

Libr@ries for a NEW AGE Report

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Report

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- The project **Libraries for a new age** was led by International Aid Network, a CSO from Serbia, and Vinkovci City Library (GKVK) from Croatia, and implemented in partnership with 4 libraries from Croatia and 3 from Serbia.



- The project included **development of capacities of libraries** in order to support cross-border exchange of experiences and transfer of know-how of Croatian and Serbian libraries, promote contacts, interethnic cooperation, networking and local and regional partnerships primarily between libraries, and support social and economic inclusion of marginalised groups.
- By **building technical capacities of libraries** (procurement of ICT equipment) and **providing relevant education to librarians** the action assisted the libraries to become a valuable community resource for provision of tailor-made education programs.

PARTNER LIBRARIES IN SERBIA AND CROATIA WERE EQUIPPED WITH ADEQUATE TECHNICAL RESOURCES FOR PROVIDING ACCESS TO ICT AND CONDUCTING EDUCATIVE TRAININGS TO THEIR USERS.

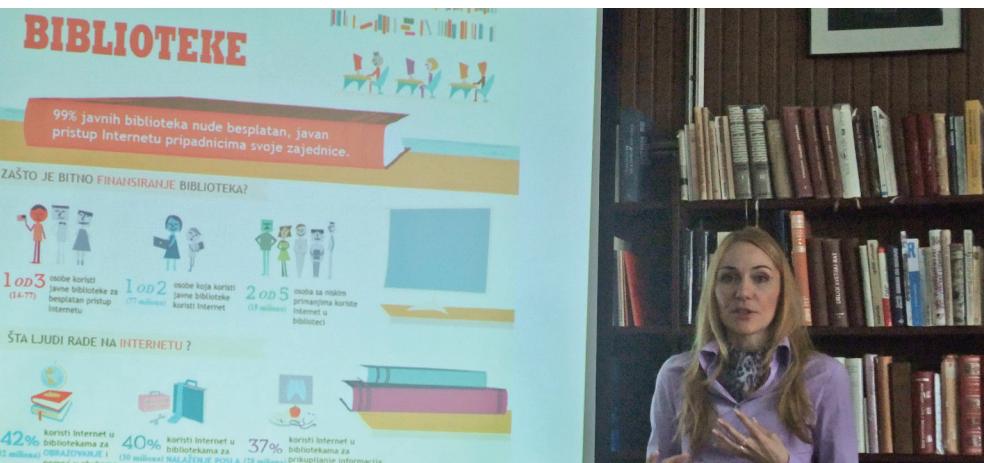
PARTICIPATING LIBRARIES IN SERBIA AND CROATIA RECEIVED TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT INCLUDING 22 LAPTOPS, 10 COMPUTERS, 4 LCD PROJECTORS, 2 TVs AND 2 DIGITAL CAMERAS AND WIRELESS INTERNET ACCESS WAS ENSURED.

Computer courses (four computer training modules – Windows, Word, Excel and Internet+e-mail) with ECDL certification was organised for 16 librarians in order to improve their professional skills in ICT. Librarians were trained in using new skills and methods in their daily work and supporting their members to use ICT resources of the libraries for learning, socialising, employment related activities, etc.

Librarians who attended the training passed 4 European Computer Driving Licence exams and acquired internationally recognised certificate ECDL Start.

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The education programs supported digital literacy as an important element of social inclusion and employability, but also important skills for using digital resources of the libraries.



Through the e-Librarian workshop representatives of the partner libraries were introduced with the concept of telecentres i.e. places in the community providing access to computers, internet and help citizens access information and knowledge using modern technologies.

Practical skills and knowledge of IAN from its yearlong work on providing digital literacy and professional empowerment to citizens, especially those from marginalized groups, have been transferred to the partner libraries.

- Upon capacity building all libraries **piloted new services** within their institutions – both for general community members and for selected marginalized groups. Community

members using library resources now have an enriched offer in their libraries that includes computers with internet access which they can use, but also competent assistance of librarians in using modern ICT for accessing knowledge. More than 1300 community members used new equipment and Internet during the project. Especially important component of the project were new **services for marginalised groups** successfully piloted in the libraries.

“... I have never used computers before. I've been attending classes regularly, but still I think I'm not good enough; then in the meantime I found a job and I'm supposed to write emails and use Excel, make charts. If I didn't attend this course, I wouldn't be able to even send an email, so I wouldn't stand a chance.”
Tanja M., IT course beneficiary,
Indija

Within these services around 300 citizens on both sides of the border were directly empowered through different trainings: **128 unemployed youth attended four office e-skills courses and four job search courses, 91 persons with disabilities and 126 seniors acquired basic e-skills course.** By realising this activity the project successfully realised one of its objectives, which was to support social, economic, cultural and digital inclusion and alleviation of poverty of marginalised groups. Through empowering local community members by providing them with the opportunity to learn



Thanks to the laptops procured through the project the courses were also held in Nustar, a village where the branch library of the City Library Vinkovci is located.

and gain new skills the project indirectly worked towards improvement of productivity and related social and personal benefits of the citizens in the cross border region.

- To promote intercultural cooperation, networking and local and regional partnerships 3 **workshops** and 2 **joint community events** were organised. The workshops for librarians included the following topics: *Building Library Image as a Modern Community Knowledge Centre*,



Central topics of the workshop “Networking of the libraries through web portal biblioteke.org” were online channels through which libraries can communicate interactively with their users.

The representatives of 8 partner libraries and their branches have been introduced with the web portal Biblioteka Futura. This network connects libraries from Serbia, Croatia, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Slovenia and Montenegro on the Internet and it “serves as a forum for free exchange of experiences and creative ideas.”

Networking of the libraries through the web portal biblioteke.org / knjiznice.org, and Intercultural dialogue through the literature for children. Each of the workshops was held in a different participating town which encouraged intercultural and interethnic encounters and exchange. Two events additionally promoted cross-border cooperation and transfer of good practices. One was the presentation of the project at the **Health Festival** in Vinkovci where GVK traditionally participates as the library's outreach to the community. Another interesting event that involved mobilisation of



The project had its stand at the Health Festival with books and other materials from all towns of libraries participating in the project. Laptops were available at the stand for the visitors in order to promote the importance of digital literacy and digital resources of libraries. The stand got the award as the best arranged stand at the Festival in the category of educative institutions.

community members from all participating towns was the **Silver surfers** competition. This event, based on innovative method of stimulating the elderly` digital inclusion through interaction of grandparents and grandchildren, transferred another good practice of libraries` activation to support the most excluded in the local communities. Through the competition the project raised awareness on importance of e-inclusion of senior citizens but it also was an excellent opportunity for promoting good neighbourly relations.

"It was real fun, we learned to write and use internet."

"We are digitally literate now and the quality of our lives improved. Education could be a foundation for employment. We feel more equal."

"Internet literacy nowadays is a necessity."

Beneficiaries from the home for mentally ill adults, Nuštar, Croatia



Silver Surfers Competition was an attractive joint cross-border event aimed at motivating the elderly for using ICT and developing good neighbourly relations. The competition was an opportunity for the whole community to take a part in e-inclusion of seniors.

Competing pairs consisted of a grandparent older than 55 and a grandchild younger than 13 thus promoting intergenerational cooperation. The competitors had to search the internet efficiently and as quickly as possible answer the questions thus showing their browsing and computer skills

“I think that this competition is great, exciting and interesting. ... I go to the library in Vinkovci regularly and my grand-daughter is a member too... My grand-daughter has never been in Serbia before. We've met some new people here and we share similar interests. New generations are getting involved and they are networking.”

Ana Š. & Anita B., Silver surfers competition winners from Vinkovci

Courses have been really useful for us, with university degrees but no jobs; I graduated a year ago and I don't work, I have been trying to find the job but I didn't make it; it's difficult. These courses could help me, I have never been prepared for a job interview before, but now my chances are improved...

Stefan S., unemployed,
Social skills course participant, Kula

Extract from External Evaluation Report

CONCLUSIONS

1. Relevance and efficiency of the methodology used for enabling social, economic, cultural and digital inclusion within the targeted two countries

The project is an original contribution to the overall objective of the action; it fosters intercultural dialogue in the region and social inclusion of the marginalised groups. The originality in project design refers to the well-recognised needs for changing old working paradigm of libraries from Serbia and Croatia and introducing the concept of "Library as a community centre".

The three specific objectives have been reached:

- A) Capacity building of 5 Croatian and 3 Serbian libraries in the cross border region.**
- B) Building capacities and empowering marginalised groups (unemployed youth and women, disabled and senior citizens) through relevant educative activities aimed at their better employability, social and economic inclusion.**
- C) Cross border networking and promotion of interethnic relationship.**

The project offered an effective model for establishing new services in the libraries, supporting digital inclusion as a part of the comprehensive approach for bringing the vulnerable groups closer to the knowledge society and social integration in local community. In addition, it creates a platform for cross border cooperation of libraries in intercultural exchange. **The potential of libraries to be involved even more in the life-long learning processes,**

utilization of new opportunities in modern digital informational society and promotion of ethnic and cultural diversity has been recognized by the librarians, beneficiaries and stakeholders.

The methodology used was efficient in achieving all planned results within the time schedule. Both project teams (Serbian and Croatian) have used their full capacities, good will and know-how to achieve all planned results. They demonstrated adequate skills to deal with unforeseen issues and obstacles.



Project partners visiting Vinkovci library "Bibliobus", mobile library of the Vukovar-Srijem county

Due to mutual respect, exchange of experience and support in project cycle management provided by IAN, as well as excellent communication among partners, all the project modalities were done successfully. In that way the model of good practice in intersectoral cooperation and know-how exchange have been established between an NGO and the cross border

network of libraries as public institutions.

2. Possible long term impacts on the wider communities and possible ways of achieving sustainability of different project modalities

Through this project a solid baseline for reaching sustainability of the model has been created, still it requires additional time and efforts from all project partners to be able to follow and measure the long term impact. Nevertheless, all the project modalities have reached different level of sustainability or potential for reaching the sustainability in the long run:

A) Capacity building of 5 Croatian and 3 Serbian libraries

Targeted libraries have been empowered to the level of their own engagement, especially in terms of understanding the benefits of becoming the modern community centres and embracing the new roles they might have in their communities. Libraries that have put additional efforts and have put in use all their resources will gain the most from this project, getting solid technical equipment and related know-how in digitalisation and required IT and training skills. **By obtaining the ECDL certificate, librarians are getting equal opportunity to further develop and use their new resources through provision of new services and assistance to the library users.**

Some libraries have gone a step forward really acquiring the new role and opportunity to reposition their libraries within their local communities. They introduced additional courses, new creative workshops and other forms of becoming a community centres and info points. New equipment, gained skills as well as new recognition and publicity gained through the EU funded project

provided an excellent starting point to be further exploited.

B) Building capacities and empowering marginalised groups

The targeted marginalized groups (young and unemployed with focus on women, disabled and senior citizens) have gained high quality service through IT training and additional courses and technical assistance provided by the trainers/librarians. Evaluation has shown a high level of satisfaction of all the participants with the training services provided. **Employment rate of 25% among those who entered the ECDL training and job search courses as unemployed is extremely good**, although it might have been influenced also by other factors. Most of the interviewed beneficiaries have demonstrated a high level of satisfaction with the program, they asked for additional training and ongoing support in more specific skills and programs they use or wish to use.

C) Cross border networking and promotion of interethnic relationships

The project contributes to development



e-inclusion of seniors through ICT courses provided by librarians, Public library Indija

of communication and networking in the region. Through several cross border activities a **certain level of partnership has been reached creating a solid base for future joint activities, possible sharing resources and partnership projects**. By introducing and piloting the two cross border events, an avenue for new related cooperation and partnerships has been opened. The project has been presented on the special web portal LIBRARY FUTURA (www.biblioteke.org / www.knjiznice.org) that follows the activities of libraries in the ex-Yugoslav region; and vice versa this virtual library network for exchanging ideas and good practice has been introduced to the project partners. In that way visibility of the partner libraries has been improved among professional societies in the region and the newly established cross-border network for cooperation could be easily extended in the future.

The project empowered libraries in reaching for a more active role in their communities. The on-line presentations, new communicational channels, public campaigns and other media appearance helped the libraries get more recognition of their work. **Local stakeholders have recognised the relevance and value of the project and all its components for their communities.** The cooperation and coordination of libraries with other institutions engaged in cultural, educational, social and employment work could be also seen as an added value of the project for local communities. Still, further proactive engagement and internal capacity building of libraries will be crucial for their promotion in the new role as a valuable community resource with its cultural, educational, informational and social goals.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Foster proactivity, commitment and ownership of the project outputs and perspectives for sustainability among partners in the project. If the project would be replicated and/or continued, ownership factor by all partners should be considered.
2. Reinforce the links and cooperation established with local stakeholders (Local offices of National Employment Agencies, CSOs, especially associations of vulnerable groups, National Youth Offices, Schools, etc.) through MoUs and action plans for further involvement in similar actions.
3. Continue with professional empowerment of librarians, with courses in English language, web design, didactic courses and sensitization for work with marginalized groups.
4. Provide training for librarians for project writing and fundraising. Support them to be proactive and open for new perspectives for institutional development under the EU programs.
5. Organize a public campaign on the national and regional level; involve national stakeholders and key persons to promote the new role and tasks of libraries for the new age.
6. Facilitate cross border cooperation and know how sharing among libraries in the West Balkan region.
7. Engage further the potential of libraries in promotion of ethnic and cultural diversity and social inclusion, spreading the influence to the new local communities, particularly those which are multi-ethnic.

January, 2014

Prepared by: Sonja Vuković, Croatia
Ivana Vidaković, Serbia

This cross-border project showed how much professional, informational and ICT potential exists in public libraries. We have seen that we can achieve more in synergy with a civil society organisation IAN, networked and joining forces to make progress both in our institutions, local communities as well as in neighbour relationships. We have all became richer personally and professionally.

We strived to promote culture through libraries and their work the essence of which is provision of up-to-date services to all users, focusing on education for marginalised groups. We have learned from each other how to get engaged, how to partner and network in order to achieve more and change things. By working together we've recognised what each of us can do and we are proud of the jointly accomplished results. I thank all the participants and nine partners in this project and I recommend us all to plan and design new projects.

Emilija Pezer, Vinkovci City Library Director

We believe that a Job search training is very important to help the unemployed find a job easier. The participants were excited about the trainings, the knowledge they received and their active participation. They particularly liked the workshop where they practiced the job interview... Library is no longer simply a place where you go to borrow a book; it's becoming an educational institution, and its staff can help those who need information... Library is open for everyone....

Branka Ćulibrk, National employment service, Bačka Palanka

At the beginning we were worried how we were going to carry it all out, but we engaged in the project and it was the initiative that involved everyone at the library, we started looking at the library in a different way, we painted the walls and decorated the rooms, which was great and it created the energy we didn't know existed here.

Vesna Stepanovic
Director of Public Library Indjija

This year we have reached the highest number of members ever, and now with the computers and the courses we expect even more.... We should continue with the courses, especially for the older population. ... Users of *Plava ptica*, a day care centre for people with special needs, started to use the library more, so it is important to offer something for them, to acknowledge them as important members, and the inclusion is important for them as well. After the course they see us as friends, they shake hands with us, come to visit us...

Marko Dmitric
Librarian in the Public Library Kula

Local authorities are open for new initiatives, and I think that this project, financed by EC, is great because if they had been waiting for us, the cross-border cooperation would've never happened, or it would have but much later; that's why I see this as a good sign and we support the project and its realization. I hope that communication initiated in this project continues and leads to communication at other levels as well... This project improved the quality of work in the library, with the new services and staff education. We should invest in people, so we could meet the client's needs and use the resources more efficiently. Libraries could have a bigger role and animate the entire population...

Dobrila Kalezić Pindović
Deputy Chief of administration of Kula

Through this project the City Library Vukovar got significant technical equipment and faster and safer internet access. In addition, with the new service – computer courses for seniors – the Library provided digital literacy education to many people and thus encountered positive comments of public and satisfaction of course participants with the knowledge and skills acquired. Also, we have developed a network of contacts with our colleagues outside Croatia and set foundations for future cooperation. Thanks to the project we not only increased technical capacities but also educated some staff members, we have expanded the range of library services in a quality way.

Anita Baier Jakovac, City Library Vukovar librarian

The project Libraries for a new age left a mark on all those who participated in it. Before all, it connected us, the librarians, both through common interests and target groups, and through common challenges and fears that our profession faces. The project allowed us to share experiences, get to know each other's culture and open new chapters for future cooperation.

No man is an island, and no library is a standalone institution. By expanding the library network over the border, the librarian profession got another "wind at the back" for all those "battles with windmills" that stand before us.

And what have our users gained? We could all agree that they got knowledge, answers, self-confidence and a new chance to compete with others. Through this project they once again got a confirmation that the libraries exist because of them and for them, that users are important and that they are a key element in creating library services. Libraries are a vital part of every society, no matter which side of the border they are on they have one thing in common – making knowledge accessible to everyone, and I believe this project helped them in this.

Klaudija Ladan, Vinkovci City Library librarian

Thanks to this project the importance of our institution has increased in the community. We started better cooperation with the community, we have the ongoing courses, people are interested... ...The ideal library and the new age library is a cultural institution that offers all kinds of information, written and those found on internet...

*Snežana Tatalović
Director of the Public Library Kula*

Beneficiaries of the centre for rehabilitation were delighted with the idea to be included in e-skills education organized by the City Library Vinkovci. They have acquired new knowledge and become more included in the local community. They continued using these skills after the end of the course. People living in institutions often have narrow social circles, and therefore learning how to use Facebook was very useful. Through Facebook they now maintain contact with friends and relatives easier and more often. During the education they developed friendly relationship with the librarians who provided the courses and started coming to the City Library. They expressed interest in continuing cooperation of our institutions – either in ICT or other organized activities.

Stiv Vranić, Rehabilitation Technician, Centre for rehabilitation "Mala Terezija" Vinkovci

I've been working at the library for a long time and I'm aware that we constantly need to prove ourselves to the local community. This project helped us be seen differently by the local community and we gained recognition... This is just a beginning, you planted a seed and it's up to us to keep up the good work, to enter institutions... I can send some educated librarians now to gerontology centre to work with the elderly... that's the role of the library, to offer more to the community...

*Koviljka Dobric,
Director of the
Library in Bačka Palanka*

This summer the library was filled with people, and it was very active here, trainings and workshops... They are still coming to the library as members and they use the computers on their own. They mostly use the Internet, Google maps... We gained so much from this project, we became recognized by the community, we had the opportunity to see how libraries in Croatia work.... There were many presentations on good practices and interesting workshops – children literature, interactive workshops, working with marginalized groups of people, integrating Roma population and working with Roma children.... So, the idea is that a library can offer more to the citizens. That was something new for us. We feel satisfied and people who attended our courses are satisfied as well.

Andrea Živković-Muškinja, Librarian, Indija



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Project Leaders



IAN Telecentar
(Education department of International Aid Network)
www.ian.org.rs/telecentar



Vinkovci City Library and Reading Room
www.gkvk.hr

Project Partners



Public Library "Dr Djordje
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www.bibliotekaindjija.rs



City Library Vukovar
www.gkvv.hr



Public Library Kula
<http://bibliotekakula.com>



Municipal Public Library Drenovci
www.knjiznica-drenovci.hr



City Library and
Reading Room Ilok
www.knjiznica-ilok.hr



City Library Zupanja
www.knjiznica.hr/zupanja

Public Library "Veljko Petrovic"
Backa Palanka

Project Associates



Social Inclusion and Poverty
Reduction Unit
www.inkluzija.gov.rs



City of Vinkovci
www.vinkovci.hr



Municipality of Indjija
www.indjija.net



Municipality of Kula
www.kula.rs

Project web site

www.ian.org.rs/libraries for a new age

