
PROGRESS REPORT

CREATING A LIBRARY IN THE EMERGENCY CENTRE FOR MIGRANTS

A PROJECT SUPPORTED BY THE 2022 IBBY - YAMADA FUND



A LIBRARY IN A CENTRE FOR MIGRANTS

The Emergency Accommodation Centre for Migrants (Centre d'Hébergement d'Urgence pour Migrants – CHUM) is located at Ivry-sur-Seine, in the southern suburb of Paris. It was created in January 2017 in order to provide accommodation for migrant women, families and couples arriving in Paris. It has a capacity of 400 places and is run by the NGO Emmaüs Solidarité¹, with funding from the City of Paris and the French State.



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Since the opening of the Centre in early 2017, children and young adults aged 6 to 18 living in the Centre have been educated at the Maryam Madjidi School created for them. Educators specialized in teaching French as a foreign language are in charge of the classrooms. Teachers in plastic arts, music and sports have also been recruited from the Paris Academy or from the City of Paris. The school is run by the CASNAV².

As part of the IBBY Yamada 2022 Fund's call for projects, IBBY France presented, in collaboration with Emmaüs Solidarité and the CASNAV, the project of creating a children's library in the Maryam Madjidi school, as well as a mobile library circulating in the Centre. The project includes a training programme for the teams of Emmaüs Solidarité and the CASNAV with two components: using a library management system and setting up reading activities.

On 8 November 2021, IBBY announced that the project would receive a funding of \$5,000 from the 2022 IBBY Yamada Fund. This sum was transferred directly to Emmaüs Solidarité and earmarked for the Maryam Madjidi School Library.

A meeting took place on 9 December 2021 between IBBY France, the CASNAV and Emmaüs Solidarité to set the project in motion. Tasks were divided as follows:

- IBBY France would be in charge of everything related to the library's collection and its management system, including trainings;
- Emmaüs Solidarité would be in charge of setting up the mobile library and the reading activities in the Centre;
- The CASNAV would provide the necessary equipment: a computer, a barcode reader, labels...

All the payments would be made directly by Emmaüs Solidarité using the means provided by the IBBY-Yamada Fund.

¹ The Emmaüs movement was launched in France in 1949 by L'Abbé Pierre. In the middle of a housing crisis, the first "companions" built accommodation to re-house numerous families. On 1 February 1954, when the authorities failed to take action during a very cold winter, Abbé Pierre made an appeal which had a substantial impact in France and beyond. From 1954 onwards, Abbé Pierre travelled the world, became involved in the global fight against poverty and told others of his experiences with Emmaüs. Emmaüs organisations were formed in several countries. (Source: <https://www.emmaus-international.org>)

² CASNAV stands for « Centre académique pour la scolarisation des enfants allophones nouvellement arrivés et des enfants issus de familles itinérantes et de voyageurs »: it is in charge of schooling children who do not speak French.

JANUARY- JUIN 2022: THE PROJECT UNFOLDS

Volunteers from IBBY France started working at the CHUM on Saturdays, from 10 am to 3 pm in the beginning of February 2022. The group consisted of a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 10 volunteers. There were also volunteers from the CASNAV and Emmaüs Solidarité who joined the group on different occasions.

The work went on smoothly from February to May, except for a period of time in March when the staff of the Centre had to concentrate on welcoming Ukrainian refugees who had arrived in France. However, these refugees didn't stay at the Centre for migrants, as they had housing solutions provided for them in various cities. The volunteers resumed work in April. By the end of May, the following tasks undertaken by IBBY France were achieved:

Processing the existing books: the first task of IBBY France members was to organise a weeding marathon to sort the books that had been donated to the Centre in the past. Once the weeding was done, a simplified **book shelving system** was set up; the relevant book shelving code was printed on labels and stuck on each book. A self-adhesive **barcode** identifying the Maryam Madjidi Library collection was put on each book. **The age group** of the readers was also indicated with a colour sticker, to help children identify quickly the book that was most suitable for them. Finally, a self-adhesive film was put on the book shelving code and on the colour sticker (More details in the [Appendix](#)).

Collecting new books: IBBY France gathered books in Amharic, Arabic, Bambara, Dari, Farsi, French, Pashto, Tigrinya and Urdu; these were the languages spoken by the children living in the Centre at that time. Some of the books were donated by the French national Library/IBBY France, others were bought. All of them were included in the library's collection.

Setting up a library management system: an open-source programme (PMB) was installed on a laptop and used to retrieve bibliographical data from international library servers in order to create the library's catalogue. Then, each bibliographical data was linked to the barcode of the book, to identify the copies held at the library.

Some challenges

There were some technical issues to solve, due to the network restrictions applied at the Centre. For example, it was not possible to retrieve data from a server using the Wi-Fi network of the Centre. We therefore used the mobile data of our phones to create a connexion allowing us to retrieve the data we needed, as we waited for the head of the IT to grant us a password protected access to the network.

The computer provided to the library was outdated and slow. We therefore decided to implement a virtual server with the library management system on our own computers, in order to have multiple working stations and process the books quickly. At the end of each work session, the databases were merged and saved.



A member of IBBY France holds the first fully equipped and catalogued book.



IBBY France members working at the future library

JUNE 2022: TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

By the end of May 2022, a new computer was set up at the library. It was therefore possible to configure the virtual server and install the library management system and the book collection database on that computer. The network access problem was also solved, which allowed the library's computer to function independently.

At this point, the IBBY France volunteers and their occasional helpers had finished cataloguing more than a thousand books.

Bibliographical records	Number of copies
1089	1178

The readers' cards were ready; the lending system was in place. What was needed now was to train the staff on how to use the library management system (PMB), to input new data in the catalogue and lend books to the children of the Centre.



Front and back of a reading card

The training session "Managing a library" took place on May 31, led by a member of IBBY France. Five teachers from the CASNAV and the director of the school attended it. The library management system

was presented with the cataloguing module, the retrieval of records using the Z39-50 protocol, the lending of books using library cards, etc. It was decided to state clearly the rules prevailing in the library and have children agree to them before borrowing the books. A reference person was chosen for the library.

A progress update was made with the staff:

- IBBY France prepared two orders for books: the first order for books in Bambara, Tigrinya, and Amharic to be added to the library collection; the second for Silent Books, which are essential for building bridges between illiterate parents and reading, and which can be told in any language. These orders were to be delivered directly to the CHUM and processed by the teachers for inclusion in the library's collection. Overall, 116 books were bought for a total of 1470,25 €.
- A cosy reading corner will be created in the library with rugs and pillows. The teachers volunteered to set up the corner and give the invoices to Emmaüs Solidarité, as previously agreed.
- It was decided to organise a training on how to bring a library to life through activities like storytelling, reading-aloud sessions, etc.

A MOBILE LIBRARY

Taking the library outdoors to meet the children and their parents outside school facilities would be a way of creating a link between them and the library. It would also help them understand that the library is not only there for scholastic purposes, but also for their enjoyment and well-being. The mobile library would also bring the books closer to parents who may not be accustomed to books.

Emmaüs Solidarité was in charge of setting up the mobile library. Examples of what was done worldwide in this field were sent to the person in charge of cultural activities in the Centre. At first, the idea of creating special furniture had emerged, but as time passed it became clear that this was not the best way of getting something done. Therefore, the project changed to buying movable boxes, floor mats, cushions... Some members of IBBY France are experts of Street Libraries; it was suggested to take their expertise into account to set up the mobile library and organise trainings on how to use it.

Some challenges

The person in charge of cultural activities in the Emmaüs Solidarité team left her job at the end of May. The Director of the Emergency Accommodation Centre for Migrants and the Director of the Maryam Madjidi School both took on new positions and left the Centre by the end of June. The library project was put on standby.

The newly appointed Directors needed time to adjust to their new positions; we therefore had to wait for the beginning of the school year, then the end of the first school holidays in November. A very positive contact was established with the new Director of the Maryam Madjidi School and a date was set for a meeting in January. The Director is very keen on getting the library working and needs IBBY France's help in order to achieve this. She informed the IBBY France committee that a need for books in Georgian had emerged, as Georgian migrants were sheltered in the Centre. IBBY France will purchase books in this language for the library's collection.

Training sessions should be organised again, to make sure the teachers can use the library management system, input data, lend books and return them.

We tried to establish contact with the new Director of the Centre, with no success to date, but we assume that the meeting in January will have an impact on her involvement too. IBBY France is prepared to take charge of everything related to the mobile library, from setting up the library to organising trainings, in order to make sure that the project is carried out thoroughly. We are also willing to support the newly appointed person in charge of cultural activities at the Centre to organise reading activities.

New milestones should be set for the project in 2023. We will make sure to keep IBBY informed of all new developments.

APPENDIX

Category	Shelf mark
Albums [Picture books]	A + the first 3 letters of the author's name
Bandes dessinées [Comic Books]	BD + the first 3 letters of the author's name OR + the first 3 letters of the series title
Contes [Tales]	C + the first 3 letters of the author's name OR + the first 3 letters of the tale's title if the tale is a famous one
Documentaires [Non-fiction books]	D + the first 3 letters of the author's name
Mangas	M + the first 3 letters of the author's name OR + the first 3 letters of the series title
Poésie, comptines, chansons, théâtre [Poetry, nursery rhymes, songs, theatre]	P + the first 3 letters of the author's name
Revue, magazines, journaux [Journals, magazines]	J + 3 first letters of the title
Romans [Novels]	R + the first 3 letters of the author's name

4-6 years	Green
6-10 years	Yellow
10-13 years	Red
13 years and more	Blue