



**migrate
to
library!**

**MIGRATE
TO
LIBRARY!**

**good
practices**

Migrate to library! Good practices

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- Arucas Municipal Public Library, Gran Canaria, Spain
- Vilnius County Adomas Mickevicius Public Library, Lithuania
- Korcula Town Library "Ivan Vidali", Croatia

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Lack of information is a lack of knowledge that leads to ignorance. Ignorance is fear, and fear wakes up daemons. War isn't assigned to region of the world, faith or race. War always begins in human minds.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Marek Sygan". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with some loops and flourishes.

*Polish journalist, reporter,
TV correspondent,
documentary film author*

INTRODUCTION

There are new challenges in today's world. One of them is contemporary crisis of immigration in Europe. Among the crowds streaming to our continent there are both economic migrants and the refugees. They leave their own countries because of the risk of being repressed because of their religion, race, nationality, ethnic affiliation, political beliefs. Those groups require our attention and very often our help. However, the local communities – culturally homogeneous, set in cement by long-term neighbour-like relations – very unwillingly host the new settlers. Frequently they are treated like dangerous intruders. To avoid the rise of xenophobia – which leads to an indifferent co-existence and sometimes even to isolation of new members of society – the education of both parties is very important. Gradually incorporating the immigrants into the community and establishing neighbourly connections will have an effect in building a sense of social security.

Thus the libraries may have a very important role to play. As institutions, for many years operating in European countries, they are naturally interwoven in the local colour. They exist in the social consciousness as traditional cultural and educational centres. The library workers are closely attached to the members of local communities, they understand them and it is easy to reach them with different initiatives. In creating and realising the “Migrate to Library!” project we made use of the fact that libraries are usually the institutions of public trust. We wanted to make them into the activation centres of culture and education for everybody, regardless of age, religion, nationality, disability or social status. A positive approach to multiculturalism enable the elimination of negative social elements such as xenophobia, racism or discrimination.

The partners in the "Migrate to Library!" project were:

- Zory Municipal Public Library, Poland – project coordinator;
- Arucas Municipal Public Library, Gran Canaria, Spain;
- Vilnius County Adomas Mickevicius Public Library, Lithuania;
- Korcula Town Library "Ivan Vidali", Croatia.

Implementing the project we shared our experience, met the practitioners who organise migrants life, we took part in intercultural trainings, workshops and discussions. Our meetings served the integration and mutual inspiration for the education of adults and helped us create a special education offer in libraries. They were the great occasion to reflect, to compare and to evaluate our own achievements in the field of migration.

The "Migrate to Library!" project lasted twenty months, from September 2017 to April 2019 and one of the results is the publication in which partner libraries want to share with you the good practices developed during durance of the project.

Aleksandra Zawalska-Hawel

*Zory Municipal Public Library Director,
Project coordinator*



Miejska Biblioteka Publiczna w Żorach

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According to data published by the Office for The Foreigners, there are currently around 378 thousand migrants living in Poland (February 2019), holding a valid document entitling them to stay in our country. The largest number of them are representatives of Ukrainian, then German, Belarussian, Vietnamese and Russian nationalities. Ukrainians are profitable migrants. Those who escaped a war in Ukraine can't apply for refugee status in Poland, because according to the law they can go to the so-called internal emigration, that is, to those regions of Ukraine that were not involved in the war. Among the persons who apply for the refugee status in Poland, the largest ethnic group are the Chechens.

Official data say that around 4,000 migrants are living in Żory. In our city, the largest group are also Ukrainians, we also have quite a few of Moldovans, Georgians and South Koreans. Żory has the largest number of repatriates in our region and ranks in the forefront in Silesia in this range. These are Polish families who, against their will, have been transported into the depths of the Soviet Union and their entire generations grew up outside Poland in the expectation that they would return to their homeland someday. They returned from Georgia, Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan - the Asian part of the Russian Federation. They all deserve our attention and respect.

When planning local activities under the project “Migrate to library!” we focused primarily on non-formal education of adults. Convinced that it is of key importance for migrants, we also had no doubt, that we need to build an accepting attitude in our community, help tame fear, while preventing attitudes of rejection and hatred. This has been facilitated, among others, by the knowledge acquired during the international training course “Stand on multiculturalism”, which participants of the project attended. We also took part in various workshops and webinars raising competences, that has been related to the project area, for example “Working with socially excluded groups. Is there anything to be afraid of?”, “To believe or to distrust the information”, “Do not be drown in by fake news! How to consciously make use of information and teach others about it?”, “Multicultural, in what way? About multiculturalism at the library”. We also had many meetings in the employees group, discussing how to shape our local activities in the project, how to involve the community and other institutions, how to effectively promote and disseminate our project, and above all what should be included in our offer.



1. MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

The literature of the world-famous Polish writer Joseph Conrad (Józef Konrad Korzeniowski) served as a pretext to start a discourse on immigrants, terrorism and national minorities. A series of panel discussions with eminent Polish writers, journalists and scientists with a great involvement of the local community helped to overcome the reluctance in talking about migrants, helped to tame fear, express concerns and get answers to many bothering questions.



The tragic fate of the Krzesimir Dębski family, a very well-known Polish composer and jazz violinist, has shown how terrible nationalism can be. His parents were refugees from Ukraine, who miraculously avoided the massacre which in July 1943 Ukrainian nationalists carried out on the Polish population living in Volhynia. However, the Ukrainians kidnapped and killed his grandfather and grandma. The accounts of witnesses to this slaughter, including Krzesimir Dębski's parents, are a shocking testimony to genocide and have been described in book "Nic nie jest w porządku. Wołyń moja rodzinna historia" ("Nothing is fine. Volhynia, my family history").

1. MEETINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

We have held meetings with people directly involved in activities for refugees, people excluded and discriminated by the society. One of the guests was Marina Hulia, coming from Belarus, who organizes help for single mothers and their children, refugees from Chechnya, who spent many weeks and months at the railway station in Brest (Belarus) and its surroundings. People who declare that they are refugees are not allowed to cross the border there.

Participants of the Discussion Book Club based on a specially selected fiction and non-fiction literature have repeatedly discussed the various aspects of migration, problems related to it and human needs.



2. MOVIE SHOWS

"Rakka" by Marek Sygacz, a documentary film showing the struggle for Syrian Rakka, the capital of ISIS. This is a report about the devastating power of war and attempts to free cities from the hands of jihadists, the sense of struggle and the inhumane methods used by Islamic State. The film is full of unique shots in the conflict zone.

"Afrin. The world betrayed us" by Marek Sygacz, a documentary movie showing how the Turkish army and the FSA militias supported by it - Free Syrian Army attacked Afrin - a canton and a city located in north-western Syria. The pretext was the fight against terrorism, but the real goal was to clear these lands from the indigenous Kurdish population.



2. MOVIE SHOWS

"Lahza 2" by Johny Kondakjian a documentary movie showing Syrian and Palestine refugee children from Syria in tented settlements in Lebanon. The children live in miserable conditions in these settlements, which are cluster of tents made with whatever materials their families could find. In this movie we can see the dire state of refugees life through the eyes of children.

"Birds are singing in Kigali" by Joanna Kos-Krauze and Krzysztof Krauze, is a social drama movie about refugees, talking about the complexity of the bloody conflict between the tribes of Tutsi and Hutus. Although Rwanda and its problems may seem distant to us, the mechanisms for spreading hatred remain disturbingly universal. In the context of Europe's migration crisis, the subject matter of the film takes on an exceptional dimension.

Film makers were present at all screenings - commented, explained, answered audience questions. They explained that it's not enough to know that a wave of refugees is flooding Europe. You need to know who these people are, where they fled from, why they had to escape, what was the basis of the conflict that banished them from their homes and whether there is any chance to resolve this conflict.

3. EXHIBITIONS

The exhibition "Borders" by Piotr Sikora features photographs depicting Polish folk art through a multicultural lens. Through showing Polish traditional costumes worn by people of different nationalities, the authors pose questions about the faces, dimensions and limits of Polish national identity against the backdrop of rapid social change. As ethnic diversity returns to Poland - a nation violently stripped of its national minorities during World War II - Poles must decide whether to embrace it or remain closed. At the vernissage of the exhibition in the library, the artist has said that a homogeneous society is like a broth without salt and pepper.



The photographic exhibition called "Is it peace after war?" by Johny Kondakjian showing the hard life of Syrian children in a refugee camp in Lebanon.

4. WORKSHOPS

Truth and falsehood play a key role in our lives. They affect our way of thinking and acting. They determine our attitude towards reality and determine our social interactions. In the fake news era, distinguishing a difference between truth and falsehood is one of the most important tasks. The “How to Recognize the Truth?” workshop has been focused on providing participants with knowledge about the mechanisms that are used for manipulation and disinformation, as well as on cognitive tools that we can use to defend ourselves against manipulation, especially media.



We have also conducted a series of “No Hate Speech” workshops, breaking the topics of aggressive language, stigmatization and calling for an end to verbal violence.

5. CONFERENCE

The conference "Language shapes the world" was addressed to teachers, in which theoreticians from the University of Silesia and practitioners dealing with language took part. Regardless of whether we speak about the language of a given nation or a social, professional, ethnic group, etc., each time it performs a socializing function - as a communication tool it enables mutual understanding and thus connects members of a given community and builds their identity.



6. MEETINGS WITH MIGRANTS

Our repatriates enjoy the library very much. Many of them needed and still need Polish language lessons. Knowing that learning a language is essential in the integration process, we organize a practical Polish language course for them. We also help them when they need to prepare a CV or official letter. They all need acceptance and appreciate that they meet friendly people in the library. Those who speak Polish better, willingly participate in events organized by us. During the meetings, it turned out that the grandfather of one of our repatriates, Julian Skawiński, is the author of Memoirs from 1918-1945, whose manuscript is kept in the Ossolineum Library in Wrocław. We endeavoured to have a copy of these unique Memories in the Żory Library, so that our community could get to know the fate of this family.

As part of the Reading Families Club, which is operating in our library, regular meetings with migrants living in our city take place. So far, they were people from Armenia, Kazakhstan, Nigeria, Russia, Southern Korea, Spain and Ukraine. They tell us about the countries of their origin, the first steps in Poland and the difficulties associated with it.



Everyone agreed that the greatest barrier to overcome is language.

7. TASTE OF CULTURE

During some cultural events, both in the library and in the open air, our residents had the opportunity to taste the cuisine of different nations. These dishes were prepared by people from different countries that were currently living in our city.

The World Migrants Day has entered permanently into the calendar of events in our library. We celebrate it together with our indigenous and migrant residents, bringing our cultures and hearts closer together.



CONCLUSION

Our previous activities have confirmed that the dissemination of knowledge about the importance of tolerance and democracy and the origin of other people is necessary and brings results. In order to contribute to the development of a culturally rich and at the same time harmonious society, we must simultaneously appreciate migrant cultures as well as the culture of a given community. Libraries are an excellent platform for promoting such an approach. At the end of the project implementation, we are already planning further activities together with migrants and for them. We try to reach those aren't active, focus them around the library, where there is always room for dialogue and education. And we strongly encourage other librarians to join. Migrate to library!





Biblioteca Municipal de Arucas

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1. ARUCAS MUNICIPAL LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

The migration crisis is one of the main challenges currently facing the European Union, and requires, in the field of libraries, specific training of the staffs to meet this social demand.

The Erasmus+ Guide, published by the European Commission, states that "Erasmus+ is an effective instrument to promote the inclusion of people from disadvantaged backgrounds, including newly arrived migrants".

The Migrate to Library! Strategic Partnership aims to integrate migrants and/or refugees into local communities, through ongoing training and the provision of library services tailored to their needs. The knowledge and experience acquired by the participants in these projects are a valuable inspiration for the daily work in the libraries. For the staff of the Arucas Municipal Library it has meant an important awareness of the need for lifelong learning and the role that libraries can play in their local communities as a link between formal and informal education, as well as in day-to-day work with adult users with diverse training needs.

1. ARUCAS MUNICIPAL LIBRARY EXPERIENCE

Libraries can play an important role in this area. As institutions that, for many years, have operated in the different countries of Europe, they are naturally woven into local communities and social consciousness, as cultural and educational centers that inspire citizen trust. They can therefore be perceived as active centers of culture and education for all people, regardless of age, religion, nationality or any other personal or social circumstance.

However, when we began to implement this project in the Municipal Library of Arucas, we looked for references in the Spanish panorama on services or activities of public libraries aimed at the migrant/refugee population, and these references were very scarce, practically non-existent. In spite of the fact that the migratory crisis increases its severity every day.

When planning our activities under the project „Migrate to Library!“, we decided to prioritize some strategic lines, according to the recipients of the different actions. Principally:

1. Migrant population / refugees.
2. Our local community.
3. Professional field: libraries staffs.

There have been more than 50 different actions throughout the two years of the Migrate to Library! Project, which we will break down according to the three strategic lines above-mentioned.

2. MEETINGS WITH MIGRANTS

1. MIGRANTS AND REFUGEES POPULATION

Related to the migrant/refugee population, the first step was to know the population statistics and determine the presence and proportion of this sector of the population in the users of the library.

Official data say that around 1.000 migrants are living in Arucas. The largest group are Italians, followed by people from South America. Non EU immigrants have higher unemployment and lower incomes than the regional average. The economic crisis has accentuated these differences.

- We have generated spaces of conversation between migrants and the staff of the Library and Cultural Department, to know in first person their needs. A resource as human and simple as the conversation has proven to be an effective tool for the empowerment of the population, that increase the levels of its social participation.



2. MEETINGS WITH MIGRANTS

- We programmed meetings between migrants and the local population in order to deepen the knowledge of their respective cultures and contribute to eliminating prejudices.
- With the cooperation of CEAR Canarias, we set up the radio space, "Living books" on the municipal radio station, Radio Arucas. On a bi-monthly basis, in each of these spaces we have presented the history of a migrant/refugee as an authentic human library. Reinforcing the positive values that migrants bring to our culture and society.



3. OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

We have developed several types of actions:

- Campaign on the local radio station, Radio Arucas. Recording many spots oriented to the dissemination of the project, with positive messages and reinforcing the values of integration and inclusion.
- "Migrate to Library!" Reading Clubs, with the participation of Secondary and Adult education centers in the municipality of Arucas. In these groups, the participants read books that deal with different aspects of migration and met themselves in the library to discuss their readings.
- "Meet the Author". Miguel Pajares is an anthropologist, he has written numerous essays, novels and articles about migrations. He is the president of the Catalan commission for refugee aid.



3. OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

- Theater plays. For example, "No country for black women", to reflect on racism and prejudices in Spain.
- Narrative show, created with the group of elders "Labrantes de la Palabra", and titled "Twelve thousand Dutch and four bugs". It relates the phenomenon of migrations in the history of humanity, and becomes "the voice of the voiceless".



3. OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

- Exhibitions:
 - "Handala" In collaboration with the Women for Peace in Palestine Association;
 - "Them/us". In collaboration with the NGO Caritas;
 - "Tinduf: wait and hope", jointly with the Arucas Domingo Rivero Secondary School;
 - "People on the Move", in collaboration with the NGO Doctors of the World;
 - "The walls and their disobedience", with the cooperation of the Gernika Nonviolence Movement;
 - "Living Books", a creative collaboration with CEAR Canarias;
- Movie Shows: "Astral", a documentary film about the NGO Proactiva Open Arms, showing their work with this surveillance and rescue boat and set sail for the coast of Libya to carry out its first rescue mission.
- Workshops for adults: community dance, languages, traditions of other cultures, gastronomy, etc.
- „Community Dance" show. This is the most democratic form of dance as an art form, because it is a way for citizens of all ages, abilities, classes, races, religions and nationalities to meet the art of dance and to express themselves through it.

3. OUR LOCAL COMMUNITY

These actions reinforce the role of the library as that “third place” where users come to share experiences, enjoy services interactively and learn in multiple ways. Libraries, and especially municipal ones, are no longer just “temples of knowledge”, but also agoras where it is possible to establish links and strengthen communities. The library provides social surroundings separate from the two usual social environments of home (“first place”) and the workplace (“second place”).



4. TRAININGS FOR LIBRARIANS

It has been another important area of our work. In order to contribute to raising awareness and to the extension of library services aimed at the migrant population, we organize actions such as:

- Fake News Workshop. Spain is the tenth country with the most migrants in the world, according to the United Nations report World Population Policies 2015. Manipulation and hoaxes about immigration and refuge in the country is constant. As information professionals, it is very important for library staff to learn how to detect false news, and transmit this knowledge to library users.
- "Migrate to Library!" Dissemination session. To publicize some of the few projects carried out in Spain aimed at the migrant population, including our own project.



2. DISSEMINATION AND COOPERATION

It has been another important area of our work. In order to contribute to raising awareness and to the extension of library services aimed at the migrant population, we organize actions such as:

- October 2017. A lecture at the “XI Muestra de Experiencias sobre Lectura y Bibliotecas”, organized by the Asociación de Profesores de Español, in Tenerife;
- November 2017. Presentation at the “Encuentro de Biblioteconomía y Documentación”, organized by Casa África;
- November 2018. Lecture at the VIII National Congress of Public Libraries, Logroño, organized by the Ministry of Culture and Sport.
- November 2018. Presentation at the OECD Forum “Diversity makes strength”, organised by the Government of the Canary Islands.



2. DISSEMINATION AND COOPERATION

A project like this cannot be developed successfully without cooperation. In order to carry out the different actions, we have established alliances with educational centers, public and private organizations. E.g., Migrando Association with educational centers, public and private organizations. E.g., Migrando Association, Women, Solidarity and Cooperation Association, the NGO Caritas Arucas, the NGO Doctors of the World, CEAR Canarias, Forum Russian Association, Zygmunt Zaleski Foundation, Women for Peace in Palestine, the University of Las Palmas de GC, etc.



CONCLUSION

If libraries are to become a hub, element or engine for development of integration activities, a number of steps must be taken, and we have done some of them during these 20 months.

The staff of the library have expanded their knowledge and understanding of problems related to the integration of foreigners. The cooperation with the libraries participating in the project, as well as the training courses carried out, has broadened our global and particular vision of the phenomenon of migrations in the 21 century.

With the activities carried out in our library, we have contributed to foster encounters between people who would never have met outside the library. Fostering values such as tolerance and trying to eliminate prejudices that only contribute to hindering citizen coexistence.



The library has positioned itself as a new point of support for the immigrant /refugee population, working with organizations that traditionally address the specific needs of this population. The implementation of new services for migrants goes beyond this project, as it generates a demand that adds new objectives to the library's regular schedule.





**Vilniaus
Apskritis
Adomo
Mickevičiaus
Viešoji
Biblioteka**

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3. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN CROATIAN LIBRARIES

According to the data of the Overall Population and Housing Census, there were people of 154 nationalities constantly living in Lithuania in 2011. 16.5 % of the whole population are national minorities: 200.3 thousand Poles, 176.9 thousand Russians, 36.2 thousand Belarusians, 16.4 thousand Ukrainians, and 19.3 thousand people of other ethnicities.

The Department of Migration also declares that there were about 50 000 migrants living in Lithuania in 2018. That makes less than 2 % of the whole population. The majority of migrants in Lithuania are from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Syria, Latvia and Germany. People have migrated to Lithuania because of variety of reasons: seeking for education or job opportunities, have married to a Lithuanian or are refugees. Also, there were about 600 asylum seekers in Lithuania in the year 2017.



1. SERVICES ARE PROVIDED FOR MIGRANTS IN ADOMAS MICKEVIČIUS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Libraries in Lithuania are only starting to work with migrants, there are no traditions in this field. However, there are some activities that libraries are trying to implement. Volunteers from other countries are creating language cafes and English speaking book clubs, librarians are building special collections for foreigners in different languages, organizing special meetings or events about other countries, and cultures.



1. SERVICES ARE PROVIDED FOR MIGRANTS IN ADOMAS MICKEVIČIUS PUBLIC LIBRARY

Vilnius County Adomas Mickevičius Public Library is constantly participating in projects, and learning about new possible services for migrants. Since the library has joined the project "Migrate to Library" a special area for migrants in the library were created. Here a foreigner can find learning material for improving Lithuanian language skills, translation of works of famous Lithuanian writers, as well as information about Vilnius and Lithuania in English, Russian, Polish and other languages.

Library has also started to organize events and meetings, where readers and visitors can get to know other countries and cultures. These types of meetings can help to overcome negative attitude and stereotypes about migrants, to get interested in other cultures and lifestyles.

Every year library is celebrating the International Migrants Day. On that occasion special events are organized. In 2017 there was an evening dedicated to India and an Indian family. In 2018 there were an Ethiopian coffee tasting evening with an Ethiopian woman who is living in Lithuania for more than ten years and has created her own business.

1. SERVICES ARE PROVIDED FOR MIGRANTS IN ADOMAS MICKEVIČIUS PUBLIC LIBRARY

However, the majority of events, and educational activities for migrants and national minorities in the library is organized by Austrian and Swiss Literature Reading room and Vilnius Jewish Public Library.



2. AUSTRIAN AND SWISS LITERATURE READING ROOM

In 1994 Embassy of Austria has establish an Austrian reading room in the library. Since than it has grown not only in terms of collection building but also in various activities for German-speaking readers. Here visitors can find information about Austria, Switzerland and the Principality of Liechtenstein. This is the only collection of Austrian publications in Lithuania, consisting of about 7000 publications, offering a unique opportunity to learn about the history, present, and essence of these countries" culture and literature. All publications are in German. Collection is composed of fiction, movies, audio records, magazines and etc. Swiss collection is approximately 1400 of valuable units in German, Italian and French languages. Principality of Liechtenstein has their representative collection of history, politics, economy, culture and customs. All collection is in German language.



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Moreover, Austrian and Swiss Literature reading rooms is famous for its educational activities, events, active Lithuanian-Austrian Society and Readers club for German speaking people. These activities are oriented not only towards readers who want to improve their German language skills but also to German community in Vilnius that is trying to keep their culture alive.

3. LITHUANIAN-AUSTRIAN SOCIETY

This society is organizing its activities in Austrian and Swiss Reading Room. The participants of this society creates and organizes different types events such celebration of memorable dates to Austria, invites Austrian people who lives in Lithuania to join German-speaking club.



4. READERS CLUB FOR GERMAN SPEAKING PEOPLE

Once per month people who speak German language gather in the Austrian and Swiss Literature reading room to discuss about German literature, history, culture, politics and etc. The participants of this club typically are foreigners who live in Lithuania and speak in German. For them it is very important to hear their own language, to communicate and discuss different topics in German. For others it is an opportunity to speak in German with native speakers.

TAG DER DEUTSCHEN SPRACHE

In 2018 a new activity “Tag der deutschen Sprache” were started where readers can learn German language. These events consist not only from German grammar exercise but also from games, quizzes, tours in the library while speaking German.



5. VILNIUS JEWISH PUBLIC LIBRARY

Vilnius Jewish Public Library (VJPL) is the branch of Vilnius County Adomas Mickevičius Public Library.

In 2011, upon the initiative of Wyman Brent, the Vilnius Jewish Public Library branch was established, in which a collection of various types of documents (printed texts, video and audio recordings and so on) of Jewish authorship or connected to Jewish culture has been gathered. The Vilnius Jewish Public Library is the only library specializing in communication of Jewish culture in all of Lithuania. Here, visitors can not just read and work, but also actively participate in various types of cultural activity, including (but not limited to) art exhibitions, discussions and conferences.

At the moment it is the only one library in Lithuania that specializes in spreading Jewish culture in various forms and provides services exceeding standard efforts of typical public libraries.



Vilniaus žydų viešoji biblioteka
Vilnius Jewish Public Library

5. VILNIUS JEWISH PUBLIC LIBRARY

One of the particular goals of this institution is to educate general public about people from various ethnic and cultural backgrounds as well as to foster tolerance through wide range of cultural events – everything from book presentations, lectures, workshops to movie screenings, concerts, art exhibitions and much more. One out of many examples proving the attention to these goals is library's collaboration with the local non-profit organization called "Youth Leisure Project" which offers local Jewish youth a lot of after-school activities including education on history, traditions and leadership while we provide knowledge, support and comfortable place for this to happen.

However Jewish people are not the only ones who can regard this library as the second home of theirs. Collaboration with Polish, Russian, Ukrainian and other minorities as well as institutions and organizations representing them makes it possible for this library to be a truly vibrant, useful and interesting place for everyone.



BOOKS
CULTURE
PEOPLE
COMMUNITY



6. LIBRARY AS INTEGRATION PLATFORM

VJPL is open not only to Vilnius residents and citizens of Lithuania in general but to the people from other countries too, especially to immigrants who are looking for ways to become an integral part of local civil society but lacks social or cultural skills as well as information about government institutions, possibilities of education and other topics important for everyday life.

Vilnius Jewish Public Library strongly believes that contemporary libraries should function as an important integration hotspots outside government integrations centers. The latter institutions provide most basic help and only primary information which usually is far from enough for immigrants who wants to feel of being part of wider community. This requires wider cultural experience and adequate understanding of local customs which can be gained only through active participation in informal activities.

WHAT KIND OF LIBRARY SERVICES MIGRANTS STILL NEED?

Based on research “Migrant’s Life in Lithuania: Public Attitudes and Experiences of Migrants” implemented by the Centre of Ethnic Studies at the Institute for Social Research, it is clear that migrants are one of the most vulnerable social groups.

Integration is a long and difficult process that consist not only from learning language or finding job, but also from building social connections, learning new traditions, joining local educational and lifelong learning system. The research has showed that majority of migrants in Lithuania have to face negative stereotypes and language barrier, they lack information about Lithuania in their own language, they need help adapting to local job market. These issues could become main guidelines when thinking about new library services.



Gradska knjižnica Ivan Vidali Korčula

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1. MIGRATION SITUATION IN CROATIA

Migration is defined as one of the foreign policy priorities of the Republic of Croatia, and the accession of the country to the EU has strengthened the importance of this topic. Croatia strives to lead an active migration policy based on the principles of freedom of movement, solidarity and humanity, while simultaneously taking into account national, economic, social and cultural development.

The current situation, as a result of mass migration with which the European Union, its member states, transit states and all other actors were faced during 2015 and early 2016, is very complex. Croatia, among other countries located on the Balkans route, is taking necessary action to adequately respond to the mass influx of migrants and develop capacities for their acceptance in order to facilitate the migration flows into Western Europe.

Since 2004, there has been about 13,000 asylum seekers from around the globe. Until the end of December 2018, 739 people have been granted international protection. This very low refugee recognition rate can be explained by a restrictive interpretation of the relevant legislation and secondly, because many applicants leave the country primarily towards their final destinations in the western and northern EU countries.

1. MIGRATION SITUATION IN CROATIA

The highest number of people seeking asylum in Croatia are coming from Afghanistan, followed by Syrian Arab Republic, Pakistan, Algeria, Somalia and Iraq. Persons granted international protection come from Syrian Arab Republic, Afghanistan, Iraq, Turkey, and Eritrea.

According to the statistics, around 80% of asylum seekers leave Croatia before the decisions on their applications are made. Certain institutions use this statistics to claim that Croatia is a transit country in which no one wants to stay. However, the reality is more complex than that, and there are several reasons why these people are leaving Croatia. One of the reasons is the same for asylum seekers as for Croatian citizens leaving their homeland – they are looking for better employment and quality of life. Another is that people wish to go to countries their family members are in, or where they already have members of their ethnic community because it is simply easier to integrate when you have the support of others.

Currently, there are two reception centers in Croatia for the accommodation of applicants for international protection. One is located in Kutina and can accommodate up to 100 people and the other one is in Zagreb (the former Porin Hotel in Dugave) and can accommodate up to 600 people. Porin Hotel has become a shelter for asylum seekers in 2013.

1. MIGRATION SITUATION IN CROATIA

In these circumstances, public libraries in Croatia are becoming more and more aware that one of the most important tasks of modern libraries is to support the development of multiculturalism. However, they also face many issues as users become more diverse and their needs more complex. Means of communication have changed, new digital technologies changed people's habits, and the multicultural environment in which we live raises the question of today's library users. All this puts new challenges ahead of libraries, as it is their job to provide access to all users without exclusion on any ground. One of the most important roles is the establishment of an intercultural dialogue. Thus, collections, programs and services become multilingual, which also enriches the library material.

Providing and funding multicultural information and services has become a part of the core activity of every library. Korčula Town Library has also directed the development of its service in this context. Throughout history, Korčula, thanks to its geographic position at the intersection of maritime trade routes, has been the meeting point of different cultures and the exchange of cultural goods. Today, Korčula is a culturally diverse community, a popular tourist destination and a desirable environment in which many people migrate for various reasons.

2. MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES OF THE KORČULA TOWN LIBRARY

Korčula Town Library is a cultural, information and multimedia center of the local community, which in order to improve the quality of life in the community, provides access to knowledge, information and cultural contents to all citizens. Partnership in the Erasmus+ project Migrate to Library! has been of great importance and has aided in the creation of new library services for the newcomers in the Town of Korčula. During the implementation of project activities, we have gained new competences and skills in the field of working with migrants, which we apply in our day-to-day work.

Seeing as libraries deal with books, making a Foreign Language Collection was a natural first step in the designing of services for migrants. We have secured a place in the library that gathers literature in various languages (mostly English, but also German, Italian, Spanish, Polish and Turkish). During the selection of books for this collection, our staff takes into account the current trends in literature and follows the publishing industry of foreign books as well as Croatian books translated into other languages.



foreign language collection

2. MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES OF THE KORČULA TOWN LIBRARY

After giving the opportunity to migrants to read in a language familiar to them, it is important to also give them the ability to learn the language of the new community. To make this task easier for new members of our community, we have acquired different library material including textbooks, exercise books and multimedia for Croatian language learning. As integration is a two-way street, it is helpful when the members of the local community share a common language with newcomers. For this reason, this collection also has materials for foreign language learning.

Great help in the acquisition of new foreign books for our library has been the international bookshop located on the island – “Kutak knjiga” (“Book corner”). The existence of this bookshop and the availability of foreign books has made possible the formation of Korčula's very own International Book Club. This book club comprises members of numerous different nationalities. Their working language is English, but each member of the book club reads the assigned book in their native language. Meetings are held once every month in Korčula Town Library where a lively discussion usually deals with books that talk about contemporary topics such as migration, traditions and customs and coexistence of different cultures. Members of the library, who are locals, often join these book club meetings, making them a great medium for integration.

2. MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES OF THE KORČULA TOWN LIBRARY

Another interesting way to integrate the local community and migrants is through food. In order to familiarize the local community with the wonders of different cultures we have developed the project "Love, Read, Cook!" with the local High School. The students choose books that are in some way connected with foreign cuisine and then present the book, the cuisine mentioned in the book and the different customs and traditions of the culture. At the end of the presentation, the participants have the opportunity to taste the various different meals mentioned in the discussed books.



Participants of the "Love, Read, Cook!"

2. MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES OF THE KORČULA TOWN LIBRARY

Since the beginning of the project, our library has started cooperation with various institutions in order to design new activities and services for migrants. One such organization is the Korčula - Lastovo Archival Centre, which is participating in the Europeana Migration project. The library and the Archival Centre have organized Migration Collection Days where migrants from different countries have told stories about their coming to Korčula Island and shared their memories. Stories and memorabilia which were collected will be a part of the Europeana.eu digital platform.



Europeana Migration Collection Day

2. MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES OF THE KORČULA TOWN LIBRARY

In order to start developing tolerance and acceptance of diversity from an early age we have also developed multicultural creative workshops for children and young people. The most popular workshops were the ones where we presented board games from other cultures to participants and then showed them how to recreate them at home. A Japanese migrant has also held an Origami workshop, teaching the participants this Japanese paper folding art.



Workshop - creating board games from other cultures

2. MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES OF THE KORČULA TOWN LIBRARY

Nowadays, media plays a major role in the shaping of public attitudes towards migrants. To help create a more positive attitude, Korčula Town Library has been using its social media along with the local radio and regional newspapers to promote the benefits of diversity, tolerance and the appreciation of different cultures. Apart from the media campaign, we have also organized exhibitions to mark the important days such as World Refugee Day and International Migrants Day at the library.



Training course "Other also belong here" in Zagreb

2. MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES OF THE KORČULA TOWN LIBRARY

In order to be able to create services for migrants, the professionals working in libraries have to be adequately educated. In April 2018, Korčula Town Library in cooperation with the Centre for Peace Studies in Zagreb organized a training course for Croatian and international librarians. The topic was the integration of migrants and what libraries can do in this regard. The lectures and workshops talked about the post-migration process, models of integration into local community, perceptions and reality of migrants in new environments. The lecturers and librarians discussed prejudice and discrimination, and different ways to combat them. They had the chance to hear first-hand experience from refugees from the Porin Reception Centre in Zagreb who participated in these lectures. This event gathered a lot of interest and support from library professionals in Croatia, especially the Croatian Library Association who gave its support to the event as well as the Migrate to Library! project. The library has also organized a lecture in cooperation with the House of Human Rights in Zagreb about successful integration of citizens from third world countries into Croatian society and the integration policies in Croatia.

2. MULTICULTURAL ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES OF THE KORČULA TOWN LIBRARY

In order to raise awareness about the migrant issues and the necessity for the libraries to get involved and start creating services for this category of library users our staff has presented the project activities and goals as well as good practices we had the opportunity to see in our partner libraries to the librarian associations from Split and Šibenik. At the constructive discussions that ensued after the presentations, we have concluded that developing these kind of activities and new services for migrants is of great importance to answer the current migration challenges.



Presentation of the "Migrate to Library!" project

3. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN CROATIAN LIBRARIES

RIJEKA CITY LIBRARY – “LIVING LIBRARY” PROJECT

The Rijeka City Library is participating in the “Living Library” project which seeks to challenge prejudice and discrimination. By organizing “Living Library” events, they give their locals a chance to engage in conversation with members of minority groups and understand the problems, way of life, and challenges they face on an everyday basis. The library has had a very positive response from the local community emphasizing the fact that these events captured the attention of all generations.

DUGAVE PUBLIC LIBRARY – “LITERARY SENSITIZATION” PROJECT

Dugave Public Library is a library in Zagreb situated in the proximity of the Porin Reception center and often cooperates with the center on the creation of activities for the centers inhabitants: various workshops such as Arabic language workshops, meetings and conversations with asylum seekers, visits to the Reception Centre in Zagreb and thematic book exhibitions and film projections. Its “Literary Sensitization” project is a series of literary talks aiming at the sensibilization of the local community through literature to be more accepting of their new members. At each lecture, a different book talking about migrant and asylum seeker issues is presented and then discussed with members of the local community including writers, translators, activists and asylum seekers.

3. EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE IN CROATIAN LIBRARIES

ZAGREB CITY LIBRARY – “A DIFFERENT VIEW” PROJECT

The Rijeka City Library is participating in the “Living Library” project which seeks to challenge prejudice and discrimination. By organizing “Living Library” events, they give their locals a chance to engage in conversation with members of minority groups and understand the problems, way of life, and challenges they face on an everyday basis. The library has had a very positive response from the local community emphasizing the fact that these events captured the attention of all generations.

KOPRIVNICA PUBLIC LIBRARY “JUMP ON THE TRAIN FOR A BETTER WORLD” PROJECT

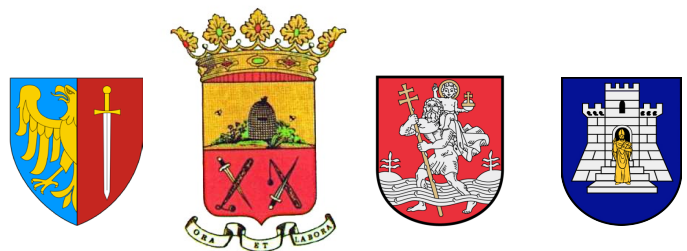
Since year 2000, Koprivnica Public Library has developed innovative programs aimed at sensibilization of the local community to the needs of minorities, particularly the Roma community. For its innovative programs that contribute to the social inclusion of Roma minorities, the Library has received numerous international awards. A book collection containing works of Roma authors was established for popularizing Roma language and culture. After several years of implementation, multicultural workshops, computer and IT lessons, lectures, roundtables and exhibitions, the Library has initiated and organized networking professionals of different profiles in the local community in order to strengthen their skills in working with minorities.

CONCLUSION

Through participation in the visits and presentations of the “Migrate to Library!” project, and the dialogue with the project partner we have acquired new knowledge, skills and competences and can now more clearly see the current situation regarding migrant issues and adequately respond to new user needs. Partnership in this project has made us more qualified and competent to create new library services and activities. In the end, we believe that the information gained through the project activities will contribute to the transformation of Croatian public library into contemporary multicultural libraries and the acceptance of multiculturalism as our global heritage, economic and social capital.

OUR THANKS

Huge thanks to the partners of the "Migrate to library!" project, for their commitment, work input and efficient organization of partner meetings. Special thanks to all people and institutions which weren't among the partners, but selflessly helped make the project more interesting and rich, familiarized us with the specificity of work for migrants and provided us with so many emotions. Thanks also to local and authorities for warm welcome and support.



International project meetings:

10 -13 October 2017 in Poland

11 - 15 June 2018 in Spain

24 - 27 September 2018 in Lithuania

08 - 11 April 2019 in Croatia

Training course "Stand on Multiculturalism"

part I

„Understanding Migrants”

26 February - 2 March 2018 in Poland

part II

„Others also belong here”

9 - 13 April 2018 in Croatia



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