

Library development in Hungary: achievements and challenges



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The milestones of library development

- ❑ The strategic objectives for 2003-2007
- ❑ Analysing the current situation and identifying the problems to be solved
- ❑ Elaborating a new concept for library development
- ❑ Concept receives approval from the government
- ❑ Finding the appropriate financial sources

Towards the development programme

The current situation is:

- ❑ The library supply of rural areas is inadequate: the situation of village libraries is far from being satisfactory, 90% of the 1950 libraries „open to all users” are village libraries
- ❑ Smaller libraries have insufficient ICT infrastructure and content services
- ❑ The quality of services shows great variances
- ❑ The digitisation of cultural heritage needs to be solved
- ❑ Apart from the professional qualifications of librarians, Hungarian librarianship does not have a unified approach to quality services

Strategic objectives and concepts

- ❑ Improving the conditions of library supply in rural areas – concept and funding sources
- ❑ Widening access: the development of the National Document Delivery System, enhancing content services
- ❑ Digitisation – concept and funding sources
- ❑ Introducing quality management at libraries in order to raise the quality of services
- ❑ Elaborating a code of ethics for librarians

Achievements in the development of library supply in rural areas

- From 2005: government funding for the development of village libraries, library service points and mobile libraries

Result: 600 new or renovated libraries and refurbished library service points, two mobile libraries

The annual state funding is ensured by a government statutory order

Achievements in widening access to documents and information

- Annual funding from the budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture for the National Document Delivery System; ICT development in the libraries of the NDDS resulting in an increase of 240% in interlibrary loans; the development of the Hungarian National Shared Catalogue
- The Ministry concluded the contract for the national licensing of a database package by EBSCO Publishing

Achievements in digitisation

- ❑ The National Library Digitisation Plan has been published
- ❑ Division of tasks between the National Széchényi Library and the Neumann Digital Library
- ❑ Funding is expected from the European Structural Funds available via the operative programmes of the 2nd National Development Plan

Achievements in quality management at libraries

- „Quality development 21“ – a three-year project funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture
- Continuing training courses for librarians funded by the Ministry
- Introducing a system of quality-based professional supervision at libraries

In order to achieve a unified approach to quality services by library professionals:

- „The code of ethics of Hungarian librarianship” was published in early 2006
- The preparatory works included:
 - background studies and completion
 - public debate about the draft in various professional groups
 - approval of the code of ethics by the professional organisations

Have we solved all the problems?

- The solution of every problem generates other challenges

Current challenges:

- ❑ Funding by library authorities for the everyday operation of libraries has dramatically decreased
- ❑ There has been a setback in the culture of reading
- ❑ EU Structural Funds will be the only funding source for development projects
- ❑ In the National Development Plan, the development of cultural institutions is secondary to the educational sector

The way out from this situation is the Portal Programme

- ❑ Wider access by society, more funding
- ❑ The launch of reading programmes
- ❑ Fostering new links with educational institutions
- ❑ Enhanced fund-raising activities