

Network of multimedia public libraries



AlpCity Partner Work Package WP Coordinator Subjects involved and their role

Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria)
Services and quality of life (WP6)
Provincial Government of Lower Austria (Austria)
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Spatial area involved

The participant towns were initially:
Heidenreichtstein, Eggenburg, Gänserndorf, Wolkersdorf, Gloggnitz, Fischamend,
Haag, Waidhofen/Y, Langenlois, Hainburg.
Actually the members are Eggenburg and Krems.

Project budget

€ 38.246,00

Project purpose

The main goal of the project consisted in the implementation of a creative and



Project methodology	<p>innovative cooperation process within some selected multi-media equipped public libraries in small-medium towns of Lower Austria. New forms of personnel and virtual user dialogs together with a periodic exchange of experiences within the network created the base for an enduring development process that aims at the provision of user-oriented multimedia stock and services. To enable a long lasting working process, a virtual platform and periodically organised personal meetings are carried out as a fundamental organisation structure.</p>
Project activities	<p>The project adopted the participation process as base for cooperation. Representatives of public libraries established a network after developing the concept of networking during some proper workshops. Some best practices examples have been collected and used as professional input. The bottom-up approach ensured a tailor-made design of the project stimulating the people's participation.</p> <p>The project aims have been achieved through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- coordination of interested and involved groups- working out of topics and working fields- implementation of self-organisation methodologies (local workshops)- setting up of inputs and strategy know-how (regional workshops)- development and establishing of products and services for the libraries to create more direct benefit for the participants. <p>March 2004: Introduction of the network. Informing cities with active public libraries about the call to take part in the project. The information was carried out with information letters and personal calls.</p> <p>June to September 2004: Introductory workshops with 5 libraries that were interested in taking part in the project. The specific goals of the network were set.</p> <p>January – June 2005: Implementation of educational workshops, where all public libraries were invited. Topics: "Sponsoring and fund raising for libraries" and "The perfect Appearance–professional speeches and presentations".</p> <p>October 2005 Symposium: Public Libraries in the 21st century – Knowledge Transfer Networks – Expectations, Facts, Perspectives The final declaration is provided in an extra document.</p>
Achieved results	<p>2006 so far Planning of further steps in establishing more network activities and getting more members into the network.</p> <p>Achieved agreements with 12 interested towns. Coordination of regional and local authorities and persons. Preparation and organisation of workshops. Homepage and project logograms. The participating towns showed a greater interest in the role of the libraries. Krems will soon provide its public library with new rooms. At the moment, the network has only two permanent members, although many more libraries expressed interest in taking part.</p>
Discrepancies	



between planned results and results achieved

The goal of eight participating libraries was missed, not because of lack of interest, but because of lack of personnel resources in the libraries involved.

Instruments proposed, revised and finalised

An information leaflet.

The Network Agreements between participating towns and the Association for Village and Urban Renewal in Lower Austria.

The implementation of a website for dissemination. On the website also an online-forum is available.

Invitation folders for the symposium.

A final resolution as the result of the symposium.

Impact on the local environment, actors and stakeholders

A knowledge transfer among the libraries during the implementation phase.

An educational programme for more and better skills in the daily work. Also a knowledge transfer between “beginners” in the business and people working in a library for long time.

In the participating towns, the role of the libraries was more emphasized.

During the symposium, the head of the country’s biggest scientific library offered cooperation to all public libraries attending the symposium, independently from their size. The gap between scientific libraries and public libraries started disappearing.

The resolution of the symposium can be used at political level: it was formulated and passed by some representatives of scientific and public libraries alike.

Critical aspects

The libraries are very interested in networking, but they do not have the necessary personnel resources.

Nevertheless there are more and more local networks between bigger libraries and small libraries in the countryside.

In order to overcome this obstacle the important role of libraries has to be recognised by the municipalities, who run the public libraries. Like that, hopefully more funds will be provided.

Fund raising was always an important issue.

A second strategy consists in encouraging voluntary work also in the libraries of cities, as it happens in the countryside.

The online-forum on the website was not used. The reason seems to be due to a lack of experience among users in the libraries. A training day on this subject will be offered in 2006.

Lessons learned

Networking is widely regarded as an important tool, but especially building up a network takes time. Therefore a coordinator is needed, who has to work only for that particular project.

The participants in the network have to understand their personal advantages for getting active.

Especially on the political level, it will be important to break up the image of the old style libraries with little old ladies taking care of them, but to position the library as an active and important access point to education and science.

The full usage of new media is limited because there is a lack of technical skills among many people.

Transferability

The methodology of workshops to design the network is widely accepted by the participating libraries and the feedback was very good.

A network on this level has not ever existed before. The activities of the network were planned together with the participants in the workshops.

The symposium was the first event of this kind and brought together public libraries, scientific libraries and also dealt with the way to bestow a new appearance to public libraries.

Case study

The web page will be kept up.



follow-up	<p>There will be further activities set within the framework of the Urban Regeneration Programme in Lower Austria.</p> <p>In the long term, there is the goal to implement a country-wide network.</p>
Common issues with other projects	<p>There are common topics with the second project submitted by the Partner (multimedia network, cooperation, setting up of infrastructures and know-how transfer) and also a common methodology (meetings with the stakeholders, participation process in networks, virtual platform, best practices exchange).</p> <p>The project shares also great part of its methodology with “the international mountain school of the Maritime Alps” case study managed by Piedmont Region.</p>
SSC Experts’ comments and recommendations	<p>The idea of libraries forming a network has a strong impact, because they can be seen as an “aggregation place” for people living in small alpine towns. Generally isolated initiatives will fail, because they are not integrated in a system; for this reason the project approach is correct as well as the adopted methodology. Furthermore, the project is linked to the other one, submitted by the Partner: both of them supply tools to attract people, particularly the youth. The stakeholders’ involvement has allowed a bottom-up approach since the beginning and made the local population the engine of the project.</p>