



knowledge without boundaries

EIFL-PLIP

Improving lives and livelihoods through innovative public library services

Public library provides a safe space for youth Public Library Zavidovici, Bosnia and Herzegovina

When librarians saw hundreds of high school children wasting time at the Zavidovici bus station while waiting for buses to take them home to their villages, they decided to act. The library is near the bus station and had the potential to be a safe place for the children. But it was dull and unattractive – ‘a traditional reading room’.

The librarians consulted youth organizations, the municipality and the children, and so the idea of the Youth Corner and Multimedia Centre was born. With EIFL-PLIP support (US\$30,000), the library bought 11 computers and a laptop, three music players, a television set, a projector, a scanner, a camera and a camcorder. They transformed the reading room into a vibrant and modern multimedia centre, with free access to the internet and other equipment. They organized media and journalism skills workshops, and found volunteers to give extra lessons in difficult school subjects.



Every day, young people come to Public Library Zavidovici's Youth Corner to use computers and other equipment, to do homework and take extra lessons in difficult school subjects.

Youth Corner activities

Working with their partner organizations, the Zavidovici Municipality, the youth organization, ‘Ogledalo’ (‘Mirror’), and the youth focused non-governmental organization, Embassy of Local Democracy, the librarians kept their young users busy. Activities included:

- Extra lessons in difficult school subjects, including English and mathematics; helping with homework.
- Little School of Journalism, during which youth wrote articles for local media.
- Little School of TV Production, during which youth made films about the Youth Corner and Three Rivers, a film to promote the beauty of their town.
- Little school of digital photography – including a photo competition for the best photograph of Zavidovici.
- Workshops and presentations on issues of concern to youth, like the dangers of drug addiction, and the history and culture of Zavidovici.

Achievements and impact

- Librarians reported a 500% increase in visits to the library – from 50 people a week before the Youth Corner to 252 people a week by the end of the Youth Corner's first year.



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- The library is open for longer – from 7:00 to 19:00 to be available to the students before and after school.
- Fewer children waste time at the bus stations. Out of 731 students who are members of the library, 452 (62%) are commuters.
- 60 new students registered as library members.
- 190 young people attended classes and workshops and learnt new skills.
- The library has a committed pool of volunteer trainers to draw on in future.

What the parents say

- Their children now have a safe place to go to while waiting for buses.
- Their children like the library, because the atmosphere is relaxed and creative.
- They value the free tuition and extra lessons, which many cannot afford.

What the youth say

'I come to the Youth Corner before and after school. I am a student at technical school, and we often work on presentations. The opportunity to use the internet means a lot to me because I am now able to find information and create high quality presentations. I often do my homework here so that I don't have to do it at home. As a result, I have a lot more free time and I am able to organize and use it better!' - Eldin Sinanovic, high school student.

'After the Little School of Journalism, I am more firmly committed to studying journalism than ever before!' - Almira Ridžal, high school student.

The future

'The new service of Public Library Zavidovici will definitely be sustainable in future!' said Ms Amela Hodžic, director of the library. The Zavidovici Municipality has agreed that part of the library's budget can be used for Youth Corner activities, and the library will continue to fund internet access. The library will strengthen their team of volunteer trainers and extend services for other groups in need of support.

EIFL-PLIP supported the service in May 2010. A year later, the library assessed the impact of the service.

Information presented here is based on the library's assessment.

For further information, contact Ms Amela Hodzic - avbibl@bih.net.ba.

[EIFL](#) (Electronic Information for Libraries) is an international not-for-profit organisation dedicated to enabling access to knowledge through libraries in more than 60 developing and transition countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe. EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP) supports public libraries to use ICT to implement innovative community development services. Learn more - www.eifl.net/plip; further information - plip@eifl.net. EIFL's Public Library Innovation Programme is supported by a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation