

Draft Concept Library & Testimony Archive

FOUNDATION FOR DISPLACEMENT, EXPULSION, RECONCILIATION
DRAFT CONCEPT LIBRARY & TESTIMONY ARCHIVE

Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation
Draft Concept Library & Testimony Archive

Berlin, June 2018

Updated Version
Berlin, April 2020

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Credits
Bundesamt für Bauwesen und Raumordnung: S.5

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Preface

The Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation hereby presents its draft concept for the Library & Testimony Archive, **which was developed on the basis of the Foundation's 2012 draft concept**. The Library & Testimony Archive is **part of the Foundation's** Department for Documentation and Research. It is comprised of a specialist library, an archive, and an oral history collection. The Centre's **overarching task is to provide a space for the "profound and ongoing discussion on the subject [of forced migrations] from a European and global perspective" (the Foundation's Conceptual Framework p. 15)**. The horizon therefore extends significantly beyond the German experience during the Second World War. In their totality, the collections focus on the experience of people affected by expulsions and displacement. The Documentation Centre offers interdisciplinary perspectives on the significance of uprooting, loss and new beginnings in individual biographies, as well as both historical events and present-day phenomena. The Library & Testimony Archive will utilize about 400 square metres in publicly accessible rooms within the first floor of the new building. The fourth floor also offers 200 square metres of closed stacks, which are equipped with a mobile shelving system.

This document ties into the permanent exhibition concept that was approved by the Board of Trustees in May 2017. Both documents and the specifications derived from them are related to one another in terms of content and function. The permanent exhibition and the Library & Testimony Archive, which are seamlessly connected on the first floor, must be understood as an entity, **not least because of the building's architecture**. Both spaces, which provide a multi-faceted array of information and educational offerings, will significantly shape the Foundation's external image.

The "Library & Testimony Archive" was referred to as the "Documentation Centre" in a prior version of this concept. On July 18, 2019, the Board of Trustees decided that the institution as **a whole would be called "Documentation Centre"**. The name "Library & Testimony Archive" can be amended after the opening. A person from contemporary history could be a namesake – ideally a researcher – **whose work is closely related to the Foundation's purpose, is regarded as exemplary in the field, and thereby can add to the institution's reputation**.

The Advisory Board has closely followed the Foundation's development work on this concept and provided outstanding support. The concept first became a binding document when it was approved by the Board of Trustees. The next step is the development of a plan for realizing the described potential uses, services, educational offerings and cooperations in the spaces envisioned for these purposes in the new building.

1. Guideline

The Library & Testimony Archive is comprised of an archive, a specialist library, and an oral history collection. The collection of books, documents and testimonial interviews follows an interdisciplinary perspective. The thematic horizon encompasses not just the experiences of Germans, but also of forced migrations in Europe and beyond. The Library & Testimony Archive, as a mediator between scholarship and a broad public audience, sees itself as a versatile service provider that offers visitors, who have different interests, with profound insights into this subject matter.

The law establishing the Foundation (2008) and the Foundation's founding document (2012) describe its tasks as follows:

- The communication of research findings and scholarly knowledge
- The collection, documentation and scholarly evaluation of relevant documents and materials, especially of testimonial accounts
- Cooperation with German and international museums and research institutions
- In-depth educational offerings and research opportunities
- A specialized institution for communicating research findings regarding German, European and global forced migrations

This remit opens up generous latitude for the Foundation to pursue the collection of **documentation and for educational and communication activities**. The Foundation's aspiration should be to participate and to shape international discourses about forced migration as a historical phenomenon and as an urgent matter of our own times. The integration of the old holdings of the Deutschlandhaus Foundation and the Foundation House for the East German Homeland means that a majority of our library and archival holdings are related to the history of the displacement and expulsion of Germans. Most of the interviews **conducted until now have been with German expellees, due to the project's close association with the permanent exhibition**.

It is all the more important therefore to emphasize that the Foundation's founding statutes for the Documentation Centre envision a significantly broader scope. There will also be a focus, as a complement to the "German case," on aspects of the European and global history of forced migrations, which is a current issue in the world and will continue to be of great importance. For this reason, the library began collecting specialist literature on the thematic complex of forced migration from around the world in 2010. This means that this collection is already international and in multiple languages. The majority of the documents in the archive are related to German history. At the same time, however, we are planning to round out our holdings by means of targeted acquisitions at the European and global level, both leading up to the Centre's **opening and beyond**. **The same applies to the collection of interviews in the oral history project.**

The three collections are shaped by their focus on experiential history. Archival items and interviews illuminate at different levels the effects of forced migrations on individuals, families and societies. The (auto)biographical access that is offered by personal testimonies often illuminates profound, and often traumatic, experiences. The Library & Testimony Archive offers a variety of life histories to the public in order to deepen the content of the permanent exhibition and to encourage visitors to think about their own family histories.

Eyewitnesses communicate how forced migrations impact individuals in particularly powerful ways. Along with personal testimonies, which constitute the focus of the archive collections, our work in the field of oral history includes the recording, transcription and archiving of interviews.

In late November 2017, the Foundation published a call for people to send in their stories of displacement. There were over 500 responses. The major cross-regional resonance underscores the fact that former German refugees and expellees in particular view the Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation as an appropriate partner for the long-term preservation of posthumous bequests and documents that have often been carefully protected for decades, such as photographs, letters or memoirs. Unlike some archives, the Foundation is viewed as an institution that looks after human fates, secures the memories of a generation, and preserves them for following generations. Thanks to its work in recent years, and despite prominent conflicts, the Foundation has acquired a reputation for being close to people and listening to them, for providing a voice to those impacted by displacement and expulsion, and for helping interested parties in any way possible. This image is a very valuable asset and should continue to be cultivated. We anticipate that the opening will initiate a new dynamic. Queries and donation offers will increase significantly. The ways in which the Foundation deals with such offers, and how it is provisioned for this in terms of finances and staffing, will strongly influence its perception among the public.

The target audience of the Library & Testimony Archive is substantially the same as the **Foundation's: school classes and youth groups, families and eyewitnesses, people with a migrant background, those interested in culture, international tourists, and academics.** However, given the open room design and the limited number of workstations in the reading room, these offerings are oriented primarily towards individual visitors or small groups. This includes small groups of pupils, which are supervised by the education and communications division. Work with school classes and larger youth groups will take place mainly in the permanent exhibition and in the seminar rooms on the ground floor.

The services of the Library & Testimony Archive are oriented towards the expected behaviors and interests of visitors who

- come specifically for research purposes or out of a non-specific autobiographical interest;
- after visiting the permanent exhibition, find their way more or less accidentally into the collections;
- visit the Documentation Centre in the context of an event or educational offering.

In institutional terms, the Library & Testimony Archive fulfills three important functions:

- **As a "showcase," it presents the Foundation's collections and makes them accessible to the public.**
- As an information site, the Library & Testimony Archive advises scholars and genealogists, refers to the holdings of other institutions, enabling direct access to these materials.

- As a vibrant forum of civil society, it participates in media and academic discourses about forced migration by means of educational offerings, events and publications, and shapes these discourses in the spirit of reconciliation.

In this way, the Library & Testimony Archive will make an important contribution to the public image and visibility of the Foundation as a unique cultural brand. The employees will cultivate a constant professional exchange in relevant national and international networks. At the same time, the strategic network with other institutions will be expanded. The Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation wants to establish itself as an internationally oriented institution for discussions in civil society about the situation of ethnic, religious and national minorities that are confronted with forced migrations, violence and human rights issues. Expulsions and displacement affect the fates of millions of people, both historically and today. To make the tangible and intangible dimensions of bereavement caused by the **forcible loss of one's homeland open to experience: this is the goal served by the Library & Testimony Archive** and its resources, including the encounter and mutual comprehension of people of different heritages.

2. Library & Testimony Archive

2.1 Rooms

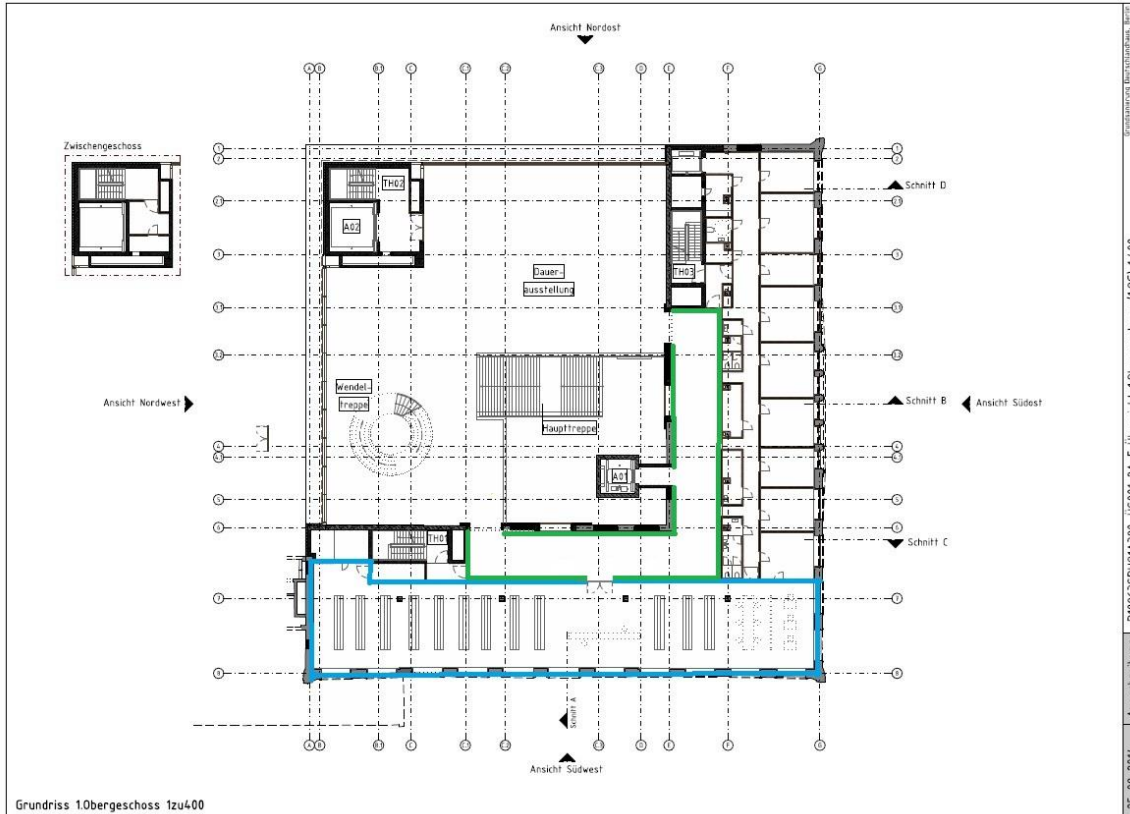


Fig. 1: Floor plan for the first floor with the Documentation Centre (blue) and lobby (green)

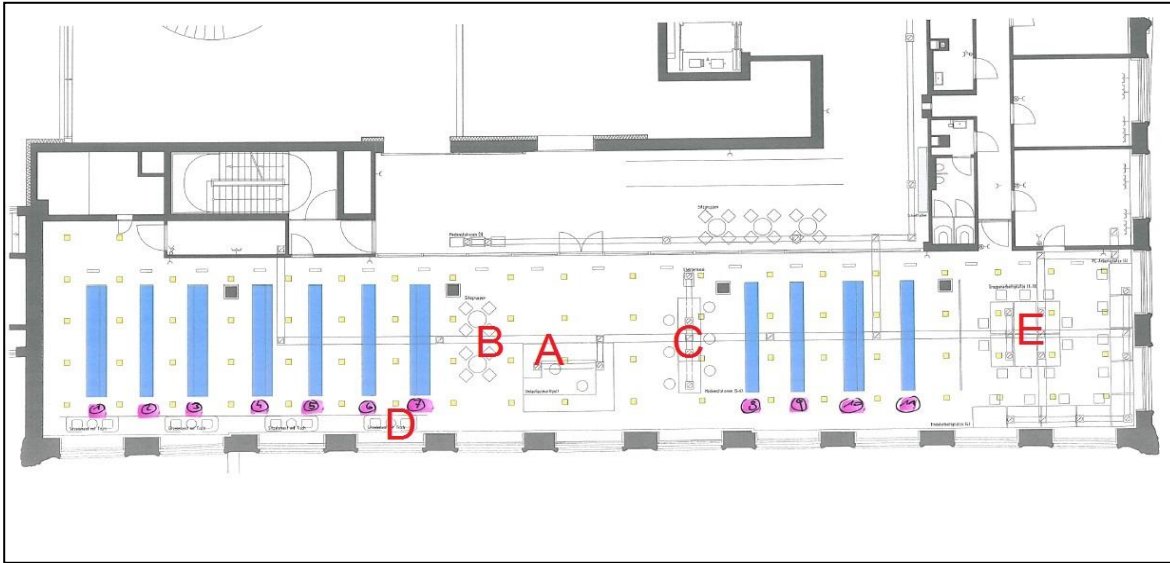


Fig. 2: Floor Plan for the Library & Testimony Archive

- A: Information desk,
- B: Seats and reading places
- C: Media stations / standing module
- D: Seats with small desks along the window façade
- E: Quiet working area with computers and desks.

The Library & Testimony Archive is located in the first floor of the former Deutschlandhaus. The 400-square-metre reading room is shared by the library, the archive and the oral history collection (Fig. 1, marked in blue). A lobby (ca. 200 m², Fig. 1, marked in green) provides a seamless passage in both directions. Visitors reach the bright room via the open stairway and through the first part of the permanent exhibition, or from the elevator. The lobby forms a transition between the exhibition and the Library & Testimony Archive that is visible through large windows. Small seating arrangements for groups, and a few media stations, invite visitors to spend time there. After seeing the exhibition, visitors can exchange thoughts, carry out deeper research, or view excerpts from testimonies.

Visitors reach the reception area of the reading room through a double door. The room gains its atmospheric quality from its large windows and the high visual quality of oak in the parquet flooring, doors and shelving on the walls. There are seating options (Fig. 2, B) to the right of the information desk (Fig. 2, A). More media stations and standing modules (Fig. 2, C) are located, from the perspective of the main door, to the left. There are more seating options with small desks along the window facade, with a view of Askanischer Platz. (Fig. 2, D). In the quiet rear part of the reading room (Fig. 2, E), there are computer workstations along the windows looking out on Anhalter Strasse and Stresemannstrasse. There will also be a large table with additional seats. A total of up to 40 visitors can work in the Library & Testimony Archive at one time. The design, content and demeanor of the employees in the Library & Testimony Archive should convey the sense that guests are welcome.

2.2 Holdings

2.2.1 Specialist Library

Since 2010, the scholarly specialist library has been collecting international specialist literature, newspapers and journals, as well as digital media, on forced migrations around the world, the culture of memory, and a broad array of forms for discussing displacement and expulsion. Relevant publications on National Socialism and the Second World War are also being taken into account. Thanks to the old stock from the former Deutschlandhaus Foundation, the library has an important subcollection on the historical German territories in the East and landscapes in Eastern Europe. This subcollection includes rarities such as old publications and writings, as well as family bibles and very rare regional histories, travel guides and brochures from the prewar period. Although the library is significantly smaller **than Marburg's Herder Institute, the Martin Opitz Library in Herne, or the scholarly library of the Sudetendeutsches Haus in Munich**, there are books in the old holdings that can only be found at the Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation. The entirety of the old stock and the constantly growing reservoir of international research literature is generating a unique profile of holdings and collections. Above all, the **Foundation's** collection differs significantly in its broad geographic spectrum of specialist literature on forced migrations in Europe and beyond, which departs from the collections held by institutions supported under Section 96 of the German Federal Expellee Act (Bundesvertriebenengesetz, or BVFG), which focus on the history and culture of Germans in Eastern Europe. The media library collects German-language and international films and documentation on CD, DVD and Blu-ray.

On January 1, 2018, the library held around 34,000 books, 84 titles in its rare books collection, and 600 journals with a total of 6,250 individual volumes. There are also 50 shelf metres of books from various donations and posthumous bequests. The media library has about 150 titles. An annual growth of about 700 titles is planned for the coming years. The new building offers enough storage space in the reading room and in the stacks for a total of 50,000 media items.

For some time, the library's holdings have been accessible via the joint online catalogue of the libraries of the Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation, the German Historical Museum, and the Allied Museum. The catalogue can be accessed via the Foundation's website. Through its participation in the association catalogue of the Bavarian Library Association, the holdings are also recorded in the central cataloguing platform for the states of Bavaria, Berlin and Brandenburg (B3Kat) and in the cooperative Berlin-Brandenburg Library Association (KOBV), and can therefore be accessed nationally throughout the Karlsruhe Virtual Catalogue and internationally via WorldCat, the world's largest bibliographical database. The library profits from an established exchange with 46 scholarly institutions, memorials and institutions sponsored under Article 96 of the German Federal Expellee Act (Bundesvertriebenengesetz, or BVFG). It is a member of the working groups on memorial libraries (AGGB), the specialist libraries (ASpB) and the art and museum libraries (AKMB) and takes part in annual conferences.

The classification system is oriented towards the thematic foci of the collection and also takes into account our previous experience with users and their questions and search strategies. Early on, there were proposals to implement major classification systems such as the Regensburger Verbundklassifikation, which is used in several scholarly and university

libraries, or the Dewey Decimal system. Such systems, however, were found to be too broad and extensive. In a technical discussion with the Topography of Terror, the House of the Wannsee Conference, the Herder Institute and the German-Russian Museum, we designed and implemented a customized classification system that is more closely aligned with the **Foundation's themes**. In the course of this work, the thematic structure of the old holdings was integrated.

Twelve main classes are followed by alphanumeric notation. The main classes are identified with capital letters, and below the second level of classification there are consecutive numbers for a total of 645 subclasses. The individual level notations are separated with periods (for example: A.1.3 for exhibition catalogues). A call number is comprised of a group number, a subgroup number and a four-character author abbreviation. Editions, volumes and multiple holdings are indicated by a suffix to the call number (for example: A.1.3 Walz -2). The classification system was transferred into the electronic library system. All of our media will be entered in the system before the opening. New acquisitions are classified as they are entered in the inventory. The system is designed in such a way that it can be changed and expanded at any time.

2.2.2 Archive

The Foundation maintains its own archive. The entirety of the holdings (about 100 shelf metres) is comprised of personal testimonies and eyewitness interviews, posthumous bequests, documents from agencies and institutions, and historical descriptions. Seven literary estates (20 shelf metres) from the holdings of the Deutschlandhaus Foundation, including those of Ruth Hoffmann, Gustav Renner, Eberhard König and Gerhard von Amyntor, are a particular highlight. The archive also includes the extant documents from the Foundation House for the East German Homeland from the period up to its dissolution in 1974, as well as the administrative files, documents and photograph collection of the Deutschlandhaus Foundation up to its disbandment in 1999 (34 shelf metres).

The video testimonies by the Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation and other such materials, in digital and transcribed form, also form part of the collection. The organization of the archive shows additional small holdings and also takes into account the task of preserving the files of the Foundation since its establishment. **Much like the library's organizational system, the archive's spatial arrangement** was developed by relying closely on existing holdings and the **Library's** tasks. This organization can also be expanded and modified at any time. The archive holdings are recorded electronically on an ongoing basis in the MuseumPlus database, in accordance with scholarly standards. The entire collection should be entered in the database by the time the Documentation Centre opens.

The archive's profile and self-image are significantly determined by personal testimonies. These testimonies are not the most numerous (20 shelf metres), but they are our most important holdings. In November 2017, we published a call for people to send in their stories of displacement. The initiative was a complete success. Thanks to public relations work in several regions in Germany, as well as support from the Federation of Expellees, the Foundation received over 500 responses of all kinds within a short amount of time. The processing, organization and classification of these documents is in full swing. As a result of this initiative, the Foundation archive now holds written accounts from about 600 people who experienced displacement and expulsion from German-speaking territories during and

immediately after the Second World War. These include memoirs and reports of displacement, family chronicles, diaries and journals, bundles of letters, materials about **dealing with the loss of one's** homeland, and intergenerational transmission of memories, audiovisual documents passed down, and image source material such as photographs or postcards.

Furthermore, reports and materials related to individual stories are being accepted that **provide information from native populations' perspectives on the arrival, absorption and** sometimes contentious everyday life with refugees and expellees. In order to provide context for the subject, international experiences from the period of the Second World War are also included. The archive collects exemplary documents and memories of people from Poland or Ukraine, for example, who were affected by forced migrations caused and organized by the German occupation regime. We are gathering reports of displacement from a broad array of people who, in the course of the twentieth century, came to Germany, and continue to do so today, for reasons related to forced migration. This is why our call for stories from refugees in November 2017 was also directed at refugees from the former Yugoslavia and from Syria. A collection of facsimiles and digital copies of key documents is being created in line with the design of the permanent exhibition and other fields of work at the Foundation. These include numerous international treaties and agreements (e.g., the Treaty of Lausanne of 1923, the Potsdam Conference of 1945, the Dayton Agreement of 1995), laws (e.g., the Federal Expellee **Act of 1953**), **ordinances and decrees (e.g., the Beneš Decrees of 1945/46)**, declarations and plans (e.g., the Charter of German Refugees of 1950, the Indian Independence Act of 1947), and international criminal law (e.g., the last judgment of the International Criminal Court for the former Yugoslavia, 2017) and international humanitarian law (e.g., the Geneva Convention on Refugees of 1951). These holdings provide a historical context for the experiential-historical dimension of forced migrations, expulsions and displacement, while also expanding the horizon of such studies to the European and global level. This service is meant in particular for those who are interested at taking a look, whether before or after a visit, or independent thereof, at original documents that are otherwise dispersed around the world in state archives. In extremely rare cases, the original of such documents will be loaned out, yet **not to permanent exhibitions for conservation reasons. Today's facsimiles are of high quality** and come very close to the original in terms of appearance. These digital documents can be **presented and researched on the Foundation's website if the rights to do so have been** granted.

When itemizing archival materials, the database entries are structured in such a way that they can be entered into the D archive portal by the time the Documentation Centre opens. The platform enables researchers to search across all available search engines for the participating archives and to view search results and digital documents. Like other archives, the Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation will also show selected documents there online.

Public occasions, such as "Archive Day," which is held every two years under a changing motto, are used to present our holdings and reach new user groups. The **Foundation's** archive is a member of the Association of German Archivists (*Verband deutscher Archivarinnen und Archivare*, or VdA), participates in its specialist groups and working groups, and is regularly represented at international professional conferences such as the Central European Archive Day.

2.2.3 Oral History Collection

The Foundation was assigned a budgeted position on the basis of the law that established the Foundation, which explicitly emphasizes the core importance of collecting testimonies. In comparison with other institutions, the Foundation is therefore quite privileged in this regard and is able to build a portfolio of interviews in a systematic way over the long term.

The ongoing task in this field is to conduct audiovisual interviews with people who were and are affected by forced migration. The focus is on the autobiographical narratives of eyewitnesses. The interviews follow the life-story method. This provides the narrator the space to present what they have experienced in a subjective manner and to interpret their experiences themselves. The main purpose of the interviews is to illuminate worlds of personal experience; a secondary purpose is to illustrate historical processes and communicate information about what happened.

Methodological guidelines for conducting interviews were developed in 2014. Every interview requires a great deal of preparation beforehand. First, potential interviewees have to be contacted. Preparatory discussions, held on the telephone or in person, create the necessary **trust until the interview can be done, typically at the eyewitness's home**. Forty-one interviews were conducted by the end of 2017. Our new goal is to complete up to 20 interviews each year beginning in 2018. The transcription of audio and video recordings is ongoing. The interviews are completed in three modules that have different thematic foci and create synergies with other fields of work at the Foundation. The first module is dedicated to forced migrations from 1938 to 1952. The core of this module is comprised of autobiographical reports from German refugees and expellees. There have been 30 such interviews thus far. The module was developed with an eye to the permanent exhibition with the purpose of recording different perspectives and regionally specific experiences of flight and expulsion. The interviews are typically recorded on video; for some interviewees, we only made an audio recording if it seemed appropriate for the person or the content of the interview.

The second module (11 interviews thus far) focuses on the experiences of the "second generation." The narratives of the children of expellees illuminate the biographical impact of forced migrations, the potential for conflict that can emerge from differing perspectives on the past, as well as the transmission of trauma. The confrontation of the phenomenon of **"postmemory", as it is called in the research, opens up a new perspective on forced migrations and their long-term consequences for societies.** It becomes clear how later generations act in response to the personal, collective and cultural influences of their parents and grandparents. By capturing these stories, the Foundation can reach a broader public and raise questions about transgenerational family memory, questions that are gaining particular relevance given the disappearance of the German generation that experienced displacement and expulsion. This module is closely associated with the archival holdings and the object collections because many of the donors are the descendants of expellees. A family history interview can therefore be a meaningful addition, embedding archival items and objects in an overarching narrative and making them useful in a sustainable way. In an open discussion, which is based on documents and objects provided previously, as well as preparatory discussions, we address aspects of family history and the transmission of memory. We usually make audio recordings of these interviews.

The third module bears the title, "Refugees and expellees in Berlin." This program will be done in such a way that the results can be used for press and public relations work leading up to the opening, as well as the educational work that will begin at that time. The call for testimonial submissions, which has been ongoing since November 2017, provides an important foundation for later implementation. The documentation of the variety of personal

fates shaped by forced migration in Berlin, and the relationship between the Foundation and urban society, are central aims. The interviewed eyewitnesses can be young or old, from different cultural backgrounds, or have had different experiences of integration. They are connected to one another by Berlin as their city of residence, by universal experiences of **losing one's homeland and starting over, as well as their personal confrontation with what they have lived through.**

A central task of our testimonial work is to prepare all of the interviews in such a way that they can be used as sources of oral history. This means that they have to be transcribed in full and with information about their context and origin so that they can be evaluated according to scholarly standards. Such transcriptions include time codes, systematic keyword indexing, multiple levels of cataloguing, and long-term archiving. Over the medium term, we are planning for a cooperative agreement with the Center for Digital Systems at the Free University of Berlin (CeDiS). The embedding of the interviews in a platform that is under development **should also contribute to the international visibility of the Foundation's testimonial work.** The Foundation issued a letter of support for a German Research Association (DFG) application for funding by the CeDiS in 2017.

In order to anchor the Foundation's testimonial work in a durable way in the international oral history landscape, we are cultivating a continuous exchange with relevant national and international networks (for example, the International Oral History Association).

3. Information Site

The Library & Testimony Archive is designed as an open place for all visitors to find information. Our employees have been in close contact for years with numerous interested parties, donors and lenders. The indispensable and valuable cultivation of these relationships has taken place primarily behind the scenes.

The importance of the publicly accessible reading room is manifest in the generous, well-lit spaces in the first floor, in the existing wing of the building along Stresemannstrasse. The space near the reception desk in the main entrance will be the primary location where the institution will come into direct contact with the public. Questions, suggestions, needs, praise and criticism can all be addressed to the employees there. We anticipate staffing the information desk with an employee specialized in media and information services. The librarian and the archivist in particular will be available in the reading room for part of their regular working hours. Furthermore, visitors will be able to meet the curators and the director of the Foundation at regular intervals.

We anticipate three groups of visitors: people who come by spontaneously after visiting the exhibition; those who come to the Foundation with specific questions or research interests, **independently of a visit to the exhibition; and people who participate in the Foundation's educational offerings.**

Three central services are directed to the public: First, interested parties can begin to explore more deeply what they have experienced in the exhibition by looking at a showcase with the **Foundation's own collections.** Second, visitors receive information about the holdings of other institutions and can access a selection directly. Third, in combination with other institutions, the Library & Testimony Archive views itself as a central point of contact and advice for genealogical and regional research, particularly with regard to Eastern and Eastern Central Europe.

3.1 Showcase for Collections

As described earlier, the Library & Testimony Archiv is seamlessly connected to the first part of the permanent exhibition through a lobby. Various information and educational offers can already be used here, outside of the reading room. This is all the more important because the operational planning up to this point anticipates that the Library & Testimony Archive, unlike the lobby, will only be accessible during the week and not on weekends. Experience has shown that many people contact the Foundation to ask specific questions about places and names. This is why the lobby is meant to offer an opportunity to research place names and leads toward the possibility of searching for names in the reading room. There are also curated and illustrated excerpts from testimonial interviews.

The reading room makes the specialized library, the archive and the oral history collection open to the public as much as possible, either directly, via order from the stacks, or online. A few shelves near the entrance are designed in such a way that they can present new book titles and special archival items. These mini-presentations allow us to take on and bundle subjects and occasions, for example, a new temporary exhibition, an event, a specific region or a language. New acquisitions in particular – **research literature, fiction, and children's and**

youth literature – invite visitors to browse. Two rows of shelves with five shelves each and about 60 linear metres can present up to ten topics. There are also two glass cabinets for displaying pieces from the collections. These offerings are oriented in particular towards visitors who exit the permanent exhibition and take the path to the Library & Testimony Archive – either spontaneously or intentionally, to take the opportunity to learn more during their visit.

The book collection in the reading room is a reference library, meaning that books cannot be checked out. However, you can create copies or scans on a book scanner for a fee. Our information desk offers literature recommendations on specific subjects and reading lists sorted by foreign languages. Individual visitors usually receive one-on-one advice. Small groups can receive a guided tour upon request. Guided tours are also possible in the context of events.

Visitors can research the holdings in the Foundation’s library catalogue and in the journals database (Zeitschriftendatenbank, or ZDB). Electronic journals are accessible via the electronic journal library (Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek, or EZB), whether from the computers in the reading room or from the Internet. Visitors can move about on their own in open-access sections and look for books using call numbers or the signs on the ends of the individual shelves and the subject areas. The same applies to the collection of German and international journals. Titles located in the closed stacks can be picked up in the reading room after ordering them in advance. All relevant information is available on the Foundation’s website. This includes accessing the library catalogue, tips on registration and use, the call number system, FAQs, and the reading recommendations mentioned above.

The archive also offers visitors an array of information in the reading room. At the media stations in the entry area, the main focus lies on materials related to subjects found in the permanent exhibition. Visitors can view selected personal testimonies there, as well as the aforementioned collection of key historical documents. However, visitors can also research in the database and order archive items from storage to view in the reading room. The opportunity to view testimonial documents and the original biographies of those affected by flight and expulsion invites visitors to broaden the scope of their visit to the exhibition. The archive and the **department’s** research associates provide advice and support for scholarly **research, answer questions from users and supply materials for the Foundation’s educational and public relations efforts.** Guided tours on working with archival materials are offered on a regular basis (once a month).

The Library & Testimony Archive is working together with its education and communication division to develop concepts, based on instructional planning in the federal states for relevant subjects (including history, geography, politics, social studies, religion) to provide pupils of various ages (secondary levels I and II, but also younger children) with access to historical documents and especially with personal accounts of displacement. The regular nationwide analysis of curricula is an important instrument for being able to offer event formats that can be integrated into school excursion programs. We are also working on close cooperation with universities, above all with departments of history and cultural studies. The archive is open to university students and offers materials for term papers and theses. Both younger academics and the Foundation benefit from research done with original materials.

Finally, visitors can familiarize themselves with oral history interviews in the Library & Testimony Archive. We are planning an introduction to oral history and interview practices for genealogical researchers, as well as a workshop for young people and university students, **that presents the Foundation's work with testimonies**. These concepts are being developed in cooperation with the education and communication division, and will be available for **booking via our visitors' service once they are in operation**.

Contact with the public is very important overall for the Library & Testimony Archive. The presentation of literature, testimonies and memoirs should also inspire visitors to share their own stories. A discussion that begins with user questions can turn into a conversation about **someone's life history**. This kind of discussion can also become the initial spark that leads to a donation to the Foundation that secures a story of displacement, expulsion or a personal history for coming generations. The Library & Testimony Archive should become a lively place where, on the one hand, the Foundation introduces its competences through contact with the public, and, on the other hand, where visitors contribute to the growth of our collections. This constantly growing collection is then available to the general public, and especially for research purposes.

3.2 Holdings from Cooperating Partners

The Library & Testimony Archive views itself as a service provider for interested parties and researchers who require support for their research. This claim extends far beyond the presentation of our own holdings. We want to create a place in Berlin where people can come to find out more about the holdings of our cooperation partners in other regions of Germany and abroad, and also access some of these materials. Our goal is to become a cross-regional information portal on the subject of forced migration. In particular, we are seeking to provide an overview of the collections held by institutions sponsored by Article 96 of the German Federal Expellee Act (Bundesvertriebenengesetz, or BVFG).

On the basis of custom-fit cooperative agreements, we provide stationary digital access in our reading room to the holdings of other institutions that are usually only available at a fee, or not at all. This lends our service an exclusive character and creates a means of connecting **with our visitors**. Such cooperative agreements promote the Foundation's networking with its partners, who then in turn have the opportunity to draw attention to themselves in Berlin and thereby gain new users and interested parties. Research on the collections can be done on media stations and computers with the aid of association catalogues, specialized databases and bibliographies on Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe. Furthermore, visitors can request professional advice from the library or the archive. Commented links to catalogues, databases, archive portals, specialized libraries and search services in Germany and abroad are also on the website, insofar as this is possible.

Relevant cooperation agreements and the determination of conditions of use are currently in preparation. One illustrative example is the Federal Archive – Reparations Office Archive in Bayreuth, which has extraordinarily rich holdings on the flight and expulsion of Germans. The most extensive holdings are those of the Reparations Administration (more than 30,000 linear metres). They document the losses of expellees and refugees from the eastern territories of the German Reich and the German settlement areas in Eastern and Southeastern Europe at the end of and after the Second World War. Visitors to the Documentation Centre's reading room will be able to search electronically in the reparation files by name and place

and identify specific proceedings. The eastern documents (about 145 linear metres), which were created in the 1950s and officially ended in 2017, are of fundamental relevance. In about 30,000 reports, people describe their experiences in the last months of the Second World War, as well as the economic and living conditions in the former German areas in the east. The Bayreuth archive also holds the files of the Church Tracing Service, which was responsible from 1945 to 2015 for finding and supporting missing German civilians and late repatriates in the wake of expulsions. There are also about 200,000 historical photographs of cities, communities and individuals in the former settlement areas and eastern German territories.

Following this principle, the Library & Testimony Archive will also refer to eyewitness interviews from other institutions. For example, we are currently preparing a cooperative venture with the testimonial portal opened by the Haus der Geschichte (www.zeitzeugen-portal.de) in 2017, which contains interviews by the “Memory of the Nation” association. These thematically broad interviews also cover aspects of flight, expulsion and forced migration. The platform serves as a coordination and service point for the testimonial work done by institutions sponsored by the Federal Commission for Culture and Media (BKM). The Foundation, as one of the few institutions that can plan a long-term practice for interviews, will contribute its expertise in this field. Our goal is that visitors to the Foundation receive an overview of relevant oral history projects, portals and databases. These include the holdings of the institutions sponsored under Article 96 of the Federal Expellee Act (BVFG). The Foundation recorded, viewed and evaluated these holdings across the Germany some time ago.

3.3 Genealogy and Regional Research

The Library & Testimony Archive is focused in particular on an experiential-historical perspective. Its holdings concentrate on the effects of forced migrations on individuals, families and societies. These experiences become particularly vivid through the lens of biography, whether in the form of personal testimonies or interviews. These autobiographical narratives therefore contextualize, treat, supplement and expand on the content of the permanent exhibition. Moreover, the Foundation wants to encourage visitors to take a closer look at their own family history.

This is why we are providing special services and offers to genealogical and regional researchers, whose numbers have been increasing for years. The Foundation is contacted on an almost daily basis by interested parties with a broad array of requests. To meet this demand, we published a manual on our website in the spring of 2018 that provided important tips on searching for more information on the former Prussian provinces in the east and the German settlement areas in Central, Southeastern and Eastern Europe. Amateur researchers in particular encounter the problem of how such information is in a generally disparate and scattered condition, which makes it almost impossible to connect the dots without professional skills. The Foundation views itself as a companion and guide in the booming market of genealogical research.

Future workshops will present methods that can help people to perform research within their families, in archives, with searching and tracing services, and in church registry portals. This should appeal to people whose genealogical and regional research have led them to information about the historical German settlement areas in Eastern Europe. There are also

important tips about the archiving of documents and personal files. We are working closely together with the adjacent archive at the Foundation Topography of Terror, which has already established itself as a seminar organizer. These subjects complement one another, thereby enabling both institutions to expand their range by working together. In cooperation with experts from institutions sponsored by Article 96 of the Federal Expellee Act, we will offer regular seminars with a regional focus in which we introduce search methods for research (for example, in Upper Silesia) and answer specific questions.

The Foundation will provide access to online portals and enable genealogists to view the inventories, and even some documents, from selected archives. We are already in preparatory talks for such cooperative agreements with two partners. A large portion of the church registers in the Protestant Central Archive in Berlin and most Protestant state church organizations are available on a digital basis through Archion, the church registry portal of the Protestant Church of Germany. About 20 million pages of church registers can currently **be researched on Archion. Although website users have to pay for accessing Archion's** holdings and downloading content, we will provide use free of charge at the **Library's** media stations.

We are also planning a cooperative agreement with Ancestry, the U.S. firm that leads the world in the digitalization, indexing and online publication of genealogical documents. Ancestry charges a fee to Internet users for its services. Visitors to the Documentation Centre, however, will be able to access the civil registers from the eastern Prussian provinces dated 1874 to 1945, free of charge. Furthermore, Ancestry has digitized the holdings of Registry Office I (Standesamt I) in Berlin, which, as the registry office for compensation by the Federal Republic of Germany, holds the most comprehensive collection of registers and certificates for the former German territories. The retention period for these documents has **expired and they are available online. For people who are interested in exploring their family's** experiences of displacement and expulsion, these services a good reason to visit the Documentation Centre.

4. Forum for Civil Society

The Documentation Centre of the Foundation for Displacement, Expulsion, Reconciliation is meant to serve, in the spirit of reconciliation, as a forum for civil society to facilitate dealing with ethnic, religious and national minorities, forced migrations, violence and human rights, both in history and in the present day. Since its founding, the Foundation has sought to build an institutional network; this is a strategic process that continues in a systematic fashion and is gaining momentum with growing visibility. Contacts have been made from Finland to Serbia by means of publication projects, events and professional exchanges. Robust relationships will lead to the establishment of long-term and project-related cooperative agreements with scholarly institutions, museums and educational institutions.

One example is our contact with the museums of the Varde Commune in Denmark. In Oksbøl, a village in this community that is close to the popular tourist destination of the Baltic coast, there was once the largest camp for German refugees from the east between 1945 and 1949. Up to 36,000 people were temporarily housed there. In addition to information boards, the former camp hospital, the foundations of barracks and a German war grave site all provide **evidence of the 1,675 German refugees who were laid to rest here. Denmark's "refugee museum" project will be built here on the former camp premises in the coming years. The project's initiators have set up** a network of sponsors and cooperation partners, primarily in Denmark and Germany. High-level supporters include the Danish Queen and the German ambassador. The historic site should serve as a reminder of the fate of 250,000 German refugees, above all women, children and elderly men who fled mainly from Pomerania, West and East Prussia over the Baltic Sea to Denmark, which was occupied by the Germans until the end of the war. Much like the Foundation, the new museum in Oksbøl wants to connect historical events with contemporary issues. The Foundation is planning to cooperate with the museums in the Varde Commune in order to facilitate joint special exhibits and events. We are also in discussions regarding an event to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the departure of the last German refugee, and the closure of the camp, in February 2019.

4.1 Events

Events – typically in the context of cooperative efforts – have assumed a fixed place in the **Foundation's work since its** establishment. There is a large auditorium in the ground floor of the new building that offers up to 300 seats for such events. A well-designed, successful event schedule is an essential instrument for arousing interest in and shaping public perception of the Foundation. The Foundation wants to participate in current debates, research controversies and anniversaries with its own programs and its cooperative activity with other institutions, thereby shaping the discourse. Our goal is to be visible on a regular basis and to various target audiences through consistent in-house offerings. The conceptualization, planning and organization of events already requires close cooperation now, and especially will when we begin live operations, between the leadership, public relations work, education and communication, and the Library & Testimony Archive. We are envisioning the following formats:

- Evening events and presentations on current debates on forced migration and integration with members of the Advisory Board and other leading experts as presenters;

- Presentations of new publications that are relevant to the Foundation and its subjects;
- An event series that illuminates historical forced migrations in other countries and how they dealt with them;
- Film series with expert discussions; Displacement, expulsion and forced migrations in new and contemporary feature films and documentaries;
- Readings with reputable authors who have published books on displacement and expulsion;
- Lunch lectures (brief presentations of 15 minutes on objects, subjects, debates);
- An annual scholarly colloquium with our international partners. This format offers a **special opportunity to broaden and deepen our work, and increases the Foundation's** visibility as a stakeholder in the scholarly landscape with calls for papers and programs.
- **"SFVV on the road": Events with other institutions** and educational organizations, such as territorial associations, both in Germany and if applicable abroad, in order to advertise the Foundation and a visit to our building in Berlin, as well as to communicate our own content.

4.2 Publications

Publications represent another field of activity for the Documentation Centre. A catalogue for **the permanent exhibition is planned for the opening and will present the Foundation's tasks,** objectives and profile in an appropriate way. Its publication should reach the broadest possible audience, much like a calling card. A draft idea was formulated and commented upon by the Advisory Board in March 2018. The concept will be developed further on the basis of their expertise. A publication strategy is being developed that goes beyond this one project. Special exhibitions, as well as larger events and anniversaries, are possible occasions for publications. The selected form of publication will depend on the target group, as well as financial and staff resources. Catalogues, tie-in editions, subject-specific volumes and conference anthologies are all conceivable. We should note that most of the institutions sponsored under Article 96 of the Federal Expellee Act also publish their own works. As a consequence, we must identify niches and create value in this context. With an eye to our mediating role between an interested public and the scholarly community, publications should be popular, in the best sense of the term, and yet satisfy scholarly demands. One possible project could be source editions with previously unpublished testimonials. Due to the fact that the generation that experienced these events firsthand is dying out, reports on flight during the time of the Second World War hold a special importance.

4.3 Inspiration for Scholarship

The department of documentation and research sees itself as a mediator between the public and researchers, and as a part to the scholarly community. In the course of working on exhibition projects, events and educational offerings, desiderata may come to the surface and be opened up for scholarly treatment. The number of German civilians who died in the course of displacement and expulsions, which has never been clarified, is among the most sensitive, and yet insufficiently researched subjects in contemporary history. The Foundation can organize a conference that would provide inspiration for making the debate about the number of victims more objective. An externally financed project that would identify victims and register their names in a database is also conceivable. These kinds of initiatives for basic

scholarly research – combined with the objective of attaining broad public influence in the classical sense of public history – would be a contribution from which the Foundation can communicate its profile.

The Foundation wants to engage in the promotion of the next generation of academics. The publication of selected dissertations would be one way in which the Foundation could do this. Young scholars could also be invited to present their research in the context of events. This would allow the Foundation to develop into a place where the latest scholarly developments and discoveries could be debated.

In terms of public perception, the awarding of a prize could also lend the Foundation's profile a special note. Despite constant calls for a transnational perspective on the phenomenon of forced migration, only a few research projects have actually satisfied this demand thus far. **Given that the Foundation's mission is to put the mid-twentieth-century "German case" into an international context and connect it with contemporary discourses, a prize (funded externally) could serve as a unique feature: awarding distinctions to special achievements in interdisciplinary research and the presentation of forced migrations in their European and global dimensions. The prize's eponym should be a person from contemporary history who has excelled in education, research or politics with a critical perspective on the subject of forced migrations.**