

# Public Libraries in the Netherlands and the War in Ukraine



[Mark Deckers](#) is a blogging librarian in the Netherlands. On March 13, 2022, he wrote this overview.

*In my tour of libraries, I see three lines of business that libraries can do:*

- *that of a statement,*
- *that of giving information, and*
- *that of offering help. I walk past some initiatives, again without the illusion of being complete. So, feel free to fill me in.*

## 1. Statement of European Libraries

The largest statement from joint libraries in Europe comes from [Eblida, Naple en Public Libraries 2030](#). FOBID, VOB, SPN, and KB support this statement as parties within the Netherlands. The national parties also call on libraries to develop initiatives and prepare to support Ukrainian refugees.

## 2. H-art for Ukraine

Various cultural institutions have united in the [initiative H-art for Ukraine](#), and it is supported by Kunsten '92. They called for lighting your building with the colors of the Ukrainian flag. These include De Nieuwe Kolk in Assen, Coda in Apeldoorn and Kunstwerk! in Zevenaar participated as a combined institution.

## 3. A poem every day

Coda in Apeldoorn also places a [poem](#) on its own website every day. This under the motto: 'Beauty and poetry in response to ugliness'. Residents are asked to think about which poem should be on it.

## 4. Information evening about Ukraine

An [information evening](#) about Ukraine was held on 11 March at the Tweede Verdieping, the library of Nieuwegein. Two lecturers from Utrecht University and the Refugee Support Center provided the content of the evening in which questions could be asked about the conflict and the current flow of refugees. In line with this, the Tweede Verdieping is already recruiting extra language buddies because they expect to need them in the future. Also, in the [library Heerhugowaard](#) a lecture was given on 5 March by a political scientist and a social geographer. The Kennemerwaard library, to which the branch in Heerhugowaard belongs, does this together with [NEIOS](#), the Network for

European and International Orientation in Education and Society. Perhaps a useful organization for other libraries as well.

## **5. Programming about Ukraine**

Several libraries also have a movie or theatre room. At movie theatres, you can see, for example, that the [documentary Don Bass](#) is being programmed. In addition to information, it is therefore also an opportunity to specially program other art forms related to the theme of 'war and peace'.

## **6. Book Tips**

The library Zuid-Kennemerland has made a [book list](#) with reading tips for adults and children. With some general information about the situation in Ukraine with a selection of websites. The West-Achterhoek library also has a similar page. The [Online Library](#) offers a special heading 'War and Peace'.

## **7. Fieldlab Bed, Bath, Bread, Book**

Rijnbrink is working on setting up a [Bed, Bad, Brood, Book field lab](#). Bed, Bad, Brood, Boek provides a concept for libraries in emergency shelters. the Gelderland-South Public Library has had good experiences with this in the past for the Heumensoord location. Together with other libraries, it is now being ensured that a concept is created that can also be used quickly and efficiently at other reception locations in the future. Several libraries have already shown interest and the contact person at Rijnbrink is Karien van Buuren.

## **8. Proceeds from books written off for Ukraine**

The Heiloo library sells special bags with written-off books for Ukraine. The bags are sold for € 2.50, and the entire proceeds go to help Ukraine.

## **9. Benefit Performance**

A benefit performance with stand-up comedy by Harry Glotzbach and Wilko Terwijn was organized in the Kennemerwaard library. The cards were sold for € 15 each and the entire proceeds went to Giro 555 for aid to refugees.

## **Ideas from the crisis of 2015**

In 2015 I also wrote several times about the [refugee crisis](#) that arose at the time. Perhaps there is also a good idea to be gained from these overviews for the coming refugee flow. Incidentally, I understood that, just as with the refugee crisis in 2015, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek intends again to maintain a central page with initiatives.

## **Meanwhile, at the libraries in Ukraine**

The Electronic Information for Libraries website contains an article about what libraries in Ukraine are currently doing. On the front line, these are places where people who want to take shelter are offered shelter, a place where there is still the internet and where information can be looked up. At the same time, they appear to be places from which humanitarian aid comes together. In places where there is no direct combat action, lectures are held on how to deal with the stress of war. They are also places where things are collected for refugees or victims of the war.