



What has changed?

Nine years of library services to people experiencing homelessness

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Content:

- Homelessness in Croatia
- What I knew about homelessness 9 years ago
- What I didn't know
- Impact of 9 years of library services to people experiencing homelessness
- Why I have decided not to continue to manage services
- A key message

Homelessness in Croatia

- the war in the first half of the 1990s
- transition from socialism to capitalism
- every fifth citizen lives at risk of poverty
- 2011 Social Welfare Act – homelessness mentioned for the 1st time
- no relevant data about the number of people experiencing homelessness
- lack of programs for them
- insufficient communication in the system

What I knew about homelessness 9 years ago

- people experiencing homelessness in Zagreb didn't have access to the Internet
- those who didn't have an ID card couldn't use the library
- shelters didn't have book collections
- people have prejudices towards them
- a few of them I met were kind, interested in books and how to use the Internet
and I started targeted services.

What I didn't know

- that for 9 years I will be the only librarian who will work with them
- that I will work with people who were abused and abused others, addicted, with personality disorders, mental illness, intellectual disabilities...
- that will be no experts from other areas who could educate or supervise me
- how to set healthy boundaries

Impact of services

- 9 continuous years of IT workshops twice a week
- donated books and IT equipment to shelters and the drop-in center
- published and collected books, magazines and other materials
- legal and psycho-social support ...
- intensive advocacy
- workshops for the ZCL's librarians

...or just helped people experiencing homelessness to find shoes, food, medicine, and accept them the way they are.



IT workshops with
the help of
volunteers.
The importance of
welcoming space.



Award Pride of Croatia 2016



A documentary film about users of library services to people experiencing homelessness won „A Corto di Libri Award 2018”

A Corto di Libri
Shorts on Books

International AIB/IFLA
short film competition
about libraries
X edition

I cortometraggi raccontano
le biblioteche

SALONE INTERNAZIONALE
DEL LIBRO TORINO

IL
MAGGIO
DEL
LIBRI
LEGGERE FA CRESCERE
2018

Premio / Award
Cortometraggio dell'anno / Best Short of the Year
WHAT DO USERS SAY ABOUT
LIBRARY SERVICES FOR PEOPLE
EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS?
Marko Sikic, Sanja Bunic, Zagreb City Libraries

una proposta in collaborazione con sotto gli auspici del

Logos: AIB, Salone Internazionale del Libro Torino, M.I.C., M.I.O.L., P.P.I.A., Free Library of Philadelphia, Centro per il Libro e la Lettura

Co-chaired the
IFLA
Guidelines for
Library Services
to People
Experiencing
Homelessness



CHANGING

Managing services to people experiencing homelessness was the most gratifying work I have done as a librarian but...

Why I have decided not to continue

- I have more and more other responsibilities, and less and less time and money to improve services
- I am still the only one...
- I have had more good moments, but also some very hard and overwhelming ones with no support
- the drop-in center near the library has already been opened for one year

The complex role of libraries in contemporary society is increasingly demanding for librarians.

The multitasking and commitment to the field of other professions makes us forget what is our priority and our uniqueness.



EMEARC19 CHANGE THE GAME

THANK YOU

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