



**Bibliothèques  
Sans Frontières**  
Libraries Without Borders

# Providing access to information to those in need

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## TOOLS

to reduce inequalities in  
access to education and  
information



## RESOURCES

and innovative services to  
strengthen the capacities of  
vulnerable populations



## FACILITATORS

who make the library a  
space for development and  
initiative





# Editorial

PATRICK WEIL

Chairman of Libraries Without Borders

Since 2007, Libraries Without Borders (LWB) has worked to bring knowledge to those who are the most in need. Libraries are simultaneously excellent places for personal development as well as for collective work. However, they are too often absent in those places where they could have the most impact.

In 12 years, LWB has helped to change the lives of more than 6 million people in 48 countries across the globe. We have created revolutionary tools like the Ideas Box which now gives tens of thousands of refugees the ability to learn, exchange ideas, educate their children and plan for the future. Right away, the Ideas Box showed their potential in various other contexts including inner cities in France, rural settlements for FARC ex-combatants in Colombia and aboriginal zones in Australia. This is because the tool itself is fantastic of course. But mainly because each Ideas Box is unique.

What makes our work special is that we are able to bring the resources which correspond to the needs of the right people at the right moment. Because the access to and the understanding of information are the key sources of the majority of inequalities today, we work in 23 languages and have selected more than 28,000 resources. This allows us to strengthen the capacities of populations around the most important issues of our world today: education, health, employment, citizenship, environment and sustainability, disability and technology.

LWB is not an organization like the others. Our work is halfway in between a humanitarian NGO that intervenes in the most difficult situations, and a social enterprise that helps local and national governments spread knowledge everywhere. The diversity of our actions is our strength and pushes us every day to innovate in order to give everyone the capacity to be free and autonomous, and to make decisions that correspond to their aspirations.

## 17 years

THE AVERAGE AMOUNT OF  
TIME A REFUGEE SPENDS IN A  
REFUGEE CAMP \*

## 750 M

PEOPLE IN THE WORLD  
WHO CAN NEITHER READ  
NOR WRITE \*\*

## 50%

OF THE WORLD'S POPU-  
LATION DOES NOT HAVE  
ACCESS TO INTERNET \*\*\*

Sources \* UNHCR; \*\* UNESCO;  
\*\*\* We Are Social

Helping libraries  
adapt and reinvent  
themselves so that they can  
respond to the great  
challenges of our time.



### OUR VISION

THE ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE ALLOWS THE EXERCISE  
OF ONE'S RIGHTS, PROMOTES INCLUSION WITHIN SOCIETY  
AND PERMITS EMANCIPATION FOR EVERYONE

### OUR MISSION

TO BRING KNOWLEDGE  
TO THOSE WHO ARE IN NEED

### OUR VALUES

SHARING, RESPECT, AGILITY,  
INNOVATION, CULTURAL DIVERSITY

# The 3 pillars OF OUR WORK



## TOOLS FOR BRINGING LIBRARIES TO THE MOST VULNERABLE POPULATIONS

With the Ideas Box, a media center in a kit which allows for implementations in multiple different contexts, or the KoomBook, a book-sized, autonomous server that brings internet to rural areas, LWB creates libraries where none exist.

Bringing libraries  
to low income  
neighborhoods and  
rural areas.

Community and  
learning centers  
during humanitarian  
crises and post-  
conflict situations.

Connected spaces  
for public, cultural,  
social and education  
services in isolated  
areas of countries in  
the Global South.



## CUSTOMIZED RESOURCES FOR CHANGING LIVES

Our primary expertise is the selection and the circulation of resources along with educational and informational services that correspond to the needs of populations. With 28,000 selected resources in 23 languages, we are now capable of intervening in a large variety of contexts, from the education of young Kurdish refugee women in Iraq, to the employability of young adults in West Africa, to increasing digital literacy skills of senior citizens in France.



## LIBRARIANS AS LOCAL AGENTS OF CHANGE

In 11 years, we have trained more than 5,000 librarians and facilitators across the globe in education and cultural intervention. We provide them with the support they need in order to become entrepreneurs and agents of change whose actions have a transversal impact on their communities. Our goal is to transform libraries into learning hubs where people can go to create solutions to the problems with which they are faced.

### KEY FIGURES



100  
IDEAS BOX  
PROJECTS



6M  
BENEFICIARIES



48  
COUNTRIES



100  
STAFF  
AROUND THE WORLD



# A look at our projects AROUND THE WORLD

## UNITED STATES THE WASH AND LEARN INITIATIVE

In 2016, Libraries Without Borders launched the Wash and Learn Initiative, a program that creates pop-up libraries and learning centers inside laundromats in Detroit, the Bronx, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Washington DC, and other cities across the country. This initiative provides families in high-need, low-income neighborhoods with access to digital tools, early literacy and workforce development opportunities at the laundromat. It equips each laundromat with laptops, Wi-Fi hotspots, books, and tablets. In Baltimore, the program focuses on achieving digital equity - access to on-line tools and the skills needed to use them - as a baseline for becoming an informed, engaged and discerning member of today's rapidly changing, technologically-infused world.



## SYRIAN CRISIS GIVING A VOICE TO REFUGEES

We intervene in several humanitarian crises across the world to give refugees the means to inform and educate themselves as well as plan for their futures. Since 2015, Ideas Box have been set up in camps for Syrian refugees in Jordan, Lebanon and Iraq. The 12 Ideas Box in the region have welcomed more than 10,000 visitors and have made strong impacts in terms of protecting populations, education and social cohesion. In these community centers, the libraries give a voice to those people who have been deprived of one for too long and allows them to begin the fundamental task of personal reconstruction.

## SENEGAL ACCESS TO EDUCATION FOR STREET CHILDREN

An Ideas Box was implemented in the city of Ziguinchor, within the House of Education, for the integration and the access to education for street children and adolescents, as well as youths victim to early labour. Some of the activities organized include workshops for writing, reading, math and grammar, but also for theatre, hip-hop, dance, etc. This project allows over a hundred young boys and girls to receive proper schooling.

## PUERTO RICO AN IDEAS BOX AFTER THE HURRICANE MARIA

After Hurricane Maria, Libraries Without Borders partnered with local nonprofits, small businesses and community associations to launch a pop-up library and maker-space program in Puerto Rico that equipped residents of two communities with the tools and technology they needed to rebuild after Maria and prepare for the future. Over time, the Ideas Box became a community resource center - a place where residents could borrow power tools to fix broken furniture, apply for FEMA assistance, transport themselves to space through our virtual reality workshops, or participate in workshops on the environment, social entrepreneurship and 3D printing. By providing access to information and critical services in places that were open to all residents, the Ideas Box strengthened social bonds, bolstered resilience, increased human capital, and promoted sustainable recovery.



## BANGLADESH

### IDEAS BOX AND KOOMBOOK FOR ROHINGYA REFUGEES

With the arrival of over 700,000 Rohingya Muslims, Cox's Bazar is now the largest refugee settlement in the world. The "mega camp" of Cox's Bazar now has more than 700,000 Rohingya refugees, a Muslim minority that has been discriminated in Burma for decades. A giant "city" where the literacy rate is not less than 25%. In 2019, Bibliothèques Sans Frontières installed KoomBook and five Ideas Box : three in the refugee camp, two others with host populations. The workshops will be animated around themes of social cohesion, promotion of peace and integration.

## UNITED STATES LEGAL LITERACY INITIATIVE

In 2017, Libraries Without Borders launched the Legal Literacy Initiative, an outreach program that creates pop-up learning spaces in places where people who need legal support regularly congregate, including churches, schools and community centers. In partnership with legal aid organizations, local libraries and nonprofits, we curated, contextualized and simplified legal resources according to the explicit needs and concerns of the community. There are Legal Literacy programs in the Washington DC area, Minneapolis/St. Paul, Providence, and other cities across the United States.

## ITALY INTEGRATING YOUNG MIGRANTS IN PALERMO

In 2018, Libraries Without Borders implemented an Ideas Box in Sicily in order to work with different local actors to encourage the integration of young migrants, primarily Guineans, Gambians et Burkinabes. The technological tools, games and books selected for the Ideas Box give users access to the study of the Italian language as well as the opportunity to search for employment.

## FRANCE PROMOTING DIGITAL LITERACY

With the Digital Travelers (in French: Les Voyageurs du Numérique), Libraries Without Borders has created a citizen movement around digital literacy allowing anyone to support persons with minimal digital skills so that they can employ new information and communication technologies in a useful and responsible manner. During one year, the Digital Travelers will be going on a "Tour de France" visiting small towns and big cities alike to meet with local, like-minded partners and recruit volunteers.

## BURUNDI PROMOTING INTEGRATION OF MINORS IN DETENTION

In 2017, a KoomBook and digital tablets were implemented in the minors' section of the Ngozi detention center in order to support the center's educational activities and to encourage the reintegration of the girls detained there. This project allows the personnel of the prison to help the minors improve their behavior on a daily basis. For example, conversation groups allow them to express themselves more freely. Among the topics addressed: unwanted pregnancies, reproduction, sharing, conflict management, and forgiveness.

## COLOMBIA BUILDING PEACE THROUGH CULTURE

Following the signing of the peace accord in 2016 between the government of President Juan Manuel Santos and the FARC, 20 Ideas Box were implemented in demobilization and transition zones where ex-combatants laid down their arms in an effort to reintegrate into society. By creating meeting spaces, these libraries allowed to initiate the peace process by encouraging exchanges and by restoring trust between the affected communities.

## FOCUS OFFLINE INTERNET

While a growing number of individuals and communities are able to benefit in numerous ways from the expanded opportunities that new technologies offer, there are many people and places where Internet connectivity is weak or non-existent, which leads to a loss in educational, cultural, economic and social development.

To explore these issues and pursue solutions, Arizona State University, Libraries Without Borders and IFLA organized an international summit in Tempe, Arizona. This event brought together twenty-five practitioners from around the world, who formed a consortium committed to providing underserved communities with offline internet in the event that connectivity fails.



To learn more, visit our website (in French only) [ouvronslesbiblio.wesign.it/fr](http://ouvronslesbiblio.wesign.it/fr)



## FOCUS THE URGENCY OF READING

In 2012, Libraries Without Borders launched the international call to action "The Urgency of Reading," supported by more than one hundred writers of international renown, including eight Nobel Prize winners : Toni Morrison, Doris Lessing. This campaign was relayed to international organizations and governments.

**THE CHALLENGE:** Acknowledgement of the intellectual dimension of human beings in humanitarian crises as a priority for emergency responses.

In July 2018, 192 United Nations member states - excluding the United States - approved the creation of a Global Compact on Migration, which lists a set of commitments to improve protection and access to education services for refugees and migrants. We can only rejoice!



To learn more, visit our website (in english) [urgencedelire.fr](http://urgencedelire.fr)



# AROUND THE WORLD

People talk about our work

**“The library is a cultural space where opportunities are born.**

An open space in the world to better one's future. They make us stronger. A selection of books for example helps us improve our situation - notably the management of revenues from our agricultural crops. The Santa Maria Library created and recreated trust between people. In just one year, we have seen impressive changes, particularly among children. The seeds that we have planted in them are already bearing fruits! For them, the library is a second home, the librarian a second mother.

**WALTER, COLOMBIA** - Active member of the group Friends of the Santa Maria Library

**“The Ideas Box has brought so much happiness to our community.**

Young people loved using the 3D printers and little kids could not get enough of the virtual reality activities! Even the adults were into it !

**PUERTO RICO** - Community Member in Loiza

**“During the activities, I rediscover empathy, management of impulsivity and respect.**

Occasionally, I begin to think about my future very pessimistically because I know that I have little to no perspectives. When I remember that I am imprisoned, I get stressed, unhappy and lose my temper easily. I am quick to insult those around me. Once in the room with the KoomBook, I feel systematically relaxed, calmer, almost happy, and I can have conversations with others.

**CLAUDINE, BURUNDI** - 15 years old, detainee at Ngozi prison

**“Many children from the North End neighborhood have never stepped foot in a public library.**

The people in the neighborhood are just trying to make ends meet. The surrounding blocks are inhabited by families who have been struggling for years. In the building next door, many don't have internet or a computer. For some, it is even financially difficult to come to the laundromat. Before it was transformed into a library, people were bored hanging around the neighborhood. Now, they read and use computers!

**JUSTIN, UNITED STATES** - Manager of Fit and Fold laundromat in Detroit

**“This library is a little bit like life: sometimes you want to learn and work, sometimes you want to simply laugh with your friends.**

It has helped me a lot. Thanks to the Ideas Box, I have developed relationships that I never thought I'd have. It is an open space that welcomes everyone equally. When we learn together, there are no nationalities! I wish we had this type of library in my country. Lots of people want to study but don't have the opportunity. There should be libraries like this everywhere !

**ANSOU, ITALY** - Young Senegalese in Palermo

**“The Ideas Box is not a substitute for a library, but a tool in its service.**

Unfortunately, at Cox's Bazar, they still can't go to school and have few places to socialize. With the arrival of the Ideas Box, we're excited to partner with Bangladeshis who know the area well, and to work with Rohingya volunteers, who will play an essential role in making sure the program is accepted by the camp.

**ANNA SORAVITO, BANGLADESH** - Field expert

**“The Ideas Box allows to create a bridge, a cultural dynamic and a social link between people.**

An establishment has both rules and walls. With the Ideas Box, we are in the streets, fitting in with the surroundings and neighborhood life. Without walls, encounters with people are more spontaneous, candid and paradoxically more intimate, conducive of trust. Boundaries are broken. During the course of an afternoon, we create a temporary open space, a little village where children come or are never far from. They play, have fun outside, laugh, injecting life into the neighborhood!

**DELPHINE, FRANCE** - Facilitator of the Ideas Box in Marseille

**“Since I began using the Khan Academy - an e-learning platform translated into French by LWB - I feel that I can better teach my students.**

With the reverse classroom, I have more added value as a professor because I can provide more personalized support. I am very happy with the results; everyone is performing better. Some students even stay to work during breaks. Everyone learns at their own pace. Those who are weak in math take the time that they need to understand the basics. The more gifted students are no longer bored in class, they help their classmates or use their extra time to explore other subjects.

**JEAN-FRANÇOIS, FRANCE** - Math teacher in Paris

● Project    📖 Book Collection

**WHAT IS THE «BOOK COLLECTION» ?**

In France, Libraries without Borders collects books with the help of institutions, publishers et individuals. Sorted and referenced by our staff with the help of volunteers from our logistics base, they fuel our projects supporting libraries across the globe.

# What is the **IDEASBOX** ?

FULLY-EQUIPPED MEDIA CENTER READY IN JUST 20 MINUTES !

**Boxes filled with resources and creativity to create libraries where there are none.**

Each Ideas Box can be set up in less than 20 minutes to create a learning center within 100m<sup>2</sup>. Equipped with books, an internet connection, laptop computers, tablets and e-readers filled with e-books, and even a built-in theater, it is a wonderful toolbox in which children and adults alike can draw from to build their futures. Created by French designer Philippe Starck, the Ideas Box was initially designed to reconnect families and reinforce access to education, information and cultural resources in situations of crisis and post-conflict. Today, it is also deployed in low-income neighborhoods and rural areas in Europe, in the United States and in Australia.

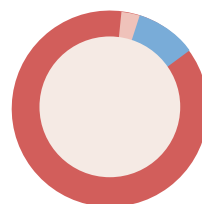
## Help us bring access to **KNOWLEDGE** where it is most needed

[WWW.LIBRARIESWITHOUTBORDERS.ORG](http://WWW.LIBRARIESWITHOUTBORDERS.ORG) / **DONATE**

### Our financial commitment

**87%** OF ALL EXPENDITURES GO TOWARDS OUR PROJECTS

10% General operating expenses  
3% Fundraising costs



### HONORS AND AWARDS

- The Library of Congress Literacy Award 2016
- Open Education Consortium Creative Innovation Award 2017
- UNHCR's Humanitarian Education Accelerator 2017
- The Google Impact Challenge 2015
- WISE Accelerator 2015
- Elastic Cause Award 2018
- HundrED Best Innovations in Education 2018

### WHERE TO FIND US

#### HEADQUARTERS

- France

#### OUR BRANCHES

- United States
- Belgium
- Switzerland

#### OUR OFFICES

- Amman in Jordan (Middle East)
- Bujumbura in Burundi (African Great Lakes)
- Athens in Greece and Palermo in Italy (Southern Europe)
- Bogota in Colombia (Latin America)
- Cox's Bazar in Bangladesh (Asia)

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