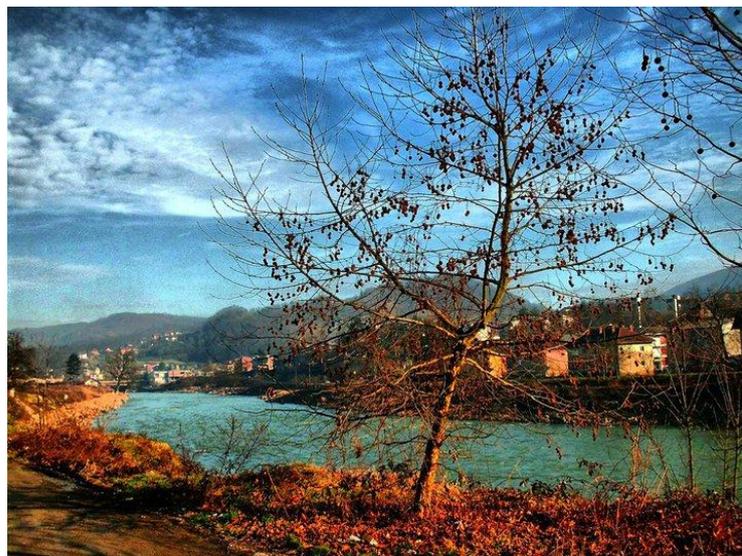


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Youth Corner and Media Training Centre

Zavidovići Public Library in Zavidovići
Bosnia and Herzegovina
March 2011



The first choice of the jurors, Reflection of Life, by Eldar Muhić.

This case study is based on information provided by the Zavidovići Public Library in March 2011. EIFL-PLIP has edited the study for the Public Library Innovation Programme (PLIP) replication process.

SUMMARY

INNOVATIVE IDEA

Transforming a traditional reading room into a multimedia centre, with modern media technology, to bring young people into the library from the streets.

THE PROJECT

Librarians observed that many young people from villages around Zavidovići were spending up to four hours a week at the bus station, waiting for transport home. Concerned about the risk for young people in the street, they decided to create a multimedia centre with modern Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to encourage them to come into the library.

KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

The Zavidovići Public Library has provided a creative space for 'the net generation'. Every day, 60 – 70 young people use the Youth Corner.

Young people of Zavidovići now have a different environment for studying, for leisure and for information activities, including research and using ICT. Librarians believe the two main reasons for the success of the Youth Corner are the multimedia technology (computers with Internet connections, a laptop, a TV set, music players, a camera, a camcorder, a projector and a scanner) and the bright and attractive environment. After the library transformed its traditional reading room into a multimedia centre, the young started to spend time *in* the library and not *around* the library.

To see how the Zavidovići Public Library changed its space from a traditional reading room to a space for young people, see www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAI7rCi_m-c.



The Zavidovići Public Library has created a multi-media centre for 'the net generation'. These young people have made a film to promote their town.

CASE STUDY – CREATIVE MINDS CREATE JOB OPPORTUNITIES

INTRODUCTION

Zavidovići is a small town in central Bosnia and Herzegovina, burdened by economic problems resulting from the war (1992 – 1995) and the post-conflict transition period. Many young people in the Zavidovići municipal area feel disconnected because of a lack of quality activities for the young. High school commuters spend three or four hours a week waiting for buses home to rural areas. The Zavidovići Public Library is a small library that is located next to the bus station. However, the traditional reading room was not an attractive or interesting place for young people.

Library staff decided to change this by creating a new, modern environment for the young, including media technology, access to the Internet and content that would be of interest to the young. In this way, we would make the library a place where young people would feel welcome and engaged.

The library space works better than school for certain activities, because (i) school is obligatory and activities are decided by the syllabus, while young people can choose whether to come to the library; (ii) young people feel comfortable and free in the library because they are not subject to evaluation and assessment. The library environment offers children many opportunities for improving their lives in ways that they choose to, without stress or too many rules.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Target group and goal

Our target group is high school students who spend several hours waiting for buses at the bus station, which is next to the library. The goal of the project is to get the students off the streets by offering them an alternative. The alternative we are offering is attractive space where they will feel safe and where they can spend quality time while waiting for a bus.

Implementation

Redecorating the reading room and installing multimedia equipment

We redecorated the traditional reading room and created a new, modern environment with modern ICT: 11 computers, a laptop computer, a TV, music devices, a camera, a camcorder, a projector, and a scanner. The young people use the equipment free of charge.

Consulting young people

While we were thinking of activities for the multimedia centre, we decided to involve the young in deciding what activities we should include. We did this by cooperating with local associations of young people and by using Facebook, which is a favourite social network among youth in Bosnia and Herzegovina.

The young immediately named the centre a 'Youth Corner'. They suggested activities such as English language courses, because English is necessary for communication and to use the Internet. Youth also expressed great interest in learning computer skills and in extra lessons in school subjects that they find difficult – like mathematics.

Activities and courses

Although the primary target group was students who commute, the Youth Corner attracted many young people from the community. Apart from workshops, we organized three

English language courses, an Information Technology (IT) course, a math course, extra lessons in other school subjects, and a little school of journalism, video production and digital photography.

We also held two workshops on current topics: fighting addiction, and presentation of the project *Tajan*, a natural monument. (*Tajan* is the mountain surrounding the town of Zavidovići that was proclaimed a national monument. The aim of the workshop was to involve young people in promoting tourism).

STRATEGIES, TACTIC AND TOOLS

Bringing technology into the reading room

We changed the library environment by replacing the traditional reading room with a modern multimedia centre. The main change was introduction of new technology and the Internet. Soon after we connected the Internet, youth started visiting the centre to study for exams.

Partnerships

Partners include the Zavidovići Municipality. The Employment Agency, schools and Local Democracy Agency, all of whom were involved in marketing and promoting the project and who provided ideas and support for lectures and workshops. The Municipality also provided financial support for some activities.



Students at the “School of Journalism” in Zavidovići Public Library, Bosnia and Herzegovina.

Changing the library opening hours

We changed the opening hours to accommodate the school students' needs. Instead of opening from 7.00 to 15.00 as in the past, we are now open from 7.00 to 19.00.

Using Facebook to communicate with young people

One of our tactics was to connect with youth on Facebook. Through Facebook we were able to find out about our members' interests. To see our Facebook page, visit <http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=125135790855404>

Marketing

We also used Facebook to market the project. In addition, all the Youth Corner activities were documented and presented in the local media. At the end of the project period in May 2011, we will host a public presentation to show the achievements of young people using the Youth Corner.

Training staff

Another tactic was to train library staff to carry out the project and to provide a quality service for young people.

KEY BENEFITS

One of the main benefits of the Youth Corner is that it enables members of the library to access the Internet. Access to the Internet is a service that only few libraries in Bosnia and Herzegovina offer, mainly because they cannot afford computers and Internet connections.

The students who commute now have a place in the library where they can spend quality and productive time while waiting for a bus. The traditional reading room, which was half-empty, is full of young people. Before the Youth Corner, about ten students a day visited the reading room, mainly looking for information from references books. From the moment the Youth Corner opened, the number increased to about 60 visits a day, and young visitors are staying 30 minutes to an hour and longer.

The benefits for the library staff include IT training and acquisition of equipment, which will result in improved services over the long-term.

PRELIMINARY IMPACT

Our impact assessment research is still under way, but we can say that we have achieved the primary goal of this project: getting the students off the street by providing a welcoming space and interesting activities. Many young people are using the multimedia centre, and about 190 students have attended the courses and workshops.

There were three English courses of different levels (for beginners, for students who were struggling, and for advanced level) attended by 48 students, which lasted for six months. The IT and the math courses were each attended by 11 students.

The School of Journalism, including audio and video projection and digital photography, attracted 20 young people. The journalism group completed some concrete projects, including writing articles that were published in local newspapers, a complete recording of a video clip, and a TV story. The Youth Corner was also an improvised studio.

An especially successful activity was a competition for the best photograph of Zavidovići. The contest ran on Facebook, and we attracted 200 entries, over 2,000 comments on the entries and over 5,000 visitors a day to our Facebook page.

The photo contest, with the other activities, gave young people a unique opportunity to show what they learnt.

The EIFL-PLIP project has changed the position of the library in the community. The library now plays a more significant role in the community and is attracting many new people, including parents, relatives and friends of the young people.

The most successful was the competition for the best photograph of Zavidovići. Among the 2,000 'likes' and 5,000 daily visitors were many people from Zavidovići who had left during the war, and who now live abroad. The contest itself was popular in the local community. Information about the contest was published in the largest-selling daily newspaper in Bosnia, *Dnevni avaz*. The idea for the contest originated from a little school of digital photography in the Youth Corner. The prizewinning photographs can be seen at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Izbor-za-najbolju-fotografiju-Zavidovici/122558487809437>

LESSONS LEARNED

Where the project can be implemented

The Youth Corner and multimedia centre can be implemented in many environments and communities. At the heart of the project is involvement of young people in the activities of the library, and there are young people in every community.

The project is particularly applicable in places young people have been marginalized, where schools are not able to provide extended hours and where there are social and economic problems.

Possible harm from the Internet

During the project, we were concerned about the possibility of children becoming addicted to the Internet and exposure to content like pornography and violence. We were concerned that students might start missing school or the bus as a result of using the Internet and other devices. Therefore, we limited their access to the Internet to one hour, and installed Internet filters to protect them from inappropriate content.

We also tried to offer activities that combined use of technology with other pursuits. For example, the photo contest combined use of modern technology while at the same time encouraging the youth to go out to search for ideas and scenery.

Small space

Our space was limited, and this was limiting to the new Youth Corner service. We believe that space for a similar service should be bigger than 50 square metres and flexible. Working with young people requires a variety of activities and we had to adapt the space to fit the activity. For example, at different times we adapted the Youth Corner to accommodate a recording studio, a concert hall, lectures and workshops.

SUSTAINABILITY

Demand for and use of the Youth Corner is continuing, and the library will continue to work with its partners to seek ways of securing sustainability.