important benefits is that the library can draw attention to itself as important educational institution and strengthen the picture of the library as a meeting place for everyone where integration can happen. Through the media hype around asylum seekers the library has here more than ever the possibility to reach the general public and decision-makers with this attitude. If the library can establish itself as a place for integration, education and meeting place, this can give a whole new right to existence to some libraries.

But libraries should not only care in short-term about asylum seekers because it is currently highly topical, they should continuously evaluate and enhance their services. Because working with asylum seekers means a commitment for long-term to reach the goal mentioned in the introduction: integration.

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E-mail: annebhel@bergenbibliotek.no
Role: Responsible for multicultural library services at Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek

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E-mail: Anna-Katharina.Rich@bamf.bund.de
Role: Employee of the Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in Germany

Tidemann-Andersen, Siri (2016): Spørsmål om DFB, 08.04.2016
E-mail: siri.tidemann-andersen@kul.oslo.kommune.no
Role: Leader of Det flerspråklige bibliotek

I. Glossary of German and Norwegian terms

Norwegian/German word	Origin	Meaning
<i>Abitur</i>	German	Diploma from German secondary school qualifying for university admission
<i>Aktion Mensch</i>	German	Social lottery in Germany
<i>Ankomstsenter</i>	Norwegian	First reception facility for asylum seekers
<i>Asylbewerberheim</i>	German	Ordinary reception center in Germany
<i>Bergen Offentlige Bibliotek</i>	Norwegian	Bergen Public Library
<i>Büchereiverband Österreich</i>	German	Library Union Austria
<i>Bundesamt für Migration und Flüchtlinge, BAMF</i>	German	Federal Office for Migration and Refugees in Germany
<i>Deichmanske Bibliotek</i>	Norwegian	Name of the Public Library of Oslo
<i>Det Felles Innvandrerråd</i>	Norwegian	A Norwegian organization for immigrants
<i>Det flerspråklige bibliotek (DFB)</i>	Norwegian	The multilingual library, a department supporting libraries in whole Norway with multicultural library services
<i>Deutscher Bibliotheksverband (DBV)</i>	German	German Library Union
<i>Deutsch perfekt</i>	German	Magazine in easy German, translated "German perfect"
<i>Erstaufnahmeeinrichtung</i>	German	First reception facility for asylum seekers
<i>Fachstelle</i>	German	An authority advising libraries
<i>Finn din foreleser</i>	Norwegian	A project by the DFB, translated "Find your lecturer"
<i>FlerKult</i>	Norwegian	Special interest group for multicultural library services founded by the Norwegian Library Association
<i>Förderverein</i>	German	Supporting association of the local library
<i>Folkeuniversitetet</i>	Norwegian	Norwegian adult education institution
<i>Fritt Ord</i>	Norwegian	Private Norwegian foundation, translated „Free Word“
<i>Fylkebibliotek</i>	Norwegian	County library in Norway
<i>Gaveforsterkningsordningen</i>	Norwegian	Gift Enhancement Scheme
<i>Idébank</i>	Norwegian	Idea-bank, collection of ideas

<i>Generell studiekompetanse</i>	Norwegian	Diploma from Norwegian secondary school qualifying for university admission
<i>Inkluderingsutvalget</i>	Norwegian	Inclusion Commission in Norway
<i>Integrerings- og mangfoldsdirektoratet, IMDi</i>	Norwegian	Directorate of Integration and Diversity in Norway
<i>Internasjonalt seminar</i>	Norwegian	Public debates which regularly take place in Tromsø Public Library, translated "International seminar"
<i>Klar Tale</i>	Norwegian	Newspaper in easy Norwegian, translated "Clear Speech"
<i>Klar & Deutlich</i>	German	Newspaper in easy German, translated "Clear & Precise"
<i>Kommune</i>	Norwegian	Municipality in Norway
<i>Kompetenznetzwerk für Bibliotheken</i>	German	Competence Network for Libraries in Germany
<i>Kristent interkulturelt arbeid</i>	Norwegian	Norwegian organisation, translated "Christian intercultural work"
<i>Kulturdepartementet</i>	Norwegian	Ministry of Culture in Norway
<i>Kultusministerium</i>	German	Ministry of Culture in Germany
<i>Landeszentrale für politische Bildung</i>	German	Federal Agency for Civic Education in Germany
<i>Lesen macht stark: Lesen und digitale Medien</i>	German	Project in Norway, translated "Reading makes strong: Reading and digital media"
<i>Letterstedska föreningen</i>	Swedish	Offers information about possibilities for international collaboration
<i>Mottaksenter</i>	Norwegian	Ordinary reception center in Norway
<i>Nasjonalbiblioteket</i>	Norwegian	National library in Norway
<i>Nordisk Ministerråd</i>	Norwegian	Offers information about possibilities for international collaboration
<i>Norsk Bibliotekforening</i>	Norwegian	Norwegian Library Association
<i>Norsk filminstitutt</i>	Norwegian	Norwegian film institute
<i>Norsk kulturråd</i>	Norwegian	Arts Council Norway
<i>OeB_multikulturell</i>	German	German weblog about the topic "multicultural public libraries"
<i>Prosjekt- og utviklingsstøtte</i>	Norwegian	Financial support by the Norwegian national library
<i>Røde Kors</i>	Norwegian	Red Cross
<i>Schöne Literatur</i>	German	Belles lettres

<i>Senter for Internasjonalisering av Utdanning</i>	Norwegian	Offers information about possibilities for international collaboration
<i>Skjønnlitteratur</i>	Norwegian	Belles lettres
<i>Utlendingsdirektoratet, UDI</i>	Norwegian	Norwegian Directorate of Immigration
<i>Voksenopplæring</i>	Norwegian	Adult education institution in Norway
<i>Volkshochschule</i>	German	Adult education institution in Germany
<i>Willkommenskultur</i>	German	Welcoming Culture