

Cooperation and Partnership of School and Public Libraries: The Way to a Better Future for Everyone

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Abstract: *Enabling students to master the skills needed for lifelong learning is the mission of primary education, i.e. schools, therefore also school libraries. Developing and encouraging the habit of reading, understanding the read text and using library services, enabling young people to use information in all forms and on all media, are some of the basic tasks of the library. Today, the school library successfully performs its tasks and meets the requirements of the modern school. By working to improve the quality of teaching, the school librarian, by performing professional tasks during the entire schooling of students, enables the acquisition of functional knowledge and through extracurricular activities improves and contributes to the development of all student potential. In this way, the overall development of the child is supported. With the cooperation of school and public libraries, this task is accomplished more easily.*

The aim of this paper is to present a series of joint activities of the elementary school and public library. This cooperation allows students new ways of acquiring knowledge and skills, since in this form a correlation is created between librarians and students, as well as between librarians. This creates better communication and motivation among all participants, and the youngest and young users benefit the most. Multi-year cooperation is successfully implemented through various programs.

The work shows joint activities, examples of good practice realized through the cooperation of school and public libraries, and among them we highlight the projects "Library - a place for learning" and "Digital citizen", educational - creative workshops with preschoolers and first-graders, which are realized every year on the occasion of Children's Week, the masquerade ball "On the Wings of Imagination - The Main Hero of a Book", which has been organized with

younger students for ten years in a row, as well as the celebration of Francophonie Day through publication exhibitions and distinguished activities of students, teachers and librarians.

Through such activities, we bring children closer to books, art and knowledge in general, motivate young users to develop a culture of reading and equip them for independent learning and lifelong education. Various extracurricular activities offer students, through the process of cooperation, new and modern learning methods, interactivity, and thus help students in developing their own attitudes, interests and critical thinking.

Libraries, through creativity and innovation, become for young users places of entertainment and active spending of free time, places for work, knowledge, but also rest and communication. The library becomes a nursery of ideas, creativity and innovation. It is an unconventional carrier and source of information and knowledge.

School librarians encourage creative processes and cooperation through the implementation of curricular and extracurricular activities, contributing to the education, development and improvement of their users. With the established plan and program of work, librarians have the opportunity to influence the acquisition of cultural habits and attitudes of students, as well as educational outcomes and the quality of knowledge, from the first contact of students with a book.

The introduction of new modern methods of work in the library business, with the help of new modern entertainment and educational content, contributes to meeting not only educational, but also broader needs and interests of students.

Keywords: *school library, public library, cooperation between school and public library, library services for young people, encouragement of reading, encouragement of creative activities, local community*

Introduction

According to the data of the Republic Institute of Statistics of the Republic of Serbia (2021), the total number of libraries in Serbia is 1988. Of these, 2 are national, 142 are higher education libraries, and 123 are special libraries. There are 512 public libraries, and a maximum of 1,209 school libraries.

The number of public library users is 561,418, and the number of school library users is 596,993.

The number of employees in public libraries is 2177, and full-time work is 2020. Serbia has the largest number of school libraries, however, out of 2127 employees in school libraries, only 472 work full-time.

School libraries in Serbia are an integral part of two systems: school and library, and thus their work is regulated in two ways, by regulations in the field of education and regulations in the field of librarianship. Regulations from the field of librarianship are applied in the segments of work of school libraries that relate to professional library and information work, and the supervision of registry services has an advisory, not binding character. Many problems that school librarians in Serbia face on a daily basis, as well as the marginalized position of librarians in the education system, arise from this arrangement of the work of librarians.

The school library is part of the educational process of every individual, and the basic tasks of the school library relate to the development of literacy, IT, information and media literacy, learning and culture, as well as encouraging permanent reading habits and lifelong learning.

School and Public Libraries are Natural Partners

School and public libraries are natural partners because today their mission is the same - to provide their users with access to all the necessary information, to bring cultural contents closer to them, to enable them to develop skills for future life. That is why the basic task of the library is to develop and encourage children's reading habits and the use of library services.

The successful cooperation between the Dušan Jerkovic Elementary School library and the Public Library Uzice has been going on for many years and is of great benefit to both students and librarians, and is achieved through visits, literary meetings, events, exhibitions, the offer of signed books, collective membership fees for students and the collective schools, implementation and participation in various projects, as well as the exchange of ideas and professional information.

The goal of this work is to present a series of joint activities of elementary school and public libraries, which can serve as a good recipe for successful cooperation in which the youngest and young users benefit the most. The authors will present the realized projects of the librarians of the Elementary School "Dusan Jerkovic" in Uzice with the librarians of the Children's Department of the Public Library Uzice, which were realized through various forms of cooperation.

Today's world is changing rapidly, and in order for children and young people to be able to successfully join social life, they must learn how to learn, how to find and evaluate information, and how to acquire knowledge and skills for their overall development and independence. The tasks of school librarians are primarily related to promoting reading among students and the independence of students in learning, and it is known that reading is the basis for all learning. School librarians perform their responsible role on a daily basis independently or in cooperation with the school's teaching staff. But also the school librarian should "achieve cooperation and joint planning of the activities of teachers, school librarians and local self-government".

In order to achieve these tasks of the school librarian, close cooperation with the librarians of the children's departments of public libraries is inevitable. The cooperation of the school and public library, as representatives of competent and organized institutions in the education of children, is of great importance, to be more precise - their cooperation is a reliable partnership, because both libraries are permanently interested in their young users being permanent users of the libraries, and this interest itself represents basis for broad and successful long-term cooperation. The librarians of both institutions play a key role in this cooperation. What sounds so obvious is often difficult to achieve in practice, and the cause is most often the inactivity of librarians. That's why the authors of this paper want to show examples of their good practice to encourage interested librarians, to encourage them to cooperate and take action, as well as to point out the benefit of improving the dialogue between these parties.

Children's departments work with young people and children who come to the library on their own initiative, they are children who want to use the library's services, who read, like to participate in workshops. Compared to school libraries, children's departments have better material resources, they acquire books that are current, and this attracts children, who like to read, because school libraries, often burdened by a lack of suitable staff, inadequate space, have an outdated book collection and give priority procurement of reading materials in relation to the procurement of other materials. And on the other hand, the advantage of the school library is its daily availability, which is a "unique potential"

Coming to the library today offers children and young people informal learning, acquiring, developing and improving the skills they need related to their educational needs

and interests - researching information, and with the help of librarians, they learn how to find and value it. Reading, reading comprehension and research are the basis for all learning, especially in the 21st century when we are surrounded by countless information. That is why encouraging children from the earliest age to come and use library funds is of immeasurable importance. "A quality children's library provides children with the necessary lifelong learning and literacy skills, empowering them to participate and contribute to their community."

Ruth W. Small (Ruth V. Small) in the text "The Motivational and Information Needs of Young Innovators: Stimulating Student Creativity and Inventive Thinking" says: "With today's increasing emphasis on curriculum, standards and testing in schools, it is becoming increasingly likely that students develop a "good enough" sense that they don't need imaginations, nor do they need to seek answers to questions that go beyond the curriculum, nor do they need to allow themselves to explore confusing topics that would encourage their curiosity." She adds that in this context, "the school library becomes the only place in the school where all children are allowed to think outside the box, learning basic research skills, using their creativity and innovative thinking to find solutions to real-world problems that interest them and cause."

IFLA manifestos and guidelines in the best interest of children and young people (among other things) recommend: creating and nurturing reading habits in children from an early age, encouraging imagination and creativity in children and young people; students to master lifelong learning skills, develop their creative imagination, and enable them to be responsible citizens; providing access to local, regional, national and global resources and opportunities, which exposes learners to diverse ideas, experiences and perspectives. The cooperation of the school and public library by providing quality content contributes to the achievement of these goals and objectives, improves the quality of library services and is aimed at the well-being of young users.

Good Practice through Workshops

The role of the public library, as a place for learning and entertainment, in the upbringing and education of children is invaluable. That is why librarians of children's departments of public libraries must be aware of their role and try not to make the library a place where books are

only stored and borrowed. "It must become the focal point of cultural events in the environment", a place where children eager for knowledge will learn, get to know literature, art, and develop their creativity through various educational and creative contents.

Parents, educators, teachers, and librarians play an equal role in the formation and nurturing of children's reading habits. The mission of librarians to bring the library closer to children, get new members and keep as many as possible who will be active users of library services is further complicated by the fact that libraries today have strong competition in digital technologies and the advantages that the virtual world offers to young people.

"The tasks of the modern library stem from its educational mission, and the degree of its arrangement, equipment and ability to perform that function is in proportion to the understanding and understanding of the environment for its cultural activity". The significant role of school and children's sections of public libraries should be redefined and adapted to the needs of modern society.

Searching for new models and solutions, the librarians of the Children's Department of the Public Library Uzice in 2018 conceived and in cooperation with the librarians of the Elementary school "Dusan Jerkovic" successfully implemented the project "Library - a place for learning". This project was financed by the Ministry of Culture and Information of the Republic of Serbia.

The computer equipment obtained through this project made it possible to facilitate and improve the implementation of the educational-creative program and IT workshops, and in addition, the free availability of modern educational materials was ensured, which is of great importance for children whose parents are unable to afford similar activities. Dr. Carol A. Gordon (Dr. Carol A. Gordon) in the text "Teacher-librarians as Champions of Digital Equity" says that "with the growing importance of digital and information literacy, digital equity is a priority which ensures that there is not only equality, whereby every child receives the same opportunities, guidance and assistance, but that there is fairness, whereby every child receives the information and digital competences they need. This means that children in a disadvantaged position may need more opportunities, lessons or help", and libraries, by implementing such programs, enable them to do that.

As for the book, Presentation is not a ghost and My virtual corner, are the names of the workshops that were realized within the framework of this project. It is precisely in this acceptable way that the library is promoted among children and young people as a place for permanent learning and the development of information literacy.

Six classes of the seventh grade of Elementary School "Dusan Jerkovic" (about 150 students) participated in the How to a Book workshops. In the introductory part of these workshops, the lecture "Reference literature - the right search leads to a quick answer" was held by Mirjana Radovanović Pejovic and Ana Dukovic, librarians of this school. After that, the librarians of the Children's Department of the National Library of Uzice held a lecture on electronic catalog searches, where the children learned about the functioning of the Cooperative Online Bibliographic System (COBISS.SR), Mutual catalog (COBIB.SR), with the possibilities of a digital library, as well as ways of accessing the Anthology of Serbian Literature (ASK). After the lecture, the children were given pre-prepared tasks to practice and confirm the acquired knowledge. Workshops called Presentation is not a ghost, form the second phase in the implementation of the project "Library - a place for learning". In these workshops, we dealt with educating children to work in the Microsoft PowerPoint program, which is close to them because it connects text and images.

Branka Arsović, M.Sc., Professor of Informatics at the Faculty of Education in Uzice, gave a lecture on working with the WordPress program to interested students of the seventh and eighth grades of the Elementary School "Dusan Jerkovic". At the "My Virtual Corner" workshops, children were introduced to the basics of digital marketing culture and trained to create a website in the free WordPress program. During the training, we did not deal with programming, but only with tools that require basic internet skills. Several students from two departments of the school each told their school librarians that they had tried to create their own websites, and they were encouraged to do so by this lecture.

The cooperation between the school librarians of Elementary School "Dusan Jerkovic" and the Public Library Uzice continued in the implementation of the "Digital Citizen" project. This project was initiated by the Institute for Youth Development and Innovation - IRIM from Zagreb, with the financial support of Google and the cooperation of local partners. The Public Library Uzice is one of 20 libraries in Serbia that, by participating in the project, received 20 micro:bit devices and 5 boson - do-it-yourself sets as a gift. The

workshops are designed so that children of elementary school age get to know the basics of programming. They were realized partly in the premises of the Library, and partly in the IT offices in primary schools in the territory of the city of Uzice.

Workshops were held with sixth-grade students of "Dusan Jerkovic" Elementary School, again in cooperation with school librarians and teachers of technical and IT education, through which we enabled the students to learn simple programming in an interesting, interesting and fun way, and the students were delighted when they found out that the sets can be rented to interested users to practice the basics of programming at home. Thanks to the successful implementation of this project, the Public Library Uzice won a 3D printer.

In his book, *The Library in the Twenty-First Century*, Peter Brophy says, "I believe in libraries, but I fear for them. They have so much to offer, and yet they can easily get stuck." We are aware that children born in the era of information technologies, especially the Internet, have other priorities, which leads us to problems, but also to the need to overcome the reading crisis. "In our daily work with children, we are aware that they respond positively to almost any type of animation aimed at awakening or deepening their interest in reading".

In support of this, primary and pre-schoolers of Elementary School "Dusan Jerkovic" have traditionally, for several years, come for an organized visit to the National Library of Uzice during Children's Week. The goal of the workshops, which are usually thematically related to the motto of Children's Week, is precisely the promotion of the library, books and reading, and their realization confirms that both school and public libraries equally contribute to children's intellectual, social and linguistic development.

The creativity and knowledge of children's library librarians is best reflected in finding new, interactive models for preserving old ones and attracting new library users. "That's why in the children's library, the center of all interests is the child itself, the study of his psychological characteristics and literary inclinations." For this very reason, the Children's Department of the Public Library Uzice, in cooperation with primary schools and preschool institutions of the city, has for many years been organizing educational and creative workshops for preschoolers and first-graders, which are visited annually by about 1000 children. At these workshops, children get to know the work of the Library and the fund of

the Children's Department of the Public Library Uzice. Along with the obligatory reading of children's stories, fairy tales, fables and discussion of various interesting and current topics, children are enabled to express their personal experiences and to express their creative ideas through various techniques of artistic creation.

One of the most interesting and fun joint activities is the masquerade ball of students "On the wings of imagination - the main character of a book". The school librarians of Elementary School "Dusan Jerkovic" started organizing masquerade balls to the great joy of the students 10 years ago, in the 2009/2010 school year in order to encourage students to read, and the following year they agreed with the librarians of the Children's Department of the Public Library Uzice to organize a joint masquerade ball from then on. The expert council of third grade teachers coordinates with the students and cooperates in the selection of students who will additionally perform on stage and present their class. School librarians and teachers instruct them on how to express artistic and expressive elements in the performance, and parents monitor the entire performance of the activity. Fellow teachers and librarians from other schools participate occasionally. The Public Library Uzice provides space and awards books to several students who most successfully portrayed the chosen literary character with their costume.

Mutual support and finding new models of cooperation has resulted in the last few years in the joint celebration of Francophonie Day through various activities: the performance of a short college program by students in the Reading Room of the Public Library Uzice, an exhibition of French costumes from different eras and NBU books in the French language (2016 g.); a poetry and music evening was held within the Poetry Lovers' Club dedicated to Jacques Préver, which exists in the school "Dusan Jerkovic" as a project of the school librarians, with the aim of affirming the power and importance of the poetic word, an exhibition of books by French writers for children of the Children's Department of the Public Library Uzice in the hall of the city library, the final performance was held, a musical and stage program of school students, performed in French (2017); the final part of the school project "Let's get to know France" was realized with the cooperation of students, teachers of French, geography and school librarians in the NBU Reading Room (in 2019).

By implementing a series of such activities, students gradually become independent in learning and solving tasks, and at the same time, their creativity and creativity are stimulated.

Students adopt the goals and tasks of several subjects, and at the same time form their personality in a cosmopolitan spirit, motivated to cultivate tolerance and directed to a more dynamic and engaging combination of knowledge. A very important fact is that the cooperation of librarians encourages reading and motivates children and young people to research, but also to socialize and research different sources in the library, as well as outside it, all for the purpose of lifelong learning, which is imperative today given the great development of technology, science and the world we live in.

Instead of a Conclusion

The presented examples of practice and partnership relations of these two libraries - public and school can serve as a guide for librarians who work with children and young people and encourage them to jointly design new models of cooperation. Mutual cooperation, dialogue and agreement have multiple benefits for both librarians and children and students; librarians help each other, exchange ideas, learn from each other; young people are motivated in different ways to read and to use the services and funds of libraries, they are told that lifelong learning is increasingly an axiom for performing both future jobs and leading a quality life.

The advantage of this kind of work of librarians is that they bring creativity and fun into the process of learning with children and young people, they adapt more easily to the demands of the new time compared to learning in school according to mandatory curricula.

Today's society, which is constantly learning, still does not recognize the library as an essential place for learning (learning), and it is up to librarians to impose themselves with their many different activities, programs and projects and point out the numerous possibilities of improving knowledge that they offer.

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