



# Libraries as Gateways to the Integration of Immigrants in the EU

Prague 2006



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# Introduction

The fall of totalitarian regimes in Central and Eastern Europe following the breakup of the Soviet Union at the end of the 1980s resulted in significant migration flows across Europe. During the entire second half of the 20th century, Czechs lived under a totalitarian system completely isolated from events behind the Iron Curtain and unaccustomed to foreigners and diversity. Since the end of WWII, Czech society has been relatively homogenous, of course excluding the Roma ethnic group which was largely stripped of its distinctive culture and thoughtlessly socialized by the communist regime while living on the fringes of the society. Since the 1950s, the only representatives of the other and the exotic in Czech society were students from African or Asian countries governed by friendly leftist regimes or students from Cuba. In the 1980s, Vietnamese laborers began arriving in the Czech Republic to work in factories. Presence of these people – some of whom have established families and lived here for decades – was nevertheless perceived as temporary and Czechs generally felt that foreigners were to be tolerated based on the communist regime's political preferences. However, the post-1989 political changes resulted in migration flows of unprecedented magnitude and the Czech Republic found itself facing an influx of refugees from the Balkans and war-threatened countries of the Near and Middle East as well as labor migrants from the former Soviet republics and third world countries. While some of these labor migrants decide to stay in the Czech Republic only for a short period of time, others travel back and forth between the Czech Republic and their home country. Still others see the Czech Republic as a mere transit country on their way to Western Europe. However, the Czech Republic is increasingly popular with migrants as a target country because of its booming economy and EU membership. These trends entail numerous legislative problems and require that the government promptly deal with issues related to asylum policy, legal and illegal migration and effective strategy of integration.

The phenomenon of immigration directly affects the entire Czech society and forces all of us to think about our own tolerance for people from different social and cultural backgrounds. It is not sufficient, however, for our society to tolerate otherness or passively coexist with people from different ethnic groups. Such passive coexistence only leads to creation of modern ghettos as can be sometimes seen in the Czech Republic: immigrants from different ethnic groups live isolated lives with no social ties to or personal contact with the majority. This isolation fosters various stereotypes, prejudices and in marginal cases also extremism. A modern society of the 21st century should politically, socially and culturally strive to actively support and implement such an integration policy so as to enable immigrants take part in the social, economic, political and cultural life of their adopted homeland. Of course, the government and its policies alone cannot resolve integration-related issues – this task requires a reciprocal, complex process requiring active involvement of both immigrants and the majority. Since its founding in 1999, it has been the mission of the Multicultural Center Prague to improve the level of tolerance towards minority groups and

people from different social and cultural backgrounds and help find ways of coexistence and mutual respect between “foreigners” and “citizens”.

In this respect, libraries have always been important and reliable partners of our organization from the very beginning. These traditional cultural, educational and information-disseminating institutions represent a well-organized network in the Czech Republic with branches in all major cities and nearly all towns. Libraries employ well-educated people and have adequate space and equipment giving them tremendous potential to assist in multicultural education and contribute to integration of foreigners into Czech society. Between 2002 and 2004, the Multicultural Center Prague joined forces with Czech libraries to implement Diversity in Libraries, an international project employing best practices from foreign libraries to find ways of getting public libraries involved in multicultural education of the Czech majority.

In the past two years, we have worked together with partners from Czech and foreign libraries to implement a project entitled “Libraries as Gateways to the Integration of Immigrants in the EU” which explores ways in which libraries can facilitate integration of immigrants. Apart from the Association of Library and Information Professionals of the Czech Republic, Municipal Library in Prague, Jiří Mahen Library in Brno, Regional Library in Karlovy Vary, Regional Research Library in Liberec and Municipal Library in Ostrava, we have cooperated in the project with a number of foreign partners, including the Danish National Library Authority (DNLA), Stadtbücherei Frankfurt am Main (Germany), Gemeentebibliotheek Utrecht (the Netherlands) and Villa Decius Association (Poland). A total of five Polish libraries became involved in the project later. Libraries in countries with long experience in integration issues (Denmark, Germany and the Netherlands) provided examples of successful integration activities, thus enabling us to examine ways of applying these good practices in the Czech Republic. Based on a mutual exchange of experience, we have developed ideas and strategies for Czech and Polish partner libraries. All strategies are based on the underlying assumption that integration of foreigners is possible but involves a reciprocal social process requiring willpower on the part of immigrants as well as active and forthcoming attitude on the part of the majority. We see the greatest potential of libraries in this process in their ability to create conditions and opportunities for meetings of immigrants (community centers) and develop activities aimed at linguistic, social and economic integration (language and other courses, legal and social counseling, psychological assistance) as well as activities facilitating presentation of their own unique culture. This publication will show to what degree we have succeeded in achieving our goals and have been able to find and present suitable strategies and options leading to tolerant and mutually enriching coexistence of immigrants and the majority.

**MARIE BUŇATOVÁ**

Multicultural Center Prague

01

# Library as a place of integration

08



# Possible role of libraries in integration of foreigners in the context of activities of NGOs

There are numerous non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in the Czech Republic involved in integration of foreigners, although their total number is rather small compared to Western Europe. Moreover, NGOs in the Czech Republic are concentrated in large cities such as Prague or Brno. While some of them have branch offices in other cities (Ústí nad Labem) and the catholic Charita and evangelic Diakonie work in all regions, the demand for NGOs active in the area of integration in the regions is far from saturated (there are no NGOs working in some locations or NGO workers visit only irregularly to see a particular client or deal with a specific problem.)

It is also for the above reasons that libraries – thanks to their network and manner of operation incorporating openness, Internet access, etc. – seem to be an excellent place to fill certain gaps on the “integration market,” concentrate necessary information and contacts and implement specific activities. In order to describe possible activities in more detail, we must first identify the specific problems and needs of foreigners living in the Czech Republic as presented by them to NGOs who use this information as a basis for developing programs and activities and for their overall functioning.

As regards educational activities, NGOs interested in foreigner-related issues focus, directly or indirectly through other providers, primarily on organizing Czech language courses, computer literacy courses and job market training wherein clients learn about communication, employment, different types of work contracts, resume writing, self-presentation, etc. There are also other activities including retraining assistance, diploma recognition, further education in concrete fields, etc. Some NGOs organize sewing workshops or so-called ‘ethno-catering’ (making specialties from home countries of clients and their marketing to event organizers). It is clear that the vast majority of (educational) activities of NGOs targets foreigners and typically focuses on helping them succeed on the job market. Another area of activities involves student tutoring, free-time activities and integration into the society. Here, the work of NGOs is rather complementary. One must note that schools are very effective in this area provided that they are proactive, especially in the beginning, and devote extra time to specific students.

For obvious reasons, foreigners are concentrated in Prague and other large cities. However, there are smaller cities and towns with sizeable immigrant populations, e.g. border regions where many Vietnamese live. There are also areas with virtually no foreigners, but even there – and sometimes especially there – it is necessary to work with specific foreigners, helping them integrate into the mainstream society. A higher concentration of foreigners (in particular from a single region of origin) in no way indicates that their integration will be easier – the contrary is often the case. Especially in the case of asylum seekers, who in some cases may even fear their compatriots living in the Czech Republic, there is a need to develop new ties and social networks in order to provide employment and housing, but also guarantee full-fledged social life. It is in such cases in particular that libraries can function as excellent places

to obtain important information and contacts or enter into informal relationships. It must be noted that in some cities, libraries realized the precarious social position of foreigners and granted them free library access (e.g. Jaroměř). Whether a particular library is located in a city with little or many foreigners (or immigrants) or not, it can function as an information and social crossroads (naturally depending on the circumstances, size, etc.). With regard to integration activities, it is easy to imagine libraries functioning also as meeting places and places of concrete cooperation (Internet, publications, etc.) between social workers and clients, in particular in locations where no NGOs are active. This is fairly easy to imagine also because it is already taking place in some locations.

If libraries are to become a hub, element or engine for development of integration activities, a number of steps must yet be taken. One of the crucial steps on the part of library staff members is attaining a fairly accurate understanding of the specific issues associated with integration of foreigners and recognizing existing obstacles as well as ways of overcoming them. Another precondition of integration is for libraries to expand their activities as regards supply of services and promotion. If integration is to be successful, it is also essential for NGOs to strive to cooperate

with local institutions such as libraries, share information about programs and services, better coordinate activities with other NGOs and, last but not least, engage in regular communication, approaching integration activities strategically and knowing what they mean and what their objective is.

There are many examples of foreign libraries fulfilling a role not unlike that of social centers for immigrants, presenting their culture, satisfying their natural desire to obtain information from home, etc. While the importance of such activities for the personal satisfaction of immigrants starting anew in their adopted homeland is unquestionable, one must ask to what degree these activities can be classified as assisting integration. It is undoubtedly a good foundation for developing mutual trust and further cooperation, but I dare say that if we speak of integration, we must go further, linking those newly arrived to people from their new neighborhoods and building mutual (and mutually enriching) formal and informal relationships. This is where I see a window of opportunity for cooperation between libraries and NGOs and other institutions coming into contact with immigrants, but also between libraries and local residents. There is an opportunity for libraries to get truly involved in integration of foreigners in the Czech Republic.

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## Library as a place of integration

Marie Dočkalová

# Multicultural education as part of librarianship – Municipal Library in Třebíč

Třebíč and its vicinity are not among those parts of the Czech Republic where the number of foreigners is rapidly growing. This is probably connected to the fact that the Vysočina Region and Třebíč have one of the highest rates of unemployment in the country. The exact number of foreigners living in the Vysočina Region is unknown. Apart from foreign tourists who use our Internet room during the summer, we usually welcome in our library foreigners who have lived in the area for longer periods of time and have no language problems and increasingly often also children of the ubiquitous Vietnamese vendors. However, we realize the importance of being prepared for events and problems related to integration of foreigners into Czech society and see this as a vital part of librarianship.

The Municipal Library in Třebíč set out on this path after staff members attended seminars on issues related to minorities organized by the Multicultural Center Prague. We were able to learn about theory for the first time and also about interesting and inspiring practical examples from foreign and Czech libraries. Our library became involved in the Multicultural Center's Diversity in Libraries project and through it was able to obtain books about minorities and other cultures. At about the same time, we began thinking about our own multicultural activities. Rather vague notions that we initially had gradually evolved into specific and targeted activities on the part of selected staff members who had become enthusiastic and very involved in multicultural activities.

Of course, this required some effort just like any other new library activity or skill that librarians had to master in the past decade. Computers, automated library systems, Internet, database development and provision of new database services, digital services, language training, grant programs of various difficulty levels, community perception of the library are just some of the many great changes that set today's librarianship apart from librarianship in the beginning of the 1990s. The community and multicultural aspects of librarianship are not entirely new but must be understood in the current social circumstances and implemented in line with the technical and staffing resources available. It is always necessary to examine the needs of potential clients and adapt services to such needs.

If potential clients include people from different cultures, it is only natural for libraries as public institutions to take all the steps necessary to keep abreast of social developments. Libraries should therefore acquire new books and periodicals; provide signs in foreign languages to be user-friendly; translate key documents (application forms, lending rules, etc.) and their web sites; and also make available foreign keyboard layouts on library computers. However, the human factor, that is the ability of staff members to communicate with foreigners, is just as important for libraries. It is for this reason that we deem it indispensable to train librarians from our central library as well as from all regional branches. During our training sessions, we regularly disseminate new information from seminars organized in Prague and Brno by the Multicultural Center Prague.

Nonetheless, such transmission of information is never as effective as real life experience and because not all librarians can attend all seminars, we decided in the fall of 2005 to organize a multicultural seminar in Třebíč.

Instructors from the Multicultural Center Prague provided the necessary theoretical background, while librarians from the Regional Library of Vysočina and from Brno provided practical examples and members of selected minorities provided observations and experience from their life in the Czech Republic. Training activities have so far always been productive as in addition to the tremendous benefits of real life experience and new insights, they give rise to a large number of ideas that can be implemented through grant projects such as the Ministry of Culture's successful Library of the 21st Century, the Vysočina Fund or the Healthy City of Třebíč.

There is no doubt today that libraries play a major role in extracurricular public education. The library in Třebíč has confirmed this not only when it organized computer literacy courses as part of the National Computer Literacy Program and trained over one-fourth of all course participants from the Vysočina Region (362 of almost 1,200 participants during 6 weeks at the end of the year). We deliberately include topics related to multicultural coexistence in lectures and public debates on social issues. We try to base such information on a theoretical foundation in order to outline the key issues and questions related to migration in general: what are the reasons for migration, how many people

migrate, who is considered to be a foreigner, what is an ethnic minority, what are the motives and results of migration, historic examples and forecasts for the Czech Republic and the world or the legal aspects of life of immigrants in the Czech Republic. We have used for all theoretical topics documents obtained from the Multicultural Center Prague as part of the Diversity in Libraries project, information from the Internet and internal documents from seminars organized by the Multicultural Center Prague.

On the contrary, Czechs may easily find themselves on the other side after the country's accession to the EU and become foreigners in a different European or other country. We consequently try to present the customs and traditions of peoples who rarely immigrate to the Czech Republic and seem attractive to Czechs. We like to invite explorers and people who have lived abroad for extended periods of time. Prior to the country's accession to the EU, we organized a series of debates with experts and also introduced some of the countries entering the EU together with the Czech Republic.

We think of the past, too: in August 2003, a collection of houses in the former Třebíč Jewish ghetto was – together with a Jewish cemetery and the Basilica of St. Procopius – inscribed on the UNESCO World Heritage List. The Jewish



past of Třebíč is unique also because prior to WWII, two different religious communities used to live there. For this reason, we are currently working on a series of events with Jewish themes, including an exhibition of photographs from Zámostí and lectures on Jewish holidays (Jewish year) or the importance of the Jewish community for Třebíč's economic and social development.

As evidenced by the experience and activities of other libraries, there is a myriad of possible ways of approaching multicultural issues. We are happy to be inspired or educated. We should be prepared for some things not to go as planned. But this is the only way to target our services according to the actual needs of all citizens.

#### EXAMPLES OF EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND GRANT PROJECTS OF THE MUNICIPAL LIBRARY IN TŘEBÍČ:

•• **Participation in seminars organized by the Multicultural Center Prague and processing information for our library** (working meetings, inclusion of new information in future plans, monitoring grant programs in order to choose the right time and program for submitting grant applications, etc.).

•• **Multicultural Dialogue** – lectures for our librarians and staff of professional and non-professional libraries in the region (2004-2005), Matěj Josef Sychra Library in Žďár nad Sázavou (May 2005) and the Municipal Library in Jihlava (May 2006).

•• **Seminar as part of the Family Next Door project** (Slovo 21) – Regional Authority of the Jihlava Region (September 2005); this is a project of Slovo 21, an NGO.

•• **Seminar of the Multicultural Center Prague for librarians from the Třebíč area** (December 2005).

#### EXAMPLES OF MULTICULTURAL EVENTS FOR THE GENERAL PUBLIC:

•• **On the Road to Europe** – a series of lectures about the country's accession to the EU; EU enlargement process: does second-class membership exist?; impact of the Czech Republic's accession to the EU on Czech citizens; advantages and disadvantages of EU membership; referendum.

•• **Intercultural Dialogue. Getting to know other cultures as a basis for coexistence with foreigners** – a lecture for senior citizens as part of life-long learning activities (fall 2004); note: education of senior citizens takes place in two cycles, spring and fall, further divided into a computer literacy training cycle and social sciences cycle.

<http://www.knihovnatr.cz/Vzdelavani/verejnost/archiv.htm>  
<http://www.knihovnatr.cz/Vzdelavani/verejnost/senior.htm>

•• **Adoption of African children** – public debate and exhibition, Humanitarian Center Na Rovinu, December 2005. This was a spontaneous idea of a colleague who heard the director of the Humanitarian Center on the radio

in her car and wrote down the contact details. After the emotionally charged debate, librarians decided to adopt a girl from Kenya, sending money to pay for her schooling through the Humanitarian Center.

•• **Life of Women in...** – grant project; Library of the 21st Century, implemented in 2006.

•• **Multicolored World** – grant project for children, Library of the 21st Century, implemented in 2006. 3 weeks about 3 cultures – Vietnam, Roma, Africa. Exhibitions, competitions and lectures for children.

•• **Public debates about life abroad** – explorers, writers and musicians (Finland, Ukraine, India, Turkey, Iceland, New Zealand, Ghana, Kenya and many other countries plus an evening of Bengalese music with Mohsin Mortaba).

#### MARIE DOČKALOVÁ

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## Library as a place of integration

Marie Pokorná

# Libraries are not boring – Masaryk Public Library in Vsetín

“If you want to know how to do it, first you must feel a true desire to do it. Then go see kindred souls – others who want to do it like you – and study their methods and means, learn from their mistakes and do your part.”

14

Chaim Potok

This quote aptly characterizes the many years of efforts by the Masaryk Public Library aimed at changing not only its position in our society, but also its services for the general public. It characterizes the library's efforts to be an institution that actively and responsibly takes part in making the life in our city better. These smart words spoken by the American writer Chaim Potok are now being turned into reality in our library. Since 26 September 2006, our library has been working in new, modern premises and has added new activities which we believe will greatly enhance the satisfaction of our patrons. However, the way ahead is long and uncharted.

Is the Masaryk Public Library going to be a modern library capable of reacting to current developments and providing adequate public services? This was a question that the library management asked frequently at the end of the 20th century. The answer was clear: YES. Our rich, 80-year history and traditions invited the realization of ideas described in the Report on the Green Paper on the Role of Libraries in the Modern World (1998).

As early as the 1860s, *Osvětová beseda* (a Czech reading club) and *Snaha* (an association for popular education) were founded in Vsetín. Our library was founded on 7 March 1920 to commemorate the 70th birthday of T. G. Masaryk, the first president of Czechoslovakia, and opened its doors one year later. Since the beginning, the library was a meeting place where people came not only to find information, but also to enjoy friendly atmosphere and a wide range of educational and free-time activities.

After numerous transformations ensuing from historical developments, the library again took up its original name, Masaryk Public Library, in 1991 and became a subsidiary organization of the city of Vsetín in 1997.

With the return to its original name, the library embraced new ideas including the idea of community activities. However, inadequate premises remained a problem. On its website, the library presented itself as an old lady in pink, but over time increasingly resembled an old tattered lady in pink with insufficient space for new activities. The library had not only the motivation and craving but also the need to try something new.

We wanted to provide premises and conditions to facilitate initiative of other people and get them involved in community activities.

Thanks to the library's new position, people started seeing it not only as a place to get books, but also as an integral element of their social and personal lives.

The library has become a gateway to the world of information and a natural center of life-long learning and cultural development of individuals and social groups. We strive to react to burning local issues and work hand in hand with other institutions to alleviate social exclusion of certain groups.

However, the library's development along the desired lines soon ran into obstacles of technical nature. Every day, librarians and users had to cope with limited space and lacking human and technical resources. This situation led the management to the decision to outline its ideas and plans regarding future operations in a strategic

document (1998) which was later expanded into the Library Strategy (2002-2005 and 2005-2007) based on European librarianship documents and Czech and regional development programs. These strategic documents served as a foundation for our projects, increasing our chances of winning funding and helping the library to turn around.

First of all, we needed to ensure internal support for our plans, i.e. to get our staff involved. While librarians realized the need to change our attitude towards users in order to reflect overall social changes, it was initially difficult for some of them to feel comfortable with the new, multi-faceted model of functioning and leave behind traditional ways of librarianship. Team work, staff alignment and conviction that what we do is right are the cornerstones of candid, respectable and trusting attitude towards users. The management held lengthy discussions about the desired community library model and its features with staff members. Although libraries in general have great potential for social integration, they should remain above all a place where people can obtain information, learn new things and read books. These criteria may not be necessarily compatible. Finding and defining the meaning of the term “community library” meant a major breakthrough in staff members’

thinking. After many meetings and consultations with Zuzana Ježková from the National Library in Prague, we have articulated the values of the Masaryk Public Library: credibility, openness, satisfaction of all citizens, preservation of traditional library functions (lending and information), and making the library a meeting place for all.

Another key step without which our vision could not have been implemented was winning the local government’s support. Negotiations with councilmen resulted in a partnership with the City of Vsetín enshrined in the city’s strategic priorities. A working group was subsequently created made up of representatives of the city and the library.

The first project activity was applying for funding from the Open Society Fund’s NGOs on the Road to the European Union program in 2003 to finance Library on the Road to Becoming a Community and Learning Center, our own project. Our application was successful and the project helped us prepare for drawing funds from EU Structural Funds, put our ideas on paper and understand more about EU funds in general. Our team learned many new things and gained motivation. Together with this educational program, the Czech Republic was passing new legislation and preparing for 2004-2006 Operational Programs of the

Photo: Archives of the Masaryk Public Library in Vsetín



European Union. As part of the program, we have learned about choosing the right project measures, dealing with calls for applications, and obtaining up-to-date information about changes and new developments in relevant areas.

The next opportunity arrived soon afterwards and the Masaryk Municipal Library applied for funding from the first programming period of EU Structural Funds.

However, the idea of implementing a project entitled “Masaryk Public Library as an Institution of Community Activities and Life-long Learning” was years in the making. Library management created a working team to coordinate and finalize the project to be kicked off in January 2006. Project preparation was a process of constant changes and involved the necessity of accepting new conditions and decisions made by the European Union as well as partners acting as intermediaries between the library and its target group. Based on specific measures of the Operational Program under which our project was to take place and to which it had to correspond, it was necessary to divide it into two parts: investment and non-investment. The investment project was submitted by the City of Vsetín under Measure 3.1 – Infrastructure for human resource development in regions of the Joint Regional Operational Program with the library acting as a strategic partner. The investment project was completed on 30 June 2006.

The library proposed the project’s non-investment part within the Zlín Region grant scheme supporting social integration in line with Measure 3.2 – Support to social integration in regions of the Joint Regional Operational Program. The overall aim of the project is to integrate disadvantaged groups into the community, stimulate employment among these groups and reduce social exclusion through educational activities in the library’s new premises. The library offers information, knowledge, community programs and is well on the way to becoming a contact point for people faced with administrative difficulties and for developing local partnerships. The library’s primary goal is not to resolve unemployment, but rather to facilitate social inclusion and offer individual treatment. The financial agreement between the Masaryk Public Library and the Zlín Region was signed in October 2005 and the project is scheduled for completion in April 2008.

Our project activities include seminars, lessons and courses focusing on information literacy and motivating our target groups, i.e. the unemployed and mothers (parents) with small children. Those who have taken our courses may come back and test their knowledge in practice and exercise new skills. A project team is available to help participants.

In addition, we implement educational and community programs designed for children and teenagers in cooperation with schools with the aim of integrating children at risk into the community, preventing social

pathologies, preparing children for their future jobs and teaching civic and social literacy. We also offer free-time activities. Our programs have been designed with the extensive local Roma minority in mind: 89% of the 150 students of the local special needs school are Roma.

Thanks to our gradual development of partnerships which culminated in an agreement with the Vsetín Job Center and the Society for Community Work in Vsetín, we are now able to effectively communicate with our target groups.

The Masaryk Public Library kicked off new community activities at the start of 2006. Now, eight months later, we know that the path we have chosen is right. The library has found a unique place in our beautiful city and is now an equal partner of various institutions with a lot to offer to the general public.

### WHAT STAFF MEMBERS GAINED FROM PROJECT ACTIVITIES

#### 1. NEW WAY OF THINKING AND INCREASED SELF-CONFIDENCE

The library organized various public programs even before the project, but we realized in the course of project preparations that it was indispensable to offer services based on actual demand and modify them as required.

Thanks to high-quality, successful projects, the library’s position in the city and region has changed: we are now perceived as professional partners capable of obtaining funds from the European Union and assisting in preparation of key strategic documents.

#### 2. PARTNESHIP

The pre-project partnership was imbalanced and not clearly defined, involving provision of one-off services to schools and NGOs more than anything else. However, in the course of project preparations, we have learned how to develop a true partnership based on written agreements, clearly defined roles and fruitful involvement of all partners. Our current partners include institutions, job center, schools and NGOs.

#### 3. EDUCATION

While the library had and still has an ample and well-organized system of professional education, EU-financed projects brought a systemic change. We were forced to start thinking in terms of projects, understand the logic of EU and Structural Funds, learn about programming documents and prepare projects.

#### 4. CONSULTING CAPABILITY

After taking part in the Open Society Fund’s program and securing funding from the European Union, we have become an informal consultancy to which municipalities

and municipal libraries turn when they want to learn about procedures that helped us obtain funding for our project.

5. CREATION OF NEW JOBS

Two new staff members are involved in project activities and we plan to hire an additional staff member for the project starting on 1 January 2007. Their salaries are paid from the project budget.

6. JOY AND BEAUTIFUL AEW PREMISER FOR OUR LIBRARY AND ITS USERS.

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**MARIE POKORNÁ**

MARIE POKORNÁ STARTED WORKING AS A LIBRARIAN IN 1975. SHE IS NOW THE HEAD OF LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE MASARYK MUNICIPAL LIBRARY IN VSETÍN. SHE TOOK PART IN MANAGEMENT OF EU-FUNDED PROJECTS, A TRAINING PROGRAM (2003-2005). SHE IS NOW THE CONTENT MANAGER OF THE EUROPEAN PROJECT MASARYK PUBLIC LIBRARY AS AN INSTITUTION OF COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES AND LIFE-LONG LEARNING.

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Photo: Archives of the Masaryk Public Library in Vsetín



# Danish Library Centre for Integration

The Danish Library Centre for Integration (DLCI) works on a national level to support the library sector in offering a range of services and materials to ethnic and lingual minorities in Denmark.

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The library was established in 1984 as “The Guest Worker Collection”, focusing on servicing the main immigrant groups in Denmark at the time. In 1998 it became part of the State and University Library in Aarhus, and was until recently known as the Immigrant Library.

A strategic name change to “Library Centre for Integration” at the beginning of 2006 signalled the library’s new development towards a more knowledge-based organisation. From being a traditional library service, offering a range of physical materials to Danish public libraries, the Library Centre for Integration is aiming to become a national knowledge-centre on libraries and integration, for example by hosting a range of networks between librarians, offering and by arranging conferences and seminars on the topic.

**DLCI** has two core focus areas:

•• TRADITIONAL LIBRARY SERVICES

As a national resource centre the DLCI has a significant collection of books and other materials in more than 30 languages (music, video/ DVD, books on tape etc) for lending through branch or municipal libraries. The materials are offered as depository loans or single loans to all types of libraries in Denmark. There is a specific focus on the most important immigrant languages in Denmark, namely:

Arabic, Persian, Turkish, Bosnian/Serbian/Croatian, Urdu, Somali, Polish, Vietnamese, Russian, Tamil, Kurdish, Afghan languages, Chinese, Thai and Albanian.

The library centre has a dynamic selection strategy, which takes various external factors into consideration in the selection process, such as demography, accessibility and collection development. The selection process is done in collaboration and consultation with the public libraries.

The DLCI also offers joint acquisition and cataloguing services to municipal libraries as well as single loans and interlibrary loans.

•• KNOWLEDGE CENTRE SERVICES

The DLCI coordinates national projects and networks, and provides consulting and training service to the Danish library sector regarding library services to ethnic minorities.

The centre also offers consultation and national acquisitions schemes regarding the purchase of books in international languages, and employ specialized consultants with in-depth knowledge of the international market for library materials.

The DLCI also hosts a widely used web portal FINFO ([www.finfo.dk](http://www.finfo.dk)) giving information and access to Danish society in 13 different languages. The portal is maintained and updated with current, regional information by libraries all over Denmark, and has more than 30,000 unique visits every month.

**WHY A NATIONAL RESOURCE CENTRE?**

All municipal libraries in Denmark must provide library services to ethnic and linguistic minorities – adults as well as children.

As the settlement of immigrants and refugees in Denmark is dispersed and fragmented, provision of multilingual library service is not the sole responsibility of each local library, but is supported nationally by the DLCI.

Libraries all over Denmark are knowledge-gateways to Danish society and portals to a global community and information network. There are several reasons why libraries are important spheres in society, and particularly for immigrants. One of them is the fact that immigrants, according to various surveys, use libraries much more frequently than ethnic Danes.

## FACTS AND FIGURES ON INTEGRATION AND LIBRARIES IN DENMARK:

- There are 220 local libraries in Denmark (220 municipalities)
- 96 work on integration issues
- 48 offer language support to multi lingual citizens
- 30 offer school work support – often with the assistance of the voluntary sector/NGO's
- 25+ offer support with job applications
- 21+ have official, scheduled learning activities (i.e. how to use the Internet, or democracy and citizenship development).

## LIBRARIES AND ETHNIC MINORITIES – TRENDS AND DEVELOPMENTS

There are various political factors that influence the changing demography of immigrants in Denmark. A restrictive immigration policy towards immigrants outside the EU has resulted a relatively significant fall in immigration from those countries in recent years. The change in immigration patterns obviously have an effect on demands for materials in specific languages and of varying content, and it is thus important for the library to mirror the actual needs of its users and be flexible enough to adapt its offerings and services accordingly.

Libraries are gateways to society in several ways and there are a range of innovative library projects across Denmark, which experiment with new ways of providing spaces for learning and entertainment. There are thus multiple home-work support “cafés” where the library’s clients can interact with tutors in their desired topic. Several libraries offer support with job applications and CV-writing and others have developed hybrid institutions that combine public information services, health centres and job searching support within the space of the traditional libraries.

The Danish Library Centre for Integration is actively engaged in supporting this process nationally and in strengthening and rejuvenating traditional library services to immigrants, by offering a range of materials and concepts through the Danish public libraries.

For more information regarding the Danish Library Centre for Integration, please contact Nicola Ravden, Project Manager at nr@statsbiblioteket.dk or +45 89 46 21 25

## Library as a place of integration

A background article by Branch Librarian Lone Hedelund

# Community Center Gellerup

## From everyday practice to method development – a Danish public library case

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Gellerup Library is in the process of transforming into a Community Centre. Danish public libraries are increasingly adopting a more proactive and outreaching role in developing local communities in co-operation with other local institutions and private organisations and networks. Especially in so-called exposed communities and housing sectors the libraries are striving to become a knowledge resource intended at supporting for instance ethnic minorities in dealing with their specific situation, competence development and integration in the Danish society.

### COMMUNITY CENTRES

The establishment of Community Centre Gellerup is to a great degree based on institutions that know each other through working together on previous occasions. These experiences mean that members of staff as well as citizens are included in the whole process. There will be interview rounds, focus group meetings, stop-a-moment day, and taking part in ad hoc groups consisting of both staff and citizens.

One of the most fundamental democratic principles is the individuals' right to equal and free access to information and knowledge. The idea of enquiring and enlightened citizens being a prerequisite for a well-functioning democracy goes back a long way.

To insure that the free and equal access to knowledge and cultural experience also includes citizens who for various reasons – such as different forms of physical or mental disabilities, mental disorders, social phobias, lack of knowledge-based competences or other restraints – may find it difficult to reach the resources, the libraries must work with determination to facilitate the access to knowledge both through the design of physical libraries and expedient planning of the knowledge and informational product offered. The libraries have an obligation to be accessible to and assist the informationally weak and socially marginalized citizens alike; to provide them with the ability to make use of their democratic rights and citizenship.

The libraries must present culture which imparts knowledge and experiences. Cultural dissemination improves the users' adaptability, communication skills, ability to participate in social life and it develops both personality and independence.

People have different ways of orientating themselves. Some prefer the audible; others are oriented towards images and films, while others yet are oriented towards texts. By making available a broad spectre of different genres and types of materials, the libraries contribute to the consolidation of cultural diversity and dissemination.

The effects of the libraries' non-fictional media are individual competence development, learning, formal and informal education, personal development and enlightenment.

The social cohesion is considered to be one of the greatest assets of Danish society, but globalization, network economy, changes in methods of production, rapid technological development and the lack of a common set of norms cause our society to in certain ways appear increasingly

non-homogeneous and fragmented compared to earlier days. This development in addition to the growing number of Aarhus citizens with a foreign ethnic and cultural background has brought on a pressure on the social cohesion and the traditional shared core values.

The libraries are a natural place for refugees and immigrants to get to know Danish language and culture and at the same time maintain their mother tongue and cultural background through various uses of media and services. Since the core values of the libraries embody free and equal access for everyone, they are seen as a natural retreat by many refugees and immigrants.

### COMMUNITY NEEDS

Lifelong learning is a key concept in a world which is undergoing changes at a staggering pace.

It is no longer possible to receive an education and do work based on the same knowledge throughout life. It is vital – and it will be even more so in the future – that each individual on a permanent basis renews his or her knowledge and strengthens his or her innovation skills.

Lifelong learning relates to both the professional and the personal development of the individual. From a social point of view there is need for a high level of education and strong innovation skills when competing with other countries.

A special competence area is the development of reading skills. To be able to read is a core skill for citizens of a knowledge society. It is estimated that up to 500,000 Danish adults (Danish population is appx. 5 mill.) suffer from reading and writing difficulties, which present daily challenges. Research indicates that the functional reading ability has been impaired in the course of recent years.

Furthermore the libraries can serve as focus in a technological process of development and in the mental process of development which results from this. The libraries must be a physical place of experience, where testing and playing with different types of media and forms of learning can take place in a way which supports the citizens' innovation skills and desire for change.

Libraries are, because of their unique position in local communities, ideally placed to provide opportunities for individuals to develop themselves. Self-help is assigned major importance and new forms of citizen involvement and ethnic diversity are a major contribution to new thinking and creativity also for libraries.

Needs are very important. If libraries are to be one of the centres of the community, we must provide offers that are relevant to the local community and which respect the wishes and demands of the citizens.

Therefore Community Centre Gellerup will work in depth with the following:

- Centre of knowledge
- Centre of education
- Centre for various information
- Centre for guidance
- Centre for sparring
- Centre for coordination of networks
- Centre for discovery
- Centre for culture
- Centre for involvement of citizens

### METHODS

Over the past few years no projects have been initiated at Gellerup Library without being based on citizens' inclusion and the use of the empowerment method.

Libraries have an important dual role to play in providing opportunities for empowerment and empowering communities to take up opportunities.

We are therefore working with empowerment on three levels:

1. INDIVIDUAL CITIZENS AND STAFF MEMBERS: having the right to make one's own decisions – to live life according to own wishes
2. GROUP: being able to interact in a group – to create and support social networks
3. (LOCAL) SOCIETY LEVEL: stating one's opinion and pleading other peoples' causes – to demand and expect influence and respect.

Another important aspect is that contact with staff as well as with citizens is based on appreciative talks and attitudes – AI (Appreciative Inquiry).

### APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY (AI)

- Acknowledge and enhance what is already working well.
- Focusing on solutions that already exist.
- Focusing on alternative realities, dreams and wishes.

This method is used not only by the library, but is an attitude shared by police, social services, primary and secondary schools and day-care institutions.

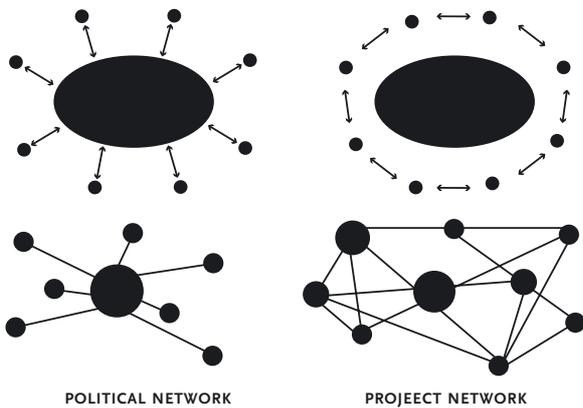
Community Centre Gellerup therefore builds on these methods, as do other projects in the local community as well as the cooperation partners.

**DIFFERENT TYPES OF NETWORKING**

No Library is an island. It is very important that the Library is a part of a lot of different partnerships. That is essential if libraries are to be relevant to the community. By working in partnerships we can identify particular needs from both citizens and other local authorities and agencies.

In that way we can ensure, that the service, we are offering is responding to the needs of the community.

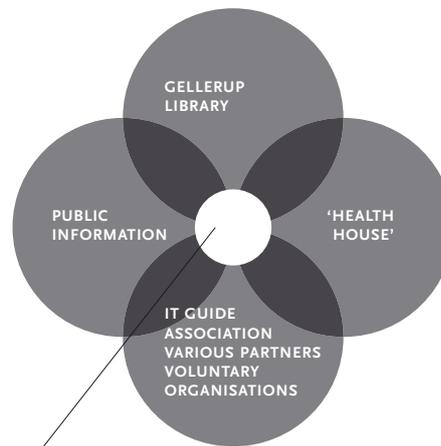
Working in partnerships means that the Library always will be able to offer a wider, more varied and better service than would be possible working on our own.



The intention is to develop models for cross-sectorial cooperation, plurality management through dialogue-based work and via cooperation under different managements to exploit the synergy effect in cross-sectorial cooperation. We also have to work on ways of involving volunteers in the daily running of the project and on the development of the public library with pro-active citizen involvement. Finally a strategy has to be prepared for anchorage of the different models.

**HYBRID INSTITUTIONAL CONFIGURATION**

COMMUNITY CENTER GELLERUP



Common denominator:

- Shared values
- Joint events and courses
- Shared staff development
- Shared strategies
- Better use of resources
- Better services
- Better coordination
- Involved citizenship

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**WHAT IS COMMUNITY CENTRE GELLERUP?**

The project Community Centre Gellerup started in the spring of 2005. The library in Gellerup is a local library under Aarhus Public Libraries.

Community Centre Gellerup is to develop and extend the public library's solution of information-related tasks and knowledge management in close cooperation with other institutions that share premises with Gellerup Library.

Community Centre Gellerup is a project cooperation between:

1. Folkeinformation (Public Information), Family Centre West, Social and Employment Department of Aarhus Municipality
2. Sundhedshus (a healthcare centre): The Department for Children and Youths, Aarhus County
3. Aarhus Public Libraries, the branch libraries represented by Gellerup Library and IT Guide Association
4. The State and University Library
5. Volunteer organisations

In the autumn of 2004 the project **'Folkeinformation'** (Public Information) was initiated at Gellerup Library. The aim of the Public Information project is to provide a service to all citizens of the municipality; however it is primarily directed at citizens of foreign descent residing in the urban areas of Hasle, Herredsvang and Gellerup. Anyone experiencing a need for general guidance and information on everyday problems may approach the public information service and receive qualified information without any registration and be referred to the proper 'expert advisors'.

With regard to this project, Family Centre West has applied for and received funds partly from the Ministry of Integration, partly from the EU Urban Programme (In 2002, Aarhus was chosen to be part of the Urban programme – a programme supported by the EU. This programme runs until mid-2007 and aims to increase the possibility of the citizens in Gellerup-Hasle-Herredsvang

economically and socially to help them realise their dreams and hopes for the future. Active participation of the citizens is therefore imperative. See more about the programme at: [http://www.aarhuskommune.dk/portal/borger/flygtninge\\_in\\_dvandre/urban?\\_page=urban\\_english.emne](http://www.aarhuskommune.dk/portal/borger/flygtninge_in_dvandre/urban?_page=urban_english.emne)

The Public Information project has until now received funding sufficient to cover a three and a half year working period; after that it is projected to keep running financed within the general operating budget of the family centres (City Centre and West).

At Gellerup Library, '**Sundhedshuset**', a Healthcare Centre, was established in the autumn of 2001. It was not intended that the Healthcare Centre should replace the already existing prophylactic and health promotion efforts, but serve as a supplement to the efforts taking place via the house calls of the visiting nurse, the Children and Adolescents-Medical-arrangement and the local dental clinic. The Healthcare Centre is also based on involving resourceful new Danish parents as disseminators and founders of networks in relation to the health work, and it is part of the municipal effort to break the negative social heritage.

Among the activities offered at the Healthcare Centre are 'Open House' at the visiting nurse, the midwife consultation and the prophylactic dental examinations at the dental hygienist, all of which offer health related individual guidance. Furthermore, it is possible to participate in various group activities, such as sessions on subjects like e.g. nutrition and exercise, prophylactic dental care, children's diseases and accidents, bringing up children and family planning. In addition to this, young mothers are offered antenatal classes and participation in gatherings with other mothers.

The Healthcare Centre has now become permanent according to the 2005 budget conciliation for Aarhus Municipality.

For Gellerup Library the placing of the Healthcare Centre in the library has been an asset. Partly because many women and their families have become familiarized with and been registered as users of the public library, partly because Gellerup Library, being an open, accessible service for everyone regardless of sex and age, has obtained a force of attraction in relation to partners such as the Public Information Service.

It is a great expectation at Gellerup Library that the establishing of a Public Information Service in the library will cause at least an effect on the daily running of the library similar to the one the Healthcare Centre has caused, but seen from a social point of view it is also very important to work on the development of partnership models for these kinds of cooperation. It is the intention to integrate the information tasks of the Public Information Service and the library in a manner that allows the staff of both institutions

to handle parts of each other's tasks. It is furthermore the intention to integrate the running to the greatest possible extent to obtain a synergy effect. Since the Healthcare Centre now is a permanent institution, the information tasks of the Centre will also be incorporated in the overall working model.

**THE IT GUIDE ASSOCIATION** – <http://www.it-guideforeningsn.dk/>. The appendix outlines the conclusions of the project IT Competence Upgrading. The IT Guide Association was set up under the IT Competence Upgrading project. Experiences from the project are carried over into a recently launched project 'IT for the People', a collaboration between the IT Guide Association and Gellerup/Hasle Libraries. IT Competence Upgrading was instrumental in Aarhus Public Libraries getting the Bill & Melinda Gate Foundation's highly estimated library prize "Access to Learning Award" of half a mill. US dollars in 2004. The prize was awarded in recognition of the project's focusing on making technology freely available to the citizens, for teaching citizens and staff to use technology as well as making a special effort in relation to resource-weak groups of society.

**VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS** – apart from the IT Guide Association, the Daisy Association (Tusindfyd) offers help with homework at Gellerup Library. The Daisy Association is a department under the Danish Refugee Council; it consists of a group of young students who four times a week offer help with homework free of charge to children, young people and adults. You don't have to book a session, you just turn up. The homework-help is for all citizens, whether they attend a language school, are preparing for the theoretical part of their driving test, attend primary or secondary school. It is also available to people who are starting upper secondary school or a commercial education. About 15-20 citizens attend per opening day. <http://tusindfyd.com/>

Community Centre Gellerup has two target groups:

1. Staff members of the involved institutions: Healthcare Centre, Public Information and Aarhus Public Libraries/Gellerup Library
2. Citizens in the local community (Gellerup).

We want to:

- Develop the public library and new roles for library staff
- Develop the public library service, particularly as regards information and learning on the basis of cooperation
  - Develop and exploit the staff’s competences, knowledge and resources in a joint action-oriented, targeted and dialogue and value-based development of cooperation across the institutions
  - Develop a new organisational form across administrations and institutions with tasks as local community centre for the citizens of Gellerup
  - Develop models and methods for cross-sectorial cooperation
    - Test diversity management in a cross-sectorial cooperation
    - Develop models for inclusion of citizens and volunteers in established organisations
    - Move focus from clients to citizens – to make a difference in public service to citizens
    - Work with exposure of the physical space and the services offered to citizens, while at the same time making the space flexible to the extent that it can change concurrently with any citizen initiatives taken.

**CHALLENGE FOR THE STAFF**

- Greater focus on users’ needs, less focus on the collection of materials
- Gather and produce digital information easily accessible for all
- Differentiated service
- Link between the physical library premises, the service and the competences of the staff

**FACTS**

The target group for Community Centre Gellerup is the citizens in the local area of Gellerup Library. There are about 19,000 inhabitants, 44,5% of which have a bicultural background. Approximately 70 different languages are spoken in the area. 40% of the children in the local education area for two of the schools of the area are children under 14. All pupils of the local school Nordgårdsskolen are bicultural.

Gellerup Library works closely together with Hasle Library. The two libraries together cover a local area of about 40,000 inhabitants.

Common for these local areas – called Vestbyen – is that the total income of the average family is low – about 14,517 Euro against 19,541 for Aarhus in general. About 50% of the citizens of the area are receiving cash payments or transfer income. Half of the total number of inhabitants lives in council housing.

Many of the citizens have only short or no education at all and lack the basic knowledge to enable them to be part of Danish society on an equal footing.

Besides that there are several other characteristics to identify the areas:

- A mix of non-profit making residential housing and detached houses
- The level of moving in/out of apartments is appx. 40 %
- 17% of new citizens are students, 6% of "old" citizens are students

During the last 3 years there has been some development:

- Unemployment among immigrants and refugees has dropped from 24.3% to 20.4%
- Employment among immigrants and refugees has risen from appx. 29% to appx. 31.2%
- A significant increase in number of immigrants and refugees involved in job-preparing initiatives – 3.8% to 9.4% (also for Aarhus Municipality)
- Number of immigrants and refugees in the area has over the same period risen from 48.3% to 53.3%
- The percentage of citizens participating in organised or unorganised spare-time activities has risen from 57% in 2003 to 80% in 2005 (variations according to ethnic background are insignificant).

Several of the projects launched on the basis of Gellerup Library have been targeted at or been based on women, particularly women with a bicultural background. As part of its strategy Gellerup Library has taken as its point of reference the African proverb: "When you educate a man, you educate a man. When you educate a woman, you educate an entire family/village".

Facts about Gellerup Library:

	2003	2004	2005
Opening hours	40 hours per week	40 hours per week	40 hours per week
Circulation	174,133	158,977	165,172
Visits	162,401	156,121	183,683
Loans per visit	1,07	1,01	0.7 (1.1 -2005)
Materials			38,764

**CONNECTION WITH THE MUNICIPALITY OF AARHUS**

The main vision for Aarhus Municipality is as follows: Aarhus – a nice city for everyone. Room for diversity and multiplicity. Integration must be one of our strengths.

Since the year of 1996 Aarhus have had a policy for new citizens. There are four headlines for working with ethnic minorities in the municipality of Aarhus:

- Citizenship and antidiscrimination
- Education
- Employment
- Pattern of settlement – ghetto or not

Furthermore, the Municipality of Aarhus has three values that all public employers have to work by. These are:

- Credibility
- Respect
- Commitment

Community Centre Gellerup has added another two values:

- Focus on resources
- Joint ownership

The staff of Community Centre Gellerup has developed a model for these five values.

By:

1. CREDIBILITY
2. RESPECT
3. COMMITMENT
4. FOCUS ON RESOURCES
5. JOINT OWNERSHIP

The staff perceives:

1. EVERYONE MUST BE ABLE TO COUNT ON WHAT WE ARE SAYING.
2. EVERYONE MUST BE SERVICED DIFFERENTLY IN ORDER TO RECEIVE THE SAME SERVICE.
3. WE ARE ACCOMMODATING AND HAVE AN APPRECIATIVE APPROACH TO THE CITIZENS AND TO EACH OTHER.
4. WE GIVE OUR BEST IN OUR WORK AND IN DEALING WITH EACH OTHER AND THE CITIZENS.
5. WE FOCUS ON RESOURCES RATHER THAN DEFICIENCIES.

The staff of Community Centre Gellerup has prepared action plans for how to act in order to meet the abovementioned values. The action plans fall under five headlines:

- Management
- Staff well-fare
- Inclusion of citizens
- Networking
- Interaction among the Staff.

#### STAFF QUALIFICATIONS

Community Centre Gellerup is working with different strategies for staff education: a structured course for members of staff to develop and use their competences, knowledge and resources in a goal-oriented dialogue and

value-based development, but also including the development of new roles, models and methods for cross-sectorial cooperation and testing diversity management in cross-sectorial cooperation.

At Community Centre Gellerup many members of staff have different training:

Healthcare Centre: Here we have midwives, dental hygienists and health visitors.

Public Information: Here are 8-10 people with widely differing backgrounds (anthropologist, theologian, nurse, ergonomist, interpreters, pedagogue etc.), 3 on full-time, the others in flex jobs.

Public library: librarians and assistants. Also an MA in political science, working as an integration consultant, three people on subsidized salary, a computer scientist and one without a formal education. A total of 6 FTEs (37 hours a week), apart from the one employee on subsidized salary/light job. Finally a project coordinator and IT instructors in the project "IT for the People".

Demand for staff qualifications

- Innovative
- Accommodating
- Outreaching and networking
- Pedagogical and communicative abilities
- Creative, focus on resources among others
- Project-oriented
- ICT
- Capable of differentiated service
- Social and intercultural knowledge
- Insight in/knowledge of the labour market and education
- Capable of navigating in complex contexts

By having some of these qualifications the staff is also given opportunities:

•• The staff feel they are levers for hopes and dreams

- Creating context for many people
- Being role-models and help break patterns
- A feeling of generating knowledge
- Action-oriented
- Creating framework
- More freedom and flexibility
- Greater challenges
- Show courage
- Capable of greater ambitions in their work

But still there are – and will always be – some obstacles for staff members, which can be very difficult to overcome:

- Lack of motivation
- Frustration
- The working environment – 'hallway chatter'

- Focus on deficiencies and problems
- Anxiety of all things new
- Social barriers
- Overcome citizens' perceptions about the library
- Changes take time
- Weariness of cross-sectorial cooperation
- Resisting sharing knowledge
- Opposition from others

### CONCLUSION

Libraries are well placed to act as lever in creating hopes and making dreams come true. But in order to do so, libraries must change continuously to remain relevant for children as well as for adults.

In developing the future of a community there are three processes of imagination to consider before taking action:

#### 1. UNDERSTAND

- Affirmative topics
- Positive questions
- Value-oriented
- Intergenerational

#### 2. IMAGINE

- Possible
- Visionary
- Hopes

#### 3. CREATE

- Practical
- Visibility
- Organisation

Being a part of community development is a process by which the library provides opportunities for empowerment by providing citizens proactive access to the information, knowledge and skills necessary to satisfy their needs.

Community Centre Gellerup is now a model developed on practical acting by focusing on community needs. At the same time Community Centre Gellerup is developing a lot of strategies for the development of the community of Gellerup. The innovative aspect is to develop forms of and models for cooperation in cross-sectorial work, diverse management and cooperation under different management forms, the use of volunteers on a daily basis as well as developing the public library with pro-active citizen inclusion.

#### LONE HEDELUND

LIBRARIAN SINCE 1977. WORKED AT SEVERAL PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN DENMARK: THISTED, GUDERUP, AND ALSO AS A CHIEF LIBRARIAN IN THE NORDIC HOUSES; REYKJAVÍK IN 1995. THE LAST 15 YEAR AT AARHUS PUBLIC LIBRARIES AS BRANCH LIBRARIAN FOR THE LIBRARIES GELLERUP AND HASLE. IN THE PERIOD 1982-1984 I WAS A MEMBER OF THE DANISH UNION OF LIBRARIANS. SINCE 1995 MEMBER OF THE DANISH LIBRARY ASSOCIATION.

# 02

## Guidelines for implementation of integration activities in libraries



The following guidelines for implementation of integration activities in libraries are based primarily on generalizations of good practices from foreign libraries that have been consciously involved in efforts to integrate minorities in libraries for some time now. While these guidelines contain certain rules, they are by no means to be taken as unshakeable truths or dogmas, but rather as good (and occasionally less good) practices, observations, pieces of advice, recommendations and sometimes even surprising revelations about the results (benefits as well as problems) that libraries should expect in this area.

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Some information may seem only remotely applicable to the reality of the Czech Republic at first sight, but let's not be mistaken and pay attention to everything: once we enter the field of integration activities, we are bound to learn that we do not know many things about the Czech reality.

All suggestions and recommendations will prove to be important and beneficial for your actual work. Nevertheless, take note: the key step in this kind of work is developing and presenting a vision and strategy and convincing and involving co-workers and managers of your library, or rather changing attitude to the role and services of libraries within your own organization. Very often, this project phase is underestimated and later resurfaces as the root cause of a project's failure or even loss of your library's social capital. Without home support, the chances of success are slim. It is therefore important to pay great attention to recommendations regarding this phase and to give them the significance they deserve in real life. Good communication within your organization, good "internal

PR," will have a positive impact and help you in the second crucial phase which entails communication and development of partnerships outside your organization. Developing partnerships and searching for internal and external allies and supporters will be beneficial for your library as well as for the target group even if the project at hand is not implemented fully in accordance with your original intentions.

We hope that the following guidelines will prove to be a good and practical tool for concrete activities, a tool to which you can return at any phase of your project. We also hope that you will find the included bibliographical tips useful and that the presented questions relevant for individual project phases will assist you in clarifying what else should be taken into account. Last but not least, we hope that it will be possible in the future to update the guidelines with new good practices, suggestions and notes on integration activities of Czech libraries.

## I. HOW TO START PROVIDING NEW SERVICES TO IMMIGRANTS AND MINORITIES

### STEP 1: GET TO KNOW THE NEIGHBORHOOD

#### •• Demographic and other data

It is important to find out what the *population* make-up is in your area: collect available statistics about the population's ethnic makeup, age structure and existing language groups; learn what groups of immigrants live in your area, how well they are educated, whether they work or not and what is their social status. You can get this information from various institutions and schools or you can try the Internet. Take into account that official information and statistics in particular usually do not fully describe reality and it is therefore important to evaluate them correctly, if possible together with an expert.

Even official publications acknowledge the discrepancy between official data and the actual number of foreign workers in the Czech Republic. It is also an officially recognized fact that only a fraction of Roma claim their nationality for official purposes.

#### •• Attitude of self-governing bodies

It is equally important to find out what the situation with the local self-governing body is and what the attitudes of political representatives are. Have they formulated their priorities with respect to immigration policy? Will they support us?

### •• Partnerships and cooperation

Your efforts will be much easier if you find local partners. Potential partners may include individuals (teachers and instructors, social workers, consultants, but also businessmen) as well as institutions (various associations and NGOs, immigrant clubs, schools, language schools, community and information centers, churches, the media or other libraries.)

Remember that cooperation can be mutually beneficial: your library has something to offer, too: space for events and learning, library trips, special deals for teachers, etc.

Look around and try finding someone who is bilingual to help you prepare notices and signs in the languages of local minorities. Is there an institution, school, church or non-profit organization organizing events that you could approach later? Is there a regional coordinator for minorities? Are there immigrant clubs? Are there maternity centers or other organizations or programs designed for groups of different ethnic origin? Often, individual members of minority groups who are proactive and perceive cooperation with your library as an encouragement can be very helpful.

## STEP 2: GET YOUR LIBRARY READY TO PROVIDE NEW SERVICES

### •• Vision and strategy

When you roughly know who the potential users are and what are their needs, it's time to think about the services that you can offer to them. It is important to know even before that, however, whether new integration activities are going to become an integral part of your services, i.e. a permanent part of the library's activities. Simply put, you need to know whether the library has formulated a vision that would support offering multicultural services.

If you want to take a strategic look at integration activities, you must be aware that this means additional responsibilities for the library and therefore recognize its new role and all consequences.

With respect to integration activities, it is thus important to clearly define your direction and objectives, but also to clearly communicate what is it that we do not wish and what has no place in your library (e.g. dogmatic proselytizing).

### •• Library management and staff

To fulfill a vision, you must know whether you have the support of the library management and staff. It is important for all employees to share the same vision of what needs to be done with respect to minorities and whether and how integration activities are to be integrated into the library's day-to-day operation. Make sure that everyone knows about your activities, invite instructors versed in intercultural education, organize a seminar or

show a film. Support of management and involvement of other librarians is one of the crucial factors of success.

### •• Library staff training

If your library is to be something more than a mere provider of learning tools and materials about the host country, all employees must be aware of that (including those who are not directly involved in your project.) The library's new role calls for a proactive librarian. Creativity and teaching and communication skills are increasingly important: librarians must be familiar not only with demographics and intercultural communication, but also possess personal traits such as empathy, openness, curiosity and desire to cope with the unexpected; they must be ready to function in an ever-changing environment and to face new challenges.

**SUGGESTION FROM ABROAD:** a representative of a minority or immigrant group on the staff can give your library an entirely new perspective and send a clear signal to the outside world that the library is truly open to all target groups.

### •• Library premises

If you decide to focus on integration activities, you should adapt the library premises accordingly.

There is no universal rule as to how to prepare your library for minority readers. It's natural for some librarians to organize works of fiction based on language and add relevant educational materials, films, music, newspapers and magazines. Others prefer treating minorities just like any other user group and do not create any special groups or areas. By being forthcoming and helpful during library orientation time, responsible staff members can help turning foreigners into regular readers. It is also possible to concentrate books and other items containing basic information in one place and file others based on normal rules.

It is practical to arrange computers in a cluster, thereby creating an environment conducive to learning where all those interested may either study alone or take part in courses organized for groups as required. Every library must decide individually based on information about the target group and environment.

**NOTE:** When selecting the most suitable library, it is also useful to think about its accessibility, or the accessibility of the branch chosen for multicultural activities. How difficult is it going to be for the target group to visit the selected branch? Is there a neighborhood with a higher concentration of members of the target group?

STEP 3: IDENTIFYING NEW OPPORTUNITIES AND ROLES YOUR LIBRARY (NEW SERVICES)

•• **Contact with potential users**

It is essential to establish the needs of the target group and think about how your library can meet them.

Contact with potential users is crucial for tailoring services to the target group's needs and promoting them to the largest audience possible. You may approach immigrant organizations but only after making sure that they are truly supported by the given immigrant community and that the person you are dealing with enjoys respect, has a degree of influence and is willing to work together with the library.

We have already talked about the importance of partnerships and contacts. If you want your efforts to succeed and bring about positive change in the local community, it's always a good idea to involve as many people as possible, thus increasing your chances of success. Partners can provide both human and professional assets.

One of the ways of involving experts from various organizations is by setting up working groups responsible for individual issues, projects or policies. Partners are perfect for organizing events and themed meetings, for translations or interpreting, but also for proposing, drafting and implementing projects.

•• **Communication**

Always pay extra attention to communication with users from different cultural backgrounds. Things that we consider polite are not always common or acceptable abroad. It helps to realize what the impetus for emigration was for immigrants and what their worldview is. Think about your values, customs and norms of behavior – are they universal? You should be ready to anticipate reaction to cultural differences and introduce foreign library users to our cultural milieu. Literature can help people prepare for intercultural differences. Always try to base dialogue with all users on mutual respect, openness, equality and recognition of the fact that diversity can be enriching.

MY A TI DRUZÍ: PŘÍRUČKA PRO MULTIKULTURNÍ VÝCHOVU A VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ NA ZÁKLADNÍ ŠKOLE. Prague: Multicultural Center Prague, 2003. 83 pages. ISBN 80-239-2099-5

ŽIVOTNÍ STYL A VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ DĚTÍ MIGRUJÍCÍCH CIZINCŮ: [(studijní text pro přípravu učitelů ZŠ a ZvŠ)]. 1., Romové / Dagmar Kubátová. 1st edition. Ústí nad Labem: Univerzita J. E. Purkyně, Pedagogická fakulta, 2004. 39 pages. ISBN 80-7044-584-X

POZNÁVÁME SVĚT DĚTÍ Z VIETNAMU: HLEDÁNÍ SPOLEČNÉ ŘEČI: STRUČNÁ PŘÍRUČKA PRO PEDAGOGICKÉ PRACOVNÍKY O PODMÍNKÁCH ŽIVOTA DĚTÍ „NEČESKÝCH“ NÁRODNOSTÍ PŘIJÍŽDĚJÍCÍCH DO ČR A JEJICH VLASTI / Jiří Kocourek. 1st edition. Plzeň: Foto & Tisk Znamenaj, 2002. 111 pages. ISBN 80-902017-9-2

TY + JÁ = KAMARÁDI: HRY, BÁSNIČKY, POHÁDKY A TEORIE PODPORUJÍCÍ MULTIKULTURNÍ VÝCHOVU / Jarmila H. Čermáková ... [et al.]. 1st edition. Praha: ISV, 2000. 152 pages. ISBN 80-85866-76-5

INNI TO TAKŽE MY: MNIEJSZOŚCI NARODOWE W POLSCE BIAŁORUSINI, CYGANIE, LITWINI, NIEMCY, UKRAIŃCY, ŻYDZI: PROGRAM EDUKACJI WIELOKULTUROWEJ W SZKOLE PODSTAWOWEJ / pod red. Barbary Weigl i Beaty Maliszkievicz. Gdańsk: Wydaw. Psychologiczne, 1998. 263 pages.

TOLERANCJA I WIELOKULTUROWOŚĆ – WYZWANIA XXI WIEKU / red. nauk. Agnieszka Borowiak i Piotr Szarota. Warszawa: „Academica”, 2004. 203 pages

•• **Materials and information for/about the target group**

Libraries play a key role in language learning because they provide various learning programs, audiovisual tools and electronic materials.

It's a good idea to add new language course books and dictionaries to your library's collection. Don't forget about picture books and simple technical books in Czech that foreigners can use for initial language orientation and learning.

TIÈNG SÉC CO SO CHO NGƯỜI VIỆT NAM = ČEŠTINA – ZÁKLADNÍ KURZ PRO VIETNAMCE / Nguyen Tung. Praha: Občanské sdružení Klub Bambus, [2003]. 72 pages. ISBN 80-239-6846-7

MALÝ VIETNAMSKO-ČESKÝ SLOVNÍK: 15.000 slov – Séc : khoảng 15.000 tut / připravil Michal (Miroslav) Semotam. 1st edition. Bratislava: Sloviat, 2000. 231 pages. ISBN 80-968193-5-6

CHOČETE HOVORYTY PO-ČES'KOMU? = CHCETE MLUVIT ČESKY?: (ČES'KA MOVA DLJA POČATKOVYCH KURSIV) / Elga Čechová, Helena Trabelsiová, Harry Putz. 1st edition. Liberec: Harry Putz, 1999. ISBN 80-902165-4-4

Gojdaš, J.: ČEŠTINA PRO UKRAJINCE-ČES'KA MOVA DLJA UKRAJINCIV. Brno: Cestovní kancelář SUBCARPATIA, 2005.

POL'S'KA MOVA ZA 4 TIŻNI: INTENSIVNIJ KURS POL'S'KOI MOVI Z KOMPAKT-DISKOM = JĘZYK POLSKI W 4 TYGODNIE Z PŁYTY CD / Marzena Kowalska; [tł. Bożena Antoniak]. Warszawa: „Rea”, cop. 2004. 448 pages.

POL'SKIJ ĀZYK: PRAKTIČESKIJ KURS / A. K. Kiklevič, A. A. Kožinova. – Izd. 2-e, stereot. – Minsk: BDU, 2001. 319 pages.

CHOTITE GOVORIT' PO-ČEŠSKI? = CHCETE MLUVIT ČESKY?: češskij jazyk dlja načínajuščich / Elga Čechová, Helena Trabelsiová, Harry Putz. 2nd edition. Liberec: Harry Putz, 1999. ISBN 80-902165-5-2

ČEŠTINA PRO ARABY / Charif Bahbouh. Praha: Dar Ibn Rushd, 1997. 477 pages. ISBN 80-901881-4-1

CHCEMY MÓWIĆ PO CZESKU: (JĘZYK CZESKI DLA POCZĄTKUJĄCYCH). 1. część = Chcete mluvit česky?. 1. díl / Helena Remediosová, Elga Čechová. 1st edition. Liberec: Harry Putz, 2005. 414 pages. ISBN 80-86727-03-3

Immigrants and members of minorities will be interested in books and materials about their country of origin as well as about the culture and lifestyle of their adopted homeland. Such books can help you learn a great deal about potential users. It is very useful to approach them directly and use questionnaires or interviews to find out whether they are interested in the publications. Different minorities may have different preferences.

HƯỚNG DẪN CHĂM SÓC Y TẾ CHO TRE EM Ở CH SẾC: CÊM NANG THÔNG BÁO CHO NGƯỜI NƯỚC NGOÀI CÓ CON SINH SỐNG Ở CH SẾC. / [các tác giả Karolína Dobiášová; biên tập Karolína Dobiášová, Olga Angelovská]. Kostelec nad Černými lesy: Vien chính sách và tài chính y tế, 2005. 47 pages. ISBN 80-86625-45-1

POZNÁVEJ ZEMI, V NÍŽ ŽIJEŠ = HÃY LÀM QUEN VỚI ĐẤT NƯỚC, NƠI EM ĐANG SỐNG / Věra Danielovská; [přeložila Truong Thi Phuong Mai]. 1st edition. Praha: Fortuna, 2003. 31 pages. ISBN 80-7168-858-4

VĂN DE NHÀ Ở TẠI CÔNG HÒA SẾC: THÔNG TIN DÀNH CHO NGƯỜI NGOẠI QUỐC. 37 pages. ISBN 80-238-9838-8

HƯỚNG DẪN HỆ THỐNG CHĂM SÓC Y TẾ CÔNG HÒA SẾC. Kostelec nad Černými lesy: Institut zdravotní politiky a ekonomiky, 2003. 40 pages. ISBN 80-86625-09-5

NHUNG VĂN DE BẢO VỆ QUYỀN LỢI NGƯỜI TIỂU DUNG TREN CÔNG HÒA SẾC: (DẠY CHI LA THÔNG TIN DÀNH CHO NGƯỜI NƯỚC NGOÀI): công đồng nhưng người nước ngoài: do an số 3/2003. [Praha]: Ministerstvo průmyslu a obchodu, 2003. 24 pages. ISBN 80-239-4680-3

TRUYỆN THUYẾT VÀ CỔ TÍCH SẾC / Duon Tat Tu - Duong Thi Chau Lan tuyen dich tu nguyen ban tieng Sec. Ha noi: Nha xuất bản the gioi, 2000. 238 pages. ISBN (Brož.). – České pohádky pro děti

PROŽIVANJA V ČES'KIJ REPUBLICI: INFORMACIJNA BROŠURA DLJA INOZEMCIV [kolektiv autorů]. – 1st edition – Praha: Poradna pro integraci, 2002. – 56 pages.; 21 cm, ISBN 80-238-9837-X (váz.)

Prepare a leaflet about the library in relevant languages containing information about how to obtain a library card, library rules, services available to immigrants and other ethnic minorities, etc. Also, make sure that all important signs, notices, forms and rules (Internet use, etc.) are available in all relevant languages.

#### •• Introducing the library

If a user who speaks a different language visits your library for the first time, he needs special attention, usually because he is not fluent in the language of his adopted homeland. Multilingual signs and “communication sheets”

with common information in the hands of librarians can help such users find their way around the library.

Apart from individual visits, you can organize regular trips to libraries located in multicultural locations for interested members of minorities and foreigners (see below) in order to show them around the library, introduce available services and provide all the information that they might require. Library excursions are usually organized in cooperation with other institutions such as schools or immigrant clubs that are able to inform the entire target group. Consider bringing in an interpreter. In the course of the presentation, make sure that the audience understands what you are saying and that the information you are providing is clear enough. Try making them feel at ease and communicate with them. Show them all departments and introduce individual staff members. Focus on books in their language, language learning materials, educational programs, newspapers and magazines.

#### •• New services/roles of library

If you decide to start – and continue – implementing integration activities, you must recognize that it will take more than just organizing a few events. The library can become a center of education, provide consulting services, help bring different cultures closer together, provide job market information, etc. It can even take the role of a community center.

The objective is to develop new services and regular programs, initially in the form of single projects and later a comprehensive range of community services. You can focus on:

- Support of active citizenship – providing general information about the society and culture,
- Development of language skills,
- Professional development, educational programs, development of skills and literacy,
- Active assistance with integration of foreigners (presentation of domestic culture, mentoring, filling out job applications and other forms of assistance),
- Providing space for dialogue, public debates, creating a new meeting place,
- Support of personal development with emphasis on one's origin.

#### •• Promotion

Promotion is a key factor for success of your activities. With ethnic minorities and foreigners, it's a good idea not to rely exclusively on printed advertisements in the local paper, but to pay more attention to the local radio and television stations, advertising in mass transit, notices in small stores owned by immigrants or selected public places (e.g. job centers) as well as further promotion with the help of teachers, instructors, social workers, employees of relevant municipal departments, schools, volunteers and other stakeholders. It pays to first map out the information tools

most frequently used by the selected target group – does it have a magazine? Does it use the Internet?

These success factors are crucial with respect to integration activities. As a general rule, paying attention to staff, users, potential partners and promotion of activities always pays off. However, if you want multicultural services to become a permanent part of your library's range of services, you have to pay special attention to the above mentioned factors, if possible within the library's strategy of development or strategic plan.

**•• Summary: Reviewing what we need to consider when preparing a project**

*Issues to consider when selecting a pilot library:*

- Assessment of demographic data: a target group analysis focusing on a specific neighborhood using municipal statistics
- Library profile: a survey of your project's compatibility with library profile
- Human resources: is the number of employees sufficient? Take into account motivation, special skills of employees such as language skills and multicultural background
- Assessment of suitability of premises: is there

enough room in the library for new services? What's the library's location in the neighborhood?

*Issues to consider when assessing the existing situation in the selected library:*

- What attractive services are already available in the library? What services are important and interesting for the target group?
- How are services used? Are success factors definable?
- What target groups are we trying to reach?
- How do we establish contact with them?

*Issues to consider when setting project objectives:*

- What target group is your project designed for? (Also: will it be necessary or beneficial to differentiate based on age, life situation or ethnic/language group?)
- What new services are attractive for the selected target group?
- How can the library establish contact with the target group?
- What partners can the library approach with a proposal for cooperation?
- What services are permanently sustainable?

Photo: Archives of the Multicultural Center Prague



## II. INSPIRATION FROM ABROAD (SUCCESSFUL INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES TARGETING FOREIGNERS IN DENMARK, GERMANY AND THE NETHERLANDS)

List of examples of good practice

### Denmark

- a) Odense: We Read Newspapers – Together
- b) Juelsminde: It Takes Two
- c) Vollsmose: Learning Center in the Vollsmose Library
- d) Gellerup: Community Center Gellerup

### Germany:

- e) Frankfurt am Main: International Library  
– Learn German and Teach German

### The Netherlands

- f) The Hague: Emancipation  
– A Matter of Encouragement and Learning
- g) Utrecht: Learning better Dutch in the Library
- h) Amsterdam: El Hizjra lecture series (2004-2005)
- i) Rotterdam: Integration Information Point

### 1. Objectives of activities

In most cases, libraries see the general objective of their activities as meeting the demand for **new multicultural services** that would take into account the diversity of local population and support the involvement of migrants and minorities in society. Libraries want to become meeting points and places of integration.

Objectives include:

- Providing access to information and library collections so that migrants are able to use the library's services,
- Providing such services to migrants as to facilitate their social integration,
- Strengthening links between libraries and immigrant/minority groups,
- Providing adequate facilities for language learning for adults and children with different first language,
- Promoting self-fulfillment, assertiveness and involvement of women from minority groups,
- Supporting local involvement of target groups and strengthening their ability to solve problems on the local level,
- Improving functional literacy of target groups,
- Strengthening cooperation across institutions and organizations.

### 2. Target groups

In all examined projects, a target group was selected with its make-up depending on the given project's nature.

- Three of the examined projects contain a rather general definition of the target group (i.e. all people over 14 years of age with minority/ethnic background living in the

location; all immigrants and newcomers who have not been entirely integrated; people living in the given neighborhood.)

- The remaining projects targeted a narrower group of people. Two projects targeted women from minority groups because their integration was perceived as most difficult. Another two projects attempted to create a space for adult migrants attending or planning to attend language courses to exercise and improve their skills. One project focused on a specific minority (Arab immigrants) while another focused on people interested in the given culture. The last project involved language learning and targeted preschool children from bilingual background.

For the most part, the examined projects focused on adults or adolescents from immigrant and minority groups as children as a group are easier to reach out to and integrate into the library environment through school activities and cooperation between school and library. In Utrecht (the Netherlands), for example, frequency of library visits by elementary school students of Moroccan and Turkish origin is comparable to students from the majority population. Regular library excursions take place to strengthen this trend. However, adults from minority groups often don't trust institutions, some of them are illiterate or come from small villages where people cannot read, let alone borrow books. Nevertheless, libraries aim at being a place for all, i.e. adults, parents and grandparents, and try to fulfill this goal by organizing integration activities in particular for adults.

**TIP FROM ABROAD: Choosing a target group is crucial for success. Knowing whom you want to come to your events is very important for your project's success as well as for the next steps in its implementation including promotion, involvement of partners, etc. Cooperation with representatives of the target group in the course of the project is also vital.**

The examined libraries involved their target groups in project preparation in varying degrees. There were basically three different approaches:

- a) Representatives of target groups took part in planning, preparation and implementation of the project (often also in evaluation) through interviews, one-off working meetings, participation in working groups, etc. Libraries therefore had not only adequate information about the target group's structure, needs and requirements, but also demographic data and other relevant materials.

- b) When representatives of target groups were not directly involved, libraries worked together with intermediaries (e.g. Office for Multicultural Affairs or immigrant organizations) who provided required information and background.

c) In two cases, the selected target group was not approached in the beginning of the project. However, both libraries realized later on in the project that they lack feedback from users and that if their activity is to be successful, it must match the needs of target groups.

**TIP FROM ABROAD:** The right tailoring and eventual success of each project depends on cooperation with the target group, as a minimum in the planning phase of the project. You will be most successful if you work together with representatives of the target group continuously, during preparation, implementation as well as evaluation of the project, as this guarantees that you will receive valuable feedback.

### 3. Implemented activities and their types

The basic activity that will help foreigners and members of minorities get acquainted with your library and prompt them to use its services is a library excursion, or, as we call it, "Introduction to the Library." We recommend organizing it in cooperation with stakeholders such as language schools offering courses for migrants or immigrant associations so that the impact is as wide-ranging as possible. Introduction of the library helps establish a positive and effective first contact between the library and users.

Public events are successful and popular and can range from public readings to themed evenings focusing not only on a specific minority, but also on the general public interested in the minority's culture, thereby facilitating mutual rapprochement.

One of the most frequent activities implemented as part of the monitored projects was development of language skills of all generations of immigrants or other minorities. There are many ways of doing this:

- Acquisition of books (and other materials) focusing on instruction of the majority language which is often tied to deliberate resignation as regards acquisition of works of fiction in original languages as their scope will always be very limited,

- Creation of self-learning workstations. It is often the case that immigrants cannot properly exercise at home the skills that they learned in language courses (small and cramped apartments, difficulty to concentrate). Because of their proximity, libraries are an ideal place for studying alone, doing homework, etc. Self-learning workstations are simply places where people can study and at the same time use a computer equipped with language programs in their mother tongue. People can also borrow books or course workbooks. Library users usually get an ID and a password and are thus able to pick up on their next visit where they left off the visit before and see their results as well as progress.

- Language instruction for preschool children from bilingual background will help them enter the educational

system without problems. Language teams comprising two kindergarten teachers, one language instructor and one librarian offer courses in the form of group language games aimed at promoting integration of children among their peers.

A larger project would be the creation of an information center or a learning center offering space for self-learning (see above) as well as for obtaining additional information and honing skills. Such centers are usually staffed by competent staff members who function as a contact person/computer expert and sometimes also by external collaborators or volunteers providing services upon request. The key here is being flexible and making an effort to accommodate individual needs. Staff members can help users prepare their CVs while or teach them how to send an email or use the Internet. All such projects feature a list of useful websites as well as multilingual information sheets with relevant information.

Specific projects are those targeting women from minority groups. Most libraries believe that it is social integration of this group that is the most difficult of all. One of the Danish libraries hosted 3-hour meetings of immigrant women three times a week where the women would read the daily newspaper to strengthen their language skills and also to better find their bearings in a new society and learn about world events. They gradually entered into dialogue, striving to overcome feelings of social exclusion.

The Hague library worked together with partners to choose 12 topics related to women's place in society (e.g. woman and family, woman and health, woman and childrearing, woman in various stages of life). Based on the selected topic, level of education of participants, their age and other factors, the library then chose a suitable activity (public reading, lecture, debate, course, working meeting or exhibition.)

Certain integration activities organized by libraries have the character of social work, giving rise to reflections about the role of libraries as community institutions. Pioneering in this respect is the project of a library as a community center working together with other local institutions and provides a wide range of services (e.g. job counseling, basic health services including visits to the dentist's, orientation in the welfare system, etc.).

Libraries should introduce new activities gradually as small projects with attainable goals. After evaluation and considering current demand, projects can be expanded in the following phase. In the long run, a certain level of institutionalization of services is required to guarantee long-term success and sustainability of the new services. The vast majority of integration services is provided free of charge.

**TIP FROM ABROAD:** Start with lesser, but visible services, e.g. multilingual signs. Reach out to local minority associations and ask them to bring interesting items into the library, e.g. artworks.

#### 4. Schedule

The described projects have short-term (less than 1 year), medium-term (2-3 years) or long-term (multi-year and follow-up projects) character depending on the nature of activities involved. Drafting a schedule of preparation, implementation and evaluation of activities also depends on their nature. While one-off activities that are not very demanding as regards preparation can often do without a detailed schedule, complex, long-term projects require a thorough breakup of individual steps. Following a pilot run, activities are often expanded to include other branches and a detailed schedule can only help if this is the case.

#### 5. Why organize integration activities in libraries?

Integration activities are usually implemented in places where coexistence of different cultures is everyday reality and proportion of immigrants and other minorities is high. There has been a growing pressure in Europe to make all newcomers speak the official language and master the basics of institutions, culture and values of their new society. It is often the case that in particular the older generation of immigrants and other minorities comes from small villages, is illiterate and has no tradition of using libraries. On the other hand, libraries are viewed as neutral places open to all regardless of age, gender, religion, education or social status. In this respect, libraries can start playing the role of an educational center but also the role of a place where different cultures meet and minorities are integrated while enjoying totally new services.

Libraries implement integration activities either based on a concrete impulse or their projects stem from local conditions and initiatives of libraries attempting to fulfill their role of “places for all.” Concrete impulses may include direct demand on the part of the target group or so-called multipliers such as teachers or volunteers. Proactive staff members build on their experience and previous projects. A challenge for the library could be to apply for a scholarship or a grant. Often, libraries proactively respond to developments in their neighborhood where a diverse structure of potential users calls for a diverse range of services (N.B. 30% of users of the Municipal Library in Frankfurt are foreigners, reflecting the make-up of this cosmopolitan city’s population.) In some cases, library activities are a part of a wider inter-institutional collaboration based on strategies adopted by the municipal government. Such strategies usually aim at dealing with issues such as social exclusion, unemployment, crime or pollution.

The objective is to integrate disadvantaged groups or revitalize the neighborhood whereas the library can play a certain role.

It is always beneficial for a library’s activities to have a wider political backing. If the local self-government is keen on integration activities or actively taking steps in this area, your library can always expect support.

#### EXAMPLES FROM ABROAD

##### Why organize multicultural events?

Odense has a group of 10,000 people who speak a total of 99 different languages.

One third of the inhabitants of Frankfurt are foreigners.

Amsterdam has 750,000 inhabitants of 174 different nationalities (51% of the population has nationality other than Dutch).

##### 6. About the libraries, staff and project organization

Only one of the examined libraries stated that it adopted a separate document on integration activities (*Library Strategy in the Area of Integration*). Other libraries based their activities on their declared mission of providing “valuable educational, cultural and information services to all citizens.” In a multicultural society, libraries offer multicultural services and strive to fulfill their mission of being a “place of meeting and integration – a place for all.”

Most libraries implemented new projects based on their past experience and have been very active in the area of integration services. Four libraries stated that they are implementing more than one project targeting immigrants and minorities at the same time.

Two libraries explicitly stated that the makeup of their staff reflects the multicultural makeup of the population. In the Odense branch where the Learning Center project is being implemented, 50% of staff members are of non-Danish origin.

Organization of a project depends on the project’s nature. With larger projects, project management usually involves an activity coordinator as well as other staff members, often across individual departments. As regards the International Library project in Frankfurt, staff involvement has been as follows:

- Administrative department takes care of financial issues,
- PR department takes care of project promotion,
- Individual branches and the central library send staff members to intercultural competencies training,
- Methodologists help build the book collection,
- Central media processing department makes sure among other things that new items get to readers as quickly as possible.

Libraries stress the importance of support across the entire organization even for small projects and one-off activities. It is important to inform all staff members about planned activities so that they become a natural part of the library. Support from the library management is equally important.

Five out of the nine examined libraries support personal development and training of staff members so that they can provide new services related to project implementation. Some staff members attended project management courses while others gained new intercultural competencies to be better prepared to work with minority users. Two libraries organized IT courses related to project objectives.

According to managers of the Gellerup Community Center, staff members should possess the following characteristics and skills:

- Innovative focus
- Adaptability
- Teaching and communication skills
- Creativity and ability to cooperate
- Ability to establish new partnerships, find contacts, etc.
- Project-oriented mindset
- Knowledge of IT
- Ability to provide different services and adapt to new requirements
- Social and intercultural skills
- Knowledge of the job market and educational system.

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**TIP FROM ABROAD:** Although independent strategic plans in the area of multicultural services are so far not common even abroad, preparing a strategy of integration activities will help you not only formulate your new range of services, but also define the library's shifting role and therefore simplify your future work.

### 7. Partners and their role

Teaming up with partners can have a great impact on the success of any project. When developing new services, it is very important to cooperate with institutions and organizations either offering services to migrants or bringing minorities and immigrants together. Such organizations can play the role of a vital intermediary when reaching out to the target group, provide feedback for individual activities and assist in shaping project objectives and activities as they are familiar with the target group's needs and background.

Taking into account the project's nature, libraries organizing educational activities often choose to collaborate with teachers' centers or schools (e.g. as regards book acquisitions or promotion of new activities among clients.)

Another important aspect is at least informal cooperation with the local self-government bodies, something all libraries realize but only a few actually carry through.

All libraries worked together with partners at some point during their projects or involved them in preparation or at least promotion of projects. Sometimes, however, the cooperation of all project partners is far from close and mutually enriching, which is something that libraries fortunately realize and plan to redress in the future.

**TIP FROM ABROAD:** Keep in mind that objectives of activities must be the same for your library as well as for your partners. Make sure that everybody understands that mutual cooperation is beneficial to all those involved.

### 8. Planning new services (part I)

#### •• PRELIMINARY SURVEY OF THE TARGET GROUP, ITS NEEDS AND POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Libraries use demographic data and other statistics. Often, they consult various studies and other background documents crucial for defining activities. The Municipal Library in Frankfurt carefully studied a research paper commissioned by the Office for Multicultural Affairs to find out how immigrants live and came to the conclusion that the most effective measure would be to create self-learning workstations as part of the project because immigrants found it very hard to study in their small apartments so typical for their community.

Before kicking off the project, libraries usually carry out a more or less systemic survey of the target group's needs (e.g. interviews with relevant institutions such as schools, employer organizations or immigrant clubs.) Based on such a survey, libraries then devise a plan of project activities and a budget.

In four cases, activities were planned during networking sessions, i.e. working meetings of stakeholders where experience and information is exchanged in order to proceed to formulate a specific project.

In two cases, no target group survey was carried out. However, one of the libraries was following up on a previous successful project and partnership.

### 9. Planning new services (part II)

#### •• PREPARING ACTIVITIES, USING METHODOLOGIES, BEST PRACTICES AND THEORIES

As mentioned above, roughly half of the examined libraries were following up on their or other libraries' or partners' previous experience. Libraries also make use of good practices from abroad (Frankfurt Municipal Library – study stay in the Queens Borough Public Library and its use as a model; Gellerup Community Centre – study stay in London and use of the Hampshire Discovery Centre as a model).

In most cases, objectives of activities were not set using the SMART method or any other standard procedure. Nevertheless, certain aspects of the discussed projects are

consistent with this method as the activities are clearly defined, accepted by the organization as a whole, subjected to evaluation and schedule, etc. The libraries did not want to limit the flexibility of individual activities by defining the project too narrowly using concrete methods.

*Note: Some libraries stated that they use models of open and experimental learning or various constructivist approaches – “people learn by interacting with others.” The Gellerup Community Center uses Appreciative Inquiry (AI), a method involving the search for and utilization of tested processes focusing on existing solutions and embracing alternative views and wishes. The center also uses the method of empowerment which on the individual level emphasizes the right of individuals to live their life as they see fit and in the library environment helps clients find information assisting them in doing what they wish. At the group level, the method supports cooperation and creation of various social units.*

**TIP FROM ABROAD:** The easiest way to go is to follow up on successful models and examples of good practice from elsewhere. If you do so, you are halfway there, but don't forget to pay attention to adjusting models to local conditions.

### 10. Project budget and financial resources

Libraries usually finance shorter and less expensive activities from their own funds. Events that always take place on the premises are organized by library staff.

For longer and more expensive activities (computer center, instructors, etc.), libraries usually draw on various grant schemes (foundations, self-government, government programs or other sources). Libraries try to make sustainable activities a part of their regular budget, but in any case, you must think ahead about the long-term sustainability of activities.

**TIP FROM ABROAD:** It is always useful with respect to the financial side of activities for the library to cease outside opportunities: for example, it is a good idea to invite an author to do a public reading when the author is already in the country on another business. Often, it is practical to organize an integration activity to commemorate a day or anniversary important to the local immigrant community as it will be much easier to find volunteers and attract local sponsors.

### 11. Promotion of activities

When introducing new library services, it is very important to advertise them to the target group and the general public. The harder it is for a library to reach the target group, the more important is promotion.

A time-tested method is cooperation with institutional stakeholders such as organizations providing services to immigrants or their associations as they are able to further disseminate required information. Cooperation with schools is usually also successful because through them, you can reach their students.

Large projects usually kick off with a press conference the objective of which is to alert not only the target group, but also representatives of various organizations and politicians. A press release is then distributed to all regional and sometimes also national media outlets including those close to minorities or migrants.

Most libraries decided to print out new (often multilingual) leaflets advertising new integration activities and displayed thematic posters. Four libraries published articles in the press about new services and included activities in local monthly cultural bulletins.

Information should be available on the library's website and possibly also other websites and distributed via email. Last but not least, immigrants or members of minorities also learn about new activities from other people and based on previous experience.

### 12. Success factors

The discussed libraries defined the following factors as crucial to success of new activities:

- Support of library management and staff and clearly defined roles and responsibilities of individuals,
- Support in official documents (library mission, municipal strategy, IFLA guidelines, etc.),
- Introducing services for migrants as part of strategic plan covering all departments of the library,
- Involved and proactive colleagues,
- Respecting the needs of target groups and getting them involved as early as the planning phase,
- Building on previous activities and experience,
- Following up on activities of other libraries and their experience,
- Clearly defined project objectives and activities based on demographic and other data,
- Secured financing,
- Realistic time schedule of activities,
- Activities are free of charge,
- Good cooperation with partners and other stakeholders based on mutual contact,
- Support of immigrant organizations and other minority clubs (emphasize that cooperation is mutually beneficial, don't infringe competencies of others),
- Don't underestimate the importance of promotion (multilingual materials, press releases, etc.),
- Try getting feedback from the target group, partners and other stakeholders,

•• Generally speaking, “bottom-up” projects are usually very successful, especially if they are supported from the top, i.e. library management.

**TIP FROM ABROAD:** Your activities are certain to succeed if they fill white spots on the map of available services. This could include for example events supplementing the limited scope of free time activities available to the target group.

### 13. Critical factors

Most libraries found it difficult to name factors that made project implementation complicated or were not aware of any such factors. Some of the common critical moments included:

•• **New library definition:** one challenge that appeared on more than one occasion was the new definition of a library as an open space and something more than just a provider of information. There were some problems within the library where some employees found it hard to identify with their new role as well as outside where users, partner institutions and self-government bodies took some time to recognize the library's new position.

•• **Insufficient information sharing:** individual project partners do not always know about each other, do not exchange information about their activities and communication falters as a result.

•• **Unexpected workload:** project implementation is much more demanding than anyone expected. In the future, better planning and preparation will be crucial.

•• **Poor coordination, insufficient authority:** success of complex projects depends on working coordination and broad skills of colleagues. Create interdisciplinary teams.

•• **Inadequate technical resources:** some libraries tend to underestimate the importance of technical facilities.

•• **Uncertain future: sometimes,** libraries face future uncertainty as for example Denmark proceeds with changes in its immigration policy. Restrictive attitudes mean great difficulties as regards planning of long-term activities and their sustainability. A situation might arise when there will be no target audience for certain activities.

### 14. Problems encountered during project implementation

Again, libraries had difficulties pinpointing problems encountered during project implementation. The following obstacles may be very similar to the above critical factors or

Photo: Archives of the Multicultural Center Prague



be rather general. However, we provide them for elucidation and inspiration:

- Partner organization was not flexible enough and cooperation did not work. Problems may appear especially due to inadequate internal communication.
- If a project involves time – and labor-intensive services (e.g. website), you should consider their sustainability and the possibility to use already existing ones.
- It is often very difficult to win the trust of female immigrants and get them involved in integration activities. They often cannot speak the official language.
- Some expectations you cannot meet, in particular as regards long-term programs. Set realistic goals and approach them with a degree of flexibility.
- The needs of a target group are sometimes contradictory (insufficient space vs. noise). Take the example of the Learning Center: some people go to the library to study alone in a quiet environment, while others come to meet people and talk. There is a problem if the library cannot accommodate both types of users.
- It is usually quite problematic to use audiovisual aids in a library. The best solution is to set aside a dedicated room for this purpose, although this can be quite space-consuming. Consider using headphones.
- Certain demands of minority groups go against the interests of the library. Libraries have no ethical code setting out basic rules applicable to both “newly arrived” and “old” clients. Project coordinators may find it hard at times to deal with certain situations.
- Some agreements are only verbal and libraries don't have efficient tools to enforce them.

**TIP FROM ABROAD:** Integration projects are a reaction to certain problems as well as an attempt to help solve them. It is therefore important to see obstacles as stimulating and indicative of future activities.

### 15. Evaluation of activities; qualitative and quantitative indicators

All libraries reflect on their activities in one way or another and realize the importance of evaluation and feedback for their future efforts.

#### QUANTITATIVE INDICATORS:

- *Number of implemented activities, programs, sessions, etc.,*

#### Note:

1. **Be aware that quantity does not always mean quality!**
2. **Activities can have different levels, schedules and importance. For example, recurring events are certainly more effective than one-off events. You can also track the total duration of activities (hours, days, etc.).**

- *Number of people using programs/services regularly and number of people attending one-off events,*

**Of course, these two figures will not be comparable.**

- Size of collection dealing with multicultural issues and loans,*
- Growth in number of visitors,*
- Growth in number of cooperating institutions (partners in multicultural activities),*
- Number of publications (related to migrants and minorities),*
- Development of employee skills (e.g. language training, training in the area of migrants and minorities, etc.),*
- Frequency of media coverage of relevant activities,*

**Certainly, it would be perfect if the number of positive media reports about migrants and minorities grew hand in hand with library activities.**

*Public awareness of multicultural services.*

#### QUALITATIVE INDICATORS

Libraries view qualitative evaluation as the most important but also the most difficult to define. In addition, such evaluation is very subjective. You can obtain feedback from individuals (questionnaires), monitor possible coverage in minority periodicals or on the Internet, etc. If the nature of the given event permits it, you can also interview participants or staff members.

Evaluation of activities may be divided as follows:

- Ex-post internal evaluation in cooperation with partners,*
- External evaluation (professional evaluator or expert in the given field),*
- Feedback from target group (sample interviews).*

**TIP FROM ABROAD:** Regularity of evaluation is important and so is the fact that results will be reflected in future activities and help setting up a more effective model.

### 16. What were the unexpected outcomes or side effects of activities?

The most common side effect of activities was commencement of cooperation with new partners in follow-up or even new separate projects. Even rudimentary integration activities will attract attention to your library and provide you with new contacts and opportunities.

It is not only language courses that have an impact on development of language skills of all minority groups. A desirable effect of all projects is the creation of an open public space. In one case, a project made it easier for a

library to obtain financing and today, it is being rebuilt and upgraded into a community center providing not only library services, but also adult training, consulting and volunteer services, various kinds of assistance, etc.

Integration services open up new opportunities to librarians as well. They are able to gain new insights and experience, develop interpersonal skills, find it easier to contact outside partners and last but not least learn about the conditions in which immigrants and other minorities live.

Snowballing of services is very common. In the case of the above-mentioned German project, it became apparent that activities can be further expanded. What was initially conceived as a service for language course participants can often be easily adapted to the needs of other target groups, for example students of literacy courses.

### 17. Final tips and tricks

While we have provided most of our tips above, we would like to highlight what advice foreign libraries have for us:

- First, make sure that you can actually implement the project and that it is realistic,
- Try attracting good partners and get those around you involved even though they don't belong to the traditional library crowd,
- Join forces with organizations involved in similar issues,
- Communicate with your target group and promote your activities,
- Make sure the target group feels positive about interacting with the library,
- Be flexible and adapt your project to new developments,
- Follow up on your activities,
- When selecting the right library, think not only about its proximity to the target group, but also about advantages of its location (main street, good accessibility via public transport) and opening hours (late evenings),
- Be aware that what your library does not offer may not be necessarily useless,
- Try to be regular in your activities,
- Get the entire library involved or at least inform all staff members about ongoing activities,
- Educate your staff, focusing not only on intercultural abilities but also on social and negotiating skills,
- Produce a plan of activities for the given community or neighborhood and make it strategic (not a mere list of activities, but an analysis – get the required data, set goals, etc.),
- A practical suggestion: when buying new books, try cutting the cost by limiting the number of dictionaries you buy and use the extra money for language courses, grammar books and workbooks,
- It has been confirmed time and again that if the part of library collection devoted to languages is to be used really extensively, it is necessary to take fully into account the needs of institutions that teach languages,

- Local and regional feedback will help you find out whether your library can improve its reputation through new services for migrants.

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03

## Best practices from abroad



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# Denmark

## Vollsmose

### Learning Centre

### in Vollsmose

### Library

**What is the name or title of the activity, project or set of activities?**

Læringscenter Vollsmose

(Learning Centre in Vollsmose, Vollsmose library, Branch of Odense County Library)

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**What was the goal or objective to be reached by this activity? Were the objectives formulated in SMART-terms?**

Læringscenter Vollsmose (LC) is a library project whose main purpose is to help the target group socialise and participate in local issues (empowerment) as well as achieve a level of information literacy that meets their needs and wishes. Læringscenter Vollsmose also functions as a community technology centre.

The objectives were not specifically formulated in SMART terms as we felt that a great amount of flexibility was demanded.

**Was this activity targeted to a specific group or number of specified groups? Which?**

The target group is persons above 14 years of age with ethnic background other than Danish, living in the Vollsmose suburb of the municipality of Odense, Denmark.

**Can you describe briefly the activities? If your project consisted of more than one activity please describe briefly each part. Please also specify the nature of the activity: training or course, meeting or series of meetings, fixed groups or open offer, etc.**

The Learning Centre is a project financed by the Urban Regeneration Secretariat for Vollsmose in cooperation

with the Odense County Library (OCL) and it consists of a 75 m<sup>2</sup> pc-equipped room situated in the Vollsmose Library, a branch of OCL. It can be defined as an electronic reading room where Information and Communication Technology and competent personnel are supplied in order to help users solve actual information and communication problems using networked computers. The LC's role is therefore to provide the inhabitants of the area with access to online information resources, support ICT Literacy and assist users in their contact with the local authorities. The main target group is adult refugees and immigrants (above 14 years of age), both as individuals or participants in integration projects. There is a librarian functioning as project manager and a 'bridge builder', assisted by an IT specialist and by external tutors or volunteers, depending on the nature of the activity. The provided services are, as in the case of all Danish public libraries, free of charge. The LC should not be confused with an educational institution though. In fact deinstitutionalization is one of the main concepts behind the Learning Centre. It is the users who decide what their needs are and whether it is about sending an e-mail, participating in a chat forum or being assisted in formulating a job application, the personnel is there to help. It is our belief that, in the Vollsmose Library context, information literacy is not achieved by trying to follow a 'curriculum', but by supporting the users in taking initiatives.

The LC has about 13,000 visits per year. About 2,000 people use the LC on an annual basis. We have a rather stable group of mainly young people who visit the LC frequently (about 300 persons). Women represent about 1/4 of the total. Being a non-formal learning project there is no measure of learning outcome. The staff is convinced though that the LC plays an important role in the local community and that the visitors are satisfied with the service provided. As one of the few organised spare time activities in the area we work with aspects that are unusual for traditional libraries such as being used as a 'meeting place' and as a 'community of practice'. The employees are often seen/being used as mentors, role models or coaches.

**What was the time frame for the preparation, the execution and the evaluation of the activities?**

The project began in November 2001 and is planned to last until December 2007. After this it is expected to be incorporated in the OCL infrastructure. The preparation period lasted from August to November 2001. Specific

activities that take place as part of or in connection with the project, e.g. 'Choose your Education' have their own time schedule, targets and budget.

***Can you describe the reason or incident that led to the planning of the activity?***

Twelve urban areas in Denmark are participating in an extensive urban regeneration (Kvarterløft) experiment. It is an experiment in citizen participation and integrated and coordinated urban regeneration in selected urban areas. Vollsmose is one of them.

In this Danish experiment, urban regeneration is an integrated and coordinated process. That means – firstly – that the area's problems must be tackled, irrespective of the sector in which they occur, and – secondly – that the action must be integrated, i.e. the different means used must support each other and the overall purpose of the project. For example, a project can have the combined aim of living up to environmental requirements, generating employment and strengthening the cultural life of the area. An integrated approach calls for coordination in the local authorities and – often – untraditional and flexible planning methods. The integrated approach can only succeed provided the way is paved for work across administrations and for cooperation between the public and the private sectors.

The urban regeneration projects in this experiment include action on several fronts, as follows:

- ACTION ON THE SOCIAL FRONT – e.g. action to help drug addicts, alcoholics and the mentally ill, together with crime prevention activities
- ACTION ON THE EMPLOYMENT FRONT – e.g. cooperation with local businesses
- ACTION ON THE ARCHITECTURAL AND HOUSING FRONT – improvement of housing and beautification of buildings, urban spaces and recreational areas
  - TRAFFIC ACTION – e.g. traffic-damping measures
  - ECOLOGICAL ACTION – e.g. incorporating ecological aspects in building and housing refurbishment
- ACTION ON THE CULTURAL FRONT – e.g. more leisure and cultural activities, new cultural institutions, community centres, etc.

One of the ideas behind the urban regeneration projects is that synergetic effects can be achieved by action on a broad front in a single urban area.

***What is relevant to know about the context in which the activity took place? (For example: demographical developments in your community, evidence from research, political influences, et cetera)***

The Vollsmose area in Odense comprises heavily industrialised rented dwellings from the late 1960s and early 1970s, a period of strong economic growth in Denmark. In this period favourable tax allowances encouraged most

employee households to choose to move into owner-occupied dwellings. The area comprises 3,000 rented dwellings, all large and well equipped, and there are a total of about 10,000 inhabitants in the area. More than 65% of them belong to nationalities other than Danish (a total of more than 70 different nationalities, mainly of Arabic, Somali, Turkish/Kurdish and Vietnamese origin).

When Vollsmose was constructed, it was the only place in the Municipality of Odense with rented dwellings available, and therefore many people with social problems were assigned flats in this area.

Through the 1980s, Vollsmose gradually changed character. From being a modern green urban area, the area became 'somewhere to live if you can't find anywhere better'. In the 1990s, the area became synonymous with violence, crime, drug abuse, and social misery.

At the end of the 1990s, the Municipality of Odense, in cooperation with the relevant housing companies, initiated the preparation of a holistic plan for the area. The plan was based on the fact that many of the problems of the areas with non-profit housing are particularly due to labour-market problems related to social and ethnic segregation. In practice immigrants and refugees are to some extent cut off from parts of the private housing market.

In summer 2000, the Municipality of Odense adopted a holistic plan for Vollsmose. This plan was based on a vision that over ten years Vollsmose will become a well-functioning residential, business and recreational area, and a fully integrated part of Odense and Danish society, respectively. The area was to be developed as a centre for cultural and commercial innovation, to become a primary example of the dynamism and opportunity held by a multicultural urban area, and a safe and secure environment was to be ensured for residents. Even though there have been significant improvements, these targets haven't been achieved yet. The holistic plan presupposed close cooperation between the municipality and the many players involved, particularly housing organisations, voluntary organisations, and the police. The plan recommended a strategy comprising three overall and equal elements:

1. In close cooperation with the housing organisations, the municipality will develop a social and more varied composition of residents and seek to augment the area with business and public-sector functions.

2. In co-operation with the residents, the municipality will start initiatives related to employment, education and training, physical frameworks, leisure, and culture.

3. The municipality will develop the municipal organisation with special focus on sustainable developments in the special problems at Vollsmose and enhance cohesion in municipal bodies and co-operation with other authorities.

**What is relevant to know about your library organisation in relation to the activity? (For example: Vision and mission, experiences, expertise, staff composition)**

The Odense County Library is among the forerunners in Denmark as far as serving ethnic minorities is concerned. At the Vollsmose branch of the library and at the Learning Centre 50 % of the staff has an ethnic background other than Danish.

**What factors or conditions were beneficial for getting this activity done? Which factors or conditions were hindering or blocking the process?**

In the first place the library as an open pluralistic institution is considered to be a legitimate place to be at and to use independently of cultural background. Placing the Learning Centre in the library context was therefore a way to give the project 'added value'.

The most obvious socioeconomic factors that make the project attractive are:

- a) The low economic status of the majority of the inhabitants in the area makes a free of charge service based on information and communication technology more attractive than for the average user.
- b) The limited number of organised spare time activities in the area.

The main challenge we have faced has been to redefine the role of the library as more than an information provider both inwards – within the organisation – but also outwards – towards partners and users.

**Which partners were involved in the activities, why and what was their role? (For example: institutions, community groups, immigrant organisations, stakeholders?)**

Employment projects, education consultancies, Danish Refugee Council volunteers and others have been involved depending on the nature of the activity. This is in order either to assist users achieve a concrete target, e.g. writing a job application or for more general purposes e.g. help with school projects and organising social activities.

**How was the set up of the organization in the library? What kind of skills and experiences were needed and addressed?**

'Hard' skills such as ICT competency and accuracy in information seeking and providing were essential. Building up the personal skills of the staff, though, has been the most important factor for achieving success: Commitment, ability to communicate with users with different cultural backgrounds, flexibility and understanding of the local community.

**Was the target group involved in the planning of the process? How?**

The target group itself was not involved in the planning of the project. Through a day to day interaction with the users though, we continue to identify needs and adapt our activities to these needs.

**Was there any kind of research before planning, like on the composition of the target group, the needs to be met, activities of other parties, possible partners, et cetera?**

Interviews were conducted with selected members of staff of a number of local institutions e.g. schools and employment agencies. A large amount of demographic information was accessible through the Urban Regeneration Secretariat.

**Was there any kind of methodological approach, experience elsewhere or theory on which the planning was based?**

Ettienne Wengers pedagogic theory on communities of practice has been the main theoretical instrument used. It is based on a social constructivist approach that in a simple way can be expressed as "people learn by interacting with other people".

**What was the budget for the activities? Please specify manpower in hours and out of pocket costs. How was the budget financed?**

The expenses for establishing the project (equipment, furniture, installations etc) were 282,000 DKK. The yearly expenses are 800,000 DKK. Most of this amount is spent on wages (about 100 man hours a week). The project is financed through the Urban Regeneration Plan.

**How was the activity advertised and communicated to the target group?**

It was relatively easy to attract the attention of library users as the LC is placed at a visible location within the library building and little by little word got around. Articles in local newspapers, posters and a web site were also used to promote the initiative. Most relevant institutions in the area were also contacted.

**What were the main problems to be dealt with and how was this done?**

In the context of a problem oriented project, such as the LC, problems are seen as indicators of what work needs to be done and as enriching experiences rather than as incidents which delay a process. What we have difficulties dealing with is satisfying contradictory needs: E.g. users that wish a quiet place to be at the time others want to talk. Our resources are not sufficient to establish simultaneous differentiated offers and therefore the priorities chosen do

not satisfy everyone. The danger with this is that individuals or groups that tend to be dominant can receive large amounts of attention at the cost of others less 'visible'.

***Has there been an official evaluation? What were the results in terms of qualitative goals and quantitative goals? What makes this activity a 'best practice'?***

The project is being evaluated annually by the Urban Regeneration Secretariat. In qualitative terms the evaluation is rather 'subjective' and is based on interviews with the employees. In quantitative terms indicators are: Number of visitors, media coverage and knowledge about the project. All show a satisfactory development over time.

***What were the unexpected outcomes, side effects of the activities?***

Probably not unexpected but not scheduled either: The attention the project has received has helped the library establish itself as the main open public institution in the area. This has resulted in increased funding and the library is scheduled to be rebuilt during 2006 so that it can accommodate other partners such as lifelong learning and adult education institutions, employment consultants, volunteers etc.

***What would you do differently next time? What advice do you have for others engaging in an activity like this?***

We would have tried to achieve a higher synergy effect by collecting within the library space institutions and professionals who traditionally do not belong in the library world e.g. pedagogues and consultants. It is a process that we hope we can accomplish during 2006. The philosophy behind such an initiative is a simple one: What a library does not offer, does not mean that it is not needed. Think not in terms of what you used to do but in terms of what needs to be done. Your users usually know what that is and you should help them express it.

Photo: Archives of the Multicultural Center Prague



# Denmark: We read the newspaper – together in Odense

Described in twenty questions:

**What is the name or title of the activity, project or set of activities?**

We read the newspaper – TOGETHER

**What was the goal or objective to be reached by this activity? Were the objectives formulated in SMART-terms?**

The goal was to give empowerment to the women. The objectives were not formulated in SMART-terms.

**Was this activity targeted at a specific group or number of specified groups? Which?**

The project was targeted at unemployed women from the ethnic minorities, all of them having only a few competencies in the Danish language. The women in the project led rather isolated lives and had no contact with Danish society; they didn't speak Danish with anyone on a daily basis.

**Can you briefly describe the activities?**

**If your project consisted of more than one activity please describe briefly each part. Please also specify the nature of the activity: training or course, meeting or series of meetings, fixed groups or open offer, etc.**

The project was conducted as a series of meetings, where we read the newspaper and discussed the subjects, which were relevant to the participants. The frame of the project was the Open Learning Centre idea. The women decided which articles to read and discuss.

Most of the items were about women's life in general, about health, children, family life, education, jobs in Denmark, racism and language skills.

The items were also about globalisation, religion and politics! The women were at the same time involved in another project called Al Drub, where they were prepared for getting a job. The women were immigrants and refugees from different countries, but with the same social background in Denmark. Their different life stories became the start of many discussions. The women got information competencies and learned how to discuss issues and get into a dialogue with each other. The project was run by two librarians and one assistant from the library staff.

The project took place in the main library of Odense and ran for 3 months, where we met 3 times a week for 3 hours. Another part of the activities were study tours to relevant places and persons e.g. the social and health school, the hospital and a café for language training.

**What was the time frame for the preparation, the execution and the evaluation of the activities?**

Altogether the preparation went on for 3 months and the execution and evaluation went on for half a year.

**Can you describe the reason or incident that led to the planning of the activity?**

Both librarians had been working with outreach activities for several years and got this idea about reading the newspaper together with immigrant women during a meeting for developing new projects for this target group. KEEP IT SIMPLE was the key phrase.

**What is relevant to know about the context in which the activity took place?**

(For example: demographical developments in your community, evidence from research, political influences, et cetera.) In the municipality of Odense there is an area with 99 languages represented within a population of 10,000 people.

**What is relevant to know about your library organisation in relation to the activity?**

(For example: Vision and mission, experiences, expertise, staff composition) Odense Public Library (OC) has a lot of activities targeting ethnic minorities. We are working with new methods in the library services towards ethnic minorities. Our themes are Open Learning Centre, lifelong learning, streetwalking, and language stimulation. OC has also employed one of four consultants in a countrywide project. OC works for diversity in the staff.

**What factors or conditions were beneficial for getting this activity done? Which factors or conditions were hindering or blocking the process?**

One of the factors was: It was rather simple – not expensive in terms of money – the project was bottom-up. We as 'staff' had the ownership from the start, and we were both very interested and engaged in what took place.

There were no obstacles in this special situation as such, but we find that this kind of project demands a lot of working hours, the surroundings have to match the activity – “a room of our own.”

**Which partners were involved in the activities, why and what was their role?**

(For example: institutions, community groups, immigrant organisations, stakeholders?) Our partner was the project Al Drub, where the women were already involved. The hosts in the study visit and the lecturers we used became our partners as well.

**How was the set up of the organization in the library? What kind of skills and experiences were needed and addressed?**

OC is working with both a traditional structure consisting of different departments and a project-oriented cross structure to ensure that experiences from projects are used in the library as a whole. The head of a project usually works very independently, while of course cooperating with both the head of department, to which the project is connected and the head of development, and in accordance with OC's general goals for serving ET.

It was necessary that our colleagues were tolerant and took an interest in this project. We and the participants used the ordinary staff canteen and became very visible and conspicuous.

**Was the target group involved in the planning of the process? How?**

Not from the start, but along the way we established a very fine constructive way of cooperating, sparring and developing ideas with the 'leader' of the Al Drub women. It became a kind of learning lab, where we all had an influence on the activities.

**Was there any kind of research before planning, like on the composition of the target group, the needs to be met, activities of other parties, possible partners, et cetera?**

This activity was a result of networking and the experience of earlier cooperations and projects. The project was built on the needs of this target group picked up through streetwalking among the target groups themselves and the staff from the municipality of Odense. Again:” keep it simple and do it now”.

**Was there any kind of methodological approach, experience elsewhere or theory on which the planning was based?**

As mentioned before, we based the activities (reading the newspaper and discussing the news) on the open learning lab theory or a kind of action learning. Action research and experimental learning were included as well.

From our streetwalking activities, we knew that this was the way to go about it.

**What was the budget for the activities? Please specify manpower in hours and out of pocket costs. How was the budget financed?**

The total budget was 125,000 DKK. Out of pocket costs were 105,000 DKK and we spent 355 manpower hours. From the Danish National Library Authority/Biblioteksstyrelsen we got 75,000 DKK and the rest – 50,000 DKK was financed by Odense Centralbibliotek.

**How was the activity advertised and communicated to the target group?**

We had a direct contact to this other project, because the target group was found in advance and was the result of an identified need.

**What were the main problems to be dealt with and how was this done?**

All the women were isolated from Danish society, spoke only a little Danish, did not speak Danish during the course of the day and had no motivation to become active citizens. The women did not feel welcome in Denmark and they all wanted to get a Danish friend! The main themes in the discussion of the news were how to support our children, health and “the good life”. In the dialogues, we all used our life experience!

**Has there been an official evaluation? What were the results in terms of qualitative goals and quantitative goals? What makes this activity a 'best practice'?**

Senior lecturer at the Royal School of Library and Information Science, Denmark, Hans Elbeshausen has evaluated the project (30 pages.) A summary is presented at the end of this questionnaire.

**What were the unexpected outcomes, side effects of the activities?**

The participants all claimed that their Danish language improved during the project. To the library staff the project was a kind of eye-opener in relation to this target group.

**What would you do differently next time? What advice do you have for others engaging in an activity like this?**

We would do almost the same next time! Our advice to others: Be sure that you are able to implement the project in one way or the other. In continuation of the project we have started an open library club for both immigrants and Danish women, and we meet once a week to Read the newspaper – TOGETHER.

# Netherlands: Learning better Dutch at the library Gemeentebibliotheek Utrecht

**What is the name or title of the activity, project or set of activities?**

Learning better Dutch at the library!

**What was the goal or objective to be reached by this activity? Were the objectives formulated in SMART-terms?**

- To offer a public place ( corners) to practice Dutch and to learn about Dutch society
- To make new citizens familiar with the phenomenon 'library'
- To increase social cohesion

**Was this activity targeted to a specific group or number of specified groups? Which?**

- People who attend naturalisation and/ or language courses in the training training centers
- All others from abroad who wants 'to learn better Dutch'
- Old and new citizens who participate in social programmes (like reading groups)

According to Dutch law immigrants now have to take themselves responsibility for learning the Dutch language and to integrate into society. Many people attend naturalisation courses or Dutch language courses. For example at the Community College, institutes for adult education and like.

The Gemeentebibliotheek Utrecht would like to help them learn even better Dutch and cooperates in this with the training centres. The actual course is given in the training centre. In the branch libraries near the homes of the students the library created the opportunity to practice the Dutch language and to learn about Dutch society.

**Can you describe briefly the activities? If your project consisted of more than one activity please describe briefly each part. Please also specify the nature of the activity: training or course, meeting or series of meetings, fixed groups or open offer, etc.**

- An open offer of language programmes on the computers in the library. The same language-courses that are mostly used by the training centers ( New Neighbours and Ice-breaker) available in the library near home;
- A special collection of other courses, books and cd-roms to learn Dutch as a second language is available in a cabinet nearby the computer programmes. The materials in this cabinet ( in 7 libraries in Utrecht ) for borrowing as well includes courses (also on cd-rom), dictionnaires and materials to practice reading. These are books on adult topics on different levels in reading;
- Also a virtual information shop for integration and citizenship has been installed on the library's computer network. This tool on the computers in the Central library and all the branch libraries offers information to the users about live, work, money, health, education, residence permit, traffic and transport ( in 4 languages).
- An introduction visit at the library for groups who attend the naturalisation courses; this library-visit of groups is systematically programmed in the lessons.
- Support of conversation/ reading programmes for women(Dutch and non – Dutch) in some branch libraries.

NB: The computer-based language programmes can be used free of charge.

To use the language programmes one must register at the information desk. The librarian will help to select the language in which one wishes to follow the course, for example Arabic, English or Turkish. A limited number of workbooks for use in the library is available from the information desk. Of course people can also use their own workbooks. The student is given an individual login code and password; the computer will recognize the student and keep track of progress and results. Each lessons starts with a short video-movie on a topic that is informative and valuable for newcomers. There are many facilities in the program both visual (for example to learn correct spelling) and auditive (for correct pronunciation). There are different levels of difficulty and all kind of aids like optional subtitling and dictionaries in different languages.

***What was the timeframe for the preparation, the execution and the evaluation of the activities?***

After a pilot in one branch library and after decision to realize this in more branches it took about a year to complete the whole service in 7 libraries, including collection books for Dutch as Second Language, a brochure and an opening ceremony by the responsible alderman.

***Can you describe the reason or incident that led to the planning of the activity?***

The Dutch attitude towards immigrants has changed in the last couple of years. At this time the government's policy is a strict rule that everybody in the Netherlands should be able to speak Dutch and have at least a basic knowledge of the Dutch society and culture. This applies both to new and old immigrants. Immigrants in Utrecht all have to follow a course and have to pass an exam in Dutch language to prove these skills.

Besides the official course in the school there is a need to practice the language. As libraries are in all immigrant neighbourhoods close to the homes they are a perfect place to do some homework on the computer and to borrow materials to practice reading.

Apart from that, the library offers more opportunities: The library is the ideal place to find community information, to read newspapers (present in all kind of languages), and to learn about the culture of the nation as well.

***What is relevant to know about the context in which the activity took place? (For example: demographical developments in your community, evidence from research, political influences, etc.)***

To teach people how to use the library, introduction in multimedia and information – and communication technology is a task of the library to all people. If not, the library would fall short for these new citizens. This is more and more important with growing numbers of new – and old immigrants, in 2006 already 32% of the population of Utrecht.

In the last 25 years the population of the city has changed drastically and the use of the library has become less common. Especially the vast group of Moroccan and Turkish immigrants has less tradition in using services of the library. And the first generation immigrants from these groups came from small villages and were often illiterate. The problem was how the library could have a function for people who giggle at the idea of ever reading a book. To be a library for all citizens means also to be a library for adults, parents and grand-parents.

Nowadays more than 50% of the children in primary schools are of Moroccan or Turkish origin. Their use of the library is of the same level as that of kids of Dutch origin.

Through cooperation with (almost all) primary schools the library has contact with all the kids and each

kid at least visits the library several times during his school career.

To give immigrant children a better start at primary school now Pre-schools are institutionalised and the library offers services to promote reading to these Pre-schools. Parents, most of them mothers, are encouraged to come along when the Pre-scholers visit the library. And once these parents are in the library they are informed about the special services the library has to offer.

Another attempt to draw the attention is by local television. In cooperation with the Community College a series of television programmes is broadcasted during day-time (immigrants who have not yet a formal status are not allowed to work), including programs on why and how to read books with your kids and how to use the library.

***What is relevant to know about your library-organization in relation to the activity? (For example: vision and mission, experiences, expertise, staff composition)***

The mission of the Gemeentebibliotheek Utrecht (GBU) is to be a source of inspiration with free access to information, knowledge and culture for all citizens of Utrecht.

The library can be an information-broker, function as a learning centre, as a cultural stage and as a guide for the citizen in society.

In Utrecht a survey showed that still a lot of people (for example some 48% of Moroccan residents) state that they can not find the information they need to participate in society. The goal of the library is that this information can be found in the library. Therefore the challenge is how to reduce or eliminate the backlog of information and in language – and communication skills of those who need it.

***What factors or conditions were beneficial for getting this activity done? Which factors or conditions were hindering or blocking the process?***

During the last four years a national project called 'Digital Playgrounds' was conducted in the Dutch greater towns to create access to computers and teach skills to citizens in less favoured areas. In Utrecht in seven libraries in Utrecht computer labs have been installed and used to accustom readers to use the computer. With the installation of the language-courses on these computers the project has got a new follow-up.

***Which partners were involved in the activities, why and what was their role? (For example: institutions, community groups, immigrant organizations, stakeholders?)***

The library collaborates with institutes in the field of education. In this case the schools and training centres where immigrants, old and new, are following a naturalisation course or a course in Dutch language.

They are sent to these courses ( e.g. the Community College) by 'Bureau Inburgering' (naturalisation office). The library has informed all staff of this office about the activities of the library. So they will inform newcomers also about the possibilities in the library and distribute brochures of the library to them. The naturalisation office organizes companion trajects with groups of immigrants who attend the language course. In cooperation with Bureau Inburgering (naturalisation office) the Gemeentebibliotheek even puts some trainee posts in the public service of the library at disposal to language students.

The Community Colleges and schools will pay attention to the offer of the library in their courses as well and arrangements have been made to have every course-group to visit the library at least once.

***How was the set up of the organization in the library? What kind of skills and experiences were needed and addressed?***

The language programmes have been installed in the library computer network by the GBU's ICT- and automation department. In each branch library a staff member of that branch has been appointed as account manager and administrator for the use of the programmes in that front-office. A group colleagues from these branch libraries evaluates on a regular basis the use, and discusses the developments both in legal aspects as well as in society and the influence on the role the library can play in learning the language and in an orientation the Dutch culture and society.

Also the publishers of the language programmes contact the library and give instructions on new items in the programme and the use of new releases.

And of course there is communication between the teachers in the Community College and other training centres and the relevant employees of the library.

***Was the target-group involved in the planning of the process? How?***

Intermediaires were involved on behalf of the target groups: social workers, teachers etc.

***Was there any kind of research before planning, like on the composition of the target-group, the needs to be met, activities of other parties, possible partners, et cetera?***

The facilities are placed in libraries in residential areas in wich larger groups of the target audience are living, in as are called 'large city policy' – areas.

***Was there any kind of methodological approach, experience elsewhere or theory on which the planning was based?***

The library itself does not teach any language lessons but provides the facilities for self-directed learning.

***What was the budget for the activities? Please specify manpower in hours and out of pocket costs. How was the budget financed?***

The licenses for the programs Nieuwe Buren en Ijsbreker (network versions) and the Virtual Inburgeringsloket are financed (for three years) out of a project budget the library has acquired.

Also the Dutch 2nd Language materials are financed out of that budget.

For the rest, the policy of the Utrecht library is to spend a certain amount of the budget for media. At least 1% of the media budget should be spend at materials on behalf of learning the Dutch language and culture. Another 2% of this budget should be spent on specific materials in the language and/or cultural background of the immigrants and their countries.

The Gemeentebibliotheek normally charges adult patrons for items they borrow. To encourage new citizens to use the library the materials from this cabinet can be borrowed, also free of charge. But if they exceed the lending period, the standard system of fines applies.

***How was the activity advertised and communicated with the target group?***

A brochure in four languages has been distributed to a lot of locations in the city such as education centres, community centre and mosques and of course the Bureau Inburgering (naturalisation).

***What were the main problems to be dealt with and how was this done?***

Much depends on the project leader, who has to be eager, persistent and result oriented, and on the coordination of the project. There are a lot of different things to realize and therefore a lot of staff members with specialized tasks are involved in the project. For example: for ICT the automation staff, staff that is concerned with the content, staff that has to work with the users of the programme in the front- office, collectionners for the materials in the special cabinet, administration and rules that come with the project money, etc. A good coordination to connect everything is a must to be able to present this service as a whole.

In this project a risk was the complexity and skills required. For example some programmes require heavy data transport on the library's data-network. For instance when there are moving images, music etc in the programme. These are aspects that only can be dealt with in interdisciplinary teams.

***Has there been an official evaluation? What were the results in terms qualitative goals and quantitative goals? What makes this activity a "best practise"?***

The program now runs for more than a year. The average use of the language programmes in the 7 libraries is about 10 people in each library who make use on a regular basis. Other visit it more incidental. Altogether there are about 1,200 items in the 7 cabinets and there have been about 1,650 loans on those materials (end 2005). This is considered a good start but not good enough to stop.

The activity of an open offer of language programmes and further collections, is for Utrecht a best practice not only because of the use of it as such but it also generates other activities:

- To increase the influx there are new contacts with other training centres like the Volksuniversiteit;
- A great succes is the "Taalmarkt" ( languagemarket): every three months in another branchlibrary there is a 'market', a day on which the training centers present their language courses, a try-out languagelesson can be followed, naturalisation-tests can be made, there is something to eat... It is an informal meeting of trainees and trainers.
- More cultural activities especially for the greater groups of immigrants are organized in all the libraries to accompany the educational offer. At least 10% of all the cultural activities and 10% of the budget for activities should be spend on this;
- For instance, authors from Turkey and Morocco

are invited to come over and give a lecture (this we organize together with libraries in three other cities);

- A special cultural program on Moroccan or Turkish culture has been programmed in the library on Sundays;
- Reading groups and conversation groups/classes are already organised in some branch libraries and will be continued on a more widespread and regular basis.

***What were unexpected outcomes, side-effects of the activities?***

With the "corners" there is a real facility to show to groups, to teachers of education centers. There is actually something to make use of in the courses, to pay a visit to, and when people come to see it they also see other opportunities the library has to offer: newspapers in all languages, internet and e-mail access, coffee-corner. The library is generally to be seen as a safe place to be, especially for women.

***What would you do different next time? What advice do you have for others engaging in an activity like this?***

Not much. In the end it turned out for the library to work the best in a chain: naturalisation office delivers trainees to the training centers, in between the library. This is the best way: work together with other organisations!

Photo: Archives of the Research Library in Liberec



# Germany: International Library – Learn German and teach German Municipal Library in Frankfurt

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**What is the name or title of the activity, project or set of activities?**

International Library – Learn German and Teach German.

**What was the objective to be reached by this activity? Was the objective formulated in SMART terms?**

- Introducing new services in the library.
- New multimedia activities and services in the library should reflect the diversity of Frankfurt's population.
- Providing equal, low-threshold access to information and library collection in particular to adult migrants learning German or taking part in literacy courses.
- Developing and establishing modern, customer-oriented services.
- Increasing the share of active library users in the catchment area. Better utilization of services means higher share of users in the total population and more effective library.
- Increasing information literacy of the target group and bridging the digital divide.

**Was this activity targeted to a specific group or a number of groups? What were the groups?**

The target group included adult migrants from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds who recently moved to Frankfurt and thought about learning German. The target group was later expanded to include participants of German language courses and literacy courses.

**Can you briefly describe the activities? If your project consisted of more than one activity, please describe briefly each part. Please also specify the nature of the activity: training or course, meeting or series of meetings, fixed groups or open offer, etc.**

Building blocks of the International Library at the start of the project in 2002:

- Book acquisitions for the target group: we deliberately chose to forgo acquisition of items in original languages and instead focused on acquisition of items related to learning and teaching of German which are in great demand by all language groups and institutions.
- Establishment of self-study area: following the example of the Queens Borough Public Library's Adult Learning Center, we have created an area with four CD players where people can study alone.
- Library excursions for migrants who were able to learn about the library through modern teaching methods (interactivity, visualization, etc.). Introduction of the library represents a major innovative part of the project and serves to create a positive and effective first impression.
- Internet portal entitled "Turkish in Frankfurt" intended to provide a virtual counterpart to new services.
- The area of public relations is crucial and included an opening ceremony with a press conference, new design of the International Library and leaflets, active cooperation with the media and introduction of new services in various institutions dealing with the target group.
- Staff dimension: the educational course Dialogue of Cultures enhanced the social and intercultural skills of librarians.

**What was the timeframe for preparation, execution and evaluation of the activities?**

Following is a summarized step-by-step outline of the International Library project implemented as part of an international library endowment (2001-2002):

- Selecting the right library, disseminating information and getting staff members involved,
- Identifying the target group(s) and matching measures,
- Establishing the purpose and objectives of individual programs to be executed,
- Proposing individual measures and programs,
- Coordinating with overall (political) objectives, getting managers involved,
- Selecting potential partners, contacting institutions providing services to the same target group, exchanging

information, setting out joint measures and executing possible program modifications,

- Implementing first measures, evaluating and executing possible program modifications,
- Assessing the degree to which the program may be implemented also in other libraries, beginning of a new project cycle.

#### ACTUAL SCHEDULE

**July – September 2001:** Study stay (Birgit Lotz) in the Queens Borough Public Library as part of an international library endowment courtesy of the Bertelsmann Stiftung a BI-International.

Objective: Determine success factors and potential of the new model and innovative multicultural library services in Frankfurt.

**December 2001:** Preliminary planning

- Coordinating with overall (political) and municipal objectives;
- Ensuring the involvement of key decision-makers;
- Identifying the purpose, objectives and content of the project
- Coordinating with the mission of the Municipal Library in Frankfurt;
- Selecting a library for the project, informing and involving staff members.

**January – February 2002:** Detailed planning, first steps of planned implementation

- Identifying the target group;
- Project planning;
- Identifying partners, contacting institutions providing services to the same target group(s), exchanging information and setting out joint measures.

**March – April 2002:** Preparing library interior upgrades (spatial arrangement, etc.)

- Acquisition and cataloguing of new books and materials.

**23 April 2002:** Opening ceremony.

**April – September 2002:** Implementation of first programs (e.g. excursions for migrants to introduce the library)

- Evaluation, planning and adaptation of programs;
- Possible enlargement of target group considered.

**October 2002:** End of international library endowment

- Final evaluation of the International Library as a project;
- Extensive final report.

**From October 2002:** International Library is established as an integral part of library services provided by the Gallus library.

**2003:** Enlargement of the special collection from 300 to 400 media items.

- 20 library excursions aimed at introducing the library to migrants from orientation courses;
- Excursions expanded to include participants of German language courses speaking different languages;
- Program expanded to include a new target group: adult migrants learning to read and write.

**September 2003:** Program transplanted to other branches (library center Höchst) following evaluation and survey of local situation.

**January 2004:** Library exchange Genoa – Bolzano – Frankfurt – Gallus.

**June 2004:** USable: Körber Stiftung honors our expansion of the Library Services for Immigrants program to include migrants taking part in literacy courses.

**January – May 2005:** Addition of multimedia components (planning and implementation);

- Study area with computers and special literacy software;
- Collection expanded.

**June 2005:** Computer learning center opens featuring six computers with literacy software, German teaching programs and a multimedia collection containing around 200 items designed for literacy training, from picture dictionaries and games to teaching and learning materials.

***Can you describe the reason or incident that led to planning of the activity?***

INITIAL SITUATION:

Migrants have been the library's target group for some time. The central library in particular has been systemically enlarging a special collection designed for this group and including books in original languages, publications in German about life in Germany as well as other items since the 1970s. Migrants can also enroll in courses of German as a second language.

The Municipal Library in Frankfurt has been cooperating with the Adult Education Center (Volkshochschule) and a number of foreign cultural centers. The library regularly organizes various events in foreign languages as well as in German, usually in the central adult library.

## SPECIFIC INCENTIVE:

International library endowment from the Bertelsmann Stiftung; study stay in Queens, New York and implementation in Frankfurt. The assignment as part of the 18-month international library endowment, which took Birgit Lotz, the head of the Decentralized Libraries Department of the Municipal Library in Frankfurt, to Queens in the summer of 2001, was to identify success factors and potential for implementation within the International Library project. The library endowment aimed at providing assistance to four managers from German libraries in two phases. The managers spent four weeks in leading libraries learning about best practices to be implemented in Germany. Project results were made available to library professionals in order to facilitate lasting know-how transfer.

**What is relevant to know about the context in which the activity took place? (e.g. demographic developments in your community, evidence from research, political influences, etc.)**

Frankfurt is an international city where foreigners make up around one-third of the population. This figure corresponds to the share of foreign clients of the Municipal Library in Frankfurt. This not only testifies to the acceptance of the library on the part of this target group, but also gives rise to a certain obligation.

All major cities in Germany have a high share of foreign population but Frankfurt enjoys a special position among them because it has the Office for Multicultural Affairs (AmkA), a unique municipal institution which has been providing services to foreigners for years. The Municipal Library has a long history of cooperation with the office. The city is also the home of other institutions, e.g. cultural institutes or immigrant associations, which cooperate with the Municipal Library.

## ISSUES CONSIDERED WHEN SELECTING THE PILOT LIBRARY:

- Assessment of demographic data: a target group analysis focusing on a specific neighborhood using municipal statistics
- Library profile: a survey of project's compatibility with library profile
- Human resources: is the number of employees sufficient? Take into account motivation, special skills of employees such as language skills and multicultural background
- Assessment of suitability of premises: is there enough room in the library for new services? What's the library's location in the neighborhood?

## ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN ASSESSING THE EXISTING SITUATION ON THE SELECTED LIBRARY:

- What attractive services are already available in the library? What services are important and interesting for the target group?

- How are services used? Are success factors definable?
- What target groups are we trying to reach?
- How do we establish contact with them?

## ISSUES TO CONSIDER WHEN IDENTIFYING PROJECT OBJECTIVES:

- What target group is your project designed for? (Also: will it be necessary or beneficial to differentiate based on age, life situation or ethnicity/language?)
  - What new services are attractive for the selected target group?
  - How can the library establish contact with the target group?
  - What partners can the library approach with a proposal for cooperation?
  - What services are permanently sustainable?

**What is relevant to know about your library-organization in relation to the activity? (e.g.: vision and mission, experiences, expertise, staff composition)**

The mission of the Municipal Library in Frankfurt states, among other things, that as part of Frankfurt's library facilities, it provides important educational, cultural and information services to all inhabitants.

Quote: "... Thanks to our modern and widely available collection, counseling and events, we significantly contribute to personal, curricular and professional education.

Our mission is to provide professional services of a public library to the people of the greater Frankfurt area. We provide flexible, modern and effective library services, thereby assisting others to obtain information and communicate.

Our library is a place of meeting and integration. We also strive to win new clients..."

Since the 1970s, the Municipal Library in Frankfurt has been actively pursuing multicultural librarianship. See also above.

**What factors or conditions were beneficial for getting this activity done? Which factors or conditions were hindering or blocking the process?**

## IMPLEMENTATION TIPS/SUCCESS FACTORS IN FRANKFURT:

- The intention to develop and provide multicultural library services should be supported at all levels. It is helpful if a project has backing in existing documents and guidelines (e.g. IFLA).

- It is important when introducing library services for migrants for the services to become an integral part of strategic planning and to extend across departments. Moreover, it is necessary to precisely define selected programs and to secure funding.

- Statistics play a crucial role. It makes sense to use existing municipal statistics and surveys, especially in the planning phase. To obtain relevant data, one must work together with specialized departments of the municipality.

- Personal dimension: make sure to win interested and involved staff members for the idea of developing multicultural services. Provide them with training and further education.

- Move step by step: new multicultural services should be introduced gradually as small projects with attainable goals. After evaluation and based on demand, projects can be expanded in the second phase. Institutionalization of services is required for sustained success.

- Even in the beginning, support of other libraries having long experience with providing multicultural services or intending to provide such services is essential.

- Cooperative dimension: solicit support of institutions working with migrants. Place emphasis on creating win-win situations by identifying shared goals. Beware of interfering in each other's competencies. Offer services in return, e.g. library premises for events, logo placement in publications, presentation of posters, etc.

- Public relations dimension: if possible, make available multilingual information brochures. Send press releases to the media and think of ethnic minorities.

- Tip: start with lesser, but visible services, e.g. multilingual signs. In the course of your project, contact local migrant organizations and ask them to bring interesting items into the library such as artworks, etc.

#### **What partners were involved in the activities, why and what was their role? (e.g.: institutions, community groups, immigrant organizations and other stakeholders)**

INSTITUTIONS AND ORGANIZATIONS PROVIDING SERVICES TO MIGRANTS AND SELF-HELP ORGANIZATIONS OF MIGRANTS ARE IMPORTANT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEW SERVICES AND FOR LIBRARIES IN GENERAL. THE MUNICIPAL LIBRARY'S COLLABORATION WITH VARIOUS PARTNERS SIGNIFICANTLY CONTRIBUTED TO THE PROJECT'S SUCCESS.

- Thanks to cooperation with institutions such as those providing language training to migrants and partnership with a project implemented by the Office for Multicultural Affairs aimed at providing language and orientation courses, it was possible to integrate library and pedagogical skills. We used this synergy to build our collection and to develop a strategy for introductory excursions to the

library for migrants.

- Cooperation with the Office for Multicultural Affairs helped us take advantage of existing intercultural know-how for example when creating a portal on our website or when translating brochures used during library excursions by foreigners.

- Other institutions and migrant organizations served as crucial intermediaries when reaching out to the target group. The library's public relations efforts focused on these organizations (e.g. presentation of new services at management meetings of the organizations or invitation for members of the foreign media and media catering to migrants to a press conference organized to launch the International Library project).

- When dealing with partners, always emphasize your objectives and mutual benefits of cooperation. Your library can offer the following services to partners:

- Space for events and educational activities.

In our case, one of the rooms was provided to organizers of orientation courses designed for Turkish migrants (2002-2003) and literacy courses (since 2003),

- Educational courses created together with pedagogic institutions and aimed at developing the information competencies of migrants,

- Privileges for teachers of German as a foreign language. In Frankfurt, all teachers from schools and other educational institutions can obtain a special ID with no annual fees giving them the right to borrow literature required for teaching and to order various media through the library.

#### **How was the project organized in the library? What skills and experiences were needed?**

In 2002, when the International Library project started, we based our activities on a close cooperation between individual departments of the Municipal Library.

ALL DEPARTMENTS TOOK PART IN PREPARING THE PROJECTS AND PERFORMED SPECIFIC TASKS:

- Administration Department: financial matters,
- Public Relations Department: project PR,;
- Lecturing Department: collection building support,
- Central Media Processing: acquisition, cataloguing (just-in-time media processing),
- Central adult library: external training of librarians in intercultural competencies, coaching and briefing of multipliers (joint training of multipliers from the central library and the Gallus branch),
- Decentralized libraries: external training of librarians in intercultural competencies.

#### **Was the target group involved in planning of the process? How?**

The target group was not involved. When planning the project, we used experience of the Office for Multicultural Affairs.

**Was there any kind of research before planning, such as regarding the make-up of the target group, needs to be met, activities of other parties, possible partners, etc.?**

Apart from the aforementioned municipal statistics, we have utilized a study by Gaba Straßburger entitled “Evaluation of the Integration Process in Frankfurt am Main.” The study was commissioned by the Office for Multicultural Affairs in order to examine the status of integration in Frankfurt using a sample of three boroughs including Gallus, where our library is located.

The study helped us in many ways, for example when designing the computer self-study area: we learned that people in Gallus live predominantly in small apartments: 80% of apartments in the area are under 50 square meters and the average floor area is just 54 square meters, the lowest of all 47 boroughs in Frankfurt where the average is 68 square meters. This information made us realize that migrants usually live in one-bedroom apartments shared by a number of people. By offering self-study work places (later equipped with computers), the library presented a compensation: people can work in a relatively quiet atmosphere using language learning tools as well as services of friendly librarians.

**Was there any kind of methodological approach, external experience or theory on which the planning was based?**

Implementation of the International Library project was based on best practices from the Queens Borough Public Library where Birgit Lotz gained experience as a visiting librarian. As regards know-how transfer, it is necessary to realize that even though the chances of successful utilization of best practices from Queens in Frankfurt were very good, it was crucial to carefully consider possible problems and obstacles. There are major differences as regards social structure, traditions and laws as well as the status of librarianship as such. The project therefore could not have been started without a detailed analysis of possible obstacles.

When implementing the New Americans Program and the International Research Library project, the Queens Public Library examined the following resources and the Frankfurt library later used them as well:

**DEMOGRAPHIC SURVEYS**

Using demographic surveys in the beginning of the project, it is possible to define the target group in the sense of customer orientation (or community orientation). Demographic data also make it easier to tailor programs to

the needs of a specific group. Detailed knowledge of the target group including its make-up and segmentation is required to develop and implement any project. To ensure any project's sustainability, regularly review changes in the relevant data. The New Americans Program attests to the importance of this as careful and regular examination and evaluation of statistics enabled the Queens library to add an extra full-time position.

**ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT**

This type of support is yet another fundamental success factor. It includes support of library management as well as contact with staff members responsible for new services and their support and cooperation. All measures must be in line with the overall (political) objectives of the library as provision of additional funding for a project depends on the library's success in fulfilling its overall objectives through a planned expansion of services targeting specific groups of users.

**COOPERATION WITH LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS (HELP AND LET HELP)**

Having a great idea and implementing it is not enough – success very much depends on cooperation with partners who have similar goals and can assist in implementation. Because libraries serve as meetings places, cooperation with other organizations, for example those providing services to the same target group, is only natural.

The idea to help and let help in this respect means that one must not only expect support, but also offer help. Within its New American Program, the Queens library uses contacts to various institutions to approach them when looking for instructors for the Coping Skills workshop and in return offers the library premises for events hosted by partners. The Queens Directory of Immigrant Serving Agencies is a tool for developing mutual cooperation: on the one hand, the library includes partner organizations in the directory to raise public awareness of them while on the other hand, the directory functions as an extensive list of potential partners to be approached when planning projects. Last but not least, the editors of the directory strive to find new publishers for it who could become active partners of the library.

**PROJECT LEVEL FOR FIRST STEPS**

This phase is characterized by steps such as design, testing and regular evaluation. Also important are necessary program modifications. Pressure to be successful is generally lower in this phase while possibilities of program modifications are greater. When making first steps, you can gain valuable experience. If a program proves to be successful and potential errors and obstacles are identified, the field of activity may be expanded and the project at hand may become a long-term and institutionalized service.

**What was the budget for the activities? Please specify manpower in hours and out-of-pocket costs. How was the budget financed?**

Initial budget in 2002:

€ 5,000 from Bertelsmann Stiftung

€ 1,600 from the Municipal Library's budget was used to expand collection

Since 2003:

No special funding; the operation of the International Library and its development has been financed from the Municipal Library's budget.

2004 (exception):

Bundesland government provided € 8,800 to create a study area with computers for adult literacy learning.

**How was the activity advertised and communicated to the target group?**

Public relations activities play an important role when introducing new library services. This is even truer when the target group is difficult to reach. For this reason, public relations activities were a part of project planning from the start.

23 April, the International Book Day, was chosen as the opening day for the International Library. In order to reach as many people and institutions as possible, the library organized a press conference after which the project was officially launched. The key objective was to alert the target group, representatives of cooperating organizations and political representatives to a new range of services provided in the Gallus branch.

**PUBLIC RELATIONS:**

- Recipients of our mailings included regional and national media outlets based in Frankfurt (press, radio and television). We devoted special attention to foreign media with offices in Frankfurt as well as media with special programs for minorities, e.g. Chronos (Croatia).

- We have distributed a press packet at the initial press conference and also mailed it upon request to those reporters who could not attend. One day after the opening ceremony, we distributed a comprehensive press release.

- We asked a designer to produce a postcard promoting the International Library project and introducing our new services and to design the project logo. A flyer in simple language was designed for people learning German as well as teachers of German. We also produced mouse pads with similar design and distributed them to participants as gifts.

It was necessary to produce new flyers when we decided to expand our services and our target group by providing a computerized self-study area in the library.

We organized another press conference and opening ceremony with refreshments and accompanying

program in June 2005 to launch the computerized self-study area.

**What were the main problems to be resolved and how was this done?**

Problems arose in particular in connection to our small Internet portal "Turkish in Frankfurt" to be hosted on our website. We used our contacts in cooperating organizations to find suitable links. We then proceeded to contact institutions and individuals in Frankfurt to inform them about our project and its goals and also asked them to furnish links to websites covering issues related to the theme of "Turkish in Frankfurt." When doing our research, it quickly became apparent that there is only a handful of websites suitable for inclusion in the portal and we therefore had to broaden the list.

Website tips had to be reviewed as to their suitability for publication on the library's portal. The library produced annotations for the websites to be presented on its website and had them translated into Turkish.

Apart from technical issues, there are also problems with administration or future development of the portal. Because there is no one on the library staff with the required language skills, it was necessary to use external assistance for updating and developing the portal. For this reason, we have decided to cease expanding it.

**TIP:** Prior to introducing a new, labor-intensive service such as a web portal, calculate the costs and ensure long-term sustainability of the planned project. In some cases, it makes more sense to take over an existing portal featuring links to favorite websites instead of creating one from scratch.

**Has there been an official evaluation? What were the results in terms of qualitative and quantitative goals? What makes this activity a best practice?**

Further education of staff members, utilization of collections and library excursions for migrants had been regularly evaluated during the project phase (April to September 2002).

**FURTHER EDUCATION OF STAFF MEMBERS:**

The objective of further education was to develop social and intercultural skills of librarians. For budgetary reasons, we accepted an offer of the municipality which organizes free workshops for its employees.

During evaluation, it became clear that while adapting the workshop tailored for employees of the municipality with all the inherent specifics was feasible, it would be necessary to concentrate on adjusting the workshop to reflect the special position of libraries as one of the few public institutions that migrants do not need to seek themselves.

Training can be the first but very important step to understand any issue. In our case, the focus was on developing personal competencies (self-reflection, self-evaluation, prediction of one's behavior). Participants saw this in a positive way, but wished that the course would also help them develop tangible competencies (knowledge of cultural specifics).

Our conclusion: It would be ideal to organize a series of seminars about different topics including the above as well as other competencies, including social competencies (ability to deal with people from different backgrounds) and negotiating skills.

#### INTRODUCTION TO THE LIBRARY

The evaluation sheet did not contain any personal data so that participants would not feel controlled. It was very simple, with no complicated phrases, and smileys were used for rating purposes. The objective was to find out whether participants felt that they understand key points of the excursion and are interested in using the library.

Participants filled out the evaluation sheet immediately after the excursion, with questions being read and explained to them in some cases. The activity was supervised by an

intern or a course leader, not the librarian who led the excursion.

The reaction of 35 people who took part in an excursion to the Gallus library in summer of 2002 was very positive: 31 said that they liked the introduction to the library and just 4 said it was average. 30 participants attended as part of an orientation course (i.e. with interpreting from German) and said that they understood everything well, while the understanding of 5 participants was only average. 34 participants said they would like to visit the library again.

#### COLLECTION

In the course of the project, we have recorded the number of loans on a monthly basis by counting items on the shelf and comparing the result with the total number of take-home items in our German-as-a-foreign-language collection. The percentage of loaned-out items was between 30% in the beginning and almost 50% later.

With the recommended percentage of specialized literature loans being 30-35%, it is clear that our collection was well used from the very beginning of the project and that further acquisitions were essential – however, because of insufficient funding, this was not possible. We were also

Photo: Archives of the Masaryk Public Library in Vsetín

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able to track differences in loans of individual items such as grammar books, language course, workbooks, etc.

#### EVALUATION RESULTS

Our acquisitions and distribution of funding proved to be more or less on target. Based on what we know today, we would have bought fewer dictionaries (reduction of funding for dictionaries from 20% to 10%). The money would have been better used for language courses, grammar books and workbooks.

We have confirmed that the key prerequisite for intensive utilization of the specialized collection is precise alignment with the needs of institutions teaching German. When in doubt, such orientation can be more important than the original languages spoken by migrants living in the library's catchment area.

- Alerting the target group to your collection has an impact on the total number of loans. In the case of the Gallus library, we have approached beginners in courses organized by the Office for Multicultural Affairs and presented them our collection. This was reflected in the structure of loans as media designed for beginners were more popular than media designed for advanced students.

- Last but not least, it is necessary to learn about the make-up of migrant population living in the library's catchment area prior to adding new items to your collection: did local residents come from a single language area or more? Are they newcomers who speak little or no German (as is the case of Gallus) or long-term residents with better command of German?

#### FINAL CONCLUSION

All evaluations confirmed that the International Library is a success and on the road to becoming something more than just a project. In the first year, i.e. 2002, the number of visitors to the Gallus library grew by 35% compared to the year before. This clearly demonstrates the degree of acceptance on the part of the target group. The number of visitors remains high and continues to increase a little.

Moreover, local as well as supra-regional feedback shows that the Municipal Library in Frankfurt can profile itself through new services for migrants.

#### What were the unexpected outcomes or side effects of the activity?

The original target group was limited to adult migrants learning German. No expansion of the target group was planned due to capacity constraints.

In the course of the project, an unexpected need arose on the part of our partner educational institution (Volkshochschule) in the area of literacy education of migrants. Moreover, we learned something interesting: our introductory library excursions, originally designed for

migrants, can be easily modified to fit the needs of those learning to read and write.

This led to expanding the project to include literacy education in cooperation with Volkshochschule. The expansion led to the project being awarded the Körber-Preis and receiving additional funding from Bundesland budget.

One interesting side effect: our multipliers of choice were teachers of orientation and language courses for migrants. However, because such individuals also work as instructors in other institutions, they kept returning to the library with students from other courses, in the process becoming intermediaries in our contact with additional educational institutions. For example, a teacher of orientation and language courses organized by the Office for Multicultural Affairs started working for the Berlitz language school. Now, she visits the library with her group (migrants who speak little German being trained to secure employment) and also brings other teachers and students from Berlitz.

#### What would you do different next time? What advice do you have for others engaging in an activity like this?

When selecting the right library for implementation of the project, we emphasized the criteria of proximity to the target group and multicultural make-up of the catchment area. For this reason, we accepted that the library is open only 18 hours a week and its public transportation accessibility is not ideal (away from the main street). In the beginning, this had a negative impact on utilization of the self-study area.)

We recommend that when selecting the right library in new projects, additional criteria be added to proximity of the target group, if possible:

- Good location (main street; in the case of a centralized service, the given library should be easily accessible by public transportation),
- Long opening hours, particularly in the evenings.

# 04

## Implementing integration activities in Czech libraries

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## They live among us – but do we know each other? Jiří Mahen Library

### ABOUT THE JIŘÍ MAHEN LIBRARY

The Jiří Mahen Library is the second largest municipal library in the Czech Republic. It provides a wide range of services to residents of Brno and the entire region of Southern Moravia with the aim of ensuring equal access to information and cultural values for all citizens.

Around 40,000 readers register every year and make more than 700,000 visits. We have a central library and 35 branches located across the city. We are open to the general public as a social and cultural center providing information, education and relaxation.

### ASSESSING THE SITUATION

#### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

(Data as of 1 March 2001; source: 2001 Census of the Czech Republic)

According to demographic data and the 2001 census, Brno has approximately 375,000 inhabitants with members of national or ethnic minorities accounting for about 5 percent of the total. The following table provides more detailed information:

Total	10 ,154
Slovaks	5 795
Vietnamese	721
Ukrainians	710
Hungarians	427
Germans	425
Poles	402
Roma	374
Other	1,300

It is clear from the table that Slovaks make up the largest group of foreigners in Brno. They have been considered a minority only since the breakup of Czechoslovakia in

1993 and because shared history, cultural traditions and similarity of language have no major problems with integration into the mainstream society. Vietnamese citizens represent the second largest foreign community in the city. Most Czechs associate this group with retailing of inexpensive products. Members of this minority strive to integrate into the society while preserving their own identity. For this reason, we have devoted this year in our library to them.

### ATTITUDE OF SELF-GOVERNING BODIES

The attitude of Brno and the Southern Moravian Region towards cultural and integration activities of organizations and associations working in the city has been helpful. Relevant organizations are seen as important and receive subsidies to finance their activities.

### PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

The library has been involved in multicultural activities for a long time and found a number of partners: the Multicultural Center Prague, the Council for National Minorities of the Southern Moravian Region, the Social Care Department of the Municipality of Brno, the Slovak Institute in Prague, the Bibiana international house of arts for children and teenagers in Bratislava, the Municipal Library in Piešťany, the Union of Hungarians in Brno, Polonius, the Bulgarian Cultural Association, the Association for Bulgaria, the Greek Community in Brno, the Society of Friends of the Southern Slavs, the German Cultural Association and the Museum of Roma Culture.

### STRATEGY AND VISION

The library carefully follows issues related to the integration of Europe. In 2003, for example, the library organized a Week of National Minorities which included music and drama performances, dance, film screenings and an exhibition about racism as well as presentations introducing the cultural and social traditions of minorities living in Brno.

This year, the library took part in a project entitled “They live among us, but do we know each other?” aimed at creating a multicultural center that would help fulfill the role ascribed to public libraries, i.e. to be an open meeting place for all groups of people. As part of the project, one major event will be organized each year for a selected national minority. In 2006, the library decided to concentrate on the Vietnamese minority, producing a series of cultural and educational activities under the following title:

### JOURNEYING THROUGH THE LAND OF RICE AND MOUNTAINS, OR HOLIDAY IN MID-AUTUMN

The library deliberately focused its first awareness-raising effort on Vietnamese school children and their schoolmates. Most Vietnamese children living in the Czech Republic have been born here. They are members of the second (sometimes third) generation that has never visited Vietnam. Their knowledge of Czech makes it much easier to work and communicate with them.

As part of the project, we have organized an interactive morning for children full of games, music, reading, competitions, story-telling, sampling of traditional food and traditional clothing. Miss Leanh Nhuyen shared her memories of Vietnam. The library then approached parents and other people. The library also hosted an exhibition of photographs by Miroslav Mrkos taken during his trip to Vietnam and Cambodia.

High-quality selection and acquisition of literature about Vietnam, Vietnamese literature, books in original and books supporting and developing tolerance between peoples and nationalities was a prerequisite for the project's success. Other activities (debates, book promotions) followed later. We have created a high-quality offering for potential users who can now use and borrow the newly acquired items during their regular visits to the library.

We advertise our public events not only in the library but also in schools, public institutions, etc. In order to sustain the new way of promotion, the library wants to attract volunteers working on a regular basis, new partners and potential sponsors. Our flyers and website ([www.kjm.cz](http://www.kjm.cz)) contain information about the library in Vietnamese.

The project appealed to traditional library users as well as new, potential young and adult users. It has therefore helped both groups to get to know the other better. In particular migrants and minorities learned from the project about new possibilities offered by modern libraries that can help them to be successful, integrate into the mainstream society and get involved in local affairs and social life.

### LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

The project corresponds to the library's overall philosophy as a building block of the library's overall vision and as a result has the full support of management.

### NEW ROLE OF LIBRARY

Integration activities include not only organization of individual events but in addition involve the library's transformation into a center of education and counseling that brings different cultures together, provides information about the job market, etc. In short, the library is becoming a community center focusing on:

- Support of active citizenship (providing general information about society and culture),
- Development of language skills,
- Professional development, educational programs,
- Supporting integration of foreigners,
- Providing space for dialogue, public debates, creating a new meeting place of different nationalities and cultures,
- Support of personal development.

### LIBRARY PROMOTION

One of the decisive success factors in multicultural library activities is informing potential users and the general public in an adequate way. To do this, you need publicity and external promotion. The library puts emphasis in particular on timely promotion of planned activities and form of such promotion. Planned activities are advertised on the library's website and other websites covering culture in the region, in the library's monthly bulletin and the Kam cultural monthly, in promotional materials and via partners of the library including the Czech Radio in Brno, Petrov and Proglas radio stations and other media outlets active in the region.

### EVALUATION

The cultural and integration policy project is a long-term and public activity. The library's efforts must match municipal and regional strategies. Only a high-quality and well-structured range of services implemented in line with a detailed time schedule and reflecting social developments can have the desired effect.

Sufficient awareness, cooperation with other organizations and experience are the right cornerstones for any activity. Our library draws on the experience of its staff members, partner organizations and also closely follows publications dealing with relevant issues.

**DANA HRNČÁŘOVÁ**

**COORDINATOR OF INTEGRATION ACTIVITIES IN THE JIŘÍ MAHEN LIBRARY IN BRNO.**

**MKC@KJM.CZ**

## Czech for foreigners Regional Research Library in Liberec

### ABOUT THE REGIONAL RESEARCH LIBRARY IN LIBEREC

The Regional Research Library in Liberec is a public universal research library (also fulfilling the role of a public municipal library) providing services which significantly contribute to the development of scientific knowledge, public education and culture in Liberec and the surrounding area. In 2002, the library became systematically involved in issues related to national and language minorities.

### ASSESSING THE SITUATION

**DEMOGRAPHIC DATA** (Data as of 31 December 2005; source: Czech Statistical Office)

Liberec	
Total	5,514
Ukrainians	2,251
Slovaks	1,157
Poles	544
Vietnamese	458
Russians	139
Germans	146
Other	589

Liberecký kraj	
Total	11,671
Ukrainians	4,055
Slovaks	2,192
Poles	1,564
Vietnamese	1,387
Russians	338
Germans	307
Other	2,045

### ATTITUDE OF SELF-GOVERNING BODIES

The Regional Authority's Department of Social Affairs, Safety and Minorities employs a regional coordinator for national minorities and integration of foreigners.

The coordinator deals with issues related to minorities in the region with emphasis on the Roma minority.

In 2004, the regional coordinator prepared a document analyzing the situation of minorities living in the region. For more information about his work and links to relevant legislation, please visit <http://www.kraj-lbc.cz>.

Our library started cooperating with the coordinator in 2003. In addition to the Regional Authority, the Municipality of Liberec is also involved in issues related to minorities and foreigners through its Commission for National Minorities the meetings of which have been attended on a number of occasions by our staff members.

In 2004, the city council adopted a resolution to implement a community plan of social services in Liberec covering the years 2005-2007. Community planning takes place under the auspices of the social services department. Representatives of social service providers created a total of six working groups one of which is to handle issues related to foreigners and national and ethnic minorities. The library is a member of this group and is one of the organizations selected to fulfill a specific task, namely to provide multicultural education including courses for foreigners and national minorities.

### PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

The library cooperates with local organizations working with minorities including the Roma Community Center, the Czech-German Women's Forum, the Technical University in Liberec, the Jewish Community in Liberec and the Museum of Northern Bohemia in Liberec.

### STRATEGY AND VISION

#### CZECH FOR FOREIGNERS

Ukrainians are the largest national minority in the Liberec Region. Consequently, our library wants to concentrate on Ukrainians as the neediest group. It was clear based on our previous contacts that there was interest in cooperation on both sides (the library had already organized an event entitled "Orthodox Christmas" for Ukrainians). We found out that the Greek Catholic parish in Liberec was looking for a place to organize Czech language courses for foreigners, in particular Ukrainians and Russians, who frequent the parish and face serious language problems. Moreover, we found out that schools in Liberec offer only a handful of Czech courses at prohibitive cost.

After talking to the Greek Catholic minister, we organized our first lesson of Czech for foreigners on 31 May 2006 in the library. There are two teachers and lessons take place every Wednesday evening. The course was divided into two groups of nine people for beginners and intermediate students and provided free of charge.

We purchased Czech textbooks for course participants (also in Russian) to be used in class and also taken home. Courses have been planned for three months and future action and course structure depends on the progress made by participants. As part of the course, we also provide participants with a basic overview of the library's services, electronic catalogue orientation and Internet searching tips. This information is provided by a selected librarian in the course of two or three lessons.

The Czech course and library introduction are aimed at helping participants find their bearings in Czech society, facilitating social integration and increasing their chances on the job market. This activity should also improve the image of Ukrainians and Russians in the eyes of the majority.

In the future (in line with social services planning by the municipality), we would like to expand the courses to

include other nationalities interested in learning. The library also wants to cooperate more intensively with the Liberec Job Center so that it may recommend Czech language courses organized by the library to all those interested.

In addition to our new Czech courses for foreigners, the library continues to carry out other activities, in particular as part of the Fusing Cultures series of events.

**BLANKA KONVALINKOVÁ**

HEAD OF CATALOGUING DEPARTMENT.

KONVALINKOVA@KVCLI.CZ

Photo: Archives of the Research Library in Liberec



## We are all at home here Municipal Library in Ostrava

### ABOUT THE MUNICIPAL LIBRARY IN OSTRAVA

The Municipal Library in Ostrava is a universal public library providing all citizens and institutions of Ostrava with general and equal access to cultural values and information. The library provides services to users of all ages and social backgrounds. Much of the library's efforts concentrate on services for children and young adults as well as the elderly and the disabled.

### ASSESSING THE SITUATION

#### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Ostrava	Moravia-Silesia	
Total	approx. 60 000	approx. 115,000
Roma	20 – 40,000*	over 2,000*
Slovaks	10,000	over 41,000
Poles	almost 1,000	over 37,000
Germans	over 500	over 3,000
Vietnamese	over 2,000	over 3,000
Ukrainians	over 2,000	almost 2,000
Other	over 300	over 600

**Note about the Roma minority:** Only a small fraction of inhabitants declared themselves as Roma in the last census (in 2001, the figure was 11,746 for the whole Czech Republic and just 691 for Ostrava). However, the Report on Situation of National Minorities in the Czech Republic estimates that the Roma population in the Czech Republic is between 150,000 and 300,000 people. According to the Personal Information Protection Act (No. 101/2000), it is prohibited to process any information regarding the number of Roma, their age structure or level of education. It is estimated that there are between 20,000 to 40,000 Roma living in Ostrava with about 90% of all working-age Roma without employment.

The majority of Roma families, whose social status is generally very low, live in excluded communities. According to the Czech Statistical Office, most traditional indicators pertaining to the Roma minority are significantly different from those pertaining to average members of the majority as well as other minorities, including a low share of persons aged 65 or more, high birthrate and low level of education and economic activity.

### ATTITUDE OF SELF-GOVERNING BODIES

Every year, the Moravian-Silesian Region grants funding to projects for national minorities aimed at preventing social pathologies. Moreover, it has a specific Program of Assistance to Members of National Minorities Living in the Region which is divided into three areas:

- 1. Artistic activities with national minority themes:** support of regional festivals and events (A); support of major concerts or performances (B);
- 2. Cultural and educational activities:** multicultural education and integration activities (A); expert seminars, conferences and lectures about national minorities (B);
- 3. Documentation of minority cultures:** research and investigation of minority cultures and folk traditions (A); publishing (B); support of documentary works related to national minorities (C).

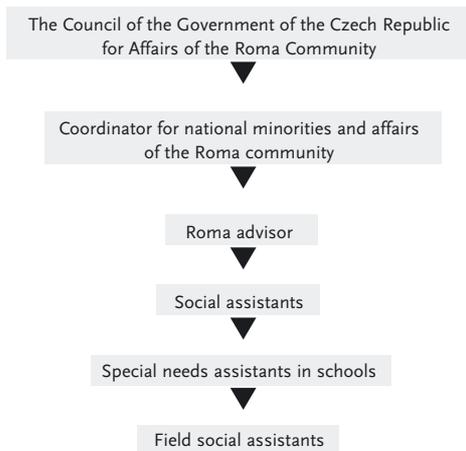
The region invites all organizations that have been implementing activities for the benefit of national minorities for at least a year (must be documented using annual reports, references, statements by representatives of self-governing bodies, press reports, etc.) to submit their applications for funding. Funding is provided to selected applicants in the form of a grant in the amount of up to 75% of the total project budget. The remaining 25% must be covered from other funds. The minimum subsidy per project is CZK 50,000 and the maximum is CZK 100,000.

Like the Moravian-Silesian Region, the Municipality of Ostrava does not have a separate program for minorities. However, applying organizations working with minorities can successfully obtain funding in more general program areas such as crime and drug use prevention (1), culture (2) or free-time activities for children and teenagers (3).

Ostrava's individual boroughs, traditional partners of local branches of the Municipal Library in Ostrava, have strategies similar to those of the municipality.

Compared to other minorities, the Roma minority enjoys a leading position in Ostrava. This greatly influences

the local government's attitude. Assistance to the Roma minority has a well-established structure on both the national and local levels:



Lýdia Poláčková, a Roma advisor to the Municipality of Ostrava, represents the Moravian-Silesian Region in the Council of the Government of the Czech Republic for Affairs of the Roma Community (tel. 596 284 956, e-mail: lydiap@seznam.cz).

Since 2003, Helena Balabánová is the coordinator for national minorities and Roma affairs at the Department of Culture and Heritage Protection of the Regional Authority of the Moravian-Silesian Region (tel. 595 622 349, e-mail: helena.balabanova@kr-moravskoslezsky.cz). One of her tasks is to bridge the information gap between organizations of national minorities and the regional government represented by members of the Committee for National Minorities of the Regional Assembly.

The following social assistants work for Ostrava boroughs with the highest concentration of Roma:

- Ladislav Koky – social assistant for Slezská Ostrava (tel. 595 225 129),
- Miroslava Kokyová – social assistant for Ostrava-Vítkovice (tel. 596 614 668),
- Dušan Červeňák – social assistant for Moravská Ostrava and Přívoz (tel. 599 443 281).

Special needs assistants work in selected kindergartens (3) and elementary schools (13) in Ostrava with a high proportion of Roma children. The number of assistants varies but it reached 34 in 2006. Some of our branches have been cooperating with assistants for a long time.

At the bottom of the above structure, there are 8 field social workers supervised by a Roma advisor.

#### PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

Following is a list of potential partners for issues

related to minorities living in Ostrava and associations with which our branches located in neighborhoods with a high proportion of Roma inhabitants already cooperate.

#### ROMA

ASSOCIATION OF ROMA IN MORAVIA – Ostrava branch: an NGO supporting Roma integration into Czech society. Its objective is to support education of Roma children and teenagers (tutoring at home) and to protect human rights. The organization operates community centers in a number of cities offering a wide range of free-time activities every day (handicrafts, art and modeling club, music club with singing and dancing, cooking club and sports club) and complementary events (children parties, summer camps, trips).

*For more information, visit [www.srnm.cz](http://www.srnm.cz).*

SPOLEČNĚ – JEKHEANE: an association of Roma and other people of Ostrava involved in community and social work.

*For more information, visit [www.jekhetane.euweb.cz](http://www.jekhetane.euweb.cz).*

VZÁJEMNÉ SOUŽITÍ: an NGO involved in community work in troubled parts of Ostrava including Liština, Zárubek and Hrušov. The organization operates community centers and a social and legal counseling center, provides tutoring to Roma children and organizes free-timer activities.

*For more information, visit [www.vzajemnesouziti.cz](http://www.vzajemnesouziti.cz).*

S.T.O.P an NGO which organizes and coordinates tutoring activities targeting disadvantaged Roma children in schools, families and community centers.

*For more information, visit [www.s-t-o-p.cz](http://www.s-t-o-p.cz).*

DUO: an NGO which offers free-time activities to all children, extracurricular education to seriously ill children, children from residential group homes and special needs and detention institutions, hosts seminars and educational programs for students, teachers and parents, organizes humanitarian activities and charity drives, etc.

*For more information, visit [www.duo.xf.cz](http://www.duo.xf.cz).*

#### SLOVAKS

SOCIETY OF SLOVAKS: the nearest chapters of the society operate in Havířov and Třinec.

*For more information, visit <http://slovak.cz>.*

#### VIETNAMESE

THE CZECH-VIETNAMESE SOCIETY: the society informs the general public about the culture, history and economic situation in Vietnam through exhibitions of photographs, debates and seminars.

*For more information, visit [www.cvs-praha.cz](http://www.cvs-praha.cz).*

**UKRAINIANS**

THE UKRAINIAN FORUM

For more information, visit [www.ukrainians.cz](http://www.ukrainians.cz).

THE UKRAINIAN INITIATIVE: an organization which publishes the magazine Porohy, organizes cultural events and provides advisory and translating services.

For more information, visit [www.ukrajinci.cz/index.php/cz/1/1](http://www.ukrajinci.cz/index.php/cz/1/1).

**POLES**

Most Poles do not live in Ostrava but in the area of Těšínské Slezsko, where all major organizations of the Polish minority are based.

THE POLISH CULTURAL AND EDUCATIONAL UNION IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: around 16,000 members in 93 local chapters in and around Těšín.

For more information, visit [www.pzko.cz](http://www.pzko.cz).

THE CONGRESS OF POLES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: represents the Polish minority towards the majority.

For more information, visit [www.polonica.cz](http://www.polonica.cz).

ARS MUSICA, A POLISH SOCIETY FOR THE ARTS

For more information, visit [www.arsmusica.cz](http://www.arsmusica.cz).

COLLEGIUM CANTICORUM, A POLISH ASSOCIATION OF SINGERS AND CHOIRS For more information, visit [www.sweb.cz/canticorum](http://www.sweb.cz/canticorum).

POLISH YOUTH ASSOCIATION

For more information, visit [www.smp.wz.cz](http://www.smp.wz.cz).

**GERMANS**

There is only a small number of Germans in the Czech Republic (0.4% of all inhabitants) and their representatives are for the most part dispersed across the country's border regions. In the Moravian-Silesian Region, most Germans live in and around Hlučín.

COUNCIL OF GERMANS IN BOHEMIA, MORAVIA AND SILESIA For more information, visit [www.landesversammlung.cz/indexcz.html](http://www.landesversammlung.cz/indexcz.html).

Photo: Archives of the Municipal Library in Ostrava



BRÜCKE/MOST FOUNDATION: SUPPORTS  
CZECH-GERMAN UNDERSTANDING AND COOPERATION.

For more information, visit  
<http://www.bruecke-most-stiftung.de/cz>.

### STRATEGY AND VISION

The Municipal Library in Ostrava is engaged in a year-long project entitled "We Are all at Home Here." It is scheduled to be launched in 2007 and focuses on the Greek, Vietnamese, Roma, Polish and Slovak minorities and possibly also other minorities in the following years provided the model proves to be successful. The project's objective, however, is not to introduce new services designed specifically for these minorities but rather to prepare, for the first time ever, a comprehensive library program about the selected minorities designed for the general public as well as for members of minorities. As part of the project, the library will launch a number of language mutations of its website ([www.kmo.cz](http://www.kmo.cz)) to better serve selected minorities.

We have been working with the Roma minority for a long time now. On 5 October 2006, we opened a unique public library targeting Roma users in Ostrava-Vitkovice. It is part of a pilot project entitled Romaňi kereka („Roma circle“) kicked off in 2004. Roma living in the area have a very low social status compared to Roma from other boroughs of the city and as a result, the area was selected for implementation of specific integration activities that are to become a natural and permanent component of services provided by the library.

To identify the needs of the target group, we have cooperated with Roma and social assistants working in the field and examined extensive studies produced by the coordinator for national minorities and Roma affairs of the Moravian-Silesian Region. A number of regular working meetings with key stakeholders helped ensure that the project would be prepared right. We have also used our experience from years of work with Roma children in different parts of Ostrava. Finally, the local government saw the planned integration activities in a positive light.

International best practices also played an important role. The Young Roma Library in Pécs, Hungary – which one of our staff members visited in 2005 in connection with the Romaňi kereka project – provided us with a successful model. While we have been able to make use of a lot of experience from Hungary, the Hungarian pilot project could not be transplanted to Ostrava as it was specifically tailored for Hungarian situation.

### LIBRARY MANAGEMENT, STAFF AND EDUCATION

Several of our branches have many years of experience with implementing integration activities aimed at Roma. Such for the most part short-term activities have

reacted to specific developments in the given neighborhood. Management supports this approach. While selected staff members attend seminars about multicultural librarianship, there are only a few such seminars.

It would be undoubtedly stimulating to organize a multicultural training seminar led by a well-trained instructor for all our librarians focusing on interaction with minority users and related problems as well as social skills. So far, just one such seminar took place at the initiative of the Municipal Library in Ostrava (in October 2005) in connection with the aforementioned Romaňi kereka project. It served as a platform for exchange of information and practical experience and included presentations by representatives of organizations working with Roma and Roma coordinators from the public administration.

For eight months prior to opening, staff of the Vitkovice branch worked intensively with an instructor (a new employee of the Municipal Library hired for this specific purpose) who was fluent in both Czech and Roma and had experience as a special needs assistant in a school where the majority of students was Roma. This new employee, who is married to a Roma advisor, is directly involved in a number of programs being prepared for the branch and focusing on the Roma community and also fulfills the role of an invaluable source of information about the community in general.

### LIBRARY PREMISES

The question of how to design the new branch targeting Roma in Ostrava-Vitkovice was to occupy a working team composed of library managers and staff members, external collaborators, designers and Roma advisors for almost two years.

There is no universal guide for developing a library for minority users. As our initial inspiration, we used a time-tested model from abroad (Pécs library for young Roma) in combination with advice from Professor Wolfram Henning from the University for Media in Stuttgart who has a long-term experience in this area.

We were well aware of the unique opportunity to escape the necessity of merely modifying an existing library and start afresh in new premises with some limitations but many more possibilities.

### NEW ROLE OF LIBRARY

The library in Ostrava-Vitkovice is to be a place where many interesting ideas will be tested in practice. Because such ideas are applicable anywhere and not exclusively to the Roma minority, we list some of them at the end of our brief guide to multicultural activities of the Municipal Library in Ostrava:

- Prepare a flyer containing information about your library (how to borrow a book) in minority languages (distribute it through local minority organizations, teachers,

municipality, language schools organizing courses for foreigners, etc.),

- Team up with organizations working with minorities,
- Offer library premises for meetings of clubs, associations or local minority organizations (by doing so, you will help debunk the myth that libraries are not places for them, convince parents that library is a safe place for children, help fight the general fear of institutions, and verify the needs of minorities and how your services correspond to those needs),
- Offer free library excursions to members of clubs, associations or local minority organizations,
- Attract parents and grandparents into the library through children (children’s art exhibition or performance in library),
- Use pictograms to make orientation easier (signs in minority languages are a more demanding alternative),
- Acquire simple Czech books that will help foreigners learn the language (picture books for children) and also language learning software,
- Ensure that minority members have privacy and can use separate workplaces (many Roma children find it next to impossible to do their homework or to study at home).



Photo: Archives of the Municipal Library in Ostrava



**PROJECT OUTCOMES:**

**AN OVERVIEW OF PILOT ACTIVITIES**

**CZECH-POLISH AFTERNOON • 26 SEPTEMBER**

- Performance of the Havířovské babky choir,
- Showcase of folk costumes from Těšínské Slezsko,
- A week-long survey of the relationship between Czechs and minorities (involvement of readers, answers in writing and recorded interviews); presentation of survey results,
- Tasting of bigos, a traditional Polish meal.

**TOUCHES OF VIETNAM • 26 SEPTEMBER**

- Public debate with the writer and adventurer Břetislav Olšer about life in Vietnam and the Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic, discussion with Vietnamese people living in Ostrava,
- Opening of Life in Vietnam, an exhibition of photographs,
- Survey of opinions regarding relationship between the natives of Ostrava and minorities and life with foreigners in one city.

**LIFE IN TRANSCARPATHIAN UKRAINE / LIFE OF TRANSCARPATHIAN UKRAINIANS IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC**  
 • 6 SEPTEMBER

- Lectures by Nataliya Mrovcová and Marta Porubová,
- Film screening and exhibition of photographs from the Ukraine.

**FAIRYTALES BRING US TOGETHER • 12 SEPTEMBER**

- Public reading of Roma, Polish, Vietnamese and Slovak fairytales by children and for children,
- Staging of two Vietnamese tales by librarians for small children (puppet theater),
- Creative workshop for children.

**ROMA AFTERNOON • 12 SEPTEMBER**

- Music and dance performance by Roma students,
- Showcase of products from art workshops of Roma children,
- Exhibition of photographs of Roma themes by Pavel Zuchnický,
- Competitions for Roma-Czech children teams.

**SLOVAK DAY • 18 SEPTEMBER**

- Public debate about Slovak traditions, culture and history,
- Exhibition of Slovak folk costumes and cuisine,
- Survey of opinions regarding the relationship between Czechs and minorities (What Do I Mind?),
- Czech-Slovak language quiz for children.



# On the road to integration Municipal Library in Prague

## ABOUT THE MUNICIPAL LIBRARY IN PRAGUE

The Municipal Library in Prague is a universal public library for all those who want to understand themselves and the world around them. Our mission is to acquire, manage, store and provide information, literature and other items of cultural value. We provide an ample range of high-quality services to the general public quickly, inexpensively and effectively. Our key target groups include children and students as well as disadvantaged people (the elderly, underprivileged and disabled). While our mission does not single out minorities as a special target group, it is obvious that working with them is both an opportunity and a challenge. Today, the Municipal Library has one central building and 47 branches across Prague. We have a total of 200,000 registered readers. 98% of them declared that they were Czech nationals during registration while 2% (i.e. around 4,000 people) said they were nationals of other countries:

	Approximately
Slovak	750
Russian	350
Ukrainian	300
American (US)	170
Serbian and Montenegrin	100
Vietnamese	75
Bulgarian	70
German	65
British	60
Croat	55
Polish	50
And 60 other nationalities	2,000

## ASSESSING THE SITUATION

### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

(Data as of 1 March 2001; source: 2001 Census of the Czech Republic)

According to official statistics, Prague has a total of 1,170,500 inhabitants 80,000 of whom do not have Czech nationality. The following table provides more detailed information:

	Number	As share of all inhabitants of Prague
Total	approx. 80,000	13
Slovaks	approx. 20,000	3,3
Russians	approx. 5,000	1
Ukrainian	approx. 5,000	1
Vietnamese	approx. 3,000	0,5
Hungarians	approx. 1,700	0,3
German	approx. 1,800	0,3
Polish	approx. 1,600	0,3
Bulgarians	approx. 1,300	0,2
Serbs	approx. 1,100	0,2
Croats	approx. 600	0,1
Roma	approx. 700	0,1
Greeks	approx. 450	0,0
Romanians	approx. 250	0,0
Ruthenians	approx. 250	0,0
Other nationalities	approx. 11,000	2,0
Unknown	approx. 23,600	4,0

When considering the above data, it must be noted that actual numbers and official statistics often differ significantly. According to official statistics, citizens of the United States, the United Kingdom, the Netherlands, Italy, France or Austria account for a mere fraction of all inhabitants of Prague. It is also difficult to believe that the total number of Roma living in Prague is smaller than 700. The explanation for this is simple: it is becoming increasingly difficult to keep track of the nationality mix of inhabitants of a large city. One of the obstacles in this respect is the existing legislation because it accentuates the right of individuals to protect their privacy and personal data; another obstacle is the general liberalization of life in the common European space.

The last two lines of the preceding table confirm this notion: 2% of people living in Prague have nationality other than Czech while 25,000 people have not specified their nationality at all. Other official figures suggest that

there is no real demand for library services on the part of some minorities (Greeks, Ruthenians and Bulgarians) as they have clearly settled in Prague a long time ago and have no problems with their national identification or integration into the mainstream society.

**ATTITUDE OF SELF-GOVERNING BODIES**

The City of Prague works with national minorities in particular through the Commission for National Minorities in Prague and the Commission for Integration of Foreigners. Hana Halová, a City Councilor, is responsible for this area. The two commissions cooperate with organizations of national minorities as well as other organizations and institutions.

Among the individual boroughs of the city, Prague 5 represents an example worth following as it has established an ethnic commission to deal with cultural and social affairs of ethnic minorities and ensure their peaceful coexistence with the majority as well as smooth communication related to integration of foreigners in Prague 5. No other borough has a commission or a committee designed

exclusively to deal with integration, education and life of foreigners. This may be one of the reasons behind the inconsistent situation as regards cooperation with foreigners across Prague.

**PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION**

It is always important for us whether cooperation is city-wide or just local (involving one or more of our total 47 branches). Key partners of the Municipal Library are the Multicultural Center Prague and Romea. We work with other partners, such as the British Council, Goethe-Institut or the Slovak Institute, as part of our general initiative to transform our library into an open space where people from all backgrounds can meet.

At the local level, our branches work towards establishing cooperation with minority organizations and other organizations helping people of different nationalities to understand each other, such as the Friends of Asia Club, the Ukrainian-Czech Society, the Czech-Arab Society, Humanitas Afrika, the Jewish Museum or the Bulgarian Institute.

Photo: Archives of the Multicultural Center Prague



### STRATEGY AND VISION

Considering the make-up of Prague's population and integration activities implemented by our library or other organizations thus far, it is not possible to speak of a unified theme or activity. The above information about the number of foreigners living in Prague indicates the following key problems facing Prague and its integration activities:

- A large number of minorities to work with,
- Low degree of formal organization of minorities (and hardly any willingness to organize, sometimes because of illegal residence status),
- Relatively small willingness of the majority to seek new information about the "other" people.

One may conclude in view of the above that although library strategies have traditionally included acquisition of items in many different languages, such as English, German, Slovak and Russian, there is now a need to acquire books in Vietnamese, Roma and Ukrainian and to go one step further, developing a collection that is vibrant, sufficiently extensive and regularly updated.

In the past few years, the Municipal Library in Prague has been concentrating on **raising awareness about public libraries as meeting places for different cultures, ethnic groups and religions**. This direction will be increasingly important in the future and we need to be more sophisticated and proactive in approaching potential partners-minority organizations and using funding available from the city and grant providers.

Key tasks of the Municipal Library in Prague as regards integration of foreigners remain unchanged:

- **We must be more visible to them** (foreigners should consider a visit to the library an ordinary activity),
- **We must present foreigners to the mainstream society** in the right ways and places to put in context differences and similarities in cultural and other aspects of life of different ethnic groups,
- We must assist in integration of foreigners by showing them everyday life in Prague and the Czech Republic.

### LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

The Municipal Library's development strategy until 2015 plays a crucial role in our work. The guiding principles for development of new services are openness, flexibility and quality. These are also the principles for our work with foreigners. The following aspects of our work make fulfilling our objectives easier:

- Organization and management of the library, library-wide or local activities defining the range and effectiveness of integration activities,

- Work of permanent or temporary working teams supporting initiative and activity sharing,
- Proactive approach of the library to learning and implementing best practices from foreign libraries,
- System of librarian training which is soon to be implemented will make it possible to take into consideration the specific social and demographic aspects of work of individual librarians or branches.

In order to increase the effectiveness of integration and community activities, the Municipal Library in Prague still needs to:

- Gain more practical experience with multiple-source funding of relevant activities,
- Learn to better present its activities to all target groups.

### NEW ROLE OF LIBRARY

No matter how difficult is the mission of defining a municipal public library as an open space for all regardless of education, age, gender or background, it must be fulfilled.

- A public library incapable of coping with new challenges and seizing new opportunities cannot survive.
- The Municipal Library in Prague sees the present as an inseparable part of its future.

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# Implementing integration activities Regional Library in Karlovy Vary

### ABOUT THE REGIONAL LIBRARY IN KARLOVY VARY

The Regional Library was established in May 2002 from the former district library. In December 2005, a new central library building financed from EU Structural Funds opened in Karlovy Vary-Dvory. Our library provides services in the areas of loans, information, bibliography, research and reprography and organizes cultural and educational events for the general public. It has a department for the blind and a special balneology collection.

### ASSESSING THE SITUATION

The Karlovy Vary Region is the least populous of all Czech regions (304,343 inhabitants, i.e. just 3% of the Czech Republic's population as of 2001). The average age in the region is 38 years and the share of people under 14 is high.

Recently, the number of foreign workers – mainly Vietnamese, Russians and Ukrainians – grew significantly, and foreigners now account for 2% of the region's population. The region's strength is a relatively young population and also the fact that most people live in cities (81%). Its location on the border with Germany is also advantageous as many people have found jobs there. Tourism is developing rapidly and the region has one of the highest shares of foreigners and national minorities among the country's regions.

### DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

(Data as of 1 March 2001; source: 2001 Census of the Czech Republic)

The number of foreigners grew rapidly in the recent past and culminated between 1995 and 2001 (up to 250% growth). Between 2002 and 2003, the official growth rate was much slower but stable (365 new arrivals, i.e. 3% growth).

Karlovy Vary Region	
Total	14,725
Vietnamese	7,903
Ukrainians	1,823
Russians	1,492
Slovaks	1,059
Germans	438
Romanians	348
Poles	171
Other nationalities	1,491
Total number of countries of origin:	65

Our region has the largest Vietnamese community in the Czech Republic. 71% of all foreigners in the region are self-employed (average for the Czech Republic 34%) and 54% of foreigners have permanent residence status, which is also remarkable.

### ATTITUDE OF SELF-GOVERNING BODIES

The Karlovy Vary Region has a website designed for foreigners where they can obtain relevant information. The Regional Authority's Social Affairs Department has a coordinator for Roma affairs, national minorities and integration of foreigners (Pavel Vaculík). His responsibilities include preparing analyses, strategies and regional projects, coordinating Roma advisors and special needs assistants, providing methodological guidance and preparing concepts and regional policy proposals dealing with integration of Roma and other minorities living in the region. He also produces statements regarding bills drafted by the region and its draft regulations concerning the rights of the Roma community and other national minorities, provides assistance in the area of employment, transportation, housing, healthcare, education, social security, social services and social and cultural life. The coordinator works together with other departments of the Regional Authority; Roma advisors, special needs assistants and bodies advising on the integration of Roma and other minorities to different institutions in the region; regional NGOs involved in cooperation between minorities and the majority; and assists in drafting regional development strategies and social prevention and community programs. He also helps implement the program of integration of refugees in the region, the strategy of integration of foreigners and asylum holders (recognized refugees) as well as the government program of integration in the area of housing by offering suitable government-funded housing to asylum holders. He drafts contractual documents, cooperates with municipalities involved in integration

of refugees, and also with the inter-ministerial commission responsible for drafting a new strategy of integration of asylum holders and allocation of integration housing to eligible individuals.

#### PARTNERSHIP AND COOPERATION

Our library has decided to cooperate with Pavel Vaculík, the coordinator for Roma affairs, national minorities and integration of foreigners. He is a source of insights and experience from working with various ethnic groups, assists us in planning our activities and provides contact information of NGOs and minority organizations. The most active minorities in Karlovy Vary are Slovaks and Germans. The Vietnamese community is rather closed and Russians together with other minorities from the former USSR have almost no organizations. The problem in this respect is not the language barrier as such (while they speak different languages, they can communicate with each other in Russian) but rather religious and political barriers (Chechens vs. Russians, etc.).

We are currently discussing the possibility of opening a mobile counseling center for refugees (November 2006) that would be located near the central library. It would be better able to monitor the needs of newly arrived foreigners. We are ready to work with them and also provide information about our library's services using multilingual leaflets.

#### STRATEGY AND VISION

Our strategy is to **expand our range of services to include members of other nationalities**. Because of the language barrier, we would like to start by producing simple **multilingual flyers with information** about the library and services available to foreigners.

One of the activities planned for November and December 2006 is the Family Next Door project which is to take place under the auspices of Slovo 21, an NGO. The great hall of the central library will host a meeting of selected schools (elementary and secondary schools and universities) and representatives of foreigners living in the Karlovy Vary Region. As part of multicultural education, we want to organize a survey in order to assess the level of awareness about foreigners in the region and the attitude of students and teachers towards the issue.

We would like to follow up with a project designed for students and entitled **"Bring Foreigners to the Library and Show Them Around."** By doing so, we hope to get a better understanding of what library services foreigners need and consider useful.

Twice a year, we would like to organize **Days of National Cultures** as part of our efforts in the cultural sphere. On 3-7 September, we hosted **Days of Jewish Culture** in cooperation with the Jewish Community featuring lectures, an exhibition entitled "Jewish Traditions and Customs," music

performances and a public debate about Judaism. Days of Slovak Culture are planned for the second half of the year.

**Czech language courses** for foreigners, scheduled to start in January 2007, are to become our crucial integration activity. We are now in the phase of measuring interest on the part of foreigners and hope to benefit from cooperation with the Organization for Aid to Refugees which is scheduled to start working in Karlovy Vary in November 2006. We are looking for the right instructor and acquiring the right literature.

We would like to implement other activities in cooperation with elementary schools with foreign students. Our aim is to organize collective readings and debates about fairytales and literature of individual nations. Children of foreigners integrate quickly and because their parents often do not speak Czech, they serve as their interpreters. For this reason, it seems important to establish contact with adults through children. We would also like to expand our services by adding to our collection books in various foreign languages, in particular Slovak and Russian, but also Vietnamese, if possible.

The Regional Library has an information center where foreigners can seek advice regarding Czech authorities and look at **employment offers of the local job center**.

#### LIBRARY MANAGEMENT

Management supports integration activities of the library, perceiving them as the next logical step in expanding library and information services. We are aware that to fulfill our vision, we need all staff members to share it and get involved.

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# 05

## Integration activities in Polish libraries

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# Immigrants in Poland (Problem outline)

The ethnic structure in Poland significantly differs from the one of Western-European societies. The latter can be easily described as multicultural whereas in Poland still dominates one ethnic group. The reason for such a situation lies in the fact that, firstly, up to now Poland was not an interesting place for considerable groups of foreigners seeking their place for permanent settlement, and secondly, due to shifts in Polish borders after the WWII and forced displacement of ethnic minorities as well as the post-war emigration of citizens of different ethnic origins, Poland became an almost ethnically homogenous nation in which ethnic and national minorities constitute less than 3% of the population.

This situation has began to change only in the beginning of the 1990's, after the fall of the Communist regime. The rejection of communist state led to rejection of the policy recognizing Poland as a monocultural country, and, thus, subjecting other nations and ethnic groups. As a result, the visa policy has changed – the borders have been slightly opened, which contributed to the first waves of immigrants. The dynamism of these changes was stimulated by the economic and political situation in the ex-USSR countries.

The level of immigration to Poland has additionally increased after Polish accession to the European Union, and this change was stimulated by two main factors. Firstly, Poland has started to be seen as a migrant destination (while in the past transit immigration dominated in Poland). Secondly, the opening of European labour market for workers from Poland resulted in emigration on a large scale (the official statistics claim hundreds of thousands of immigrants, whereas an approximate estimate provides the number of a million of Poles who went abroad to work in the EU countries), which caused a gap in Polish labour market. This phenomenon is going to increase due to a continuous negative birth rate in Poland and the resultant ageing of Polish society. Immigrants, or at least the majority of them, will fill in this gap. The situation seems to be serious since the Polish government coalition postulates opening of the borders.

Generally, we can notice all theoretical types of migration in Poland:

- 1) The inflow of newcomers as part of the so-called circular movements (the inflow of 'petty travellers' from the neighbouring countries, predominantly from the ex-USSR countries.
- 2) The flow of transit migrants
- 3) The inflow of refugees (mainly from Chechnya and Asiatic countries: Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Afghanistan, and Pakistan).
- 4) Permanent migrations (both from the East and West)
- 5) The inflow of foreigners as a part of visa movement
- 6) The inflow of highly-qualified staff from the West

What is specific for Polish minorities is a group of repatriates from the former Soviet Union, particularly from Kazakhstan. In summer 1996 the Polish Government issued a resolution on repatriation. It stated that people

who were identified as persons of Polish descent and were invited by Polish local governments would be granted a repatriation visa and a permanent residence card. At the moment of arrival in Poland, these persons were recognized as Polish citizens and became eligible for permanent residence. In a very specific situation of repatriation from Kazakhstan, the process of coming back to Poland of at least few dozens of thousands of people, grown-up in the communistic system of Soviet societies, lacking Polish language, history, culture and religion is an extremely complicated process. It includes problems with, on the one hand, adaptation and integration of these people with Polish society, and, on the other, problems resultant from social approval of their "otherness".

Another feature specific for immigration to Poland is the fact that many foreigners who come to Poland do not consider it a country of their permanent settlement. They believe they would be able to migrate further West, or go back to their country of origin. They do not apply for permanent settlement cards, but decide on staying in Poland using "prolonged visas". Similarly to many other countries, in Poland such people are deprived of many rights, including the right to free education. A vast number of such people resign from having a legal status in Poland.

According to official statistics, we can distinguish the following migrant categories of people staying in Poland legally:

- 1) People with a permanent residence permit
- 2) People legally employed by a Polish employer
- 3) People with a permission for a fixed-term residence, i.e. people who prove that there are circumstances justifying they stay on Polish territory (the justifying factors may be: a) employment, b) running a company, c) education, d) marriage with a Pole or with a foreigner with a permanent residence permit);
- 4) People from abroad coming to Poland for permanent settlement

One of the biggest migrant groups in Poland is the Armenians. In contrast with newcomers from other parts of the ex-USSR countries, they decide on permanent settlement in Poland, even though their stay here is usually illegal. However, the way they organize their life in Poland does not provide any evidence that their informal status in Poland stands as an obstacle in achieving a somewhat stable life situation. On the contrary, such a status has its advantages, for example, it allows for running a company in a shadow economy, adding to its cost-effectiveness.

A particularly difficult situation is among families which have children at school age. Since they are not always admitted to Polish schools, many families decide to leave children in Armenia under the guidance of their relatives or one of the parents, while the second parent

migrates (alone or with other children of pre-school age) to Poland.

The Armenians can be found in many Polish cities and towns. They seem to prefer smaller cities and towns, of about 50-60 thousand of citizens. Since their usual migration strategy is based on a migration net between families (from few to a dozen of families), such a tactic gives the impression that such a net is mostly effective in small cities and towns.

In some towns, the Armenians have dominated the market trade (the products offered most often are clothes and shoes). They make a kind of the last link in a chain, buying their products in warehouses or big bazaars in Warsaw or Łódź. Their work is accompanied by a specific division of labour, consisting in having one group responsible for supply, while another group, usually bigger, deals with trading itself. They have no difficulties in renting flats, usually situated in one street, or even in neighbouring buildings located in town quarters inhabited by the lower-middle or working class (a considerable intensity of pathologies – alcoholism and crime).

Safety factors are possibly also taken into account when a place of residence is chosen. The Armenians, being in close relations with each other and appreciating mutual solidarity may be, and are perceived as a real force, a group able to fight in the face of danger coming from local hooligans.

For the Armenians, one of the most important issues is learning a language. Since they are people of very high educational attainment, possessing developed cultural needs, their contact with the language of the host country is not restricted to professional life. Among this group, watching TV, listening to the radio, and reading newspapers are common leisure activities. Another important factor is living a good, dignified life, which is, for example, visible in the way they treat each other, cultivate family relations and preserve tradition and customs.

Do the Armenians treat Poland as a transit country? Not really. Those, who do not want to settle in Poland decide to go back to Armenia rather than travel to a more attractive, Western country.

The Armenians reveal a prevalent tendency for positive assimilation among all immigrant groups in Poland. It is displayed by both the eagerness to follow the law (which, due to their illegal status in Poland, is not completely possible) and to take up work, and an openness to Polish culture. If the representatives of this migrant group could legalize their stay in Poland, they would probably become a very vigorous minority group, just as it happened in all other countries where the Armenians currently live.

Citizens of the other ex-USSR countries who migrate to Poland (Ukrainians and Byelorussians in particular, but also Russians, Moldavians and citizens of the Baltic countries – Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia), are not interested

in permanent settlement in Poland (with the exception of a relatively small group of Ukrainians). The aim of their coming to Poland is retail and wholesale trade as well as seasonal work in agriculture and building. In some cases coming to Poland is highly profitable, but it is still very uncommon.

Definitely we can notice the preponderance of circular migration, which is a way of surviving an economic crisis that afflicted the majority of Byelorussian and Ukrainian households.

The key to such migration strategies consists in building a kind of international trade-manufacturing corporations, which links, apart from shadow economy institutions and a system of big and small warehouses are hundreds of thousands of small carriers, transporting the goods to the East. Such a market arrangement resulted in creation of a whole range of accompanying services – motels, bars, restaurants etc. This system may now be described as fairly stable and solid.

The strategy of circular migration has an attribute of a specific “closed” way of behaviour. Migrants of this type treat this system of migration as a solid, routine way of demeanour. Such migrants behave like loyal, disciplined employees of a company, although they are not bounded with it with employment relations.

The decision to take up either legal or illegal job in Poland is usually taken up by people who, firstly, are not very entrepreneurial and well educated, and secondly, have lost or never had a full time job in their place of permanent residence.

Another significant migrant group in Poland is the Chinese. Their main activity is wholesale trade and they often constitute the first link in a trade chain. Their main competitors are the Vietnamese, but the scale of their trade ventures compared to the Chinese initiatives is far less developed.

For Asian people Poland is not a particularly interesting country, and the decision to come here is not an effect of any special efforts, but a kind of delegation, job travel, treated more as a punishment than a prize. The biggest group among the Asians in Poland is the Vietnamese, whose formal status in Poland is also varied. The Vietnamese have become first and foremost linked with their main economic activities in Poland, namely with trade on open markets by selling inexpensive textiles and running oriental fast food restaurants

The main element building up their status in Poland is the fact that the significant part of this group are people who focus on, firstly, stabilizing their stay in Poland, and, secondly, distinguishing or even isolating themselves from Polish society.

Vietnamese immigrants are usually former students who studied in Poland before 1989. They families in Vietnam

were usually of upper class, due to both their descent and financial status. The students were often the second generation studying abroad. The educational strategy that worked well in the case of their parents was transmitted onto the children.

When compared with the other post-socialist migrant groups, the Vietnamese seem to be more eager to stay in Poland. There are many reasons for this situation. Firstly, it cannot be ignored that a vast number of Vietnamese students are men, who got married with Polish women (when in a group there is a Vietnamese woman, the couple is formed within the group). However, mixed, Polish-Vietnamese marriages do not connote the process of melting the Vietnamese into Polish society. Children are, of course, “obliged” to assimilate, but their fathers in their both private and professional contacts usually use only Vietnamese social relations.

Sex asymmetry is viewed by the Vietnamese as a serious drawback and can be applied to many migrant societies. The possibility of a mixed marriage among Vietnamese students was relatively major among the population of Vietnamese students who lived among Poles, whereas it decreased among those who came and lived in Poland in other conditions.

Another important factor of their staying in Poland is also their better physical and mental state than when living in other countries. Rarely are they faced with apparent manifestations of aggression and distrust, as it is, for example, in Germany. Few of the Vietnamese living in Poland decided to migrate to Poland after studying or working in other European countries such as Bulgaria, the former Soviet Union countries of Eastern Germany. Sometimes the reason for it was a restrictive policy of local government, but in most cases – the pursue to find better living and working conditions. It is difficult to realize their motives but it has been a runaway from economic crisis in the countries of their former settlement rather than choosing a better place to live. Between their leaving Vietnam and settlement in Poland there was also a middle phase. The majority of the Vietnamese, formerly working in socialist countries as labour workers, turned to open market trade in Poland. Only few of them managed to skip this stage and start their own restaurants or ventures, as being far more attractive and securing financial stabilisation.

The dilemma of either going back to Vietnam to live a poor living with family and friends or staying in Poland and working for financial success is no longer crucial. Although well-educated and qualified people are able to find in Vietnam a job which is more satisfying and better paid than in Poland, the risk of failure is still considerable.

There are also other, not connected with economy, grounds for staying in Poland. It seems to be crucial that in Vietnam Poland is generally presented as a “Western” country, where the possibilities of “better”, “more interesting”

life are bigger than in Vietnam. Also, there are many examples of achieving a success in Poland, which usually stands for gaining financial stabilisation. This might be another motivation for the Vietnamese – if he succeeded, I can succeed as well.

An additional stimulus for staying in Poland is also the fact that the Vietnamese faced the shift of regimes here, in Poland. They left their country of origin when socialism was the ruling ideology, now they would have to adapt to free market reality. There is also a fear that the education achieved in Eastern Europe would be insufficient to fulfil the demands of a new, capitalistic reality. The memory of the war is also an important drawback of going back to Vietnam. Furthermore, when the Vietnamese were graduating from their studies in Poland in the 1980s and 1990s, the possibilities of professional development in Vietnam were not as wide as they are nowadays. Many Polish-Vietnamese graduates resigned from pursuing their careers in their field of interest in order to start their own businesses, mainly gastronomic and trade (import of goods from Vietnam to Poland). Now, their small businesses are well-prospering ventures.

What is more, the Vietnamese point to climate and weather in Poland as an element increasing the attractiveness of their stay in Poland, since neither the climate nor weather is as unpleasant as in Vietnam.

The Vietnamese in Poland create two, completely separated and distanced groups. It is a kind of transferring social boundaries present in Vietnamese society. The second group is formed by the 'retailers', selling goods on bazaars.

Another group of temporary migrants in Poland is a group of Western-European and American corporation staff. The presence of foreign capital in Poland means hiring foreign employees, who are usually responsible for the first phase of building a new agency, but sometimes work also on the later phases. In the case of managerial staff, they are usually delegated by a mother company.

Coming to Poland and working here is not regarded by foreigners of this sort as profitable for development of their career. There is an agreement that their stay in Poland is a kind of a welcome foreign experience. This stay, however, should not last for too long, since it can result in losing

Photo: Archives of the Municipal Library in Ostrava

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touch with the situation in the country of origin and entering a kind of professional cul-de-sac.

Owing to lower cost of living and equal earnings, staying in Poland gives an opportunity of saving up a certain sum of money, treated as a provision for the future or possible investment in the place of permanent settlement.

The fact that there is no aggressive competition in Poland, because there is enough place and work for everybody, is a factor deciding for staying in Poland. Moreover, there is also, unknown in their countries of origin, solidarity and help.

Far less advantageous situation is with middle-aged and elderly foreign workers. They have come to Poland due to the fact that they were either unable to find a satisfying job in their countries, or delegated to work in Poland by their mother companies. Often it is connected with leaving their families in the country of origin, what impedes integration with Polish society.

Aside from few exceptions, Poland is not believed to be a place of safety for Western citizens, who are frustrated and tired with the situation in their countries.

African citizens staying in Poland are by and large people who came to Poland as a part of a scholarship provided by Polish universities. From the African perspective, Poland has always been a truly European country. Studying here, thus, differed little from studying in any other European country (although on a list of top ten places to study, Poland has been far lower than Western-European countries). However, similarly to other socialist states, Poland made it possible to be granted a government scholarship and, as a result, enjoy free education, whereas in Western countries one had to pay for it.

As a consequence of Polish xenophobia and noticeable distance towards people of different skin colour, for the majority of the Africans staying in Poland wasn't an easy decision. At the same time many of them married Polish women, which enabled them to legalize their stay in Poland and find a decent job. Nevertheless, there is no tendency of using their status and forming African social nets in Poland. The reason for it is, firstly, the lack of stability, and, secondly and most importantly, a belief that such an action would cause conspicuous defiance of Polish society.

There is no doubt that functioning of migrants in a host country and their easiness of adaptation to new life circumstances depend for the most part on people's traits of character, such as resistance to frustration, ambition, inclination to risk, endurance etc. Still, aside from individual psychological differences, we can point at a group of "structural" factors, meaning those on which a migrant has no bearing (or the influence is limited), owing to the fact that they consist a part of social context influencing migrants' functioning in a host country and the probability of their coming back, settlement

of continuing the migration. The most important factors of this kind are:

1) Social, economic and political situation of the mother country (or ethnic group) of a migrant, determining the possibility of finishing the migration and going back to the mother country. If a migration is a way of improving financial status or benefit from chances (migration "towards"), we have to assume that the motives for staying in a host country are different from those characteristic for migration forced by an either objective or subjective life of freedom hazard in the country of origin (migration "from"). The necessity of living abroad and avoiding situations posing a risk of, for example, deportation, influences both the rationality criterion of behaviour in a host country and the repertoire of available adaptation techniques.

2) Geographical distance and an interrelated cultural distance between a country of origin and a host country.

3) Migrants' capital, which can take form of: economical capital (financial assets migrants bring with them), social capital (a network of people willing to help in a host country) and cultural capital, which, in the case of migrants, consists in the knowledge of host country language, its culture and law.

4) A planned length of staying, which is connected with the life phase.

A crucial factor determining migrant's functioning in a host country is the dominant attitude towards them in the society. Research conducted by Demoskop – one of the biggest Polish pool centres – has proved that there is a little number of people who both would not agree any of the migrant groups to settle in Poland and would allow all the migrant groups to live in Poland. The leading group includes those who would agree some of the migrant groups to stay in Poland. Probably the reason for this lies in the fact that many Poles have no opinion of beneficial aspect of migration to Poland. The people who migrate to Poland establish such a varied group, and there are so wide-ranging effects of their coming here, that Poles who are not accustomed with immigration find it difficult to have a clear opinion on this matter.

Polish citizens are more prone to accept migration caused by family, or sentimental reasons than by financial situation. The first type of migrants, i.e. those whose coming to Poland has no financial grounds, embraces people who in Poland have either a spouse, or their ancestry. This group also includes Poles living in Western Europe, repatriates from Kazakhstan and the Germans and Silesians who have roots in the territories belonging to Germany before the WWII. Yet, the attitude of Poles towards the last three groups of "sentimental" migrants varies significantly. The pools have shown that the most positive attitude is towards repatriates from Kazakhstan, while the least positive is towards the Germans and Silesians. The opinions differed depending

on the region the respondents lived. It was predominantly observable in the case of attitude towards the Germans and Silesians. The opinion on the matter of their living in Poland was far more positive in Silesia than in other parts of the country.

The opinion on financial migration also varies depending on the regions. Citizens of areas of high unemployment were by large more hostile towards migration of this type of newcomers. The fear of financial migration is remarkably high among not well-educated, unsecured of their posts people.

The research also reveals that in order to distinguish a migrant group and a problem dealing with this group it is crucial to establish the way Poles attitude towards it. The division of migrants can be made according to various criteria, among which the most popular has been nationality. We can notice that Poles who have some experience with foreigners and of living and working abroad are more positive about immigration to Poland. The kind of experiences also matters. For example, those who believe that Poles are treated well abroad, have more optimistic view on foreigners living in Poland. If foreign people are believed to like Poles, Poles will like them as well.

On account of the fact that Poles started to have daily contact with various categories of migrants: petty traders, undocumented labourers, refugees and Western specialists working for international corporations, the general opinions on national groups have changed, national stereotypes have been modified. There is also, apart from general liking for certain nationality, a growing importance of profits and drawbacks connected with migrants of this group in Poland.

Immigration has been perceived as an everyday phenomenon in Poland. There is higher percentage of well educated people in Poland every year. We are learning how to function in a democratic state. As claimed by pool 'other nations – our likings and antipathies' conducted by CBOS, a public opinion research centre, these factors cause the

fact that Poles are progressively positive towards "the others" and open to immigration to Poland. The results of the survey "Foreigners in Poland" conducted by CBOS in August 2004 show that:

1) 30% of Poles (an increase by 5 points) know some foreigner living in Poland. Respondents living in big cities declare such an acquaintance more often than respondents from towns and villages. The increase of the level of education goes along with the increase of the number of people declaring personal meeting with foreigners living in Poland. Young people have more such acquaintances than the elderly.

2) 75% of Poles do not mind foreigners playing a part in Polish labour market, including 31% without any restrictions and 42% without restrictions in some posts. Only 22% of Poles are against the employment of foreigners. Over the last two years the acceptance of foreign workers has increased.

3) At work, respondents prefer a contact with Poles rather than with foreigners. Nearly a half of respondents (49%) opt for working with Poles and for 45% it is not important. Very few people (4%) opt for working with foreigners. Correspondingly, one in two respondents (51%) would like to have a Pole as his/her employer; for 39% of respondents nationality of their employers is irrelevant. A small number of Poles would like to have a foreigner as their employer. Hired workers seem to be more open to cooperation with foreigners and work under their supervision.

4) The way foreigners are perceived in Poland is determined by Poles' opinions on their economic role in our society, especially on their influence on labour market: they hope for investments, but at the same time are anxious about competition. In the last five years the importance of economic issues in balancing pros and cons of foreigners working in Poland has decreased while the significance of benefits resulting from contact with other culture has increased. On the one hand, people less often fear that foreigners might turn out to be criminals, but on the other, a new danger appeared: the threat of terrorist attacks.

The problem of immigrants, or more generally foreigners, in Poland is a fairly new and complex issue. Since the beginning of 1990's Poland – traditionally a country experiencing brain-drain – has been changing into a place of either transit or destination. The increasing number of immigrants in Poland, mostly from the ex-USSR countries, in the context of NATO and UE expansion, initiates dilemmas and poses a challenge for both Polish and European migration policy. Therefore, it may be seen as a problem also for Polish economy and society.

The fact that the number of migrants in Poland is still relatively small diminishes the weight of this statement. According to Central Statistical Office (GUS), immigrants represent less than 1% of Polish population while in some other EU countries they constitute over 30% of the society. Unfortunately, it is hardly possible to estimate the number of illegal immigrants in Poland. Personally, I would take the risk of assessing a hypothesis that so as to obtain objective figures regarding the number of immigrants in Poland we would have to multiply by two the data provided by Central Statistical Office.

Regardless of the statistics, we have to remember that immigrant issues have to be examined as unconnected with mathematical speculation. Both social and human relations are not a matter of quantity but of quality. Meanwhile in Poland the public debate on immigration and migrant integration is in its initial phase. It is dominated by political and economical subjects, since, on the one hand, there is a discussion on lack of workers in Poland and a necessity of recruiting them from abroad (it concerns mostly building and agriculture), and, on the other, the consequences of obligations resultant from Schengen Treaty, which will undoubtedly deepen the change of Poland (viewed as a "safe country") from a transit to immigrant country. This discourse marginalizes weak opinions reminding of a need to prepare an immigration policy, while few institutions and organisations taking this subject are met with incomprehension and ignorance. Let us hope the situation will change in the foreseeable future.

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# Public Libraries as Part of an Immigrant Integration System in Poland

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A great number of experts from the European Union countries claim that it took Western Europe too much time to start thinking about integration: for many years, cultural differences between immigrants and local citizens were not taken into consideration, no efforts were made to integrate the newcomers with the European societies. This resulted in the marginalization of groups of aliens in the EU, ghettos, ethnical conflicts and growing xenophobia. Obviously, these phenomena were also influenced by many other factors, like, for example, a great number of newcomers; however, lack of conscious integration policy worsened the situation.

The number of immigrants in Poland is still relatively small, therefore such social problems as mentioned above can still be prevented by developing an effective integration system. According to the Central Statistical Office, immigrants in Poland constitute less than one percent of citizens, while in some EU countries they make up over 30 percent of the population. Nonetheless, the number of immigrants in Poland increases every year and their integration with the Polish society is acquiring growing importance. Actions in the field of the immigrant integration policy should be adequate to the immigration policy of the Republic of Poland, currently at the elaboration stage.

The current legal provisions pertaining to aliens in Poland significantly diversify actions of an integrative nature depending on the legal status of an alien. Basic legal acts which regulate the status of an alien in the territory of Poland include: the Act on Aliens of 13 June 2003 and the Act on Granting Protection to Aliens within the Territory of the Republic of Poland of 13 June 2003.

At present, integrative actions in Poland, within special individual integration programmes, are focused on one group of people only – those having the refugee status. This group is not numerous – there are app. 1300 recognised refugees currently staying in Poland. Compliant with the Act on Social Assistance, within 14 days after having been awarded the status, a refugee submits an application for assistance to the Starost Office competent with respect to the place of residence. A refugee is eligible for such assistance commencing as of the calendar month of filling the application, and the assistance includes cash benefits for maintenance and coverage of expenses connected with learning Polish language; contributions to health insurance and the costs of specialised guidance services are also paid for the refugee.

There are also other groups of immigrants in Poland covered with rights and obligations imposed under the provisions of the Polish legislation, which constitute the grounds for actions of an integrative nature or actions of integration

It can be stated that the already existing and potential immigrant groups in Poland, with the exception of app. 1300 refugees, are not covered by any integration policy of the state. The attempts to develop such a policy are still at the elaboration stage. The fact that neither libraries nor other cultural institutions have been taken into consideration as important elements of an immigrant integration system

in the process of its initial elaboration is symptomatic of the situation.

Prevention of future troubles and other negative phenomena connected with the functioning of immigrant groups requires an instant elaboration of a multifaceted state policy in the field of immigrant integration. Drawing on the experience of the countries which have already encountered the phenomenon of mass immigration is essential in this case. In this respect, the project "Libraries as gateways to the integration of immigrants in the EU" meets an important social need.

As shown by the experience of western countries, libraries should be regarded as one of key elements of a state integration policy, for they are institutions which democratize life in society, promote equal opportunities, and by definition are open to "otherness".

However, it does not mean that Polish public libraries are ready to assume the role of immigrant integration centres. In order to meet this challenge they have to take up a number of activities indispensable in this respect.

In order to fulfil their mission in a proper way, libraries should operate as part of a local network. NGOs and unofficial groups of citizens, including groups of people of a different status than that of Polish citizens constitute an important element of this system. Only this attitude can guarantee that libraries truly meet the social needs. It also means that libraries, on the basis of their infrastructure, should facilitate the development of civil society institutions. Making use of a public library infrastructure should facilitate the realization of various undertakings of a social, and also cultural, character, in its territory. In particular, the programme of such actions should comprise the activity of the groups threatened by social exclusion (including immigrants). On the other hand, libraries should take independent actions aiming at the activation and presentation of these groups and their achievements to others.

The implementation of the immigrant integration strategy requires that a library not only opens to the needs of this group of its potential users but also launches activities which will raise the level of acceptance of "the Other" among the members of the majority society. It means that there is a necessity to realize undertakings which on the one hand comprise the activities the aim of which is to raise the level of knowledge about "others", and, on the other hand, pursue to eliminate xenophobic attitudes and to substitute them with the attitudes open to "the Other" and "otherness".

Integration with majority society requires the minority to master basic skills indispensable for the existence in a majority milieu, which include: the knowledge of the official language; general knowledge on the country and the region; general, and in some areas, detailed knowledge in the field of state and local law. Therefore, public libraries should: account for the above mentioned matters in their collection

development policy; account for the above mentioned matters in the development of the information service; facilitate implementation of educational processes based on library infrastructure.

Basic knowledge of the country of residence and even the ability to use its official language do not guarantee a successful process of integration. It is also necessary to introduce the immigrants into the culture of the majority society, which means elaboration of activities pursuing this goal. It is also necessary to provide translations of Polish literature in the immigrants' languages.

Inculturation and integration do not indicate at the same time assimilation, which on its own (if it is happening over a short period of time or is forced) is a phenomenon bringing negative consequences. Proper integration has to be conducted with respect towards cultural identity of the immigrants. Public libraries should comply with it in their activity, which means a necessity of:

- taking this matter into consideration in the collection development policies;
- taking this matter into consideration in the programmes of the activities associated with the library.

A detailed analysis of the situation in the Polish public librarianship leads to the following, unfortunately, in most cases alarming, conclusions:

- currently, public libraries in Poland do not have a common policy aimed at the countering of social exclusion regardless of its origins;
- activities aimed at the countering of exclusion do not take priority in the activities of public libraries in Poland
- anti-exclusion functions of public libraries which are best developed include activities directed towards the disabled, including mainly the blind and the myopic
- in recent years, an increased activity of libraries has been noticed in the field of cooperation with national and ethnic minorities and their organisations
- several public libraries in Poland have started activities aiming at the countering of the social exclusion of immigrants
- a considerable number of librarians do not see the need to develop countermeasures against social exclusion in the context of their library work;
- a considerable number of librarians do not have any special competence which would enable them to take action aimed at the countering of social exclusion
- due to the implementation of the IKONKA programme by the Ministry of Scientific Research and Information Technology, the librarians feel marked out to take activities aimed at the countering of the information exclusion
- public libraries, due to their mission to meet the reading and information needs of the society are predestined to take action aiming at the countering of social exclusion

- it has to be emphasized that public libraries should provide service to all its users, regardless of their economic or social status, age, beliefs, religion, etc;
- the mission of a library as/being an educational centre for tolerance understood also as an institution actively counteracting social exclusion is based on the legally binding rules of law.

Transforming a library into an institution of social inclusion, understood also as a „gateway to the integration of immigrants” requires multifaceted activities. The first of them is the removal of barriers to the access to a library. The barriers should be understood as architectural and organizational difficulties.

As far as architectural barriers are concerned, it is recommended that alternative forms of access to the library material and information are introduced in order to remove the barriers or to sooth the effects of their existence. Such alternative forms can include, among others:

- development of www services
- development of a hybrid library model
- delivering library material to the reader’s place of residence.

Photo: Archives of the Research Library in Liberec

The organizational barriers derive from the hitherto library practices. They do exist although their legality is highly doubtful (vide Act on libraries of 27 June 1997). In the first place they are:

- charging a fee for a library card
  - limited access due to the place of residence
- the deposit issue

Charging a fee for a library card is one of the ways a great number of public libraries fill up their budget. This practice is in breach of the rule according to which public libraries serve all their users regardless of their economic status. It is of major importance in case of the unemployed, or those who suffer financial problems as any expense presents a serious challenge for them. Limiting their access to public libraries is part of a social exclusion process of such people. At the same time, as far as the unemployed or people suffering financial problems are concerned, public libraries which do not limit access to their services and collections are natural part of a system countering exclusion.

Any fee or deposit payment favours social exclusion, as it is a tool limiting access to public libraries on the grounds of the financial status of a person who wants to use their service. Being an institution which plays a democratizing



role in the life of society, a public library cannot build any, including financial, barriers to the access to its service and collection.

A great majority of librarians do not see any reasons why public libraries should take action countering social exclusion and supporting social inclusion. This status quo results in the first place from lack of knowledge of the phenomenon of exclusion and its forms, the methods of countering these phenomena and also the methods allowing for social inclusion. This leads to a conclusion that the above mentioned matters should be introduced to the system of professional development of library staff (training within the library, poviats and voivodeship seminars) and to become an important element of self-improvement of librarians.

Libraries, especially in city milieus, do not have reliable information on the reader's needs of the society they serve. Librarians are not acquainted with the social structure of this population. Nor do they recognize the groups threatened by exclusion, including immigrant groups. As a result, they are not able to organize library work in a competent way the aim of which is to meet the reading and information needs of the local community. Therefore, there is an urgent need to conduct periodic research aimed at:

- Recognition of reading and information needs of the local community
- Recognition of groups threatened by social exclusion
- Recognition of reading and information needs of the groups threatened by social exclusion.

Recognition of reading and information needs of the local community, including the needs of the groups threatened by social exclusion ought to be of great importance in agreeing on certain collection development and availability policies. In multicultural environments, it is necessary that information material on a given national or ethnic minority, or an immigrant community, as well as the literature which enables this community to maintain its own cultural identity are included in the collection development policy. In case of immigrant communities and also the Roma community it is necessary to develop a collection including entries which may serve integration of these groups (e.g. books and programmes for studying Polish language).

A proper availability policy is based on free access to a library collection. On the one hand, it means the removal of any barriers, and, on the other hand, prevention of stigmatization of people and groups of people, for the benefit of whom these barriers are being removed. A stigmatization process takes place every time there is a pre-selection of library users, that is, when readers belonging to the groups threatened by social exclusion are directed to specialized branches. The development of such specialized branches is acceptable in case of special collection only; therefore, it is in fact limited to blind or myopic people only. It is unacceptable

to develop branches the activity of which focuses on, for example, the unemployed or immigrants.

As in case of collection development policy, the knowledge of the groups threatened by social exclusion and the methods of social inclusion also have to be accounted for in the development and up-dating of the information service. Information services of public libraries may be of great importance in this respect. Immigrants and repatriates are by nature threatened by social exclusion. Having arrived in Poland they find themselves in a totally new environment. Neither do they know the realities of this environment nor the Polish law. They often have difficulties with reaching institutions which are obliged by law to provide assistance to them. Immigrants and repatriates should be able to find in a public library information on these institutions and also any other information important from the point of view of their living. Moreover, if it is possible, this information should be provided for them in their mother tongue. It is feasible because immigrant waves can usually be predicted. Therefore libraries can be prepared to admit these people.

It is generally accepted that library activities should be devoted to the promotion of reading. Transformation of a library into an institution of social inclusion requires a change of this attitude through accounting for the fact that a public library is by nature a multifunctional institution of culture. Due to the fact that it is visited by at least 25% of the local community members it can serve an educational function to them.

Education for tolerance can take different forms, from various kinds of competitions, through meetings and seminars, to the exhibitions devoted to this matter. In this context, open space libraries, especially their communication lines, are particularly attractive as they constitute a natural space for displaying the issues concerned with the education of tolerance.

A library should also become an institution facilitating the realization of cultural and artistic undertakings of groups threatened by exclusion and any minority groups (e.g. national and ethnic minorities, immigrants), as they are usually deprived of an opportunity to create their own cultural infrastructure. A support given to these groups through rendering public library rooms available for them will on the one hand be part of anti-exclusion activities, and on the other hand, will contribute to the rise of awareness of the majority community, which eventually should result in grounding the foundations for tolerance and acceptance of "the Other".

Being an institution of social inclusion, a library should include an additional function in its activities, that is actions stimulating the development of civil society in Poland. Therefore, it should spread information about the institutions of the third sector and the role they play in the

lives of local communities, and, on the other hand, become a peculiar kind of an incubator of such institutions, especially if they undertake the problem of harmonized local development, the so-called development which accounts for the needs of minority groups and milieus threatened by social exclusion.

The hitherto described activities should be regarded as typical activities of a public library compliant with the idea of a library regarded as an institution promoting social inclusion. In order to fully realize this model it seems to be necessary to add to the field of exploration other activities referring to the countering of social exclusion.

Such specific fields of activity of a public library include, for example:

1) promotion of human rights through:

- collection, promotion and making available entries on human rights and fundamental freedoms
  - publishing entries on this subject
  - spreading information on human rights through web sites
  - development of cooperation with the third sector organizations (e.g. organization of fairs and presentations)
  - creating a data base of organizations working (in the framework of library activity) for the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms
  - development of a data base of institutions responsible for the observance of human rights (e.g. Commissioner for Civil Rights Protection, Ombudsman for Children, the Students' Rights Spokesperson, the Insurance Ombudsman, Patient Ombudsman, the Consumer Ombudsman, National Labour Inspectorate, the Voivode's Plenipotentiary for National Minorities etc.)
  - development of a data base of e-zones involved in the observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms
- 2) actions aimed at social inclusion through:
- actions aimed at immigrant integration (e.g. facilitating Polish lessons, introduction into the Polish law, facilitating access to culture of the country of the immigrant's origin)
  - social activation of the unemployed (e.g. initial personal counseling)
  - social activation of the disabled (development of integration groups and communities, organization of classes with educational games, workshops, organization of occasional meetings)

The situation of immigrants, and in particular of refugees, after their arrival to Poland varies. Each of them requires an individual integration programme which will meet his needs in the best way possible, and, at the same time, account for his skills and education. However, their basic problems in the initial phase of their life in Poland remain the same: they do not know the language and culture, have no employment or accommodation.

Integration assistance should make the opportunities of the immigrants in this field equal with those of the Poles. As far as education is concerned, it should guarantee recognition of the immigrants' diplomas, completion of their education and learning Polish to the level which will enable them to find employment (preferably in their profession). The assistance of schools admitting immigrants' children is also important – work with alien children at the beginning of their stay in Poland requires increased attention of a psychologist and additional work of the teachers. Not all schools are able to meet these requirements on their own.

It is also necessary to give the immigrants a chance to find employment, which, in spite of high unemployment, is possible as immigrants often possess skills which Polish citizens lack. It is therefore very important that people who decide to assist immigrants know their competence very well. Sometimes the skills that an immigrant regards as obvious and unimportant, can make him attractive on the job market (it can be knowledge of foreign languages, a cooking talent, good computer skills, an artistic talent).

Accommodation constitutes a serious problem. It is easier to solve when an immigrant has a job. Few refugees have been given commune flats in Poland. For the rest of them finding accommodation is difficult as there are very few cheap flats in Poland. Polish experts working with refugees have come up with an idea to develop integration centres: places where recognised refugees could find accommodation and social assistance directly after having been awarded the refugee status. However, until now, none of the nongovernmental organizations or state institutions has taken up this suggestion.

Although recently the integration task has been taken up by the state, it is still nongovernmental organizations which often remain the main source of assistance for immigrants. In the present situation work coordination is particularly important in order for state institutions and NGOs not to double their actions. The activities of public institutions are different from those of NGOs; therefore, good cooperation between them would lead to the best use of these actions.

A growing interest in the immigrants' problems on the side of young people is a relatively new phenomenon, which can however positively influence their situation in Poland. Volunteers already teach refugees (and also people waiting for the status to be awarded to them) Polish language and computer skills, support the recently created Refugee Association, organize activities for refugees' children, work with refugee children during summer holidays (such holidays have been organized by the One World Association for two years now). It would be useful to develop the opportunities for voluntary action – especially with the funds for integration in Poland being so low.

In this respect, the situation could be improved by the introduction of culture institutions, with the focus on public libraries, into this system. The efforts which have been made in this respect make us believe that it is possible.

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Photo: Archives of the Municipal Library in Ostrava



# A Strategic Action Plan of The Krakow Voivodeship Public Library for the Years 2006-2009

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Establishment of a place friendly to groups threatened by social exclusion, including immigrants, as an example of a library action plan benefitting persons from other cultures.

## 1.1

Together with the development of market economy and democratic institutions (the free media), Poland has become a destination of many immigrants, mainly from the countries of the Commonwealth of Independent States but also from Asia and Africa. An analysis of everyday reality suggests that there are many immigrant groups living in Poland, mainly from the former USSR states, such as Ukrainians, Russians, Armenians, and also Asians from the Far East. This fact can be observed in the broadly understood field of service – trade, gastronomy, child and older people's care, cleaning. However, there is lack of precise data considering the number of immigrants living in Poland, their age or profession structure and also their educational and cultural needs.

The state migration policy is a complex process, which has to account for various international circumstances, demographic tendencies, cultural and economic factors. Poland has long recognized the need of refugee protection and has co-operated with the Schengen Group member states. Since year 2004 it has also been obliged to implement EU regulations. Many appropriate aliens regulations – immigrants and refugees – have been introduced to the Polish legislation. Refugees are also the only group covered by individual integration programmes. However, a prevailing majority of the institutions involved in the development of civil society believes that it is not enough. The new migration situation in Europe requires a much greater involvement in the development of a common migration policy. The Ministry of social Policy seems to be aware of this problem. In its proposition "Strategy of Social Policy for the years 2007-2013", it regards the aliens residing in Poland as a separate group, threatened by social exclusion.

Although there is much and various information on immigrants and their problems, scattered between the local government and government institutions and non-governmental institutions. Research results, if such are conducted by institutions of higher education, do not leave academic circles. Lack of coordination agenda results from lack of both central and regional integration policy. One can hope that the situation will improve as a result of cooperation between the public and the social sector. Libraries – neutral places, open to everyone, equipped with information and educational service – can play an important role here. It is necessary to prepare them for it.

## 1.1 LOCAL COMMUNITY DESCRIPTION

### IMMIGRANTS

As far as the number of aliens staying in Poland for the period of over two months is concerned, the Małopolskie Voivodeship holds the second place following the Mazowieckie Voivodeship. As shown by the data of the National Population Census of 2002, there were 3000 immigrants in the territory of the Małopolskie Voivodeship in 2002, including as many as 1900 long-term immigrants, whose stay exceeded 12 months. In general, they have settled in cities – 82% in Krakow and 71% in the Krakowski Poviát. What is interesting, the least of them – 0.3% – have chosen the Proszowicki Poviát. The greatest number of immigrants have come from Ukraine – 600 people, USA and Canada – 300, Germany – 200, Armenia and Kazakhstan – 200, Asian countries – 100.

The data from the subsequent years concerning the Małopolskie Voivodeship, are as follows:

2003 – 98 settlement permits awarded  
2004 – 260  
2005 – 288

This significant growth has been caused by the citizens of Ukraine, but it is worth mentioning, that representatives of as many as 43 states have settled in the Małopolskie Voivodeship over the period of three years.

#### REPATRIATES

Every year, Krakow admits five Polish families from Kazakhstan, providing for them board and accommodation for the period of one year. Currently, there are 429 repatriates at different age – they are usually three-generation families – living in the Małopolskie Voivodeship. As many as 199 of them live in Krakow. There are 97 seniors (people over 60 years old). In general, they do not feel well here, getting job offers below the level of their education and expectations. The Polish Humanitarian Organization, in the framework of a project financed by the European Social Fund, organizes Polish language and computer courses, but the educational needs are not formulated. The Polish Humanitarian Organization also provides opportunities to fulfil the repatriates' cultural needs – museums, theatres, classical concerts – which is very important considering their low incomes.

One of the solutions would be to open a Polish language course which would include reading of Polish literature, where repatriates could share their experiences with others.

#### 1.2. LIBRARY DESCRIPTION

The Krakow Voivodeship Public Library exercises substantive supervision over 186 commune libraries in the Małopolskie Voivodeship. In year 2005, it made its collection available 842,796 times (435,169 on the spot and 407,636 outside the library). It registered 69,679 readers, whose number increased by 7,000 in comparison to year 2004.

The library is very active in the promotion and popularization field. It runs, among others, The Małopolska Publishing Salon (Małopolski Salon Wydawców), Library Week, Armenian Days, Arab Cultural Days. In 2005, it organized nine exhibitions, four of which concerned other cultures. It has also implemented the projects: "The Round Table. The Youth Learns about the Lemkos' Culture", "The Open Door. A Great Book of Tolerance", "Libraries as Gateways to the Integration of Immigrants in the EU."

The Regional Centre for Social Integration has been

established – a specialized agenda working to the benefit of persons threatened by social exclusion. There has also been established the Regional Centre for Reading Research the aim of which is to conduct research on readers' needs and the quality of work and service provided by public libraries.

These and other activities contribute to the fact that the Krakow Voivodeship Public Library has become an important cultural centre of the Małopolska region and a place of vigorous actions to the benefit of the local community.

#### 1.3. THE ATTITUDE OF THE AUTHORITIES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS TO THE PROBLEM OF SOCIAL EXCLUSION.

Authorities and public institutions as well as the Roman Catholic Church and non-governmental institutions try to combat the problem of social exclusion in different ways. Most emphasis is placed on providing assistance to the poor, the unemployed and the homeless – there are numerous soup kitchens and homeless shelters; funds are allocated for supplementary feeding of school children.

The European Social Fund, in turn, has considerable financial sources for programmes aimed at assisting people in finding and keeping a job, and also for the disabled. However, in order to use these sources in a proper way, it is essential to simplify at once the procedures accompanying the implementation of the projects supported by this Fund.

A document entitled "National Strategy of Social Integration" has been created. In 2005, the Department of Social Assistance and Integration of the Ministry of Social Policy commenced implementation of the @lterCamp project in the framework of the EQUAL Community Initiative Programme. The project aims to create a model centre with a special integration programme for persons applying for a refugee status. There is lack of similar initiatives on the level of the regions, because in each region the structure of the groups threatened by exclusion is different. One can hope that with the priorities having been set by the European Union for the years 2007-2013, these problems, including broadly understood immigrant groups, will be tackled in a more dynamic way.

#### 1.4. THE ATTITUDE OF THE AUTHORITIES AND PUBLIC INSTITUTIONS TO THE LIBRARY AND ITS DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME.

The activities of the Krakow Voivodeship Public Library receive favourable opinions from the appropriate central and local institutions, which is proved by grants from the Małopolskie Voivodeship and State budget.

#### 1.5. THE EUROPEAN UNION POLICY ON SOCIAL EXCLUSION AND THE ROLE OF LIBRARIES IN THE PROCESS OF SOCIAL INCLUSION.

The European Union notices the quick changes in the society structure of both new and old countries of the Community. The ageing society, negative demographic growth rate, lack of direct generation replacement are some of the key problems of the Community. These problems are common for most countries. Therefore, immigrant work is the only chance of maintaining the efficiency of the retirement system. At the same time, as shown by the experience of France and Germany, a wrong immigrant policy results in a growing alienation of foreigners and the development of national and religious ghettos. At the same time, a demanding attitude towards the state prevails. Only recently has the European Union understood the need of taking a wider perspective on these phenomena.

The first important document is the **Common Basic Principles for Immigrant Integration Policy** adopted by the Justice and Home Affairs Council on 19 November 2004. Another one is a **Green Paper on an EU approach to managing economic migration** of January 2005, and finally the General programme "**Solidarity and Management of Migration Flows**" for the years 2007-2013. It includes a proposition of establishing four funds: The European Refugee Fund, The External Borders Fund, The European

Fund for the Integration of Third-country Nationals, The European Return Fund.

## II. SWOT ANALYSIS

### STRENGTHS

- Neutral character of the library – being open to everybody
- Central location (convenient transport connections)
- Infrastructure (the building, equipment, software)
- Educated staff
- Internet as an action platform
- Stable source of financing basic undertakings
- Experience from realised projects
- Positive image of the library in local community
- Possibility of cooperation with academic staff
- Possibility of recruiting volunteers – students

### WEAKNESSES

- Weak identification of the library in immigrant community
- Difficulties in getting through to a target group
- Lack of integration policy on a local level
- Dispersion of information concerning the situation of target groups (threatened by social exclusion)

Photo: Archives of the Research Library in Liberec



- Lack of identified partners in the region
- Financial resources inadequate with planned undertakings
- Insufficient determination of library staff
- Dispersion of information concerning the library possibilities and collection (a need of a modern visualisation)
- Lack of knowledge of good examples of social integration
- Lack of a strategic sponsor

**OPPORTUNITIES**

- European politics: the priority is treating diversity as a development factor, supporting effective integration of refugees and immigrants on the local community level
- Allotting European funds for the development of an integration policy
- Announcing the year 2008 a Multicultural Dialogue Year
- Economic development is a chance of enhancing the financial situation of libraries
- The change of attitudes towards immigration
- The increase of the awareness of the role of the library in dissident societies
- Noticing immigrant issue in the Social Policy Strategy of the Ministry of Social Policy for the year 2007-2013
- Engaging the library staff into social integration issues

**STRATEGIC AIMS:**

1. INTEGRATION OF IMMIGRANTS WITH LOCAL COMMUNITY
2. FAMILIARIZING LOCAL COMMUNITY WITH IMMIGRANTS

**DETAILED AIMS:**

1. ADAPTATION OF LIBRARY UNDERTAKINGS FOR IMMIGRANTS' NEEDS
  - Tasks:*
  - Analyzing the library resources and capabilities in the context of proposal for immigrants
  - Reducing obstacles in library access
  - Developing of library staff's skills in countering social exclusion
  - Drawing up the rules of collecting resources aimed at this objective
  - Creating a system of library staff training
  - Creating a bibliography on immigration in Poland
2. PROMOTION OF REGIONAL CENTRE FOR SOCIAL INTEGRATION AS A PLACE INSPIRING INTERCULTURAL UNDERTAKINGS

*Tasks:*

- Drawing up a promotional strategy of the library as a centre for tolerance
- Examining the situation and both cultural and educational needs of immigrants in the Małopolskie Voivodeship
- Establishing contact with media
- Establishing contact with organisations working with immigrants
- Initiating Polish language courses

## 3. THE PROMOTION OF POSITIVE ATTITUDES TOWARDS IMMIGRANTS

*Tasks:*

- Promotion of human rights
- Including immigration issues in circumlibrarian activity – exhibitions, meetings, films, concerts
- Panel meetings and conferences on social integration
- Establishing local partnership
- Drawing up educational strategy for libraries

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION OF****THE STRATEGIC PLAN**

- The analysis of resources and capabilities of the library in the context of proposals for immigrants 2007
- Reducing obstacles in library access 2007
- Developing library staff's skills in countering social exclusion 2007-2009
- Drawing up the rules of collecting resources aimed at this objective 2007
- Creating a system of library staff training 2007-2008
- Creating a bibliography on immigration to Poland 2007-2009
- Drawing up a promotional strategy of the library as a centre for tolerance 2006-2007
- Examining the situation and both cultural and educational needs of immigrants in the Małopolskie Voivodeship 2007
- Establishing contact with media 2006-2007
- Establishing contact with organisations aimed at immigrants 2006-2007
- Initiating Polish language courses 2007-2009
- Promotion of human rights
- Inclusion of immigration issues into circumlibrarian activity – exhibitions, meetings, films, concerts 2006-2009
- Panel meetings and conferences on social integration 2006-2009
- Establishing local partnership 2006-2007
- Drawing up educational strategy for libraries 2008

**IMPORTANT DOCUMENTS AND INSTITUTIONS:**

- National Strategy for Social Integration
- Programme for the Roma Community in Poland

2004-2013

- The National Strategy for the Young 2003-2012
- The National Programme for the Advancement

of Women

- National Contact Point on Integration

(UKIE temporary expert)

- The Team on National Minorities (Sub-team for Roma Issues)
- Community Initiative EQUAL

Priority themes:

• Facilitating access and return to the labour market for those who have difficulty in being integrated or reintegrated into a labour market which must be open to all, including ethnic minorities, repatriates and members of their families.

**PARTNERS:**

- Ministry of Interior and Administration
- Ministry of Labour and Social Policy
- Ministry of Justice
- Ministry of Culture and National Heritage
- The Institute of Public Affairs
- Polish Humanitarian Organisation
- Foundation for Education for Democracy
- Academy for the Development of Philanthropy

in Poland

• Citizen Affairs and Migration Department of The Office of the Małopolska Voivode in Krakow

- Social Policy Department of The Office

of the Małopolska Voivode in Krakow

- Social Policy Department of The Office

of the Marshal of the Małopolska Voivodeship in

- Krakow
- Regional Municipal Social Welfare Centres
- District Centres of Family Support
- Kraków City Hall
- Jagiellonian University Human Rights Centre
- The Ronald Regan Institute for the Advancement

of Civil Rights

- The Halina Niec Human Rights Association

**POSTSCRIPT**

When compared with their Western counterparts, Polish public libraries that take actions aimed at integration of immigrants act in a completely different environment. While countries that have encountered mass immigration problems earlier than Poland have taken comprehensive actions on this issue, and libraries have constituted either their complement or one of the elements of their integration strategy, Poland is in a completely different situation.

The only group of aliens that is supported by the state is refugees. It has to be pointed out, thus, that NGOs dealing with such issues have assessed Polish migration policy as too bureaucratic, incoherent and inefficient in this matter. Newcomers who are not qualified as refugees cannot count on any governmental support. Such support is provided only by certain NGOs and public institutions (libraries, for instance).

Strategic plans drawn up by Polish public libraries as a part of the project “Libraries as gateways to the integration of immigrants in the EU” intend to mirror this state of affairs. Polish librarians – making use of Danish, Dutch, German and Swedish experience – have created projects of extended, sometimes even too extended for such institutions, undertakings. Such an attitude towards the issue of the role of libraries in social integration is the result of acting in a peculiar void, where the only point of reference is either dispersed efforts of NGOs or nebulous plans of government strategy.

The strategic plan of the Krakow Voivodeship Public Library presented above is one of the examples of the project involving such actions. However, the plan is not a completely self-contained document. It is set in the Development Strategy of the Krakow Voivodeship Public Library for the year 2007-2013. A similar attitude towards their strategic plans was presented by other public libraries participating in the project.

All undertakings of Polish public libraries for the integration of immigrants with local communities, both taken up during the last two years and planned for the future, clearly indicate that they are predestined to take on a leading role in the process of the immigrant integration. We should truly hope that their efforts will be noticed and find a reflection in the strategy of immigrant integration plan drawn up by the Polish Government.

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# Conclusion



## Conclusion

Zlata Houšková

You have just finished reading a publication describing the activities of selected foreign libraries aimed at ethnic and linguistic minorities and providing numerous recommendations on launching such activities. What will Czech libraries think? Will this publication be a real source of inspiration and best practices for them or will they view the issue as only marginal? It is safe to assume that libraries in large cities with a growing immigrant population or libraries located near refugee centers will see the problem in a different light than others. Many libraries are likely to feel that this is not an issue requiring instant attention as the number of members of minorities in their towns and cities is rather small. It remains to be seen whether this is so but whatever the case may be, the situation may and probably will change over time. We recommend such libraries (and also others) to carefully monitor demographic developments in their area. Only those who are prepared will be able to prevent possible problems in the future.

Why is it important for public libraries to take minorities into account? The answer lies in the Librarianship Act which states that library is "... an institution that guarantees, without limitations, equal access for all people to public library and information services." Equal access is therefore guaranteed regardless of age, gender, religion, education or social status.

Making ethnic and linguistic minorities a part of the target group of public libraries is undoubtedly one of the key aspects of the changing social role of libraries and their quest for a new, respected position within their communities. It is by no means easy for many libraries to accept their new role as it means not only coping with numerous problems (funding and staffing needs, lack of support, etc.), but also, and in particular, changing attitude towards their own work and mission, learning to adapt to constant changes, improving skills of employees in many non-core areas (psychology, education or languages) and viewing libraries as part of a larger whole (community) the problems of which libraries must assist in solving.

Insights from abroad presented in this publication come from libraries that have accepted their new role and started providing services tailored for ethnic and linguistic minorities. We know that even in Western Europe, this approach is far from commonplace, but its importance is growing, as evidenced by projects, activities and examples from the Czech Republic. Nothing seriously prevents us from applying best practices from abroad. Consider the following for a moment:

- Czech libraries often cooperate with affiliated maternity centers or mothers' clubs – but what about clubs of mothers from minority groups or integration of mothers from such groups into existing clubs?
- Libraries work extensively with children – but do they work with children from ethnic and linguistic minorities? Are they trying to organize collective activities for children from the majority and minorities (Night with Andersen, Where the World Ends, etc.)?
- Most libraries normally organize computer literacy courses for the elderly, unemployed or other specific target groups (mothers with small children, women returning from maternity leave, etc.) – what about similar courses for minorities?
- Preparing children for life in the information society and teaching functional literacy are common activities – can we apply this approach to adult immigrants?
- Libraries host a large number of great and attractive

events to support reading. Are we able to also support reading among children (and adults) from ethnic and linguistic minorities?

- Many libraries have great qualitative results when working as centers of education – but do they include minorities in their projects?

- New information activities are being added even in the smallest towns. Are we or can we function as information centers also for immigrants or minorities?

- We offer hundreds of different free-time and leisure activities to the general public, but are we able to target some of these activities to clients outside of the majority or implement them as integration activities?

- When promoting their activities, libraries turn to the general public – what about promotion targeting specific groups?

- Electronic services, another type of public library activities, are developing fast (although not fast enough). Many libraries realize that in the future, this will be one of the most important areas. We should strive to design and provide services in more languages, not only in English, but also in languages of minorities living in the given area, so that their needs are served, too.

There are many more examples of activities that have become an integral part of library activities and can be tailored to the needs of minorities (exchange funds for asylum seekers and asylum holders, solutions enabling loans to immigrants without valid identification, etc.).

We should also note the opportunity for libraries to influence, inform and educate the majority, ideally in direct cooperation with minorities, their associations or other organizations. It is also not insignificant that libraries usually function as a major element of community integration bringing together different groups of inhabitants. It would be therefore desirable to also include linguistic and ethnic minority groups living in the given community.

Examples from foreign libraries should inspire us to provide services that are new and so far rare in the Czech Republic: language courses (Czech for foreigners), civic education, collective readings of newspapers and magazines and related discussions, etc. Such activities are nothing extraordinary or unusual for our libraries. All it takes is changing one's attitude and considering the real needs of communities and people. In addition, a strategic, systemic and long-term approach is also a must.

It is worth noting that Czech libraries can obtain funding for projects in this area from various sources including municipalities, regions and the government. For a number of years now, funds have been available from the Ministry of Culture's Library of the 21st Century program under the heading "Support of work with national minorities and integration of foreigners."

However, involvement of libraries in projects for ethnic and linguistic minorities is not exclusively about hard work: often, it is libraries that profit from such activities. First and foremost, the reputation of libraries in communities can improve together with quality of relations with municipalities as they must also reflect new circumstances (presence of minorities) and deal with ensuing problems. A well-prepared library capable of working in the local community and internalizing experience from other libraries can become an important and valuable partner for the public administration. Today, it may be also important for libraries to win a new group of users and establish unconventional contacts with individuals, groups, NGOs as well as other institutions and organizations with whom they would have never interacted otherwise. Involvement of such organizations in projects obviously means development of skills and competencies on the part of library staff, influx of collaborators-volunteers, favorable media coverage, etc.

Some Czech libraries devote a lot of energies to minorities and can be proud of many interesting and successful activities and projects (Municipal Libraries in Český Těšín, Cheb and Jihlava, Regional Library in Karviná, Municipal Library in Prague, etc.). Although Roma are only marginally an immigrant minority, it should be noted that October 2006 will see the completion of the first stage of Romaňi kereka ("Roma circle") with the opening of a new public library in Ostrava-Vítkovice whose main objective is to improve communication between Roma and non-Roma inhabitants of this part of Ostrava, develop the circumstances under which Roma receive education and finally create a meeting place where Roma would feel welcome yet not isolated from the majority. The project, implemented jointly by the Municipal Library in Ostrava, the city and the borough of Vítkovice and many other partners (Goethe-Institut, Association of Library and Information Professionals of the Czech Republic, University of Ostrava, Roma and non-Roma activists and volunteers and numerous others), received funding from Gemeinnützige Hermann-Niermann-Stiftung. We expect it to become an example of good practice for libraries across the country working with minorities. We also expect more community-focused libraries such as the Masaryk Public Library in Vsetín, Municipal Library in Rožnov pod Radhoštěm and others to get more involved in this area.

The volume of library activities is growing and it seems that at least some libraries are preparing for the time when there will be much more immigrants in the Czech Republic and libraries as friendly, forthcoming, safe and cultivated places open to all will be the first port of call and the first aid station for those newly arrived in the country. Libraries can help minorities and the majority to live together without tensions and problems.

This publication should assist them in their efforts.

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# Appendix

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# Status of various groups of foreigners in the Czech Republic

Libraries as Gateways to the Integration of Immigrants in the EU is a project focusing on integration of third-country nationals, i.e. asylum holders (individuals who have been granted asylum for political or humanitarian reasons), foreigners with permanent residence permits and – with certain reservations and exceptions – also foreigners with long-term residence permits (individuals holding visas for over 90 days). Each of the three groups has certain specifics. As a result, we deem it necessary to briefly outline differences between the statuses of these groups. One of our key motivations for doing so is making clear that the residence status or circumstances under which it was attained are – together with the attitude of Czech society – usually the strongest factors influencing the likelihood of integration of individuals and also the prospects of their success and motivation much more than for example their ethnic origin, religion or 'culture.'

## ASYLUM HOLDERS

Asylum holders are individuals who have been granted political or humanitarian asylum in the Czech Republic because their lives, health or liberties were in danger in their country of origin (this group is not to be confused with a much larger and much more problematic group as regards status, namely asylum claimants, i.e. those who are waiting to see whether they will be granted the status of asylum holders, formerly recognized refugees). Asylum holders have the de facto right to permanent residence and should enjoy nearly the same rights as Czech citizens. In reality, this is not always the case, but this issue is not relevant for our purposes. On the one hand, this group of foreigners is rather marginal when considering the total number of foreigners living in the Czech Republic (this group of 100-200 individuals per year accounts for just 1% of all foreigners residing in the Czech Republic), while on the other hand, it is in the gravest danger and needs the most as regards various services and programs sponsored by the government or NGOs. Asylum holders are currently the target group of most projects implemented by NGOs as well as the government's sole program of integration, the State Integration Program. It focuses on housing aid, cost-free Czech language courses and extra job center assistance. However, all these areas require further support from projects such as Libraries as Gateways to the Integration of Immigrants in the EU and other projects implemented by NGOs. The fact that the unemployment rate among this group of people is around 60% shows that not everything is well (see Zdeněk Uherek: *Integrace azylantů a efektivita Státního integračního programu*, 2006).

## PERMANENTLY RESIDING FOREIGNERS

Foreigners in this group have been granted permanent residence status either thanks to their uninterrupted stay in the Czech Republic or through consecutive visas for over 90 days in the course of 5 years (only since 2006; before, the required period was 10 years) or by marrying a Czech citizen or due to humanitarian or other special considerations. The manner in which permanent residence status was obtained is a crucial factor: an individual who has lived in the country for a long time, speaks the language and understands local customs or culture is in a different position than an individual who has married a Czech citizen, does not speak the language and is totally dependant on his or her spouse.

### FOREIGNERS HOLDING VISAS FOR OVER 90 DAYS

This is the most diverse group as the reasons for and circumstances of staying in the Czech Republic are profuse and often very different. The rights of this group of people ensue from the purpose of their stay and are therefore rather limited. However, their obligations are the same as or even exceed those of Czech citizens. In general, most of them are foreign entrepreneurs or workers with a higher potential for integration and permanent settlement in the Czech Republic. However, foreign entrepreneurs or workers also represent the most serious problem because of the current practice of various “agencies” that usually organize their stay, employment or business. Such foreigners are often completely dependant on ambiguous structures and a system wherein they might easily find themselves breaking the law without realizing it. This not only serves as a breeding ground for illegal practices, slave labor conditions and corruption, but also goes against integration and puts the society as a whole at risk. It must be noted that many Czech citizens including some public administration officials profit from the dismal situation of these people. The task of NGOs is thus not

only to inform clients about their rights and obligations, but also about existing threats and ways of mitigating them as well as to support the victims of this system. The role of the non-profit sector (and others) is made more difficult by the fact that the status of these foreigners is very unstable and there is little separating them from losing their residence privilege and having to leave the country. Of course, this has an impact on the possibilities of long-term cooperation with this group and its motivation to integrate into Czech society.

Photo: Archives of the Research Library in Liberec

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## Publications of the Multicultural Center Prague

The following publications may be purchased in the office of the Multicultural Center Prague located at Vodičkova 36, 116 02 Prague 1 or ordered by telephone at 296 325 345 or e-mail at [infocentrum@mkc.cz](mailto:infocentrum@mkc.cz).

**•• ETNICKÁ HUDBA VE ŠKOLE: METODICKÝ MATERIÁL PRO**

**SEZNAMOVÁNÍ S MIMOEVROPSKOU HUDBOU NA ZÁKLADNÍCH A STŘEDNÍCH ŠKOLÁCH ("ETHNIC MUSIC IN THE CLASSROOM: A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO INTRODUCING NON-EUROPEAN MUSIC IN ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY SCHOOLS")**

JURKOVÁ, Zuzana and HORÁKOVÁ Kateřina. Prague: Multicultural Center Prague, 2001. 1st edition, 73 pages, (CD included).

*This is a practical tool for instructors wishing to lecture about non-European music in elementary and secondary schools. Music is a great way to learn about the culture, religion and history of Africa, the Americas or Asia. An audio CD is included with the publication.*

PRICE: CZK 200 (publication + CD).

**•• COŽE? JÁ, A RASISTA? ("WHAT? ME? A RACIST?")**

SEMANCOVÁ, Andrea (Ed.). Prague: Multicultural Center Prague, 2002. 1st edition, 31 pages, ISBN 80-238-8066-7.

*This comic book is an attractive and entertaining educational aid commenting on everyday life in a society of people of different skin color, gender, social status, age and religion.*

PRICE: CZK 90 (comics sold out but available from the library of the Multicultural Center)

**•• MY A TI DRUZÍ: PŘÍRUČKA PRO MULTIKULTURNÍ VÝCHOVU A VZDĚLÁVÁNÍ NA ZÁKLADNÍ ŠKOLE ("WE AND THE OTHERS: MANUAL FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION IN ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS")**

NĚMEČKOVÁ, Iveta (Ed.). Prague: Multicultural Center Prague, 2003. 1st edition, 83 pp. ISBN 80-80-239-2099-5.

*A handbook for multicultural education in elementary schools that will teach you how to organize intercultural workshops focusing on Roma, Vietnamese, Chinese, people from the former USSR and also the major monotheistic religions.*

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HOŘAVOVÁ, Barbora (Ed.). Prague: Multicultural Center Prague, 2003. 1st edition, 94 pages, ISBN 80-239-1137-6.

*A book that attempts to determine what we think about*

*foreigners and minorities living in the Czech Republic and what information we receive about them from the media.*

AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE from the Multicultural Center Prague.

**•• SOCIAL AND CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: OLD FACTORS AND NEW**

BŘEZINOVÁ, Kateřina and LOBOTKA, Petr (Eds.). Prague: Multicultural Center Prague, 2004. 1st edition, 40 pages.

*Proceedings of the first annual seminar entitled "Social and Cultural Diversity in Central and Eastern Europe" which the Multicultural Center Prague hosted in October 2004 in Prague. The English text contains key contributions about ethnic, religious and cultural diversity, cultural and migration policies, etc.*

AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT

<http://www.mkc.cz/cz/nase-publikace.html>.

**•• KNIHOVNY PRO VŠECHNY: ROLE VEŘEJNÝCH KNIHOVEN V MULTIKULTURNÍ SPOLEČNOSTI ("LIBRARIES FOR ALL: THE ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN A MULTICULTURAL SOCIETY")**

HOŘAVOVÁ, Barbora and RICHTEROVÁ, Daniela.

Prague: Multicultural Center Prague, 2005. 1st edition, 106 pages, ISBN 80-239-5021-5.

*This book provides information about multicultural activities of Czech public libraries, recommendations on developing a multicultural library and also an overview of projects implemented by foreign libraries. A bibliography and Internet resources dealing with foreigners and national minorities in the Czech Republic are also included.*

PRICE: CZK 80.

**•• MIGRATION PROCESSES IN CENTRAL AND EASTERN EUROPE: UNPACKING THE DIVERSITY**

SZCZEPANIKOVÁ, Alice; ČANĚK, Marek and GRILL, Jan (Eds.).

Prague: Multicultural Center Prague, 2006, 83 pages, ISBN 80-239-6725-8.

*The fourteen essays and three interviews with leading figures from different non-profit organizations presented in this volume trace migration processes in Central and Eastern Europe from the 1980s to the present.*

PRICE: CZK 80 or available for free download at

[www.migraceonline.cz/novinky\\_f.shtml?x=1691378](http://www.migraceonline.cz/novinky_f.shtml?x=1691378).

**•• FINANČNÍ SLUŽBY V ČESKÉ REPUBLICE: PRŮVODCE PRO CIZINCE ("FINANCIAL SERVICES IN THE CZECH REPUBLIC: A FOREIGNER'S GUIDE")**

ŽÁKOVÁ PETROVÁ, Hana. Prague: Multicultural Center Prague, 2006. 50 pp. ISBN 80-239-6725-8

*A practical guide to the Czech Republic's banking sector and financial products designed for foreigners living in the Czech Republic; published in Czech, English, German, Russian, Ukrainian and Vietnamese.*

AVAILABLE FREE OF CHARGE from the Multicultural Center Prague or as a free download at [www.migraceonline.cz/finance](http://www.migraceonline.cz/finance).

# Libraries as Gateways to the Integration of Immigrants in the EU

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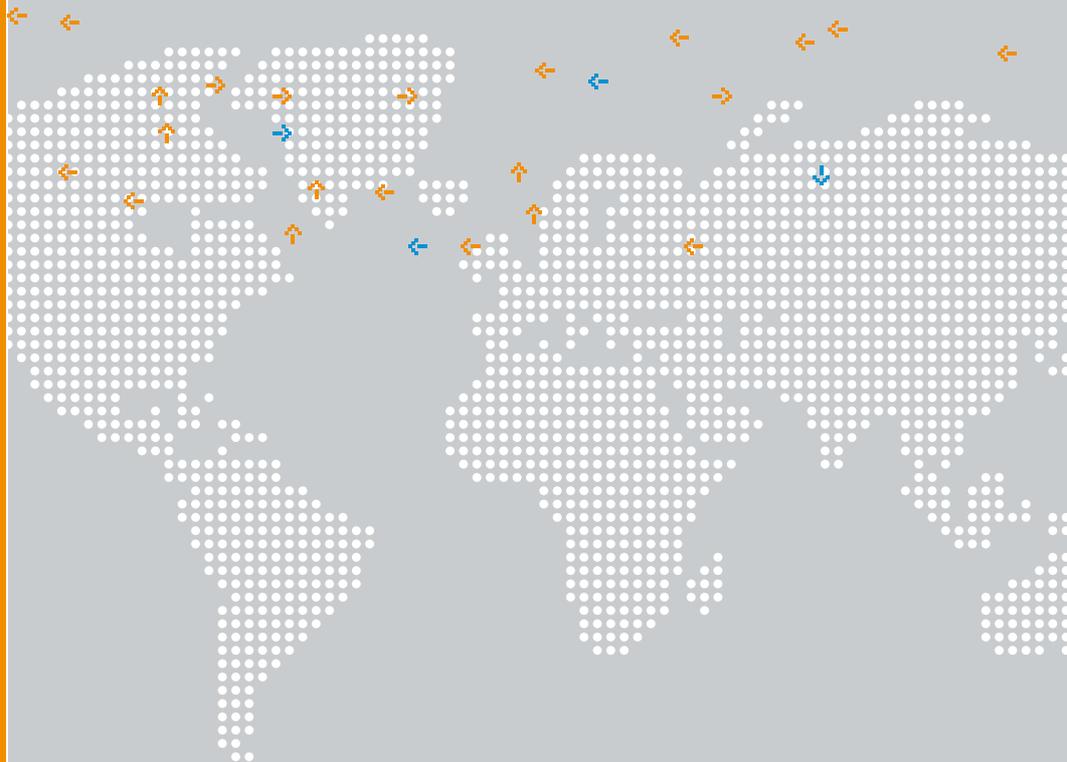
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Web o mezinárodní  
migraci ve střední  
a východní Evropě



články a studie

vývoj legislativy

aktuální témata

projekty organizací

kalendář akcí

adresář kontaktů

monitoring tisku

#### → [Migrace Online](#)

Mezinárodní migrace se v České republice stává výrazným společenským a politickým tématem. Do veřejné debaty přispívá Multikulturní centrum Praha se svým webem [www.migraceonline.cz](http://www.migraceonline.cz), který je už od roku 2002 zaměřen na vývoj postavení různých skupin cizinců v České republice a dalších zemích střední a východní Evropy. Internetová stránka systematicky mapuje výzkumy týkající se migrace, vývoj legislativy v oblasti migračních a azylových politik a činnost vládních i nevládních organizací a institucí. Jejimi čtenáři jsou převážně odborníci a další zájemci z akademické sféry, veřejné správy, nevládních organizací, médií a širší veřejnosti.

#### → [Aktuálně na webu](#)

- články k tématu „Jazyk a jeho role v integraci imigrantů“
- blogy migrantů z visegradských zemí na Západě  
na [www.migrationonline.cz/blogs/](http://www.migrationonline.cz/blogs/)

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...A tolerant  
society which  
is open to  
otherness  
and benefits  
from cultural  
diversity...

The Multicultural Center Prague is a non-governmental, not-for-profit organization founded in the Czech Republic in 1999. It works towards its objectives by organizing public debates; implementing a wide range of activities in the areas of education, information and research; issuing publications; and networking individuals and organizations with similar aims in the Czech Republic and abroad.

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