

Don't judge a book by its cover!

The Living Library Organiser's Guide

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Human rights cannot be implemented through legal process alone. That is why the Council of Europe also works to inspire civil society and public authorities who promote human rights worldwide and strive to prevent injustice, oppression and discrimination.

*Terry Davis,
Secretary General of the Council of Europe*

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We apologise for errors and omissions and regret that we could not include all material received in this publication.



introduction



'For once this is really a new idea!' This was my spontaneous reaction when I first learned about the Living Library organized at the 2000 Roskilde Festival in Denmark. 'Everything should be as simple as possible, but not one bit simpler,' said Albert Einstein. The Living Library is one such simple idea: Meet your own prejudice! Instead of talking *about* it, simply *meet* it.

The Living Library works exactly like a normal library – readers come and borrow a 'book' for a limited period of time. After reading it they return the Book to the library and – if they want – they can borrow another Book. There is only one difference: the Books in the Living Library are human beings, and the Books and readers enter into a personal dialogue. The Books in the Living Library are people representing groups frequently confronted with prejudices and stereotypes, and who are often victims of discrimination or social exclusion. The 'reader' of the library can be anybody who is ready to talk with his or her own prejudice and stereotype and wants to spend an hour of time on this experience. In the Living Library, Books cannot only speak, but they are able to reply to the readers' questions, and the Books can even ask questions and learn themselves.

Those familiar with working on programmes promoting intercultural dialogue, human rights and pluralist democracy – be it in civil society, adult education or youth work – are frequently faced with the challenge to come up with something really 'new' and inventive, something that can attract many people's attention and make a difference. The innovative Living Library methodology presented in this short guide aims to create constructive interpersonal dialogue between people who would normally not have the occasion to speak to each other. It is particularly suitable for large public events such as festivals and other large gatherings attended by hundreds or even thousands of people.

Interactive methodologies are produced and re-produced in large quantities by creative and competent people, and they are constantly practised, published, adapted, amended, developed and revised. Throughout Europe numerous training courses, seminars, conferences, exchange programmes and community projects are being organized to bring people together, to encourage understanding and to help them to deal with their lives within the community of human beings. The biggest challenge in all these efforts is to reach as wide a public as possible. Despite the size of this offer in Europe today, it cannot satisfy the demand of people – younger and older – who want to learn about how to live in and contribute to a peaceful society, and to develop for themselves a fearless and open way of communicating with and understanding others. Such others may live next door or be encountered in the street, in the supermarket, in school or at work. The



Living Library is an opportunity for intercultural learning and personal development aimed at people who usually have little access to or time for non-formal educational programmes.

"A stranger is a friend you haven't met yet." This old anti-racist movement slogan is as simple as it is complex. Simple, in that it implies the pure necessity of communication: talking to and meeting with strangers who could potentially become friends; complicated, as it is, in fact, not that easy to meet and speak to people, who, depending on perspective, are indeed really 'strange'. Sociologically, the notion of the 'stranger' is not defined purely by distance – i.e. the further away somebody is, the stranger they are – but by proximity: the distance we may feel from those others who move and live near us. Our social divides are defined by social, political and cultural differences, as well as by age, lifestyles and life opportunities. A 16 year old high school student from Finland might find it easier to communicate with and understand another 16 year old high school student from Spain or Turkey than a 58 year old unemployed metal worker from his or her own town living next door. Increasingly complex and fluid social relations in the 'information society' may be resulting in an ever-increasing fragmentation of interpersonal communication; people interact with those with whom they have common projects and daily business, be it at work, in their leisure time or in family life. Little time and opportunity is left for interpersonal meeting with the 'unknown'.

Surrounded by images and fragments of information about others, people are left to their own imaginations and assumptions or to their prejudices and stereotypes, and very often the two go hand in hand. The Living Library gives people an opportunity to speak in private and personally to a 'stranger' in a structured, protected, yet completely free space – within a strictly limited time, but without any further commitment. This framework is probably one of the reasons why the Living Library has been so popular wherever it has been organised: readers can predict the risk they are taking in meeting the Other.



The Living Library became part of the Council of Europe's programme "Youth promoting human rights and social cohesion"¹ in the year 2003. The philosophy of this programme contends that human rights cannot be defended by legal texts alone. They need to be protected and fostered by everyone. In order to encourage citizens to think about their own human rights and those of the Other, awareness needs to be raised in the wider public about the importance of human rights for the personal well-being of all.

¹ For further reference: www.coe.int/hre and www.coe.int/youth

The Directorate of Youth and Sports of the Council of Europe has unique and important experience in the field of non-formal and intercultural education, based on the principles of human rights, pluralist democracy and cultural diversity. In more than 30 years of existence, the programmes of the Council of Europe youth sector have reached many thousands of young people and those working with young people, in both voluntary and professional youth work. The main partners in this work are associations of young people, non-governmental and governmental organisations.

Large public events, such as the European Youth Campaign "All Different – All Equal" or "European Youth weeks", have enlarged the networks of partners and made the work of the Council of Europe known to a wider public. These types of large-scale events require long term commitment and solid financing; with these conditions in place the impact can be substantial and crucial follow-up programmes can (and should) be sustained.



A Brief History of the Living Library

The Living Library does not have such large ambitions; it is rather 'a small event within a large event' where within a short period of time and with a relatively small investment, a large number of individuals can benefit from the consolidated experience of the Council of Europe's youth sector and its large network of partners. The readers of the Living Library – a wider public – do not need to commit themselves to further action. However, one of the reassuring experiences of the organisers of many different Libraries was that, as a very positive and energizing effect of their visit, many readers became interested in civil society movements and further involvement.



With this publication the Council of Europe youth sector aims to promote the methodology of the Living Library, which has been successfully implemented and developed in several of its member states since the year 2000. This *Guide for Organisers* summarises the consolidated experience of previous hosts, organisers, librarians, Books and readers of Living Libraries. It is intended to give encouragement, support and advice to those wishing to take on the demanding and rewarding task of organising a Living Library. It is not intended to be a 'recipe book' and nor can it be: as the 'ingredients' will differ from event to event, future organisers will need to adapt the methodology to their own specific social and physical environment. At the same time, there is a clear limit in terms of adaptation: good tools are necessary to build stable constructions, and if used lazily or with less than noble intentions, these tools can serve to destruct as well. It is the authors' wish that their work be taken forward in responsible hands and for responsible reasons: the Living Library is *not* a public relations exercise looking for spectacular headlines; it is not a zoo or display case for rare and exotic species; neither is it a job recruitment agency or a place to exhibit famous people.

The Living Library is a tool to foster peaceful cohabitation and bring people closer together in mutual and careful respect for the human dignity of the individual. This is true for the readers, the Books and the organisers alike.

Eurocrat-Book

The idea of a Living Library (Menneske Biblioteket = Human Library²) was initially developed by the Danish youth NGO "Stop the Violence" (Foreningen Stop Volden) as part of the activities the NGO offered to visitors at the Roskilde Festival 2000, Denmark's largest annual music event. Based in Copenhagen, "Stop the Violence" was a peer-led youth initiative aiming to educate young people to be active in the prevention of violence among young people. The NGO's project managers organised the first library in close co-operation with the Festival and with the financial support of the Roskilde Foundation. At that point, it was clear that the activity showed potential beyond the expectations of both the organisers and the festival hosts.

As the introduction outlines, this positive experience at the Roskilde Festival came to the attention of the Director of the Council of Europe's

European Youth Centre Budapest (EYCB). Through the EYCB, the Danish organisers were brought into contact with the organisers of the Sziget Festival – a major music festival in Hungary – and decided to organise a Living Library there for the first time in 2001. Since 2003, the Living Library at the Sziget Festival in Hungary has been organised by the EYCB as part of the Council of Europe's stand, each library lasting for seven days. So far, the Sziget Festival has hosted four Living Libraries and the activity has become a major attraction for guests of the festival's 'Civil Island' area, a zone where NGOs and many other institutions and organisations promote their work and offer public activities.

The libraries organised by the Council of Europe at the Sziget Festival established that the activity could transcend borders and be adapted to different societies. Owing to its international and intercultural nature, it also constantly introduced new features such as 'dictionaries': 'books' that also serve as interpreters. This innovation allowed the participation of a large international public at the festival and Books unable to speak the local language. The Living Libraries organised within the Council of

LIVING LIBRARY: A TIMELINE OF EVENTS

- 2000 Roskilde Festival, Roskilde, Denmark
- 2001 Sziget Festival – Civil Island, Budapest, Hungary
- 2002 Nordic Ministers Council "Youth Summit 2002", Oslo, Norway
- 2002 Sziget Festival – Civil Island, Budapest, Hungary
- 2002 Alværn Youth School, Nesodden, Norway
- 2003 Sziget Festival – Civil Island, Budapest, Hungary
- 2003 Stavanger Library Festival, Stavanger, Norway
- 2004 Budapest Szabó Ervin Library 100th Year Anniversary, Hungary
- 2004 Pszinapszis Youth Festival, Budapest, Hungary
- 2004 Rock In Rio Lisboa, Lisbon, Portugal
- 2004 Sziget Festival, Civil Island, Budapest, Hungary
- 2004 Northbridge Festival, Copenhagen, Denmark
- 2004 Grønnerlykka Community School, Oslo, Norway

² Stop the Violence was initiated in 1993 by five young people in Copenhagen as a peer-led violence prevention initiative prompted by the brutal stabbing of a friend. Within three years, the movement numbered 7000 members, most of them between 12 and 18 years. The movement ceased to exist as an active NGO in 2001.

Organising a Living Library — past experiences

Europe's youth programme on human rights education had the largest participation, the biggest press coverage and produced the most comprehensive documentation of the activity, its methodology and impact.

In the last few years, other organisations have begun to discover the concept, and the possibilities it offers. A Living Library was staged as part of The Nordic Minister Council Youth Committee's major youth event "Youth in the Nordic Countries" during autumn 2002 in Oslo, Norway. It took place in an actual library, and was free and open to the general public as well as comprising part of the programme for the 450 young people attending from all the Nordic countries. In the summer of 2004, the Portuguese organisation APAV, who work with victims of violence, organised a one-day Living Library for the "Better World Tent" at the Rock In Rio Festival in Lisbon. The event was managed on a very modest budget, had limited opening hours, and yet the results were very interesting: the Lisbon Library demonstrated that the event is not only adaptable to different countries, but also to different levels of ambition and financial capacity. For example, the original library in Roskilde contained 75 Books, the Sziget Festival close to 50, while the Lisbon Library carried only 20 Books.

The Hungarian experiences with the Living Library have illustrated how elaborately it can be staged, the Nordic experiences show the different dimensions that can be present and the Portuguese experience proves its adaptability. The Living Library can probably work successfully in any country in the world, and it continues to develop. The tables below show the past and future travels of the Living Library, but only those we are aware of now. There will be many more.

SCHEDULED FOR 2005 (AT THE TIME OF PUBLICATION)

August: Central Library, Copenhagen, Denmark
August: Central Library, Oslo, Norway
August: Hútt Husidd, Reykjavík, Iceland
August: Sziget Festival – Civil Island, Budapest, Hungary
September: Northbridge Festival, Blaagården Public Library, Copenhagen, Denmark
September: Oslo, Norway
September: Helsinki, Finland
September: Reykjavík, Iceland
September: Gothenburg Book Fair, Gothenburg, Sweden
September: Youth and Human Rights Street Festival of the Ministry of Youth, Family, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities, Budapest, Hungary (linked to the 10th Anniversary of the European Youth Centre Budapest)



CHRISTOFFER ERICHSEN WORKED AS A FULL-TIME EMPLOYEE OF THE "STOP THE VIOLENCE" MOVEMENT AND WAS ONE OF FOUR PROJECT COORDINATORS WHO ORGANISED THE FIRST LIVING LIBRARY AT THE ROSKILDE FESTIVAL:

The Roskilde Festival began in the early 1970s and quickly earned a reputation as one of Europe's top music festivals. It takes place in early July over four days, with more than 150 artists performing on five stages. The festival is a registered non-profit organisation donating its profits to NGO work through the Roskilde Foundation.

By participating in the Roskilde Festival, "Stop the Violence" wanted to try to go a level deeper into the discussion about youth, violence, racism and their root causes, and to try to uncover what circumstances lead to violent conflicts between people who belong to different cultural, ethnic, religious or work-related groups. We wanted to create an activity that would enable the 'audience/readers' to focus and reflect on their own prejudices and stereotypes, and to establish a peaceful, positive and fun meeting with one's own worst prejudice. We approached this with the conviction that all people hold some sort of prejudice or stereotype. It's easy to have prejudices about another group of people from a distance, but far more difficult to maintain the stereotypes in direct personal contact with someone. We often heard things like 'I hate immigrants, but Mohammad from my school is okay because I know him'.

So the basic idea was that the Living Library was to be a physical space decorated as a library and full of humans acting as Books. My job was to prepare the activity and take care of the day-to-day running of the Library, working also with the Festival, who financed the event. The major challenge was to contact the relevant departments of the festival in order to secure agreements in relation to our needs for the activity, and to coordinate between the festival's administrative system, and our crew of volunteers. We were allocated a space inside the festival grounds to build the library; when we arrived there was nothing but green grass.

Running the Library involved a thorough process of recruitment: volunteers, Books, librarians, decorators and work crews. When we were recruiting the Books, we organised a brainstorming session, where widespread stereotypes and prejudices were discussed and listed; this served as a starting point for gathering the Books. After a long discussion about ethics and the limitations of the activity, it was decided not to invite Books such as skins, Nazis, religious fundamentalists or people from esoteric religious groups who hold derogatory concepts of other groups in society. The exercise is about bridge-building, and not for using as a platform for controversy and conflict.

Once we had identified approximately 50 different types of Books we began by contacting all the Books we had in our own network. We contacted other organisations, public institutions and workplaces that might be able to provide a Book for the Library. A general request for Books was sent out to partners along with information to ensure that both the organisation and the individual Book were presented with a clear picture of what they were entering into, and what was expected of their participation.

The Librarians of the Living Library functioned much like real librarians: facilitating loans, filling out library reader cards, keeping a check on availability, handling reservations, and conducting interviews with people who volunteered to become Books in the Library. Two young graffiti artists were invited to decorate the library stand with images of situations in everyday life where our Books might find themselves in conflict with others. We recruited a work crew from our NGO volunteers, and they set up the activity before the festival, and cleared everything up once it had ended. We also recruited a crew of volunteers to keep an eye on the stand and the volunteer camping area at night. The camp was an important place: the festival took place over seven days and people needed somewhere to stay; it also helped communication, and build a feeling of togetherness between all the staff and Books.

The Library was in an area close to the World Stage tent, and we fenced in the perimeter and created a gate that could be closed outside the Library's opening hours. We put together chairs and tables for our Books to use, and set up a library counter staffed with two to four librarians. We worked hard to publicise the activity: the festival publishes a programme of the festival in which we were given space to present the concept to the audience, and we also took advantage of the festival radio and website; we assigned a project co-ordinator to be in charge of handling contact with the wider media, and we also put out a press release about the Living Library to accredited media through the press centre of the festival.

A Festival Street Promotion Team was formed comprising sixteen young people, aged 16-21, from different ethnic backgrounds. They were offered the opportunity to work for the Living Library and in return they would get food, drink and access to the festival and camping. This was a bit of an experiment: these young people were the so-called 'youth at risk' who are the target group of "Stop the Violence", and we had advice from social workers from the institutions where they spent some of their free time, detailing some of the things we should avoid and be careful of. When the street team was originally briefed, it would be hard to describe them as enthusiastic. However, late on the first day, we saw the street team returning, several of them without their T-shirts. This was a large group of dark-haired young boys, the kind that is often

stereotyped and avoided by other young people. However the air was filled with laughter, and stories of how young girls had begged them for their T-shirts. They did not realise how many hours they had actually walked around, meeting people: this experience of promoting the library already showed promise for the activity itself.

Some of the most frequently asked questions put to the street team, apart from practical ones, included 'Who came up with the idea?' and 'Is it really true that you can borrow a real policeman or homosexual for one hour?' When the festival officially opened, 70 000 people poured in, only to be faced with a huge variety of activities, although at the Library we had prepared ourselves not to expect a big rush until things generally got going. The Books used this time to get to know each other and discuss what they expected. It was two hours into the festival before the first reader entered the Library; however once the readers started coming, the rush did not stop for four days, and the most popular Books were constantly out. Of course, part of the audience were very sceptical about the idea at first, while some readers were so excited that they offered to volunteer to be Books for a day. Overall the vast majority of readers and audience found the idea interesting and daring. The Books reported both sincere readers and some less serious ones, but in general they seemed to have enjoyed being read.



I can warmly recommend this activity if you are interested in reaching young people with a message of tolerance and openness. However the organiser needs to realise that this is a serious undertaking and quite time-consuming. Naturally this depends on how big the activity is and its running time. But as an NGO coming into a festival with this activity, it is important to make as many preparations as possible in advance with the festival staff and administration.



TRYGVE AUGESTAD WAS THE LOCAL COORDINATOR FOR A LIVING LIBRARY HOSTED AT ALVÆRN UNGDOMSSKOLE (ALVÆRN YOUTH SCHOOL) IN NESODDEN, NORWAY. IT WAS ORGANISED BY NORSK FOLKEHJELPP (NORWEGIAN PEOPLE'S AID) IN OCTOBER 2003:

The Library was organised in connection with "International Week" at the Alværn Community Youth School for 84 students. Norwegian "People's Aid", in co-operation with "Stop the Violence" Denmark, wanted to try out the concept of the Living Library as an educational method in a school environment. We established contact with three teachers at the school who expressed interest in the concept, and decided to organise the event for the students during normal classes. We were given a three-hour time frame for the activity, and the aim was to give the students new knowledge about people and groups that they have little or no regular contact with, and to bring issues of stereotypes and prejudices to their attention.

A working group was established, consisting of two representatives from Norwegian "People's Aid" and the three teachers from the school. The working group worked on adapting the concept, and debated which stereotypes and prejudices would be most relevant to offer to the students. The list they developed also aimed to make visible the diversity of the local community. Our list of Books was: an *African*, *Fireman*, *Film Producer*, *Football Supporter*, *Person with an eating disorder*, *Homosexual*, *Elderly Person*, *Expert on street gangs*, *Asylum Seeker*, *Blind Person*, *Politician*, *Professional Athlete (Basketball Player)*, *Male Dancer*, *Christian Youth*, *Salvation Army*, *Author*, *Mentally Ill Person*, *Lesbian*, *Vegetarian* and *Serbian Refugee*.

The Books were recruited mainly through contacting a variety of NGOs and associations; some of the Books were recruited from the local community, and others came from Oslo. The description of the stereotypes and prejudices was written in cooperation with the Books, and handed to the school the day before the event. The teachers then presented the Books to the students and made a list of their requests, which they in turn distributed to the Books. We set up some rules for loan and had a maximum of 5 readers per Book and a limit of 3 Books per reader. 84 out of the 350 students at the school were invited to take

part as readers. The interest from the other students was overwhelming, but time constraints and the limited number of Books meant we had to apply this limit. The Books were pre-ordered by the students, and the list of loans was ready when the excited students showed up at the school media centre. Each Book could be borrowed for 45 minutes and immediately the questions from the students started pouring down on the Books. Some of the most frequently asked questions to the Books were: 'When did you become blind?' 'Do you know what 'colour' is?' (*Blind person*); 'Are you afraid to die?' 'Do you know what 'the Internet' is?' (*Old Man*); 'Why is there fighting and riots at football matches?' 'Is football that important?' (*Football Supporter*); 'Don't you like food?' 'Why can't you just eat more?' (*Person with an eating disorder*); 'How do you feel about heterosexuals?' 'What was it like for you to come out?' (*Homosexual*).



The Books tried to answer to the best of their ability, while the students took notes. Norwegian "People's Aid" provided librarians to facilitate the loans and to record feedback from Books and readers. This included some interesting realisations. The stereotype about asylum seekers being lazy, criminal and not integrated into Norwegian society was seriously challenged when the former Pakistani national marathon champion and military deserter began to share his experiences as a 'foreigner' in Norway. A prejudice of the mentally ill as large, brutal and dangerous men was challenged by a young woman who had faced great ordeals in her life and was very open and honest in sharing her experiences. The students experienced the opportunity to ask questions that they had always wondered about, but had never dared ask, and these were questions that the recipient was prepared for and willing to reply to. The students reported that they found the 'reading' challenging, fun and exciting. Several of the Books said they felt tired and worn out, but as some of them said: 'It was that nice kind of tired feeling'.

On a follow-up evening for students, teachers and parents, a group of students made a power-point presentation that described the Books, showed pictures from the conversations and talked about their interviews with Books and readers. Some of the students wrote 'book reviews' – a nice add-on feature that we plan to include and develop for future Living Libraries.

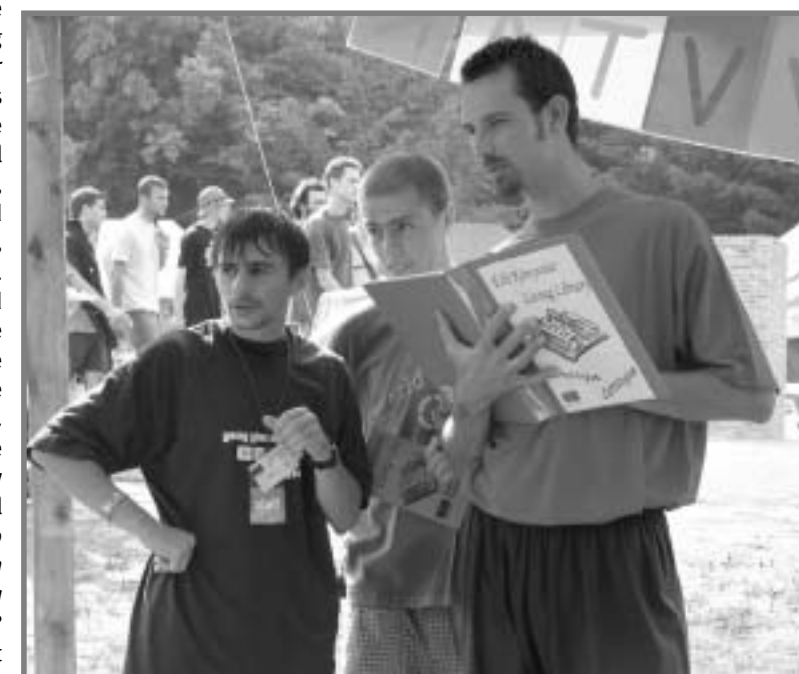


PÉTER WOOTSCH HAS BEEN INVOLVED WITH THE LIVING LIBRARY AS ORGANISER OF THE SZIGET FESTIVAL IN BUDAPEST, HUNGARY, SINCE IT WAS FIRST HOSTED THERE. HERE HE REFLECTS ON 'ONE WEEK WITH THE ISLANDERS':

The Sziget Festival has been held for a week every summer since 1993 on an island in the river Danube and this is how it got its name ('sziget' is the Hungarian word for 'island'). It started initially as a student initiative with 40 000 visitors and two stages, and it has become one of Europe's biggest open-air festivals, welcoming 350 000 people in 2004. The multicultural Sziget Festival is a mix of musical and cultural events, and an atmospheric place for encounters of a wide diversity of young people. The Festival is a kaleidoscope of events, and the young visitors – the Islanders – are always on the move to discover and enjoy the different zones and festival activities. One of these zones is the Civil Island, introduced as a new programme element in 2001. Here 130 civil society and public associations and organisations offer content-oriented, innovative and colourful activities to the Islanders. The independent Civil Radio and BBC Hungary broadcast the programmes of Civil Island during the entire week to the world outside the island. The Civil Island as a whole gives an opportunity for civil society to enlarge their contacts with a wider public. The Living Library found its place in this environment.

It was not difficult for the Living Library organiser of the 2000 Roskilde festival to convince me, one hot spring day in 2001 in the garden of the European Youth Centre Budapest, of the value of the Library for the Civil Island's programmes. However the Festival was just two and half months away, and it was not easy to prepare the project quickly. First of all we had to understand clearly how the Living Library works; ok, it is against prejudices and stereotypes, but how it is possible to implement in practice? How it is possible to find the right Books? How it is possible to explain such an idea without running the risk of being misunderstood? The result of the Living Library in 2001 was far from perfect. Our Books were recruited from the tents of the civil organizations present, which we thought would be interesting enough, but we were wrong. Many of the Books did not understand the concept and used the opportunity to advertise their own regular work. The book titles were badly formulated: how can one possibly deal with a Book called *Two unforgettable weeks in Indonesia* or *Being Hungarian in Romania*? We also recognized that some associations we

approached did not join for fear of being abused by readers; for example, gay and lesbian organisations were worried because of an ongoing negative media campaign at the time. We had no time to create a trusting atmosphere before the start of the Festival. Finally, we had only 12 Books and the Living Library was open for four days during the week. Yet with all its shortcomings, we had more than 130 readers and people started to get interested in, and understand the idea.



In planning for 2002 we tried to avoid obvious mistakes of the past; we began preparing earlier, training the librarians and involving them in the planning. We introduced a slogan "Just read, don't judge", which might in retrospect have been a bit too pedagogical. The Living Library was open for seven days. We were more careful in choosing and briefing the Books, but we still made mistakes. We accepted proposals from

Organising and running a Living Library



partners, but in the end we were not able to deal well with the results. The Book *Kossuth was a refugee* from the UNCHR was fine, for example; *Women are also human* was okay, but the *Bridget Jones* book was problematic. We had 72 Book offers but we ran the library with 32 Books and had more than 300 readers. The new T-shirt was very popular and with the special offer to readers to "get a free T-shirt after reading four Books" we substantially increased the number of loans. This was the first time the press had discovered the Living Library and coverage of the event was broadcast on Civil Radio.

The European Youth Centre Budapest decided to join the Civil Island in 2003 with a stand, and this provided an excellent opportunity to polish up and restructure the Living Library. It became a joint project for the Civil Island organizers together with the EYCB's human rights' education programme. The result was a reform of the educational approach, the setting and the methodology. A new slogan was introduced: "Don't judge a book by its cover". In order to attract international visitors, Dictionaries and multilingual Books were introduced. The Living Library tent was located next to the EYCB's tent, which gave the opportunity to link the Living Library to European youth work. As a result of the changes implemented and the EYCB's clear ownership of the Living Library, it became one of the most popular tents of the Civil Island. Numerous VIPs visited the Living Library – even ministers and state secretaries came to get information. Being photographed with the Books was also popular. The VIP visits brought a lot of media attention for the Living Library, and it was advertised on television, radio and in the press.

The popularity of the Living Library brought a number of requests from institutions and associations wanting to copy the idea within their context. This was the next challenge: while the Living Library seems at first glance to be an easy project, we knew by then the challenges involved for organisers, as well as the challenges that could come from adapting it to new environments. In 2003 and 2004 several initiatives set the Living Library elsewhere – in schools, real libraries and as part of student events. We had good and bad experiences with such adaptations. If the organisers had a clear idea and they were open to the experiences we shared with them, then they could limit the practical problems and maintain quality standards. If the motivation, however, was not clear or merely involved self-promotion for the organisers, then as a result the adapted Libraries missed the point completely.

From the perspective of a festival organiser, and after four years' experience in organising Living Libraries, I can't recommend more strongly the idea for similar events. As an important conclusion, however, it should be underlined that the Living Library is best set in a protective and safe environment. It should not be abused for political propaganda, egocentric public relations or for commercial purposes.

Any association, organisation, institution or initiative wishing to organise and stage a Living Library should first of all reflect on the intention and possibilities of doing so, and set clear objectives for the Living Library itself and for the place of the activity within the wider context of the organisers' regular activities.



DEFINING OBJECTIVES

The Living Library is a means of promoting respect for human rights and human dignity, and aims to raise awareness of, and enable constructive dialogue about prejudices that frequently lead to discrimination against individuals or groups of people.

In taking on this activity, it is important to realise that the main aim of the Living Library is predefined, whereas more detailed objectives should define realistic and achievable local impacts for the activity.

Within your context, you may want to develop detailed objectives in relation to:

- young people's awareness of stereotypes and prejudices, and their negative consequences
- visibility of youth work and human rights issues
- reactions to current or recent events in your country (e.g. increases in hate crimes or human rights' violations)
- initiating and enlarging networks of partners
- creating dialogue between a variety of partners in civil society



---> CHOOSING THE SETTING

The experiences of the Living Library organisers illustrate that choosing the right setting is of major importance in securing a suitable platform for the activity. Staging a Living Library in a large public event, such as a major music festival or gathering, will reach a very wide and diverse public and is highly visible. At the same time, however, it will be difficult to predict the number of readers or follow-up on their experiences, as a large public remains largely anonymous. On the other hand, organising the Living Library as a 'stand-alone' event – such as in a school or at a conference – can target a specific group of (young) people. The number of readers will be easier to predict, and evaluation and discussions amongst readers can be organised after the event. It will therefore be easier to judge the impact of the Living Library.

Whatever option organisers choose, they should be aware that the effort of planning and preparing a Living Library will be similarly demanding, whether it is 'an event within a larger event' of several days or a stand-alone Living Library of several hours. A difference in terms of investment in time, material, finances and human resources will only become apparent during the implementation phase.

---> The Living Library as part of a festival or other large-scale event

The library has typically been staged within a larger context, such as a music festival where many people gather for several days. The festival setting offers many advantages to the Library. Large summer festivals often have a big public and are primarily attended by young people and those generally predisposed to such an experience. Typically the festival grounds are parks or other natural surroundings that provide many places for the reader and Book to go and enjoy the loan. Many of the young people that visit festivals and who are not involved in civil society movements would probably not otherwise attend a 'human rights activity' as a stand-alone event.



Another advantage of the festival audience is that the general atmosphere is relaxed and highly tolerant. This does not mean that readers at festivals have fewer stereotypes than people elsewhere, but that the festival creates an environment that is complementary to the work of the Library. However it is worth remembering that in this setting the activity is exclusive to those who can afford to buy a festival ticket. There is also the vulnerability of festivals and other outdoor activities to changing weather conditions to take into account!

The library organiser will normally contact the festival with a proposal for the activity. Many festivals are always on the lookout for interesting new activities, and this should work to your advantage. If the interest and support of the festival organiser is unclear, then it is not recommended to pursue organising a Living Library. The motivation of the host to support the event needs to be clear and preferably in a written agreement.

Larger festivals usually have a rigid infrastructure and are often commercial events, asking entrance fees from their visitors. At the same time, space is restricted and many different interests have to be fulfilled by the hosts. When negotiating with the Festival Organisers, it is important to get their agreement to support the Living Library by providing (for example):

- Free festival passes/tickets for Books and staff
- The possibility to transport material on site before the opening of the festival
- Privileged access for Books with disabilities (such as a car pass)
- A centrally situated yet relatively quiet and sufficiently large space to set up the Library
- Equipment such as tents, chairs, tables, and access to electricity
- Inclusion in promotional materials (festival programme, loud speaker announcements)
- Access to camping grounds if needed
- Access to toilet and shower facilities
- Meal and drink tickets/vouchers (where possible)
- Possible financial support for production costs of T-Shirts and other materials

In return, Living Library organisers should formulate realistic demands regarding space and support they require, and give their agreement to mention the hosts as sponsors/supporters in all written and material productions (e.g. by putting acknowledgements in brochures and by printing the festival logo on all library materials).



---> **The Living Library as a stand-alone event**

Some Living Libraries have been organised beyond the festival setting as stand-alone activities in schools and in (real) public libraries. This means that the visitors come only to visit the Living Library. The stand-alone libraries that have been organised thus far have typically been one-day or half-day events with a limited selection of available Books. The setting has some advantages in its simplicity and limited duration, however, but equally it poses a greater challenge for organisers in

promoting the event and leaves it more vulnerable to factors beyond the organisers' control. If organised for a specific target group – such as students in school or readers in a public library – experiences have shown that it is possible to have a positive outcome with this form of organisation.

IMPORTANT EXPERIENCES FROM A PREVIOUS SCHOOL LIBRARY:

Loan time of 45 minutes was appropriate; however it is important to have the possibility to shorten or cut the loan if the conversation runs out. The concept seemed to work best with students aged 13-16 and they would usually go in groups of 3-4 with each Book. A pre-order system worked well; however it is important if possible to have back-up copies of some Books since 3 out of 20 did not show up for this event. The students/readers, especially if they are young, need to be prepared for the fact that they can actually ask about many of the things they have been thinking about.



---> **GENERAL CONSIDERATIONS ON THE SETTING**

---> **Number of potential readers**

During the preparation period, it will not be possible to come up with exact estimates. In a festival setting the number of readers might differ greatly from one day to the next, depending on other ongoing events. As a point of orientation, if 5000 people pass by the Living Library during a festival day, probably 500 will stop and take a quick look, 200 might study the catalogue and some 50 might become readers and borrow a Book. With stand-alone events, one can assume that nearly everyone coming to the Living Library will eventually become a reader.

---> **Duration and opening hours of the Living Library**

For a Living Library within a Festival, it is recommended to open the Library every day. Festival visitors need some time to orient themselves amidst the variety of activities on offer, and so therefore the first day might start slowly. Word of mouth is the best PR for the Living Library during a festival and the number of readers will probably increase daily.

Peak-times will be weekend days and periods when no other special events are taking place. Broad parameters for opening hours suggest not before midday, as festival visitors

get up late, and during daylight hours. Opening hours should indicate the latest possible time a Book can be taken out on loan (since the library staff must wait for an hour until the book is returned). Opening hours should be fixed in accordance with the availability (and need for breaks) of Books and librarians.

OPENING HOURS:

The Living Library is open every day from 12.00 to 20.00; last opportunity to borrow a book is 19.00!

From the Living Library flyer SZIGET 2004

---> **Requirements of the physical space**

An informal, visually attractive, inviting and relaxed setting promotes dialogue and makes Books and readers feel comfortable. Regardless of the setting, some general needs regarding the physical space include the following:

❖ The 'inner' area of the Library (where the Books sit) should be visible, while being semi-closed so that public flow can be regulated. The space of the Library should be large enough to provide seats and tables for all Books in the collection as well as for librarians.

- ❖ Librarians are the first contact for readers. They work from a front counter at the entrance, and it should be a space large enough for several readers to sit down and comfortably read the catalogue while they consider which Book to read.
- ❖ The physical set-up should signal to potential readers that it is not desirable to simply walk into the Library and start talking to Books.
- ❖ The space should consider the demands of the weather and general environment.
- ❖ Soft drinks, small snacks and reading materials should be available to Books during opening hours.



Step-by-step organisation

The Living Library is a project that requires detailed organisation and good delegation. Important considerations that influence the amount of work involved include:

- ❖ the size of the library and the amount of Books involved
- ❖ the duration of the activity and the opening hours
- ❖ the degree and nature of the support from the festival host
- ❖ available budget for promotion and promotional materials.

The principal organiser should assemble a core group of three coordinators. Each coordinator can be assigned a primary responsibility to carry out. Below is a suggested division into three work areas:

- **PHYSICAL SET-UP OF THE LIBRARY AND LIAISON WITH THE FESTIVAL HOST**
 - Recruitment of building volunteers
 - Building the setting on site
 - Preparing facilities and equipment needed
 - Organising camp facilities for staff
 - Clearing away the setting and restoring the area to its original state
 - Monitoring the site out of opening hours (where necessary)
- **DAILY RUNNING AND PREPARING THE CONTENT OF THE LIBRARY**
 - Compiling the list of literature
 - Recruiting, briefing and screening the librarians and Books
 - Co-ordinating and planning the daily schedule of the event
 - Managing Book logistics, e.g. timetable, breaks, specific needs, ...
 - Managing hospitality, catering and meal tickets
- **MATERIALS, PROMOTION, FUNDRAISING AND EVALUATION**
 - Managing the production of library cards, T-shirts, leaflets and posters
 - Fundraising for the event
 - Planning promotional strategy and recruitment of street teams
 - Evaluation with Books, readers and librarians
 - Documentation of the event
 - Overall responsibility for finance

A chronological approach involves the following steps, which the coordinating team should map onto a project time line for their event:



The Books



LOGISTICAL AND EDUCATIONAL PLANNING

- Define your aims and locate your setting
- Identify possible partners
- Develop the proposal and approach festival host for an arrangement
- Approach partners and develop fund-raising strategy
- Create the list of literature and initiate recruitment of Books
- Plan and design the physical setting for the event
- Instigate the media pre-promotion according to the media targeted
- Prepare the promotional materials
- Organise a coordination meeting for all staff, coordinators, work crew, street promotion team and festival host
- Organise a pre-event briefing of Books, Dictionaries, chaperones and librarians
- Plan a documentation strategy



ON-SITE LOGISTICS

- Transfer equipment needed to build setting
- Build setting
- Transfer equipment needed to promote and run activity
- Prepare setting
- Street promotion team starts work (in camping area where available)
- Circulate press release the day before opening
- Opening of the event
- Street promotion continues work in vicinity of Library
- Daily evaluation meetings
- Public relation work continues
- Documentation continues
- Closing of the event
- Restore area to its original state or as agreed with festival host



A young Hungarian asked me if it is true that the Germans always wipe their hands with bread after eating. We were not at all prepared for such questions and, to be honest, they were a bit over-challenging but we were also challenged in a positive way. It was interesting to see how the Germans are seen abroad and we hope that we were also able to overcome some of our own prejudices. We were also prompted to think about who we really are and what stand we take.

GERMAN BOOK



GENERAL INTRODUCTORY GUIDELINES

- ✦ The book titles must relate to a representative group of people who are frequently subject to prejudices, stereotyping and often discrimination. It is up to the organisers to interpret this in their own context.
- ✦ The catalogue should be large enough to offer a real choice to the readers, but at the same time it should not exceed the capacities of the organisers, in terms of space available and the resources required for recruiting, briefing and looking after the Books. From experience, it is possible to suggest that a catalogue should include a minimum of twenty Books for it to be interesting, and be limited to no more than fifty Books to remain manageable.
- ✦ The book titles should be accompanied by descriptions detailing some of the frequently encountered stereotypes and prejudices. It is helpful to collect and discuss these before finally deciding on the book titles.



BOOK TITLES

The following list gives some examples of successful book titles used previously in Living Libraries. The list is neither exhaustive nor binding; it simply aims to give inspiration for organisers adapting their final list to the setting in which the Living Library is staged.

Animal Rights Activist, Asylum-Seeker, Black Person, Blond Woman, Bureaucrat, Christian, Civil Servant, Disabled Person, Driving Instructor, Environmentalist, Ex-Drug Abuser, Ex-Football Hooligan, Ex-Neo-Nazi, Ex-Prisoner, Feminist, Football Supporter, Gay, (Ex-)Homeless Person, Hip-Hopper, Jew, (Ex-)Illiterate, Lesbian, Muslim, Pensioner (elderly person), Priest, Police Officer, (Ex-)Politician, Rabbi, Refugee, Roma, Sexual Advisor, Social Worker, (Ex-)State Secretary, Teacher, Skate-Boarder, Ticket Inspector, TV Journalist, Unemployed Person, Vegetarian





COMPILING THE CATALOGUE

Compiling the catalogue for the Living Library implies three major tasks:

- ❖ Deciding on the criteria and composition of the collection
- ❖ Allocating the most frequent prejudices to the book titles
- ❖ Producing the actual catalogue to be presented to the readers.

Criteria for the collection:

The best approach to putting together the collection is often a brainstorming session between the organisers, and possibly guests they might want to invite. Brainstorming involves listing on a flipchart

those people facing prejudices and stereotyping in your society, with an emphasis on those which young people may focus on. At this point do not comment on the suggestions, just try to get a long list on paper. Of course the prejudices collected are not universal prejudices, but prejudices that have developed within their specific cultural and social context. It is not advisable to use catalogues developed in a different setting without thorough revision and

adaptation. On the basis of this list (which might well be much longer than your eventual catalogue), try to eliminate those proposals that do not find consensus in the group and try to create a list of 'favourite' prejudices. This will bring you to a short list, ideally anywhere between 20 and 50 Books, guided by the size of your event and the possibilities available to the organisers.

When a girl is asked if she wants to represent a 'blonde' in a Living Library, then she has to consider whether it is a compliment or an insult. I found it interesting that the Blonde was one of the most popular Books at Sziget. Of course, this was not due to my personality, but to the extent to which modern society deals with 'blonde' as a notion. At first sight people found this Book interesting, but could not do much with it once they had figured out that being blonde and a woman does not make a person different from the rest. She is also a woman, as are about 50% of all people, and the colour of her hair does not make any difference whatsoever. It happened that one man borrowed me clearly expecting to pick up a blonde sexpot. Once he realised his hopes were dashed, after approximately 20 minutes he took me back to the Living Library, but he handled the situation very well.

BLONDE BOOK



When finalizing the list of book titles, take into account the following considerations:

- ❖ The book titles should be concise and easy to understand. Prejudices, and therefore the book titles, are not too complicated. (*Black person* is clear as a category of prejudice. *A citizen that may not have been born on this continent and has a different skin colour* is not the title of a prejudice.)
- ❖ The catalogue should include a wide diversity of Books in order to attract a wide diversity of readers. A 'specialized Living Library' would attract a limited public and lose its attraction by appearing too narrow. This diversity means recruiting Books from all walks of life, and not composing a catalogue solely of, for example, ethnic minorities or women who have been discriminated against.
- ❖ One limited interpretation of groups discriminated against could be based on legally existing anti-discrimination standards such as those mentioned in the European Convention on Human Rights. In this case, the books might stand for certain religious, sexual or ethnic minorities, such as gays or lesbians, Muslims or Roma.
- ❖ A wider interpretation also responds to prevalent, locally recognisable stereotypes of people according to their appearance (e.g. *Blonde*), profession (e.g. *Police Officer*) or their consumption habits (e.g. *Vegetarian*).
- ❖ The catalogue might also include representatives of professions particularly stereotyped by young people, such as teachers or social workers.
- ❖ The Living Library can provide a possibility to get to know young people's subcultures and affiliations by including books such as *Skate-Boarder*, *Graffiti Artist*, and so forth. This is particularly interesting for young people who may be prejudiced against members of a subculture other than their own.
- ❖ An interesting surprise in past libraries has been that Books representing particular nationalities (such as *German*, *Romanian*, *Swede*) were not popular and were often left on the shelf. There seems to be a higher awareness of the heterogeneity of nations than of cultural and social groups, and they are less implicated in everyday social conflicts.
- ❖ In order to reach a wide consensus on the composition of the catalogue, it is useful for the composing group to discuss and agree on the prejudices faced by the proposed Books, as this can lead to a diverse and concise catalogue.

All stereotypes are just crying out for some common questions to be asked often, if not every time. This raises a potential problem, because it's really hard to answer the same questions interestingly over and over and over again, especially if you don't want to repeat everything each time, exactly the same way. As advice for future Books, I would like to use a classic cliché (which actually works in this case, unlike in some other areas of life): 'just be yourself', because this whole thing is not about acting or pretending, it's about opening people's eyes with truth.

EX-NEO NAZI BOOK



- ❖ Given the educational dimension of the Living Library, it is not advisable to include Books in the catalogue that could potentially promote unhealthy or dangerous behaviour – such as *Drug addict* or *Football hooligan* – morally and politically questionable platforms – as with *Neo-Nazi* – or those who may try to use the opportunity to promote their own interests and mission, as with, for example, members of religious sects or sales representatives.
- ❖ Nevertheless, it is advisable to include Books that have overcome an addiction or successfully changed negative or destructive behaviour, such as a *Former drug abuser*. In such cases it is recommended to recruit Books known personally or reliably recommended to the organisers. It may turn out more frequently with these kinds of Books that readers seek assistance or advice for their personal lives.



---> **The allocation of stereotypes and prejudices to the book titles:**



On the basis of the list of book titles, try to collect the most frequent

prejudices and stereotypes related to this title. List the stereotypes and prejudices under each book title and eliminate those not agreed by consensus. The list you establish will be the basis for the final corrections made by the Books when they have been recruited. It is important that the Books agree with the prejudices: Books frequently make important changes and additions to the list proposed by the organisers during the briefing meeting.

When I was asked to be a Book at the Living Library I was worried and afraid because it was my first time, and my knowledge of English is not enough to explain to people, and I did not know what kind of questions people may ask me. I accepted the request to be a Book in the Living Library because it was a good opportunity for me to tell the people about my country. At the actual event I met many people who know about my country – not only the drought and war, but the long and ancient history of Ethiopia and its multiethnic and multicultural history. The worst moment was when some people who know that I am from Ethiopia asked me if there is food in my country, if there is any water. That was strange for me.

AFRICAN BOOK

When establishing the list, keep in mind the following considerations:

- ❖ Readers usually look briefly at each page in the catalogue, and therefore the language used should not be complicated.
- ❖ Easy adjectives are the best way to formulate rough prejudices, ('dirty, mean, lazy'....) but you might also need some half sentences (e.g. 'not good enough for a real job' is easier to understand than 'unemployable').
- ❖ Slang can be helpful, but avoid bad or foul language.
- ❖ To be sufficiently expressive when describing Books, use a minimum of four elements/statements; to be concise, restrict the list to seven elements per Book.
- ❖ When you expect a very international public or readers, brainstorming with an international group is useful for developing an interesting and diverse collection.



---> The production of the catalogue

The physical catalogue of the Living Library is the main advertisement of the Books for the readers and often the basis for their choice. It should therefore be visibly attractive, easy to read and inviting to browse through. Some practical hints for the catalogue are as follows:

- At a large event many people will go through the catalogue without necessarily becoming a reader. Use materials resistant to dust, dirt, rain, and that can be cleaned after a busy day.
- Ring binders provide a good cover for the catalogue as they allow for easy changes and additions (as the collection changes during the event due to the availability of Books).
- Produce one sheet per book on A4 paper. Protect them either by using plastic sleeves or by laminating them.
- The book titles should be big and bold so as to be recognised at a glance.
- Produce several copies (3- 4 for a festival) of the catalogue. There will be peak times and people will be attracted to the Living Library when they see others studying the catalogue. Some readers study the catalogue for a long time, and too few catalogues could prevent other potential readers from taking a loan.
- Produce multilingual catalogues for events with an international public.
- If you have multilingual Books, add the languages they speak on the A4 sheets.
- If you work with interpreters, you can add the languages available in interpretation to each book sheet.



It is well-known that people have many prejudices against us, which is why I was slightly afraid when accepting the request. On the one hand, I thought that many could pick on my gypsy origin, and that only teasing and embarrassing me would be their goal. But the complete opposite was the case: those who borrowed me, all of them without exception, were very decent and they showed real interest in our culture, in our habits, as well as in my life. In short, I came up against no prejudices. Those who had not liked gypsies before would not get to like them after the conversation with me, but might have seen, let's say, a 'positive' example, and not only what the majority of people think about Roma. What I also found very interesting was when I was borrowed by a Roma girl, of almost my age, but she lived in a small village in Hungary. We talked about the differences between the lives of a gypsy youngster living in Budapest and one living in the countryside.

ROMA GIRL BOOK

---> CHOOSING THE BOOKS



The role of a Book is exhausting, demanding and challenging, but it is also interesting and fun. The selection of the people who will represent the book titles is undoubtedly the most important part of the Living Library preparation. While the organisers will set a rigid framework for the activity as a whole, the meetings between the Books and readers themselves will happen spontaneously, and in a confidential space. Organisers will not have a clear picture of what transpires in these discussions, but must trust the Books to follow the objectives of the Living Library.

On my first day as a Book it surprised me how 'library-like' the atmosphere was. When a potential reader entered the stand, the person was treated like a person looking for a book to borrow in a library. As a Police Book I experienced young people who were frustrated with the political system, at not being understood, and who felt a need to make their mark on society. It's my impression that their aim was not to commit illegal acts themselves but they were very upset when the police crossed their personal borders. But by talking about their personal experiences of these conflicts they got an impression of the insecure person behind the uniform, and I believe I helped them realise that Police officers also are people. I was delivered back to the library right on time and when the activists left, I had a warm feeling inside.

POLICE OFFICER BOOK





---> **Some general guidelines:**

- ❖ The best partners for the selection of the Books are members of specialized NGOs, associations and organisations that have a real and vested interest in counteracting the prejudices and stereotypes faced by them in their daily life. Volunteers and staff of such associations are used to answering the type of questions put to them by the readers and can competently provide information. At the same time they will be able to turn to other members of their group should they need advice and support.
- ❖ Books must be authentic: each title should be represented by one or several people who have meaningful personal experience on the subject.
- ❖ Books have to be stable personalities ready and able to communicate with a diversity of different readers. They require a reflective and mature opinion on the subject they are representing, while avoiding a missionary approach.
- ❖ It is not sufficient to choose talkative and extrovert people as Books, it might even be an obstacle for serious exchange. Try to avoid personalities who mainly want to promote themselves.
- ❖ Books should be reliable and able to commit themselves to the working hours suggested by the organisers.
- ❖ Depending on the duration of the Living Library, it is recommended to have several people representing the same book title in shifts. Four to five readers per day per person is recommended as a maximum.
- ❖ For potential Bestsellers, try to have several 'copies' of the Book available simultaneously to satisfy the readers' demand and to avoid the exhaustion of popular Books.
- ❖ If the Living Library is staged for an international public, it is important to have Books available in different languages (i.e. people speaking different languages). The different language versions should be mentioned in the catalogue.
- ❖ As an addition or alternative, the Living Library can provide 'dictionaries' that interpret between the Book and the reader. The profile of the Dictionaries corresponds to those of other Books: they should be competent and aware of their role as Dictionaries, rather than having a personal agenda. Foreign language competence is not enough to act as a Dictionary. Try to find students from interpretation schools or people with interpreting experience, such as active members of international NGOs or similar partners.
- ❖ The option of Dictionaries also allows for the involvement of Books that do not speak the local language, which can be a great bonus for the collection.
- ❖ Plan the timing of 'book purchases' – Books have to make a time commitment and need plenty of notice. At least two months before the event, you should already have your 'purchase list' ready so to be able to start contacting the Books.



---> **PREPARATION AND BRIEFING MEETING FOR THE BOOKS**

It is recommended to organise a briefing meeting for all Books a few days before the start of the Living Library. While the Books will have received basic information beforehand, the meeting will help to clarify open questions, address insecurities and put the Living Library in the context of the organisers' association or institution.

The briefing meeting should take place in a quiet place in order to facilitate discussion and concentration, and this is unlikely to be the public space chosen for the Living Library. If this is not the first Living Library run by the organisers, it is useful to provide a summary of evaluations from previous events and to invite 'experienced Books' to share their impressions. Plan to invite people in the late afternoon – so as not to disturb their work or studies – for a meeting of about two hours, and organise the seating arrangement in a circle or square so that people can see each other. The box opposite outlines a sample agenda for the briefing meeting.



---> **BRIEFING MEETING**

- ...> Welcome participants
- ...> Introduction of the organisers (the people in charge and their association or institution), the librarians, round of Book introductions (name, book title, association, where applicable)
- ...> Review of the concept, aims and methodology of the Living Library:
 - ...> Why has it been organised?
 - ...> What should be achieved?
 - ...> What does it look like in practice?
 - ...> What are people's expectations?
 - ...> General questions from the Books

---> **The role of the Book**

- ...> Job description for Books
- ...> The catalogue
- ...> Explaining the rules for readers
- ...> Working hours
- ...> Role-related questions from the Books

---> **Clarification of infrastructure and running of the Living Library**

- ...> Provision of all relevant background documents (rules for readers, tasks of the Books, PR materials) to participants
- ...> Possibility for each Book to check and revise his/her page in the catalogue, with the revisions to be integrated in the final version of the catalogue.
- ...> Agreement on the working hours and attendance of the Books.
- ...> Books may sign an agreement (if it is helpful).

---> **Time for informal discussions between Books, librarians and organisers.**



BEING A BOOK IN THE LIVING LIBRARY – SOME USEFUL HINTS

- Prepare yourself for your role of being a Book. This is not a game: you have to be convinced about the Book you are representing.
- It can help to prepare some factual arguments and information, such as statistics or research data, in order to evaluate the relevance of the information some readers might confront you with.
- When you, as a Book, are borrowed, decide with your reader on a place that is comfortable for both of you.
- Check your watch: you have a limited amount of time together. If the reader wants to spend more time with you, and if you also want to, you should go back to the librarians to extend the loan.
- Be yourself; be honest and open to talk and listen carefully.
- Do not act another role or invent characteristics for yourself; the reader will realise, and you will lose credibility.
- Be ready to share your reflected personal experience. If questions become too intimate, feel free to say that you do not want to answer.
- Accept that your reader borrowed your book title and is interested in this dimension of your personality; additional information is mainly meant for illustration. This might give you the feeling that you are somewhat limited, but this is normal in the context of the Living Library.
- Be prepared to repeat yourself again and again, as different readers might pose the same question. Try to treat your reader as if they are the first person you are giving this information to. Try not to show that you are answering the same question for the 4th time.
- Remember that you meet your reader for approximately one hour and you might never meet again in your lives.
- Every reader borrowing you will be different, and the reason for choosing your book can vary greatly. A good question to start the discussion is 'Why did you choose my book?' This will give you a first impression of the reader's interest.
- Readers of the Living Library are, in general, ready to talk, to listen and to learn. Their questions are not always very clear, so it's important to help readers formulate their interest in your book. Try to get some basic information about the reader – Have they met someone like you before? Did they have good or bad experiences with a person like you? – as this will help you to decide on the kind of information they might find interesting.



Readers often ask: 'If I choose someone from the catalogue, will you bring an actor or an actress who will play the role of the book?' When I say 'no', and as soon as they understand that the Book is authentic with the title, they become very excited.
A Living Library librarian

- It may turn out that a reader is ignorant or for some reason becomes verbally aggressive and/or attempts to hold you responsible for a variety of social problems. Try to remain calm and show understanding, while expressing your disagreement where necessary. Try to move the discussion on to an area in which you feel safe.
- Although the librarians will have encouraged the reader to choose a Book that represents their stereotypes and prejudices, the motivation of the reader to borrow you may be different; they may be curious, or looking for personal advice. Remember readers have to make their life decisions themselves; you can share your own experiences of solving problems or tackling difficult situations, but be careful in giving advice.
- The content of the discussion with your readers is, in principle, confidential. If you quote from other readers, do not mention their names.
- It may happen that you are borrowed by two or more people. This can be interesting, as the discussion is more varied. However, be aware not to let yourself be used for sorting out problems between different members of a group.
- If you work with a Dictionary (i.e. an interpreter), pause after every two or three sentences to ensure that everything you say has been translated. If you are not sure you understood the questions or comments of the readers in translation, clarify it.
- Ask for a break if you feel you need a rest, particularly after a difficult discussion with a reader. It is important for you and the next reader that you are a relaxed discussion partner.
- Use your breaks to exchange your experiences as a Book with other Books in the Living Library. It will also be particularly helpful to compare with Books with the same title.
- If you feel uneasy or humiliated by a reader, recall the rules of the Living Library: you have the right to end the discussion if you feel insulted or accused.
- If your Book is a Bestseller, arrange with the Librarians for short breaks between the readers and inform them of how many readers you are prepared to meet.
- If your Book is not so popular, try to make the best use of the time in the Library by speaking to the other Books.
- Enjoy being a Book! If approached with the right motivation it can be a very interesting and enriching experience for you and your readers!



Loving to talk, being egoistic and exhibitionist does not make a good Book. On the contrary, these characteristics can endanger the whole concept of the Living Library.
A Living Library librarian



---> **BOOK TESTIMONIES**

---> **Feminist Book:**

The hours spent with my readers meant self-awareness, and it was a challenge to meet curious, open-minded and critical young people who had very specific questions and wanted to get answers and then thanked me very politely at the end of the talks. The intensity and the sincerity of the talks, discussing different points of view, the debates with yourself on what it means in this role for yourself and for others, as well as the reflections themselves – all this means constant learning about each other. However it's not always simple: you have to repeat, explain, deal with provocation, as well as question and discuss formed opinions, and argue. Sometimes you get fed up with your role, even offended in terms of everything that you stand for – and you wish yourself to be again the person with all the other roles you have in your life. But that's what it's all about: reducing people to clichés, and prejudices that disregard everything else. Some people aren't given a chance from the beginning, and it's about the fight against this, and about reflecting on it.

A feminist hates men, is lesbian, aggressive and doesn't shave her legs. If she doesn't do all that, is she really a feminist? Can a woman be a feminist and a wife and mother at the same time? Several readers asked me if I'm a real feminist and different things resonated in this question: worry, shyness, uncertainty, curiosity, interest and criticism. And whenever I was asked this question I always asked back: 'what does a feminist mean to you?' Sometimes there came a time when I was no longer surprised to hear the clichés and stereotypes that you could find in the library catalogue. Only when I answered them in the negative was I not a feminist. Do you have to hate men to become a feminist? I tried to explain my definition of feminism and to add that although there are different trends of feminism and despite the fact that I consider myself a feminist, I don't like using this word the same way I used to. I rather prefer to describe a feminist as a person who stands up for women's rights and deals with women's issues, and in addition reflects on gender questions.

Some talks were good discussions, some of them questions and answers, some of them only listening with attention, and some of the readers expected advice, which I found quite problematic, and refused. However, it was not a problem for me to tell an 18 year old boy that in my eyes it did not mean the loss of manhood if he likes cooking, didn't want to pass his driving test (and had to convince his girlfriend about it). There were exciting discussions when 2-3 readers borrowed me and they had violent discussions with each other, which I tried to mitigate by bringing in factual arguments. However, these were the most exhausting talks, as I had to open several pages of the Book at once.

Being read all the time, sometimes without any breaks, is exhausting and reduces the concentration that you need. Your pages are turned again and again, and the same pages are marked and read several times. You look like a book that's not just read once and put back on the shelf, but rather lent to friends and acquaintances – a bit worn at the edges, and not looking new any more. But it's also a nice feeling. Which book doesn't want to be read?



---> **Disabled Book:**

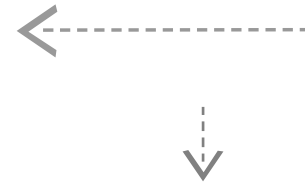
On my first day on the Sziget, on August 1, it was awfully hot. To my great surprise, not a single reader was interested in us that day, and we were just 'collecting dust on the shelves'. Mind you, a negative experience is also somehow still an experience. I was upset about this, as I heard that on the previous day the tent had had quite good attendance. In the end I was even trying to fool myself that maybe it was because it had rained the previous day, and many were escaping here to the tent, and taking something out to 'read'. I was not bored, however, contemplating how diverse and multi-coloured the borrowers were. I would have liked to register as a reader, but there was no such opportunity, so I was just talking to the library Books. There was a wide range of Books: *Football supporter, Ex-alcoholic, Witch, Romanian and Roma young people, African, Rabbi, Psychologist, TV journalist*. But there were some Books notable by their absence: *a Politician, a BKV ticket inspector, a Policeman, an Ex-prisoner*.

I was startled to read the list of prejudices about disabled people published in the catalogue: 'mentally backwards, permanently sick, paid by society, does not work, wants people to feel sorry for him / her, unable to have a sexual relationship'. Then finally on Monday we were visited by a reader. It was a young guy who came to our circle – there were three of us who were disabled, all of us women. He had no negative feelings when we greeted him with 'Just come and take a seat in my wheel-chair'. From what he said, in his close surroundings, in his family there is no-one with motor neuron disease, but he was very curious about us. We went through all the judgements concerning us point by point, and supported our statements with arguments, anecdotes and real-life examples. All three of us are married, bringing up children, we work, and have finished our schoolings, both academic and personal development. We told him about the problems of giving birth, the attitude of the doctors, and of the specialists. People still do not know that paralysis or other motor neuron diseases cannot be inherited. We live in our own homes, and not in so-called 'colonies', segregated. Sadly, I had already heard an extremely insulting phrase 'handicapped-village'.

He was surprised to hear that the lower part of my body became paralysed in 1959, but I still rode bicycles and horses, went swimming a lot, and had even ridden a small motorbike for two years. When the young man was saying good-bye, he told us – and I do not think he was just overpowered by numbers – that he would, even subconsciously, look at his surrounding with completely different eyes; these include the stairs in public buildings, public transport and the environment in general.



The Librarians



---> **Subway Ticket Inspector Book**

'Klaus, you are gonna be a library Book', my boss said to me one morning at work, and I was a bit confused and asked if it was because I was meant to be put on the shelf now. 'No,' my boss replied, 'but we believe that you are exactly the right man for this job.' He then proceeded to explain how the company had received this letter from the Danish "Stop The Violence" movement asking for a 'living book' for the 'Living Library' to be organised at the Roskilde Festival. I quickly understood the idea. The library consisted of many different people, among others the Danish police, Parking Attendants, Football fans and many more. My Book, the Subway Ticket Inspector, is also negatively referred to as the 'Subway Cops' and is one of those occupations where you are at a high risk of being confronted with violence, assault or verbal abuse. My job is to check if passengers have a valid ticket to travel with on the subway.

The policemen and I were some of the most popular Books, and out on loan almost all the time. So I decided to begin taking my readers to a place not far from the Library where we could have a drink and chat. As it turned out, it was very interesting to meet and learn about how these young people experienced us (ticket inspectors) on duty in the trains. Some of the most frequently asked questions were 'Do you have to be a bastard to get a job like yours?', 'Don't you ever feel sorry for those people who somehow find themselves in a situation without a ticket but needing transportation?' or 'Isn't it terribly difficult for you to have to do this to other people?'. In several cases they had questions that related to a specific situation they themselves had been involved in. I heard many of the readers' personal experiences with my colleagues, good and bad. But the advantage of the situation was that I was right there, sitting with them and ready to try to answer their questions. I often had to cut the conversation short when the time ran out.

I especially remember one situation with a young couple, sworn members of the Punk scene with their colourful hair and black leather outfits; we had a very interesting discussion and some more people joined us and started to ask questions. It ended up being 20 people joining in and listening to me babble about my work as 'the bad guy who writes out the tickets'. At the end I gave some thought as to what I would do differently if I were to participate in another Living Library, and came up with 'better shoes and more warm clothes'!

At the heart of the Living Library are the librarians, who have the primary task of facilitating the loan of Books. The librarians connect the reader and the Book: they are the first people the readers of the Living Library

have contact with and must be able to communicate and work patiently with Books and readers during the sometimes complicated deliberations and decision-making processes. It is recommended to find professional and trained (real!) librarians for the Living Library, as they already possess the skills and competencies for the many practical functions, such as filling out library cards for readers, updating and maintaining the available list of literature, and keeping records of loans and the return of books in the library ledger. Librarians are also the guardians of the library rules.

GOOD ADVICE FROM PAST LIVING LIBRARIANS TO FUTURE LIVING LIBRARIANS:

- ❖ Get to know the content and interesting facts about the books in your collection prior to opening.
- ❖ Be strict in applying the library rules and demand the same from readers and books.
- ❖ Document all loans accurately.
- ❖ Set up a work-plan with your fellow librarians.
- ❖ Cooperate closely with the other librarians.
- ❖ Use free moments to get feedback from Books and readers.
- ❖ Take good care of the Books, and filter potentially difficult readers (by redirecting the reader to another Book, inviting them to stay within the library premises or send an accompanying Dictionary).
- ❖ Get to know the environment surrounding the library so that you can recommend places for reading.





JOB PROFILE OF A LIVING LIBRARIAN:

- Believe in and be enthusiastic about the idea of the Living Library.
- Be cooperative, diplomatic and communicative.
- Speak foreign languages.
- Be tolerant and curious.
- Be pleasant, friendly and patient.

Living librarians also have an important explanatory function: they help readers understand the concept, find a relevant Book and understand the library rules. Librarians might be approached by the press during the event, and therefore it's important that

they have relevant information about the organisers and hosts. For practical purposes, librarians should also be immediately recognisable by their T-shirts or Library staff identification.

---> BRIEFING AND EVALUATION WITH THE LIBRARIANS

The librarians, like the Books, will benefit greatly from a well-prepared briefing before the launch of the activity. Librarians should have a meeting with the organisers at an early stage to agree on their role and tasks as well as working times. Librarians are also indispensable participants in the briefing meeting with the Books. During the course of the activity, it is recommended to hold short evaluation and coordination meetings at the end or beginning of each working day. This provides organisers and librarians with the opportunity to adapt things that might not be working and go through the experiences of the day.

---> DEALING WITH WALK-IN BOOKS

During some of the Living Libraries staged over a longer period – such as at music festivals – librarians were approached by readers wanting to volunteer as a Book during the event. Organisers should give clear indications to librarians on how to deal with such situations. The producers of this guide do not recommend including extra Books during the activity itself unless there is a real shortage of Books, or the self-nominated candidate competently fills an 'important gap' in the catalogue. The primary concern is that these 'walk-in' Books do not have the same preparation and briefing for the event and their motivation is different from the Books recruited before the activity. Proposed titles of self-nominated Books in the past include, for example: *a Man*, *Lawyer*, *Divorced man*, *Self-employed person*, and *Computer programmer*. There is a clear risk that walk-in Books will not match the criteria for the Books outlined above. Nevertheless, if walk-in candidates represent a category missing from the catalogue, consider taking their contact details for future Living Libraries.

If organisers decide that they want to keep the opportunity open for additional Books to join the library, they need to consider the following:

- the extent to which the proposed book title corresponds with the criteria of the catalogue
- the need to conduct a screening interview with the Book
- the need to brief people during the event, and set out the conditions of participation
- the need to make amendments and additions to the list of literature.



➤ Hosting a Living Library

Hosting a Living Library is rewarding and demanding, and requires commitment from any interested festival and festival organisers. A festival can be a platform for building relations and dialogue between young people, and this activity also sends a message of respect and tolerance from the festival to its audience. It is dynamic and interactive, and it complements the festival atmosphere. Previous experiences have shown that Library and festival organisers need to work in close cooperation. The role of the host is to ensure appropriate conditions and to provide logistic and financial support to the organisers of the activity. The host is also responsible for providing assistance in securing an appropriate location for the event. It is the task of the organiser to make these aspects clear to the host, and to communicate precisely what the objectives and requirements are, and how the host will benefit by staging the activity. It is good practice to have a contract detailing agreed conditions with the festival organisers, and ideally they should share the responsibility for the activity with the organisers of the Living Library.

For a list of resources and types of support the organiser should discuss with a prospective host, please see the section above on Choosing a setting.



◀ Promoting the Living Library

Publicity for the Living Library is crucial, and there are many ways in which organisers can promote their Living Library event. The general press and the festival's programme and publicity can be used to inform guests about the activity. It is important to take advantage of opportunities for free publicity, although organisers cannot only rely on the small texts generally offered in festival programmes. It is also important to plan a strategy for getting media coverage. In the build-up to, and during the festival, it has proved useful to organise street promotion teams with information leaflets and attractive strategies for getting people's attention.

As a part of your promotional strategy, you could consider the following options:

Giving a visual identity to the Living Library with a logo and slogans

While "Living Library" is in itself an attractive title for the event, you might want to underline its message with a slogan. The EYCB has successfully used for three years "Don't judge a book by its cover", which figures on all promotional materials and T-shirts and invites prospective readers to search for further information. Examples of other slogans used are "Don't judge – read!" and "We don't have cook books, travel books or children's books; in fact we don't have any books at all". Different logos used can be found in this guide.



Working with festival media

Take time to find out what media is available to organisers through the festival system. Apart from programmes, for example, some festivals have a festival radio that can help promote the activity, and there is almost always a media centre service available. These are important for helping to distribute press releases about the Living Library as a part of the festival publicity. It is also worth checking the possibilities of being included on any festival website.

Producing a press kit/working with the press

Past experiences have shown that the press very often respond positively to the idea of the activity. It is therefore important to make sure that the press get a proper presentation of the library in press release materials, including invitations to visit the library and meet Books and readers. It is important in all communication to emphasise that the Living Library is free to festival guests, as well as to offer a clear message about the nature of the activity.

Developing and distributing promotional materials

Produce a **promotional leaflet** with all relevant information about the activity: the rules of loan, opening hours, location, and a brief explanatory text. Produce **Book T-shirts**: they attract people's attention as the Books circulate in the festival grounds. Organisers with a comfortable budget can consider producing posters promoting the living library that – with the permission of the festival host – can be put up around the grounds.

Organising and managing a **street promotion** team provides a valuable resource for the activity. A group of volunteer library promoters can circulate and hand out leaflets with the rules of loan, and information about the library to guests. The street promoters must be briefed so as to be able to explain the concept in depth and provide directions to the location. The street teams typically work in groups of 4-5. Make sure you have enough copies of your promotional materials since an effective street team can easily hand out several thousand copies in one day. Alternatively a group of Books can work as street team promoters during quiet periods.



Living Library – Don't judge a book by its cover!

HERE WE ARE AGAIN!

IF YOU ALREADY VISITED IT AND LIKED IT; IF YOU SAW US LAST YEAR BUT DIDN'T HAVE THE TIME TO POP IN, OR IF THIS IS THE FIRST TIME YOU'VE HEARD ABOUT US:

Have you ever thought about your own prejudices and stereotypes about other people? Or the impression that other people might have about you? Do you have a lot of stereotypes for example about Muslims or Jews, policemen or ticket controllers, priests or psychologists, feminists or homosexuals, ex-criminals or hooligans, environmentalists or about blond women? But you have never had the chance to speak to one of them to find out what his or her life is like?

If you are ready to face your own prejudices and stereotypical judgements and meet "your stereotype" personally, you should become a reader of the Living Library where books can speak!

HOW DOES THE LIVING LIBRARY WORK?

- The Living Library is placed in the Civil Sziget, next to the tent of the European Youth Centre.
- When you come for the first time, you will have to register as a reader to receive your Living Library Pass. By becoming a reader you accept the policy of the Living Library.
- From the library catalogue you can choose a book you would like to read. Many books are available, in many different languages....
- If your book is in a language you do not understand, the Living Library can also provide you with a dictionary.
- If the book you wish to read has already been borrowed by another reader, you can choose a different one or come back later!
- You can spend an hour with the book of your choice anywhere on the Sziget. Then you must bring the book back to the Living Library.
- The services of the Living Library are free of charge for registered readers.

WHAT ARE THE RULES FOR READERS OF THE LIVING LIBRARY?

- Only registered readers who have accepted the Library rules can borrow a book.
- Only one book can be borrowed at a time. It is not possible to reserve a book provisionally.
- A book can be borrowed for one hour, and then it must be returned to the Living Library. Readers can extend reading time for a maximum of one extra hour with the librarian.
- The reader must return the book in the same mental and physical condition as borrowed. It is forbidden to cause damage to the book, tear out or bend pages, get food or drink spilled over the book or hurt her or his dignity in any other way. The reader is responsible for preserving the condition of the book.
- The reader accepts the fact that the book can quit the conversation if she or he feels that the reader treats her or him in an inappropriate manner or hurts her or his dignity.

AWARD FOR REGULAR READERS!

Regular readers will receive the attractive "Living Library Reader's T-Shirt" after returning the second book to the Library!

OPENING HOURS:

The Living Library is open every day from 12h to 20h, last opportunity to borrow a book is 19h!

The Living Library on the Civil Sziget is organised by the EYCB with the kind support of the Sziget Iroda.



Evaluation of a Living Library



THE FOLLOWING SUGGESTIONS HAVE EMERGED FROM THE LIVING LIBRARIES HELD AT THE SZIGET FESTIVAL:

- It is important to use traditional forms of advertising at a festival (brochures, leaflets, programme-notes), but remember that festival-goers tend to dump much of this publicity, so don't create unnecessary rubbish!
- It is important to use creative means of advertising, and bear in mind that the most important thing is personal communication. (In our evaluation survey a significant number of readers found the Living Library because they had heard about it from friends.)
- Check if it is possible whether other programmes can support the Living Library in indirect ways, such as live music or small concerts in front of the tent. If there is an established broadcasting system, use it for local advertising. It is important to concentrate on the content of the text, for example: 'You have prejudices, but do you know how to live with them? Test your prejudices at the Living Library.'
- The organisers of the Living Library should at all times maintain contact (radio or mobile connection) with the Festival organisers who have the responsibility and the capacity to manage and provide help and information.



The dimensions, intensity and methodology of any evaluation should be defined by the organisers during the preparation process. In order to get sufficient material for an evaluation, it will be important to define the evaluation criteria and procedures early on in the planning process. This publication is not a guide to the aims, objectives and methodology of evaluation. If you wish to learn more about evaluation in youth activities in general, please consult www.training-youth.net³, where you will find numerous tools and approaches on evaluation methodology in non-formal education.

Evaluation serves two main purposes in the context of the Living Library:

- The evaluation of the event in relation to the **achievement of measurable objectives** defined at the beginning of the planning phase.
- The evaluation of the **experience of organisers, librarians and Books** with the purpose of reflecting on common experiences, and improving the methodology for a potential re-run of the event.

COLLECTING QUANTITATIVE DATA:

How many readers, how many loans, how many reading hours? What were the most popular Books, and which were less in demand?

These figures are relatively easy to collect and it is an important task for the librarians. They should register every loan on a list, indicating the title of the Book, the time of the Book loan and return, and whether or not it is a first time reader. At the end of the event these statistics can then easily be produced.

How many people showed interest, but didn't become readers?

This can be complicated to undertake in the heat of the moment. It could be an additional task of the Librarians to count interested people by keeping a simple 'tick-list', but obviously such data will be approximate in events visited by thousands of people.

Press coverage

Collect newspaper articles, record television and radio broadcasts, and record the number of journalists who conduct interviews or who simply source information from Books, readers and organisers. It is also useful to keep a list of any media coverage of well-known personalities who visit the Living Library. This is not strictly for evaluation, but also for future promotional purposes.

³ For example, *T-Kit on Training Essentials*, in particular chapter 3.6. © Council of Europe & European Commission, October 2002.



---> COLLECTING QUALITATIVE DATA

Questionnaires

Considering the large number of people involved in a Living Library, questionnaires are an easily manageable and adequate means of collecting data. They should be prepared and produced before the event, and distributed to Books and readers during the event to secure a good return rate to librarians and organisers after the event. You will need different questionnaires for each group. Readers should have the choice as to whether or not to disclose personal data, and in principle the Living Library protects the anonymity of readers.

---> EXAMPLES OF QUESTIONNAIRES

At the end of this section, you will find two sample questionnaires, one for readers and one for Books. The questions are suggestions only and can of course be adapted to each Living Library.

Questionnaire for readers

It is important that questionnaires for readers are short and can be completed within a couple of minutes. Librarians will have the task of distributing them to readers. Ideally, frequent readers should fill in their questionnaire after their last loan. Readers should be informed that the information on the questionnaires serves to improve the methodology of the Living Library and helps to produce statistics. Readers do not have to reveal their identity, unless they wish to do so.

What follows is a selection of illustrative answers collected from readers' questionnaires in previous Living Libraries:

Question: What was the most important experience for you as a reader of the Living Library?

Sample responses:

- *the books are brave to be themselves*
- *being open to different opinions and breaking down barriers*
- *comparing my view on different subjects with those of others*
- *to rethink and elaborate my opinions*
- *to look beyond the label*
- *personal contact, make friendship*
- *exciting interaction*
- *expanding the world and bring human nature closer to my soul*
- *very interesting to talk to people with whom I would not talk normally*
- *I found out many interesting things I did not know before*



Questionnaires for Books

Books will obviously be very happy and even have the urgent need to share their experiences, and reflect by writing about them. It is advisable to give the questionnaire to Books at the beginning of the Living Library and ask them to return it by the end or shortly after the end of the event by a given deadline. The responses of the Books can be summarised after the event and serve for briefing future Books. Organisers should study the evaluation questionnaires of Books and react without delay if a Book carefully evaluates his/her experience in a very negative manner, as this might require an in-depth discussion with one of the organisers and the Book concerned.

Below are comments collated from Book evaluation questionnaires from previous Living Libraries:

Question: What was the best moment for you as Book during this week?

Sample responses:

- *the readers were open*
- *one of the readers borrowed me not for being a disabled, but for being a woman*
- *five Dutch men borrowed me for two hours, they were kind and clever and it was the most interesting conversation of the year*
- *the great deal of empathy of the 16 – 20 year old readers*
- *the interest of several straight people in homosexuality*
- *beautiful girls borrowed me, too*
- *exciting and smart questions of interested readers*



Question: What was the worst moment for you as a Book during this week?

Sample responses:

- *some readers borrowed me to solve their problems*
- *a guy who was very frustrated and showed an offensive attitude during the entire conversation*
- *a reader asking 'shall we swap women for goats?'*
- *somebody condemned me for who I am*
- *a reader who was not really interested and just wanted to kill some time*
- *none at all*
- *feeling exhausted and tired at the end of the day*

Question: What questions were you most frequently asked?

Sample questions:

- *Can a feminist have a husband and children?*
- *How can it happen that someone becomes a ticket inspector?*
- *Where is your home?*
- *Are your husband and children also disabled?*
- *Does God exist and is their life after death?*
- *Why did you drink and how could you stop?*
- *Why did you come to this country?*
- *What terrible things happened to you so far?*
- *What is it like to be a police officer?*
- *What did your parents say when they learned that you are homosexual?*
- *Which religion is the right one?*
- *Can gypsies tolerate non-gypsies?*
- *How can I get a job in a European organisation?*
- *How is the first day in prison? How is the first day out of prison?*
- *If you had a second chance, what would you do differently?*



EVALUATION MEETINGS

Evaluation meetings often take place during the event; many teams like to have a short check-in at the end of the day. A thorough evaluation, however, including the Books and librarians, should usually take place a few days or weeks after the event. It might also be useful to invite partners, such as the NGOs providing the Books, as well as the hosts of the event.



Dear Reader,
 Thanks for taking some time to fill in this short questionnaire, to share your experience in reading one or more of the Living Books. Your comments will contribute to further developing the methodology of the Living Library. All answers will be treated confidentially and anonymously.

Your age:

Your gender: male female

Your nationality/ies:

Where did you hear about the Living Library?

TV radio newspaper passing by our tent leaflets on the Sziget

from previous readers other source:

Have you been a reader in a Living Library before?

No, first time Yes, please specify:

Which Book did you borrow?

.....

How much did you like the idea of the Living Library?

1 2 3 4 5 (1-not at all, 5-impressed)

How did you like the selection of the Books and stereotypes presented in the catalogue?

1 2 3 4 5 (1-not at all, 5-impressed)

Comments:

How would you evaluate the service of the librarians?

1 2 3 4 5 (1-not helpful at all, 5-very helpful)

If you used a Dictionary, how satisfied were you with it ?

1 2 3 4 5 (1-not at all, 5-very satisfied)

What was the most important experience for you while you were reading the Book/s?

.....

Have you learned anything new in reading a Book or several Books from the Living Library?

.....

Would you recommend others to be a reader at the Living Library?

.....

Would you like to recommend any new Books to be presented in our catalogue?

.....

Thanks for your comments and time!

Name:

Your title as a Book:

Age:

Gender: male female

Nationality/ies

Are you member of an NGO? If yes, which one?

How many readers did you have during the Living Library?

1-5 5-10 more than 10

How was your experience as a book?

1 2 3 4 5 (1-very bad, 5-very good)

What was your impression about your readers?

1 2 3 4 5 (1-not motivated to learn, 5-interested, very sincere attitude)

How useful was the description of your role as a Book , which you were provided with before the Sziget?

1 2 3 4 5 (1-inappropriate, insufficient, 5-very clear, well described)

How do you evaluate the support of the Library Staff (librarian and organisers)?

1 2 3 4 5 (1-not helpful at all, 5-very helpful)

If you used a dictionary, please assess your communication with it

1 2 3 4 5 (1-not helpful, poor, 5-accurate, very good)

How would you rate the duration and appropriateness of your working hours?

1 2 3 4 5 (1-inappropriate, too long, 5-very appropriate)

How did you feel your readers benefited from reading you?

.....

How did you benefit from being read?

.....

What were the most frequently asked questions?

.....

What was the most challenging part of being a Book?

.....

For the next Living Library, what advice would you give?

.....

To future Books:

To organisers:

To librarians:

To future readers:

For the presentation of the catalogue:

Would you be ready to be a Book again?

Other comments?

Appendices

PHOTO INDEX AND CREDITS

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Feminist Book participating in a discussion on gender issues in the tent of the Ombudsman Office at the Sziget Festival
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All Books in the Living Library at the Alværn Ungdomskole, Nesodden, Norway, 2003
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One book for three readers, please!
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Reading a promotion leaflet
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Librarian explaining the list of literature, Roskilde Festival
Credits: Mathies Erlandsen, Stop the Violence, Denmark, 2000

Page 59
Reading just outside the Living Library
© Art Factory, 2003

Page 60
Frequent reader choosing yet another Book
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Page 66 (appendix)
Stand of the Living Library, Rock in Rio, Lisbon, 2004
Credits: Ronni Abergel, 2004

Page 67
Promotion Poster of the Living Library in at the Alværn Ungdomskole, Nesodden, Norway, 2003
Courtesy of Norwegian People's Aid/Norsk Folkehjelp

ONE OF THE MANY POSTERS OF THE LIVING LIBRARY AT THE ROSKILDE FESTIVAL 2000
Courtesy: Stop Volden, Denmark

TITLE:
WHEN YOU ARE THROUGH YOU WILL SURELY FEEL LIKE LEAVING A FRIEND.

TEXT ON CARD IN RIGHT CORNER:

Borrow a human being you normally can't stand. We have a wide choice of popular types, such as gays, hiphoppers or doormen. Go for a walk and discuss - or leave it. Just remember to return the person within two hours.



LIVING LIBRARY STAND AT THE ROCK IN RIO FESTIVAL, LISBON 2004



PROMOTION POSTER OF THE LIVING LIBRARY IN AT THE ALVÆRN UNGDOMSKOLE, NESODDEN, NORWAY, 2003



A PAGE OF THE CATALOGUE AND A READER'S PASS (EYCB)

Feminista **Feminist**

- Gyűlöli a férfiakat,
- Leszbikus,
- Képtelen pasit szerezni magának,
- Egy...

- Hates men,
- Is lesbian,
- Couldn't get a boyfriend,
- Is a feminist due to a trauma,
- Aggressive,
- Hairy legs, hairy all over.

Living Library
 ELŐ KÖNYVTÁR
 LIVING LIBRARY
 SZIGET 2004

Név/Name: **PETER**
 OLVASÓJEGY
 READER'S PASS
 Dátum/Date: 8/8/

Kölcsönzött könyvek
 Book loans

1 **Feminist**
 2 **Gay**
 3 **Priest**
 4

==

Ha erre a könyvre más nyelven lenne szükséged, fordulj a könyvtárhoz!
 For availability in additional languages, please contact the librarian.

SAMPLES OF BOOK T-SHIRTS



Book t-shirts of the Living Library in Alvarn Ungdomskole
 Courtesy of Norwegian People's Aid/Norsk Folkehjelp



Book t-shirts of the Living Library at the SZIGET Festival
 Design: Art Factory, Budapest

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THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE YOUTH SECTOR AND HUMAN RIGHTS EDUCATION

The Living Library is part of the Council of Europe's youth sector's priority programme "Youth promoting human rights and social cohesion".

Its aim is to:

- identify responses to persistent violations of human dignity, such as social exclusion, violence, racism, intolerance and discrimination;
- empower young people to develop activities which address the racism, xenophobia, discrimination and gender-based forms of violence that affect them;
- develop educational tools and methodological resources for use by practitioners in human rights education;
- promote and support the pilot projects and training activities on human rights education across Europe;
- bring together European networks of trainers, multipliers and youth organisations that are active in promoting human rights.

The participation in large public events for young people gives a unique opportunity to spread the message of human rights, youth participation and intercultural learning to a wider public.

If you wish to find further information about the programmes of the Directorate of Youth and Sport, please visit our websites:

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The Council of Europe's official website.

www.coe.int/youth

The work of the Directorate of Youth and Sport of the Council of Europe, its programmes, decision-making structures, publications, partners and much more....

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The website with information on the human rights education programme including links to publications and educational materials.

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