

The Frankfurt **Public Library Service (Stadtbücherei Frankfurt am Main)**, consists of a Central Library for adults, a Central Library for children and teens, 4 District Libraries, 13 Branch Libraries, a Mobile Library Service with 2 buses and almost 80 professionally managed School Libraries.

## **1. Prologue to the project “Libraries for all” in Frankfurt Public Libraries**

Altogether in the city of Frankfurt am Main there are **people of 180 nations** living together, 30 per cent of the city's population is not of German origin. Understandably the Frankfurt Public Library Service has therefore for a long time attached particular importance to library work with persons with a migrant background. For many years the libraries has held for example stocks in foreign languages. However seen in an historical context, the most important pre-condition to the project „Libraries for All” was the founding of the International Library in 2002 in the Gallus Branch Library.

In close cooperation with the relevant partner organisations within the catchment area – and particularly with the Institute for Multicultural Affairs (Amt für Multikulturelle Angelegenheiten) and the Adult Education Centre of Frankfurt am Main (Volkshochschule Frankfurt am Main) - the hard-to-reach target groups of non-German speaking immigrants have been introduced to the library and familiarised with the relevant and specific library facilities available there for them.

### **The International Library comprises:**

- A special collection of materials in German acquired in response to the needs of the target group.
- 4 ‘self-learning’ workspaces.
- An interactive introduction to the library focused on active participation, and tailored to the target group of adults with little knowledge of German.
- A PC Literacy Lernstudio: 6 computers equipped with appropriate software for alphabetisation, learning German and text editing. The Literacy Lernstudio also has a mixed-media stock of picture books, educational games, teaching and learning material, for the promotion of adult literacy.
- Staff training in intercultural competences. <sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Vgl. Lotz, Birgit (2007): Die Bibliothek als Lernort für Migrantinnen und Migranten – das PC-Lernstudio zur Alphabetisierung im Rahmen der Internationalen Bibliothek. Vortrag beim 3. Leipziger Kongress für Information und Bildung. URL: <http://www.opus-bayern.de/bib-info/volltexte/2007/361/>; Lotz Birgit, Silke Schumann (2004): Multikulturelle Bibliotheksarbeit. "Die Internationale Bibliothek" in der

## **2. The projekt „Libraries for All“ in Frankfurt am Main: Who will participate?**

Our first job was to select suitable branch libraries for the project. We chose:

1. Stadtteilbibliothek Gallus (Gallus Branch Library) because

- it is situated in a catchment area where more than 50 % of the local population do not hold a German passport or they have a migratory background.
- the staff have extensive experience and training in intercultural library work („Internationale Bibliothek“)

2. Stadtteilbibliothek Sindlingen (Sindlingen Branch Library) because

- by implementing an LMEC in two branch libraries we planned to provide ourselves with the opportunity to compare the development and reception of an LMEC under similar conditions but within differing frameworks.
- no structured intercultural services had been offered in this branch library before. We wanted to observe the effect of the newly implemented intercultural services.
- through the process of transferring the expertise gained in the Gallus Branch library to the library in Sindlingen we hoped to develop a best practice model which can be transferred to other libraries.

## **3. Setting up the Multicultural Advisory Board**

The innovative core of the project is the Multicultural Advisory Board, the members of which are directly involved in the needs assessment and structural organisation of the project.

We decided to have one Advisory Board for both branch libraries, with members directly involved in one or other of the catchment areas of the branch libraries. There were to be three members and one librarian for each branch library.

Having committed ourselves to the target group of migrant parents and families, we invited local citizens who were involved in this area to participate as members on the Board. Four of the members have personal migratory experience (Turkish, Greek, Moroccan). The Board was initiated in June 2009 and has met six times between June 2009 and March 2010.

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Stadtteilbibliothek Gallus der Stadtbücherei Frankfurt am Main. In: Handbuch KulturManagement, B 4.15, S. 1–29; Lotz, Birgit, Silke Schumann (2004): Neue Ideen aus Queens für Mainhattan. Von New York nach Frankfurt am Main: Die "Internationale Bibliothek" kommt bei Migranten gut an. In: BuB 56 (2004), 1. S. 30 - 35. Lotz, Birgit (2002): Die Internationale Bibliothek – von New York nach Frankfurt. Gütersloh : Bertelsmann Stiftung. Zum Download unter: <http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/cps/rde/xchg/SID-0A000F0A-DC96509A/bst/hs.xsl/14052.htm?suchrubrik=>.

## **4. Needs Assessment**

One of the missions of the Frankfurt Public Library Service is to provide a wide variety of relevant up to date materials and services to help community residents obtain information meeting their personal, educational and professional needs. In order to fulfil this mission it is necessary for each individual branch library to continually be aware of and act according to the changing demands and needs of the residents of each individual catchment area. To this end the branch librarians work continually and in close cooperation with other institutions within the district to create the necessary profile for their library.

The needs assessment generated for the project correlated with the perception of everyday life in the communities and provided an insight into its sources. All the drafts were discussed at considerable length by the members of the Advisory Board, thus ensuring that educational experts and migrants were included in the preparation and analysis of the needs assessment. All comments of members of the board were incorporated. Further sources of information for the needs assessment were provided by statistics and conceptual plans from other town offices, knowledge gained from work with local district educational committees as well as the pilot events of the branch libraries for the project up to May 2009.

Characteristic of the catchment area of both branch libraries is the multicultural structure of the population. Approximately 20 (Sindlingen Branch Library) or, in the case of Gallus Branch Library, 40 percent of the residents do not hold a German passport. One third, or respectively one fifth of these citizens comes from Turkey, the remainder from a variety of nations. They can be described, therefore as linguistic and ethnic heterogeneous communities. The economic and social situation of the families living in both catchment areas is often precarious. Approximately half of these families receive state aid. As well as schools and day care facilities for children, in both districts help is also provided by a variety of social institutions and associations. These organizations are efficiently networked through working panels such as local district committees (Stadtteilarbeitskreis) and local advisory boards for the prevention of addiction/violence (Präventionsrat). The branch libraries are represented on both panels. Very soon it became clear that in both districts there existed a need to aid and promote the expertise and skills of parents and families.

Three key aspects emerged for the libraries:

- Promotion of language in the mother tongue
- Assistance with learning German and the promotion of the German language
- The promotion of media competency and literacy

## **5. The work of the Multicultural Advisory Board**

With these facts in mind the Multicultural Advisory Board discussed in detail the proposed new services of the „Library for All“in the Frankfurt branch libraries in Sindlingen and Gallus. The pivotal questions revolved and still revolve around the following issues:

*Conception of the services:* In close cooperation with the Board it was decided in which languages literature should be provided in both branch libraries. The Board discussed the educational concept which should be clarified in the project and gathered ideas, for example, on the question of how parents could be encouraged to transfer the knowledge they gained during the events to other parents.

*Reaching the target group:* The experience gained with the International Library in Gallus branch library had already shown that migrants with a low standard of education could only be encouraged into the library using an unusual approach. The traditional method of publicity with flyers, handouts, newspaper articles is not particularly successful because the target group takes little notice of it. Apart from this it is often simply the fear of the unknown which has to be overcome. All members of the Board agreed that close cooperation with institutions, groups or associations already working with the target group would provide the key to success. This meant that the librarians had to go out, introduce themselves, put forward their suggestions and create a basis of trust with the institutions, groups and associations. In the course of the discussions the Board compiled a list of potential contact persons.

*Public relations:* As the members of the Board are themselves involved in multicultural work with families or actually belong to the target group, they bring their own manifold institutional and personal contacts into the project work with them ( see Chapter 9: opening party in Sindlingen)

From the librarianship point of view the work with the Advisory Board is the most productive experience within the project „Libraries for All“. As well as providing affirmation for the chosen approach this work gave and gives plenty of suggestions from which the libraries involved will undoubtedly profit well beyond the end of the project.

## **6. Services in Frankfurt „Library for all“**

The services are targeted towards parents and children, stimulate cooperation between families and intentionally include families with and without a migratory background. Essentially families with low educational experience are approached. The duplication and overlapping of services is to be avoided – which means that the libraries do not offer events or services which are already offered by other institutions such as the day-care centers for children, schools and other social and educational establishments in the area. These institutions are seen as partners in whose activities the libraries can participate with their professional expertise. The „Frankfurt Library for All“ features the following modules:

### *Multicultural family library*

- Library stock
  - Parental handbooks in various languages (Turkish, Arabic, German)
  - Picture books and Cds in individual languages (Turkish, Arabic, German)
  - Picture book and Cds in two or more languages (various languages)
- Products: introductions to the library and events
  - Introduction to the library for parents

- Briefing on everyday use of the media in family life (reading aloud, television, computer games, internet)
- Multicultural reading promotion for parents and children
- The library offers itself as partner for institutions, groups and associations organizing multicultural events with themes on family and education.



#### *International library*

- Stock and facilities:
  - Multimedia stock for learning the German language (new only in Sindlingen)
  - PC Lernstudio in Gallus branch library
- Products: introductions to the library and events
  - Introduction to the library for migrants learning German (new in Sindlingen)
  - Special introductions into the use of the computers and the specific software for courses in literacy and the German language.

Both the introduction to the library and computer software as well as the briefing on the everyday use of media in family life are enriched with visual material and designed to encourage active participation. An important educational instrument and at the same time a playful element is the „magic cube“, an inflatable plastic cube with transparent plastic pockets on each side. These pockets can be filled with pictures or photos which can be produced in each library as required using a digital camera and photo printer. Further information and a precise summary of the individual introductions using the cube will soon be available on the homepage of the project (in German).

The material for the promotion of reading is tailored towards two to five year olds and their parents. Normally the event includes an introductory ritual followed by the reading aloud of the chosen book, a creative or playful action associated with the book and a ritual to conclude the event. In this way, children and parents experience how much fun it can be to read a book aloud – sometimes even in several languages, to talk about it , play and create with the ideas in the book. Details of the individual titles and material available can be found also on the homepage of the project.

In Frankfurt Public Library the „action boxes for the promotion of multicultural reading“ include not only the book but everything one needs to reproduce the event in any library. The boxes can be used by all libraries within the Frankfurt library system, not only by the project libraries. In this way, through the boxes there is already a transfer of knowledge within the library service.

The library for parents is flanked by appropriate events. Exemplary is the series of events, „Genitori Informati – teaching parents“ which took place during the course of the project in close cooperation with an association of migrants: „Coordinamento Donne Italiane di Francoforte e. V.“. During a series of events, mostly planned by the Coordinamento , Italian parents received information on topics such as bilingual education, the German pre-school and school system and the use of the library. To round off the program there was a Christmas story time and a German-Italian afternoon theater is planned for June 2010.

## 7. Experiences

During the course of the project both branch libraries worked on a local level together with more than 25 institutions or groups. Only in a few instances, as for example with the Coordinamento Donne Italiane di Francoforte e. V. was there an agreement to organize one or more events together. In fact it was rather the case that the individual libraries offered their services to other institutions or groups, which, for example then booked an introduction to the library or a multicultural story time. In many instances the services of the libraries was repeatedly called upon by individual institutions , so that, during the course of time close partnerships developed - as for example with the Volkshochschule (Adult Education Centre), the Eltern-Kind-Treff Gallus (parent-children-club in Gallus), the Kinderschutzbund (Child Protection Agency) and the Internationalen Krabbelkreis (international crawling group) in Sindlingen.

The practice of approaching cooperation partners and institutions in order to reach the target group has proved to be successful. The library has to make clear the fact that it under no circumstances poses competition but that it can enrich and augment the activities of the institution in question with its special library orientated services. Appointments and content of the events are individually agreed with the contact person. Normally this policy guarantees a minimum of 5 to 15 participants per event.

Within the framework of the project 66 events have taken place between October 2008 and the end of March 2010, including introductions to the library, reading promotion etc. 28 of these events with altogether 300 participants took place within the last four months since the official public presentation of the project. The following events were particularly popular:

- Introduction to the library for participants in literacy and German language courses (18)
- Multicultural story times for parents and children (15)
- Introduction to the library for parents (with and without extra story times) (13)
- Introduction into the use of the computers in Gallus Branch Library (9 since Dec. 2009)

More important is finally the fact that the library staff leaves the library to present their products outside. For example, Vera Dopichaj, presented the services of the branch library in Sindlingen

at a meeting of the international women's group in the nearby district of Zeilsheim before the group made two appointments to visit the library. Silke Schumann visited the women's group of the Tarik Mosque during one of their regular Sunday gatherings to talk about the library and invite the women to come there. Here it is important to note that the group had the opportunity to meet the librarian personally in their own environment before being confronted with the unknown in the library.

## 8. First Results of Evaluation

The evaluation of the project is still underway. It should survey whether the specific services offered to the target group are used as well as the regular library services. To this end we have compared the lending of the stock for the target group with the lending figures of the complete stock in each library. The following figures are from the first quarter of 2010:

In Gallus Branch Library the turnover for stock in the section for parents and the international library is approximately the same as that for the whole stock. The figures for Sindlingen are not available at the present time. In individual sections, such as the multilingual picture books or the handbooks for parents in Turkish the volume of turnover is considerably higher than for the overall turnover. The interests of the target group are therefore well matched.

The primary evaluation of the events produces a similar result. In both libraries together 12 events have been evaluated to date. The participants were asked to what extent they liked the event. To do this they could place dots on a target. (See Photo chapter 9). In nearly all cases participants placed their scores within the central core of the target. Only one event – a talk on the use of the media in everyday family life – received a mixed evaluation.<sup>2</sup> At six events the participants were also asked if they planned to return to the library. The response to this question was extremely positive, interestingly even by the group which had given mixed scoring on the first question. As a temporary result it can be noted that the decrease in the fear of the unknown and the help to help oneself (both verbalized as goals in the needs assessment), appear to have been successful in the services offered by the project. The good use of the project-orientated stock helps to prove this point.

Further goals mentioned in the needs assessment such as the support of other educational institutions in the district or the building of networks will be evaluated using other methods in May and June 2010. Meetings and discussions will be held with contact persons from the institutions and groups with which the libraries work. At the beginning of June the Advisory Board will also discuss the results of the project.

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<sup>2</sup> In a discussion with the head of the group it became clear that contradictory expectations and a different group of people from those usually present at an open meeting was the cause.

## 9. Publicity and transfer of knowledge

We have informed other libraries and municipalities through the means of reports and project presentations, recently for example during the German Library congress in Leipzig.<sup>3</sup> The workshops which took place in each library are among the most important events for the transfer of knowledge. The first workshop was on 13. November 2009:

*The workshop „New Approach: Multicultural Services for Families“*

Up until October 2009 our attention was focused entirely on the completion of the concept, the set-up of services within the project, the accession of equipment, the building of collections in the libraries etc., - all in close cooperation with the ABM. Finally in November 2009 we were in a position to present the first results of the project to the public. One of the events was the workshop „**New Approach: Multicultural Services for Families**“ which took place in Gallus Branch Library on November 13th.

### *Marketing*

This workshop was advertised in a mailing list for librarians and also in the city of Frankfurt program of the „Interkulturelle Wochen“(Intercultural weeks), which took place in November 2009. Naturally we also invited our staff of Frankfurt Public Library, the members of the ABM and representatives of the „Stadtteilarbeitskreise“ (local district committees) of the districts Gallus, Sindlingen and Zeilsheim

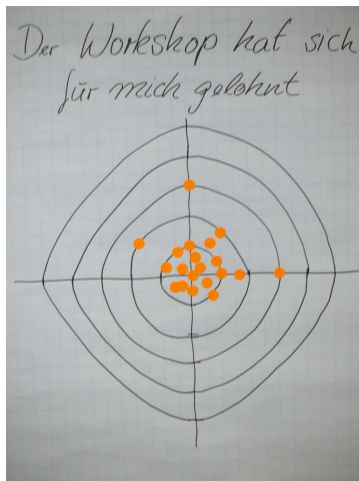
### *Program*

There were 18 participants of varied professions: Colleagues from the Frankfurt Public Library and librarians from the City Libraries of Offenbach and Aschaffenburg, members of the Advisory Board and educators from various institutions in the district of Gallus were also present. Ms Eleonore Demmer-Gaite from the Internationales Familienzentrum e. V.(International family centre association) gave a presentation on the chances for migrant families to receive a good education for their families This was followed by an introduction into the ESME-Project presented by Birgit Lotz and Silke Schumann. Members of the ABM introduced themselves and answered question on the work of the Advisory Board. In the second part of the workshop Ms. Schumann and Ms. Lotz presented the new services for multicultural families.

### *Assessment*

During the course of the workshop there was an animated discussion on how to reach the target groups. An interesting and important result was the mutual exchange of ideas and getting acquainted with one another's professions. Most of the non-librarian participants were impressed to learn how much and how effectively help can be given through the branch libraries to the educational institutions and how active our networking with other institutions dealing with the same target group is. The staff from other libraries articulated a desire to stay in contact with

us and to receive further results of our work. The book boxes („Aktionskisten Interkulturelle Leseförderung“) were of special interest. Feedback from staff members of the Frankfurt Public Library was varying: a few of them thought that there was not enough new information given in the workshop, that it had been more a kind of recapitulation. Others thought it very interesting and stimulating to get a focused overview about the project and its ideas. Here we should add that we have, of course since the start of the project reported regularly in various panels and committees within our library, so that inevitably the staff had different levels of information. To summarize: the majority of the participants evaluated the workshop as „good“ or „very good“ (see the photo with the answers to the question: How did I benefit from the workshop?)



The second workshop, organized in cooperation with the “Fachstelle Darmstadt”, a specialist department serving libraries in small municipalities in the south of Hesse, took place on June 7th, 2010, and provided us with the opportunity to transfer our knowledge systematically to other municipalities in the region.

### **Press conference and opening event (November 28th, 2009)**

Stadtteilbibliothek Sindlingen

For Saturday, November 28th we scheduled an opening event in Sindlingen Branch Library. It began with a press conference, attended also by one of the members of the ABM and resulting in two positive articles in local newspapers.

During the course of the event we presented our new collections: books in Turkish and Arabic languages for children and parents, multilingual books for children, and books for learners of German. We also gave introductions to the library for parents and organized reading-aloud sessions of two of the newly acquired books for children in German and Turkish. An international buffet and a Turkish Karagöz-Theatre were the other highlights of the afternoon.

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<sup>3</sup> Vgl. Lotz, Birgit, Schumann, Silke: Libraries for All - Ein EU-Projekt unter Beteiligung der Stadtbücherei

More than 70 people, mainly parents and their children, attended the event. We issued one new library card and lent 76 items on that day. Several mothers were really enthusiastic about the Turkish books for parents. One mother took out several Arabic books for children, happy, that her husband now can also read to their son in his mother tongue.

Very important for the great success of the afternoon was the cooperation with one of the members of the ABM. She organized the buffet and came with her group of Turkish mothers into the library. Many of them had never been in the library before.



## 10. Conclusion and future prospects

The project „Libraries for All“ has proved very stimulating for the multicultural work of the branch libraries in Gallus and Sindlingen. In many respects the work within the project is on the local level a good investment in continuity and sustainability.

- Continuity of the service: The services developed in the course of the project will continue to be offered in both libraries; the educational concepts will be practiced.
- Conceptual development: The suggestions of the Advisory Board which could not be realized during the course of the project will be given top priority in the future.
- The continuity of the Board, possibly in a slightly different form, is being considered.
- Networks: The local contacts made during the course of the project will be cultivated and new ones made. Already events are being planned with local partner organizations beyond the end of the project.

- Transfer of knowledge: Those responsible for the project will continue to share their experiences and knowledge. For example answering inquiries from other professionals and giving lectures. Another transfer of knowledge within Frankfurt Public Library is planned.