Each December 10 as the world celebrates Human Rights Day, the anniversary of the adoption of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights in 1948, the world community builds solidarity and a unified vision.

Human rights, the assumption that all human beings deserve certain rights and dignity by virtue of their human existence, are most eloquently defined in the preamble of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

“Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice and peace in the world. [United Nations. (1948) Universal Declaration of Human Rights.]

The aim of the Seminar, Librarians and Human Rights, is to present a historical and cultural analysis of the role of librarians vis-à-vis human rights as defined by the 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The course will highlight the stated goals of the profession and the work librarians must do to achieve a more equitable society in the United States and a compassionate nation among others.
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Readings and Resources in LIS


ALISE Information Ethics Special Interest Group. Position Statement on Information Ethics in LIS Education


IFLA/UNSECO Public Library Manifesto (1994)


Kagan, A. (2008). "An Alternative View on IFLA, Human Rights, and the Social Responsibility of International Librarianship." *IFLA Journal* v. 34 no. 3: p. 230-237. The publication of the first book on the development of IFLA’s human rights involvement provides an opportunity to stimulate discussion about that history, with particular reference to the Free Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE) core activity. Several case studies (South Africa, Turkey, Israel/Palestine, and Cuba) are evaluated, the work of the IFLA Social Responsibilities Discussion Group is noted, and suggestions are made for the more democratic and effective functioning of FAIFE. Keywords: IFLA; FAIFE; human rights; social responsibility; freedom of expression.


Librarian. Duluth: Library Juice Press.


McCook, K.


Librarian at the Kitchen Table. Includes mailing list and 2-3 messages a week. Launched 7/8/01. Subscribers as of 1/01/05 : 780. http://www.cas.usf.edu/lis/a-librarian-at-every-table/ continued at the blog : http://librarianoutreach.blogspot.com/


(2000). "Library Services and Diversity." Library Trends. (As editor, introduction, etc.)


Joint Conference of Librarians of Color as reported in Library Journal: "At a panel, Kathleen de la Peña McCook (Univ. of South Florida, Tampa) reflected on a dearth in cross-organization work. Within ALA, the creation of the various groups-feminist, gay and lesbian, ethnic, and the Social Responsibilities Round Table-"may have divided us up too much," she said. Then she argued that librarianship is human rights work and suggested displays on subjects such as secret detention and rendition, enforced disappearances, the meaning of habeas corpus, and more. She and others encouraged the librarians present to, in McCook's words, "commit to more active involvement in social issues."


"Tracked in America"

University of Washington. [Human Rights Film Directory](https://www.lib.uw.edu/filmguide).


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**Professional Organizations Committed to Diversity and Outreach:**

[Africana Libraries Newsletter](https://www.africana-libs.org/)

[American Indian Library Association](https://www.alsa.org/)


American Library Association. [Office for Literacy and Outreach Services](https://www.ala.org/litoutreach).

American Library Association. [Social Responsibilities Round Table](https://www.ala.org/srt).
Asian/ Pacific American Librarians Association

Black Caucus of the American Library Association

Chinese American Librarians Association

Civil Rights Digital Library

Ethnic and Multicultural Information Exchange Round Table (EMIERT) of the American Library Association.

Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, and Transgendered Round Table (GBLTRT) of the American Library Association.

The Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force (HHPTF), a group within the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), was formed in 1996 to help promote and implement Policy 61 (Library Services for Poor People) and to raise awareness of issues related to poverty.

The “Library Services to the Homeless” page provides recommended resources relating to the following four categories:

* Economic, Legal, and Human Rights Issues  
* Local Statistics  
* Selected Readings for Librarians  
* Social Exclusions and Libraries

In addition, the page links to an archive dating back to March 2005 and offers a list of entries by topic.

Information for Social Change.

International Federation of Library Associations.

Progressive Librarians Guild.

REFORMA: National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking:

Other Sources:

Union Librarian (blog)
Human Rights Organizations

American Civil Liberties Union This organization works to preserve and protect the civil rights delineated in the US Constitution.

Good Search Good Search is a search engine which donates 50-percent of its revenue to the charities and schools designated by its users.

Human and Constitutional Rights Their website is administered by the Columbia University Law School Library. It provides a comprehensive array of links to human rights organizations all over the world.

The Human Rights Institute

Human Rights Watch An independent organization dedicated to protecting the human rights of people around the world.

New Tactics in Human Rights from their page: "The New Tactics in Human Rights Project, led by a diverse group of international organizations, advisors and practitioners, promotes tactical innovation and strategic thinking within the international human rights community."

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization UNESCO promotes international cooperation in education, science, culture and communication. The organization is committed to educating about human rights.

United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) represents the world's commitment to universal ideals of human dignity. The organization has a unique mandate from the international community to promote and protect all human rights.

US Human Rights Network This Network provides ways for organizations and individuals working for human rights and social justice to connect with others working on those issues in the US and in other countries. A central premise of the organization is that the US does not provide many of its own residents with the rights it purports to demand of other countries.
Women's Human Rights-net An organization dedicated to providing information and analysis on women's human rights around the world.

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Foundational Sources: Human Rights

Key Documents, in Chronological Order

**Vedas (ca. 2000-1000 B.C.E.)**


**Analects of Confucius (ca. 479 B.C.E.-221 B.C.E.)**


**The Eight Beatitudes** (Appx. AD 30)

from the Sermon on the Mount by Jesus Christ

**The Qur’an (ca. 632)**


**Magna Carta (1215)**


**Milton’s Areopagitica (1644)**

Locke’s Letter Concerning Tolerance and Second Treatise of Civil Government (1690)


Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Social Contract (1761)


Thomas Paine’s The Rights of Man (1791-92)


The Declaration of Independence (1776)


Abigail Adams, “Remember the Ladies” (1789)


France: Declaration of the Rights of Man and of the Citizen (1789)


U.S. Bill of Rights (1789)

Library of Congress.
Mary Wollstonecraft’s A Vindication of the Rights of Women (1792)


Kant’s Perpetual Peace (1797)


Robert Owen’s New View of Society (1817)


Elizabeth Cady Stanton, “Declaration of Sentiments at Seneca Falls” (1848)

*Women's Rights National Historic Park Website.*

Civil Disobedience by Henry David Thoreau (1849)


John Stuart Mill, On Liberty (1859)


Declaration of the Rights of Toiling and Exploited Peoples (1918)


International Labour Organization Constitution (1919)

International Convention for the Suppression of the Traffic in Women and Children (1921)


Geneva Declaration of the Rights of the Child (1924) League of Nations


Convention to Suppress the Slave Trade and Slavery (1926)


Franklin Delano Roosevelt, “Four Freedoms" (1941)


The Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948)

Adopted and proclaimed by the United Nations on December 10, 1948.


Keown, D. Journal of Buddhist Ethics v. 2.

"Mahayana Buddhism and Human Rights: Focusing on Methods of Interpretation"

Shiotsu, T.
ALA Policy 61

(Library Services for the Poor)

The American Library Association promotes equal access to information for all persons, and recognizes the urgent need to respond to the increasing number of poor children, adults, and families in America. These people are affected by a combination of limitations, including illiteracy, illness, social isolation, homelessness, hunger, and discrimination, which hamper the effectiveness of traditional library services. Therefore it is crucial that libraries recognize their role in enabling poor people to participate fully in a democratic society, by utilizing a wide variety of available resources and strategies. Concrete programs of training and development are needed to sensitize and prepare library staff to identify poor people's needs and deliver relevant services. And within the American Library Association the coordinating mechanisms of programs and activities dealing with poor people in various divisions, offices, and units should be strengthened, and support for low-income liaison activities should be enhanced.

61.1 Policy Objectives

The American Library Association shall implement these objectives by:

- Promoting the removal of all barriers to library and information services, particularly fees.
- Promoting the publication, production, purchase, and ready accessibility of print and nonprint materials that honestly address the issues of poverty and homelessness, that deal with poor people in a respectful way, and that are of practical use to low-income patrons.
- Promoting full, stable, and ongoing funding for existing legislative programs in support of poor children, adults, and families.
- Promoting training opportunities for librarians, in order to teach effective techniques for generating public funding to upgrade library services to poor people.
- Promoting the incorporation of low-income programs and services into regular library budgets in all types of libraries, rather than the tendency to support these projects solely with "soft money" like private or federal grants.
- Promoting equity in funding adequate library services for poor people in terms of material needs and services.
- Promoting supplemental support for library resources for and about low-income populations.
- Promoting increased public awareness—through programs, displays, bibliographies, and public programming.
- Promoting the determination of output measures through the encouragement of community involvement, involving both anti-poverty advocates and poor people themselves in such assessments.
- Promoting direct representation of poor people and anti-poverty advocates through appointments to include library-paid transportation and stipends.
- Promoting training to sensitize library staff to issues affecting poor people and to attitudes that may hinder their use of libraries.
- Promoting networking and cooperation between libraries and other agencies, organizations, and advocacy groups in order to develop programs and services that effectively reach poor people.
- Promoting the implementation of an expanded federal low-income housing program, national health insurance, full employment policy, living minimum wage and welfare payments, affordable day care, and programs likely to reduce, if not eliminate, poverty itself.
- Promoting among library staff the collection of food and clothing donations, volunteering, and other forms of philanthropy.
- Promoting related efforts concerning minorities and women, since these groups are disproportionately represented among poor people.

ALA Task Force Member Survey on Policy 61 The Hunger, Homelessness & Poverty Task Force, in partnership with the OLOS Subcommittee on Library Services to Poor and Homeless People, reported the findings from the ALA Task Force Member Survey on Policy 61 at the June 2008 Annual Conference.

Click here for more information.