



Library Services to Multicultural Populations Section: <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s32/index.htm>

Defining "Multiculturalism"

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"Multiculturalism" is the co-existence of diverse cultures, where culture includes racial, religious, or cultural groups and is manifested in customary behaviours, cultural assumptions and values, patterns of thinking, and communicative styles.

"Multicultural library services" include both the provision of multicultural information to all types of library users and the provision of library services specifically targeted to traditionally underserved groups.

The Section of Library Services to Multicultural Populations addresses the information needs of ethnic, linguistic and cultural minorities in order to ensure every member of a library community has access to its services.

In the Section's Guidelines for Library Services to Multicultural communities, the following groups are described as traditionally underserved in a multicultural society:

1. Immigrant minorities

In this category are included permanent settlers who possess their own language(s) and culture(s) which are distinct from those of the host society. The category also includes the descendants of immigrants who continue to identify with their ancestral culture.

2. Persons seeking asylum

Refugees and residents with a temporary stay permit.

3. Migrant workers

In this category, temporary immigrant workers and their dependants are included. They are immigrants who do not intend to stay permanently, and whose legal status is that of temporary resident. They may eventually become permanent residents (category 1), depending upon the policies of their country of residence and their own wishes.

4. National minorities

These are indigenous or long-established groups with a long-standing and distinct ethnic, linguistic or cultural identity, distinct from that of the majority. They may use the main language of the country (such as the Swedes of Finland), or have substantially adopted the main language of the country (such as the Welsh or the Native Americans). National minorities may share their language or culture with majorities in adjoining countries, or may be confined to the country in which they are a minority.