



Winter 2021

2022 IMPACT REPORT



**Libraries
Without Borders**
US



Dear friends,

On behalf of Libraries Without Borders, I am proud to present our 2022 impact report.

Over fifteen years ago, we founded Bibliothèques Sans Frontières with a simple mission: to get books and information to the people who need them most—and who wouldn't get them any other way. Since then, we have reached underserved, marginalized, and vulnerable communities around the world, from Dakar to Bogota, Dhaka to Brazzaville, Kiev to the Australian Outback.

In the United States, we have sought to do the same thing.

For the last eight years, Libraries Without Borders US has delivered access to vital information resources to communities across the United States that need it most. We have created learning spaces in laundromats and manufactured housing communities, church basements and grocery store parking lots. We have innovated successful models to build community and transform trusted neighborhood institutions into places where people can access vital information and necessary resources—

books, internet, and digital technology. In all these places—and more—we have brought digital technology, connectivity, and literacy tools to low-income communities, communities of color, and immigrant communities.

Through these pilot projects, we learned so much about how to bridge information and digital divides.

In 2022, we pushed ourselves to think *nationally*. Book deserts, the digital divide, censorship battles, and the learning gap are crises that demand immediate and strategic intervention at scale.

We thus returned to our roots. We are an organization that reimagines what libraries are and where they can be. There are over 17,000 public libraries nationwide and we want to ensure they are reaching people that need them most. As you will learn in this report, we are revolutionizing library access for underserved communities.

Thank you as always for your support, for believing in what we do, and for helping us to empower communities nationwide. I am so excited about where we will go next.

Sincerely,

Patrick Weil
Founder and Chairman of the Board
Libraries Without Borders



Dear friends,

While the United States has more public library branches than Starbucks or McDonalds franchises, there are still millions of people who have been left behind by the digital revolution, millions of people who live in book deserts, and millions of people who struggle to access vital information.

When I joined the LWB US team as Executive Director in 2021, I saw so much possibility for our work to address these massive, national challenges. What if we could share what we have learned with public library partners across the country?

2022 was a transformative year for Libraries Without Borders US as we figured out how to do all that—and more.

We're excited to share updates about ongoing projects as well as new directions with public libraries nationwide.

Meanwhile, the work of our parent organization, Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, has never been more important.

The first European ground war in seventy five years led to the largest refugee crisis on the continent since World War II. Bibliothèques Sans Frontières has been at the front lines delivering books, language learning resources, and other materials to thousands of refugees from Poland to Moldova and to the citizens of Ukraine as well.

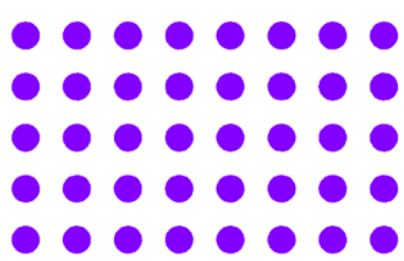
The challenges facing democracy—at home and abroad—are pressing. Italo Calvino, the great Italian storyteller and thinker, once asked: “What harbor can receive you more securely than a great library?” Today, when trust is fraying, as refugees and immigrants flee war

and insecurity, when economic and racial inequality threaten our civic fabric, libraries have become even more necessary harbors for citizens and communities in crisis.

The work ahead is challenging and has never been more important. Thank you, as always, for your support. We couldn't do any of this without you.

Sincerely,
Aaron Greenberg
Executive Director
Libraries Without Borders US





In 2022, we welcomed a new member of our leadership team, COO **Nina Safane**. Nina earned a national reputation for non-profit leadership and social entrepreneurship, founding and scaling multiple ventures that have enriched lives and built equity in communities across the country. She is the rare non-profit entrepreneur whose cutting-edge strategies honor the values and history that shape community identity. Among her other accomplishments, she designed, launched, and scaled Girls Athletic Leadership Schools (GALS), a

first-of-its-kind public school for girls in Denver rooted in a whole child health and wellness curriculum. More recently, she co-founded and scaled COVIDCheck Colorado, a COVID-19 response organization with a staff of hundreds that provided testing and vaccines to communities coast to coast, administering over two million tests and 300,000 vaccine doses during the pandemic. Her experience cultivating powerful cross-sector partnerships brings together private actors, public agencies, and non-profit allies to get big things done.



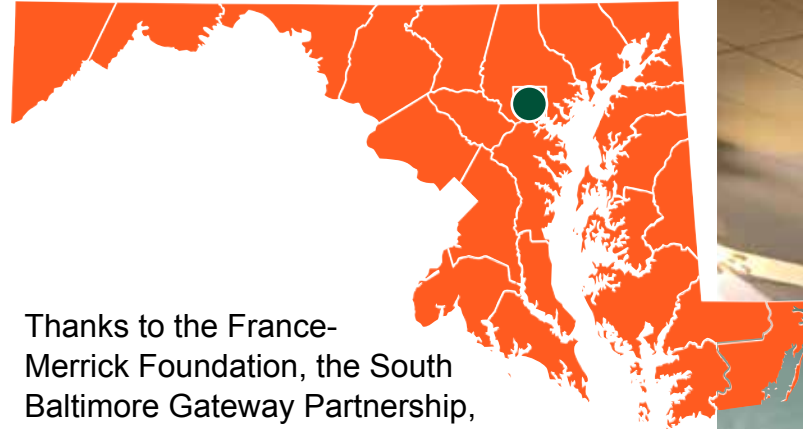
Nina Safane

Impact in the United States

Baltimore

The Stillmeadow Community Fellowship is more than a religious congregation. For the residents of Southwest Baltimore, Stillmeadow serves as a community anchor, with a 10-acre park, apiary, and space for meetings and programs—from workforce development to vaccinations. Thanks to the support of the Baltimore Community Foundation, Abell Foundation, Ujima, and France-Merrick Foundation, we collaborated with Stillmeadow Community Fellowship to create an afterschool space and computer lab with resources for young people at three area elementary schools.

In 2023, we will deepen our work in Baltimore by helping address behavioral health and wellbeing. Low-income people and communities of color in Baltimore City disproportionately struggle with mental health challenges as cost, proximity to service, and cultural stigma prevent many people from accessing care. The COVID pandemic, coupled with systemic racism, chronic unemployment, and the housing crisis have only raised the barriers for historically marginalized communities. But local communities already connect in trusted neighborhood institutions such as barbershops and hair salons. For Black communities in particular, barbershops and hair salons have long been recognized as unique “third spaces” for connection and support.



Thanks to the France-Merrick Foundation, the South Baltimore Gateway Partnership, and the Mayor’s Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement, over the next two years, LWB US and the Black Mental Health Alliance (BMHA) will build upon the informal mental health resources already available in these spaces by transforming these spaces into resource hubs reaching 400+ patrons and offering over 1,000 hours of one-on-one mental health check-ins; creating safe spaces for community members to navigate digital mental health resources; and training shop staff to effectively assist their clients through mental health challenges.

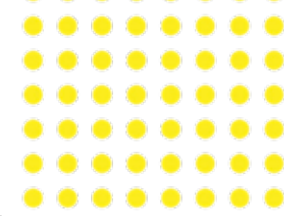
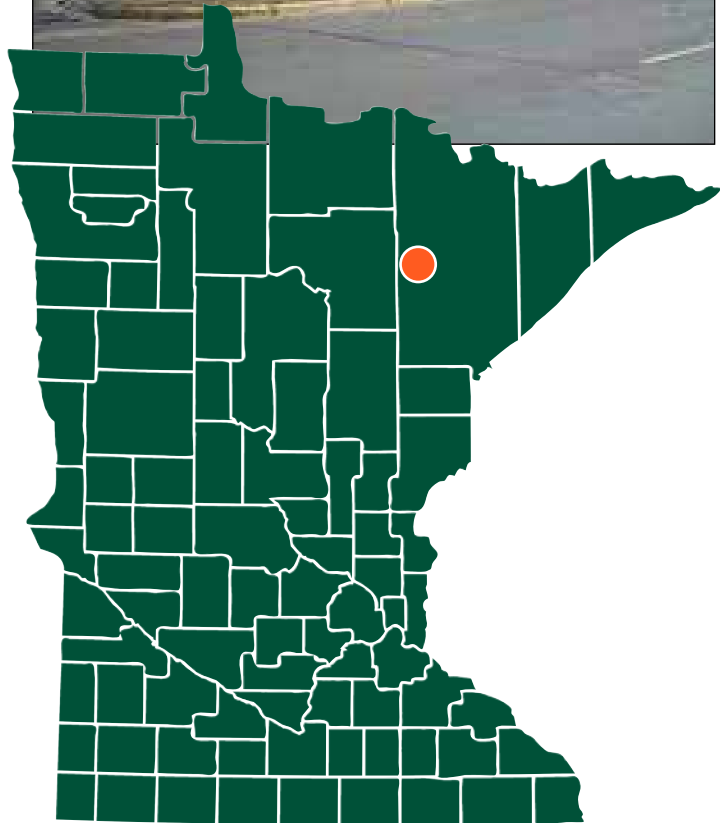
The Baltimore Crown Project will lay the foundation for significant systemic improvements in mental healthcare access in Baltimore, particularly for low-income and Black communities, by destigmatizing mental health services and familiarizing residents with pathways to accessing services.





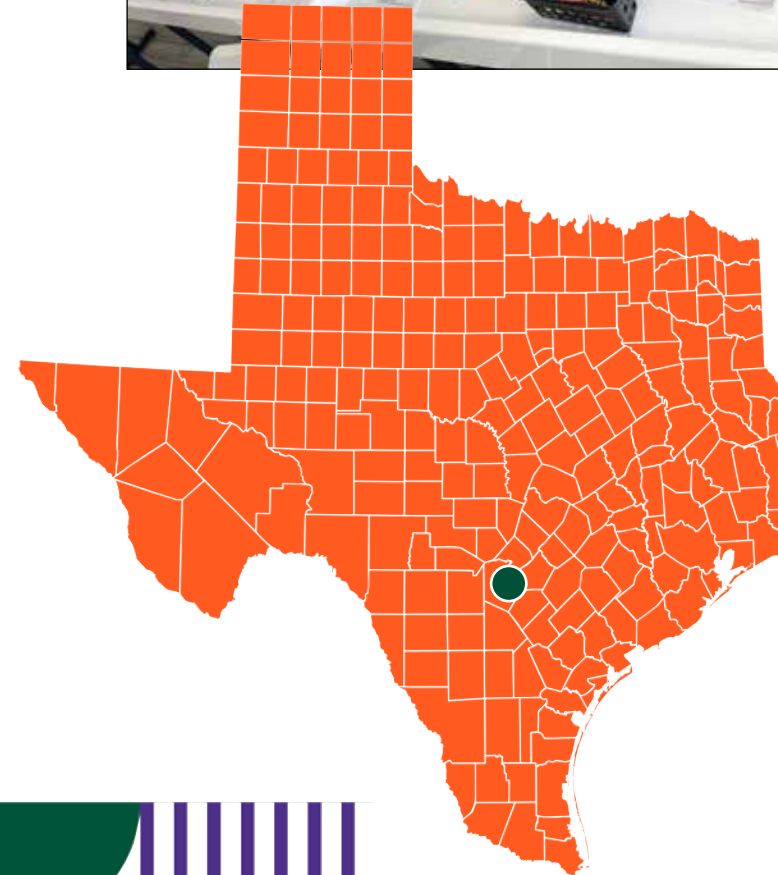
Minnesota

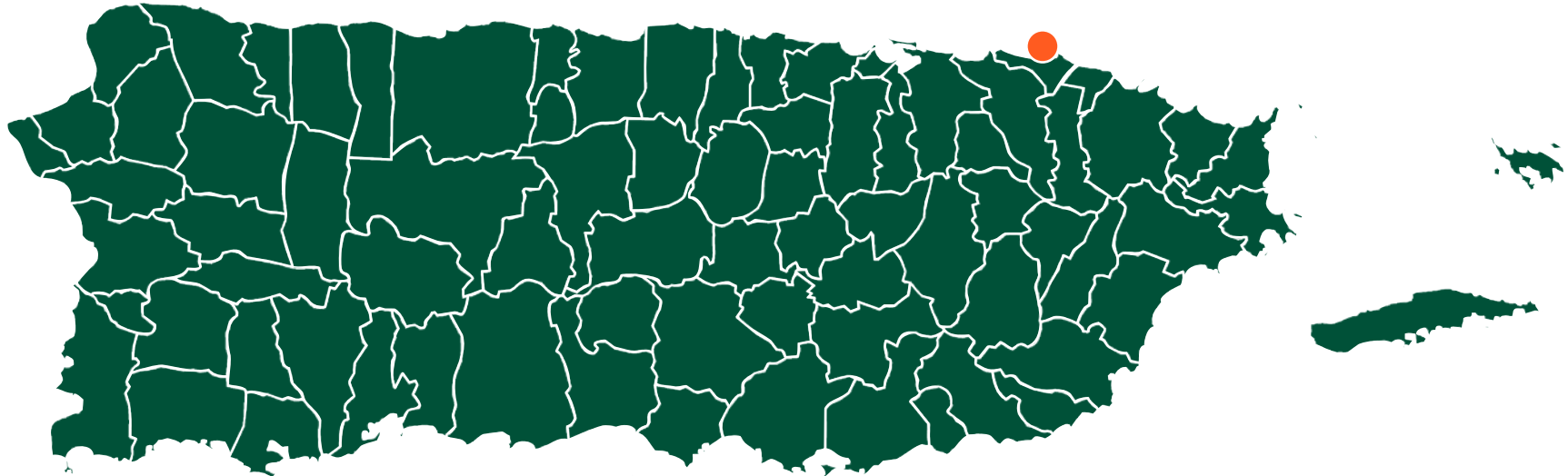
Thanks to support from the Blandin Foundation, we help bring high-speed internet and public health resources to older residents of rural Hibbing, Minnesota. We partnered with the Hibbing Public Library to facilitate computer literacy programs for senior residents in the community space and created a tech lending program for residents in the public housing complex. Digital connection allows residents to access the National Institutes of Health (NIH) “All of Us” health literacy resources for the first time and to participate in the national health survey.



San Antonio

Thanks to the support of Google Fiber and the San Antonio Area Foundation, we opened two more “Wash and Learn Initiative” laundromat sites in San Antonio—on the East and West sides of the city. The locations, outfitted with books, community resources, high-speed internet and laptop computers, bring digital connection and information to hundreds of laundromat patrons in traditionally underserved communities. At the Westside location, we partnered with American Indians of Texas-Southern Colonial Missions (AIT-SCM) to celebrate indigenous stories, histories, and culture with a day of storytelling, performance, art-making, and traditional foodways. Facilitated by indigenous moderator and storyteller Dr. Carmen Tafolla, the event included a zine-making station, oral history performances, traditional dance, and opportunities for patrons to share and document their own stories.





Loíza, Puerto Rico

Loíza, Puerto Rico is the center of Afro-Puerto Rican life—but it’s also one of the poorest communities on the island. Hundreds of years of Afro-Puerto Rican heritage is at risk of being lost.

Thanks to support from the Mellon Foundation, we are training community members to create digital archives of the unique folkways, foodways, and artistic practices that can be shared for generations to come and carried forward with pride.



Vargas, who exhibits his work globally and has deep ties in Loíza.

In 2011, José Luis founded the first youth media center for Boys and Girls Club in Puerto Rico where young people created and produced comic books and video campaigns and spots touching on human rights and public health.

José Luis and Puerto Rico Program Manager, Alex Aldorondo, describe the digital archive as setting the groundwork to “build and heal the community through listening and sharing.” José Luis, who has led projects in Loíza for over twenty years, added that ¡Loíza Vive! provides a whole new perspective on its history, revealing the “many versions — and gazes — towards history.”

This vital work enables Loíza residents to tell a more complete story about their community, their culture, and their identity — and to change the received narrative from one that centers around poverty to a celebration of the community’s rich and vibrant shared culture. So far, oral histories have focused on social and political struggles against the state; the history of Bomba dance and performance; the distinctive food kioskos; mutual aid during climate disasters; and the history of fishing and farming.

We kicked off ¡Loíza Vive! in 2022 and have already created six community archives in collaboration with noted visual artist and educator José Luis

In 2023, we will expand ¡Loíza Vive! We plan to create another five archives over the next twelve months and build out a continuous archive that can be sustained over the next five years. We are also exploring opportunities to create a comprehensive catalog of public library and literacy resources on the island in order to identify access gaps and find innovative ways to address them.

The Future of Libraries Without Borders US: Revolutionizing Public Library Outreach



Ramona Naddaff, a professor of Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley, and a founding member of our Board of Directors



The 17,000+ public libraries across America are the backbone for social, civic, and digital engagement. But fundamental barriers stemming from historical and geographical neglect and systemic racism keep people in need from accessing the vital resources that the public library offers.

We are pivoting from pilot projects to a national program that revolutionizes library outreach by reaching into communities where library services are inaccessible or underutilized. We provide data-driven and innovative solutions to help get books, computers, library cards, and essential information resources into the hands of communities that wouldn't get them any other way—and in ways that libraries and community organizations can sustain long-term.

In late 2022, we announced a pilot partnership with the Connecticut State Library and six public library systems across the state. We are piloting an approach that can change how traditionally underserved communities across the state think about—and engage with—their libraries, and how public libraries can best reach geographically and historically marginalized communities.


This project is made possible in part by the Institute of Museum and Library Services under the provisions of the Library Services and Technology Act, administered by Connecticut State Library.

In November 2022, we gathered at the Ives Main Branch of the New Haven Free Public Library to celebrate the partnership with the Connecticut State Library. Friends from Connecticut and beyond joined to mark the public announcement of the partnership—and a new step forward for Libraries Without Borders US.

That evening, Ramona Naddaff, a professor of Rhetoric at the University of California, Berkeley, and a founding member of our Board of Directors, delivered remarks about the past, present and future of Libraries Without Borders in the United States:

Good evening. It's a pleasure to be with you tonight and tell you a little about the history and mission of Libraries without Borders. It begins in a living room.

In 2003, Patrick Weil, the founder of BSF, was visiting my husband, Peter Sahlins and myself in Brooklyn, New York. Peter—who would become a founding member of the BSF board—and Patrick were lamenting the thousands of books they had collected over the years and their lack of ideas of what to do with them now that they were moving on in ideas and research. They quickly—and brilliantly—imagined a future for the books: An organization would be created that sent books to countries around the world suffering

A vertical green sidebar on the left side of the page, featuring a variety of white geometric patterns including circles, sunbursts, and horizontal stripes.

from natural and political (if such a distinction can be made) catastrophes. These historians understood that books were as vital as water and electricity in times of despair and hopelessness. And thus Libraries Without Borders was conceived.

Patrick Weil, with the help of Director General Jérémy Lachal, got the project off the ground. Our first impulse, at that time, was the global recycling and sharing of books. We took great care, as we do now, to be certain that the books we sent were tailored to the interests and activities of its audience. We avoided, as it has been called, “charity dumping.” Not any book was right for any country. When Hurricane Katrina struck in 2005, I learnt firsthand how overwhelmed school libraries were by unusable books sent by well-meaning individuals and institutions. I worked with a library or two in the ninth ward to help devise solutions to this problem, arriving with beautiful letters and donations from students in New York.

In 2009 BSF/LWB shifted its focus and moved to work specifically with libraries and capacity building. We trained over 5000 librarians and facilitators from over 20 countries with an innovative learning platform and thousands of digital resources, and we focused on capacity-building and the construction of libraries throughout the world.

One might claim, however, that the “first” BSF revolution came with the invention of the Ideas Box in 2013. The story began when the BSF team was building municipal libraries in Haiti in January 2010 when the devastating 7.0 earthquake struck. At the insistence of our Haitian partners, we stayed in Haiti and helped them to create information and cultural access points in the settlement camps where tens of thousands of Haitians were forced to live in the aftermath of disasters. The experience led us to collaborate with the French designer Philippe Starck and the UNHCR to create the Ideas Box, a pop-up multimedia center and portable library. The Ideas Box is an innovative tool that expands access to information, education and cultural resources to places that desperately need them — refugee and IDP camps, rural and isolated communities, and underserved urban spaces or indigenous communities around the world.

There are now more than 150 Ideas boxes in 23 countries and in 28 languages. This creative technological innovation, this “pop-up” library has expanded our global reach and mission from refugee education in Bangladesh to most recently, and in conjunction with a UN special envoy agreement, to the prevention of violence against women. In the words of Phillip Starck, the Ideas Box—and, more generally, libraries—allows for the flourishing of the imagination, both political and personal,

democratic and polyvocal: “When one has lost everything, the one thing that cannot be taken away is the ability to dream.”

Tonight, we’re celebrating the coming of a “second” revolution of Libraries Without Borders. The revolution is a return of sorts to our origins. Once again, we will be working with and as libraries, arising in places and moments where crisis, economic, political, social and cultural, calls for a variety of interventions and solutions. We know that books and libraries are but one of the many ways to create a democracy composed of creative, critical, and diverse voices. But this is the LWB way and we thank you for your support.

As John Koethe writes with a certain amount of humor and truth about reading a book,: “It changes you. You’re a different person by the end/If only since it takes so long to read.” As a scholar of literary censorship, I am personally enlivened at this moment when book banning in libraries is increasing nonsensically and ideologically to be working with Connecticut’s public libraries, furthering the mission of LWB to make books (and culture) available to anyone, at any time, in every situation.



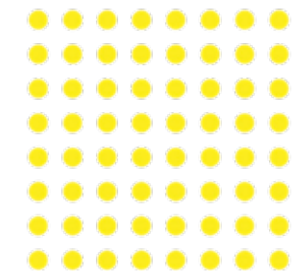
The Humanitarian Crisis in Ukraine

In response to the needs of millions of Ukrainians who fled the war with Russia, our parent organization, Bibliothèques Sans Frontières, mobilized to establish emergency, information and integration solutions for refugees. Just weeks after the invasion, in March 2022, BSF began deploying nearly a dozen emergency multimedia libraries in the form of “Ideas Box” kits at key locations on Ukrainian borders in Poland, Moldova, and in Ukraine itself.

The first, pictured here, was set up in a public gymnasium in Hrubieszow, Poland, about ten miles from the Ukrainian border. Transformed into an emergency accommodation and transit center, the space welcomed and aided thousands of refugees, most of whom are women and children. The versatility and portability of the Ideas Box is such that following its initial deployment in the transit center, the Hrubieszow box was then installed in a refugee center in Warsaw.

A New Partnership with the United Nations

Sexual violence is the world’s oldest war crime. And it is a growing threat: 2021 saw a 20% increase in sexual violence against children in armed conflict (UN, 2021). In November 2022, Bibliothèques Sans Frontières (BSF) entered into a partnership with the Office of the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General on Sexual Violence in Conflict to combat conflict-related sexual violence. In the partnership, BSF will use the Ideas Box and other innovative solutions to support survivors of conflict-related sexual violence, along with their families and communities.



Board of Directors

In 2022 we welcomed five new members to our Board of Directors: Nathaniel Hill, Mary Lee Kennedy, Amber Koonce, Antonio Garcilla Padilla, Gary Stewart, and Tse-Sung Wu.



Nathaniel Hill

Nate Hill is executive director of the Metropolitan New York Library Council (METRO). Nate. He grew up in upstate New York and began his career in libraries at Brooklyn Public Library's Stone Avenue Branch. After almost ten years of service and several different roles within Brooklyn Public Library, he relocated to Silicon Valley to retrain and re-tool as a web designer and developer for the San Jose Public Library.

Before joining METRO in June 2015, Nate served as Deputy Director of the Chattanooga Public Library, where he led the 4th Floor project, a 12,000 square foot library loft space featuring a public access makerspace, civic laboratory, and gigabit laboratory.

Nate was named a "Mover and Shaker" by Library Journal in 2012. He earned his undergraduate degree in art from Skidmore College and an MLIS from Pratt Institute's School of Information and Library Science. When he's not busy library-ing, Nate enjoys hiking, camping, art, design, and tinkering alongside his wife and kids.

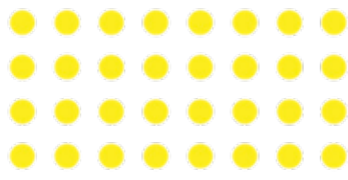


Mary Lee Kennedy

Mary Lee Kennedy serves as executive director of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL) where she leads the development of and implements ARL's strategic direction. She builds on ARL's strengths as a leader and partner in the research and learning ecosystem, as a catalyzer of global opportunity and value through the Association's suite of programs and initiatives, and as an institution that embraces innovation, diversity, and inclusion.

Prior to coming to ARL, Mary Lee was principal of the Kennedy Group, where she partnered with organizations to empower local and global communities to create and use knowledge that enhances lives. She has a wealth of experience in academic research libraries and knowledge corporations, most recently at

New York Public Library (NYPL), where she held the position of chief library officer (2013–2016). Before going to NYPL, she served at Harvard University as senior associate provost for the Harvard Library (2011–2013) and executive director of Knowledge and Library Services, Harvard Business School (2004–2011). Prior to her roles at Harvard, she was director of the Knowledge Network Group at Microsoft (1998–2004).



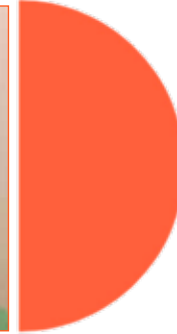
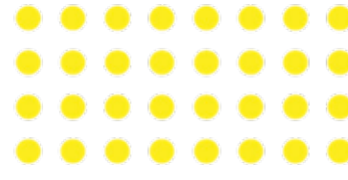
Amber M. Koonce

Amber M. Koonce is a human rights attorney at the NAACP Legal Defense Fund and a nonprofit executive. At the Legal Defense Fund Amber represents Pulitzer Prize-winning Journalist Nikole Hannah Jones and litigates issues of imprisonment conditions, the desegregation of public schools, and classroom censorship.

As the Founder and Executive Director of BeautyGap, LLC, Amber has led a nonprofit that supports the development of girls of color around the world by providing them with dolls of color. In this capacity, Amber has overseen the distribution of dolls to Ghana, Haiti, Kenya, and the Philippines. BeautyGap's efforts have been recognized by Glamour Magazine and Cosmopolitan Magazine, among other national publications.

Amber received her J.D. from Yale Law School and her B.A. with Highest Distinction in Public Policy from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Amber previously maintained an active pro bono practice as a Litigation Associate in the New York office of Fried, Frank, Harris, Shriver & Jacobson LLP. Amber also clerked for the Hon. William A. Fletcher on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit and worked as a Luce Scholar for the Humanitarian Legal Assistance Foundation in the Philippines.



Antonio García Padilla

Antonio García Padilla is the Dean Emeritus of the University of Puerto Rico Law School has served (2001-09) as President of his University, an 11-campus public system registering 60,000 students and granting degrees that range from the Associate to the post- doctoral levels. Antonio was appointed Dean of the University of Puerto Rico Law School in 1986 and served until 2001, to become President of the institution.

Antonio holds a BBA in Finance, magna cum laude and a Juris Doctor, magna cum laude, from the University of Puerto Rico. Before studying law, he formed part of the team of the Antitrust Division of the Puerto Rico Department of Justice. Upon pursuing an LL.M. at Yale Law School, Antonio made a judicial clerkship with then Judge Stephen

G. Breyer in the US Court of Appeals for the First Circuit in Boston.

Antonio currently chairs the Puerto Rican Academy on Law and Jurisprudence and is the Secretary of the Council of the Section of Legal Education and Admissions to the Bar. He has been a member of the Council of the American Law Institute and the Middle Sates Commission on Higher Education and has served in multiple committees, commissions, and work groups in these and other entities in the fields of law and education. He chaired the Luis Muñoz Marín Foundation of Puerto Rico (1993-2000); has served on the Board of Directors of Universal Insurance Co., the Commonwealth's largest insurance company; and has been an advisor to Universia, the association of

Latin American, Spanish, and Portuguese universities supported by Banco Santander.

Antonio currently teaches Secured Transactions, Commercial Contracts, Payment Systems and Commercial Arbitration at the University of Puerto Rico. He is in the panel of commercial arbitrators of the American Arbitration Association and is a Mediator in the US District Court for the District of Puerto Rico. Antonio has published extensively about education and commercial law matters.



Gary Stewart

Gary Stewart is a visiting professor of entrepreneurship at Yale Law School and the founder and CEO of FounderTribes, an app that uses proprietary machine-learning algorithms to connect founders to the social and financial capital that they need to start up and scale up their businesses.

Gary is the former CEO of Wayra UK, a corporate accelerator backed by Telefonica (O2), where he invested in 185 start-ups that raised \$265m and were valued at more than \$1.5bn. Gary is on the boards of UnLtd., Capital Enterprise and the University of East London. He is also on the investment committee of Ascension Venture's Fair by Design Fund and the advisory board of Included.VC.

From 2010-2014, Gary was an associate professor at entrepreneurship at IE Business

School in Madrid in addition to being the CEO of Wayra Spain. He launched his first start-up in 2005, which was a property search engine that raised \$4m before eventually being acquired by a publicly listed company. Before becoming an entrepreneur, Gary worked as a lawyer in NY, London, Madrid, and Barcelona. He graduated magna cum laude, Phi Beta Kappa from Yale College and was the executive editor of The Yale Law Journal at Yale Law School.

He has been twice on the Power List of the most influential Black people in the UK and was named by the Financial Times as one of the UK's top 100 LGBT Executives in 2016.



Tse-Sung Wu Stewart

Tse-Sung Wu leads cross-functional teams of scientists and engineers to develop therapeutics in the biopharmaceutical industry where he has worked over two decades. A child of immigrants from the Pearl River delta in Guangdong Province, China, he has an affinity for peoples in transition and migration, as well as building bridges across cultures, whether they span oceans or academic disciplines. Currently involved with his own children's public school in the San Francisco Bay Area as a community leader, he has a personal connection with the promise and challenges of public education, universal access to it, and equity in serving all students.

He received his Ph.D. in Engineering and Public Policy from Carnegie Mellon focusing on environmental sustainability and corporate decision-making.

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