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multicultural
library

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authors:

Maja Branka
Dominika Cieřlikowska
Author of the inspiration „Provocation in Stare Juchy”: Lena Rogowska

content editing:

Maja Branka
Dominika Cieřlikowska

graphic design:

David Sypniewski

typesetting (english version):

Magdalena Balicka

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Supported by a grant from Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway through the EEA Grants and co-financed by the Polish funds.

multicultural library

Maja Branka
Dominika Cieřlikowska

Information Society Development Foundation
Warsaw 2015

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Foreword

Starting the project on „Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures“, under which this publication has been prepared, we were aware that a library was a special place. The place where people of all ages, having diverse needs and interests, coming from various environments meet every day. No other public institution has an equally friendly image and seems so safe and open to everyone. Therefore, we have been convinced that libraries represent a space for meetings also for representatives of various cultures and, as a consequence, they may contribute to integration and development of their own local communities even more.

The multicultural library is not a new idea. The manifesto concerning the necessity to adjust this institution to the needs of the continuously changing, diversified society, was announced in 2006 by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)¹. Libraries from countries with a large number of immigrants have been developing specialised multilingual services for years – in particular, Norwegian libraries which supported us with their expertise in this area during the project, can serve as an example here². It is obvious that many Polish libraries also undertake diverse activities promoting the achievements and traditions of the minorities or disseminating information about culture of other countries.

The implementation of the project has assured us that a library is the place serving for dissemination of an idea of tolerance, encouraging to dialogue, benefiting from the diversity. We have also made sure that multiculturalism can be, on the one hand, a fascinating topic and, on the other hand – also a difficult issue. We have learnt about it owing to the experience of librarians who shared their successes, but also their concerns and the difficulties they faced while conducting the activities in their communities. The more we (both – us and the librarians) were getting involved in the issue of multiculturalism, the more challenges we observed, but the more motivation we also had to work.

And that is what this publication is about: why it is worth creating a multicultural library and how to do it, what to focus on and what to avoid. We address this publication to all libraries – both those experienced in conducting multicultural activities and those for which this issue is completely new. We hope that this reading will be inspiring for you and, as a result of it, you will reach the same conclusion as we did, namely, that each library not only may but should be a multicultural library.

Team of the Information Society Development Foundation

1 The IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto was approved by the Board of IFLA in August 2006 and adopted by the UNESCO General Conference at the 35th session in Paris in October 2009. The General Board of the Association of Polish Librarians adopted the resolution concerning the application of the Manifesto in December 2009. The Manifesto (also its Polish translation) can be found on the IFLA website: <http://www.ifla.org/publications/iflaunesco-multicultural-library-manifesto> (access: 31.08.2014).

2 The project was implemented in partnership with six Norwegian libraries: the Multilingual Library in Oslo, Buskerud County Library, Hordaland County Library, Oppland County Library, Bergen Public Library and Trondheim Public Library.

MAJA BRANKA

A trainer of social skills and the equality trainer, author of publications and training materials. She has been providing training in the scope of equality and counteracting discrimination for over thirteen years. Since 2010 she has been associated with Polish libraries through the Library Development Program (A Training School for Librarians, the „Appreciate a Library – How to Provide Advocacy Effectively” programme, LABiB Network).

A multicultural psychologist, providing workshops and consultations supporting the equality multicultural activities for thirteen years. She worked with refugees, voluntary migrants as well as with national and ethnic minorities. She also has her own experience as a migrant (in China and Kosovo). The author of scientific and educational publications concerning anti-discrimination and multiculturalism. For two years, she has been cooperating with the library environment (the „Appreciate a Library – How to Provide Advocacy Effectively” programme, LABiB Network).

DOMINIKA CIEŚLIKOWSKA

From the authors

We are extremely pleased to offer you the publication aimed at providing the readers with inspiration and knowledge related to the methods of implementation of the multicultural perspective into the library activities.

We were writing this publication having various libraries in mind, both small and bigger ones which can afford acting at a large scale. Not all the solutions we propose will be feasible for implementation by the smallest libraries, particularly those employing a single person. Nevertheless, we encourage you to treat the ideas presented here as an inspiration to be adjusted to your own library, town or village, or region.

Multiculturalism is a broad topic, comprising such diverse subjects as cultural and ethnic groups (including historical and contemporary groups), the issues of voluntary and forced migrants (refugees), mechanisms triggered on the crossroads of cultures or, finally, the multicultural competences. The anti-discriminatory approach adds issues of stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination to this perspective. Combining of all those aspects in a single publication was a great challenge. We tried to provide examples related to various groups and their specific nature, especially those less known, such as, for example, refugees or the Roma. For obvious reasons, it was not possible to capture the issue comprehensively, therefore, we provide references to further sources, publications and encourage you to continue your own search.

The publication is divided into two parts preceded by the substantive introduction. In the Introduction we describe the most important terms related to multiculturalism which are used in the publication and whose understanding is essential for further reading. **Part one** consists of four chapters and deals with the multicultural library model. In this part, we discuss the pillars of a multicultural library (chapter 1), describe how multiculturalism can be introduced into the activities of a library as an institution (chapter 2) and in the activities of a library addressed to the local community (chapter 3), and then we describe (chapter 4) how to start the work and implement the model of a multicultural library step by step. **Part two** is devoted to inspirations – we present examples of good practices, activities of Polish and Norwegian libraries which are already involved in multicultural activities. In the additional materials included at the end of the publication, contact data of expert organisations from all over Poland and the list of reading recommended by us can be found.

We wish you an inspiring reading and successes in introducing the multicultural perspective!

Maja Branka i Dominika Cieślukowska

Introduction – Knowledge on multiculturalism

While preparing this book, our intention was to show the distinctive features of individual cultural groups living in Poland and their needs. It was important for us to capture their uniqueness as well as cultural, language and historic characteristics. The specific character of functioning of such groups and their representatives should be perceived not only from the multicultural point of view but also through the anti-discriminatory perspective. The way of living, treatment and the possibilities available to migrants from Vietnam, the Jews, the Lemkos, or the refugees from Chechnya are affected both by the cultural nature of those groups and by their number or social status. They are people of unique, own specific culture and, at the same time, they represent minorities living in a country with a group strongly dominating and homogeneous in terms of culture, language and religion. The contact between the ethnically Polish majority and the minorities, for example, the ethnic and national minorities, is shaped not only by the cultural features of each of these groups and the Polish culture, or the phenomena characteristic for multiculturalism (ethnocentrism, adjustment disorder, assimilation and other), but also by stereotypes, prejudices or such phenomena as discrimination, power or domination.

Below, we provide a short explanation of terms related to both those areas – multiculturalism and anti-discrimination, most commonly used in the publication. You can find an extended form of each key term used in the text in the equality dictionary posted on the website of www.rownosc.info³ portal or in the trainer's manual: *Anti-discriminatory Education. Trainer's Manual*, that we are the authors of⁴.

What groups create the multicultural landscape of Poland and what are the differences between them?

Foreigner, according to the Act on Foreigners of 12 December 2013, is *anyone who does not have the Polish citizenship*, but stays in Poland which has become the place of stay/residence for such an individual. The most numerous foreigner groups in Poland include individuals coming from Ukraine, Belarus, Russia (Chechnya, Ingushetia), Armenia and Vietnam. In many countries, „migrant” is used, as a more neutral term, not emphasising the alienation, coming from a „foreign land”. More on this term and the diversity of migrants – in the dictionary of the Równość.info⁵ portal. The arrival of foreigners to the territory of Poland can be a voluntary decision or it may result from the pressure to leave their own country.

Voluntary migrant – a person who has changed his/her place of residence or stay due to economic conditions in the country of origin and arrival (in particular, the labour

3 Equality dictionary, <http://rownosc.info/dictionary/> (access 06.09.2015).

4 Anti-discriminatory Education. Trainer's Manual, edited by M. Branka, D. Cieślukowska, Decjus Villa Association, Kraków 2010.

5 Migrants [in:] Equality dictionary, <http://rownosc.info/dictionary/migranci-i-migranki/> (access 06.09.2015).

market), a possibility to acquire or upgrade the education and professional qualifications, the demographic situation or the family situation (family reunification or a bicultural relation), as well as the style and comfort of life.

Forced migrant – foreigners/migrants also include persons forced by public authorities to change the country in which they used to live and spend most of their time. They are individuals holding or applying for various forms of legal protection: a refugee status, asylum, a permit for tolerated stay or temporary protection⁶.

Refugee, according to the 1951 Geneva Convention, is *any person who, owing to well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership to of a particular social group or political opinion, is outside the country of his nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself of the protection of the country he is the citizen of*. In Poland, Russians of Chechen origin/the Chechens have represented the most numerous group of refugees for many years. Over the recent years, the second biggest group has included the Syrians escaping the war and dramatically poor living conditions in their country, searching for a shelter in Poland.

Ethnic and national minorities in Poland are defined in the Act of 6 January 2005 on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional languages. It defines the ethnic or national minority as a group of Polish citizens which jointly fulfils the following conditions: is numerically smaller than the rest of the population of the Republic of Poland; has a separate language, culture or tradition, and awareness of own historical ethnic/national community and is oriented towards its expression and protection; as well as its ancestors have been living on the present territory of the Republic of Poland for at least 100 years. The national minority identifies itself with the nation organised in its own state, whereas in case of ethnic minority, such identification does not occur and there is no country of reference (e.g. the German minority is the national minority whereas the Roma represent the ethnic minority, since there is no separate country inhabited by the Roma). The essential fact is that representatives of ethnic and national minorities have a Polish citizenship but they do not have a territory in Poland which would be separated in political or administrative terms. Four ethnic groups are recognised as ethnic minorities in Poland: the Karaim, the Lemkos, the Roma, the Tatars. On the other hand, national minorities in Poland include nine national groups: Byelorussians, Czechs, Lithuanians, Germans, Armenians, Russians, Slovaks, Ukrainians and Jews. The Silesians and the Kashubians are not recognised as minorities in the Polish law. They have a status of ethnographic/ethno-regional groups. Each person included in the ethnic or national minority has a right of free decision on being treated as a person belonging or not belonging to such a minority (it is forbidden to force such a person to disclose information concerning his/her membership in the minority or require that such a membership is substantiated).

What is the status of the groups described above in relation to the Poles?

All the groups described above differ from a group dominating on a given territory in terms of their ethnic origin, culture, religion and/or language (in the publication we focus more on the ethnic aspects, nationality and language than on the religious diversity). They represent a numerical minority in Poland, although there are regions where they dominate in demographic statistics. Thus, the term „minority” does not necessarily need to refer

⁶ The extended definitions of individual terms specifying the legal status of forced migrants are available at: <http://rownosc.info/dictionary/migracja-przymusowa/> (access 06.09.2015).

to the numerical size of the group but it shall mean the status in the society (less power, lower social status, subordination). For the minority identity, an important distinctive feature is often the need to recognise the uniqueness, the right to cultivate own culture, religion, language and a possibility to undertake activities aimed at preservation and development of its own identity.

The term „majority – minority” used in the publication is derived from the anti-discriminatory approach and it means a symbolic classification referring to the status of the group in the society and the manner of its functioning. It does not need to rely literally on the numerical differentiation of the groups. The majority group dominates and has a higher status, power, control, influence, decision-making authority, and its standards are treated as binding. It has the ability to impose its will on others and to have an impact on the other party’s situation. It usually holds measures ensuring its control over such a conduct. The minority is more subordinated, it has a lower social, often also economic status, it is marginalised, which is reflected in its low representation and influence. It is often a group which is not visible in public space, i.e. „silent”⁷. In the context of migration, imposing of communicative rules is a symptom of power of the receiving society (the Poles): „if they want to come here, they must learn our language”, in the situation of libraries, it means the failure to guarantee books, materials, aids in languages of such groups, deriving from their culture and responding to their needs.

How do the majority and minority groups live in one society?

The ideal of functioning of the dominating group (ethnic Poles in Poland) and the marginalised groups (ethnic and national minorities, foreigners) in the social life is **integration**, i.e. striving for merging both cultures with each other. In practice it means, e.g. celebrating feasts in accordance with both traditions, using media and literature in both languages, access to knowledge on the political situation of both cultural groups. Full participation in the social life, particularly under equal rules, is often a fiction. Stereotypes, prejudices and discrimination are often a foundation of exclusion. The automatic mechanism of majority groups’ activity is based on securing their own position and the corresponding privileges, often also imposing their will, standards, habits on the minority group. **Assimilation** consists in conformity, to the highest extent possible, to members of the receiving (majority) culture, making new contacts only within the autochthon circles, changing the former life style, with simultaneous resignation from cultivation and participation in culture of own group of origin. It may be reflected in significant weakening, abandoning or even avoiding contacts with fellow countrymen/the minority, change of habits (cuisine, ways of spending free time, traditions related to celebrating feasts) to those preferred by the surrounding majority, or even hiding own origin, e.g. through the change of name. The majority group often strives for maintaining its own status of segregation or isolation which enables it to keep power and control over minority groups. The tendency of separation due to concern for its own identity and own culture may also appear on the minority side. **Separation** is the strategy opposite to assimilation. An immigrant/a minority tries to maintain their own identity. Accordingly, they may strive for sustaining contacts or searching for new acquaintances in their „own” environment, simultaneously limiting contacts with members of the receiving/majority culture to the minimum, or even avoiding contacts with people outside their own group (refusal to learn the language of the receiving country, satisfying

⁷ More on this issue, in the trainer’s manual: *Anti-discriminatory Education...*, p. 111. The publication is available on the Internet: <http://www.ideazmiany.pl/publikacjepliki/Antydiskryminacja.pdf> (access: 06.09.2015).

everyday needs within their own cultural minority, e.g. doing shopping only in shops run by minorities, searching for a job only in their companies).

The role of the anti-discriminatory law is to prevent such mechanisms and protect the equality of all people. Representatives of ethnic and national minorities are the best legally protected groups in Poland, since they are Polish citizens and their rights are guaranteed by the Constitution of the Republic of Poland and the Act on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional languages (prohibition of assimilation against the will of persons belonging to the minority and protection against discrimination, hostility and violence). The law prohibits discrimination and focuses on integration-based approach also to other groups: refugees and voluntary immigrants.

In the publication, we also refer to mechanisms triggered at the crossroads of cultures. They include:

Ethnocentrism, i.e. placing own nation or ethnic group in the centre of interest (an example is Sino centricism: the name of the state of China in Chinese and in literal translation means the „Middle Kingdom“). This term usually also encompasses the exaltation of a national, ethnic or cultural group to which one belongs. Consequently, own standards are treated as universal and the only justified; values, standards and life styles of other groups are perceived through the perspective of own group; attention is paid only to interests of own group; cooperation within own group is postulated as well as readiness to fight and devote life for it. On the other hand, in relation to other groups, the ethnocentric attitude is expressed by treating their representatives as inferior, immoral and contemptible, due to the lack of trust and fear of strangers, lack of cooperation with them, demand of obedience towards own authorities, tendency to condemn others, blaming them for any troubles and using them as scapegoats. This point of view manifests itself at the individual level as the attitude of individuals and, at the institutional level, as sustainable group, social, organisational practices. The opposite is **ethnorelativism** defined as the awareness, acknowledgement and respect towards intercultural differences and intuition in situations when such differences are faced. It means inclusion of new behaviours, typical for other perception of the world, in own repertoire of behaviours (behavioural level) and/or combining various ways of understanding the world which should lead to building multicultural, multifaceted identity (cognitive level). Celebration of religious feasts of only one religious faith by public institutions in a religiously diversified region is an ethnocentric behaviour (in Poland, ethnocentrism is expressed, e.g. in the calendar of religious holidays and public holidays since it is based on state holidays – secular and religious – of only one religion).

Stereotypes, prejudices are the opinions, beliefs disseminated in a given group, enhanced by the emotional attitude and the tendency to express premature judgements concerning other people, based on their group membership. They are expressed in behaviours, often resulting in **discrimination**: the selective, detrimental and unjust treatment of individuals due to their membership in the specific group.

These mechanisms trigger specific threats which may affect an immigrant, a representative of an ethnic or religious minority or a refugee. This may include an array of xenophobic attitudes and behaviours, such as: racism, anti-Semitism, Romaphobia, hate speech, or even criminal offence justified by prejudice. Such phenomena result from the attitude of the majority group towards the minority, from its predominance and power.

Problems arising from the situation of minority groups include culture shock, post-traumatic stress disorder, and minority stress. The culture shock and post-traumatic stress disorder represent psychological reactions of man to the environment culturally different than the environment in which an individual used to live so far. The minority stress is the psychological response to functioning in the environment unfavourable for the development of own identity and satisfying individual and group needs different than the needs of the dominating group.

Culture shock is the dynamic process of changes at the level of emotions (changeability and emotional instability, often comprising apathy, confusion, anger, frustration, but also euphoria, joy, interest, curiosity, etc.), thoughts (considerable cognitive changes, accelerated acquisition of new cognitive categories and knowledge, conflict between the concepts of world understanding held before and new concepts), but also changes at a level of behaviours (starting from adjustment ending up with the intention of distinguishing and stressing the diversity or withdrawal, and abandoning the relations), arising from current, on-going contacts with unknown reality.

Post-traumatic stress disorder is the disease described in the international classification of mental disorders, very often experienced by refugees or victims of human trafficking. It affects thinking, emotions, reactions and physical health. It demonstrates the whole set of symptoms, including the irritation or outbursts of anger, problems with concentration or excessive vigilance. Post-traumatic stress disorder significantly hampers daily functioning and, consequently, the adjustment to life in a new country. On the other hand, learnt helplessness may be the effect of stay in a centre for foreigners and waiting (often for a long period of time) for decision concerning granting the refugee status. It is the phenomenon associated with the lack of self-confidence, often developing in case of an individual exposed to long-lasting situations when his/her own initiative and individual impact on the reality are limited. It is diagnosed in people from marginalised groups (inter alia the unemployed, the addicted, the homeless, the disabled and the refugees), staying under the care of aid institutions for a long time. Whereas the post-traumatic stress disorder or the learnt helplessness do not necessarily affect each person experiencing exile or migration, facing cultural differences and adaptation process, often leading to culture shock, affects almost every person experiencing the transfer to a new country.

Minority stress is the handicap which persons belonging to stigmatised minority social groups are exposed to, experiencing, often repeatedly, rejection and discrimination. It is believed that this type of experience differs from other types of stress as it is not a common stress but a unique feeling specific to minorities, and it is long-lasting and chronic, since it is not caused by any short-term or single incident, but by permanent and difficult to eliminate social and cultural factors, which are not dependent on an individual in any manner.

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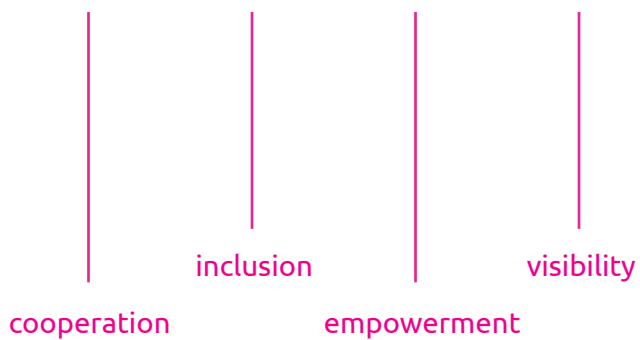
**Multicultural
library
model**

1. knowledge and information
2. culture
3. education
4. social integration

Library activities for the community

1. planning
2. team competence
3. communication and promotion
4. infrastructure and space
5. cooperation with the environment

Library as an institution



Pillars of multicultural library

Introduction

In this part, we describe a model of multicultural library. We will look at practical consequences of considering the assumptions and postulates of the *IFLA/UNESCO Multicultural Library Manifesto* and the content presented in the preceding part of the publication. Below the issues used for the description of the model in the following chapters are presented:

1. Values to drive the multicultural library – this perspective is described in the form of four pillars which should constitute the foundation of multicultural thinking and acting: visibility, inclusion, empowerment and cooperation.

2. Methods of including the multicultural perspective in the activities of the library as an institution – in this chapter we focus on activities building and promoting the library as an institution. We will look at: planning of activities, library team and competence required to introduce multiculturalism, promotion sensitive to multiculturalism and avoiding the stereotype communication, planning of the library space and cooperation of the library with external partners. In chapter two we describe how to organise the library as a multicultural institution.

3. Methods of including the multicultural perspective into the library activities addressed to the community – in this chapter, on the other hand, we focus on activities addressed to the library users; we shall check what it means to include multicultural issues in the areas of library services, such as: knowledge and information, education, culture and social integration. The external dimensions of the multicultural library model are described in chapter three.

4. Process of multicultural library model implementation – we will see how to implement the ideas described in the preceding chapters step by step. This part has a practical character, we are showing here how to plan, implement and monitor the performance of the multicultural library model. In this chapter, besides the consecutive steps to be performed in order to implement the model, we also present scenarios of actions – examples of tools, practices and tasks which shall facilitate the implementation of the model. Chapter four deals with the process of model implementation.

μ

4 pillars
model

We recognise the following four pillars providing foundations – the philosophy and the long-term goals of the multicultural library model: **cooperation, inclusion, empowerment and visibility (in Polish called “4W”: *współpraca, włączanie, wzmacnianie and widoczność*).** We describe each of the pillars below. However, before we go to the description, we would like to highlight their complexity and complementarity. It means that whereas the library may voluntarily select among the solutions and ideas described in the following chapters, related to the implementation of the multicultural approach – depending on the specific character of the library, its needs and possibilities or characteristics of the region, in case of four pillars we recommend an overall approach. In metaphorical terms, the four pillars are four legs of a table whose top will be stable only if it has all four legs. Lack of one leg will disrupt the stability of the table. It is also true for the four pillars of a multicultural library – in order to state that your library implements a multicultural approach, you must take into account all four pillars in your everyday actions. In the following chapters we describe what it means in practice.

Pillar 1: Cooperation

We define cooperation mainly as the partnership-based treatment of minority groups through the acknowledgement and respect towards the cultural diversity. It means the implementation of the slogan „we act together with groups to the benefit of multiculturalism” as opposed to the approach „we act multiculturally to the benefit of minority groups”. The cooperation should have partnership implications which, in practice, shall mean, among others, the examination of needs or defining the goals and activities jointly with a given group (instead of – for a given group). It also means regular cooperation with the environment and organisations associating cultural minorities. Important aspects of the cooperation include: on the one hand – building the co-responsibility and recognition of both groups (cooperation as a value and method of action), and on the other hand – establishing relations with the environment and organisations associating minority groups, creating the institutional cooperation network (cooperation as a form). The effects of cooperation understood in such a way should include mutual education and activities undertaken jointly as well as the development of the library offer in the commonly defined directions. An example of the fruitful cooperation and partnership between the library and the Lemkos activists in Gorlice town in the Małopolska region is described in the part on Inspirations.

Pillar 2: Inclusion

Inclusion is understood as considering the perspective and needs of diverse groups in the activities of the library at all possible levels of its functioning. Thinking of multiculturalism and needs of the minority representatives should be permanently included in the method of functioning of the multicultural library and in areas of its activities. Due to the fact that the mission of a public library is to guarantee access to services to all inhabitants of a given town or municipality/commune, inclusion will be, among others, based on checking whether the offer of the library is useful for people in all groups. For example, it can be checked, whether information and a possibility to participate in classes for children organised by the library is available to all potentially interested people, irrespective of the cultural group they come from. If it is found that the library enables participation only to persons coming from majority groups (e.g. Polish children), and children of Roma origin, whose parents are not aware of such an area of the library activities, do not come to the courses, the library should try to ensure that persons from the minority group receive information concerning the activities of the library and can use it in the reasonably convenient manner, taking into account their specific cultural features. In the simplest way, it can be said that inclusion is not necessarily doing something additional, exceptional, on the contrary, evaluation of library actions undertaken so far is important as well as the potential modification of activities already taking place in the library, so that they are available to various social and cultural groups.

Pillar 3: Empowerment

Empowerment means such an approach to cultural groups that, once included both in the permanent offer of the library and in the dedicated activity undertaken, will strengthen the competence, recognition and the feeling of impact of minority groups, which will consequently be reflected in equalising the opportunities and increasing the possibility of independent functioning of such groups. Empowerment activities mean such activities which are addressed to individual groups and their underlying goal is to strengthen the position and increase the competence of such groups' representatives. Due to such activities, they will have easier access to the offer of public institutions and gain independence in terms of communicating in the new environment. In relation to immigrants, it may mean organising special discussion clubs supporting learning of the Polish language. Owing to such activities, they will communicate more freely in the language strange for them. It will facilitate their everyday functioning in the new country and may, for example, help them to find a better job. We have written about the practical implementation of such activities in the part on Inspirations, where we refer to examples of two libraries – the library in Opole which conducts classes of Polish, the so-called „Chats” (Polish: „Pogaduchy”) for the Ukrainian students and the library in the Norwegian Buskerud County carrying out dedicated activities for new inhabitants of the region, under the project called „New in Buskerud”. Empowerment should be most visible in the tailor-made activities for the specific minority group in order to fill the gaps and empower the minority groups in areas where their opportunities are more limited as compared to other social groups.

Pillar 4: Visibility

Visibility is understood as recognising and stressing the presence of a given group. There are various methods for implementation of this pillar, however, in order to strengthen the visibility of a given group, first of all, we have to recognise it ourselves, in the context of our activity. Then the library may undertake activities which will enable it to acknowledge and promote the output and cultural heritage of minority groups. Visibility also comprises activities associated with the education of the majority group – in Poland it means that ethnic Poles learn about other groups, their culture and functioning. It should be stressed that this pillar is based on recognition of minority groups and their specific character and on creating safe conditions for them to foster cultivation, development and presentation of their own culture, language, religion and other important aspects of their own identity. As a consequence, such groups and their culture should become present and visible for the whole community and the library should be the place of education on such groups and their culture, language or religion, both for representatives of such groups and persons representing the majority groups. It is also important that the implementation of this pillar is not only perceived through actions, one-off activities, such as a cultural event (e.g. the evening of Vietnamese culture). Visibility of a cultural group also means allocation of library space for collection of books in its language, marks, symbols of various cultures in the public library space, etc. In the context of the Roma community this may be expressed by organising a literature evening with Roma poetry and its creators, to be conducted by a person representing the Roma community. For the Roma this will provide the opportunity to show their own culture to the non-Roma audience (not only the output but also the rules of life of poets and the Roma community). For representatives of the Roma community itself, the literature evening will be the opportunity for deeper insight into their own tradition and culture.



— Library as an institution —

The pillars of the multicultural library, i.e. cooperation, inclusion, empowerment and visibility should be reflected in the performance of the library as an institution. They should be taken into account mainly in:

1. planning of actions,
2. functioning of the team and increasing its competence,
3. partnership-based cooperation with the environment and the interlibrary cooperation,
4. communication and promotion,
5. care for the library space and infrastructure.



Planning of actions

We have devoted a separate, fourth chapter to planning the implementation of the multicultural library model. In this part we describe what it means to take into account the multicultural perspective in planning of the library activities.

While planning the actions we focus on setting the priorities in the context of the multicultural vision of the library – what we mainly want to achieve, what is most important for us in the perspective of a year or several years. The goals we set to ourselves for a given period should be practically reflected in the activities of the library (both those addressed to the users and those associated with the organisation of the library work), the schedule of events and the utilisation of the library resources and budget.

Planning of multicultural actions should, first of all, take place with the participation of groups affected by multiculturalism, taking into consideration their presence and needs – in such a way we shall implement two pillars of the multicultural library: cooperation and inclusion. In order to achieve that, representatives of local minorities and non-governmental organisations should take part in the survey of needs and diagnosis of the environment and, at a later stage, fulfil the role of consultants within the action plan created by the library. Being driven only by own good intentions and lack of consultation at the preparatory stage may expose us to frustration and complaints and discourage us to undertake multicultural actions in the future. Let us see how such planning may look like from practical perspective and how essential the participation of minority group representatives is since the very beginning.

AN EXAMPLE

One of public institutions willing to be known as an open and inclusive place, included social integration of children from various cultural environments among its goals. The diagnosis of the environment has shown that the institution is located in the vicinity of the refugee centre where considerable groups of the Chechens have been arriving for years. Although the Chechen children attend the nearby schools, the lack of integration between the Polish groups and the refugees is painful for everyone. Teachers from schools, employees of the centre and the Chechen parents themselves – complain about the situation, although the latter were the most difficult group to obtain information from. Therefore, an idea emerged to organise a meeting for the Polish and Chechen children from the refugee centre. The cooperation was already initiated before and on many occasions both institutions used to support each other in various initiatives, thus no difficulties have been encountered in terms of formal aspects of the organisation of this integration activity.

A December date was selected with the intention of matching the event with the available budget and the planned actions. The decision was made that the best circumstances for the meeting would be provided by a common participation in the Christmas Eve dinner. Due to the fact that the goal was noble and related to children, it was possible to gain a sponsor who not only provided many attractive presents but also paid for Santa Claus's participation. Considering the rich selection of gifts, it was possible to invite children at each age. The female employees of the institution made a lot of effort to make the pre-Christmas meeting as successful as possible: they prepared beautiful invitations in two languages (Polish and Chechen), provided the translator present throughout the event, cared for preparation of the meal, invented many integration games, such as common dance in a circle, games for physical distance breaking, they decorated the room beautifully, prepared songbooks and music for common singing of Christmas carols.

The organisers waited with full engagement for the day of the meeting when everything was ready to the last gaiter button. However, during the event which was, by the way, attended by much less children from the centre than expected, the enthusiasm and joy the organisers expected, were missing. Whereas Polish children were active, joyful and they were present everywhere, the Chechen children seemed unhappy. They did not eat the carefully prepared dishes, they did not participate, besides the youngest, in games and competitions, not to mention the common singing of Christmas carols in which nobody from the centre participated although the translation was offered.

After the meeting the organisers were unhappy and they blamed the Chechen children recognising them as ungrateful and demanding since they, in fact, used only the gifts. Low attendance, lack of participation in the games and singing, rude refusal to eat the meal only confirmed the opinions heard earlier by the organising women, about the Chechens as demanding people, about their indifference, lack of will of integration. The organisers regretted that such a huge work, time and money was spent on arranging the event which has not brought the expected results. They were aware that it would be very difficult to convince the sponsor and the authorities to repeat the activity in the following year. Anyway, the women had limited motivation to organise the next

integration meeting.

Several days after the event the translator, a young student who has had contacts with the Chechens in Poland for several years, showed up to collect his remuneration. One of the employees decided to ask him about his feelings concerning the event. The boy said that he was very surprised seeing so many Chechens attending the event. The reason is that it was the time of the holy month of Ramadan, one of the most important Muslim feasts, during which the Muslims do not eat the whole day, until sunset which makes many of them avoid contacts with food during the day. It is the time when the Muslims would rather stay at home with the family and when children help in preparing the nourishing, a little more luxurious Ramadan dinners. Taking this opportunity the translator also provided more comments concerning the Chechen culture. He advised the organisers to select games more carefully next time – all games involving common entertainment within one space, particularly the physical contact between people of various gender, are prohibited in case of slightly older children. He has also mentioned that encouraging children to sing Christmas carols which is a social activity, however, deeply immersed in the religious context, like the entire idea of Christmas Eve, is the specific type of ethnocentrism. The religious context of a meeting is not desirable to everyone and, for some more orthodox people, participation in the religious meeting of representatives of different faith may be even impossible. According to the translator, the entire event had more assimilative than integration effect. He has also said that, on the one hand, it was the invitation to the celebration whose context is unknown to many Chechens (although for the Poles, even those non-religious, the meaning of Christmas Eve is obvious) and, on the other hand, he perceived it as an attempt at subtle forcing to participate in religious practices of the foreign culture. In his opinion, integration would consist in telling each other, in neutral circumstances, about own culture, for example, searching for similarities and differences. Even if Christmas Eve was the only occasion to organise the meeting, the programme should at least include time for talking about the Ramadan or other feast important for the Muslims.

The women who had organised the meeting, although moved by what they heard, tried to defend themselves by saying that the parents could have told them about those circumstances, that children could have reacted and explained and, finally, he himself could have told them about the problem still during the meeting. The translator has only answered that nobody wanted to destroy such a beautifully and carefully prepared event by saying negative words and criticising. On many occasions, the Chechen children in Polish schools participate in meetings, events whose context is unknown to them, however, they would never dare to ask, since they do not want to appear ignorant and undermine the authority of a teacher, an older person. Once they try to learn, question, explain, they are considered as trouble-makers, difficult and demanding. As the minority they do not have an easy life in the society strongly dominated by a single culture and religion. The Chechens, similar to the Roma and many other cultural minorities, perceive the word „integration” as abuse. In their view, many events, activities, situations which are perceived as integration by the Poles, promote Polish norms and values which they are forced to accept.

As the example shows, it is worth planning individual events with participation of the group such events are addressed to. While planning actions to be implemented in the library in a given year, it is also recommended to:

- › Look at cyclical, permanent, well-tested activities to be repeated and check, involving the minority representatives, to what extent such events are available, interesting and satisfying the needs of such groups, what can be changed to make them more inclusive, if they have not met this criterion so far.
- › Consider whether additional actions responding to the needs of a given cultural group should not be included in the calendar of the library events and meetings. It is possible to select pilot actions independently, using, for example, the inspiration of other libraries, or ask representatives of minority groups how could the library offer be extended to make it more available and useful for them.

Budget

While planning the actions, we cannot forget about the budget. In the context of planning of the tailor-made actions for individual groups, or the cyclical and checked events, or new events, it is always necessary to undertake cost estimation. The adjustment of the library offer to the needs of a new group may be often costless. Let us look at art classes organised in connection with a selected book for children and adjustment of their programme to the needs of Vietnamese children, more and more frequently attending Polish schools. The classes may be adjusted without any additional money, it is rather the issue of openness and multicultural sensitivity when formulating the invitation in the manner appealing to the Vietnamese, encouraging volunteers and the interested group itself to become involved in organisation and adjustment of the logistics to their needs. Maybe it is worth asking one of the parents to help in translations, if necessary (certainly even more in translating the conversations with caretakers – the Vietnamese, most of whom do not speak Polish at all; the majority of children attending kindergartens and schools in Poland speak Polish fluently, however, they should not be used to act as interpreters of conversations with their parents), or in preparing meals – the Vietnamese living in Poland even for many years are faithful to their nutrition habits brought from their country of origin. Thus, if you are planning to buy sweets as refreshment, a Vietnamese – a volunteer or a friendly parent – may help you to do shopping, indicate a Vietnamese shop, tell you what snacks are popular among Vietnamese children. Adding Vietnamese delicacies to the refreshment may be also an inspiring lesson of multiculturalism for Polish participants of the classes and, at the same time, include, empower the Vietnamese group and make them visible.

Extending of the offer, particularly the additional activities to empower a given group – purchase of language courses, books in the language of the minority, organising meetings concerning amendments to the migration law in Poland, may require including new costs in the budget. The local government may and should be the source of financing such activities, since the Vietnamese, the Roma, refugees, labour migrants, are usually legitimate inhabitants of a given municipality/commune – they are registered, they pay taxes, have their rights and obligations like other Poles. However, it is worth remembering that separate funds are allocated in the European budget, central budget, at a level of region and municipality/commune, to satisfy the needs of some of these groups, for example, ethnic and national minorities (the Roma) or refugees (the Chechens, the Syrians). The reason is that equalising the opportunities is the obligation of authorities at various levels. Quite often such activities are also undertaken by non-governmental organisations which may serve as a partner while applying for money, or a source of financing, due to various grant programmes they conduct.

Planning actions versus the 4 pillars

Will the organisers of the „integration“ event next year **include** Chechen leaders, parents and children themselves in planning the event based on partnership, equality principles, ensuring better cooperation? Will they be able, through selected actions and activities, to care for **empowerment** and **visibility** of not only Polish but also Chechen standards and habits?

Care for multicultural pillars at the stage of planning the actions means:

- › **considering representatives of all groups and their perspective in the analysis of the environment and in the research on needs** – talking to group representatives, leaders of cultural circles, searching for information in more experienced institutions or organisations dealing with foreigners, training, courses, on the Internet and in available publications;
- › **building a diversified offer of the library** – planning the activities conducted so far so that they are available and correspond to the specific character of everyone, whether these are persons from dominating or minority groups, and preparation to the implementation of new projects and events, e.g. aimed at integration of many groups or addressed only to the minority groups;
- › **multiculturalism-sensitive planning of the calendar of cyclical events** – so that they are not in conflict with dates of holidays and feasts celebrated in various cultures and they do not prevent the participation of the minority in events and celebrations due to such a conflict;
- › **introducing holidays and events important for various groups to the calendar** – we should remember not only about events important for the dominating group; if it is compliant with a given culture, we may offer common celebration of its feasts in the library;
- › **spending public money based on equality rules** – so that it satisfies the needs of the dominating group and the minority groups, e.g. taking care for raising funds for organising a Christmas meeting (Catholicism) and Eid al-Adha⁸ (Islam), for a common excursion not associated with a cult place of any religion, or for multiculturalism competence training for organisers from the majority group which will result in services better adjusted to the minority group's culture.

⁸ Eid al-Adha –the Feast of the Sacrifice, the most important Islamic feast falling on the last day of the annual pilgrimage to the Mecca. The sacrifice given after the prayer symbolises the faith and obedience to Allah – ed. note

Team competence

Building and development of the multicultural library depends, to a large extent, on the multicultural competence level of its team. What does it mean? Should an employee of the library enroll in Romani studies or should the library manager employ a Vietnamese prior to starting cooperation with the Roma or the Vietnamese? Would the team only then be prepared to work with users representing various cultures? That is not the point, although a Chechen co-worker or an expert consultation with the representative of the Arabia.pl portal would not be harmful to anyone... It is worth stressing that this is just what the Norwegians do – have a look at the Inspirations. Libraries in Poland can also be a source of inspiration, for example, the promotion department in Opole launched cultural and language classes for foreigners and quickly found a graduate of the Russian philology among its employees who eagerly offered her language skills and experience in teaching a foreign language. In the library in Kędzierzyn-Koźle, at the beginning there was no person having knowledge concerning work with the Roma, therefore, cooperation was started with a school assistant for education of the Roma children who suggested how to organise an intercultural event and, simultaneously, expressed her readiness for further cooperation with the library. You can look for support in your own library, in the multicultural environment and in non-governmental organisations. The latter have experience and would often provide free advice, although let us remember that organisations do not always know what libraries deal with. The list of organisations able to assist in multiculturalism issues is provided at the end of the publication.

Multicultural competences: attitude

*Competence is a learnt, developed skill required to tackle tasks, particularly those which are new and unrepeatable*⁹. It is the property of man used to perform various activities in personal or occupational life. The „multicultural” part refers to competences which help in contacts with persons of cultural origin other than our own, due to which we are not only able to function next to each other in the diversified environment but also to proceed towards mutual approximation¹⁰, to create a new quality. Let us stress two issues in the definition quoted: learning capability (it can be acquired, practised, developed) and the adaptive nature (it helps in adjusting to a difficult, new situation). In the contemporary, globalised world, where cultural minorities emancipate themselves and the democratic values start penetrating into various spheres of life, multicultural competences become a mandatory supplement of qualifications required in different professions.

Competence consists of:

- › attitude: what for? – values, motivation, beliefs, personality features,
- › knowledge: what and why? – theories and principles explaining the reality, arising from own experience and social communication,
- › skills: how? in what way? – behaviours, procedures.

Skills and knowledge are secondary towards attitudes. Attitudes provide basis for building respect to other man, also (or particularly) the one originating from other culture. Attitudes and beliefs are the driving factors of the thinking process – the readiness to develop the knowledge or the selectiveness of the remembered facts. The inclusion of the specific activities (skills) into the menu of our behaviours also depends on ourselves. If the Chechen children did not participate in the Christmas Eve meeting actively, the interpretation of their behaviour (knowledge) and dealing with them (skills) would depend mainly on our attitudes. If we find flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, attention, reflexivity, emotional control and courage in ourselves, we shall be on the right path to stimulate, develop, learn and acquire multicultural competences and work fruitfully with Chechen children or those coming from other cultures.

Flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity

Flexibility and tolerance of ambiguity are the key features in case of the clash between diverse standards and values. In the multicultural context, fast assessment and over interpretation disrupt relations, whereas looking at diverse points of view, sometimes contradictory, with simultaneous suspension of what is well known and safe, may lead to the constructive dialogue and adequate actions. Full immersion into the multicultural reality often means the necessity to reject the obviousness, learnt truths and rules and learning totally different attitude to the world and the everyday routine. The lack of explicit, permanent points of support and a great deal of uncertainty make the

9 M. Czerepaniak-Walczak, *Emancipation Pedagogics. Development of the Critical Awareness of Man*, Gdańskie Wydawnictwo Psychologiczne, Gdańsk 2006, p. 129.

10 According to: I. Czerniejewska, *Multicultural Education. Activities Undertaken in Poland*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe Uniwersytetu Mikołaja Kopernika, Toruń 2008, pp. 26–28.

typical framework of the multicultural occupational or private relations. The organisers of the Christmas Eve strictly following the Christmas ceremony will not be able to create an atmosphere inviting persons from other cultures or religions to participate in a common event. Recognising the ambiguous behaviour of the Chechen children who arrived, i.e. expressed their readiness to participate, but were not active, should trigger the curiosity of the organisers, their willingness to learn what the problem was, before the negative assessment of those children was expressed.

Mindfulness

Recognising that the Chechens do not celebrate Christmas, anyway, a very important event for organisers of the meeting, would support the acknowledgement of diversity. Therefore, mindfulness is so important, owing to which the awareness of own habits, templates used in acting and thinking may be increased, but also the field of vision may be extended, explanations which are not obvious and new information may be searched for. Capturing signals, such as: lack of children's engagement, particularly, older girls, nervous smile, turning the head, whispering into each other's ears, especially, when they were asked to hold each other's hands, are very specific indicators which would be noticed by a multiculturally sensitive person.

Reflexivity

In order to use attention and manage the ambiguity, reflexivity is necessary, i.e. stopping, taking a breath, refraining from premature assessment, with the purpose of gaining knowledge on how I act, what I am driven by and what my assumptions are. In case of the example under discussion, before offering the next planned game, the organiser should take a short break and consider: *I proposed the game in a circle, trying to engage boys and girls, but I can see resistance, particularly in case of older children. I have to learn what is behind and what I should do in a given situation.* An attempt may be undertaken to combine the interpretation of the fact with such elements of the situation as: gender, age and interpersonal distance. If any of these elements is important (although without the knowledge of the Chechen culture it is not exactly known what it is), the response to those signals may be the proposal to build two circles in the next game: one for girls and one for boys.

Emotional control

The aforementioned behaviour is possible with a certain deal of attention and reflexivity, but also with control of own emotions (*I do not feel offended when children do not play the game I have proposed*). On the other hand, the cold and rational assessment may sometimes reduce the engagement. Therefore, it is necessary to control own emotions so that they do not disrupt the possibility of analytical thinking and reflexivity, but also in order to prevent reducing readiness and curiosity to learn and ask questions due to excessive distance. Contact between individuals or groups considerably diversified in terms of culture is burdened with a high level of misunderstanding and uncertainty, which may lead to disruption of security and self-confidence (*How is it possible? Whenever I used to propose this game, there was always a lot of laughter and relaxation, and in this case there is tension and seriousness. Something is wrong with them. Maybe I gave them wrong instructions and I am unable to animate them?*).

Courage

Therefore, an important element of the attitude fostering multiculturalism is courage. On the one hand – to deal with ambiguity and lack of confidence, on the other hand – to exceed the written and unwritten rules, such as the approval of introducing a new game which is unknown, a sudden modification of old, well-tested instructions, giving the floor to an older Chechen boy to lead a part of the event if he seems to be a person capable of animating the group.

For some people the attitudes we have listed above are close, specific for their personality, conduct, and they constitute their way of thinking and acting, whereas for others this will be the area for work and development. Irrespective of which group you are classified in, such background of action is worth care and fostering. It will motivate to acquire knowledge, learn different cultures. If these are not elements of personality of a given individual or, if an individual has not had earlier multicultural experience and is afraid of the unknown, it is sometimes advisable that a person managing the library encourages his/her employees to gain competence in the area of multicultural communication, knowledge on cultural customs of various groups, and to participate in language training or anti-discriminatory workshops.

Multicultural competences: knowledge

However, multicultural competences do not end up with willingness and attitudes. Specialised knowledge in this area comprises numerous aspects. We try to list them all, however, it is not our aim to require the knowledge of each of them immediately. Persons working in a multicultural environment should be mainly aware of the role and impact of culture on everyday functioning. We can see how the approach to authorities and older persons and the prohibition of criticising them influenced the behaviour of the Chechen children – they preferred to subordinate and participate in games breaking their cultural rules than oppose to the organisers.

While doing such work, both knowledge of broadly understood multiculturalism and knowledge of individual cultures is useful. The first type of knowledge comprises issues related to mechanisms facilitating or hampering the efficient functioning on the crossroads of cultures: ethnocentrism, stereotypes and prejudices versus ethnorelativism or knowledge of various approach to time, space, relations, emotions, work and tasks, gender roles, structure and organisation of social life. The organisers of the Christmas event showed their ethnocentric belief in the power of similarities while planning the individual elements of the event (they assumed that all children like to receive gifts from Santa Claus, play in the circle, sing Christmas carols) and in an ethnocentric manner, through their own norms, they have evaluated the behaviour of children as rude (by refusing the meal), without taking into account the values and rules of a different culture (fasting during the Ramadan).

In relation to individual cultures, knowledge can be extended by: basic facts in the scope of history, tradition, geography, economic and political situation of the country; standards, values and practices typical of a given culture in various spheres of life; characteristic

and most typical feasts; current events and important social debates in a given country or cultural group. In the example under discussion the key issue is the organisers' awareness that they arrange an event in the period of the Ramadan, which is not favourable for going out and during which fasting is obligatory. It would be also valuable if they knew the rules concerning the relations between genders.

Depending on the specific character of the site and presence of specific groups it is worth being aware what the status of a representative of the ethnic or national minority, or a voluntary emigrant (work, love, lifestyle) or forced emigrant (refugee) is associated with. It is necessary to understand the importance of race, nationality, ethnic membership for the individual and group identity, also in the minority – majority context. The asymmetric relation of guests versus hosts was reflected in more easy-going behaviour of Polish children, feeling „at home”, and in the embarrassment of the Chechens. It can be also observed that children were stimulated to subordinate to the majority group – standards, customs and traditions strange to them were once again imposed on them. While working with migrants or refugees, it is also advisable to know the psychological and social consequences of migration and exile observed in children and adults. Limited freedom of behaviours or the lack of willingness to participate in activities may be the symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder or culture shock.

The knowledge of the cultural and intercultural specifics supports planning and implementing more adequate and effective projects. We think that it is not necessary to study all such knowledge comprehensively before the work on the crossroads of cultures is started. However, we recommend to be aware that many guidelines concerning the behaviours in the scope of intercultural contacts and the knowledge on a given culture is at hand. In the part devoted to Additional materials we have included the list of recommended publications, materials and sources of knowledge.

Multicultural competences: skills

Besides knowledge, skills are also important. The problem is not to study the consecutive reports on intercultural studies in depth, but to translate the theories learnt into specific behaviours. Among the skills, the application of intercultural communication rules, concerning both verbal and non-verbal messages, is most important. The reason is that while talking competently with representatives of various cultures you can learn the same or even more than from very wise books. It cannot be hidden that during multicultural meetings the skill of resolving conflicts is helpful – the knowledge on whether we can lead to direct confrontation, or approach the conflict in more indirect way, with a possibility to save own face, becomes invaluable whenever difference of opinions arises. Developing of own creative approach to difficulties and stressful situations, which are common in the ambiguous and often unpredictable intercultural contacts, is also helpful.

In the table below, we have summarised the whole array of attitudes, elements of knowledge and skills useful for multicultural meetings.

ATTITUDES

flexibility, tolerance of ambiguity, attention, reflexivity, emotional distance, courage

KNOWLEDGE

awareness of the role and impact of culture on everyday functioning

intercultural knowledge about what is happening at the crossroads of cultures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › ethnocentrism, stereotypes and prejudices versus ethnorelativism › various approaches to time, space, relations, emotions, work and tasks, gender roles, structures and organisation of social life and other
cultural knowledge on a given culture	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › basic facts in the scope of history, tradition, geography › standards, values and practices typical for a given culture › characteristic feasts › current events and debates in a given country or cultural group
legal status of ethnic or national minority, voluntary emigrant and refugee	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › relations between minority and majority, role of race, nationality, ethnic and religious membership for the individual and group identity › rights, privileges and obligations
psychological consequences of migration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › culture shock › strategies of co-existence of groups: assimilation, integration, separation
psychological consequences of exile	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › post-traumatic stress disorder › learnt helplessness

SKILLS

coping with difficulties and stress
ability to accompany, support, strengthen

rules of intercultural communication	› verbal and non-verbal messages
conflict resolving strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › approach to differences › role of “saving the face” › indirectness and directness

Intercultural attitudes, knowledge and skills are acquired for many years. It can be achieved through specialised studies at various faculties (knowledge of culture, psychology, sociology, management, political sciences, intercultural relations, etc.). Participation in shorter training, courses or workshops is useful. However, personal experience of relations in the intercultural environment is extremely important, as well as the daily practice and verification of behaviours, attitudes and opinions based on the conclusions drawn independently and feedback, particularly, received from representatives of other cultures. The ears, eyes and hearts should be widely open to absorb and explore the rules of intercultural co-existence. It is not the task for a single course, studies or a single foreign trip, but an invitation to continuous self-development, adventure for the whole life. In chapter four, devoted to the implementation of the multicultural library model, we write about how to start this route and make the first step towards intercultural competence. This chapter also includes the scenario with tasks supporting self-development.

The library team versus the 4 pillars

The composition of a team acting in the library to the benefit of multiculturalism should reflect all four pillars. The key element seems to be the effort to **include** the perspective, knowledge and experience of persons from the cultural group recognised in the diagnose as present in the environment and important. This may mean hiring of an employee coming from a given cultural group or acquainted with the issue, or cooperation with a volunteer, a leader of a cultural group. It is important that relations in the team are based on partnership and **cooperation**, to provide representatives of specific cultures with influence arising from acknowledgement of their expert knowledge. It is worth assuming that they know better, which may be necessary, important, adequate and polite in relation to the minority group or, more generally, in the scope of multiculturalism. Equal treatment should be also reflected in the conditions of cooperation – as often as possible, we should also award financially representatives of various cultures cooperating with the library. They are often people whose situation in the labour market is much more difficult than the situation of the majority group, and the opportunity of earning any money is worth a fortune for them. While employing a given person we must make sure that his/her remuneration is not lower than the compensation received by other persons employed at similar positions, or performing a comparable scope of work. If we fail to observe this rule, we will show discrimination which is legally prohibited. Treating cultural representatives as important informers and experts not only **strengthens** their feeling of influence but also increases their competence, which consequently has a positive impact on their participation in the social, professional or political life. **Visible presence** of representatives of cultural groups and experts in the team, makes the activities of the library more reliable and breaks the stereotype perception of cultural group representatives as less educated or poorly prepared to the participation in various projects and to functioning in the society.

Partnership and interlibrary cooperation

Before the whole knowledge required in the multicultural work is gained, it is worth searching for people competent in this area in your own environment, including, among others, partners from the multicultural community. Well-structured local partnership may serve as invaluable support in supplementing the resources and competence or personnel gaps. Essentially, the background of all activities described in this publication, in the part on Inspirations, was the partnership cooperation.

Cooperation is one of the four pillars of a multicultural library. In this part of the publication, we focus on local partnerships or interlibrary cooperation in the context of involving partners coming from other cultural groups. It will be interesting for us what should be taken into account while getting involved in the intercultural or international cooperation.

Interlibrary cooperation

We have described an example of particular interlibrary cooperation, important in the multicultural context, in the Norwegian inspiration. The Multilingual Library in Oslo is the department of the Public Library in Oslo and represents a centre of specialised knowledge on multilingual services, functioning as an institution supporting other libraries. Currently it holds collections in 57 languages. The Multilingual Library is not available to users, its collections and services reach the inhabitants of Norway through public libraries all over the country. In Poland, such specialised departments in regional public libraries or the National Library are not available yet. Creating of multilingual collections requires the specialised cultural and language knowledge. Polish local libraries have also started to perceive such a need. The Regional Public Library in Olsztyn has started creating a collection of educational materials and publications devoted to multiculturalism, to be available to local libraries. Perhaps a solution is the cooperation on a county or regional level and sharing the purchase of books in languages used by inhabitants of a given area. In the Opole Region libraries participating in the FRSI project „Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures” have already undertaken the first steps aimed at interlibrary cooperation. At first, they used the Roma library created by Inga Mirga for the needs of the Polish-Roma meeting organised in the library in Kędzierzyn-Koźle. The prepared exhibition of Roma books has also travelled to the neighbouring libraries. Joint training meetings organised for several libraries of the region have also resulted in the opportunity for librarians and persons cooperating with them to consider, inspire each other while preparing multicultural projects in libraries. Inga Mirga, who was an expert cooperating only with Branch no. 5 of the Municipal Public Library in Kędzierzyn-Koźle at the beginning of the project, has also developed relations with other libraries, participating in events devoted to the literature related to the Roma (e.g. in the meeting in the library in Zdieszowice concerning the Roma poet, Papusza, on the occasion of publication of her biography and screening the feature film telling the story of her life).

Local partnerships

Look at the Inspirations – you will find a description of good practice from Gorlice library there. Owing to that example you will learn about a well-functioning partnership, based on assumptions and rules supporting multiculturalism. The partnership in Gorlice probably does not need additional comments any more – the activities of libraries and the Lemkos organisations speak for themselves. We promote the Gorlice partnership since its way of operation is based on implementation of four pillars of the multicultural library. The partnership has established and has been extending **cooperation** with the Lemkos organisations, has been actively **including** Lemkos representatives in its activities, taking advantage of their resources and competence, it has been **empowering** the Lemkos organisations sharing knowledge concerning the professional elaboration of the collections, it has been implementing and planning actions which strengthen the **visibility** of various cultural groups inhabiting the region in a non-stereotype way. The selection of partners is also worth stressing in case of the Gorlice partnership. During conversations with individual entities involved in the activities, it was found that the library and its manager may fulfil the role of the project leader, since she is perceived as a person impartial towards all partners and neutral towards the problem.

(Non)homogeneity

A good diagnosis of the local environment, considering all smaller and bigger organisations and cultural groups, is the key factor for gaining the reliability and building the inclusive partnership. The general belief of persons from the dominating group may be that the minority has to unify and be unanimous. On the one hand, it is the effect of categorising and creating social division – the conviction that our own group is diversified and non-homogeneous whereas representatives of „alien” groups are thrown into the same bag, being treated as equal. On the other hand, it is also the vision of what may be effective – cohesion and unanimity may be perceived as conditions of existence and breaking through the majority. However, in practice it turns out that almost in each environment, starting from a large city to a small village, both minority and majority environments are divided, and often also in conflict.

Let us take the Roma community in any location as an example. It happens very rarely that it is a single and unanimous group. It is true that the first line of social classification is the Roma character (the Roma and non-Roma), however, it is immediately followed by other diversifying elements. Almost each Roma environment is divided into different ethnographic and language groups, i.e. four main Roma groups functioning in Poland: Bergitka Roma, Polish Roma, the Kalderash and the Lovari. Each of these groups has a different language, history, origin, diverse customs and different attitude towards tradition. Moreover, strong family relations are observed among the Roma. Family membership and common name is the next line of division. In many environments the Roma also create various associations and informal groups, not always presenting the same postulates, approaches or aspirations, therefore, they rarely agree with each other. Many other factors overlap with this differentiation. Thus, while planning cooperation with the Roma, you should find out

who acts in your community and under what rules, what are their mutual relations, where they cooperate and where they are in conflict. It is the knowledge which may significantly facilitate your cooperation and leadership. However, try to invite everyone, so that you are able to act for the possibly broadest group of recipients and you can be perceived as an impartial and reliable partner. In more difficult situations, in case of conflicts, the library will maybe have to act as a mediator, however, the impartiality, i.e. the „equal distance” to all parties and the problem will certainly help in overcoming difficulties.

Barriers of multicultural partnerships

However, several barriers may emerge on the path leading to creating a well-functioning partnership with co-workers from various cultural and minority groups. You will read about them in the following part of this chapter. We also share our guidelines concerning issues to pay attention to while starting the cooperation so that multicultural traps may be avoided and unequal treatment may be prevented.

One of the basic issues to think over while initiating cooperation with a partner coming from the minority cultural group, is the impact of the minority-majority relations on the performance of the partners. It is particularly important when a representative or representatives of the library come from the dominating group. In case of the asymmetric relation (when one party has better access to resources and more power), it is easy to trigger mechanisms maintaining the inequality.

Tokenizm

One of the undesired phenomena emerging during the intercultural cooperation is tokenism. Acting once as one of the members of a team organising the intercultural festival, I was aware that the invited representatives of various cultural groups did not have any real influence on the concept and programme of the festival. Our team included Chechen artists and musicians from Senegal, but only to make us look better on posters and to facilitate the acquisition of other partners to cooperation, rather than to listen carefully what their opinion about the event is and what ideas they could contribute. Tokenism is a phenomenon opposite to real inclusion. *It is the practice of using representatives of minority groups by dominating groups in order to prove that in institutions dominated by representatives of majority groups no discrimination exists, and no exclusion of individuals from the minorities occurs*¹¹. The term comes from a word „token” – a token for games, and it is used in relation to persons coming from minority groups whose names are referred to as examples „thrown on the table” when accusations of discrimination and exclusion appear.

The same phenomenon may be also observed while submitting applications for co-financing of projects. Many funding institutions allocating money for the minorities or excluded groups require implementation of the project with participation of a minority partner. Thus, some applicants use organisations of minority groups in order to gain funds, however, their representatives are not perceived as equal, important, experts to be used while planning and implementing the project.

11 N. Sarata, Tokenism [in:] *Equality Dictionary*, <http://rownosc.info/dictionary/tokenizm/> (access: 06.09.2015).

Depreciating

Persons from ethnic and national minorities often feel depreciated. *Among the Roma there are partners for discussion. Recognise it!* – says Joanna Talewicz-Kwiatkowska, the Roma leader, in her interview with a journalist. *What is important and what is not, is usually decided by specialists on the Roma, instead of the Roma themselves. (...) I only want to say that there are people among us who can be partners in discussions. Let us think together*¹². Depreciating experts coming from minorities means treating them as a party not mature enough to represent their own interests and describe their own life situations.

If you are not willing to treat persons coming from cultural minority groups in a way they may perceive as depreciating, and it is important for you to use their knowledge, experience and the way of seeing the reality, invite the Roma education assistant when organising events for the Roma children. By doing this under the rules of inclusion you will offer the minority representative an opportunity to have an impact on the situation. This is what employees of the library in Kędzierzyn-Koźle decided to do, although certainly with some initial reservations and difficulties. In the part on Inspirations you can read about the benefits of including the Roma member in the project team.

Double standards

While working with representatives of the minorities it is necessary to check whether we don't automatically trigger the approach characteristic for persons from dominating groups. The reason is that within the cooperation of persons with different social status, it is easy to:

- › lower the competence standards,
- › or to trigger the opposite phenomenon – double standards of performance.

Did not the volunteers from the Roma community cooperating during the organisation of a cultural evening receive less ambitious tasks than the Polish volunteers? Who delivered the speech at the opening of the Ukrainian exhibition organised in the library: the professor of the Academy of Fine Arts – a Pole, or the student from Kiev helping with organisation of the event? When organising the debate on the situation of refugees, did you not decide that the Chechen woman – the refugee, should not talk about her experience as it may be too difficult for her to speak about war and the escape?

We often believe that persons from minority groups have lower competences, that some of the tasks will be too difficult for them, that the formal background, academic knowledge or knowledge of persons more rooted in the Polish reality (i.e. reality of the dominating group), is more adequate than personal experience and perspective of persons from foreigners' groups, or ethnic and national minorities – this is what lowering the competence standards is about. However, most probably the speech of the student from Kiev would better introduce the audience into the climate of the exhibition, at the same time, presenting in more detail to the Poles what is nice, interesting, attractive for the Ukrainians, what they pay attention to, how they speak about art, paintings, in what way they perceive art. There are no other reasons, besides stereotypes, prejudices and lack of confidence that the Roma girls should not receive tasks equally difficult as the Poles. The Chechen woman who experienced the war trauma and the effort of escaping from her

¹² L. Ostatowska, *Among the Roma There Are Partners for Discussion. Recognise It!*, „Gazeta Wyborcza” daily, no. 180, 04.08.2010.

country, is probably still very emotional about it, however, maybe it is worth asking her about her readiness to share her experience? Maybe she needs it very much, and it may be even therapeutic for her. It is also possible that after such traumatic experience talking about it would not be difficult any more. We do not know this, the decision should not be made by us.

On the other hand, we sometimes allocate tasks to foreigners, ethnic, national or religious minorities, which are too difficult or inadequate. Is asking a Syrian friend from Kraków, working at the statistical office, to prepare a 20-minute talk about the basic obligations of a Muslim at a seminar on religion organised by the library, a task adequate to her abilities? Double standards of performance mean the mechanism consisting in formulating stricter criteria of assessment towards persons representing the minority group than in relation to persons from the dominating group. A person representing the minority must do, know, be able to do more, better, more precisely in order to be evaluated as a person representing the dominating group. Is every Pole able, willing, and does every Pole have background to prepare a twenty-minute presentation concerning the Catholicism? We know very well that at least a hundred of reasons exist – including the major fact that not every Pole, just like not every Syrian woman, must be religious – due to which the Pole should not receive such a task, likewise, not every foreigner or representative of a minority should be treated as an ambassador of his/her culture or religion.

It is simply better not to be driven by own assumptions but precede the expectations with questions: Would the Ukrainian be willing to say something at the opening of the exhibition? What do volunteers from both groups think about the distribution of tasks? Is the refugee woman ready to talk about her experience in public? And, is the Syrian woman willing to talk about Islam and if yes, what would she like to say? It is better to leave the decision to people who engage in the activities. It will not only strengthen their involvement through the feeling of influence, sense and acknowledgement, but it will also really include, strengthen them and provide the visibility, ensuring the real cooperation under partnership rules.

Stigmatisation

There is still another issue associated with the multicultural partnership. In many various situations in this publication, we highlight the importance and essence of visibility of cultural groups in the library considered as multicultural. At this point we would, however, like to draw attention to the reverse of the coin. Persons from minority groups are more visible and easier to recognise, therefore, they are more socially exposed. Distinguishing due to the ethnic origin, colour of the skin, nationality, language or religious faith, may be inspiring, encouraging, inviting to contact, however, it may also trigger stigmatisation – negative attitudes, reactions, comments. Let us take, for example, season's wishes in two languages sent in Gorlice. A reaction of a councillor initiated a stormy discussion on the Internet. *What was happening, was threatening to me, these posts were disgusting. I even didn't think that I would care so much. It was a very difficult experience* – tells Magda Miller, director of the Gorlice library. Such reactions to undertaking multicultural issues, as protests, outrage, personal attacks, destroying property (such as boards at the exhibition devoted to multiculturalism), unfriendly articles in local media, may appear. The issue, although important, necessary, inspiring and up-to-date, is also controversial, particularly where historic events or fresh problems associated with multiculturalism exist.

Therefore, while developing multicultural cooperation, you should agree with the partners whether and how they would like to be present and distinguished. Your role may also include offering support whenever the visible presence of a given group, its organisation, its representative may turn into an uncomfortable or threatening situation. It is also necessary to be prepared to various interventions (personal, NGOs or institutions specialised in this area – the police, the city guards, the Plenipotentiary of the Regional Governor for Ethnic and National Minorities, the Ombudsman, the Government Plenipotentiary for Equal Treatment), which may be unavoidable if the issue of visibility gets out of control and starts generating adverse effects. Your own and your minority partner's security and comfort should be always the priority issues. Cooperation while defining the intervention methods and the scope of measures to be undertaken in response to unkindness and other negative phenomena should be included in the partnership rules. It is not about threatening and discouraging but about having awareness and being prepared to various scenarios of developments.

The understanding of mechanisms in the minority – majority area is one of two major aspects to discuss while establishing the intercultural partnerships. The other one is the awareness of cultural differences which may not only affect the quality and successfulness of the cooperation but also the possibility of its establishment.

Dimensions of culture

Below we present the dimensions of culture important for building partnerships. It is actually a very broad area covered by many monographs or comprehensive chapters of handbooks¹³, however, let us see what is important and worth remembering when establishing the cooperation.

Importance of the group – collectivism versus individualism

Cultures differ in terms of how groups and individuals perceive their role. While planning the first meeting of partnership established with the Roma, take it into account when arranging the space. It is probable that if you have invited three Roma organisations and informal groups, it shall mean the meeting with more than three of their representatives. Such a first meeting will show how much collectivism of the Roma culture is cultivated among the Roma living in your community. It is possible that just three persons would come, but it is more probable that you would meet in a really numerous group. Each Roma leader will be accompanied by persons from his family, his co-workers and important personalities of the Roma environment.

Importance of the social hierarchy – egalitarianism versus hierarchy

If you invite librarians from Norway to the partnership under which you shall submit the application for co-financing, do not be surprised that the document sent is not returned to you for weeks. The fact that you have written in the letter that you would like the director of the library to review the final version of the application just before it is submitted, would rather not be understood as such by the Norwegians. According to the much more egalitarian approach to the structure, the director will once again send

¹³ We recommend several items in the list of publications to be found at the end of this book.

the documents to all stakeholders and he would carefully listen to all comments which the team would try to present commonly, even if the opinions are different. The conduct of the Norwegians in such cases would be based on involving everyone, irrespective of the formal position and the hierarchy, since the opinion of employees from all departments and at all levels is important and it is taken into account while taking decisions. In case you had a similar case to resolve with the Vietnamese partner and if you applied to the president of the association, you would probably receive the answer after five minutes. This is the time the president would need to read the document and take his own decision, without any consultations. In strongly hierarchic cultures, opinion of people at lower positions is not heard and taken into consideration by leaders.

Importance and social roles of men and women – masculinity versus femininity of culture

Your library developed cooperation with a refugee centre. The head of your institution has already had several talks with the woman acting as the director of the centre who is convinced of the importance of the cooperation in favour of supporting the Chechen community inhabiting the facility managed by her. However, she does not want to take further steps without being sure that the Chechens would be interested in the library offer. It is important for her to involve them in creating plans since the very beginning. Therefore, the director of the library met the senior group of the Chechens and outlined the opportunity of cooperation in general way. The Chechens expressed their considerable interest in being included in various activities of the library, for example, in the currently launched project on assistance in job searching and computer courses. However, they wanted to receive more details. The director promised them a second meeting during which individual female employees, as being more competent than him, will talk in detail about the library offer. However, he was deeply disappointed when none of the Chechens appeared at the second meeting. He started to consider what reasons caused the absence of the interlocutors who seemed interested before. Can you guess what has happened when you read this example? The Chechen senior board, the group of the most important Chechens in the community, has probably refused to acknowledge the authority of the women – the employees. As long as the talk was conducted with the supervisor – the man, they were interested in the cooperation. They did not treat the meeting with women as the serious proposal they should accept. Such approach results from the hierarchy and the social role of women in the Chechen culture.

Importance of relations – relationship oriented versus task oriented cultures

With your library, for several months you have been trying to finalise the talks and establish the Polish-Vietnamese partnership. Due to the fact that a market was opened in the neighbourhood of the library where more and more Vietnamese arrive, you have an idea to make them interested in the activities of the library. You can create an interesting offer for children of the Vietnamese entrepreneurs who highly appreciate education. You know that in other districts where the Vietnamese live, some sponsors have been identified among them, ready to support the library. However, you are surprised that you have already met several times (in the library, at a restaurant, at the market, in the company of one of the Vietnamese) but you still have not started to discuss the cooperation. Even if each of the meetings was very nice, you have learnt more about the Vietnamese culture (in particular, after a visit to the restaurant), nevertheless, in your opinion, you should start discussing what the Vietnamese partners would specifically like to be

involved in (who has so much time, do those people work at all?). You are losing faith that these meetings shall lead to anything. Is it possible that the Vietnamese were not interested in the library? Maybe you are wrong. If you keep meeting, you will certainly start talking about the specific issues, but maybe still not at the next meeting. The Vietnamese are much more oriented towards relations than the Poles. Before they „do business“ or start cooperation, they must get well acquainted with the potential partner. Numerous meetings, but also a rich code of ceremony, based on exchange of politeness, courteous talks, visits and re-visits, including the exchange of gifts, represent the prelude to the promising cooperation. Before you get to the point – setting details and potential tasks, invite them for a meal and green tea and hand them over a nice gift. Good relations may mean a very fruitful cooperation.

Role of context in communication – high context versus low context

Your library has been cooperating with a partnership library in Germany for years. In the municipalities close to the border there was simply no other option. You see many advantages of this partnership: you organise seminars together, you have issued a publication, you support each other in building a department of regional traditions. There are still many other plans. However, you are consistently surprised by the fact that in case of each new project the German partner writes down the rules of cooperation again, appoints a person for contacts, discusses the project with his full involvement and defines the precise distribution of tasks. You do it only because of him – you trust him enough to accept any terms of cooperation. Anyway, you change many of those initial arrangements in practice.

The need of the German partner arises from the low context nature of his culture. In low context cultures, efforts are undertaken to agree on as many issues as possible, leaving few aspects in the area of suppositions, to be read „between the lines“, based on context. The low context communication demonstrates directness, desirability, precision of descriptions and explicitness. Germans rely on what is discussed and written down, instead of relying on the knowledge of context. As compared to the western neighbour, the Poles represent the high context culture. They do not have such a strong need to define the context, i.e. situations, circumstances, participants and the relations linking them. In their opinion, not everything has to be expressed or written. Their message represents high context since it assumes that the other party knows what the issue is about and knows the context from which it is able to read and deduct a lot. They rely on the knowledge of context which is very important for communication.

Attitude to time – monochronicity versus polychronicity

A junior high school cooperating with your library launched students' exchange with Spain some time ago. Teachers still remember the nice presentation of the town and commune you made for the students from Germany, therefore, they have also asked you to meet the Spanish group. And also this time you have met the challenge by preparing an improved version of the presentation. You have prepared it together with a volunteer who has also translated a short material about the library and its history into Spanish (it will also be useful for other occasions, maybe you will publish it on the Internet, since you have been thinking of enhancing the Internet image of the library for a long time; you hope that maybe the Spanish school will involve the library in the cooperation and you will manage to write a project together). It has all cost you a lot of engagement and work. You are looking forward to meeting the Spanish teenagers. Then, why do you feel disillusioned and why are

you not satisfied after the presentation? You have the impression that the teenagers were not interested at all, particularly, if compared to the Germans. During the meeting they apparently listened to you, however, at the same time they were surfing on the Internet in their mobiles and tablets. They kept taking photos, standing up and one of the persons has even answered a call. You started to have doubts if you can deliver good presentations at all and if you have good contacts with teenagers. You do not believe any more that you made them interested enough to contact you with a library in their home city, you were planning to launch cooperation with. You have not taken into account one variable – a different attitude to time. Although the Spaniards arrived at the meeting with a 20 minutes' delay, it was not a clear signal for you. It is quite likely that they listened to you carefully and they were equally interested as the German teenagers. However, they come from the polychronic culture where many activities are performed at the same time. Time is not divided into single fragments filled with only single activities. It is a category with high capacity where a lot can be accommodated. In polychronic cultures not only doing several things simultaneously during a meeting is a norm but also simultaneous dealing with several issues while using the phone or Skype. This is not perceived as the lack of respect or interest. While planning a partnership with representatives of polychronic cultures, you should remember about this cultural dimension. Accordingly, you will avoid frustration due to delays or non-appearance at meetings, dealing with something else during a conversation, abandoning a given activity and other consequences of approach to time, different than in your culture. You should also remember that plans will be rarely long-term, whereas they may change quite often.

Partnership versus the 4 pillars

If you are planning to establish a partnership with **inclusion** of partners originating from ethnic, national, language or religious minorities, you should remember that the conditions to undertake the **real cooperation** are as follows:

- › **Maintaining impartiality and neutrality towards partners representing the whole local environment** – so that everyone has a possibility not only to take part in the partnership, but also to present their own perspective. This will strengthen the representation, legitimacy and reliability of activities of the library as an institution open to and towards all inhabitants. Try to refrain from evaluating who is right (everyone has their own point of view), search for solutions which would enable further cooperation, do not resolve disputes.
- › **Preventing effects of asymmetric relations between the minority and the majority** – i.e. such phenomena as tokenism, depreciation of experts, lowering expectations, double standards and stigmatisation. Only a serious approach to **partners** from other cultural groups, as people with valuable and unique knowledge and understanding of multiculturalism, and their recognition, will enable to develop cooperation strengthening the potential of other cultural groups.
- › **Understanding cultural rules of the other party** – putting yourself in the partner's situation and approaching the contact and cooperation considering those rules will not only facilitate making contacts and maintaining the cooperation but it will also protect you against various frustrations and disappointments, often arising from the ethnocentric interpretation of the situation. On the other hand, allow yourself to make mistakes and learn this cooperation through experience – it may be a funny adventure, not free from failures! Consider with partners how and to what extent you want to care for visibility of individual cultural groups living in your region.

Communication and promotion

The method of our communication with the environment and promoting the multicultural events organised by us, may significantly influence the successfulness of our actions. Communication of the library through the website or promotional materials is conducted mainly using the language and visual symbols, and both those tools are extremely sensitive to the multiculturalism issues. Before we discuss the technical aspects of communication and promotion – what to write and promote and how – we shall start from short considerations and look at the hidden messages which we often (unconsciously) communicate in the multicultural context.

Hidden messages

Recall how typical Polish posters and other materials related to multicultural events and activities look like. What can we most commonly see on various information carriers? Our experience shows that within the promotion of multiculturalism we can find two tendencies in messages:

- › **Tendency 1:** Human figures with various skin colours (to reflect ethnic, national, cultural, racial diversity), usually smiling and holding each other's hands. In an abstract version, the image would consist of items in various colours, e.g. stones which, besides different colours, are identical. What is the message transmitted from such an image? We are all tolerant and the multiculturalism is an idyllic story of people who – although different in a certain sense (e.g. in terms of image) – are first of all people and have many similarities, e.g. they like eating, they have emotions, they love children, etc.
- › **Tendency 2:** People in folk clothing typical for various cultures, or rather for the specific region in a given country, rarely worn by anyone on a daily basis. The message here is as follows: culture mainly means cultural heritage, tradition and history. Presenting culture we focus on slightly archaic aspects, something derived from the museum, far from everyday life and issues currently important for multiculturalism.

Tendency 1: Utopia versus realism

Refer to your experience of contacts with different culture, it may be both private and professional experience. Foreign trip? Visit of foreigners in the library? Visit of a family from a different country? Or, maybe your child emigrated from your country of origin and has a relationship with a foreigner? Try to recall what kind of feelings arise from such situations. Joy? Uncertainty? Curiosity? Tension? Enthusiasm? Surprise? Aversion? Shame? All of them together? Probably, most of them. If the contact was additionally burdened with historic problems, it was more difficult. Everybody knows, the majority has experienced it. Multiculturalism is a complex experience, which may be both fascinating and difficult. Such is the reality. Stereotypes and prejudices „work hard”, hampering translating tension into curiosity, surprise into learning and extension of own perspective. Messages in the utopian version build on stereotype images, instead of experience. Exposing universal similarities,

they deny difficult differences. Therefore, in the utopian version, we are all tolerant, open and curious of the world, believing, however, that each multicultural meeting will mainly lead to finding the universal human nature and community, owing to which dialogue will be easier to conduct. Messages in realistic version build on diverse experience, rely on questions and searching for sometimes difficult answers. In the realistic version of messages – assuming good will, self-reflection and curiosity – we can learn a lot from each other, revealing what joins us, but also learning important differences since only such differences, although intriguing and sometimes discouraging and frustrating, shall broaden our horizons and enable learning something really new.

The discrepancy between the real multiculturalism experience and the idealistic presentation of the phenomenon is, however, quite easy to sense and it may discourage potential recipients of multicultural events. The idealised images refer to the longing for an easy and nice world, but simultaneously distort a much more complicated reality.

Writing about communication and promotion sensitive to multiculturalism, we encourage to create materials showing this reality and complexity, not only the colourful utopia. The cover of this publication was designed with such intention. We have used a picture showing an interpenetrating structure whose elements sometimes meet and sometimes don't meet. The distance is once smaller, once bigger. Letters of various alphabets refer to different cultures and languages, since there are many methods of recording.

Tendency 2: Past versus present and future

At various types of international meetings, participants are often asked to talk about culture of their country. During one of such workshops, the Norwegians, presenting their country, showed a model of ecological solar batteries, recently constructed and popular in Norway and offered everyone chocolate bars which were a hit in Oslo at that time. What did the Poles do? Easy to guess: they showed a doll in Łowicz folk dress and encouraged to taste Wedel chocolates with Chopin image. This story typical for many similar events, both on private and state level, shows that the Norwegians, as many other nations, while promoting their country, refer to the contemporary time and aspects which have gained mass popularity or which have been acknowledged by experts here and now. On the other hand, the Poles, and they are also not isolated in this approach, refer to tradition and history. Psychologists studying multiculturalism use the term of cultural dimensions¹⁴. These dimensions, diversifying nations and regions, show their attitude towards various aspects of life: time, hierarchy, work, interpersonal relations or gender roles. One of such dimensions is the time wise orientation: past – present – future. On one pole, there are cultures oriented towards the future, perceiving present through the perspective of what is important for the future (e.g. Nordic countries, western European, north American countries, Japan). On the other pole, there are cultures focusing on the past and referring many aspects of the present times to their past, to their roots (e.g. Arab countries, the majority of African countries, countries of south and south-eastern Asia, eastern Europe). Using such a description of cultures, it is easy to define where Poland and where Norway

¹⁴ The successive researchers dealing with multicultural differences, postulated slightly different approaches and typologies, including, among others: Edward T. Hall, Geert Hofstede, Fons Trompenaars, Shalom H. Schwartz and the team lead by Robert J. House – their publications should be referred to in order to obtain the full and detailed description of dimensions.

is located. The Scandinavians are surprised that during international workshops the Poles do not promote what people living today like to do, eat, watch. On the other hand, the Poles looked with some distance at how the Norwegians cut off their roots, focusing only on the present times. Locating of Polish culture within the time orientation dimension is one of the reasons explaining why Poles usually refer (often unconsciously and non-deliberately) to the past, tradition and cultural heritage, instead of contemporary, present time, while promoting multiculturalism.

Let us stress: we do not claim that tradition is wrong, we only say that message focusing on the past and history is not understandable by everyone, attractive and desirable, and that it has further consequences. It should be used deliberately and consciously, not as a habit.

Let us look closer at communication of the Poles with the aforementioned Norwegians – highlighting the past in communication with people oriented towards the future makes mutual understanding and establishing real, current relations, difficult. Going further, using selected folklore elements in promotion: ethnic clothing and artefacts, usually several popularised ethnographic motives, not only loses realism and the contemporary perspective, but also flattens the much more complex reality, closing cultural groups whose motives are used in a historic bubble, reserving only conservative, traditional images for them, cut off from reality. Would a mountaineer applying for a scholarship in Drammen or a girl from Łowicz applying for a job in a bank in Oslo like to be associated with ‚kierpce‘ (the traditional moccasins made from calf leather in Polish mountains) or with a traditional Łowicz skirt? How would the image built on associations with Cepelia handicraft shops help the Poles in developing their international academic or professional career? Let us remember that using elements of tradition and folklore in promotion, apparently attractive and colourful, may be adequate and justified in some situations (when we prepare a workshop of traditional artistic forging), whereas in other circumstances, it may be harmful for the minorities or the whole nations, creating an unrealistic image of who their representatives are, what they do and what aspirations they have.

Multiculturally sensitive communication and promotion

The objective of communication with the environment and promotion is to reach a relevant target group with a message. In order to be successful, our message (what we want to say), tools (leaflet, poster, website) and distribution channels (media, direct contact, distribution of materials, word-of-mouth marketing) must be adjusted to the group of recipients selected by us. While communicating with the environment and promoting its services, the library can do it in the manner facilitating reaching each inhabitant of a given community with an offer, taking into account the cultural diversity of such community. Planning multiculturally sensitive communication and promotion, take into account: forms and channels of information distribution, language as well as graphics and images.

Forms and channels of distribution

The form and communication channel we decide to use, depends mainly on our target group. Posting information on the websites is the fastest and cheapest method, however, not always effective. The first question worth answering is whether we need written materials at all? In case of known users, it is probably a good solution, whereas in case of groups we have no contact with, or groups who visit us rarely, direct contact and oral information may be a better (and cheaper) option.

In the majority of hierarchical and collectivist cultures (in fact, it means countries outside the western European cultural circle, for example, it shall refer to the Chechens, the Congolese, the Sudanese, the Vietnamese, the Chinese, the Ukrainians, the Turks, the Syrians or the Poles of Roma origin), making a contact with the appropriate person – a leader of a given community is the key factor of success. Covering of our town or village with posters or even the most attractive banners on the website shall have a much poorer effect. Face-to-face conversation, presenting our plans, what we want to achieve, how a given event will look like in detail, taking into account the specific needs and convincing important persons in a given community, will significantly increase a chance of success. Leaders will play the role of key cultural „interpreters” to explain to their community what is going to happen in the library through the perspective of values and issues important for their culture. Our message will become reliable only if it is supported by the reliability of the leader of a given community. In the part devoted to inspirations we have described activities of the library in Kędzierzyn-Koźle addressed to the Polish and Roma children. The plan was excellent and it had laudable aims, but also a limited potential of success. Without the support of the Roma assistant, the programme of the project would not be adapted to the needs and abilities of pupils of Roma origin, and none of them would have received the consent of parents to participate in events organised by the library. Only the Roma woman, and only such a person who was respected in her community, was able to show the project to the Roma in such a way that they could understand the essence and importance of the meeting with the Poles in the library.

Libraries enjoy high level of social trust from the majority of Poles, however, you should remember that it may not be the case with foreigners or other cultural groups. Refugees had to escape from their country exactly because their state and its institutions did not ensure security. The Roma and other minority groups have a collective experience of oppression by institutions. They may associate a library, a school, and any other authority with compulsion, hostility, assimilation... In order to build prestige and trust in the library, direct relations and good contacts will be important.

How to make contact with a leader of a given community? Two methods are usually successful: establishing contact with a non-governmental organisation which cooperates with a given group or represents it, or potentially, with a local authority or social welfare facility. If such organisation or institution is not available, visiting places where representatives of a given group appear or work, such as restaurants, schools, bazaars, may be effective. In such places, during an informal conversation, respecting the rules of communication of a given group, guidelines may be found on whom to contact, who takes decisions, who is most important for a given group. Whether we search for the leaders through organisations or personally, it is better to meet informally.

However, if you decide to prepare a written material, it is worth defining the content

and form of the material with a representative of a given group. The example of organising a Christmas event for the Polish and Chechen children described before shows how important the appropriate presentation of the message is. If you organise an event for children, in many cultures information will be important on who will provide care and how, whether the activities will involve both boys and girls, whether any food to be potentially served takes into account the religious rules of a given group, e.g. both the Muslims and the Jews must not consume pork (thus, the majority of Polish soups, cold meat, yoghurt and jellies containing pork gelatine is excluded). Obviously, not all representatives of other cultures are religious, therefore it is worth consulting the content of the materials, instead of relying on a common knowledge and own good intentions. The more culturally distant the group you want to cooperate with, the bigger the need of consulting the materials prepared.

Language of communication

The language we prepare our material in will depend on the specific ethnic character of our region and the goal we have defined. If we want to attract new users to the library, who have not visited the library so far, e.g. the Roma, refugees, immigrants living in our city, the material prepared in the language of a given cultural group will be the most appropriate. Nobody expects that librarians should fluently speak several languages. In such situations, the support and assistance of representatives of a given group or volunteers is necessary. When we conduct promotion or recruitment addressed to the specific group, leaflets, posters or information on the library website should be prepared in the language of this group or in bilingual version. Due to such approach, our recipients will get acquainted with our language or even learn it.

Bilingual and multilingual materials are recommended in places inhabited by multicultural community, where different languages are used on a daily basis. It is also worth considering when we want to promote and appreciate the multicultural heritage of the regions and locations where mainly historic minorities live and the majority language has become the dominating one. Such approach has been, for instance, adopted by the library in Gorlice which regularly prepares season's wishes in Polish and the Lemko language. If they additionally included wishes in Yiddish on the occasion of the Jewish Hanukkah, it would have a symbolic dimension, even if the Jewish community inhabiting that region before the war does not exist today. The fact itself is important as well as highlighting the multicultural diversity and the educational goal. From this perspective, it is not important how many people actually understand the wishes in a given language.

An important aspect of the considerations concerning the language is also the sensitivity to wording which should be based on equality and implement the language postulates of a given group. Besides the wording or labels explicitly offending specific cultural groups which we do not need to mention, we would like to draw attention to the wording which is often regarded neutral, however, not in the perception of the groups they refer to. For instance, many Gypsies in Poland want to be referred to as the Roma not because the term Gypsy (in Polish: Cygan) is offending in their language and culture but due to the fact that in Polish the term Gypsy often appears in unfair context or in proverbs preserving stereotypes (e.g. Roma cheating or stealing children), or recalling stereotype images and associations (the Gypsies rolling stock or card fortune-telling has nothing to do with the way of living of a Roma woman lecturing at the university or with what she deals

with). In Poland, a function of the Roma (not Gypsy) assistant exists and this group wants to be called like that. The situation with the word Negro (in Polish: Murzyn) is similar. Many Polish language researchers defend Polish word Murzyn as being neutral. Unfortunately, it is not perceived as such by black people living in Poland. Sayings like: „a hundred years behind the Negroes” or „the Negro has done his job, the Negro can go”, the cake called Little Negro (Murzynek) or the Palma margarine with an image of a black person, reveal our dominating attitude. They are certainly not neutral. It is enough to imagine what our reaction would be if the margarine best for baking the Little Poles was produced somewhere.

How to speak and write? You should use the phrases: black people, the black, community of black people, or simply, a Nigerian, a Botswanan, the Sudanese. The Africans is quite a capacious concept, it is unknown what ethnic, national or language group is meant. An important gesture would also be making a little effort and learning to pronounce names in their original version, instead of creating your own version of the names (for instance choosing familiar names most similar to the original ones). We are mostly used to our name, to its specific form, and in many cultures, names have special importance and carry content which we are unable to read. Let us respect it while trying to promote multiculturalism, let us be sensitive to proposals and needs of the minority groups and let us ask people from different groups how to write about them.

Non-stereotypical graphics and images

We have already written about it, but let us return to this issue from practical perspective. The most common mistake is illustrating the content with images making it infantile and stereotypical. The Vietnamese are presented in traditional conical hats during work on a rice field, and inhabitants of Africa are half-naked and wear skirts made from grass. In general, simplified folk clothes stripped out of context dominate, rarely, clothes worn every day appear, without referring to the specific ethnic, national or religious membership. These are usually not photos of people but drawings with the style referring to the kindergarten (creating the infantile image). Such images reproducing stereotypes have nothing to do with the 21st century, with the real cultural diversity of individual continents, countries, religions. They refer to historic, or even colonial imagination and they are distant from capturing multiculturalism in the manner we write about in this publication.

While choosing photos and illustrations, you should avoid stereotypes, refer to the reality and everyday life, instead of archaic images. You should remember that each group is also diversified internally – it includes women and men, older and younger persons, religious and non-religious people. Not every Muslim woman covers her hair and wears niqab, just like not each Jew is the Hasidic Jew wearing kippah and payot, and just like very few Polish women would put on a Łowicz skirt preparing to work in the office. While selecting the photos take care and make sure that they reflect the diversity, adequacy and contemporary reality.

Communication and promotion versus the 4 pillars

Communication and promotion are the activities which may support the implementation of four pillars of the multicultural library

› **Cooperation** with minority persons or organisations will enable us and facilitate good

preparation of the materials which will really reach the intended destinations. Owing to such approach we also learn and really exploit the multiculturalism.

- › **Including** representatives of minorities in the works related to communication with a given group, we work **with** the minority instead of working **in favour** of a given group. This will enable us to respond better to the needs of such a group of users and to prepare better materials.
- › Appreciating the knowledge and competence of the minority representatives we make it easier for them to acquire new competence or to use their potential. It **empowers** them, strengthens their recognition and supports their development, and it may also result in the follow-up joint projects in the future.
- › Taking care of multiculturally sensitive communication and language, using multilingual materials or presenting knowledge concerning the specific culture in a complex way, without simplifications and stereotypes, we show the output and strengthen the **visibility and presence** of a given group in public space.

Let us refer to an example: an important element of promotion and communication of the Human Library in Wrocław is the catalogue of Human Books. Let us see how the approach of organisers of this event takes into account four pillars of the multicultural library:

- › It is a real cooperation based on involving both persons from the library and from minority groups in the preparation of the catalogue. The librarians select titles of Human Books which refer to widespread stereotypes and to what the readers would like to find in the next issue of the event. Thus, it can be said that this part of the catalogue is created by the majority group. On the other hand, the prefaces are written independently by Human Books – representatives of the minority groups. The result of the joint work reaches the readers and participants of the meeting – where they can find both elements close to them and often used by them (book titles) and the authors' individualised descriptions and characteristics of individual people (prefaces).
- › Including the perspective of minority groups' representatives into the preparation of prefaces is real and full. The librarians have stressed that the prefaces are inspired by the needs of individual persons – each of the Human Books may decide what to focus on in his/her own story: on presenting him/herself, own distinctness and individuality or presenting him/herself as a representative of a given group, or showing the most commonly found accusations, stereotypes and prejudices. Therefore, they write about themselves, about their group or about the majority group, or a little about each of the three or two perspectives. They also decide themselves what their language would be, what kind of expressions they would use, how the readers should think and speak about them.
- › It is directly reflected in the so-called empowerment, i.e. strengthening the recognition. Human Books take decisions on their own matters, nobody does anything for them or without them.
- › The messages created by minority representatives are included in the catalogue promoted on the website, in publications and in information. Words of individual people, arranged as poems, lyrics, stories, biographical notes, information and various other forms become the flagship of the event. Their visibility and their broadest possible presence in the library space and in the public space is important for organisers, since, from practical point of view, it means the success of the project and from strategic perspective – it is one of the best forms of educating about needs, situation and specific features of persons and groups they come from.

Infrastructure and space

You may be surprised that we are considering how space and infrastructure in the library can promote multiculturalism. The space, unless natural, is rarely neutral – space speaks through symbols or information we may acquire having a look at it. In this part we would like to look at how space in the library is labelled, what messages may be read by only looking at the library and its website, to what extent the space for users is organised in the manner which would facilitate orientation to people who do not speak dominating language, as well as at the issues associated with space and infrastructure which are worth focusing on while planning multicultural events.

Symbols

Our intention to visit or stay in an institution which is new for us may depend on how freely and safely we would feel in its space. Imagine that you have moved to live abroad for some reasons and you do not speak well the language of the country where you live. It is a country distant to you in terms of culture and the majority of its inhabitants have different religion than yours. You decide to visit a local library. What will you pay attention to entering the place? What will you look for first? What kind of information do you need? What kind of environment would make you feel safer? We can ask the same questions if we decided to visit the library website first instead of the real visit to the library.

At first, you would probably check whether any information in your native language or any language you speak can be found on the website. For many people arriving to Poland it means English or Russian. In libraries of one of the Norwegian counties a welcome poster has been prepared on which the word „welcome” was written in several dozen languages spoken by people living there. However, this does not mean that the library personnel speaks several or several dozen languages. This poster is the symbol of openness and interest in the issue, the signal that multiculturalism is important for us. Maybe from the perspective of your library, welcome message in one specific language is important, instead of several dozen languages. Maybe you live in the region inhabited, or once inhabited by the German, Ukrainian, Jewish minority?

While proceeding, you will most probably look at symbols and pictures hanging on the walls. Elements we display inform about what is important for us. Walk across your library as carefully as if it was your first visit to the place. What can you see? What is hanging on the walls? The National Emblem? The Flag? The Cross? Other religious symbols? Whose images are visible in the photos? Whose images are missing? How are those people shown? Before I met the employees of the Gorlice library, I was walking in the building, looking at photos hanging everywhere. Photos showing various events can be seen there, among others, photographs of Lemkos artists, pictures of a ceremony attended by a rabbi and religious Jews. I do not remember the events these photos illustrated, I only remember my thought that in the library multiculturalism was present, since it was visible in its space. If you decide to promote multiculturalism through pictures or other artefacts, try to avoid reproducing the stereotype images of specific groups and people (more on this issue in the section on Communication and promotion). If you are willing to pay tribute to Jews inhabiting your region at present or in the past, do not hang, e.g. a reproduction of pictures

showing The Jew with a coin. Although this image has become popular in Poland as a kind of amulet or talisman bringing financial success to a person possessing such a picture, according to the opinions of the Jews themselves and anthropologists, this superstition results in thoughtless copying of negative stereotypes and the image of The Jew with a coin itself corresponds to the tradition of anti-Semitic images.

Labelling the space

In the part on Inspirations you will find the description of activities undertaken by Buskerud county libraries. Those libraries have been implementing a special project called „New in Buskerud”, whose one of the elements is the *Newcomer’s Zone*, i.e. the special zone – a separated space allocated for newcomers and a dedicated website addressed to new inhabitants. In the zones, it is possible to reach the content, information concerning services and activities important for persons trying to find their place in the new reality – in the library, or more broadly: in the city. The space has been labelled in a special way, to facilitate moving around the library to the new inhabitants whose majority does not speak Norwegian. Maybe you think that such need does not exist in relation to your city or region. However, have you thought of foreign tourists or emigrants returning after several years of work in England or Ireland?

The special form of library space labelling highlighting multiculturalism is the introduction of labelling in several languages which are spoken in a given region. The Gorlice library plans to introduce such a solution under the project called „Three alphabets” – in case of this region (the Low Beskid Mountains) it refers to the Latin, Hebrew and Cyrillic alphabet (you can read more on this idea in the part on Inspirations). Perhaps the introduction of labelling in Vietnamese in your library would encourage parents of Vietnamese children to use the library services and language lessons?

Similar solutions can be used on the website. Can I learn anything about the historic or contemporary multiculturalism of the region by visiting the website of your library? We shall use once again an example of the Gorlice library where the website opens with Umberto Eco’s quote concerning the library as a place open to everyone – the text which explicitly defines the vision and mission of the library. On the website, tabs about the library are also found in English, French, German and Russian. Soon, owing to the cooperation with the Lemkos organisations, information in the Lemko language will also be available. Translations into each of the languages were made by friends free of charge.

Allocating the book collection

Another solution, sometimes raising controversies, is the allocation of the dedicated thematic book collection or the book collection devoted to the specific cultural group. It is known that in libraries the specific catalogue order applies. On the other hand, the special shelf with publications concerning human rights and refugees, books in a given language (which is already practised), literature concerning the Roma or written by Roma authors, provides assistance to persons who have problems with dominating language or are interested in access to literature related to the specific group. It is particularly important in case of groups and topics to which only few issues have been devoted. The library collections may be organised so that access to the necessary publications (e.g. to the literature in the Ukrainian language) is as easy as possible, also for the representatives of minorities, and so that the library becomes also the place for them.

An example of the dilemma related to breaking the traditional systems of book classification has been described in the part devoted to the Norwegian inspirations. Employees of one of the libraries complained that they were not able to find Koran on the proper place, in accordance with the catalogue. Users always put Koran on the top shelf. After asking the users it has turned out that in accordance with the tradition, Koran should be always placed on the very top, for example on the top of the bookshelf. Employees decided to respect this need, violating the library practice. The decision was approved by the Muslims, however, other persons complained that the library system had been adjusted to only one religious group among many various groups of library users. On the one hand, the universal system of cataloguing ensures repeatability and neutrality, however, on the other hand, it may ignore specific needs of a given group of users.

Care for multiculturalism often means promoting of a certain way of thinking and acting which sometimes is not neutral and clearly supports one of the parties – the minority group. To what extent such solutions are worth using is the issue to be solved in individual libraries. Let us remember, however, that usually the majority group protests against special treatment of the minority. This shows our real readiness and openness – the argument of exaggerated claims appears quite quickly. Following various discussions and controversies related to minority groups we will quickly observe that the issue of exaggeration appears immediately after the *status quo* has been violated and a new group becomes visible and more clearly present in the space. Resistance is one of the classic reactions to change and it should be expected when deciding to apply a non-typical solution. Visible presence is one of the four pillars of a multicultural library.

Besides books, computers occupy more and more space in the library. Therefore, also in this case it is worth checking whether any special language needs exist. What may this mean in practice? Attention must be paid at least to two issues. The first one is the adjustment of the computer keyboard to the needs of persons speaking languages with non-Latin alphabet. The second issue is the possibility to select the language in the computer so that commands and settings are displayed, e.g. in English, Russian or Ukrainian. If your library is located in a tourist place, it is probably worth installing a computer with settings in English in the Internet reading room – such a solution will also not be harmful to children and teenagers having obligatory classes of English at school.

Space and multicultural events

While organising multicultural events it is worth considering whether they require any special spatial solutions. In one of the Roma day care rooms in Wrocław it has not been foreseen that when inviting children for educational classes, it is also necessary to provide space for caretakers. Pupils did not come alone or only with their mothers, but also with grandmothers and cousins. The mothers who did not know the institution and did not have full confidence, were not willing to leave the room in which the children were to play. As a consequence, there was not enough place for everyone. Only after some time, the space was reorganised so that it also accommodated chairs and tables for adults accompanying the children.

Another example is the situation when it is necessary to organise classes separately for women or girls and for men or boys. Sometimes, the lack of such a separation may even prevent arranging the classes. We mentioned a similar situation – an attempt to conduct

a co-educational game for the Chechen children – in this chapter, in a section devoted to considering the multicultural perspective in planning. The problem is often not about addressing the activity to women or men only but to separate the space (sometimes only symbolically). The appropriate earlier preparation is the key issue.

It is also worth paying attention to the spatial consequences of the minority – majority relations. On many occasions we have been witnesses of intercultural events during which representatives of groups with a higher social status (e.g. Americans) felt more confident and occupied freely more of the central space. For nationalities less prestigious in Poland (e.g. the Ukrainians, the Georgians), last benches in the rows or peripheral parts of the room were left. However, other consequence of asymmetry in relations may be the lack of readiness to mix during the integration events. Sitting of the Roma on one side of the room and the Poles on the other side is a common situation, polarising both groups and causing the effect opposite than intended. While organising such an event, you should think it over how to invite participants to use the space equally. In case of bigger celebrations, such as performances, you may use visiting cards on the chairs (if you know names and surnames of guests), or propose the volunteers to guide persons participating in the event to proper places prior to the commencement of the event. In other case, you may also officially announce what the goal is (of the integration) and ask the people to mix. In case of smaller events, such as workshops, a good method is a physical game based on swapping the place. Once you have received the effect of equalising the opportunities in using the space, ask persons participating to stay on places just occupied.

Infrastructure and space versus the 4 pillars

Infrastructure and space planning is the area of the library functioning which may also support the implementation of four pillars of the multicultural library:

- › **Cooperation** with minority persons or organisations will enable and facilitate good planning of space while organising multicultural events. Perhaps the group you are working with has special requirements worth asking about before the event.
- › **Inclusion** of the multicultural symbols, space labelling, highlighting the diversity provides a signal to the world that this issue is important.
- › The space which **underlines** the diversity within which everyone can find his/her piece, or will not feel dominated by one option, will **empower** those cultural groups which do not feel at home or whose presence tends to be questioned.
- › **Taking care for the presence** of symbols, language, cultural messages of various groups inhabiting your region in the comprehensive way, free from simplifications and stereotypes, you would stress the achievements of such groups and strengthen the **visible presence** of a given group in the public space.

A large, white, stylized letter 'E' is centered in the upper half of the image. The 'E' has a thick, rounded, sans-serif font style. The background is a solid teal color.A photograph of a rural landscape is shown in the lower half of the image, overlaid with a teal tint. A dirt road leads from the foreground towards a small wooden shed and a tall, thin tree in the distance. The sky is a pale, hazy blue.

**Library activities
for the community**

A library is the institution with a rich and diversified offer which is continuously developed. In this chapter we shall look at the library activities in terms of multiculturalism and check how the library may support multiculturalism and the multicultural groups inhabiting the region within the services addressed to users. We conventionally define four areas of activities of the libraries: knowledge and information, culture, education and social integration. We shall discuss them in terms of the possibility to take into account the pillars of the multicultural library.

Before you start planning how to include multicultural activities in the library offer, you have three following tasks:

Task 1: Review the offer used so far in terms of multiculturalism (pillars: inclusion and cooperation) – checking to what extent you have already considered the multicultural library pillars and what should be changed in your activities. It is necessary to look at the activities carried out so far and check whether the library offer is also addressed to representatives of cultural minorities, whether they participate in your activities. In other words, we should check to what extent the offer used so far is inclusive towards users coming from groups other than ethnic Poles. It is also worth remembering that sometimes the difficulty in using the offer may not necessarily arise from its content but from the perceived level of the library openness. Thus, it is not the content but the way of acting which is of crucial importance. If we become aware that a given group inhabiting the region does not use the library services, the next step is to check why such a situation occurs. Let us remember that most probably we will not be able to guess those reasons ourselves. If our activities undertaken so far have not encouraged a given group, it is the sign that something should be changed in our activity. What should it be? We can learn that from representatives of this group. Without cooperation we would rather be unable to acquire reliable information and, at least, it will certainly be much more difficult.

Task 2: Analysis of the environment in terms of needs to create an offer addressed to minorities (pillars: empowerment and cooperation) – checking whether representatives of minorities need any activities dedicated to them in a particular way in any area. Should the library not introduce special activities into its offer? Are there any students, immigrants, refugees in your environment who need assistance in learning Polish? Does the Roma assistant need help of volunteers while doing homework with the Roma children? Is there any social competence deficit in a given group in the enhancement of which the library could support the group? For example, teaching reading and writing in informal atmosphere to adult Roma who prematurely resigned from education (in such a case, separate classes for women and men would probably be necessary). Another empowering activity is using competences of minority group representatives and showing their role as experts in a given area. It is important that within the empowering activities the minority representatives are not positioned as recipients of the activities only, but also as creators and experts.

Task 3: Analysis of the minority group presence and acquaintance with the minority group by the majority group and analysis of relations between the groups (pillars: visibility and cooperation) – accordingly, you will be able to plan activities strengthening the presence and visibility of a given minority group and deepening the knowledge of its culture and achievements. You are searching for an answer to the following questions: Is the multiculturalism of the local community visible owing to the visibility of the library? Does the majority group know the minority group? Is the majority group acquainted with the cultural output and cultural heritage of the minority group and with its contemporary functioning? It is worth thinking here of the visibility of the groups which maybe do not exist anymore, but inhabited the specific region historically. In many places in Poland this would include activities disclosing and recovering the presence – often only symbolic – of the Jewish community. It is also the space for mutual, sometimes difficult, education. The older the roots of multiculturalism in a given region are, the more occasions for disputes and conflicts occurred, often unresolved until today. Without the opportunity to meet and talk it will be difficult to change those attitudes.

Let us stress once again that in each of those three tasks, cooperation with the minority representatives is required. And they must be treated as partners, if they are to be involved in the activities of the library.

Those three tasks determine three types of activities:

- › **inclusive activities (common)** – activities or a way of their implementation which also includes the minority groups,
- › **empowering activities (dedicated)** – activities addressed to cultural groups, responding to their specific needs (arising from the status of the minority group),
- › **visibility activities (highlighting the presence)** – activities addressed to the majority group and the minority groups, highlighting the presence and output of various cultural groups, teaching the majority on the culture of the minorities.

The specific activity may simultaneously support all four pillars of the multicultural library – this is the model version. For example, the library is organising the exhibition of contemporary local artists with participation of Polish and Kashubian artists and the vernissage shall be honoured by the concert of the Kashubian singer. It is the activity which simultaneously includes (the audience comes from both groups), empowers (the share of artists from cultural minority) and provides visibility to the output of the specific culture. This activity would not be possible without cooperation with the representatives of a given minority. Thus, we divide the activities into specific types a little artificially, however, this classification helps in highlighting the most important aspects, particularly to those who have just started their adventure with multiculturalism.

In the ideal version, each activity of the multicultural library would implement all the aforementioned types of actions each time.

In reality, this would probably be impossible, especially at the beginning of the multicultural trip. Therefore, let us treat the guidelines below as an array of possibilities we may choose from. It is important to do it as consciously as possible based on the needs of the region and the capacity of the library.

Knowledge and information

Providing access to knowledge and information is the basic function of the library. In this area, the library provides services both through making specialised book and multimedia collections available as well as through ensuring the possibility to use Internet, or through organising meetings with experts from various fields. The library also acts as the local information source – it is the place providing knowledge on local events, activities undertaken by various institutions, capacity of the local labour market. Let us see how the implementation of each of three types of multicultural activities in the area of knowledge and information could look like.

Type 1: inclusive activities

This type of activities refers to the offer addressed to all groups. Creating of participation opportunities for minority groups is the key factor. It is important that representatives of various minorities can find collections representing their culture and language in their library and that they have access to information in the language they prefer. The extension of the collections by adding publications interesting for minority groups will also be a solution. It is also possible to purchase the relevant equipment (e.g. a keyboard with the Cyrillic alphabet), or to change settings of the computer into English, which shall facilitate the use of the computer reading room by refugees, immigrants or tourists.

Type 2: empowering activities

It is important that the representatives of minorities, particularly those who do not speak Polish are able to reach the information they need, owing to the support of the librarian. The empowering multicultural activity may be based on creating the special information tab on the library website for newcomers in the town or on organising a meeting concerning the refugee rights, consultations with a lawyer, social worker, employee of the labour office or a teacher.

Type 3: visibility activities

An example of visibility activities (highlighting the presence) may be the extension of collections related to the multicultural history of the region, with focus on minorities who used to live in the area in the past. It may be the special thematic shelf or the special exhibition of a publication. It may also involve more active forms, such as organising bicycle races and walking tours of the area in search for traces of various cultural groups.

Culture

Libraries fulfil the role of local centres of culture, organising various cultural events, such as exhibitions, competitions, photo, art, theatre workshops or dance classes. Such activities create many opportunities to include multicultural aspects and perspectives.

Type 1: inclusive activities

Examples of forms: organising exhibitions, to which local artists will be invited, both Polish and Lemkos, or organising an art competition for teenagers, whose topic will focus on multiculturalism of their own families. This may also involve invitation to artistic activity: preparing amateur films, performances, artistic events which would show multiculturalism of the region in retrospective perspective, for example, from the times before the World War II until the contemporary times. Another example of an inclusive activity in the area of culture is sending season's greetings in two or three languages, or sending wishes by the library on the occasion of feasts other than Catholic.

Type 2: empowering activities

Among the actions empowering a given cultural group, activities supporting preservation of the cultural identity, language, customs, are worth mentioning. One of the organised events of this type includes the Olympic Games of the Silesian Dialect aimed at cultivating and passing language customs of the Silesians between the generations. The art competition called „The City where my ancestors come from” could be dedicated to the Vietnamese living in Poland for two or three generations who are slowly losing links with their country of origin. Another example includes activities developing the non-stereotype career paths or output of cultural minority representatives, e.g. the workshop of storytelling for representatives of cultural minorities during which they may tell and record narration on their non-obvious and surprising interests, such as the hobby of the Roma from Kowary of writing *science fiction* stories.

Type 3: visibility activities

Activities making a given culture and its output visible are relatively often conducted by libraries, most commonly in relation to cultural minorities inhabiting a given region. The exhibition of celebrations or Lemkos, Kurpian or Ukrainian customs can be found among the library activities. Events and festivals devoted to different countries also take place there. At this point, we would like to warn against introducing the stereotypes – which we have written about in the part devoted to communication and promotion – i.e. against excessive simplification of cultural messages or showing them only in the historic context, and focusing on traditional customs, omitting the contemporary challenges. Showing the culture of a given country or a group, we should also refer to contemporary practices, achievements and events. Presenting the wedding ceremony from Poland and other culture we should show it according to the entire practised diversity – not all Poles conclude church marriage, organise wedding parties, including the traditional unveiling ceremony, and similar situation occurs in other countries and cultures.

Education

Education is the area of growing importance in the library activities. Most commonly, the considerable part of the educational offer of libraries is addressed to children and teenagers or to seniors. In the activities proposed below we encourage to extend this traditional offer of libraries by adding new groups and topics.

Type 1: inclusive activities

Many educational activities already conducted by libraries may also be addressed to the representatives of minorities (e.g. computer courses, English lessons); in such cases, it is necessary to care for the relevant, inclusive method if conducting the classes, e.g. through referring to the specific experience of the cultural group during the language courses or a conversation about the multiculturalism of the region and its importance to participants of the classes. A computer course for seniors could have its specialisation: for the seniors of the Roma or refugee origin. Due to learning how to operate the computer and the Internet communicators, they would be able to contact their families and friends who stay in their home country or live abroad. It is also worth considering the activities expanding knowledge and upgrading the skills of inhabitants in the multiculturalism area, such as workshops of intercultural competence, anti-discrimination workshops, both for representatives of the majority and minority groups.

Type 2: empowering activities

Empowering activity in the area of education may involve, for example, inviting a representative of the minority as a guest or an expert in the specific area (let us stress that it does not need to be a lecture on a given culture, being a Pole does not make everyone the specialist on Polish culture). It often happens that refugees staying in Poland used to work as specialists in their country, or held qualified positions. A friend from Syria who sells bath oils in a shopping centre in Poland, used to work as a well-known graphics specialist before the civil war in Syria began. She could certainly say a lot about the contemporary graphics, or she could conduct such classes for teenagers. Other type of empowering activities is the education addressed to the minority group, e.g. lessons of Polish for foreigners, a reading group and conversations in Polish, or learning how to fill in Polish documents, use the bank, etc.

Type 3: visibility activities

You should think it over or conduct a mini survey to check what library users know about the multicultural roots of the region or groups currently inhabiting your locality. You may be surprised how limited the knowledge would be. Librarians working in branches of the Gorlice library complained that school pupils had no idea about the region they lived in. At schools no regional education is provided. Although there is an Orthodox church in each town in the neighbourhood, the majority of the children has never visited any. This is the opportunity for the library to fill in this gap. The library may conduct special library classes on multiculturalism of the region or, as in the Gorlice county, it could organise a meeting concerning the dogmas and rules of the Orthodox religion, combined with a visit to the Orthodox church. In such activities it is important that representatives of the majority

groups have a possibility to learn about other cultural groups and get acquainted with the perspective of the minority groups. Such activities may be based on learning about culture and customs, about history of the region and output of individual cultures, or recognising problems of contemporary migrants. We should not forget about the non-governmental organisations acting for the minorities or to the benefit of multiculturalism, which may make the library offer more attractive by conducting the educational activities. The list of organisations from all over Poland is provided at the end of this publication.

Integration of the communities

The library is a place of meetings where people feel safe. It would be beneficial if the library, through its activities, built a platform for communication of people coming from various groups, not only in cultural terms, in order to enable them to get acquainted with each other, counteracting separation, exclusion and marginalisation. This is often accompanied by difficult conversations which do not result in a single response or resolution. As long as the library does not support one party, agree with one party or is not tempted to resolve multiannual disputes or conflicts, instead creating space for talks, showing various perspectives without evaluating their legitimacy, it shall act in favour of integration and change of the sometimes difficult *status quo*. It is important that the activities undertaken by the library foster building of the local identity in order to give the whole society a feeling of community, in spite of the visible cultural differences, treated as values. It is worth repeating that the term integration itself may be understood in a different way by the minority group as compared to the majority group. The standards of the dominating culture are often so strong, overwhelming and considered as obvious, that, after all, they also drive the so-called integration activities, which are still perceived as assimilation by minorities (as the example described in the previous chapter: an integration activity for the Polish and Chechen children organised as a Christmas Eve, i.e. a feast celebrated by the majority group and expectations of the organisers that the Chechens would participate in the celebrations, i.e. assimilate the event culturally strange to them).

Type 1: inclusive activities

Approaching this issue as simply as possible, a joint action usually integrates – we may organise a picnic, however, let us do it together, so that each group has the opportunity to present itself and show its capacity, but also meet others. We should plan the activities to provide both space for highlighting the individuality and for the common action. We may come from various cultures and practise different religions (or practise no religion at all), however, what is common for us is, e.g. the park where we all stay every day and spend time at the weekends. The common work under the annual action „Cleaning of the world” shall be an integration activity which can additionally undermine several stereotypes, especially if we talk about standards of cleanness, space or the stereotype belief that the Arabs, the Roma or inhabitants of Africa are dirty.

Type 2: empowering activities

In the area of community integration the empowering activities will be based on assisting the minority in its integration with the Polish majority, but also in integration inside own group. In the first case we mean, for example, organising classes on Polish values, customs and culture. As an ethnic group we have our own preferences, habits, obvious truths and a number of cultural codes (including non-verbal), the knowledge of which facilitates functioning. Thus, we can show what it means to be the Pole in cultural terms. We should be careful and avoid showing the historic approach only; a contemporary Pole still learns about *Pan Tadeusz*, but he also reads other books on everyday basis, which librarians will certainly know best. We may also explain how the Poles spend time (what does the term „holiday under the pear tree” mean and where it comes from), what feasts they celebrate (and consequently, when the shops will be closed), when they exchange gifts, when they offend each other and what they currently discuss about.

In the second case – integration inside the group – the aim is to create space where representatives of the minority can meet within their own group. It is difficult to sustain or cultivate own identity if the possibility to talk to own countrymen or people facing similar situation is jeopardised. It is particularly important for refugees or immigrants, especially if there is no organisation in the region which supports them. The reason is that they are often persons with very limited financial resources who cannot afford renting a room or meeting in a café.

Type 3: visibility activities

In principle, integration of the society will mainly take place through inclusion of individual groups into the conducted activities. This is where we create space for meetings, conversations and planning of common activities. However, let us stress that integration is understood as a common activity and creating additional quality, not only as a mutual meeting. Participation in the Roma culture festival shall not cause that the society would be more integrated. To this end, it is necessary to plan activities, common work and discussion also on difficult issues. It is worth thinking of organising events fostering stereotype breaking, such as, e.g. „Human Library”, during which a „Human Book” can be borrowed, i.e. a representative of the minority group – we devote one of the Inspirations to this method. On the other hand, the meeting itself is the prerequisite of integration. We can organise a Polish-Danish canoeing trip, like the library in Człuchów¹⁵, however, we should not end our activities like that.

15 Report of the event available on Internet at: <http://bibliotekawczluchowie.pl/wydarzenia/wydarzenie/splyw-kajakowy-wielu-kultur-2/> (access: 17.08.2014).

A large, white Greek letter delta (δ) is centered on a purple background. The background features faint, stylized Arabic calligraphy in a light purple color, which is partially obscured by the large delta symbol. The calligraphy appears to be a mix of modern and traditional styles, with some characters being more prominent than others.

δ

Implementation of the
multicultural library model



We suppose that after reading the previous chapter various questions could have come across your mind: *It sounds beautiful, but how to implement it? What should we specifically do?* In this chapter we will try to answer these questions and present how you can implement the multicultural approach in the library step by step. It will probably not be possible to implement all the activities at once, not all of them will be also possible to implement in each library. The reason is that the size of the library and the available resources are important. Let us thus treat the proposed solutions as inspirations and hints on how it can be done. They are certainly not the only solutions. For the sake of simplification, we present the scenarios of activities, tasks and tools which are helpful while implementing the model.

Implementation of the model is the process which we suggest to divide into smaller parts, to facilitate planning of the work. The diagram below illustrates how this process looks like.

Awareness and knowledge on multiculturalism: knowledge of processes and mechanisms

S1

STEP 1

Decision on undertaking actions focused on multiculturalism

S2

STEP 2

Diagnosis of environment/region in terms of multiculturalism

S3

STEP 3

Developing the implementation plan of multicultural library model

S4

STEP 4

Implementation of the plan by competent pesonel

S5

STEP 5

Evaluation

In the first instance, pay attention to the element of the diagram comprising the whole process: „Awareness and knowledge on multiculturalism: knowledge of processes and mechanisms”. Sensitivity to multiculturalism and knowledge of this phenomenon is a comprehensive issue for us – the perspective which should accompany each stage of the model implementation. Effectiveness of this work will mostly depend on your knowledge and openness to diversity. The knowledge of processes and mechanisms which occur on the border of cultures, religions and languages is particularly important. Where is it possible to learn it? First of all, we encourage you to read and think over the introduction to the publication. In this part, we present the most important terms and processes required to understand multiculturalism and the entire model. At the end of the publication we also provide a list of reading which will help you to understand the multiculturalism issues better.

Step 1 – Decision on undertaking actions focused on multiculturalism

It seems obvious that since you read this publication the subject itself must have attracted your attention. Does it mean that the decision on involvement of the library in actions to the benefit of multiculturalism has already been made? Or, maybe you are still concerning whether it is the subject for you? Or, maybe you are the head of the library and you are searching for hints on how to convince your team to undertake this action?

We invite you to start considerations, both individual and institutional. At this stage, we will focus on identification of multiculturalism in your environment. At the beginning we have to consider whether the situation has features of a problem and represents a challenge which is worth facing. What will happen next depends on whether we notice at all that „something is going on”. In Poland there is a common opinion that we are a homogeneous country, we have few historic ethnic minorities and the issue, in principle, does not refer to us too much, particularly in comparison with, e.g. Great Britain or France. Within discussions concerning multiculturalism the argument quite often appears that there is no problem since there are no immigrants and if they appear, it would not be any problem as well, because the Poles are famous for their religious tolerance – the fact is that Poland was the „country without stakes”¹⁶. This idea is derived from several hundred years’ tradition, however, today it is enough to read the daily newspapers to notice that the reality is much more complicated. Many people do not perceive multiculturalism as a challenge to be faced by Poland.

Let us think for a while: what really made you read this publication?

- › **Is the issue important for you personally?** Has your daughter emigrated in search for a job? Do you believe that equality, diversity and tolerance should be actively promoted? Did your parents practice various religions: Is your neighbour a foreigner? Are your roots multinational – your grandfather came from a German family and your grandmother was a Jew (and she did not want to talk about it)? Maybe you have been recently upset due to the specific situation – has anyone destroyed a Jewish cemetery, or beaten a black student from Nigeria?

¹⁶ The saying refers to the Act of Warsaw Confederation adopted in 1573, which guaranteed unconditional and eternal peace between worshippers of various faiths, equal rights of decision makers and Catholic noblemen, proclaimed the rules of freedom of conscience and tolerance.

- › **Is the issue important for your region?** Do you live in a region which was inhabited by various ethnic and religious groups in the past (Silesia, Małopolska, Pomerania, Warmia and Mazury, Podlasie, the Lubelskie Region... in fact we can list each region)? Do many immigrants or foreign students live in your city – Vietnamese? Ukrainian? Turks? Maybe there are many Roma children at schools? Or maybe the recent incident when vulgar, threatening slogans were written on the doors of refugee flats showed you that multiculturalism is still a big problem in your region?
- › **Is the issue important for your library?** Do your regional collections include publications in various alphabets, which is the evidence of the historic multiculturalism of the region? Maybe emigrants appear more often who ask for books in Vietnamese or Ukrainian and you have nothing to offer them? Or maybe a large ethnic group lives in your city and you have never seen any of its representatives in your library?
- › **Are you driven by cognitive curiosity?** Are you considering what multiculturalism has to do with the library? How can this issue be included in the library activities?

How many affirmative answers to these questions you have provided? Which questions surprise you? How many questions you do not know answer to? Some problems are imposed on us (a situation has happened which forces us to deal with the issue although it is not a statutory task), whereas some of them we identify ourselves and we take decision that they should be resolved. Such was the situation in case of Gorlice library owing to which we shall illustrate the essence of the first step of multicultural library model implementation – taking decision to act to the benefit of multiculturalism.

AN EXAMPLE

The Stanisław Gabryel Municipal Public Library in Gorlice is located in the region traditionally inhabited by various ethnic groups: the Poles, the Lemkos, the Ukrainians and historically also the Jews (murdered during the Holocaust). Within the distance of two kilometres away from the library, the Orthodox church is located, within the distance of six hundred metres – the Catholic church. The library has rich regional collections called „Galicjana” comprising three alphabets: Latin, Cyrillic and Hebrew. For many years the library has been undertaking activities showing the historical multiculturalism of the region – it organises exhibitions, concerts, meetings with local artists, cooperates with the Lemkos organisations. In winter 2012 the library sent bilingual Christmas wishes to cooperating institutions and organisations – in Polish and in the Lemkos language (which it has been doing for years). At the December session of the City Council, one of the councillors caused a storm, accusing the library and its director that, by sending the bilingual wishes, she violated the Act on the Polish language and he demanded disciplinary penalties of the library management. The position of the councillor stimulated a fierce discussion on the local portals. Diverse arguments for and against were shared. The conflict recalled all difficult Polish-Lemkos issues: starting from massacres of Poles in Volhynia, to the „Vistula” action and the post-war history. As a result – the councillor lost his position of the Chairman of the Education and Culture Commission (sic!) and the library decided to strengthen its activities focusing on promotion and multiculturalism of the region.

The Gorlice example shows various motivations and reasons why it is worth dealing with multiculturalism and starting to implement the multicultural library model. Such reasons can be divided into four categories:

Historic reasons	› Traditionally multicultural region inhabited by at least three ethnic and religious groups
Institutional reasons	› Rich regional collections showing the multiculturalism of the region › Mission of the library highlighting the openness to diversity
Social reasons	› Conflict around bilingual wishes showing the importance and difficulty of the issue for inhabitants
Personal reasons	› The values observed and the personal faith in mission of the library as the institution which is open to everyone

Within this step we mainly encourage to considerations – individual and in a team – on the reasons for dealing with multiculturalism in the library. Each library and each region is different – perhaps the reasons are not historic but contemporary. In bigger cities it is possible to meet many groups of immigrants who do not have roots in the Polish culture and could become library users. However, this would require the library to prepare. It is important to believe in dealing with this issue and to take decision consciously. This means new challenges: developing the sensitivity, gaining knowledge and competence, sparing time and raising money from the budget. Supporting the multiculturalism in the library is an innovative action, which requires commitment to the idea.

SCENARIO 1 – HOW TO TAKE A CONSCIOUS DECISION

Implementation of the multicultural library model should start with thinking and considerations concerning the issue of multiculturalism. We invite you to talk with yourself and your co-workers. If you work independently, the issue seems easier – the decision is only up to you. However, if you work in a team, taking the decision is more complicated. Obviously, if you are the manager in the library, you can also take a unilateral decision, nevertheless, the implementation of the multicultural approach will require involvement of the whole team which means that it would be better if all employees were aware and convinced, even at a minimum level, that the task is worth doing. Therefore, within the scenario showing how to implement the first step of the model, we describe how to conduct a meeting with the library team.

Programme of the meeting on „Decision concerning the implementation of the multicultural library model”

We propose a meeting which will assist you in taking the decision. Depending on the possibilities, consider what you will discuss, and in what sequence, how much time should be allocated for individual issues, how much time should be left for questions and discussion.

1. Presentation of the meeting objectives

Each meeting with employees should be well planned. Persons invited should know the objective, the agenda and the duration of the meeting.

Objectives of the meeting:

- › considerations on the personal attitude towards multiculturalism and own readiness to engage in the subject;
- › getting acquainted with the multicultural library model and methods of its implementation;
- › defining benefits arising from dealing with multiculturalism in the library;
- › considering potential difficulties associated with the implementation of the multicultural library model;
- › taking decision on the elements and scope of this model to be applied in our library.

Presentation of the multicultural library model and methods of its implementation

Before you start considering whether your library should engage in the implementation of the multicultural library model, the content of model itself must be clear to everyone. Therefore, you should talk about the model and the consecutive steps of its practical implementation. Remember that your decision does not need to be a ‚zero-one‘ type at this stage: we shall implement or not. It is important that you discuss the issue and take the decision most convenient for you. You may choose only some elements of the model for implementation.

3. Discussion

After the presentation, invite everyone to discussion, explain, provide as much information as possible but also leave space for doubts, complaints.

You should all consider and answer the following questions:

- › **Historical reasons:** Is the issue important in our region and why? What can be the potential difficulties and limitations?
- › **Social reasons:** Is the issue important in contemporary times and why? What can be the potential difficulties and limitations?
- › **Institutional reasons:** Why is the issue important for our library? What can be the potential difficulties and limitations?
- › **Personal reasons:** Why is the issue important for me personally?

4. Defining benefits and challenges

Summarise the conclusions arising from the discussion so far and divide them into two categories. While listing both benefits and challenges, remember about the four levels: personal, institutional, social, historical. We show examples of notes in the table:

BENEFITS – WHY IS IT WORTH DOING?

- › We shall implement the mission of library open to everyone.
- › We shall acquire new competence, enhance our sensitivity.
- › We shall learn interesting things about our region.
- › We shall enrich the library collections.
- › We shall acquire new users, representing groups which have not used the library so far.
- › We shall be better prepared for return of our friends and family members from the emigration to England.
- › ...

CHALLENGES – WHAT MAY BE DIFFICULT?

- › Historical conflicts may affect the perception of the library.
- › We do not have sufficient competence to deal with potential conflicts arising from multiculturalism.
- › Not all councillors will be happy that the multiculturalism issues have been included.
- › I don't like the Arabs, I would not like to start cooperation with them.
- › • ...

5. Summary and decision

After summing up the individual areas, the time comes to take decision. Define, how the decision will be made: will you decide together and the voice of everyone will be equally important, or maybe the aim of the meeting will be to consult the issue but the final decision will be made by the management of the library.

What is worth remembering

During the meeting it is important to build involvement in discussions, explore doubts and search for as diversified perspectives as possible. Remember that in order to get involved both in the discussion and in further activities, people mainly need to:

- 1. Know clearly the goal**, value and plan to be implemented.
- 2. Have impact on what is going to happen**, on their role and method of implementation.
- 3. Have competence** – feel that they will manage and that they know or will learn how to do it.
- 4. Feel needed and recognised** – see the sense of their activities.

Step 2 – Diagnosis of the environment in terms of multiculturalism

An important stage of implementation of the multicultural library model consists in creating a multicultural map of the environment or the region. At first, we have to get well acquainted with the situation and the multicultural environment in which the library operates.

The decision that it is worth opening doors for diverse cultural groups may be taken for various reasons (we have described them when discussing the first step of the model implementation) and at various levels. It may be, among others, the individual level, when the director of the library takes such a decision, the team level or the decision taken as a response to the bottom-up initiative of the library users or expectations of the library organiser. On the other hand, further steps of implementation of the multicultural library model, i.e. the analysis, followed by planning, implementation and evaluation of activities, should be performed by the team and take into account all four pillars of the model (cooperation, inclusion, empowerment and visibility).

If you have already held the team meeting and you know that the library will undertake multicultural activities, it is time to start good research of the local environment. The tool which is worth using and which shows what aspects should be investigated and what representatives of various groups should be asked about, is the analysis of the environment in terms of multiculturalism: „Four important questions”¹⁷.

Question 1: WHO IS PRESENT, WHO IS MISSING? – demography and statistics

This is the moment for observation of the surroundings and the local environment, including the library functioning in it. At this stage, we mainly search for answers to quantitative questions.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT	QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE LIBRARY
1. Who represents the culturally dominating group and the minority group in our community? What was the situation in the past?	6. Are the representatives of those groups/ all groups are the users of the library?
2. What are the figures? Was the situation always like that? What has changed?	7. Who uses the library more often?
3. Are these individual persons or social groups? Do they have their leaders?	8. Who does not come at all?
4. Are there any functioning organisations/informal groups associating persons from minority and majority groups?	9. Do these figures change over time?
5. What do we already know and what should we still learn?	

¹⁷ Own title, adjustment of the tool based on the 4R method used in the gender mainstreaming approach. M. Branka, M. Dymowska, K. Sekutowicz, *Implementation of the Perspective of Equal Opportunities of Women and Men in Projects of the European Social Fund*, Fundacja Fundusz Współpracy, Warsaw 2008.

Question 2: WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE THEY ARE (NOT), WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WE ARE (NOT)? – portraits

This is the occasion to develop portraits of persons representing the minority and majority or to verify the already existing images. It is also the test of our own and the society' status of knowledge related to various groups and their representatives. It is the moment when courage, curiosity is important as well as going beyond the common, repeated, always stereotype and evaluating beliefs related to various cultures.

Finally – it is the moment when we make an in-depth analysis of the former activities of the library and our performance.

QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE GROUPS	QUESTIONS RELATED TO THE LIBRARY
<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. What do I know about persons representing the majority? What do I know about persons representing the minority groups? What language do they speak?2. What do they do, how do they live, what are they interested in, what does it arise from, which standards and values are important for them?3. What is the access of individual groups to public institutions and resources?4. What is my source of information about these groups? How can I verify, check it? What else should I learn?5. What do they know, think about us, how do they perceive us? Where do they acquire such information from?6. Are there any conflicts in the community which affect the situation of the minority groups? How does it build relations between us?	<ol style="list-style-type: none">7. Who do we mainly address our offer to? Which cultural groups use it, and which do not?8. Does the offer of our library include events addressed to minority groups, e.g. celebration of feats important for a given group?9. Does the offer of our library include activities whose main aim is integration of various cultural groups, including education concerning minority groups?10. Does the offer of our library include activities empowering cultural groups, e.g. providing specialised knowledge, developing competence in Polish, highlighting the output and cultural heritage of minority groups?11. Does the library cooperate with organisations, groups, persons representing cultural minorities?

Question 3: WHY IS THE SITUATION LIKE THAT – reasons

Further questions should pursue the relationships and reasons. Sometimes it is worth spending more time on this part and pursue it better in order to understand more complex, complicated conditions of the existing system of forces, relationships, privileges and their lack.

1. What relationships exist between the collected statistics, developed portraits and the historical context?

2. How is this affected by contemporary phenomena associated with migration and by the global changes?
3. What is the role of stereotypes and prejudices?
4. To what extent is it associated with discrimination and the minority – majority mechanism?
5. What kind of barriers in access to the library do the individual groups face?

Question 4: WHAT CAN BE CHANGED? – needs

Asking this question you pass to the next stage of implementation of the multicultural library model. You go beyond the status of the current environment and the library and you start considering the future of the library and how it may affect the change in the social situation of a given group, or the relations between various groups inhabiting your community.

1. What are the needs of the majority and the minority in connection with their social functioning?
2. Are these practical, current needs or rather strategic, long-term needs?
3. How can the library respond to them?
4. What, in terms of the way of functioning of the library and its offer, is already adjusted to the needs of individual groups?
5. What can be organised differently in order to better respond to the needs of individual groups?

You can acquire answers to the „Four important questions” using various methods. We provide some hints concerning such methods in the scenario accompanying the second step of the model implementation. What we do not recommend, particularly if we want to invite cultural minorities living in Poland for a relatively short time and not speaking Polish to cooperate with us, is the questionnaire survey. Why? It is not only the question of language competence, one could use translation in this case. The paper-pencil tool does not enable to establish contact necessary for persons representing relational and ceremonial cultures to open in front of a stranger well enough to be able to perform the task. In such cultures, contact with a sheet of paper shall not replace contact with a man who, due to his/her age, job, or social position is the warrant of the relationship quality and the key to collect information. The questionnaire method may prove effective in cultures with direct communication and low context cultures where words and the precision of statements are important, but it will not work where the addition of context is essential, as well as reading between the lines and observation of non-verbal issues. Moreover, such a method may be associated with institutionalised forms of action, whereas, as we have written before, representatives of some cultures and countries have a very negative (often legitimately) attitude to institutions. Therefore, where personal contact, context and non-verbal communication is important, the questionnaire is out of question, and it should or even has to be replaced by the initiated conversation (information concerning the impact of culture on conversation, interview or conducting a meeting is developed in the next part of this chapter).

Acquiring answers to all of the „Four important questions” requires considerable work. It is even more true in view of the fact that it is necessary to gain answers from representatives of various groups: minority and majority. Below you will find guidelines on how to collect information allowing to answer each of the four questions:

Question 1: WHO IS PRESENT, WHO IS MISSING? – demography and statistics

While collecting the aforementioned information, use as many diverse sources as possible: own observations, statistics maintained by the library, information from the Commune Office or the City Hall, from the local historian, an inhabitant engaged in commemorating the history of the small homeland, journalists, teachers, people working in a shop, in the post office and, obviously, from representatives of ethnic, national, religious minorities. It is possible that you will have many fascinating, important and insightful conversations.

Question 2: WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE THEY ARE (NOT), WHAT KIND OF PEOPLE WE ARE (NOT)? – portraits

You can collect information on this topic on your own or in the library team, but also with the participation of inhabitants. Creating portraits of the town inhabitants may be a leading idea of art workshop organised by the library for children, for families or for the whole community. It does not need to be a laborious analytical work behind closed doors. Maybe it is worth getting inspired by the idea implemented by the Srebrna Góra library and organise a happening with the participation of the biggest possible number of inhabitants who, taking the opportunity of the joint meeting, will contribute some information about themselves. The Commune Public Library in Srebrna Góra used an idea of one of its employees who is simultaneously a sculptor, a graduate of the Faculty of Sculpture and Spatial Activities of the Academy of Fine Arts in Poznań. The librarian – artist initiated a meeting of inhabitants in public space, at a generally accessible square. The occasion to organise the meeting was the preparation of a sculpture – a mosaic from clay tiles. Each person who came to the square or to the library during the specific weekend was able to make a palm print in the previously prepared material. From the scorched and coated tiles a mosaic was arranged which made a specific kind of monument of the Srebrna Góra inhabitants.

I have thought of creating a mosaic for some time. I deal with ceramics myself, therefore this idea has emerged naturally. (...) I asked everyone to invent a characteristic arrangement of their palms. On the tiles it is possible to notice diverse variations which are identifiable for their creators – tells Agnieszka Ciszewska¹⁸. You can organise a similar meeting of inhabitants. Instead of tile, use cardboard, bristol board, a long roll of paper or even a wall, an external wall which needs painting and where a mural could be created. Ask everyone to paint their self-portraits. Encourage them to play, to overcome barriers, to show their creative expression. Mobilise the whole team and also the volunteers prepared to do this task, to approach various persons during the meeting, talk with them, ask questions. At the end of the event the exhibition of the works should be organised, the vernissage of the mural creation, common celebration, and after returning to the library – you should organise the meeting of the team during which you will record all information collected

¹⁸ *The Exceptional Monument to the Srebrna Góra Inhabitants is Ready*, an interview of Dorota Getinger with Agnieszka Ciszewska, <http://zabkowice.express-miejski.pl/wiadomosc/14901,wyjatkowy-pomnik-srebrnogorzan-gotowy/> (access: 17.08.2014).

and check which aspects should be explored, checked. However, the form of work may be absolutely optional, it is only important to collect information from various sources, from many parties and entities and to supplement it, if necessary, with additional data.

Question 3: WHY IS THE SITUATION LIKE THAT? – reasons

It is worth starting by asking yourself a question: why is the situation like that? Then, it is also worth asking the same question two, or three people. You will certainly find many traces yourself. However, in order to pursue this issue better, you may study the professional literature on history, sociology, cultural sciences. Maybe it is worth searching through regional collections, archives, establish the cooperation with a non-governmental organisation, an expert on a given topic, take part in a conference of historians or in an anti-discrimination workshop. It is a piece of analysis you should look at from various perspectives.

Question 4: WHAT CAN BE CHANGED? – needs

How to conduct the analysis of needs taking into consideration the multicultural perspective? Quite popular methods of reaching to information on expectations and needs of various groups include a meeting in a group, called a focus study or a focus group interview. These methods are based on meetings of 6-8 people in a homogeneous group (e.g. only representatives of a given ethnic minority) or a diversified group (persons from various social/cultural groups from a given region). The conversation among the invited guests should be moderated. The entire method is based on asking questions¹⁹. It is an interview conducted simultaneously with several persons on the specific topic, e.g. needs, expectations towards the library offer. One meeting usually takes about two hours. The discussion is conducted according to the previously developed scenario, describing the objectives of the study (what kind of information we want to acquire), sometimes, although it is not necessary, containing a detailed instruction and questions to be asked during the study. The discussion process is usually recorded or noted down.

A prototype of such a situation are common meetings and everyday discussions, therefore the librarians from Opole (described in the part on Inspirations) called the first meeting of this type „Chats”, as it was a kind of analysis of needs and getting acquainted with the target groups. The organisers of the meeting liked the atmosphere so much that they decided to continue their work according to the similar formula – during informal meetings with a cup of coffee and cakes, students from Ukraine, in accordance with the needs reported, practise Polish and learn the vocabulary associated with the topics they have selected.

A lot has been said and written about the impact of culture on communication²⁰. Below

19 Description and guidelines on how to conduct a qualitative study in the library can be also found in the FRSI publication *Appreciate a Library – How to Provide Advocacy Effectively*, Warsaw 2012, p. 89–92.

20 Report to the Ocalenie (Rescue) Foundation to receive good, concise and simple materials (contact in the list of NGOs at the end of the publication). If the topic is interesting for you and you are searching for more specific information, refer to the literature on the subject: P. Boski, *Cultural Framework of Social Behaviours. A Handbook of Intercultural Psychology*, Warsaw 2009; „Contemporary Culture. Theory, Interpretations and Practice” no. 2/2008, concept of the issue: W. J. Burszta, P. Szarota, National Centre of Culture, Warsaw 2008; „Intercultural Communication” no. 2 (56)/2008; D. Matsumoto, L. Juang, *Intercultural Psychology*, Gdańsk 2007; M. Szopski, *Intercultural Communicating*, Warsaw 2005.

we only present several guidelines important from the multicultural perspective. During meetings and conversations with people representing various cultures, differences may reveal concerning the same issues we describe in the subsection related to partnership, namely, the importance of: a group (collectivism vs. individualism), social hierarchy (egalitarianism vs. hierarchy), social roles of men and women (masculinity vs. femininity of culture), relations (relative vs. task cultures), context (high vs. low context), attitude to time (monochronicity vs. polychronicity).

Our long-term intercultural practice, including direct contacts with representatives of various groups, shows that the most important aspect for establishing a good contact and conduct a conversation is taking care whether we talk with a person representing culture where direct communication is appreciated, or rather direct communication and emotional or reserved character of culture²¹.

Directness is more often found in individualistic societies where people function much more separately, independently from each other, where no uniform way of thinking and understanding situations exists and everyone may personally interpret their meaning. Therefore, information must be expressed directly and words serve as the most important communication means and carrier of meanings. Indirectness of communication is, on the other hand, characteristic for collectivist cultures. When a group is of big importance, as well as sharing, similarities, harmony, then it is not necessary to explain everything precisely, people „understand each other without words” since they know each other better living in a group. The most important information channel is the non-verbal message. Information is read from what has not been uttered, what is disclosed in the way of looking and speaking, the tone of voice, distance, body posture. The Polish culture is somewhere in the middle, however, we are closer to the individualism and directness.

When you talk to someone coming from culture more individualistic than Polish (western European, north American) you should expect that messages would be quite direct and you may also ask more directly about many things, since:

- › people say what they think and think what they say,
- › you do not need to read between the lines,
- › it is important to communicate your opinion clearly,
- › less pressure on feelings of the interlocutor occurs.

While conducting an individual or a group conversation, prepare clear instructions, be precise in terms of words, formulate short and concrete sentences which do not leave room for speculations, ask questions directly without caring too much for a form.

While talking to a person coming from collectivist culture (Asia, Africa, South America, Middle East) you will probably hear messages which are not expressed directly and you will experience that:

²¹ In the fragment of the text related to communication, materials concerning communication and cultural adaptation prepared by Piotr Bystrianin and Anna Kawalska from Ocalenie Foundation were used.

- › people imply/suggest what they want to say,
- › the skill of understanding information which is not uttered directly is appreciated,
- › non-verbal signal is one of the keys to understanding the content of the message,
- › the „truth“ may disrupt harmonious relations.

During the conversation or in an interview you may use more digressions, narration. Be prepared on the interruption of the thread of conversation. Observe carefully the behaviours, the mimics, gestures, distance between people since it will significantly facilitate your understanding of the hidden communication you will have to encode.

On the other hand, when it comes to the level of expression and openness in communication it has been found that people brought up in expressive cultures speak with each other loudly and quickly, gesticulate a lot and express their emotions distinctly. Reserved cultures are opposite.

When you conduct an interview or a meeting with representatives of expressive cultures (e.g. from the Roman countries of Europe, the Mediterranean or Latin America countries), don't be surprised if:

- › the interlocutors interrupt each other – it does not mean the lack of respect but rather the engagement in the conversation,
- › people feel uncomfortable in case of silence which is understood as the lack of common topics and willingness to talk,
- › you will observe holding an interlocutor by hand, or touching his/her arm, etc., even if he/she is a stranger – it is an important part of the communication, expressing also freedom, good relations, involvement,
- › it will be difficult to maintain distance – the maximum distance between interlocutors accepted as correct is the distance equal to half of the straight hand,
- › someone will look into your eyes intensively – it is the sign of carefulness and respect and it is important to maintain the contact.

In contacts with reserved culture (e.g. representatives of East and South-Eastern Asia or Nordic and Germanic countries) take care that you:

- › speak silently and don't interrupt people in their surroundings,
- › do not interrupt and do not let others interrupt – interrupting the interlocutor is deemed impolite, careful listening and waiting for your turn is required,
- › do not talk away, do not shorten the silence which is perceived as an important element of communication – silence before answering is interpreted as weighing the words and recognised as a symptom of respect,
- › do not touch others, do not reduce the interpersonal zone, since it is easy to infringe someone's private zone, which is undesirable,
- › avoid looking into someone's eyes and maintaining a longer eye contact,
- › control gestures and do not overuse them.

Step 3 – Action plan

The next step in the implementation of the multicultural library model – following the decision-making and conducting the analysis and diagnosis of the environment in terms of multiculturalism – is the preparation of the action plan. We encourage you once again to do this work together with representatives of the minority groups. It will not be necessary in all parts of the plan, however, for some of them, it is just required. In the next scenario, we will propose how to conduct a meeting with representatives of various groups.

The action plan suggested by us consists of five parts. It depends on you how detailed your plan will be. It is not about creating documents which will not be used by anyone, but about reliable consideration on how your library may implement the model of multicultural library, open towards various users.

The most important thing is to adjust the plan to the needs of your region and the capacity of the library. In the previous chapters we tried to provide examples taking into account various minorities and activities of different scale. The possibilities of a local, single employee library as compared to a county library where over twenty people are employed are much more limited. It does not mean that nothing can be done. We invite you to look at those needs and possibilities and to select such actions which will be most reasonable.

ACTION PLAN

I. Motivation and benefits

Motivation: Why do we want to undertake actions focusing on multiculturalism? What is our motivation?

Benefits: What benefits we shall achieve as a library by dealing with this issue? What can we gain? What can we learn?

List at least seven arguments for each question. They will be useful both in the moments of doubt (*why do we need all this?*), and in discussions with sceptics who will undermine the legitimacy of such actions.

II. Vision and goals

Vision : Imagine your library in the ideally multicultural version – what will change as compared to the current situation?

The vision of the multicultural library is also outlined in the UNESCO/IFLA Manifesto concerning the multicultural library. Think what is important for you and what your vision of the multicultural library is. The vision determines the far-reaching goal and direction of actions and it will certainly be impossible to implement it fully at the initial stage of action. Therefore, it is worth formulating the measurable and specific goals, e.g. for a given year or for the forthcoming years.

Goals: What do we want to achieve over the forthcoming year? What are our priorities?

- › What do we have to achieve (most important)?
- › What should we achieve (important)?
- › What would be worth achieving (less important)?

We remind you that the goals should have the construction allowing for their verification. Following the SMART rules is helpful, namely, it is worth to formulate goals which are specific, measurable adequate to the needs, realistic and time-bound. You may divide the activities of the library into areas in the same way we have done it in this publication. Define separate goals for the library as an institution and goals for services implemented by the library. What do you want to achieve in each of these areas? Maybe you want to focus on one area only? Let us remember, in this part we focus on what **we want** to achieve, instead of how to achieve – this will be planned in the next part.

III. Activities

While planning the activities, we should take care that the planned goals are achieved and the pillars of the multicultural library are taken into account. Notice: it does not always happen that each of four pillars can be translated into actions. The pillars are rather reflected in the method of work – we can have activities planned in an excellent way which, however, will not be implemented in inclusive way but in patronising way towards the minority. Let us remember that the scope of activities depends on us, however, we should not select pillars we want and we do not want to consider.

Let us stress that the key element while formulating the goals is to ask yourself the question to what extent the goals we want to achieve bring us close to the implementation of the multicultural library vision. The goals we present below are only the examples, they serve as an inspiration rather than as the ready action plan.

AREA OF ACTIVITIES		EXAMPLES OF GOALS AND ACTIVITIES
LIBRARY AS AN INSTITUTION		
Planning of actions	Goal:	Planning regular, quarterly meetings with representatives of the Roma minority during a month.
	Activity:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › developing of the action plan, including the analysis of the cultural specific features of the Roma minority.
Team competences	Goal:	Until the end of 2015, at least two persons from the library team will participate in an anti-discriminatory workshop.
	Activities:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › review of the educational offer of free anti-discriminatory workshops associated with the multicultural competence, › selection of courses and participation.

Partnership	Goal: Establishing the relations and permanent cooperation with the Vietnamese community until the end of the year.
	<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › establishing the cooperation with the „Nomada” organisation, › establishing the contact with the leader of the Vietnamese community, › preparation of a common activity with the library for the Vietnamese community.
Communication and promotion	Goal: Elaboration of the tab on the website for labour immigrants who arrived to our county, until the end of the first half of the year.
	<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › elaboration of the tab content in Polish, › preparation of the translation into English and Vietnamese.
Infrastructure and space	Goal: Adjustment of the reading room for adults and the computer reading room to the needs of English and Russian speaking users until the end of the first quarter.
	<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › purchase of computer keyboard with the Cyrillic alphabet, › setting new languages in the software, › development of the multilingual labelling of bookstands.
LIBRARY SERVICES	
Knowledge and information	Goal: Equipping the library with at least 20 multilingual issues, including books, films and multimedia until the end of the first quarter.
	<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › analysis of needs and preparation of the shopping list, › purchase of publications.
Culture	Goal: Conducting at least one cultural event during the year, promoting the achievements of the pre-war Jewish culture.
	<p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › organising the exhibition „(Non) present Inhabitants of Biata”, › borrowing, collecting of photographs and memorabilia documenting the history of the Jews from the region, › organising an educational workshop accompanying the exhibition concerning the Jewish culture and history of the region – in cooperation with the Museum of Polish Jews History.

Education	<p>Goal: Development of the scenario of two-hour classes on multiculturalism for junior secondary school students within the regional education.</p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › selection of the content for the classes, › preparation of the scenario and materials for the classes jointly with the volunteers from the German and Ukrainian minority, › conducting pilot classes, › conducting at least 10 classes for the nearby junior secondary schools.
Integration of the communities	<p>Goal: During the year, at least 20 Polish and Chechen pupils shall express their willingness to participate in the activity club and propose a joint activity.</p> <p>Activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> › establishing cooperation with schools attended by Chechen pupils, › establishing cooperation with the Chechen seniors from the refugee centre, › official opening of the classes, integration of pupils, › defining the joint activity to be carried out by pupils.

IV. Resources

What kind of resources do we need to be able to implement the plan?

Partners: Who do we need? With whom should we cooperate in order to achieve the assumed goals and implement our multicultural actions?

At this stage, we shall look at the results of our earlier work, both the analysis and the diagnosis (organisations, groups and persons who appeared in the „Four important questions” analysis) as well as defining goals and planning the activities. We check with whom we should cooperate in order to be able to implement our plans. Maybe this step will be only a summary of our previous work, or maybe it will turn out that you need to establish cooperation with someone you have not considered before.

Money: How much money do we need? Are the planned activities included in the budget available so far, or do we need additional money (and for what)?

If you have planned additional activities, in particular, special activities and those addressed to the minority groups, you should definitely consider (and calculate!) whether any costs will arise from cultural differences and the specific character of the minority groups.

Other resources: What else do you need, besides partners and money, in order to be able to implement the multicultural library model?

SCENARIO 3 – PLANNING COMMON ACTIVITIES

Let us assume that you have already finished the analysis of the environment, made the decision and you want the library to be more accessible to the Roma community. Owing to the commitment of the library employee and three volunteers (two Polish women and one Roma woman) you managed to collect quite a lot of information on the group itself and on its needs. You have a few ideas of activities, however, you completely do not know whether your ideas are right. The Roma woman you have made friends with also cannot help on this issue, she simply does not know what is going on in the library and what could be organised here.

In accordance with the four pillars we believe that the interested group itself – the potential users from the minority group, should be involved in the selection of the activities. It will not always be easy. In the fragment above, our intention was to show what the potential difficulties are: persons who do not have a frequent contact with the Polish institutions may be unaware what services are available at all, what is the range of activities and possibilities. Asking these groups to invent what should happen in the library and what can satisfy their needs, may be an impossible task (in cultures where honour and saving the face is important, it may be even discouraging and it may lead to breaking the cooperation – they ask me about something I am not able to answer, I will lose in the eyes of the librarian, I will lose my face, therefore, it is necessary to break contacts with the library to avoid this risk). Moreover, asking minority groups about their needs, ideas, visions, although it is very important and required for the implementation of the four pillars, is not easy. Very often representatives of minority groups, although they certainly know and feel what is good and bad for them, do not have experience in talking about it, especially, in front of the public. We would like to make you sensitive to the fact that the general experience of minority groups is being unheard and depreciated, rather than being treated with attention and respect. If a given community has a competitive and trained leader – such a person would speak on behalf of the group. If such person is missing, the voice of the minority may be unheard.

Therefore, in this scenario, we propose the method of working with a minority group (the Roma, the Vietnamese, the Nigerians...), but also with the Poles, which, to a certain extent, helps us in overcoming the barriers presented before. Instead of the traditionally conducted meeting based on discussion, we invite you to test a slightly more refined project which may become a very engaging and integrating meeting.

Goals

- › Getting acquainted with the library offer and developing new ideas of activities (including the tailored-made activities according to the needs of the minority groups).
- › Learning of discussion skills, exchange of ideas, drawing conclusions in a diversified group, including persons with various levels of experience, social participation and different knowledge of a library as an institution.
- › Confronting own ideas with the ideas of others, creative inspiring each other.
- › Creating a feeling of community among persons involved in the work and strengthening the intergroup/intercultural cooperation.
- ›

Target group

The meeting may be organised for a group comprising from several to several dozen individuals (maximum 50-60 persons). The method, depending on the size of the group, requires some modifications.

Materials

The work will be probably performed in four groups. While preparing the materials, multiply the numbers provided below in order to obtain the total number of everything you need.

- › flip chart paper – a block of paper per one thematic group,
- › coloured A4 sheets of paper, or smaller: yellow (50 per each group), blue (20 per group), red (20 per group), green (15 per group),
- › thick markers – 15 per group,
- › self-adhesive cards (preferably, small spots or squares) – 5 per person,
- › adhesive tape of painter tape – one per group,
- › envelopes or baskets – one per group.

Preparation

In order to conduct the meeting, one bigger room is necessary, where work with the whole group and in subgroups or pairs, will be possible.

In ideal conditions, several people are needed to organise and conduct this event (the chairperson and 2-3 persons cooperating, also from the cultural group with whom we intend to plan the activities). However, we can carry on the whole event individually, after thinking over and preparation of the structure of the work and the successive tasks. One of the persons, preferably from the library, will act as the chairperson, and the co-workers will work as facilitators, particularly in the smaller groups. The chairperson must prepare to work, establish the order, consider thoroughly all items on the agenda, define the time framework as well as plan and discuss the course of the meeting with the cooperating persons.

The meeting process

1. Opening

- › Welcome in front of the whole group (decide before whether the meeting shall take place in a culturally diversified group or a monocultural group – both options are possible). Introduce yourself and present your role during the meeting. Say a few words about the library, so that everybody can feel relaxed. If you have to deal with the hierarchic and ceremonial culture, remember to show respect and highlight the status and role (in relation to your own and other people's role).
- › Short presentation of persons participating in the meeting (in case of groups comprising from several to twenty people, it is possible that everyone can introduce himself/herself shortly, in case of bigger groups, think of such a formula which shall enable everyone to appear but which shall not last too long, e.g. people introduce themselves with the first name only).

- › Presentation of goals: getting acquainted with the library offer and development of new ideas of activities interesting for everyone and for each person individually.
 - › Presentation of ideas: in pairs, in small groups and at the plenary session we shall discuss, share ideas and inspire each other in order to create an outline of the offer adjusted to the needs of various people (results of the work may be used while planning the schedule, submitting applications for co-financing to the external sponsor or during the presentation at the local council session).
 - › Remind the participants about your role, present your co-workers and the concise plan of work: three stages of work in small groups, between them – plenary sessions, presentation of results of other groups, summing up during the plenary session (possible refreshment). The work will be probably performed in four groups.
2. **Introduction concerning the library:** The chairperson shortly talks about the library offer. He/she presents the activities divided into four areas: knowledge and information, culture, education, integration of the communities. Try to do it as simply as possible, however, without suggesting specific ideas which may be implemented in the library. Each of those areas will later serve as a leading topic for the work of individual groups.
 3. **Dividing into groups or pairs:** We should divide persons participating in the meeting into several person groups or pairs. Depending on the size of the whole group, finally, four subgroups or eight subgroups should be established (five-six persons in one group).
 4. **Selection of topics:** Drawing of leading topics for the groups takes place, or their adjustment, depending on interests of each of the groups (we recommend drawing). If four groups or pairs are established, each of them shall receive one topic: (1) knowledge and information, (2) culture, (3) education, (4) integration of communities. If there are eight groups, each of the topics is doubled.
 5. **Explaining task 1 called „Ideas“:** The chairperson presents the instruction: all persons receive yellow sheets of paper and write down ideas of activities which they associate with a given topic. They write down one idea on one sheet of paper. The intention is to have as many ideas as possible, therefore, it is worth writing down anything which comes across the participants' mind, without assessing and censoring. The method refers to the so-called „brainstorming“ – while preparing to the meeting, it is possible to get acquainted with its idea and rules.
 6. **Work in groups or in pairs – stage 1:** Groups with the facilitator allocated to them go to their positions, taking comfortable places (this may include places prepared earlier, e.g. through arrangement of a table and chairs in different parts of the room, or places optionally selected by the group).

Persons in the group introduce each other (name and one basic information about him/herself). All of them start doing the task. In the meantime, the facilitator or the main chairperson may also add their proposals. It is only important that the ideas of the library do not dominate the creative atmosphere of the group.

The chairperson reminds all the time that each topic is important, encourages each person from the group to write down at least several ideas, to have courage and write whatever comes across his/her mind. In this way, common inspiring to express new ideas and associations is stimulated, more and more creative and original ideas are developed,

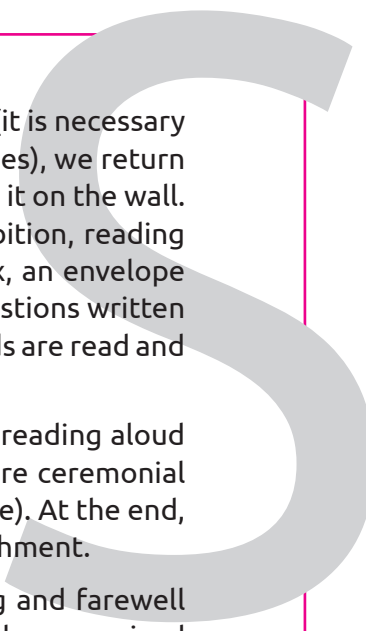
but also disclosing of hierarchy, domination in the group is prevented, which could disturb the freedom of expression and getting involved of persons on equal rights. At the end, we should stick all sheets with ideas in a visible place.

A group working on the topic „education” may list, for example: classes on Polish culture for the Roma, classes on adapting to the Polish school, classes for the Roma on the Roma history/literature (supplementing the knowledge which is not provided by the Polish school and which the family or the Roma environment is sometimes not able to transfer it either), classes for the Poles on the Roma culture, computer classes, a conference/seminar on the Roma literature, anti-discrimination workshops for the Poles, training for other institutions in the commune concerning the specific nature of work/contact with the Roma, training on writing applications for subsidies, taking into account the knowledge on funds allocated for the Roma, lessons of Polish for the Roma children, or lessons of reading for adult Roma men and women.

7. **Plenary Forum:** explaining task 2 called „Arrangement”: The chairperson asks everyone to meet together for a plenary session and explains what is the second stage of the task about. The selected person from the group (it may be a co-worker of the chairperson or a person selected from the group) reads all associations and ideas displayed. Then, all participants arrange the repeating ideas into groups, combine, collect, and divide them into categories, name a given aspect and give it the title.

The ideas may be divided into several categories: activities addressed to the Roma (e.g. a course of Polish or reading, classes on the Roma history, a computer course), services for users of the library, only with Polish origin (classes on the Roma culture, anti-discrimination workshop) and for users with both Roma and Polish origin (a computer course, a course on writing applications), for Polish groups other than library users, e.g. employees of cooperating institutions (training on how to cooperate with the Roma) or for experts on the Roma topics (seminar on literature).

8. **Work in groups or in pairs – stage 2:** Groups split and start doing their task. It is probable that a creative chaos occurs in the room since everyone will walk around, read, detach and attach. It is a good sign: the atmosphere should be dynamic and creative. Once subgroups of ideas constituting a given type of activities are created, the group jointly gives them titles and writes them down on the blue sheets of paper.
9. **Plenary Forum: explaining task 3 called „Ranking”:** At the plenary session the chairperson informs that during the following part of the meeting each participant in a given group will receive five small self-adhesive cards. Each person will approach the board with titles and allocate points according to what is most important, most attractive for a given person and what seems most adequate to the needs of his/her group. Each person may distribute points at his/her own discretion: all five points may be allocated to only one idea, one point can be allocated to one topic, or two and three points – to two different topics. At the end, points allocated to each idea or category should be summed up.
10. **Work in groups or in pairs – stage 3:** Return to own groups and distribution of points. The chairperson or a volunteer sums up the points and makes the ranking: from the idea which received the biggest number of points to the issue selected most rarely.

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11. **Presentation of lists with ideas:** Having completed the work in groups (it is necessary to remember about synchronisation and earlier setting of the time frames), we return to the plenary session, each thematic group brings its ranking and places it on the wall. We arrange an exhibition of lists and everybody walks across this exhibition, reading the generated results. In front of each poster with a list of ideas, a box, an envelope or a basket should be placed, where the visitors may put comments, questions written down on a green sheet of paper. Then, still in thematic groups, green cards are read and attached to the list as plenary conclusions.
 12. **Official closing of the meeting by the main organiser:** celebration of reading aloud all lists, acknowledgements to everyone for the common work (the more ceremonial the culture, the more it is worth making this moment ceremonial and nice). At the end, everyone can be invited to take the souvenir photo or to have the refreshment.
 13. **Work on rankings of ideas:** Closing of the official part of the meeting and farewell to its participants does not mean the farewell to the lists. The librarians have received a rich material: lists of diverse ideas, activities, proposals, arranged as ranking lists. Now, it will be their task to select activities for implementation based on essential criteria, e.g. whether the idea is real, whether it responds to the diagnosed needs, whether it fits the library vision, whether the library has competence, money and other resources to implement it.

Step 4 – Implementation of the plan by the competent team

Do you remember an example of the Polish-Chechen Christmas Eve, described in the part concerning planning of multicultural activities in the library? Behind the idea and the plan were hidden really good intentions. The commitment of the organisers in the preparation of the event shows the high level of motivation and good will. However, motivation itself is not sufficient to implement the multicultural library model successfully, or even to implement a single multicultural task. As we have stressed in the description of the team and the multicultural competence, the attitudes and the motivation are very important, however, contact with representatives of various cultural groups and organisation of multicultural events requires professional preparation and gaining certain skills. There are many forms of education on this topic and the number of opportunities is also growing. The role of multiculturalism as an academic and practical discipline becomes more and more important.

If you want to upgrade your competence or the competences of your team, three paths are available:

1. Learning within the formal education system, i.e. in the official educational system.

As an adult you may study various approaches to multiculturalism at such faculties as: cultural sciences, ethnology and ethnography, intercultural psychology, sociology, management, political sciences, international relations and other. You may also select among language courses developing communication competence.

2. Learning within informal education, comprising any educational programmes constructed so that knowledge can be extended, attitudes are developed and new skills are learnt.

This type of education comprises activities undertaken by NGOs, institutes of culture and other institutions, implementing their mission within the informal education mode: courses, training activities, workshops. This offer is more and more impressive and participants of training activities and workshops more and more frequently say that their quality has improved considerably over the recent years. Among workshops related to multiculturalism, the following activities can be found:

- › workshops of multicultural sensitivity and/or competence,
- › anti-discrimination and equality workshops,
- › workshops dealing with specific issues (contact with a client, resolving conflicts, partnership and cooperation) and related to individual cultures defined in various ways (concerning the Muslim-Arab world, Roma culture, South-Eastern Asia, and many other),
- › workshops preparing to moving abroad (acculturation) or return from abroad (concerning coping with the return shock),
- › workshops for migrants and foreigners concerning understanding of the Polish culture,
- › strengthening workshops for persons with minority ethnic and national groups,
- › re-adaptation workshops for refugees and returnees,
- › anti-Roma-phobia and anti-Islam-phobia workshops, etc.

3. Learning within the non-formal education understood as continuous learning during which – owing to the everyday experience and materials acquired in own environment – attitudes, values are shaped, skills and knowledge is developed.

This type of learning comprises any incidental meetings, conversations with people with different origin, values, culture. In this process, the role of „teachers” is taken over by parents, neighbours, friends, moreover, entertainment, television or work may also act as intermediaries in the learning process. The most attractive forms of such learning include longer trips abroad or well-organised study tours and international exchange programmes.

Depending on the goal, needs, interests and possibilities (time, finance) or availability, it is possible to start from any path of learning. Building of a team competent in multiculturalism may mean both sourcing from the potential of people employed or cooperating with the library, coming from various cultural groups (the most effective example of incidental education) and undertaking studies containing the multicultural element (formal

education path). Perhaps, training activities and workshops represent the most accessible and, on the other hand, quite effective form. As an indirect form, containing both elements of the formal structure (as studies, school) and taking advantage of incidentality and exchange between people, training may be a good beginning of the educational path in the multiculturalism area. It is worth checking the offer of training activities organised by the non-governmental organisations (you will find the list at the end of the publication) and participate in them (most of the training activities take place under subsidised projects, therefore participation is free of charge). Or maybe you will decide to organise training in your library?

However, before you enter the path of formal, non-formal or informal learning, we propose a number of self-development exercises which you can do yourself, starting even immediately. See what tasks we propose for you in the scenario below.

SCENARIO 4 – DEVELOPING MULTICULTURAL COMPETENCE

There are several tasks you need to complete, all inspired by the film with a speech of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie – a Nigerian writer – during the TED conference. Only one of the tasks refers directly to the recorded speech and focuses on Africa and Nigeria. All other tasks, although inspired by a film, allow for going much further. They invite to starting the research concerning other countries, cultures, religions and continents. The aim of the proposed exercises is both to extend the knowledge using various methods and sources, and to shape attitudes through self-reflection. We have also designed them having in mind the idea of encouraging to exercising intercultural skills which can be later applied in the activities in the library.

The proposed tasks require various levels of involvement in the issue, own work, searches and establishing cooperation and contacts. The tasks have different length, you can do some of them during an hour or two, other invite you to work distributed over several weeks. The film itself lasts almost 19 minutes. At the same time, we want to remind you that development of intercultural competence is not the matter of one single exercise, training course, single studies or one foreign trip, a book read or a conversation with a foreigner. It is rather a never ending journey, a task for years. You can do some of the tasks yourself or – although we do not write it in the instruction – in a pair or in a group of co-workers in the library. You can exchange information, discuss. For some tasks it is worth, and sometimes necessary to establish the intercultural cooperation. While performing the tasks, irrespective of the instructions and command, search for applications to what is happening in the library, consider how to use this experience, knowledge, materials to what you do at work, to the needs of users you meet.

We invite you to watch the film – on the TED portal, search for the speech: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The danger of a single story and enable Polish subtitles (click the icon Subtitles just under the film and select Polish)*²².

22 Ch. N. Adichie, *The Danger of a Single Story*, http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story#t-1075368 (access: 17.08.2014).

Task 1

- › After watching the film, on a sheet of paper, write down a thought, message or communication which was most important, most inspiring for you in this speech.
- › How does this message refer to your work performed so far, to the functioning of the whole library?
- › How can you use this message in your work in the future, while implementing tasks in the multiculturalism area, or maybe not only in this area?
- › We also encourage you to search for information about the author and her books. At least several websites in Polish and much more in English present the writer and her output.

Task 2

1. Watch the film again, in several shorter fragments, use the possibility to pause. While watching the film, write down all information provided by the writer about Nigeria and Africa.

Write them down in two columns:

Everything stereotype, superficial, harmful, annoying, too simple, anything the author fights with and counteracts.

Anything which shows Nigeria and Africa as diversified, multi-faceted, variable – in diverse light, nice and difficult, negative and positive.

2. After watching the film and creating the list, insert ,plus' next to information which was known to you, and a question mark next to new issues you did not know before. Count pluses and question marks. What does this result tell about your knowledge concerning Nigeria and Africa? What does it tell about the common beliefs of the Poles concerning this country and continent?
3. Think it over and write down your sources of knowledge; how and where did you acquire information concerning Nigeria and Africa.

Are there any school handbooks among those sources?

The image of Africa presented in school handbooks was studied by the Anti-discrimination Education Association (TEA) and described in the *Significant Absence* report which can be found on the website of TEA association on the Publications subpage²³. The results of the studies have been also presented in the form of infographics. You can see the works on the TEA website on Projects/Discrimination versus education subpage. Pay attention to the works by M. Nosek, M. Nowak and K. Łagoda²⁴.

4. Think whether you know books which can supplement the gaps in handbooks. Do you have such books in your library? Try to select a few titles which can be recommended

²³ *Significant Absence – on Anti-discrimination Education in the Formal Education System in Poland. Report of Studies*, ed. M. Abramowicz, Anti-discrimination Education Association, Warsaw 2011, http://www.tea.org.pl/userfiles/file/Wielka_nieobecna_raport.pdf (access: 17.08.2014).

²⁴ „Discrimination Versus Education” – A unique exhibition of TEA, http://www.tea.org.pl/pl/SiteContent?subitem=dyskryminacja_a_edukacja (access: 17.08.2014).

to a person interested in Africa or Nigeria.

5. Search for information about the Nigerians in Poland. What do you know about them and what can you still learn?
6. If you do not know the works of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, maybe is it worth reading one of her books? Are such books available in your library? Is it possible to organise a meeting devoted to the author or a discussion concerning one of her books? Maybe such a meeting could start with presentation of her speech during the TED conference?

Task 3

1. Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie talks about the beginnings of her own work: about the first books she wrote and illustrated in her childhood, whose faithful reader was her mother. She shares the level of knowledge and perspective of a child using the available literature and she speaks about the characters she created. She also talks about patterns derived from British literature and the non-compliance of the reality from the books she used to read with who she was, what she experienced in her life and what surrounded her. If you do not remember this fragment of her story, watch the beginning of the film again. Work of libraries with the youngest representatives of the majority on how they perceive other, alien cultures may be particularly fruitful, but also with children from the minority – on what their patterns are and what they should be, where to search for books representing their culture and images adequate to who they are themselves. Children are very receptive to the impact of the books they read and the library may, or even should be the place supplying various stories about the world.
2. While thinking about your library, its collections and young readers, think what characters and realities they would create based on the available literature. What kind of world do they read about in the available books? What kind of world they would build based on those descriptions? Maybe you should try organising classes or a competition to learn about it?

With whom could the Roma, Vietnamese, German, Chechen children identify themselves, or the young Poles who have cousins in England, go to Turkey on holiday, meet a Roma child in the yard? Do you know books worth recommending where they could read about themselves, about people similar to them, about the reality surrounding them or to which they would soon move?

3. Maybe you have already completed the diagnosis of multiculturalism of your environment, or this task is still to be done. Think what cultural groups live in the vicinity of the library, which of these groups use the library resources? Which cultural groups are worth presenting to the Polish children by means of literature?
4. List, recall, search for titles of books for children and teenagers which present various cultures, nations, ethnic groups, religions. Think whether you can buy them, if so, equip your library with such books. You can find hints on various websites, for example, by visiting the website www.eduglob.silesius.org.pl (tab: Reading Room – Czytelnia), created under the project „Global education of children changes our world” implemented by the Angelus Silesius House (DAS)²⁵.

²⁵ Global Education of Children Changes Our World.

www.eduglob.silesius.org.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17&Itemid=125

Read those books or one selected book. Think what kind of classes can be prepared on its basis. On the DAS website (Scenarios of classes tab) you can find educational materials and programmes of classes prepared by teachers from schools and kindergart²⁶. Use them or prepare your own scenario and conduct a library lesson according to it.

Task 4

1. Write down on a sheet of paper what you know about the specific ethnic, national, religious or language minority, for example, with whom you cooperate or which is interesting for you.
2. Think what image of this group emerges? Is it closer to the *single story* term from the speech of Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, or does it present this group in a multi-faceted manner?
3. For the next two weeks try to supplement this image, search for further stories, facts, messages, information about the selected cultural group. In free moments, surf the Internet, read a book by an author of this nationality, an article in a newspaper, watch a film concerning this group, or a film of a director coming from this group, or a speech of a person representing this group on TED. Or maybe you have a possibility of direct conversation with a representative of this minority? Search for various, also not obvious, surprising sources of information about a given group. Study the content, explore information, but also observe the appearance, clothing, behaviour, communication style, mimics of people from this group. After two weeks, on the next sheet of paper, list all „stories”, issues, information.
4. Compare both sheets of paper (the one with the initial knowledge about a given group with the sheet containing the extended information). You can repeat this exercise any number of times, gradually immersing into the knowledge about the same group or selecting a new group every two weeks. A year has about 52 weeks. You can even get acquainted with 26 different ethnic groups, nationalities, religions, if you do this exercise the whole year.
5. Try to identify which of the messages and information you have found is unfair, untrue, although popular.
6. Invent an activity which could be conducted in the library in order to change the imagination about this group, enrich the knowledge about it, deny the simplified and unjustified, sometimes unfair images and messages. Could it be an exhibition? A photo, story, infographics competition for readers? A meeting of a Book Discussion Club? A lecture? A workshop? A provocation inspired by an example from Stare Juchy? Or, perhaps you have an idea of something completely different?
7. Establish the cooperation with the selected group, NGO, academic professor, other library, and consult with them your idea of an activity. Consider, how you can still use the acquired knowledge for the activities in the library.

(dostęp: 17.08.2014).

26 Global Education of Children Changes Our World. Scenarios of classes, http://www.eduglob.silesius.org.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=19&Itemid=112

(access: 17.08.2014).

Task 5

8. Watch again the fragment of the film in which the writer speaks about her contact with a friend from the dormitory during studies in the United States. Recall the questions the girl addressed to the Nigerian once again. Think what culture is interesting for you.
9. Try to make contact with a person coming from this culture (own relations, through friends, an NGO, Facebook, an embassy, a cultural institute of a given country, a language school, in other way). Make appointment with this person (face to face meeting, via Skype, telephone, email exchange).
10. Prepare to the conversation. Think what kind of questions you should ask. Keep the American's questions and the Nigerian's responses in mind. Try to search deeper, broader in order to receive access to less superficial, more non-obvious stories, information. Remember about cultural differences in communication – recall guidelines from the scenario related to conducting focus studies and intercultural communication.
11. Conduct the conversation and after receiving the answers, ask your interlocutor about his/her impression. Which of the questions was surprising, which was most obvious, often asked, which question was the most pleasant, the most interesting? Or, maybe there is a question which was not asked, maybe there is still something to share? Are there any questions a given person does not like?
12. Think how you can use this conversation at work. How does it contribute to the multicultural activities, how will you use it in building partnership, analysis of needs, communication with various library users?

Task 6

Consider what your own idea is to use the film and the speech of the Nigerian writer.

Step 5 – Evaluation

Step five is the last stage of implementation of the multicultural library model. It is the time for reflection and summarising our activities from the time perspective. It is the stage which is often omitted, although very important – owing to reflection, particularly if performed together with partners and users, we shall learn what we can already do, what we are good at, what is our good practice, and what needs further improvement, development of competence, change of the way of conduct. Also this step should be implemented in accordance with spirit of four pillars: cooperation, inclusion, empowerment and visibility. What does it mean? As in case of planning, during evaluation the perspective of our partners is important, particularly those representing cultural minorities. Including them in the process of evaluation will not only be a chance for us to learn other perspective, but also a way to recognise the competence of our partners.

In case of evaluation it is important to care particularly for the manner of including the minority representatives into the process. What should our carefulness be based on? We have already written that the questionnaire is a quite effective method in case

of cultures appreciating the precise verbal message, but it will certainly be a less effective tool in cooperation with cultures appreciating indirect communication. At this point we want to stress that cultures also differ in terms of their attitude to evaluation and providing feedback. Whereas in some cultures evaluation is perceived as an important element of learning and shaping the relations (e.g. the US culture), in other cultures a request to evaluate the activities will be difficult for many reasons and it shall cause discomfort. Let us look, for instance, at the hierarchy dimension – it is almost impossible for a person with a lower status to evaluate a person who is higher in the social hierarchy (thus, how can a participant of the classes or a library user evaluate the activities of the management, or a librarian, who is often treated with a high social esteem?). Taking into account that in some cultures the social harmony and well-being of the group are the most important issues (collectivist cultures), it is not surprising that for persons coming from such cultures, a sincere evaluation of somebody's behaviour is not an easy task. Direct expression of unfavourable assessment could disturb the harmony and only a positive statement is the warrant of the desirable social order. Therefore, it is difficult to acquire neutral or negative responses from persons representing such cultures, concerning difficulties, deficiencies or inaccuracies. There are also cultures demonstrating the phenomenon called the negative norm of social thinking, which in practice means increased cultural tendency to complain as compared to other nations (the Poles belong to this group). Information on what was good and what was working well should not be expected in relation to representatives of cultures demonstrating asymmetry in expressing negative and supporting opinions. Be prepared for the list of shortcomings and shortages which will not correspond to the reality.

Through those three selected cultural dimensions (hierarchy, directness, complaining) we wanted to make you aware that acquiring the necessary information (e.g. what operates and what should be changed) may be a real challenge. Therefore, it is important to conduct the questionnaire, if needed, as a questionnaire-based interview, where the interviewer will be the key person noting down additional observations, responses, comments, and who will warrant the meeting of man with man. If possible, however, the questionnaire is worth replacing by direct conversation.

Particularly at the beginning of our adventure with multicultural activities, it is recommended to meet regularly and summarise each activity, besides the evaluation at the end of the project or evaluation of an annual implementation plan. The meetings do not need to be long, however, without this moment of reflection it will be difficult for us to get practice in the implementation of four pillars of the multicultural library. And, the more we have failed the more worth it is to consider what we can change, instead of becoming discouraged to the multicultural activities. Let us recall once again the example with organisation of the Christmas Eve for the Polish and Chechen children. The organisers received feedback from the translator who participated in the event and – explaining the cultural differences – indicated clearly what was nice and involving and what would be worth changing next time. Whether the organisers use his hints, depends only on them. Evaluation tends to be difficult, particularly if, irrespective of our commitment and considerable expenditure, we did not manage to achieve the intended effect. If you feel mainly frustrated and fatigued, do not start the evaluation interview, wait for a better moment, when emotions calm down and you will be really ready to listen to opinions other than yours. While providing and accepting feedback, care for balance between the critical and the acknowledging approach. It seems that this is a universal need of man – to be perceived through our own diversity, both in relation to our successes and failures.

SCENARIO 5: CHECKLIST

It is the last stage of the model implementation. In scenario five we present a tool – a checklist, which will help you to evaluate the activities after the termination of the defined period for implementation of the multicultural library model. The presented checklist has three parts: the part designed for the library, to be filled in inside the team, the part designed for multicultural partners cooperating with the library and the part designed for users – both those representing the minority groups and the majority group. In each part, questions are most important, rather than the form of conducting the evaluation. The decision on the form of the evaluation: whether this will be a questionnaire (written form), or a direct conversation, should mainly depend on the needs and recipients as well as on the time you can allocate for reflections. Nevertheless, considering the specific nature of various cultures, try to conduct conversations as often as possible. Camilla Sørbye from the Buskerud County Library says that although interviews with immigrants conducted in their library were mainly aimed at collecting responses to the questions prepared earlier, talks with representatives of various countries provided the valuable opportunity for the employees to get better acquainted with the cultures and for self-development. We have prepared the questions presented below so that they indicate the general direction of the conversation. Questions to users are the general evaluation questions which can be asked to each user, not only representing the cultural minority. However, it is worth collecting the answers according to cultural groups, divided into minority and majority groups. It will additionally enable to analyse the attitude of both groups to changes proposed in the library and reactions to the fact that the library already has become or is becoming multicultural. Whether we recognise their specific features depends on our openness and sensitivity as well as on the careful asking and separate analyses of responses provided by individual groups.

Part for libraries

	EVALUATION QUESTIONS
DECISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › From the time perspective, do you think that the decision on undertaking actions focusing on multiculturalism was right? › Why yes? › Why not?
ANALYSIS AND DIAGNOSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Was the diagnosis performed by you sufficient for conducting the activities? Did it turn out during the activities that you had not taken into account any important information? › If so, what kind of information should be taken into consideration while conducting the next diagnosis? › Have you involved representatives of cultural minorities in the diagnosis conducted? › What were the consequences of inclusion or lack of inclusion of minority representatives at the stage of diagnosis?

VISION AND GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Is your vision of the multicultural library changing as a result of the implemented multicultural activities? If yes, in what way? What should be changed, added, eliminated? › Did you manage to implement goals defined in the implementation plan? To what extent? Why were you successful? What were the reasons of failure?
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Did activities conducted by you take into account the pillars of the multicultural library? › How did you take the individual pillars into consideration: 1. cooperation, 2. inclusion, 3. empowerment, 4. visibility?
EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do you see any benefits of the activities you conduct? If so, what are they? › Do you see any negative consequences of the activities you conduct? If so, what are they? › What have you learnt owing to conducting of the multicultural activities? › How has the library and its perception by the local community changed?

Part for multicultural partners

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	
DECISION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › From the time perspective, do you think that the library made the right decision on getting involved in the multicultural activities? › Why yes? › Why not?
ANALYSIS AND DIAGNOSIS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Do you think that the library was sufficiently prepared to conduct multicultural activities? To what extent yes and to what extent no? › Did you feel involved enough in the creation of the implementation plan of the multicultural library model? Why yes, why not?
VISION AND GOALS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Did you manage to achieve the assumed common goals? To what extent? › Why were you successful? What were the reasons of failure? What should be changed in your cooperation in the future?

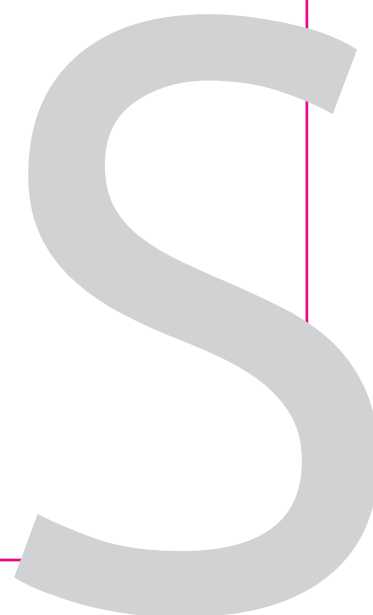
ACTIVITIES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Did the activities conducted by the library correspond to the needs you have expressed? › Did the method used by the library to cooperate with you encourage you to further engagement in the library activities? › Did you feel that your perspective was important and taken into account sufficiently?
EVALUATION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Has your perception of the library changed as a result of multicultural activities? If yes, in what way? › Do you see any benefits of the activities conducted by the library? If so, what are they? › Do you see any negative consequences of the activities conducted by the library? If so, what are they?

Part for users

You can address the questions listed below both to the cultural minorities and to the dominating groups. Remember to collect and analyse the responses divided into cultural groups and, where necessary, adjust the questions to the specific character of activities conducted in your library. Think whether you will evaluate the activities addressed to the minority group, the majority group, or to both groups.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS	
A general question concerning the perception of the library and its multicultural activities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How, in several sentences, can our library be described and its activities addressed to representatives of various cultural groups from our region?
Questions related to the library offer and the readiness to use it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › How did you find our library? Why did you come here for the first time? › What would have to happen to make you come here more often? › What did you expect, search for, need from the library at the very beginning? › Which of the activities offered are most useful for you? › What other activities could the library undertake in order to facilitate your life and living in this community, in our city, region?

<p>Questions concerning multicultural activities and their organisation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › Which of the activities addressed to individual cultural groups or related to individual cultural groups would you attend again? Why? › Which of them are worth recommending to someone? To whom? Why? › Which of the activities addressed to individual cultural groups or related to individual cultural groups you would not attend again and which of them you would not recommend to anyone? Why? › What do you think about promotion and information about multicultural events and the offer of activities addressed to the specific cultural group or about the specific cultural group? › Do you feel well in the library? Does the organisation of space and equipment of the library respond to your needs? Why yes? What is missing? › Is multiculturalism visible in the methods of the library organisation and equipment? Why yes? What is missing? › What do you think of the methods of work of persons employed in the library and their competence in the multiculturalism area? Which of their behaviours, attitudes help or hamper the work in the multiculturalism area?
<p>Question on supplementing, any other comments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> › What else should we know if we want our library to become more and more open, friendly to various cultural groups living in our region?



2

Inspirations

Introduction to Inspirations

Authors: Maja Branka, Dominika Cieřlikowska, Lena Rogowska²⁷

In this part we invite you to get acquainted with inspirations – multicultural activities already conducted by Polish and Norwegian libraries. These examples, on the one hand, show how to implement the multicultural library model in practice, provide some specific ideas and solutions while, on the other hand, they reveal the backstage and difficulties the libraries had to face while implementing the multicultural initiatives.

Within the Polish inspirations, we show histories of five libraries, four of which (besides Mediateka in Wrocław) – participated in the FRSI Project „Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures”. There are certainly much more libraries like that in Poland, conducting multicultural activities, like the Commune Public Library in Ryjewo which, discovering the local roots through studies on the local language, published *„Knafle, Szneki, Topki...”, i.e. a Small Dictionary of the Ryjewo Land* jointly with its partners. It is impossible to describe all those activities and ideas.

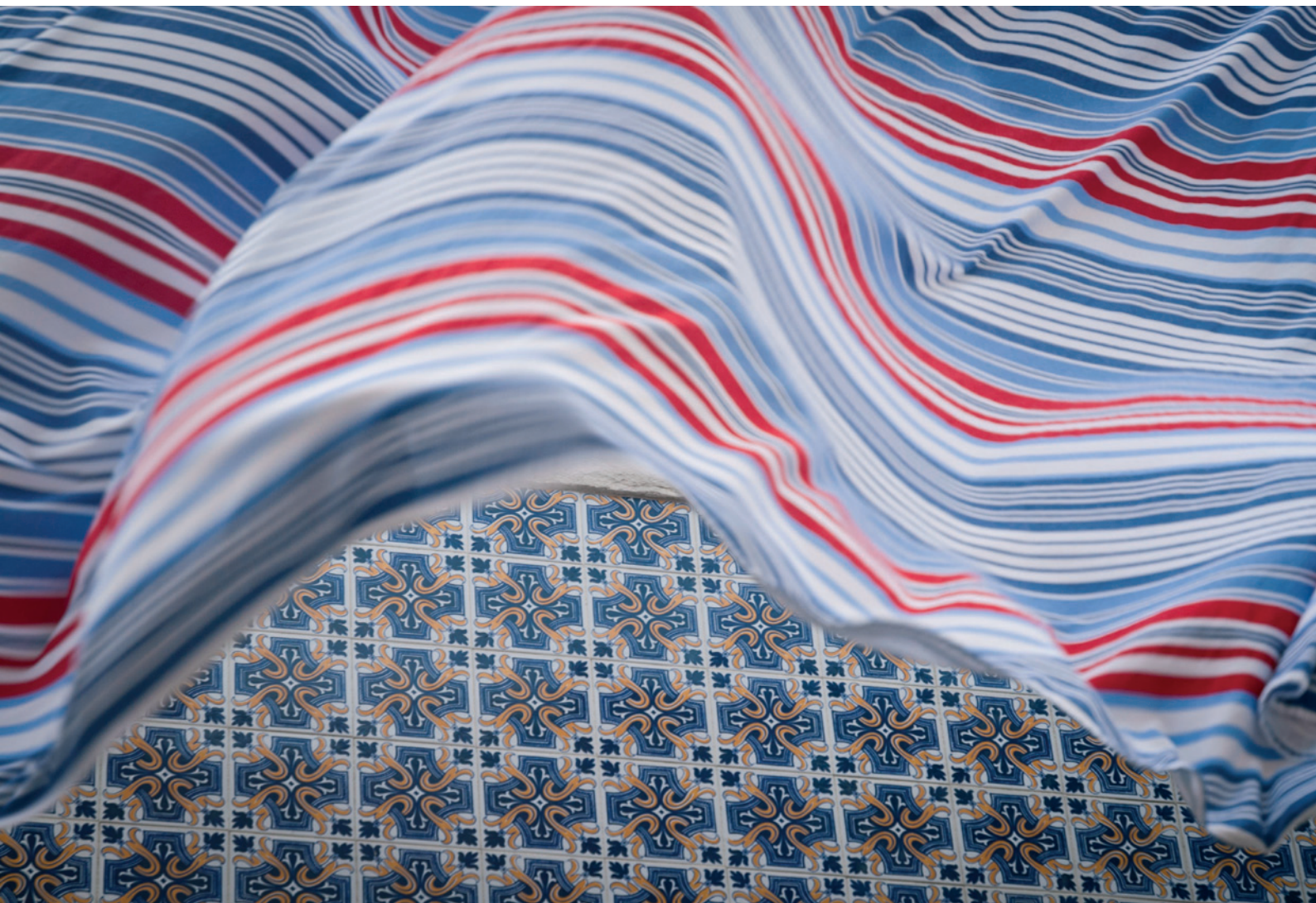
Using the example of the library in Stare Juchy – „Provocation” – we show how to teach yourself and the community to be open to multiculturalism in a small village where no immigrants or other cultural groups live. Activities of the Gorlice library show us the essence of partnership and cooperation with minorities traditionally inhabiting a given region and care for presence and visibility of the minority group. On the other hand, the „Chats” organised by the Opole library is an example of activities that are addressed specially to foreigners – in this case, Ukrainian students studying in Opole. Through the inspiration from Kędzierzyn-Koźle we wanted to show how to organise Polish-Roma classes bringing closer the culture of the Roma – as a group particularly stigmatised in Poland, although inhabiting many regions of Poland, but rarely present in Polish libraries. The experience of the librarians from Kędzierzyn-Koźle shows us that it is not a simple task, that it requires, first of all, openness, readiness to learn and delegating the decision-making to the minority group, which is the essence of the intercultural experience. On the other hand, the „Human Library” initiative of the Wrocław Mediateka is an example of the challenging activity already conducted on a grand nationwide scale. This activity, engaging many partners, asks extraordinary questions, undermines stereotypes and prejudices – teaches the dialogue which „poses a threat of understanding”, as a poster of one of „Human Library” issues informs.

²⁷ Authors of the inspirations: M. Branka: inspiration from Gorlice, D. Cieřlikowska: Norwegian inspirations and inspirations from Opole, Kędzierzyn-Koźle and Wrocław, L. Rogowska: inspiration from Stare Juchy.

In the part devoted to Norwegian inspirations, we present short information concerning Norway and the Norwegian library system, as a background for three inspirations coming from libraries in Oslo, Buskerud county and Bergen. These examples come from three various types of libraries: (1) a central library, with the nationwide range of activities and addressing its services only to other libraries, (2) a county library with the regional range, whose target groups include both other libraries (in the county) and individual users directly, and (3) a library of the lowest level in the structure of Norwegian facilities – a local public library dedicating its actions directly to the town inhabitants. Each of the examples refers to different type of service: interlibrary exchange of multilingual collections, organising dedicated zones in the library and on the website containing information and providing support to newcomers, and a computer course for migrants. Our intention was to show, through the array of inspirations, the scale of possible services, depending both on the potential of libraries and the needs of their customers. What is quickly being noticed by many Polish librarians as an essential difference between Poland and Norway is the diversity of the multicultural context in both countries. Scandinavia is first of all a region that accepts immigrants, therefore, many services are addressed exactly to this group. The Polish context is more associated with traditional ethnic and national minorities living in country for years, which, on the one hand, implies different needs and activities than in Norway and, on the other hand, indicates situations and groups for which the Norwegian practice may be very adequate. One of the examples is the issue of the Roma – the traditional ethnic minority facing, at the same time, a situation similar to migrants – culturally strange and isolated from the social life, not speaking Polish or speaking it very poorly, often not very well oriented, like other minority groups, in its own legal and social situation. Another issue distinguishing the Norwegian system from Polish is the concentration on language issues. Services addressed to minority groups often refer to language competence, which arises from the migration policy of a country and considerable pressure on knowledge of the Norwegian among persons living in Norway, irrespective of their country of origin. It can be seen both in the types of services offered (language cafés, multilingual literature) and in the terminology used – the Norwegians use the term „multilingual community of the city” more often than „multicultural community”.

Besides the differences between Poland and Norway, we think that the practices from Scandinavia are applicable in the Polish context. What we can learn from the Norwegians at a more general level is the issue of competence. In the examples provided it can be seen that the Norwegians focus on the development of intercultural competence and availability of employees or co-workers specialised in this area. Looking from the financial perspective, although Norway is a richer country, in practice, libraries also face similar problems – they have limited budgets with little money for activities addressed to minorities. This is the reason why libraries try to join forces: with each other (interlibrary exchange, consultations, searching for good practices and introducing ideas checked in other areas) and with the local partners – other institutions complementary in terms of competence and territorial range.

We invite you to reading and benefiting from the Polish and Norwegian inspirations!



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION

The Stare Juchy Commune is an agricultural and tourist village, situated on territory of the Ełk Lake District, among forests, lakes, hills and valleys. Stare Juchy is one of the oldest settlements in the Masuria region, with its establishment dating back to 1461. The population of the commune mainly consists of descendants of people resettled from the Suwałki, Podlachia and Mazovia regions after the World War II and (in the significant minority) – descendants of the Masurians. Several persons belong to the German Minority Association acting in Ełk. The majority of the community comprises Roman-Catholics, there are several people representing the Orthodox and Protestant religions. On the territory of the commune, one Catholic church and one Evangelical Methodist church operate.

The library in Stare Juchy has been operating since 1949. It is currently under reorganisation. The new institution will be established after the merger of the library and the cultural centre, under the name: Library of the Information and Culture Centre of the Stare Juchy Commune. The library cooperates with non-governmental organisations and in 2013 it won the 1st place in the regional competition entitled „A library with good social climate”.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIBRARY

LIBRARY PARTNERS INVOLVED IN THE „PROVOCATION”

The Commune Public Library in Stare Juchy, the Volunteer Club in Stare Juchy, the Volunteer Support Centre from Ełk, the Association for the Development of the Stare Juchy Commune, the MUKSZTYW Association.

Participants of the „Provocation” included:

- › A librarian from the Commune Public Library in Stare Juchy, the coordinator of the overall action: Beata Klaus-Gramacka,
- › Volunteers from Ełk: Aleksandra Kozikowska (as Harrisa), Anna Polakowska, Nicol Kurzynowska,
- › The Volunteer Club in Stare Juchy: Patryk Mazurek, Karol Malinowski, Adrian Milewski, Magdalena Zdancewicz,
- › The trainer conducting training under the project „Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures” who acted as an interpreter of Harrisa: Lena Rogowska,
- › Inhabitants of Stare Juchy.

Provocation in Stare Juchy

When I saw it from the distance, I was literally terrified, because it was strange, you don't see it every day. I told the boys that if it was blue or light blue, it means, fair, maybe it wouldn't be so terrifying. But I associate it with death since it is black.

Harrisa Darram appeared in Stare Juchy on 21 May 2014 before ten in the morning, during the peak traffic in the village, in front of the shop and the Commune Office. She was a Muslim woman, wearing a black niqab, she came from Lebanon. She wanted to buy land in Stare Juchy, preferably, located on the lake. She could not speak Polish. She communicated with others through the interpreter who accompanied her.

Harrisa is not a real character. Her character was created by the librarians from the Commune Public Library in Stare Juchy and a group of young people associated around the library. She was invented in order to test the attitude of Stare Juchy inhabitants towards the „aliens” and to open the discussion on multiculturalism. It was one of the first multicultural activities undertaken by the library.

Provocation

The idea of the activity emerged during a workshop (conducted under the project „Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures”) – says Beata Klaus-Gramacka, the librarian and coordinator of the „Provocation”. We were talking about the problem that when a person with non-standard appearance is walking along the street of Etk, people turn their heads. They gaze, comment. Curiosity appears but nobody knows what is behind it. Are people living here open? Are they open towards people coming from outside Poland, who distinguish at the first sight? We did not want to organise an official discussion or meeting. We wanted to see live reactions of people. It was supposed to be our provocation. We wanted to test spontaneous reactions. And it was probably the most important issue. Several people have been informed of the action since the beginning: a school director, the governor of the Commune. A lot depended on them because if they were “closed” people, it would not have been possible to organise the action. I am happy that the response was so positive. We knew already at the first stage that there was a green light, that they wanted to do it with us.

Reactions

I was afraid that people would react negatively towards me – says Aleksandra Kozikowska, who acted as Harrisa. When we walked along the street, everyone paid attention to me, looked at me. They were showing – wow, some stranger is walking, different than others. Such a big „wow“! One lady in the shop tried not to look at me. I am looking at her, and she is looking somewhere at the walls. But, when we left the Commune Office, all people were standing in the window and stared. Everyone at the window, to see what will happen. They didn't ask where we came from or how we had come there. They only stared.

Karol, a junior secondary school student: *The gaze of all people around was the best, not only the people tested, but also the passers-by. The gaze following Harrisa. She triggered the curiosity.*

– *When I saw it from the distance, I was literally terrified, because it was strange, you don't see it every day – tells Mieczysław, an inhabitant of Stare Juchy. But it was the matter of a few days and it would be normal, wouldn't it?*

– *And what would you think if she was your neighbour?*

– *I am usually tolerant towards all nations, even towards the gays and the lesbians, it doesn't matter to me; it's important that people don't disturb each other, don't cross each other paths. It is better to live with them than when people go to church but disturb each other, do the dirty on others.*

In the Commune Office, the first clerk who had been asked about availability of land for sale, provided the girls with exhaustive information, in a friendly and competent manner. She showed the plots of land available for sale on the map and offered that she could go with them there and show them the area. The girls thanked and said they would come on the next day. Harrisa with her interpreter also visited one shop and the school.

In this shop the situation was worse – tells us the coordinator. This lady was once robbed by a stranger and she has such an attitude now. When the girls entered the shop she didn't smile at all. It's strange, isn't it? People usually smile at us automatically when we smile at them. But in her case, no reaction. She was just registering the girls in order to describe the situation later to the police. She said that if a memory portrait was necessary later, she would even be able to draw Harrisa.

Harrisa: *She stared at us as if she wanted to kill us.*

In order to check whether the shop assistant smiled at people at all, Patryk was sent to the shop.

Coordinator: *But Patryk followed you, and she was immediately smiling. She had positive attitude towards him, and also to me. Then, we can compare.*

Change

At the beginning there was mainly curiosity because who knows what would happen after that – reports the art teacher from the Complex of Commune Schools in Stare Juchy on the reaction of children to Harrisa. Children were asking if Harrisa was available on Facebook, they wanted to add her to their friends immediately. I think that if a real Harrisa appeared here, they would ask her hundreds of questions immediately, to learn about history, culture, to learn anything about her.

Harrisa: *The first comment when I entered the classroom was: „how beautiful eyes she has“.*

Librarian: *And what should they say? That you have a nice frock? I also wouldn't comment myself that you have a nice frock. You don't know if this is correct.*

Harrisa: *I was earlier interested in various cultures, however, not in the Muslim culture. After this experience, I want to learn more. Particularly, about women in those cultures, how they live there, how they put this hijab or other scarves on their heads, how they tie them.*

Patryk: *I had fun, an interesting experiment, I have never heard of anything like that. When they talk about the Muslims in the media, it is only about terrorist attacks, etc.; therefore, such is the stereotype of the Muslims among people. In my opinion, they are normal people. Although I have never met anyone like that, but I would like to. Reactions of people were different, usually positive or neutral. Has anything changed inside me? I think it made me think about it.*

Karol: *The whole action triggered a lot of laughter, but also considerations. We spoke about how to cope with it. There were many ideas. Many characters were planned. A Muslim man, a Hindu woman, a punk, a skinhead. Finally, we decided on one person. And it was nice because we didn't make too much rumour and we can draw conclusions from the study anyway. This activity has certainly changed our attitude to the Muslims. For sure. Has the attitude of the tested people changed? Probably it hasn't. But I think that if someone started to think that a person like that could really come here, it's also important. Going out in Juchy tonight I would certainly hear my friends' comments concerning today's action. They will talk about it for three days. It will be the best diagnosis. It was a sort of ad hoc action, but now we have to develop materials. We want to make a multimedia presentation and disseminate it. Harrisa's fan page on Facebook could be also created. Many young people were tested and it would be possible to collect all opinions in one place, since it would be possible to invite them there. This could be another method of diagnosis. People could express their opinions on the film and the whole action there.*

From the library perspective

Coordinator: *I am satisfied with the cooperation, I am happy that the young people from Etk arrived. I think that the action was successful. I assumed that the result would be positive. Only after the talks during the training I thought that the situation might be different, that other reactions were possible. We also didn't know completely how to use it, we acted a little spontaneously. It was not the case that we prepared every detail²⁸. I prepared the action with the young people and I am happy. There were certain inaccuracies in the scenario but it's good that they have done it. Did it have any impact on them? What do they think now about the Muslims? In fact, we haven't talked about it. I think they have limited knowledge of the Muslim culture, religion. Tomorrow we want to watch the film *A girl in the Sneakers* and talk about it. We want to immerse into this topic ourselves. I admit that I don't know too much myself. I know that it is something different, diverse and I was probably always afraid to learn more. I also don't know whether I would be open, probably I would react as all those people. Positively, however, there would be some border. It is a little "a taboo" topic.*

Only during the action it has turned out that the character has no name. Therefore, the name „Harrisa“ was proposed. After the action it has turned out that Harrisa is not a human name but the name of a hot spice.

I don't know whether this event somehow influenced persons we have stopped today. Did they start thinking about it? I don't know. I will try to talk to them in some time. However, this activity has showed me that we can continue our work. There were positive reactions and interest. We can screen the film, conduct a discussion and go further to learn about various cultures. And I am still considering one issue. Harrisa was a little unreal, as if she was coming from other world or from TV. A question is, what would happen if it was a Roma woman instead of the Muslim? Not an actress, but a real Roma woman.

Description of the method

GOALS

- › Making other culture closer to the group involved in the activity (the culture the character comes from).
- › testing the reaction of the local community to „aliens“, creating a mini diagnosis of the local environment.
- › Starting talks about multiculturalism, introduction to other multicultural activities.

THE PROCESS

1. Introduction of the character

Harrisa (wearing a black niqab) with the interpreter were walking across the village, talking and looking at the buildings.

2. Provocation, interaction with inhabitants

Harrisa with her interpreter visited a grocer's shop. In the shop, the interpreter asked the shop assistant in broken Polish about a possibility to purchase land. The shop assistant referred them to the Commune Office. The girls visited the Commune Office and another grocer's shop, asking everywhere about a possibility to purchase land. They have also visited the school. There – introduced to the class selected by the school director involved in the action – they talked to pupils and the teacher. Harrisa (through her interpreter) told the pupils that she had moved from Lebanon to Poland and she was considering the selection of a school. She asked the pupils how they were doing at school, whether they had to learn a lot and whether persons of faith other than Catholic were well-treated at school.

3. Explaining what the provocation was based on, conducting interviews.

The walk of Harrisa with the interpreter across the village and their interactions with persons they met, were documented by photos and a video. After the interaction, the disclosure of the „Provocation“ in each of these places occurred. The team documenting the event and the coordinator arrived at the site, Harrisa with the interpreter also came back. The coordinator explained to the people what had happened and what the purpose of the „Provocation“ had been. Persons documenting the action recorded interviews with witnesses and incidental actors of the action, asking about their first reactions, emotions, thoughts and attitude towards other cultures and nationalities. It was also possible to take a souvenir photo with Harrisa.

4. Elaboration and presentation of results in the form of a multimedia exhibition, a film, a radio play.

A short video (6 minutes) from the „Provocation”, prepared by the library can be watched on YouTube, by entering the catchword „Prowokacja w Starych Juchach” in the search engine .

1. Prepare the story of the character carefully. The „African” or the „Muslim” are very general terms (just as the „European”). Establish precisely the country, city or village a given character comes from. Read about the history and culture of a given country in case any of the persons not introduced into the action asked the character a question during the action.

- › Make sure that the person acting as the character is not recognised by inhabitants. If you prepare a provocation in a small town or village, invite a person from other town to play the role.
- › The preparation of the person to play the role is also important. Starting from actor-related issues (how the character walks, sits down, how he/she speaks, what does he/she do with his/her hands when standing, where does he/she stare, what is his/her face mimics), through exercising potential dialogues (checking whether the person to act as the character can answer questions which may appear).
- › The person acting the role does not need to be a multiculturalism expert. However, it is important that before the event he/she searches for information about the country from which the figure comes.

2. Find out:

- › jakie są realia życia codziennego w kraju, z którego pochodzi postać, jak ubierają się kobiety i mężczyźni, czy strój różni się w zależności od regionu kraju lub czy inaczej ubierają się ludzie na wsi i w małych miastach, a inaczej w stolicy,
- › w jakim języku porozumiewają się ludzie w danym kraju, jakiego alfabetu używają, jakie imiona noszą,
- › jaka jest sytuacja polityczna w kraju, z jakiego powodu postać znalazła się w Polsce.

3. Avoid duplication of the stereotypes, both during the preparation of the character and during the action. Remember that the character should not be shown in a grotesque, exaggerated, ridiculous way. Show it with respect. Avoid situations which may deepen the stereotypes or cause aversion to the character presented among the audience. During the preparation of the action in Stare Juchy, an idea emerged to show a Muslim couple, with a woman following the Muslim man. This idea was rejected because such a presentation of the Muslim couple could strengthen the stereotype opinion of incidental audience that all Muslim women are not well treated by their husbands.

4. Make sure that the clothing of the character is realistic. The aim of the action is to create an impression that the character comes from a different culture or from a different country. The clothes should not be the theatre national clothes since

they would make an impression that the character is a member of a folk group. Look at pictures, watch films from the country you are interested in. Care for details.

5. Find allies, care for security. The provocation in Stare Juchy was successful also because the librarians were supported by the governor of the commune and the school director. They were informed about the action and they were ready to offer their support in case of any unpleasant situations. A good practice is to involve and inform important decision-makers in the society about the action (e.g. a priest, school management, local authorities).

6. Care for good documentation (photo, audio, video) of the second part of the activity. Remember to ask for consent to recording of the sound or filming before you start doing it. Explain precisely why you want to record the conversations, where the recording will be used and whether a given person will have a possibility to verify it before the publication. Before the publication of the photos or films get acquainted with the regulations concerning image protection and acquire the required consents to their dissemination.



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION

Gorlice is a county town in the Lesser Poland region (the Gorlice Beskid mountains). The county is inhabited by over 110 thousand people, including over 28 thousand people living in Gorlice itself. It is a multicultural and multi-religion county inhabited by the Poles, the Lemkos, the Ukrainians and – until the World War II – the Jews also lived here. Inhabitants comprise the Catholics, the Orthodox, the Greek Catholics and the Protestants and the Jehovah's Witnesses. The Act on national and ethnic minorities and on the regional languages recognises the Lemkos as one of four ethnic minorities in Poland (besides the Karaim, the Roma and the Tatars), and the Ukrainians are recognised as the national minority.

On the territory of the county, as many as five facilities entered to the UNESCO World Heritage List are located: three Orthodox churches (in Kwiaton, Brunary and Owczary) and two Catholic churches (in Sękowa and Binarowa).

The library in Gorlice has been acting since 1948, and it is the municipal library acting as the county library, employing 25 people. Almost each third inhabitant of Gorlice is the user of the library (28% of Gorlice inhabitants). For many years the library has been conducting activities highlighting the multiculturalism of the region. In 2009, the Chapter of the Award granted by the Foundation in Support of Local Democracy, acting under the patronage of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage and the Polish UNESCO Committee, distinguished the Gorlice library in the category of local institutions of culture for its activities to the benefit of the national integration.

The regional collections of the Gorlice library, the so-called Galicjana, comprise a rich department devoted to the Lemkos culture and art. The most valuable regional collections date back to the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century. This collection has been digitalised and made available to a wide group of recipients. As a consequence, the library established contacts with the Lemkos from the United States and Canada who are currently sending books to the library. In the competition of the Information Society Development Foundation (FRSI) concerning the Polish-Norwegian projects, the idea of the Gorlice partnership received the best evaluation of the international jury and was ranked first in Poland.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIBRARY

PARTNERSHIP IN GORLICE:

- › The Stanisław Gabryel Municipal Public Library in Gorlice,
- › The Commune Public Library in Ropa,
- › The Commune Public Library in Sękowa,
- › Centre of Culture of the Gorlice Municipality: libraries in Dominikowice and Kobylanka,
- › The Ruska Bursa Association,
- › The Lemkos Union,
- › and numerous independent artists and Lemkos activists.

Partnership in Gorlice

The work in this partnership goes on very well. We reach agreement quickly and we invent things which are not based on preparing one library lesson, to get rid of the issue. We think about it broadly, we have a three year plan and, additionally, we want to develop jointly a regional education programme and implement it comprehensively. We managed to develop many things, and simultaneously, we try not to enter into risky situations which obviously emerge. We try to omit them, however, this does not create a false correctness. We talk and search for solutions. I personally think that this is the greatest value of this partnership so far.

In summer 2013, the county partnership of libraries and Lemkos organisations was established in Gorlice. The establishment of the partnership was stimulated by the project „Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures” of the Information Society Development Foundation. During several months of the project duration, the partnership has already gained several achievements: it won the Polish-Norwegian competition for a project, it involved several organisations and several dozen people in its activities. We can definitely say that the Gorlice way of operation is a practical example of considering the four pillars of multicultural library. The partnership has established and has been extending **cooperation** with the Lemkos organisations, it has been actively **including** Lemkos representatives in its activities, taking advantage of their resources and competence, it has been **empowering** the Lemkos organisations sharing knowledge concerning the professional elaboration of the collections, it has been implementing and planning actions which strengthen the **visibility** of various cultural groups inhabiting the region in a non-stereotype way.

Difficult beginnings

The Polish-Lemkos history is very complicated and in several points, very painful for all parties. Currently, as a result of resettlement, the majority of the Lemkos inhabit the western regions of Poland, however, some of them remained in the Lemkos area, among others, on the territory of the Gorlice county.

In December 2012, as during several previous years, the Gorlice library, respecting and celebrating the multiculturalism of the region, sent out the bilingual Christmas wishes – in Polish and in the Lemkos language. Unexpectedly, during the December session of the City Council, one of the councillors protested against the bilingual character of the wishes and demanded the disciplinary penalty towards the Director of the library due to the infringement of the Act on the Polish language. During the January session the City Council defended the Director and the multiculturalism, the Director was not punished and the councillor lost his position of the chairman of the commission. The history could be closed like that, however, the speech of the councillor triggered discussion on the local Internet fora which escalated to a serious conflict in the society. *The month between the December session and the January session, between the Catholic and Orthodox feasts was the worst. It was the time when everyone jumped down each other's throat, the first posts referred to the Christmas cards, but later everything emerged – from massacres of Poles in Volhynia, to the „Vistula” action. A lot of people got involved. What was happening, was threatening to me, these posts were disgusting. I even didn't think that I would care so much. It was a very difficult experience* – tells Magda Miller, director of the Gorlice library.

Partnership

A few months later, when I was already able to think normally, I read an announcement on the call for proposals and I thought that we had to apply because multiculturalism is the area in which a lot, really a lot is still to be done. I did not want it to be the subject of a dispute but I wanted to find a possibility to talk, search for arguments, in order to cover a little what can't be changed anyway – Magda Miller continues.

In summer 2013, the implementation of the project named „Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures” starts. Gorlice joins the project although the Lesser Poland region was originally not included in the project. On the library's request, FRSI applies to the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (the operator of the programme under which the project is implemented) for introducing the change. The Ministry agrees.

Maja Branka: *Did you have any concerns?*

Magda Miller: *I was really afraid of two things. First of all, whether we will manage to invite the Lemkos to cooperation and, secondly, how will the environment react.*

The Gorlice library invites to cooperation libraries from those communes where the Lemkos minority lives as well as two Lemkos organisations (being in conflict with each other) – the Lemkos Union and the Ruska Bursa Association. The concerns of the director do not come true, the majority accepts the invitation, some parties react enthusiastically, other feel that they cannot refuse, and only one commune is not interested. Each of the libraries invites persons representing the Lemkos minority to cooperation. One of the librarians who turns out to be the Lemkos representative, invites her brother to cooperation – the plenipotentiary of the County Governor for minorities. The Partnership is multiplying – finally it includes several institutions and several dozen people ready to act to the benefit of multiculturalism.

MB: *What was the aim of establishing this partnership?*

Magda Miller: *We have two main goals. First of all, we want to catalogue the unique regional collections owned by the Lemkos associations and make them available. Secondly, through*

the educational activities we want to strengthen and improve good relations between neighbours at a local level.

The Gorlice partnership meets regularly over several months during four training sessions organised by the FRSI under the project. Between the training sessions, the plan is developed which shall be the final outcome of participation in the project. It is the requirement, but the partnership has more ambitious targets. As a result of meetings during and between the training sessions, the partnership develops a three-year action plan, wins the competition for the multicultural Polish-Norwegian project (in autumn 2014 the Norwegians come to Gorlice and the partnership members go to Norway) and develops promotional materials – short clips promoting the multiculturalism of the region, and the presentation promoting the partnership²⁹.

Magda Miller: *The work in this partnership goes on very well. We reach agreement quickly and we invent things which are not based on preparing one library lesson, to get rid of the issue. We think about it broadly, we have a three-year plan and, additionally, we want to develop jointly a regional education programme and implement it comprehensively. We managed to develop many things, and simultaneously, we try not to enter into risky situations which obviously emerge. We try to omit them, however, this does not create a false correctness. We talk and search for solutions. I personally think that this is the greatest value of this partnership so far.*

Plans

In the three-year action plan and the Polish-Norwegian project developed jointly using the brainstorming method, various activities are assumed which respond to the needs diagnosed by the partnership.

Małgorzata Krzemińska, the librarian from Dominikowice: *So far, we have conducted multicultural activities, but now we are reaching deeper. So far, it was nice, pleasant and easy, more like a fun. Now we are looking more precisely.*

Mariola Zagórska, the librarian from Łosie: *On the territory of our commune, the regional education is not conducted at all. When I asked the director of the junior secondary school what it looked like, as I wanted to organise an excursion to the Zagroda Maziarska ethnographic park and to the Orthodox church, so that the teenagers could learn something about their Lemkos peers, it has turned out that nothing is happening. I am not surprised that they do not know anything about their neighbours then. I think that most of the people have never visited an Orthodox church although they are located in every village here.*

They want to reach all age groups and go beyond one-off artist actions, such as concerts and exhibitions. They think how to ensure the sustainability of the results – therefore the idea to catalogue and make available to the public the collections of unique regional memorabilia held in the resources of the Lemkos organisations.

Magda Miller: *It was important for us to undertake actions which are not one-off events, such as concerts or exhibitions, which we already do and will continue doing. Activities which will make a process were important for us.*

²⁹ The clips can be watched on the library website: <http://www.mbpgorlice.info> (access 18.08.2014).

Plans of the Gorlice partnership:

1. Cataloguing of the Lemkos 'Regionalia' – the partner libraries in cooperation and with the language support of minority representatives will catalogue and make available the unique regional memorabilia owned by the Lemkos organisations. The collections of the organisation will be entered into the SOWA cataloguing system used by all libraries in the county. Consequently, the users will have insight to them using the online catalogue and a possibility to borrow them through the Gorlice library. The most valuable part of the collections will be digitalised and included in the Gorlice Digital Library. Moreover, the partner libraries will sign agreements with both associations concerning the permanent cooperation in the scope of purchases and transferring rare regional memorabilia to Gorlice.

2. The „Three alphabets” action – an artistic activity showing the multiculturalism of the region through three alphabets traditionally found on this territory: Latin, Cyrillic and Hebrew. Bookmarks for readers with three alphabets will be issued, where words characteristic for each of the three cultures will be printed.

3. Regional Fairy Tales coming from Pogórze and Lemkos cultures – will be presented in various forms: reading, drama, street theatres and even the Japanese theatre of illustration – *kamishibai*.

4. Discussions in junior secondary schools and the library concerning the film „Blue-Eyed” – a documentary being a record of the anti-discriminatory workshop conducted by Jane Elliott, will be presented in all junior secondary schools, in communes participating in the project.

Further plans include the development of the regional education programme which would be consistently implemented in the whole county.

Reliability

Maja Branka: What enabled you to reach agreement?

Irena Kocur, the Lemkos woman: *There was just a will of cooperation. The director of the library played an important role here, the fact that she was perceived as a reliable person, there was no ambiguity in perceiving her. The library has also organised various initiatives earlier, sent bilingual greeting cards – it's important. In each activity a coordinator is necessary and Magda had an idea, faith and will of action, and, at the same time, her intentions were unquestionable. In order to engage, you must believe that it makes sense.*

Julia Doszna, the Lemkos singer: *The library stimulated our Lemkos environment, which is divided, to act and cooperate. Magda sometimes acted as a mediator and a buffer. The library has become this place which is neutral, which cooperates with each party and provides everyone the opportunity to meet on a neutral ground. It is very important.*

Roman Korbicz, the leader of the Lemkos band „Serencza”: *I think that the books provided a common background, everyone has noticed that it is a good direction, that there are dislikes but everybody can contribute.*

Małgorzata Krzemińska: *And above all, nice people have met. Magda was able to unify everyone.*

Magda Miller: *What was the background of our success? I think that a good will of everyone who wanted to do something reasonable, without repairing the whole world. Something for themselves, for the environment, something for the library users, for the community in which they live. If the group had not been willing to keep silent about certain things, leave Volhynia and the „Vistula” action behind, I think, that we would have gone apart after the first meeting.*

Bartek Kiełtyka, employee of the Gorlice library: *For me, those meetings and the common work have shown that anyway it is possible to reach compromise and cooperate, that it is not necessary to keep recalling and exchanging the most difficult facts from the inglorious common history – what has already happened, we can't change. It exists, but it is next to us. Now we are dealing with doing something nice together, to create some new quality together, a seed of new thinking. Maybe we are able to cut off this history at last and look forward together.*

MB: Will the partnership survive?

Irena Kocur: *It's difficult to say. It certainly has a chance if Magda still acts as a director over the next years and if she stimulates this commitment.*

Natalia Hładyk, Lemkos Union: *Honestly? If Magda stays, it will, since it is also based on personal relations and support of the local authorities, e.g. if we wanted to make street signs in three languages. In relation to national minorities, the Lemkos, the Roma or the Jews, there is often such a way of thinking that it's nice when they sing and dance, but if they want something more, it is much more difficult.*

Roman Korbicz: *If we manage to implement all those activities which are planned, these relations will become even closer.*

Description of the methos

The library in Gorlice managed to create the partnership and invite to cooperation a considerable group of people who wanted to act jointly to the benefit of multiculturalism. At the same time, they have shown that even in regions where multiculturalism is a difficult issue, which may trigger a conflict, it is possible to undertake constructive activities. It seems that the success of the Gorlice library arises from the following assumptions and rules which are worth remembering:

1. Reliability of the library – partners of the library unanimously stressed that the reliability of the library as an institution was of key importance, both for joining the partnership and for further work. The library is perceived as a reliable partner (it conducted good quality activities before), impartial partner (it invites all parties to cooperation) and a neutral partner (it does not support any of the parties). Taking and maintaining such a position enabled the library, in more difficult situations, to act as a buffer and mediator.

2. Leadership – participants of the partnership unanimously underlined the important role of the library director: she was perceived, as the library, as reliable and neutral. She had a vision on what should happen within the partnership and she communicated it clearly.

3. Direction: Future – in spite of difficulties and the unfavourable historic context, the partnership has focused on actions which refer to the presence and future. It was a conscious choice. The difficult history was accepted and the decision was made to go ahead, assuming that there is no single objective truth, but there are various perspectives.

4. Common goal – participants of the partnership stressed that the initial focusing on the goal, i.e. the cataloguing of unique regional collections held in the resources of the Lemkos organisations, provided a neutral background, clear to everyone and beneficial. The cataloguing and making the books available was an excellent starting point which facilitated further work.

5. Common benefits – all parties engaged will benefit from this solution and, at the same time, none of the parties would be able to implement this task independently. It generates benefits not only to the entities involved (the library extends the collection of the regional memorabilia, the Lemkos organisations have professionally catalogued part of their collections and they learn how to do it), but, first of all, to all library users and persons interested in the regional culture and history of Gorlice.



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION

Opole is the regional city in south-western Poland, located on the Oder river, inhabited by over 120 thousand people. It is one of the historic capitals of the Upper Silesia and one of its oldest cities. The contemporary image of Opole and the region was affected by the difficult coincidence of events associated with the history of the Polish-Czech-German border, where the present region is situated. The region is distinguished by its several centuries-long multiculturalism tradition, created by the Poles, the Germans, the Czechs, population of the Jewish and Roma origin, the Poles from the East coming to the so-called Regained Territories (Polish: Kresowiacy), and the Silesians. The results of the National Population and Housing Census conducted in 2011 showed that the Silesian and German national and ethnic identifications are the most numerous besides the Polish. The authorities of the region currently try to attract foreign investors by promoting the multiculturalism. As a result, the multicultural and multi-religion landscape of the city has been enhanced by the immigrants and re-emigrants from various parts of the world. Today the Opole Region – besides the traditional minorities living on this territory for years – also comprises its new multicultural inhabitants.

The Municipal Library in Opole (14 facilities) is the institution of long history (it was established almost 70 years ago) and a modern image. The library in Opole is one of the most modern libraries in Poland, not only in terms of its appearance (the impressive building of the central library and the Mediateka), but also the programme and innovative approach to the library tasks implemented in diverse forms. The Opole library strengthens and inspires readers' interests and promotes the recognition of literature and fine arts.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIBRARY

Chats in Opole

Here and now

The rustling of the turned pages interrupts the silence filled in with concentration, determination and commitment. A group of Ukrainian students is sitting around the table in a spacious library room turning the consecutive pages of the handbook of Polish for foreigners. Moments of individual work. Rare. Most of the meeting involves talks, questions and also outbursts of laugh.

— *Why is it written „I will go to the museum” in the previous sentence, i.e. like a Nominative?*

— *Exactly. The word „museum” in singular basically has no declination in Polish: Nominative, Genitive, Dative... Only museum, museum, museum.*

— *Wow, that’s great! Then I like this „museum”.*

From time to time, usually once a week the „Chats” are organised in the library. They are meetings with the Ukrainian students, devoted to learning Polish and to the Polish culture. There is no fixed day, hour, formula or topic of the classes. The interested persons exchange emails with the librarians every week and arrange the convenient timing, usually at the beginning of the week, between Monday and Wednesday. This is how the students wished themselves. Although they have a fixed schedule of classes at the university, it often happens that they have additional consultations, a date, a job interview, or other events which could prevent them from participating in the meetings. But the group is also not permanent. For four librarians from the promotion department of the Opole library, it is also a good approach. They organise the classes additionally, besides their daily duties. They do not complain because due to this activity they feel the wind of novelty; one of them says that these classes have given her wings.

The past

It was me, I was keen on this idea – says Martyna Czekala from the promotion department of the Opole library. I was determined to enter it. (...) I was running to the Opole University asking about Erasmus, the structure, the figures. Because I am interested in other cultures, particularly the languages. I like learning them. (...) I was most interested in the Spaniards since I was once learning Spanish. (...) I have already been trying to meet with the Spanish students for two months, but the Spanish feeling of time makes it difficult for us to meet [laugh].

Danuta Łuczak, the senior custodian, head of the promotion department: *We were searching for an inspiration to do something new. Such as the Summer Language School at the Opole University. In our branch in Grudzice (a district of Opole – ed. note), where many „typical” Silesians live, there is a librarian who has very good relations with the environment, since she comes from there herself and she is one of them. She knows the activists, the artists, she organises the Olympic Games of the Silesian Dialect. (...) And we searched for something different, something for us, something which would distinguish us. Reviewing of the press has lead us to the conclusion that there are many foreign students in Opole and that their number at the local schools is growing. (...) the Opole University proposed us to join the Summer School for the Ukrainians they organize. In our building a meeting about Grotowski was held, including the presentation of the library. After the meeting we continued our cooperation with the Ukrainians in the form of the „Chats”. (...) The idea of the classes emerged from the questionnaire survey. There was no assumption what this should be. We were also ready to do something completely different.*

Aleksandra Wieczorek, a colleague from the room, joins the conversation with the librarians involved in the project: *In our place, good atmosphere for safe acting occurs. Our Director supports ‚exceptional’ ideas. She is not afraid of the risk. Our role is to learn on mistakes: test, try, check and correct. It pushes us forward. (...) And multiculturalism is something new, therefore it is a huge experiment. We want to follow the changes which happen.*

Such was the case with the „Chats”. The initial idea which emerged from the questionnaires and talks with the Ukrainians from two Opole universities and the coordinators of students’ international exchange, i.e. organising informal meetings devoted to culture (concerning feasts in both cultures, weddings, family, cities of origin), turned into *stricte* language classes. Such was the decision of students participating in the „Chats” since, even if they have Polish classes at the university (1-3 hours per week at the beginning), it is not enough for them to study in Polish, to take exams. Some of them want to go further, to search for a job in Poland. *The class about the Genitive was the hit. A very intensive lesson they were very satisfied with* – recalls one of the librarians. Although they changed the issues discussed, the formula was not abandoned: the informal atmosphere with coffee and cakes, around the table, everyone calling each other by first name. The students also come to them after the classes, talk about themselves, about problems. It was already possible to help one Ukrainian girl in searching for a job. She received the proposal to conduct classes in the library and, moreover, she was referred to an NGO which is helping her to find a job. The employees of the library have explained what the labour market looks like in Poland, what the best ways to search for a job are, warned about difficulties and provided advice concerning the job interview. Although the „Chats” are conducted in the form of a Polish lesson organised around some leading topic, for example cinema and theatre, their impact is much broader.

The future

The Ukrainian girl is commonly associated with a girl working in the street. (...) Owing to the classes I have learnt that I am also subject to the stereotypes, impact of the group. (...) Only now I look at them in a different way, I invite them to events in the library, to use the cultural offer and I see that when they come (to the exhibition, a meeting with

a writer – ed. note), *they are smiling. Nobody smiles like them* – this is what Danuta Łuczak, the main leader of the whole project, says about the Ukrainians. She does not want to end with the classes. She is searching for new ideas for the activities. This is how she perceives her own and the library mission: *We can transfer this idea outside the library, more into the public space, to show them and their culture to the wider public.* The plans for the nearest future include: closer cooperation with the Summer Language School of the Opole University – this time common conducting of classes is possible; new classes in the holiday offer of the library, to be conducted by the Ukrainian girl; Days of Ukraine – a five day cultural event with the full involvement of the Ukrainians and using their talents (it has turned out that among them there are artists, businessmen, the whole families ready to prepare something for the festival); study tour of the Polish librarians to Norway and international cooperation (the library is a winner in the competition on Polish-Norwegian projects). And this is only the beginning...

Benefits

Students' perspective:

- › First of all they integrate with each other and with the library employees.

Some of them, depending on their personality, knowledge of the language and the Polish reality, but also on the stage of their cultural adaptation and the accompanying well-being, may have problems in establishing contacts, both with the Poles and with the Ukrainians. Foreign students represent a group of risk in terms of the negative consequences of the cultural shock which may lead to their isolation, loneliness, and even psychosomatic disorders.

- › They exercise the grammar structures using the material which is culturally sensitive – while talking about cinema, theatre, etc.

This enables them to prepare better to the classes at the university, to the exams, to the everyday life and communication with the Poles. In the longer perspective, it gives them the opportunity to find a better job, which may to a certain extent reduce the risk of exclusion from the labour market – the problem faced by many foreigners deciding to live in Poland.

- › They extend their knowledge concerning the Polish culture.

– *Anyway, do you know Polish films?*

– *Yes. One from 1937, and also „Trędowata” [„Leper”] and „Znachor” [„Quack”].*

During the language classes the students learn about Polish contemporary culture, about what is currently happening in the film, theatre, literature. They discuss everyday intercultural surprises, for example, the fact that foreign films on Polish TV have no dubbing, as in the majority of countries, but read by the reader. Discussing various surprises arising from cultural differences and their on-going explanation to the migrants helps them to go through the cultural shock less drastically and increases their adaptation ability to live in the new country.

- › They acquire practical information about the city, the country and everyday functioning. During the lesson of Polish using the context of film and theatre, students received

guidelines from the librarians concerning the city topography – where cinemas, theatres are located, including information concerning the current repertoire. Moreover, coming to the library as such enables them to get familiar with the place, to get acquainted with the whole offer, take part in other activities, besides the lessons. And to gain confidence towards the library, and maybe also towards other Polish institutions.

› They strengthen self-confidence and competence.

The classes show them how much they learn, lesson after lesson, how their knowledge of Polish is improving (more and more difficult classes, new areas of knowledge, more freedom of statements, lessons provided bilingually at first, after some time turned into meetings only in Polish). The meetings also provide the opportunity for individual persons to share their other skills, besides the language. One of the students who is a stage designer herself and had practice in various theatres in Opole, talked about her experience and knowledge in this area. She could feel like an expert on culture, coming from Ukraine, but showing others where the cultural institutions are and how they operate. She had rich knowledge going beyond what the Polish participants knew.

Librarians' perspective:

› They gain new competences and develop themselves.

Engaging in new areas of activities is the challenge for the institutions and the employees. The non-obvious development path and going outside the zone of comfort enable them to avoid professional burn-out. New tasks, although they require time expenditure, energy, development of competences, generate many personal benefits.

› They expand the offer and fulfil an important social role.

New activities make the library offer more attractive, open and important in the environment, which, in turn, confirms that the library is a reliable institution which responds to essential social needs and gets involved in solving the real or potential social problems. While conducting Polish lessons for foreigners, the library implements many goals going beyond its own interest. They include practical goals: learning the language, increasing the competence, integration of foreigners with each other and with the Poles, support in the cultural adaptation and going through various stages of the cultural shock, etc. Strategic goals can be also distinguished, such as counteracting exclusion of foreigners from social life and from the labour market and prevention or minimising adverse effects of cultural adaptation at personal level (e.g. withdrawal, mood depression, psychosomatic disorders, problems with daily functioning) and social level (risk of undesirable behaviours which could be detrimental to the foreigners themselves and to the receiving society). An essential strategic goal is also educating the majority group with cultural minority – overcoming the distance, stereotypes, aversion and prejudices.

› They extend the network of contacts and acquire new users.

Organisation of the classes, preceded by appropriate recognising of the environment, generates benefits such as new personal and institutional contacts, reflected in cooperation and potential partnerships, e.g. with universities and coordinators of the academic international cooperation, and new users, such as students, but also other persons associated with them, staying in Poland and willing to learn Polish: partners, family members, co-workers, friends, other persons – Ukrainians who learnt informally of the library offer from the students.

Description of the methods

We went to the first classes very stressed – admits Martyna Czekala – and we told them about it. And then the auction started, who is more stressed. Because the students were also afraid, they were not sure, they didn't know what to expect. Now the librarians conduct the classes without any stress, they usually prepare a day earlier, individually, and discuss the details an hour and a half before the meeting.

The team consists of four persons – two permanently engaged in the project, present at each classes, and two others who join whenever their duties permit. The composition of the team is an example of cooperation between the library departments. The initiative was proposed by persons from the promotion department, but they needed somebody with a good knowledge of Russian or Ukrainian as their knowledge of these languages was insufficient. They didn't want anyone from outside, they were searching for a professional among library employees. *Asia who is a Russian philologist was a godsend – says Martyna Czekala. I have just started my work here and the fact that I had the opportunity to use the language I have learnt gave me wings – adds Joanna Żółtowska from the information department.*

The librarians do not have a pedagogic background, but for planning the classes, they used materials prepared by an NGO which helps in the work with foreigners. Moreover, they use their own experience in learning foreign languages. *I am trying to imagine that I am a foreigner and what would I expect from the teacher – says Joanna Żółtowska.*

So far, they do not have any additional budget for the classes. Money for the refreshments, copies of material, stationery has been included in the expenses of the promotion department so far. The librarian conducting the classes bought the handbook herself, with her own money; although the librarian already has one book for teaching Polish as a foreign language, she preferred other handbook which she found on Internet and liked more.

The activity implemented in the Opole library takes into consideration all the pillars of the multicultural library:

- › It is based on **cooperation** with the Ukrainians (university coordinators – Ukrainians, but first of all with students coming from Ukraine themselves) when deciding what activities will be undertaken in the library (not only the „Chats” but also other events: holiday activities, cultural festival, exhibition) and what their content will be.
- › It is based on **including** the Ukrainians in the library life, but also in the life of the city– both in tailor-made activities prepared according to the needs of this group (language course and cultural preparation), and other activities included in the library offer.
- › The classes and the broader **cooperation** with the foreigners do not only focus on empowering of the Ukrainians through increasing their language competence but also by strengthening their self-confidence and the competence they have brought from their country of origin (talents, skills).
- › Both the „Chats” themselves, organised in the library and the plans of going into more public places, increase the **visibility and presence** of the Ukrainians in the social space. It is an important element of the intercultural education preparing to co-existence of various groups in the local environment, with the enhanced awareness and knowledge about each other.



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION

Kędzierzyn-Koźle is the city in the Opole Region, inhabited by 64 thousand people, promoting itself as the municipal centre with the specific geographical location in the central part of Europe, relatively close to six European capitals: Warsaw, Berlin, Prague, Vienna, Bratislava and Budapest. Various sources of information about the city (official website of the City Hall, articles and notes on other websites) highlight the rich international cooperation of the city with partners from all over Europe, for which it was awarded in 2007 and 2008 in the competition named „Partnership Without Borders”. Opposite to the information on the international context, no easily accessible information exists concerning the local multiculturalism. However, it results from the diagnosis of the library that the Roma constitute a group present in the society, with whom and for whom it is particularly worth acting.

The Municipal Public Library in Kędzierzyn-Koźle, with its eight branches, is one of the most important institutions of the city, responsible not only for the basic library activities organised around the books but also for the cultural activity. The library branch no. 5 for children is a friendly and open place with a rich offer for the youngest users. The librarian, Barbara Górnik, is responsible for its atmosphere, awarded by pupils from Kędzierzyn-Koźle with the „Star of Children’s Rights Sheriff”, as a person locally engaged in the promotion and protection of child rights (the award was invented by the Polish National Committee of UNICEF). The participation in the project „Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures” also confirmed her interests in the rights and situation of the Roma children.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIBRARY

The Roma in the library in Kędzierzyn-Koźle

It was supposed to be an inspiration entitled „Common Reading of the Roma Fairy Tales”. It was supposed to be, but the effect was slightly different, which does not mean that it is not worth showing what the Roma and the librarians have done in the Kędzierzyn facility. It is a good practice which should be an inspiration to the intercultural cooperation including, empowering and making the minority group visible in the public institution. In Kędzierzyn-Koźle the librarians were not afraid to pass the initiative into the Roma hands. And everyone benefited from this situation.

Branch no. 5 of the Municipal Public Library in Kędzierzyn-Koźle invited the team implementing the project „Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures” to the Polish-Roma fairy tale event based on the stories written by Jan Mirga. As co-authors of the publication concluding the project, at that time, we travelled to various libraries all over Poland in order to observe the multicultural activities worth describing as an inspiration. Therefore, we were happy to accept the invitation to Kędzierzyn-Koźle – to the fairy tale reading event itself but to the meeting with the organisers which took place several days later. It was to be an opportunity to talk about the event and the follow-up multicultural plans. However, we had certain reservations against the idea of reading the Roma fairy tales – the Roma culture is a verbal culture, it was not recorded and made available to public in order to protect it against the Gadjo – the non-Roma. Today the fairy tales and other products of culture are already published, but the idea of reading literature does not itself originate from the Roma culture and it is strange to the Roma. We were curious whether the reading of the Roma fairy tales would receive such comments.

Soon after our arrival, an energetic conversation with the organisers started – three Polish women and one Roma woman. The conversation was mainly related to the participation of the library team and co-workers in the training activities under the FRSI project. The ladies said what impressed them, they talked about the role of the trainer and the co-participants. Only after about 40 minutes we went on to discussing the fairy tale reading event. Modestly and with a certain concern the librarians admitted that there was no fairy tale reading. Uff, what a relief! From our side, joy, since we were not convinced about the idea. It has turned out that instead of fairy tale reading, classes with Inga Mirga were organised – a school assistant for Roma children education, the local Roma leader and her daughters: Semiliana, Natalia and Karolina, pupils of the elementary school.

The meeting was full of attractions: film about the Roma from the collection of the Regional Museum in Tarnów and a conversation about it (questions about the firm, the Roma history but also about the museum and the permanent exhibition devoted to the Roma), dance of one of the daughters, presentation of stage dresses, trying them on, a story about the Roma flag and colouring books, exhibition of the Roma books in the Roma language. *The library does not hold the following publications in its collection, so I brought them: poetry by Jan Mirga, „Romano Atmo” – magazines on the Roma topics published by the Association of the Polish Roma with its seat in Szczecinek, a cartoon published in Wrocław presenting the history of the Roma from the Middle Ages until contemporary times, The Encyclopaedia of a New Roma, the Academy of Kindergarten Pupil and many others. We prepared an exhibition of those materials which was displayed in the library for a week – Inga Mirga praises the idea.*

It was a bull's eye. The children were delighted. There was a real talk and getting acquainted with each other. The skin colour, differences in skin complexion were no more a problem. Completely different things mattered. Inga Mirga, introducing her two daughters, asked what was the difference between them (she knew that their skin colour may be a distinctive feature – one has a swarthy skin, the other – completely fair). The children pointed out to many differences: in clothing, hairdo, behaviour of the girls, but they did not mention the skin colour. For the educator it was the signal concerning the essence of intercultural meetings and learning the other culture: Since then, the approach to the Roma has changed. *They do not throw everyone into the same bag, but see differences between the Roma.*

This is what she says about changes in the programme of the meeting: *The Roma lead a caravan life. Spontaneous. All the time something is changing. The idea of the meeting has also changed at the last minute, because the Roma are like that.* Inga Mirga together with Tobiasz Kuca – another assistant for the Roma children education suggested that instead of the fairy tale reading it would be better to organise an informal meeting to provide the opportunity for the Polish and Roma children to get acquainted with each other.

Inga Mirga: *The reading itself will say nothing about the Roma. Only that we have fairy tales. But it is necessary to say that we are similar, but also different. Even if the Roma would read the fairy tales, it would tell them nothing about her, her culture, who she is. I was once asked to read fairy tales in my daughter's kindergarten. I agreed. I was reading but only some children were interested, other were leaving. So I switched to the Roma language. And this made them interested. They were surprised but didn't understand anything. Only my child had a smile on her face, because at last there was something in her language in the kindergarten. And this made the children even more curious. What kind of language it is? Who are you? What does it mean: a Pole of Roma origin? etc. The Roma woman also speaks about the idea of publishing the Roma books: The Roma have their poems, written down long time ago, but they were afraid to publish them. Like Papusza. There is a fear associated with the dissemination of the Roma culture.*

The librarians supplement the information concerning the change of the meeting formula. They admit that the library had bought the book still before the project and before the meeting with the Roma co-workers. It was the librarians' idea. During the training and preparation of the event, a split – as they called it – occurred between them. They admit that a part of the group „knew better” what the Roma needed and the other part wanted to learn the ideas of the Roma. Both the participation in the training under the project and further cooperation was a hard lesson – it was necessary to learn what the Roma want to say. *For me it was the lesson of humbleness – draw in your horns and just*

listen – admits Barbara Górnik, the employee of the children's department participating in the project.

There have been and there still are more splits in terms of understanding the idea of cooperation. From the Roma perspective: *Library is a public place, for everyone, also for the minorities, but librarians have to learn the culture of the minorities. For example: if a group of the Roma is standing in the library and speaking their language, the librarians perceive it as shout or quarrel, i.e. something unnecessary, whereas they must understand that this is only a conversation.*

On the other hand, Sylwia Żelezik, the employee of the Instruction-Promotion Department states: *We face the Roma every day. They don't always behave as we would expect and sometimes they don't receive well our comments concerning their behaviour.*

Two persons, two cultures, two different perspectives. The cooperation of the Poles with the Roma during the organisation of the event has shown that both parties have expectations towards each other, that they perceive each other according to their own standards and interpret their behaviour from their own perspective. *It seems that we all see the same, whereas it turns out that we differ significantly. A small detail would change the perspective* – adds Inga Mirga. During the conversation Sylwia Żelezik admits that she managed to overcome many difficulties associated with mutual understanding, even at the level of everyday talks and contacts, after the training and the cooperation.

Learning tolerance is a continuous process – says Bożena Gruba, a local activist, a volunteer and a fan of the library, mother of a girl participating in the meeting, not only based on theory but based on her own personal experience. She was ready to convince the teacher and parents from her daughter's class to come to the classes organised by the library because, as she says, she experienced physically during the training how the Roma feel every day, what discrimination means, and she wants to transfer this knowledge to others. She did not need to convince almost anybody because it turned out that both the pupils and the teacher were willing to take part in the workshop. There were no other opponents of this idea besides... her own daughter. The girl, brought up in the spirit of tolerance and respect to other cultures, who knows and likes the Roma fairy tales read to her at home, to the surprise of her mother, did not want to participate in the meeting with the Roma. The prejudices woke up which none of them, neither the mother nor the daughter were aware of before. However, it was possible to convince her to take part in the classes which he evaluated as fantastic.

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Description of the method

SCENARIO

1. The film showing the forgotten world of the Gypsies rolling stock, their traditions, culture and celebrations, from the ancient times until the contemporary period.
2. A short quiz concerning the film (pupils perfectly answered each question).
3. A show of the Roma clothes and fitting.
4. Presentation of the Roma dance performed by Karolina Mirga, the youngest daughter of Inga.
5. The exhibition of publications, including those showing the group in non-stereotype and diversified way

In the meantime the moderator proposed activities raising concentration and energy in the group (games and tasks with the use of the Roma culture elements – a flag, colouring books, a cartoon concerning history and others).

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE ORGANISERS

1. First of all, pass the event into the Roma hands – they know best what to present and how to do it in order to show the Roma culture to the majority group, but also to make the activities reliable and convince the Roma community to participate.
2. Define roles and distribution of duties – both among employees and volunteers of the library, and with the Roma party.
3. Start cooperation with a „safe” group – with whom you have good contact, experience of earlier cooperation, with whom it will be easier to work. Launching a new type of activities needs both tested audience and the self-confident staff, convinced of the idea. In the library in Kędzierzyn-Koźle it was a group of children from the cooperating elementary school. Through pupils the library tried to reach the parents and involve them in the multicultural activities. At the first stage of the project implementation neither the library nor the Roma were ready to work among adults.
4. For issues potentially difficult, controversial, or regarded as such, it is worth gaining the support of persons outside the library, who have influence on the situation (the so-called agents of change) – in the case under discussion, it was the local activist, a fan and volunteer of the library whose daughter attends the class which was invited to the Polish-Roma meeting.
5. The classes themselves should be diversified, dynamic, owing to the quickly changing activities, with an element of surprise, unexpected action (e.g. change of the language of classes from Polish into the Roma language). This will ensure interest and readiness to participate in learning by experience. At the same time, it is also necessary to allocate time for explaining the cultural context, differences, etc.; for example, in case of fairy tales, it should be explained why they were not written, what the situation looked like with the verbal and written communication in the Roma culture. The non-standard characters should be promoted, biographies of persons who do not fit into the stereotype perception of the group. The unlimited source of such

contemporary Roma personalities is the website and the materials of the social campaign „One of many”³⁰.

We described the aforementioned project disclosing the evolving formula of the meeting and quoting various statements and opinions of the organisers in order to show that the real cooperation between people representing various cultures, in particular, those keeping considerable distance, is usually not easy. All participants of the conversation repeated many times: *I was afraid*. They probably did not utter many things, did not want to admit. Fear, concerns, disorientation, uncertainty, shame, are the inherent elements of the cooperation with partners we don't know, whose culture and lifestyle we are not aware of. And we do not know the Roma at all. The story of this meeting shows, however, that despite the concerns and difficulties, the organisers demonstrated openness and readiness to overcome their own prejudices. The success of the project was based on trusting the Roma woman who has been teaching the Roma culture to the Poles for years, and on delegating the leadership in this project to her. Inga Mirga has not only proposed the formula and scenario of the meeting, „destroying” the plan of the librarians but she also accepted the responsibility for conducting the meeting, supplied the materials and cultural artefacts (film, flag, coloured books, clothes and publications themselves). This is the essence of **inclusion** of the minority into the activities of the institution – the project in which persons from the minority group play a leading role. This is also the essence of **empowerment** – delegating the decision-making, influence and responsibility, in this case, to the Roma's hands. This activity also resulted in clear **visibility and presence** of the Roma during the meeting; the Roma remained visible in the library also after the event – in symbolic manner, using books and magazines. Such a presence and visibility of the Roma in public place should make the Poles – non-Roma aware of existence of the minority but it also affects the minority itself. A few Roma children come to the library, use computers, meet their colleagues from the class, borrow books. Presence of literature in their language may make them smile widely, like Inga Mirga's daughter smiled in the kindergarten when she heard a fairy tale read in her language for the first time.

³⁰ Website of the campaign „One of Many”, <http://jednizwielu.pl/bohaterowie-kampanii/> (access: 10.09.2014).



CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION

Wrocław is the fourth biggest city in Poland in terms of population (over 600 thousand inhabitants) and fifth in terms of area. Wrocław is also one of the oldest cities of Poland. It is famous for its many centuries' long tradition of multiculturalism. As early as at the end of the 12th century, due to its location on the crossroads of trade routes, it became the place of residence of people with various roots. Nationalities, languages, religions mixed here. Wrocław was inhabited by the Poles, the Czech, the Germans, the Jews, the Walloons and the Ruthenians. The inhabitants practised Catholicism, Calvinism, Lutheranism and Judaism. The situation changed dramatically after the World War II. The Jewish population was eliminated in the city and Germans lived there, however, their number was decreasing. The newcomers from various parts of Poland started to create the multicultural landscape of the city. During three post-war years almost complete exchange of the population took place, as compared to Wrocław before the war, also due to the forced resettlement of the Lvov population. The Roma started to come to the Lower Silesia, to locations today incorporated into the city. Today, the multiculturalism of the city is also enhanced by foreigners coming to work, to study, due to the concluded marriages.

MEDIATEKA is a branch of the Municipal Public Library in Wrocław. On 24 June 2014 it celebrated its tenth anniversary. It promotes itself as the first multimedia library for young readers offering both a rich book collection and multimedia collection. The distinguishing element of the library is MultiCentrum – the interactive education centre and *Language Cafe* – the free language café conducted by *native speakers*. It is an open and tolerant place, engaging in various social projects, such as the Human Library or the World Day of Fair Trade. Employees of Mediateka create friendly space for young people where it is possible to exchange ideas and thoughts, implement important projects and develop passions and interests.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIBRARY

ORGANISERS OF HUMAN LIBRARY

- › Mediateka – Municipal Public Library
- › Diversja Association

- › Haveasign Studio
- › Municipal Transport Enterprise in Wrocław

COOPERATION

Human Library in the Wrocław Mediateka³¹

Questions... and answers

Have you ever considered...

...how did the former homeless find home?

...whether a deaf person can learn how to speak?

...whether a former prisoner disclose his stay in prison in the CV?

...whether nuns swim in the swimming pool?

...how does a blind person shave himself?

...how it is to feel a woman in a male body?

...whether each gypsy is the Roma?

... how is it possible to move in a wheelchair in Wrocław?³²

This is how leaflets distributed before the consecutive issues of the Human Library encourage to participation. It is an event promoting asking any diverse questions. *You often simply have such a blockade in your head, that it is not polite to ask³³* – admits one of the users. On one weekend in a year, in the Wrocław Mediateka, it is worth, or even you should overcome shame and ask various questions which, on everyday basis, many of us could not address to a Muslim woman, a Roma, a former prisoner, a sobering alcoholic, a Jewish woman or a single woman. The Human Library in Wrocław has already been organised seven times. It is a kind of project which can be conducted in very diverse places: at a festival, in the park, in the Commune Office or on a boat. However, the library seems to be the space naturally adjusted to organise this type of event. For several hours or days books become alive. Loyal readers of the library or persons who came only to attend this event, receive insight to the catalogue of books which includes such titles as: American, Arab, Atheist, Anti-guy, Buddhist, Former Homeless, Former Prisoner, Former Drug Addict, Homosexual, Transsexual, Transgendered person, Person in a Wheelchair, Feminist, Blind

31 Based on the conversation with Anna Janus, the manager of Mediateka and member of the Diversja association as well as the analysis of materials and Internet resources.

32 *Human Library Wrocław*, http://issuu.com/haveasign/docs/_b_booklet_net2#/ (access: 14.08.2014).

33 Statement of one of Human Library participants, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7UQnTlkVc8&feature=youtu.be/> (access: 14.08.2014).

person, Deaf person, Black person, Muslim woman, Priest, Gypsy/Roma woman, Parent of Disabled Child, Russian, Single woman, Sobering Alcoholic, Pagan, Refugee, Pupil of an Orphanage, Nun, Jew. Human Books are persons who registered in the project, coming from groups exposed to discrimination, experiencing reactions based on prejudice, due to the fact that the level of knowledge about them in the society is usually low, based on stereotypes and aversion. Having acquainted with the catalogue, the reader borrows the selected book for 30 minutes, sits down in any place and talks. He/she may learn about both the statistical data, figures, theories concerning the group and individual experience of the person chosen. It depends on the questions asked and on the readiness of the Human Book to share its knowledge and experience. Human Library becomes the place where the selected person can be met and asked, where own imagination or beliefs can be confronted, knowledge can be supplemented: from information how many persons with motion disability live in Wrocław, to the answer to the question whether a disabled is able to kiss. All of this in order to learn and understand situation of persons from minority groups, in the atmosphere of dialogue and agreement, developing openness and acceptance of others.

Pomysł

I attended a long and really dull international conference. (...) lectures, lectures, lectures and lectures, and no action, mobilisation. Only at the very end I came across a workshop entitled „How to organise the Human Library”. (...) and it has taken me only 30 seconds to fall in love with this idea. After a minute I knew that I would be the next organiser of such an event – this is what about her meeting with the educational method associated with the human rights stream says Dorota Mołodyńska-Küntzelak, who is today the President of Diversja association and the coordinator of the Human Library in Wrocław.

Dorota has learnt that the method was created by a group of people from Denmark who decided to act against prejudice motivated violence after one of their friends had been attacked. They organised the first Human Library at the music festival in Roskilde in Denmark. Various persons playing the role of 75 Human Books met with the young people having fun. It was the beginning of the movement which has spread globally. Owing to Dorota Mołodyńska-Küntzel – also to Wrocław. The initiator of the first Human Library in Wrocław, working at that time in an NGO – Angelus Silesius House, encouraged Mediateka to undertake this issue. For Anna Janus, the manager of the library branch, now also the member of the Diversja association, the project was naturally embedded in the mission of the library as an open, friendly place, ready to create space for an exchange of thoughts and experience. Obviously, concerns appeared whether the idea would be accepted by the authorities and users of the library and whether it would be possible to ensure security to the people participating in the event.

Today the Human Library is an important event in the cultural offer of the city. It is covered by the honorary patronage of the Mayor of the City, universities, media. Participants of the Human Library say: *It is the most important weekend of the year*^{B4} Around the event further initiatives develop: the Diversja association was established, acting

34 Statement of one of Human Library participants, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7UQnTlkVc8&feature=youtu.be/> (access: 14.08.2014).

as the coordinator of the Human Library; workshops are organised for various professional groups (policemen, social workers) as well as lessons at schools; film shows are held. Based on conversations with four Human Books, a publication and a mini exhibition was created, as a diploma work at the Academy of Fine Arts. Finally, the standards for preparation and conducting of Human Libraries were defined and the national network of their organisers was established. The initiators and organisers of the Human Library in Wrocław maintain permanent contact with the creators of the method and the international Human Library Organization. Individual issues demonstrate the care for the quality of the project.

Catalogue

„MUSLIM WOMAN”

In the name of God, the Almighty and the Merciful.../ It means that you speak Polish?

Glory to the God, master of the worlds.../ Are you really my student?

The Almighty and the Merciful.../ What do need this rag on your head for?

King of the Judgement Day .../ I have always thought that Muslim women are different...

*Thee do we worship, and Thine aid we seek!/ Oh s***! Al-Qaida!*

Lead us by the straight path.../ Don't you drink? Nothing at all?

The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favour, not of those who have evoked Your anger or of those who are astray... / I feel sorry for the girl.

*Amen*³⁵.

„AMERICAN”

*I would like to tell you the truth. At least, what is true from my perspective. I come from the American Empire, famous for music, TV, movies, fast food and the influence this empire has on what is going on in the world. America is mysterious and people often accept its culture and ideas uncritically, i.e. anything which is American is good and anything local and traditional is bad. It is becoming a sort of a myth. There are also people who claim that the United States is the empire of evil and assume that I am also bad due to the horrible things my country is doing. They think that I love and accept anything which is American and are aggressive towards me because they believe that I came here to evaluate them. As an American living in Poland I face both positive and negative stereotypes. Living in the shadow of my homeland, inability to escape from its impact is frustrating. It is frustrating to fight with the image people have of my country, positive or negative, but far away from the America I know. Therefore, if you want to know whether America is really as shown in the movies or on TV and why an American would decide to live in Poland, come to me, and let's abandon assumptions, changing them into critical thinking and sincere look at reality*³⁶.

35 The prologue of the Human Book derived from the catalogue of 2013, http://issuu.com/haveasign/docs/_b_booklet_net2#/ (access: 14.08.2014).

36 The Prologue included in the catalogue of Human Books, issue of Human Library in Wrocław in 2012, http://www.zywabiblioteka.pl/tl_files/Raporty%20i%20katalogi/Katalog%20Ksiazek%202012_%20do%20druku.pdf (access: 06.09.2015).

„ATHEIST”

The item which presumably has some shortage although she gets the impression that others have a surplus. So it is more difficult for her to explain this shortage, but she is eager to answer questions. She often nicely surprises the Readers by the lack of horns and claws. It is rather easy to read her, she doesn't get involved in difficult philosophical issues, although she is aware of the balance of profits and losses³⁷.

In the catalogue of the Human Library in Wrocław it is possible to find about 25-35 items every year. Some titles in a given issue appear twice or three times. Several persons representing groups of special interest or subject to the strongest stereotyping are selected. The organisers source information on a given topic from the experience of the previous issues, questionnaires, interviews with users or observation of the public debate, local problems and currently important issues. Anna Janus shares information concerning the tastes of the readers in Wrocław: *In our case, in the first years of the Human Library, religious groups were particularly popular. We invited several Muslims, Jews. The current topic in our region is the stereotype of a German. Some time ago, there was higher interest in the Sober Alcoholic and Former Prisoner, now it is more the Gay and the Lesbian. A novelty for the readers which we managed to acquire last year was the Mother of Gay/Lesbian or Person suffering from Schizophrenia.*

Not every Book is accepted in the same way. It happened that media refused to make an interview with the Human Book – Lesbian selected for this task. The organisers do their best to present all titles with the same respect and with due recognition. It is difficult for some users, also the representatives of authorities, to accept the idea that people in this project are referred to as „Human Books”. They believe that it takes away recognition and humanity from the heroes and heroines, denies the idea of human rights. However, Anna Janus defends the approach: *this is the convention adopted by us and worldwide. For us the most important thing is that the Books themselves have a very positive attitude to this nomenclature. In their opinion, a book is associated with something positive since it contains beautiful stories about people, describes various and complex emotions, opens people to the world, enables to learn something new. It is not associated with an item, more with the content, essence and function. One of our leading slogans was: „Don't judge a book by its cover”. The Human Books liked this idea very much, it carried an important message and referred directly to important aspects for the people personifying the individual titles. Human Books are eager to play with the convention, for example, they say „OK, then I am returning to the shelf”.*

The librarians and employees of Mediateka also use this offer. They are willing to reach for titles which arise their interest, they read additional news on the social groups they know less, towards which they have their stereotypes. And which Human Book would you like to borrow?

³⁷ The Prologue included in the catalogue of Human Books, issue of Human Library in Wrocław in 2011, http://www.zywabiblioteka.pl/tl_files/Raporty%20i%20katalogi/Katalog%20Ksiazek%202011.pdf (access: 06.09.2015).

Description of the method

Human Libraries is the educational method related to human rights, broadly understood, promoting respect to each man, not only the selected groups. (...) Human Library should not be organised with the participation of , e.g. only national groups. It would distort the idea. It is important to care for diversity. (...) you also should not submit to pressure of, for example, media or authorities, to resign from participation of any groups. (...) Each time the selection of Human Books should be thoroughly considered and adjusted to the local situation. Books representing groups famous in the media should appear, on which the highest number of stereotypes is present locally. Books are most important. Their selection and preparation is the background of all the event – stresses Anna Janus several times during the conversation.

1. How long does it take to prepare the catalogue and who helps?

The Catalogue of Human Books is built for many months, with the support of non-governmental organisations or institutions cooperating with various groups of people. Very often the team involves in the search their friends and friends of their friends. Some persons report individually.

2. How to prepare Human Books?

Persons to play the role of Human Books go through several stages of preparations. From the talks about the overall idea, to training during which they exercise their reaction to questions concerning very private and intimate issues, or to aggressive behaviours of some borrowers. Each of the libraries that decides to work with this method, may conduct such training on its own or request for support of initiators of Human Library in Poland (Mediateka – Municipal Public Library in Wrocław and Diversja Association).

3. Who can act as a Human Book?

For us the key criterion is whether a given person comes from a group towards which stereotypes, prejudices exist or discrimination occurs – says Dorota Mołodyńska-Küntzel. The objectives and values of the Human Book must not be contradictory towards the objectives of the Human Library. Human Book cannot persuade, conduct recruitment or impose its beliefs³⁸ – among others, such rules must be adopted by each Human Book in order to take part in the project. Most of the people agree as they share the objectives and mission of the project. However, there are also persons who resign, for various reasons. Sometimes we do not establish the cooperation. The same situation – there are various reasons – tells us the librarian from Mediateka. The organisers must ensure comfort and security to Human Books. They also set high standards to themselves.

4. How to prepare the Catalogue?

The titles to Human Books are allocated by the organiser, without disclosing any personal data. On the other hand, preparation of a personal note, the so-called prologue, is delegated to the Human Books themselves. In the descriptions, besides substantive information about oneself, it is also possible to show own personality, emotions, self-attitude and attitude to others. The prologue is an invitation to the talk.

³⁸ Standards of Human Library organisation, http://www.zywabiblioteka.pl/tl_files/KATALOG%202015/ZB_standardy.pdf (access: 06.09.2015).

MONEY

1. Human Library may be organised with very limited financial expenditure. It may and should be based on the volunteer work, both on the side of organiser and Human Books. It is first of all a social initiative. For example, in Greece, it is a bottom-up initiative – participants organise money collection among private persons taking part in the events. The first Human Libraries in Wrocław were organised without any additional financial expenditure, within the available budget of the library. Currently, due to many accompanying events, the association cooperating with the library applies for money from grants and co-financing from the city budget.

2. Money is mainly necessary for meals for the volunteers, particularly if the event lasts, like in Wrocław, from noon until 8 p.m. for two days. It is also worth purchasing T-shirts for volunteers and for the Human Books – they should make two groups distinguishable and visible in the library. However, currently the highest amount of money in Wrocław is spent on promotion. The goal is to reach various recipients with the information about the event.

PROMOTION

While informing about the event, the organisers in Wrocław use not only social portals and the website, they also print posters and leaflets. They care for the graphical communication sensitive to multiculturalism and anti-discrimination issues, therefore, they hire the adequate designers. The posters do not only serve for communicating the organisational information, but also promote the idea of the project, its objectives and values. The intention to reach the widest possible group of recipients, not only persons effectively interested in the topic, stimulates the search for various forms of promotion. Therefore, in the recent years, the organisers of the Human Library, have used, among others, electronic displays in the city or advertisement boards in trams.

WORTH REMEMBERING

1. Prepare yourself – if you want to organise a Human Library, first think it over thoroughly. Start your preparations by reading the Standards of Human Library organisation. You can also receive support using the website resources of www.zywabiblioteka.pl or by joining the network coordinated by the Diversja association.
2. Plan your schedule well – the acquisition and preparation of Human Books with whom the local community would like to talk takes a lot of time.
3. Remember about promotion – search for money for a more extensive campaign in order to reach non-obvious recipients and target not only the convinced but also the unconvinced, persons at various age, coming from various social groups.

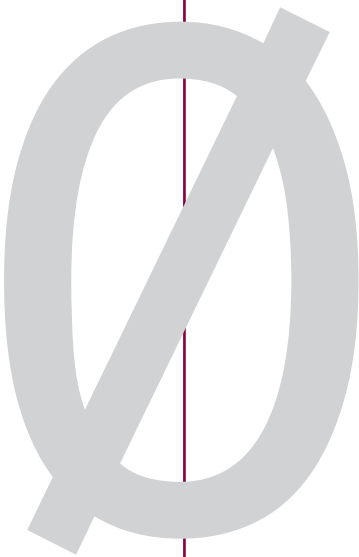
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<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=O7UQnTlkVc8&feature=youtu.be>.
- › Speech of Dorota Mołodyńska-Küntzel – the initiator and coordinator of Human Library in Wrocław: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TK9OTC17Cfk>.

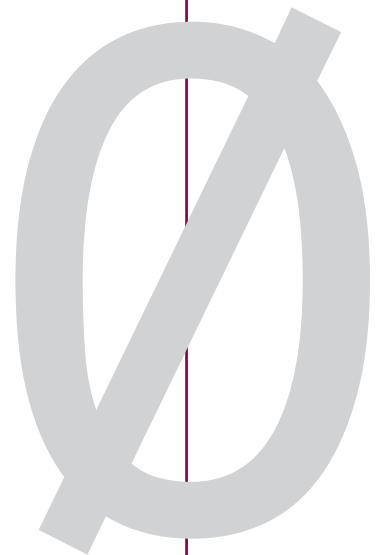


CHARACTERISTICS OF NORWAY

The territory of Norway occupies the western part of the Scandinavian Peninsula, it has the total area of approximately 385,000 km² and has about five million inhabitants. It is divided into 19 counties (Norwegian: *fylker*), further divided into 428 municipalities. The biggest agglomeration is Oslo. Other big cities of Norway include Bergen, Stavanger, Trondheim, Tromsø and Drammen. Norway has always been and still is the country accepting immigrants. It is estimated that immigrants or children born in Norway in migrant families constitute over 14% of the population (700 thousand) among current inhabitants of Norway. Immigrants inhabit all municipalities in Norway. Until the 1960s mainly inhabitants of the neighbouring countries came to Norway, followed by employees from such countries as Turkey, Morocco, Pakistan. In the 1970s the number of refugees arriving from Chile, Vietnam, and then from Africa and Asia increased. The 1990s was the period of inflow of people from former Yugoslavia, and recently, since 2005, the labour migration of representatives of new European Union Member States (mainly from Poland, Lithuania and Romania) has been growing. At present, Poles make the biggest ethnic group, following the Norwegians (1.4% of the population), preceding the Pakistanis (1.1%), the Sami People (0.8%) and the Swedes (0.7%).



Functioning of libraries in Norway is regulated by the Norwegian Library Act, including the directives of the Ministry of Culture. The Norwegian libraries are supervised by the **National Library**, financed from the state budget, responsible for the development of libraries as active institutions, significant in the Norwegian society. Norway consists of 19 counties, with a **county library** located in each of them, financed by a given county. The tasks of county libraries include consulting for local libraries, supporting competence development of their employees, initiating and financing of projects. The counties are divided into municipalities – 430 in total. In accordance with the law, at least one local library financed by the municipality must operate in each municipality. Most municipalities maintain more than one library, therefore the total number of public libraries at the lowest level (local libraries in municipalities and their branches) approaches 780. **Public libraries** circulate books and other information carriers, organise events, provide free access to Internet, conduct various courses for the municipality inhabitants and many other activities. Their role is also to initiate projects or to participate in projects aiming at the development of libraries.



THE NORWEGIAN LIBRARY SYSTEM

CHARACTERISTIC OF THE LOCATION

Oslo is the biggest city of Norway, and since 1299 – the capital of the country. Oslo itself is inhabited by 634 thousand people, i.e. over 12% of the Norwegian population. This number is currently increasing, breaking its records, making Oslo one of the fastest growing cities in Europe. 28% of Oslo population comes from the immigrant communities. It is estimated that in 2040, 47% of the city inhabitants will have immigrant roots. Oslo is the economic, scientific, administrative and cultural centre of Norway. It is the seat of the state, county and municipality authorities. The capital of Norway is also the seat of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe and the programme of the Council of Europe and the European Commission under the name of „Intercultural Cities”.

The Multilingual Library is the centre of specialised knowledge in the scope of multilingual library services. It is an internal department of the Public Library in Oslo, established in the early 1970s, closed for individual users. Functioning of this institution started with collecting books in Turkish, Arabic and Urdu, in response to the needs of labour immigrants coming at that time. In the following years, the demand for books in various languages was growing, therefore, the decision was taken to establish a separate institution specialising not only in creating of the multilingual collections but also providing information and developing competence in the area of multilingualism. The current financing of the Multilingual Library comes in 80% from the Ministry of Culture and in 20% from the city budget. The collections and services of the library are available to the inhabitants of Norway through public libraries all over the country.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIBRARY

Collections in 57 languages in Oslo³⁹

Services of the Multilingual Library

The Multilingual Library in Oslo operates mainly as the centre of interlibrary loans. The basic service of the library is the completing and free dispatch of its collections to other libraries in the country. The library has a rich collection of traditional books and audiobooks, films, music records, computer games and language courses recorded on CD and DVD – in total, it comprises about 130 thousand items in 57 languages.

The smallest collection comprises publications in Shona (the main language of Zimbabwe, also spoken in Mozambique, Zambia and Botswana). The library collected seven books in this language. One of the biggest collections comprises works in Arabic – over 14 thousand items. Thus, the diversity of the collections in individual languages is substantial and it results, to a large extent, from the reported demand. Over the recent years, the highest number of loans has been recorded in Urdu, Russian and Arabic; the number of loans of Polish books has recently increased, currently occupying the fourth position.

The purchase of individual items is based on following the trends and needs: 13 employees from Norway, Poland, Argentina, Pakistan, Iraq and other countries are responsible for acquiring books and other items which are current and important in the immigrants' countries of origin. While creating the collections, the employees also cooperate with 25 experts of individual languages, hired on a temporary basis. The decision on the purchase of specific items is also motivated by users' needs: persons from the second generation of migrants, who have poorer knowledge of their parents' language, are particularly interested in audiobooks. Films from countries of immigrants' origin enjoy considerable popularity in all national and age groups.

³⁹ The text was drafted based on information provided during the speech of Oddbjørn Hansen, the Norwegian librarian, at the international kick-off workshop of the project "Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures" in Gdańsk, held in June 2013 (the Power Point presentation and direct talks) as well as in the correspondence and consultations carried out during the preparation of the publication.

The library observes a very high demand for the relatively expensive courses of Norwegian, therefore, it offers many of them. Moreover, it offers courses of various languages: Chinese, Arabic, Somalian, and others.

Besides books and media, libraries may also borrow „walking exhibitions” devoted to specific topics, such as: sport (football exhibition), output of the specific writer (e.g. Astrid Lindgren), a country or a region (Russia, journey across the art of Islam). Each exhibition consists of multilingual books on a given topic, as well as additional artefacts: objects, posters, etc. The audience of the exhibitions comprises both the Norwegians and the immigrants. The reason is that the purpose of the exhibitions is to learn about each other, focusing on searching for similarities.

Employees of the library also provide lectures on the importance of the multilingual collections, organise annual conferences concerning multiculturalism and visit Norwegian libraries at all levels, presenting their offer and encouraging to establish cooperation.

Where should the Koran be put?

interview with Oddbjørne Hansen from the Multilingual Library in Oslo

The Multilingual Library has a long tradition as well as the competent and experienced group of co-workers from many countries of the world, due to which several practices worth imitating have been developed. Oddbjørn Hansen, the senior librarian and full-time employee of the Multilingual Library in Oslo, presented the most practical solutions functioning in his institutions in a short interview.

Dominika Cieřlikowska: How to place a collective order in the Multilingual Library in Oslo?

Oddbjørn Hansen: Public libraries all over the country borrow our collections free of charge on behalf of their users. It is good if employees of the local facilities know specifically what they need but, on the other hand, they are not obliged to know what is read in immigrants' country of origin in a given moment and what would be most interesting for immigrants. Our service consists in completing such an order which responds to even very generally formulated expectations. The typical order form contains a list of several questions. We ask to tick the language in which the collection is needed and the character of the items (books, records, exhibitions, etc.). In relevant fields the following data is checked: period of loan, number of titles, as well as the age and gender of readers. We also ask for any comments, suggestions which can help us in completing the consignment. An example of an order of one of the libraries may look like as follows: 40 books in Polish for men aged 18 to 60, to be borrowed for three months. In the „Comments” field the librarians may add: for men, criminal stories, historical books, cookery books and thrillers. Our role as employees of the Multilingual Library is to select appropriate books to be sent to the specific library. After receiving the consignment with books, the local library downloads catalogue data of each book to its system, puts the books on the shelf and lends. After three months, the library's task is to collect the books and send them back to Oslo, usually with the next order. Such a way of operation is very convenient for the local libraries. Their employees do not need to have knowledge on e.g. Polish literature and know specifically what they want to order. This is the role of an employee of the Multilingual Library.

DC: How can I know as a librarian what I am lending to the reader if the book is in the language I do not speak?

Oddbjørn Hansen: You don't need to know all 57 languages in which we have books in the library. The employees of the Multilingual Library, together with their co-workers, prepare a short information note placed on the back cover of each book. The note in Norwegian contains all information concerning the author, the content and topic of the book, awards the book received, etc. Such information helps employees of public libraries, who do not speak many languages, to get orientation on what the book is about and what can be said about it in order to recommend it and adjust it to the reader's needs.

DC: What kind of other assistance can a local public library receive from the Multilingual Library in Oslo?

Oddbjørn Hansen: Our system of loans is practical, tested and convenient. This is the main area of our activities. But we also provide advice and support to public libraries in the area of multiculturalism and multilingualism.

DC: What kind of issues are reported by libraries?

Oddbjørn Hansen: Employees of one of the cooperating facilities complained that they were not able to find the Koran – the holy book of Islam – on the proper shelf where they had put it in accordance with the catalogue. They noticed that the Koran was always put by the users on the top shelf. No matter how many times the employees would put the Koran on the shelf with religious books, after some time, they always found it on the top shelf. They received the activity of users as a sort of „sabotage of the shelf system” in their library. However, they decided to learn more and reported this to us. We encouraged them to ask the readers using the Koran in their library. From the readers, they have heard that in accordance with the tradition, Koran should be always placed on the very top, for example on the top of the bookstand. It would be ideal if it was the only book on the shelf. In this way, we – as employees of the Multilingual Library – also learnt about this rule. We advised that, in response, the Muslim tradition should be respected although by violating the common library practice. Trying to find a compromise, the employees of the local library placed the Koran on the top shelf, but in the company of other publications. The decision was approved by the Muslims, however, other persons started to criticise the library for adjusting the library system to only one group of library users. It is also not sure whether the rule related to the Koran really refers to placing a book on the shelf, or only to the pile of books collected, for example, on the table. Anyway, decisions in the area of multiculturalism may be difficult and controversial.

Adjustment to the Polish conditions

The inspiration from the Multilingual Library in Oslo is the most systemic approach among all examples we have presented here. Certainly, at least for the time being, it is the unsurpassed pattern for Polish libraries. In Poland, a similar role should be played by the National Library and the regional public libraries could also be involved in this type of activities. And, it should be proudly noticed that first steps in this direction have already been taken. In the recent period, the Regional Public Library in Olsztyn started collecting the recommendations concerning educational materials related to multiculturalism, which it could purchase and lend in the form of educational packages to libraries at a lower level. The idea behind the initiative of the Multilingual Library is worth considering and trying to adapt to the Polish conditions, also at a more limited scale. What needs special consideration is the selection of employees – employing persons from specific cultural groups as permanent employees or co-workers is the idea worth following. We acquire a competent staff and, at the same time, we act in inclusive, empowering manner, increasing the visibility of minority representatives. The idea of collection exchange corresponds to the interlibrary loan system known in Poland. Perhaps it is not necessary to purchase rich book or multimedia collections, or wait for such a move at the regional level, but it is enough to start cooperation with other library working with similar groups and launch the exchange of multilingual collections or those devoted to multiculturalism.

VÅRE SPRÅK

Shqip

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العربية

Bosanski jezik

Hrvatski jezik

Српски језик

မြန်မာစာအုပ်များ

دری

Suomi

Français

Hausa

普通話

国语

سۆزانی

Kurmancî

Lietuvių kalba

Nederlands

یہاچہب

بينتو

فارسی

język Polski

ਪੰਜਾਬੀ

Shona

af Soomaali

Español

Kiswahili

Tagalog

தமிழ்

ภาษาไทย

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Нохчийн мотт

Türkçe

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE BUSKERUD

The Buskerud county is situated in southern part of Norway, and it extends from the western part of the Oslo Fjord to the middle part of the mountain plateaux. The county is inhabited by over 270 thousand people and it is expected that this number will increase to 330 thousand in 2030 (data from 2014 derived from the official website of the county). The region is an attractive place both for persons coming from abroad and from other regions of Norway. The authorities of Drammen, the capital city of the county, proudly inform in the promotional leaflet that the multicultural community of the city comprises inhabitants coming from 140 countries and they refer to the county as the place of many opportunities.

The Buskerud County Library is located in the administrative centre of the region – in Drammen – and employs 10 people (which is a standard among county libraries). Its main task is to provide support to the local libraries, consultation, evaluation of staff qualifications and quality of the services. The library has been participating in the interlibrary loan system for years, although it is a task of lesser and lesser importance. It has started to play an essential role as an institution studying the situation of migrants in the region and developing the reference model concerning the adjustment of library services to their needs.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIBRARY

New in Buskerund⁴⁰

Imagine that you have moved to a town in the Buskerud county. It is real enough since about five thousand Poles did the same before you. You don't even have to move here permanently – maybe you are the owner of one of the holiday homes, a tourist, a student or a temporary worker. You have become the „newcomer“. Do you know what you need in the new place?

This is how Camilla Sørbye started the presentation of the Buskerud County Library during the international workshop organised by the FRSI in order to develop the model of a multicultural library. Camilla Sørbye is the librarian with many years' experience in local and county facilities, although she worked at school at the beginning (she studied pedagogics and literature sciences). She currently works in the County Library and her tasks include implementation of projects, organisation of conferences and seminars, presentation of literature and cooperation with schools. She calls herself an advisor, she is an expert on participation and inclusion of others. In the latest multicultural activities of the library, the pedagogical background with the multiculturalism specialisation turned out very useful. The librarian not only has the formal education but she also „feels“ the multiculturalism.

Sørbye explains that the demographic changes in her region resulting from the inflow of immigrants resulted to the situation where clients of public institutions are very diversified today, also in cultural terms. Therefore, institutions had to start thinking about how to include such persons, taking into account their needs and perspectives in the library offer. The perspective of better wages has attracted very diversified people to the Buskerud county – coming from other cities of Norway or from other countries. Many of them do not know the place and the Norwegian language well enough to manage in the everyday life. The „newcomers“ started to create a large, noticeable group among users of libraries of the Buskerud county. Over time, an idea has emerged to start asking them how they found the library, when they came there for the first time, what they looked for then, and what should be the library's offer for the newcomers. Those questions were an introduction to a deeper conversation and – finally – an analysis of needs, based

⁴⁰ The text was drafted based on information provided during the speech of Camilla Sørbye, the librarian from the Buskerud county, at the international kick-off workshop of the "Library as the Meeting Place of Many Cultures" project in Gdańsk, held in June 2013 (the Power Point presentation and direct talks) as well as in the correspondence and consultations carried out during the preparation of the publication.

on a questionnaire template prepared by a local librarian. As a result of this action, the employees of libraries recognised the needs of the „newcomers” which were divided into three categories:

1. „It is good to have”

It was observed that the majority of the „newcomers” indicated the need to find accommodation and a job. For many of them, information concerning kindergartens, schools and other public institutions was very important.

2. „It is good to know”

The librarians have found out that starting life in a new city is accompanied by many dilemmas and a lack of knowledge concerning the simplest things: how and where bus tickets can be bought, what the cultural offer of the city is, what the activities of local organisations and associations are? More specific questions have also appeared: where to organise a picnic or where to go fishing? For inhabitants living in the area for years, those things are obvious, but the „newcomers” search for such information and have a need to ask about many similar things, however, they do not always have a person they can refer to.

3. „It is good to have access to...”

...wireless Internet, a computer, a printer, a copy machine, media in the language of a given person or a course of Norwegian. It is important that the access to services is free of charge.

The Buskerud County Library set an ambitious target: to create the performance model of libraries in the county, corresponding to those needs, based on the methods and resources available to the libraries. The facility has no possibilities to offer a job or child care, however, while fulfilling its statutory obligations, it may support the new inhabitants of the county in the search for information concerning the work, accommodation, public institutions, sports, cultural and educational classes or refer them to other reliable sources of information. The first paragraph of the Act on public libraries binds the Norwegian facilities to „provide information, education and other cultural activities through active presentation and making available books and other information carriers free of charge to all inhabitants of the country”. Therefore, the model of a library for „newcomers” was created, which treats them as legitimate inhabitants of the district, and the inclusiveness was introduced into the regional development strategy as an important element of building the attractiveness of the region. The project was called „New in Buskerud”.

The model described two areas of actions: creating (1) zones in libraries and (2) websites for the newcomers. In 2013 two libraries in the county (Drammen and Øvre Eiker) implemented this model, adjusting the offer of the library and building the website responding to the needs of new inhabitants of their towns. The creators of the model were driven by two questions:

- › How can the library strengthen the feeling of membership of the „newcomers”?
- › What can encourage the „newcomers” to activity and participation in the life of the local community?

In the specially created zones, new inhabitants of cities in the region, can find contents, services and activities which are interesting for them:

- › literature, records with films and music, newspapers, magazines in Norwegian and in their native languages,
- › traditional and digital brochures about the city, the society, the cultural offer,
- › readers' activity clubs, language courses, presentations, meetings, exhibitions.

Simple websites (www.nyidrammen.no and www.nyieiker.no) created in Norwegian but translated using Google translator into many languages, redirect to:

- › websites with information about the city and its institutions,
- › job offers, accommodation,
- › language courses (via Internet and in the library),
- › clubs, associations and information concerning the activities taking place in the town.

The response of users of the website and persons using the new library services is very positive:

- › *I have been living in the municipality for some time but I have still not discovered many paths. Now I can find useful information. Therefore, the offer of the library is fantastic.*
- › *I think it's an excellent idea because I can also borrow and read books in my language.*
- › *This zone is very useful. Particularly the website. It's an excellent website and it has very good language courses.*

The library directors also recognise the benefits. For many of them, facing the shortage of money for new activities, the zones were found as a very innovative approach. The project is based more on reorganising the available library resources than on completing new collections. Libraries have mainly undertaken the selection of publications and multimedia they already had, which could be attractive for the newcomers, and focused on their displaying in the zone. It was not necessary to buy many new items. Moreover, owing to the project, important information reached not only the new inhabitants coming from abroad but also many inhabitants who grew up here but did not know the offer of their town.

Tore Opdal Hansen, the mayor of Drammen, states: *„NEW! The newcomer's zone" offered a better and a more targeted library service. (...). The library is an active forum of integration, whether the new inhabitants came from Sudan or from Stavanger".*

The library wants to encourage the inhabitants to use the zones and the websites, by including the subsequent „newcomers" into the life of the local community, not only through providing information but also by connecting people and building relations among them. Therefore, it is searching for ideas of various activities, during which people can meet and get acquainted with each other, for example, through the common hobby. Cooperation with various entities (from public institutions to the Norwegian Mountain Climbing Association, Association of Hunters and Fishermen, or Association of Gardeners) guarantees diversified offer of meetings and activities, attracting people with various interests. Sørbye has enthusiastically stated that for the Poles, at least those from

Drammen, fishing is the most attractive form of leisure – they borrow many books about fishing and they eagerly ask others where „the biggest fish can be caught“. In the future, the Drammen library wants to conduct a fishing competition in the canal surrounding the library building and, in this way, attract more Poles. Will they succeed and have they correctly defined the interests of the Poles?

Adjustment to the Polish conditions

The idea from the Buskerud county may be successfully applied in Poland while working with various target groups. It is possible and worth organising such zones not only for migrants from other countries (whether voluntary – e.g. the Vietnamese, or forced – refugees) but also, as in the described library, in locations where big migration of people from cities, towns and villages from other parts of Poland occurs. Assistance in finding one's own place in a new, often bigger place of residence, is something extremely important. Similar support may be also searched for by re-emigrants to Poland, i.e. the Poles who return to their country after some time, usually after several years. They usually experience the so-called re-adaptation and the shock after return. Their psychological situation and confusion in practical situations resembles the situation of foreigners in a new country. While working with those groups the libraries would not have to focus so much on the issue of language differences but rather on providing practical information assisting in establishing links with the new place and people. Other groups to which separate zones in the library or on the website could be addressed, include ethnic, national, religious minorities, such as the Lemkos from the Gorlice inspiration described above.

The model presented here seems very capacious and adaptable in response to the needs of almost each minority. More on planning of space for various groups can be read in the chapter on space and infrastructure describing library performance as the multicultural institution.



добрo пожалoватъ
Tавтай мoрилнo уу
добро пожалoватъ
Benvenuto
Dobrodošli
Välkommen
Chào mừng
Laukiamas
Bem-vindo
Tervetulo
Welkom
Dobrodošli
Bi
Лас
Vitajte
Accueil
Velkom
Bienvenido
mat datang
Siyakwamukela
Powitanie
Teretulnud
Karşılama
дoбpoдoш
Fogadtatás
καλωσόρισμα
I mirëpritur
дoбpo пожалoватъ
Gaidīts

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LOCATION

Bergen is the second biggest city following Oslo in terms of size and number of inhabitants (268 thousand), but also the economic importance (several well-developed branches of industry). It is referred to as the gate to the fjords and it has been entered to the list of world heritage sites operated by UNESCO. This attracts labour migrants and refugees. Over 14% of the population includes immigrants or children of immigrants. About a half of immigrants comes from Europe, the second half – from other parts of the world. Poles represent the biggest group of immigrants in Bergen, followed, in terms of the number of migrants, by the Iraqis. Currently many people arrive from Eritrea and Somalia.

The Bergen Public Library is a local facility of the lowest level offering services directly to the inhabitants of the region. Since the beginning of the 21st century it has observed a growing number of voluntary and forced migrants in the city, therefore, it is developing its multicultural offer. In 2003 the library employed a specialist on coordination of multilingual services. For over three years it has been providing services to the multilingual population of the city: it develops good practices of customer service offered to migrants, it shares experience with other libraries in big cities of Norway, currently it also carries out activities associated with the ICT.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LIBRARY

Laptop Club w Bergen⁴¹

The Bergen Public Library conducts various activities addressed to the migrant communities, for example: it runs a language café, a readers' group for women, or helps foreign pupils in doing their homework. However, the computer course tailor-made to the immigrants may be a particularly inspiring example for Polish libraries. This course has been conducted since 2012 and owing to the method of its organisation, it generates many benefits, both to the immigrants themselves and to the library.

Goals

The Laptop Club implements several goals. The group has both socialising and adaptation goal: during the classes participants have the opportunity to get acquainted with each other and with the library personnel, and to understand the methods of performance of the Norwegian institution. It is possible due to the adequate, favourable atmosphere during the classes and celebrating a common coffee break, or the excursion usually organised at the end of the course. However, these meetings go far beyond integration. First of all, using the new technologies, information and communication competence is created and developed among migrants. The participants get acquainted with websites and programmes necessary to participate in the life of the Norwegian society. Thus, the course not only integrates the migrants, develops their IT competence, but also introduces them into the functioning of the Norwegian social system, ensuring access to useful and important information.

Empowerment

It is also worth stressing that the club is run by library employees in cooperation with two immigrants with the ICT competence. In this way, participants of the classes receive assistance in their own language from persons who understand their needs and know their cultural context. It is also a valuable support and supplementing of the competence

⁴¹ The text was drafted based on information provided during the speech of Karen Marie Loge, the Norwegian librarian, at the international kick-off workshop of the project "Library as a Meeting Place for Many Cultures" in Gdańsk, held in June 2013 (the Power Point presentation and direct talks) as well as in the correspondence and consultations carried out during the preparation of the publication.

of library staff who does not need to know all cultural groups, all possible languages, but should select a relevant co-worker among migrants. Thirdly, and perhaps most importantly in this context – such method of the activity organisation provides the opportunity for immigrants conducting the classes to gain experience on the Norwegian labour market and to obtain a certificate confirming the skills and professional practice, which may be very useful while searching for a job in the future.

Cooperation

Both within the organisation of the Laptop Club and under the implementation of other activities, the library cooperates with the local immigrant centre. This centre plays an important role while recruiting participants. All services addressed to immigrants (a computer course, a language café, assistance in homework, excursions and library loan offer) are also available to refugees. Therefore, the library cooperates with the centre receiving and introducing refugees. The common goal of both institutions is to prepare the participants of the classes to act independently though acquiring a job or a possibility of further education. The library supports the process of integration of forced migrants with the Norwegian society, supplementing – at the same time – the activities of the centre. On the other hand, the introductory centre is responsible for providing translation, since specialists are available there, who speak about 50 languages. Other activities of the library (readers' group for women) show that the librarians are sensitive to the specific needs of cultural groups. For example, they organise unisex groups, which may be an important success factor in terms of norms and values of some cultures.

Adjustment to the Polish conditions

The idea of computer courses organised by the Bergen library may serve as a ready template for Polish libraries. Courses for forced migrants or voluntary migrants, or for ethnic and national minorities, such as the Roma, can be organised in a similar way.

We highlight, first of all, the importance of inclusion and empowering of the minority group representatives. The problem is not only to teach them how to operate a computer and use websites useful for them but also to let persons from various cultural groups participate in conducting classes and gain professional experience.



Additional materials

List of expert organisations

We present the list of non-governmental organisations operating for several or several dozen years all over Poland. They conduct educational, information activities, support refugees and migrants, care for protection of cultural heritage. They are the source of specialised knowledge, contacts, support and inspiration. The Rownosc.info portal keeps the base of organisations acting to the benefit of the broadly understood equality and the library with the extended search system and, where possible, it gathers electronic collections.

- › Halina Nieć Centre of Legal Assistance (Centrum Pomocy Prawnej im. Haliny Nieć),
www.pomocprawna.org
- › The Foundation for the Preservation of Jewish Heritage in Poland (Fundacja Ochrony Dziedzictwa Żydowskiego),
www.fodz.pl
- › Foundation Africa Another Way (Fundacja Afryka Inaczej),
www.afryka.org
- › Ocalenie Foundation (Fundacja Ocalenie),
www.fundacjaocalenie.org.pl
- › Civic Perspective Foundation (Fundacja Obywatelska Perspektywa),
www.obywatelska.org.pl
- › Polish Migration Forum Foundation (Fundacja Polskie Forum Migracyjne),
www.forummigracyjne.org
- › Intercultural PL (Interkulturalni PL),
www.interkulturalni.pl
- › Continent Warsaw of Many Cultures (Kontynent Warszawa Wielu Kultur),
www.kontynent-warszawa.pl
- › Migrant Info Point,
www.migrant.poznan.pl
- › Museum of the History of Polish Jews (Muzeum Historii Żydów Polskich),
www.polin.pl
- › Polish Humanitarian Action (Polska Akcja Humanitarna),
www.pah.org.pl
- › Portal Arabia.pl,
www.arabia.pl
- › Without Prejudice Portal (Portal Bez Upředzeń),
www.bezupzedzen.org

- › Equality.info Portal (Portal Rownosc.info),
www.rownosc.info
- › Refugee.pl,
www.refugee.pl
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www.interwencjaprawna.pl
- › Never More Association (Stowarzyszenie Nigdy Więcej),
www.nigdywiecej.org
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www.pk.org.pl/panoramakultur
- › Association of Culture Practitioners (Stowarzyszenie Praktyków Kultury),
www.praktycy.org
- › Open Republic – Association against Anti-Semitism and Xenophobia (Stowarzyszenie Otwarta Rzeczpospolita przeciw Antysemityzmowi i Ksenofobii),
www.otwarta.org
- › „Borussia” Cultural Community Association (Stowarzyszenie Wspólnota Kulturowa „Borussia”),
www.borussia.pl
- › Anti-discrimination Education Society (Towarzystwo Edukacji Antydyskryminacyjnej),
www.tea.org.pl

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- › *Identity and Citizenship in the Multicultural Society*, ed. E. H. Oleksy, PWN, Warsaw 2008.

Anti-discrimination and equality

- › Brander P. et al., *Compass. Education on Human Rights in Work with Teenagers*, Society for Children and the Youth CHANCE, Main Teacher Education Centre, Warsaw 2005.
- › Denes D., *How to Organise an Anti-discriminatory Event. A handbook of Activities in Local Communities*, Lambda Association Warsaw, Open Forum Association, Warsaw 2009.
- › *Anti-discriminatory Education. Trainer’s Manual* edited by M. Branka, D. Cieślukowska, Decjusz Villa Association, Kraków 2010.
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Books for children:

List of books on multiculturalism or equality for children available on the website of the project „Global Education of Children Changes Our World” implemented by Angelus Silesius House (DAS)⁴²: www.eduglob.silesius.org.pl (tab: Reading room – Czytelnia). Note: the website is updated quite often.

⁴² http://www.eduglob.silesius.org.pl/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=17&Itemid=125 (access: 17.08.2014).

List of illustrations

Authors and sources of pictures

- › Title photos of chapters: David Sypniewski
- › Introduction to Inspirations: David Sypniewski
- › Provocation in Stare Juchy: Patryk Mazurek
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