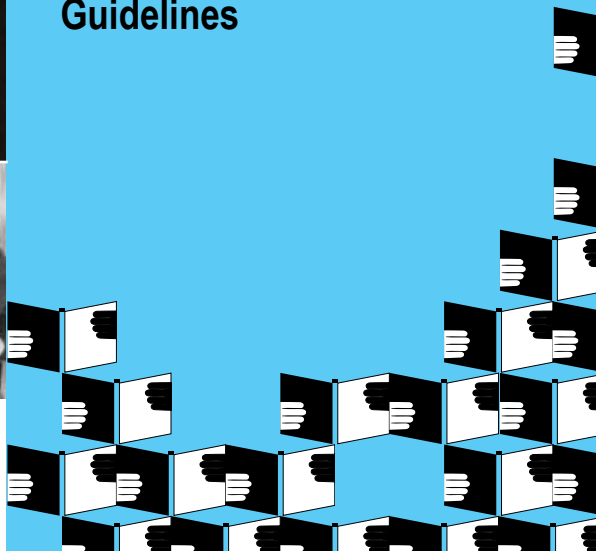




# LIBRARIES FOR ALL

## EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION (ESME)

### Guidelines





## LIBRARIES FOR ALL – EUROPEAN STRATEGY FOR MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION (ESME)

### Guidelines



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Multicultural Center Prague (Czech Republic)

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[www.librariesforall.eu](http://www.librariesforall.eu)

Manual and Guidelines are available in four language versions: Czech, English, German and Swedish, in print and for download on the project website.



## INTRODUCTION

European public libraries have undergone a significant change over the past fifty years as a result of globalisation and of both technical and technological development. Some general improvements include the increased accessibility of public libraries to the general public, the increased application of new library technologies, and the enhancement of the range of both library collections and services. One of the influences behind this process has also been the transformation of the reader community in the recent decades leading to a necessary transformation of library services. At present, there is no question that a public library should be anything but a “Library for all”; an institution whose main objective is to serve its diverse society.


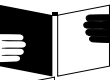


A public library is an important and central community hub, fulfilling cultural, educational and information functions within a local area. It offers both formal and informal approaches to education that is easily and openly accessible and with no barriers for a wide general public, disregarding age, gender or nationality. At the same time, it is also a place of rest and amusement, a meeting point and a place for building social relations. The objective of a library should always be intercultural by creating an open space for equal access to information as well as maintaining the development and satisfaction of each visitor's cultural needs. In this sense, a library promotes integration at the local level while also facilitating contact with the cultural heritage of other nations and cultural diversity. In this way, libraries increase understanding of the differences between individual social groups and promote peaceful coexistence.

The guidelines for “Libraries for All – European Strategy for Multicultural Education (ESME)” are one of the results of the project Libraries for All run between Sweden, Austria, Germany and the Czech Republic. The aim of the project has been to initiate an EU-wide upgrade of local public libraries and to create new models for intercultural library services. The guidelines give an understandable overview of the steps to be followed for establishing the public library as a local multicultural education centre. The guidelines outline, in short, the realization of the project in each partner countries. It comprises a checklist – a step by step procedure including the individual measures necessary to achieve the “Libraries for All” model as well as a checklist for analysis of the library catchment area, a useful tool for needs assessment.

The project manual provides a more detailed account of the project in each country. The manual is available in four language versions – English, Czech, German and Swedish – in print and on the project website [www.librariesforall.eu](http://www.librariesforall.eu), where it is also possible to find other project information as well as more information sources.

The authors of the guidelines would like to thank all colleagues in partner libraries and non-government organisations who contributed to the preparation of the guidelines with their experience, advice and remarks to its content. We hope that the guidelines will serve libraries as a source of inspiration and further development.





## EXPERIENCE OF THE PROJECT:

### The EU Lifelong learning project “Libraries for All – ESME”

Libraries for All – European Strategy for Multicultural Education (ESME) is a 2-year European pilot project (October 2008-September 2010) focusing on developing multicultural public libraries and models for intercultural library services. A key point in the ESME project is to cooperate with migrants in order to integrate the cultural capital of local migrant residents in the development process.

To this end, local Advisory Boards for Multiculturalism (ABM) have been installed at the pilot libraries in Austria, the Czech Republic, Germany and Sweden. The boards consist of librarians and selected members of the local migrant communities. The advisory boards meet regularly to assist in the assessment of local needs and to discuss and develop the local library offers and activities. At some of the pilot libraries advisory board members are also actively involved in carrying out the activities. The advisory board members play an important role in reaching the target groups, collecting and spreading information in the local community, and thus promoting the libraries and their services to the local population. You could say that they function as local ambassadors of the libraries involved.

The four regional pilot projects also offered a series of seminars for librarians and other intercultural professionals in order to promote EU-wide development of multilingual and multicultural public libraries for all. In the seminars librarians, immigrant and migration organisations were invited to reflect and share ideas on how to develop multicultural public libraries and library services. Examples of seminar topics are “Multicultural Services for Families”, “Users’ perspective”, and “Good Learning Examples”.

Local models were implemented and evaluated at the pilot libraries in the four different European regions, and a manual on how to create a “Library for All” was prepared based on the learning experiences of the project and other best practice examples. The project outcomes are published on the project website [www.librariesforall.eu](http://www.librariesforall.eu)



### Examples of multicultural services offered at the pilot libraries


Several multicultural services and events have been developed at the ESME pilot libraries in cooperation with their local partners:

- Support for children’s bilingual development, targeting parents, families and preschools
- Support for second language learning, targeting newcomers
- Bridging the digital gap, targeting migrants, migrant women
- Creating intercultural dialogue, targeting adults: multicultural exhibitions and other special events



## Below are some examples.


The Austrian pilot library in Götzis has initiated a language learning project called “German for breakfast” targeting women with migrant background. It is an informal breakfast organized at the library once a month, where the participants read and talk about different topics each time, and get the opportunity to familiarize themselves with the local area and some of the customs of their new country.



At the Czech pilot library, the Municipal Library in Prague, library information materials have been developed in seven languages (Russian, Ukrainian, Mongolian, Vietnamese, Chinese, English and German), and low-threshold Czech language courses for migrants are offered in cooperation with the Centre for Integration of Foreigners. Computer courses are also offered at the library in order to bridge the digital gap. For children various special events are organized, e.g. a weekend stay entitled “My Home”, organized by the NGO Berkát, where children are invited to illustrate and talk about their relationship to their country of origin and the Czech Republic. The resulting children artworks will be part of an exhibition on foreigners living in Prague scheduled in September 2010 at the Municipal Library in Prague.

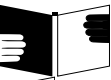
At the German pilot libraries, the Gallus and Sindlingen Branch Libraries of the Public Library of Frankfurt am Main, the overarching aim is to support first and second language development, the primary target group being parents and families. The libraries offer library introductions specifically designed to demonstrate to parents how library materials can be used to support their children’s language development. A special “Parents’ Library Collection” has been set up with brochures and books for parents and picture books for children in multiple languages. Experts are invited to read aloud in different languages at family gatherings, using special “action boxes” each containing a book in several languages and material to encourage the understanding and creativity of the young listeners.

The Swedish pilot library, Biskopsgården Library in Gothenburg, is part of the Gothenburg best practice adult learning project Adults in Learning, in which the study librarian at Biskopsgården Library a.o. offers several basic computer courses on a weekly basis and informal Swedish conversational training. Basic computer courses targeting women have also been developed. The courses are very much in demand, and since half of the population in Biskopsgården has migrant background, most participants are migrants. The drop-in conversational training in the library cafeteria now also includes English and Kurdish conversational groups. The conversational groups sometimes organize excursions for social and cultural purposes, or invite special guests and experts for specific information on demanded subjects such as fire safety. Furthermore, a series of intercultural gatherings have been planned together with the local residents in the multilingual advisory board, including a series of presentations by famous authors with migrant background, knitting café, family days with dance, music, children’s theater, storytelling for children in multiple languages, creative workshops for youngsters during school holidays, and world film screenings, which reflect the diverse cultural interests of the local residents of the Gothenburg city district Biskopsgården.



The ESME project wishes to inspire local public libraries EU-wide to initiate multicultural library services in cooperation with local partners. By encouraging multilingual/multicultural advisory boards, migrants’ cultural capital is paired with librarians’ professional competence in the local development process, a potential win-win situation for both parties.

We hope that these guidelines will be of use in the development of intercultural multilingual public libraries and as a basis for further discussions and exchange of experiences and ideas.



## CONCLUSION

Each individual participating country provided a unique opportunity for the implementation of the project. Differences were apparent at many levels, such as different local environments and situations, the make-up of the local migrant and majority populations, the structure of these populations with respect to city geography to name a few. In this respect, each local experience is unique to its particular situation; however, despite these differences, similarities begin to emerge as early as the first stages of the projects, revealing the basic goals of the project: increasing communication and sharing of information, networking, engaging and integrating disparate communities, and tailoring a set of new services to a new target group. As mentioned before, central to each local experience was the establishment of an advisory board which facilitated all these interactions. The resulting subprojects, services, and new library events and offers differed according to the locale, however, often had similar motivations and undercurrents.

Libraries in countries with shorter migration histories focused reaching out to the migrant communities in order to inform them of the general library services as well as on establishing language courses. For example, in Prague, InfoPoints were setup in library branches simply for facilitating communication with migrants. Accessibility and acquaintance with the library environment was also improved in Prague and Austria via the development of multilingual information and, along with most of the other project participants, language training and courses were more extensively developed. More multiculturally developed libraries worked on targeting more specific demographics, such as migrant women focused computer training in Sweden or parent – and family-focused programming in Austria and Germany. All over the board, the participants experimented with cultural events in poetry, music and various other arts. At the library management level, the projects in each locale have showed similar development in their public relations, establishing a network with other organizations, individuals, and communities, strengthening their interconnections and thereby providing possible future cooperation. In this sense, in all local experiences, the project has been successful in being sustainable and creating great potential for even more expansion – the planting of seeds so to speak – of these new intercultural libraries.

With such a project, there were inevitably many factors that contributed to the success at each level. Some factors for success are more concrete while others more broadly encompass the entire enterprise. The more general factors include good leadership, respect, cooperation and openness – these are prerequisites for the success of all such projects and have led to the win-win situation, where libraries improved the integration and support for migrant communities while at the same time, gaining new target groups and enriching their reader and user base. There are also concrete success factors that were recognized during the implementation of the project and here we name the most important. The needs assessment was identified as a key to the success of the project.

In this way, the libraries were able to direct the project accurately and properly reach the target group with appropriate programs and services. At the same time, success was also facilitated by cooperation and integration with other associations; this collaboration was particularly successful with language training, for example in Austria, where the library worked with the educational and language programme “mehr Sprache. Frühe Sprachförderung und Mehrsprachigkeit – eine Herausforderung für Familien und Institutionen früher Bildung (More Language: Early Language Support and Multilingualism – a Challenge for Families and Early Education)” and in the Czech Republic, where the library worked with the Center for Integration of Foreigners. However, such collaboration also benefits the library and the organizations in other ways, creating strength in a new network, learning new things through sharing, and sharing facilities and resources, thus synergizing the effects of both into a combination that helps everyone.

## CHECKLIST – STEP BY STEP AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The previous chapters look into the experiences made during the “Libraries for All” project. In this chapter, you will find a clearly arranged Checklist – Step by step, designed to help with a systematic implementation of the ideas represented by the “Libraries for All” project in other libraries. Our project draws on previous projects, addressing the issue of cultural diversity and focused on helping libraries become multicultural educational centers. As a part of these projects, a number of expert publications were written. These texts are still valid and they can provide us with guidance regarding procedures for the implementation of new multicultural services. For this reason, we reference the “Check-List for Action Planning”, originally published in “Cultural Diversity – How Public Libraries Can Serve Diversity in the Community”<sup>1</sup> and we enhance it by adding certain check-list items based on the experience of the “Libraries for All” project, as well as on the experience of its Advisory Boards and on the conducted Needs Assessments.

### Check-List For Action Planning

#### 1) Take leadership

First of all, the library management must decide to take action. If services for multicultural patrons and neighborhoods are not considered important by the senior management level, they will never be developed in an adequate way and will get a less than even share of resources. If the management does not care, why should staff?

#### 2) Define clear and measurable goals – strategic plan

Library management must advocate why it is necessary to take action in this field. Activities must be shown as being in coherence with the library's strategic planning and as actions that support its fulfillment. The next important step would be to define which actions should be taken and which goals are to be met.

#### 3) Seek political approval

Activities in this field may be controversial to certain groups in society and library management must be prepared to explain why it is important to deliver attractive services to multicultural users. The library board or an equivalent local political body should approve or, even better, advocate actions.

#### 4) Support dedicated staff

Often one can find staff members who, for many reasons, consider services for multicultural communities important. Such staffmembers should be identified and supported by the management.

#### 5) Information on local society

The actual mix of different language and culture groups in the local area will evidently change, sometimes even very rapidly because of the ongoing migration of people and actual developments in various parts of the world. So active use of census data and other relevant statistical information and collaboration with other parts of local jurisdictions is very important to get good, updated knowledge of the actual mix in the population.

SEE CHAPTER 2 IN MANUAL:  
Needs Assessment and reaching the target group  
OR THE SWEDISH CHECKLIST

<sup>1</sup> Jens Ingemann Larsen; Deborah L. Jacobs; Ton van Vliimmeren. Cultural Diversity: How Public Libraries Can Serve The Diversity In The Community. International Network Of Public Libraries, Bertelsmann Foundation, December 2003, <http://conferences.alia.org.au/alia2004/pdfs/vliimmeren.t.paper.pdf>

## 6) Seek collaboration with user groups

Many immigrant communities and language groups have established their own organizations have more or less official spokespeople etc. Such persons and organizations can function as focus groups and thereby help the library better understand the needs of the different groups and learn how they react on the various initiatives from the library.

SEE CHAPTER 3 IN MANUAL:  
Advisory Board for Multiculturalism

## 7) Learn from others

This paper should demonstrate that libraries could learn a lot from colleagues all over the world. Many libraries face similar expectations, needs and problems in the field of services towards multicultural groups and you will always be able to find someone who can help you somewhere in the national or international library environment.

## 8) Identify possible network partners

In this paper we have analyzed various consortial arrangements and networks between libraries that learn from each other and share the workload. It is very wise to seek such cooperation wherever possible, as each participating library will be able to expand services further with less effort, compared to the situation where a library would have to take care of all parts of the process on its own. No library, regardless of how excellent or well funded they are, should go at it alone.

## 9) Focus areas

Depending on the actual needs of the local community, the actual level of existing library services, the resources available etc., the library must decide which activities should be prioritized. For instance, the strategic plan may

contain more steps – from the basics to more advanced. In one community the top priority may be community information or library programming, in other communities it may be collection development and Internet resources.

## 10) Follow up – and review plan

Like all development projects, enhancing library services for cultural minorities is a constant learning process. It is very important to follow up on goals – which targets were met and which were not – in order to keep the business plan coherent with actual needs. It is also important to be flexible – to respond to changing needs, changing populations and the changing political environment.

## 11) Institutionalizing of services – part of every day work

As mentioned earlier, the key factor on the organisational level is the institutionalizing of services. At the time when services have matured to an extent where they are integrated into the normal way of operations, it is much more likely that cultural minority group users are offered their fair share of service.

## Three Golden Rules

If you want your library to be successful in serving the diversity in the community you should keep three golden rules in mind:

- 1) It depends on leadership if anything is going to happen. Without leadership there will be no lasting result.
- 2) Respect is the key factor in communication and cooperation between persons and groups with different languages and cultural background. In any planning the motto should be "Nothing over them and without them!"
- 3) You need a holistic approach. When all aspects are taken care of in a coherent way, the result will be much more than the sum of the different parts.






# CHECKLIST FOR NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## Analysis of the surroundings /Environmental analysis

Developed by Heli Henriksson Vasara, pioneer in the development of library services to immigrants in Sweden, and later purchasing manager at Gothenburg City Library, Sweden

This checklist with concrete questions shows how you can work step by step, learning more about the target groups in the library catchment area.



### 1. Demographic statistics/ Structure of the population

- Number of residents in the catchment area
- Age distribution
- Number of residents who are immigrants (born outside the country) divided on country of origin, rough age distribution, gender, and languages (N.B. Both linguistic and religious minorities)

### 2. Education

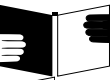
#### A. Compulsory school

- How is mother tongue training organised?
- Are there monolingual classes or schools (not majority language)?
- What languages and what age groups/stages/levels?
- How many mother tongue teachers are there in compulsory school and in which languages?
- What about the school library? Is there literature available also in other languages than the majority language?

#### B. Preschool

- Are there monolingual (not majority language) preschools or mixed preschools?
- How many preschool do not use the majority language?
- How many teachers/trainers are there at the preschools and in which languages?

#### C. Adult education

- How is second language training for immigrants organised at basic and advanced levels?
  - Alphabetisation training in the municipality/city district
  - Adult education at upper secondary/high school level and at compulsory school level in the catchment area
  - Learning centers in the catchment area
  - Folk high schools in the catchment area
- 



### 3. Elderly care

- Is there residential care/Are there homes designed for the elderly in the catchment area?
- Are there monolingual (not majority language) communities/sheltered housing for elderly/wards/parts or the like?

### 4. Reception of refugees in the municipality

- How is the reception of refugees organised in the municipality?
- Does the library receive part of the government funding for the reception of refugees in the municipality?

### 5. Club activities

- Are there association secretaries who can inform about clubs/associations?
- What orientation do the clubs/associations have?
- Are there traditional „immigrant clubs“, women's clubs, parent-teacher association, local Red Cross, Save the Children?

### 6. Economy

- Are there major workplaces in the catchment area?
- Is the library used by people who work in the area but live elsewhere?
- Are there SMEs (Small and Medium Enterprises) run by immigrants in the catchment area; e.g. restaurants, shops?

### 7. Future plans for the immediate surroundings, houses and other

For more project information and access to the “Libraries for all – ESME manual – developing multilingual and intercultural public libraries”, please visit the project website [www.librariesforall.eu](http://www.librariesforall.eu)

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