

The role of the library in improving the cultural development of the rural environment

22nd Mobile Libraries Conference and Festival of Bibliobuses


May 16 and 17, 2024 in Ljubljana

Jovana Rilak
Todor Djidrov
Dragan Gjorgiev



The origin and development of the traveling library in Štip - Infobus


- ▶ With the arrival of the Infobus mobile information library in the town of Štip in 2002, the National Institution-University Library "Goce Delčev" gained a new dimension as a source of a wide range of activities for the benefit of education, information and intellectual development of citizens and young people from the suburbs and villages of the municipality of Štip and Karbinici. Until then, library vans were used in the Republic of North Macedonia, so Infobus is the first of its kind.
- ▶ The initial activities of the traveling library date back to December 2002 with a visit to Slovenia, where the Infobus vehicle was to be delivered. The visit to Slovenia also enabled a visit to the libraries in Kobarid, Nova Gorica and Tolmin, where great experience was gained for the activities that preceded the launch of Infobus in Štip, as well as for the overall organization and thorough preparation.
- ▶ After the Infobus was delivered from Slovenia to Macedonia, the composition of ethnic groups was examined and information collected about the needs of local communities, which in turn led to further interactive cooperation with local authorities, school directors and communities from municipalities, and of course equalizing access to information in rural areas.

- 
- It was officially launched on April 23, 2003, which coincides with Librarians' Day and World Book and Copyright Day, and begins with a modest literary fund of a thousand books transferred from the home library.
 - The mobile library is located in a Mercedes Benz Atego vehicle, which, in addition to carefully arranged books for different ages and different needs, is also equipped with a television, computers and printer, makerspace sets, as well as shelves with a capacity for 6.000 books, newspapers, and magazines.
 - Its main purpose is to bring new sources of information, programs and services that are not available in rural areas and isolated environments.
 - There are two desks in the Infobus: one for the librarian and the other a table with four chairs, where users can use a personal computer, look at the daily press and read a magazine.
 - The books are available to all readers and that is why free access is possible, especially for those who know the layout of library materials on the shelves.

- Infobus currently has around 3.500 books, namely: for children and high school students, books for adults, dictionaries, lexicons and encyclopedias.
- It is a place where cultural, religious and linguistic differences are nurtured. So we offer books in Macedonian, Serbian, Turkish, Vlach, Romani, English, French and German.



Mobile information library - Infobus, 2002

- 
- ▶ Today, the mini library visits over 20 villages and 5 suburban settlements from the municipalities of Štip and Karbinici with an approximate total population of 20.000 inhabitants. Part of the region he visits is mountainous and difficult to access, and there are no libraries in them.
 - ▶ The ethnic and linguistic affiliation is different, and the majority of the population consists of Macedonians, Turks, Vlachs, Roma and Serbs. It works according to a pre-made annual schedule or according to the needs of the reader. He visits four villages daily. The duration of the visits in the villages is different, depending on the needs and the number of members, and it serves an average of 40-60 users per day. Currently, 1.000 members are registered in Infobus, of which 75% are children and young people.
 - ▶ Several target groups appear as service users: primary and secondary school students; the teachers; grown ups; farmers; retirees, etc. Each individual from these groups can find their interest from what Infobus makes available.

The main goal of Infobus

- ▶ Book easily accessible to all users, promotion of knowledge and culture, availability of information, entertainment, creation of reading habits regardless of distance, social position and material condition of users.
- ▶ With its attractiveness and multidisciplinary purpose, it represents a modern library that enriches and beautifies the everyday life of people from rural areas.



Infobus, 2022 godina

Work and activities

- In addition to library activities, Infobus also has other activities, it cooperates with the entire community, institutions and organizations (governmental and non-governmental) through the organization of courses and training in the field of information literacy; literary workshops; Theatre plays; professional lectures for adults in the field of health, agriculture and proper development of children; literary and art competitions; book promotions; socializing with authors and writers; learning English; presentation of children's magazines; education of smaller ethnic groups; excursions - taking children to the city and visiting cultural-historical and religious buildings; access to material from the field of human and minority rights; people with special needs and people with visual impairments are provided with adequate access to the Library's collection.
- All the efforts invested in the education of critical groups of citizens contributed to the fact that in 2003, for the first time, 11 girls of Turkish nationality continued their education in higher grades, which is just one of the facts about the significant role that Infobus plays in these areas.
- In recent years, special attention has been paid to primary school children with the aim of getting them back to books and reading.

Annual programs

- March 8 - International Women's Day
- March 21 - The first day of spring, "Plant a flower for a more beautiful world"
- April 2 - World Children's Book Day, "Night with Andersen"
- Easter magic
- April 23 - World Book and Copyright Day
- May 4 - Macedonian Language Day
- May 24 - Day of All-Slav educators
- Inter-municipal competition for poems and short stories
- Competition "Young librarians"
- "Roads also have their own story"
- Reader – record holder
- "Book to better health"
- An inclusive library...

Part of the activities for children

"Happiness on Wheels"

We visit all elementary schools in the municipalities and with the help of professional animators, in a very attractive and indirect way, we show our youngest users that books can be fun too.



"New Year's adventure with Santa Claus"

Spreading smiles and joy. There is no end to the children's happiness and joy, and in addition to the New Year's package, they also receive a book as a gift.



"Book to better health"

On the occasion of April 7 - World Health Day, in cooperation with health institutions and health workers, a series of events are held under the motto "Book to better health". We mark the day with educational workshops in which students from the schools served by the mobile library participate. We provide free preventive health services for adults (measurement of blood pressure, sugar), share health tips, health magazines and literature. We also hold lectures on dental care and healthy eating for children.



"Roads also have their own story"

November 18 - World Day of Remembrance for Victims of Traffic Accidents.


Preventive educational activities in cooperation with police officers of the Štip Internal Affairs Department - Prevention Department and the Republic Council for Traffic Safety.

We have been conducting a joint action for four years in a row.



- Goal: Raising awareness of all traffic participants and acquiring basic knowledge about safety, awareness and traffic culture.
- Students, with the assistance of the traffic police team, hand out leaflets with educational content to drivers and pedestrians;
- Lectures in primary schools in the Štip municipality and suburban areas, by the head of the prevention department, inspector of the Traffic Safety Council;
- "March for greater safety on the roads", because positive habits are created from a young age...



- 
- During its 22 years of existence and development, the bibliobus service in Štip has become part of the social life of the community, facilitating and beautifying the life of the population from areas without a library.
 - The need for reading, learning, research, cultural prosperity and personal development has always existed in humans. Libraries play a key role in the promotion and expansion of culture, science and education.
 - By working beyond traditional boundaries, the library can provide better service, quality and outcomes for all its users.
 - Commitment to the needs of users, improvement of forms and methods of work, expansion of the range of services it provides and the initiation of new ones, are the first steps with which libraries will strengthen their efficiency and productivity.