WHO launches free courses in health emergencies

To aid both health care personnel and the general public in obtaining education on epidemics, pandemics, and other emergencies, the World Health Organization (WHO) has launched a new collection of introductory video courses. The OpenWHO (https://openwho.org/) collection is free to access by an unlimited number of users globally. It has three channels covering the subjects of outbreaks, social sciences, and emergency response procedures. A fourth channel consists of training materials provided by the Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN). All courses are available in English, with a selection also available in French.
and Arabic. WHO also provides the courses in local languages of affected geographic regions as the need arises. Read the full story (http://www.hifa.org/dgroups-rss/who-launches-video-courses-outbreaks-and-emergencies).

Library transforms Greece’s refugee camps into thriving communities

Although the basic necessities were already available at Greece’s refugee camps, Laura Samira Naude and Esther ten Zijthoff noticed that something was missing: a sense of purpose. With the help of two fellow volunteers, Naude and ten Zijthoff created Education Community Hope and Opportunity (ECHO) (http://echo-greece.org/) to meet the need. Together, they purchased and renovated an old minibus, which was transformed into a mobile library. At ECHO, refugees can access the Internet as well as books in Greek, English, Arabic, Kurdish, Farsi, and French. The van also serves as a quiet reading sanctuary and popular community gathering space where patrons informally teach each other languages. ECHO houses 1,300 books and serves 115 patrons weekly.

“In the freezing winter we’ve had in Thessaloni, the van was sometimes warmer than the tents, and people would come inside just to get warm,” said Zijthoff. The creators of the project hope it will grow and spread to other regions in need. As Zijthoff explains, “We are looking for people to hand over the project to, and many volunteers and organisations, not only in Greece but Serbia, Italy, Palestine and Lebanon, say the set-up could work very well. So, even if we are not the ones starting them, we hope that the concept will spread.” Read the full story (http://neoskosmos.com/news/en/Volunteers-set-up-mobile-library-for-refugees-in-Greece).

Science Literacy Week breaks down communication barriers

In celebration of Science Literacy Week (https://www.ubyssey.ca/science/science-literacy-week-2017/), liaison librarians at the University of British Columbia (UBC), Canada, tackled a universal need: making scientific research accessible to nonexperts. To accomplish the feat, they created a living library of graduate- and doctoral-level researchers, who were available at the university’s Science Expo.

The living library comprised six researchers from a variety of fields of study and could be “checked out” for fifteen-minute intervals. The program was very popular among undergrad students: “It’s so inspiring to be able to hear when somebody’s passion[ate] about their research and be able to convey that one-on-one,” said Katherine Miller, a reference librarian at UBC.

The living books strived to break down barriers between scientific evidence and public consumption. Among them was May Sanaee, a researcher who focuses on women’s health topics. Sanaee recognized that the health news that the public consumes is often delivered as blanket statements, for which many civilians lack the scientific literacy to critically evaluate in order to make informed decisions about their health.

Another participant, Kelly Graves of the civil engineering department, shared her unique perspective on the world around her with patrons. She stated, “For my work, I like to know how things work and why things happen. I can go out and hike on a mountain and collect measurements and figure out what makes that lake work, and I can see the application for fisheries, drinking water [and] hydropower.” Graves stressed the importance of finding the common ground between researcher and audience to enable effective communication about scientific topics. Read the full story (https://www.ubyssey.ca/science/science-literacy-week-2017-living-library/).

Missing ancient medical reference is discovered

An unveiling is to be held at the National Library and Archives Organization of Iran for the first chapter of “Jami al-Adwiya al-Mufrada,” an ancient medical encyclopedia compiled by herbalist Abu Bakr Hamid. The text, which was recently discovered in a historic library in Tabriz, is believed to have been referenced during the writing of Avicenna’s (980–1037) seminal works Cannon of Medicine and Book of Healing. The ancient text exhibits the influences of ancient Greek medicine and is based on the four humours: phlegm, blood, yellow
bile, and black bile. Since Avicenna's works do not provide references, the source of his knowledge was unknown for many years. The newly discovered text is believed to be of great historical significance. Read the full story (https://financialtribune.com/articles/art-and-culture/69950/national-library-will-unveil-source-of-avicenna-s-reference).