

“Men Book”

By:

Rui Guedes

Penafiel Mobile Library

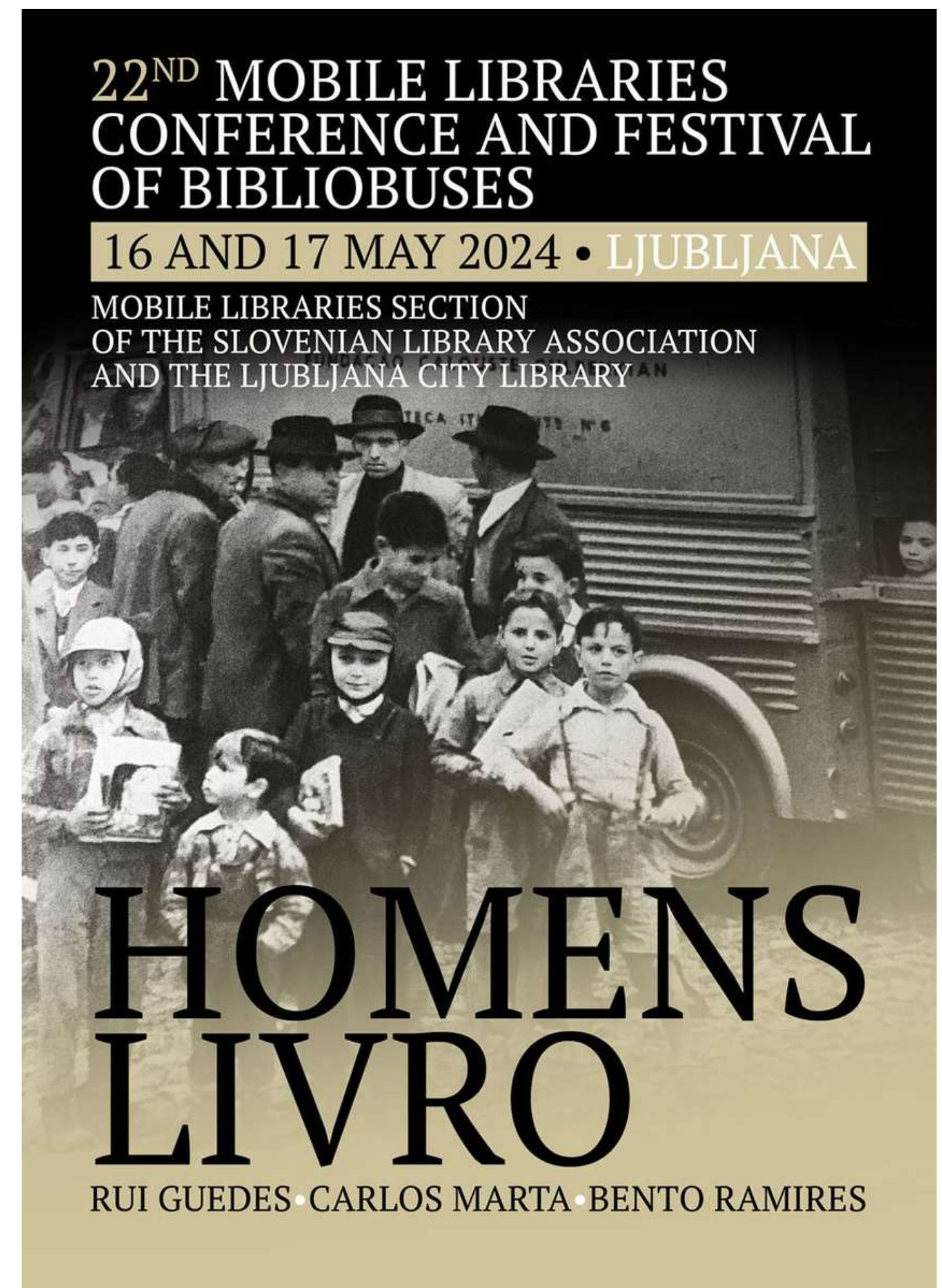
Carlos Marta

ADFP - Miranda do Corvo Mobile Library

Bento Ramires

Redondo Mobile Library

Portugal





- **This book is not a historical or chronological description of events that occurred during this period of operation;**
- **It appeals to the individual and collective memory of the Gulbenkian Mobile Libraries;**

- **Implemented in the second half of the previous century;**
- **Altered the cultural panorama of an obscure and secluded Portugal;**
- **Offered people access to knowledge through books and reading;**





- **Short story by Rui Guedes;**
- **Textual and photographic documents belonging to the personal collections of Bento Ramires and Carlos Marta;**
- **Three interviews with former mobile librarians from the mainland, the Azores and Madeira conducted by writer Patrícia Carreiro, and an unpublished document by Armando Carmelo;**



- **Introductory note by the outgoing Chairman of the Board of the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation;**
- **Highlights factually and statistically the role played by this service since 1958 until its extinction in 2002;**





- **The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation was created almost 70 years ago;**
- **Portugal was a country with great social and cultural needs;**
- **Decisive in the design chosen for its organization;**

- **Illiteracy rate of 26 per cent among men and 39 per cent among women (1960);**
- **A Foundation who just started, and whose statutory purpose was education, attempting to help reverse this situation;**





- **Awarded scholarships to young people who wanted to continue their studies in the country or wanted to specialise abroad;**
- **Opened to all areas of knowledge;**



- **Due the situation in Portugal, in order to empower populations knowledge, was created the first Mobile Library Network;**
- **It is considered one of the most iconic action carried out by the Foundation until nowadays;**





- **Launched with the aim of providing access to books for all those who wanted them;**
- **Special focus in those who lived in areas of the country where this cultural asset was practically unknown;**

- **Portuguese writer Branquinho da Fonseca was the Service's first director;**
- **Promoted the launch of a network of mobile libraries, attracting enthusiastic support from the population;**
- **Based in the UK model;**





- **Many Portuguese were then seeing a book for the first time in their lives;**



- **Mobile libraries catered for all age groups and provided readers with a vast catalogue;**
- **Useful for simple entertainment and dissemination of Portuguese and universal authors;**

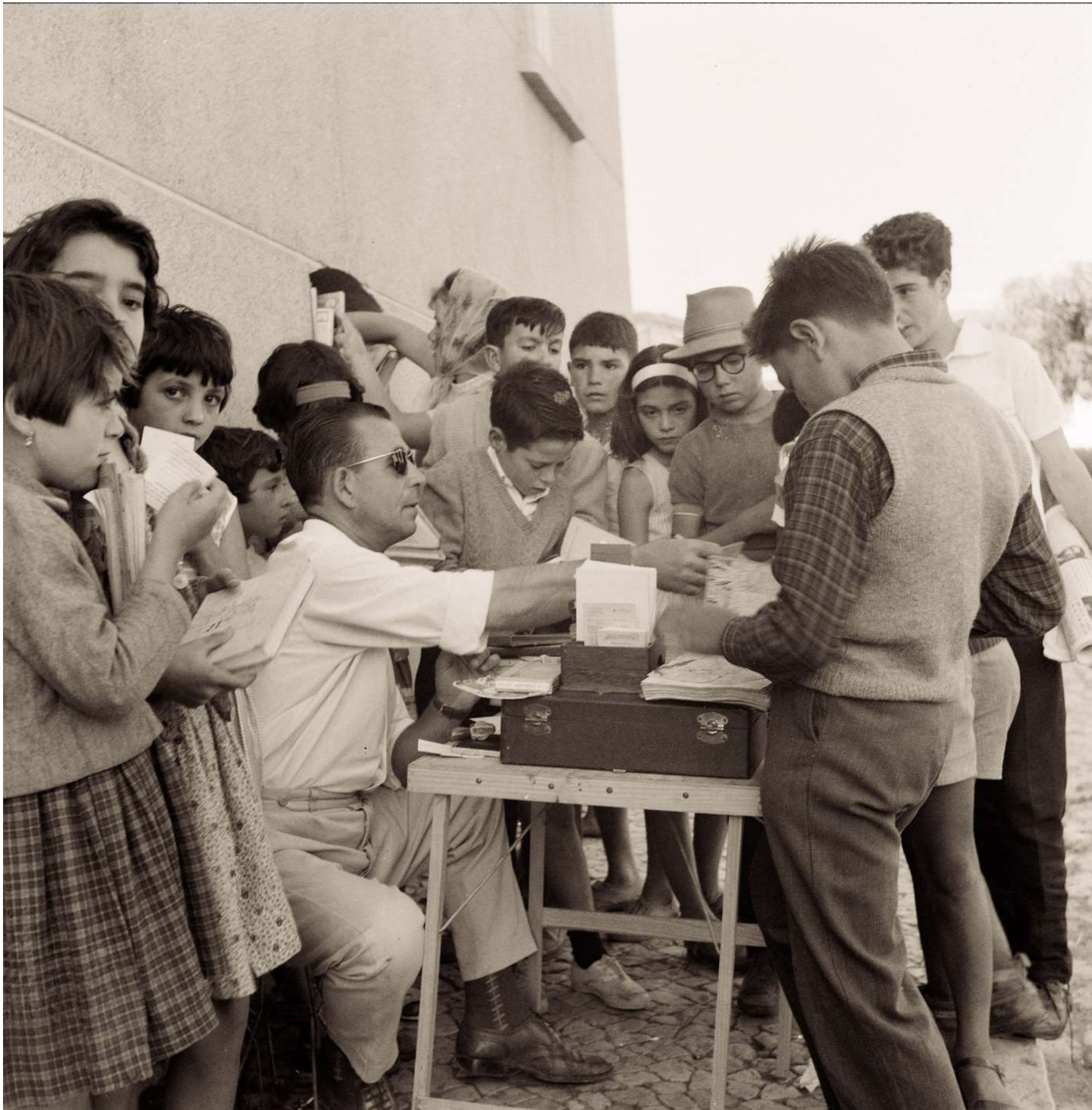




- From the early 1990s onwards, there was an increase in the number of fixed libraries (local councils);
- Better placed to adapt to the specific interests of the population;

- **Until 2002, the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation continued to supply these libraries with books;**



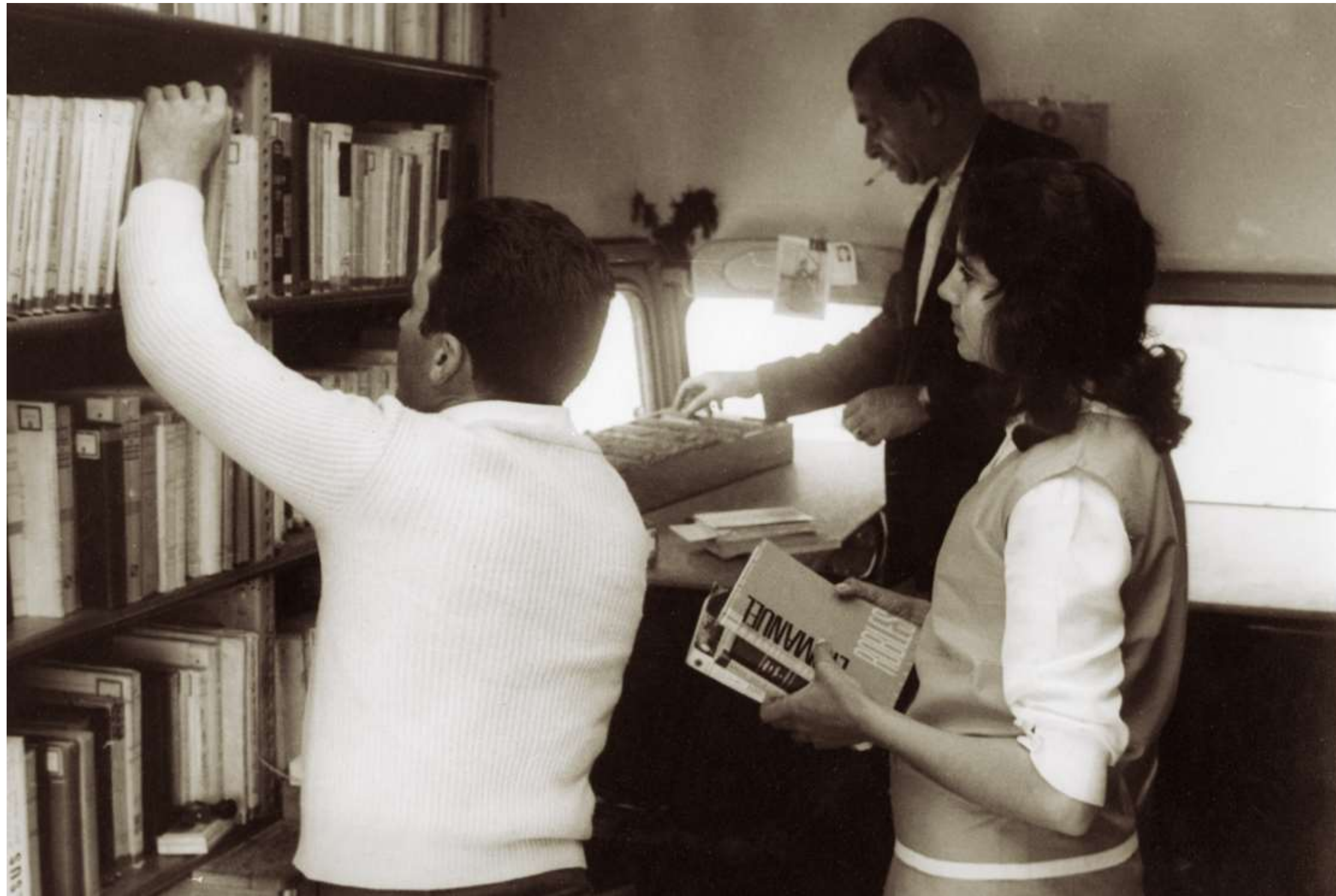


- **The Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation's public reading network has acquired 8,765,267 books and other documents on various media, and has served 56,962,637 readers who have requested 171,043,341 books;**



- **Gulbenkian Mobile Libraries were a powerful instrument of culture in Portuguese society;**





- **The role played by those mobile librarians must be emphasized;**

- They are responsible for an invaluable role in developing a taste for reading in Portugal;





There are currently
77 mobile libraries
in operation in
Portugal, spread
across the
mainland and the
Azores and Madeira
archipelagos:

North - 18

Centre - 28

Lisbon - 9

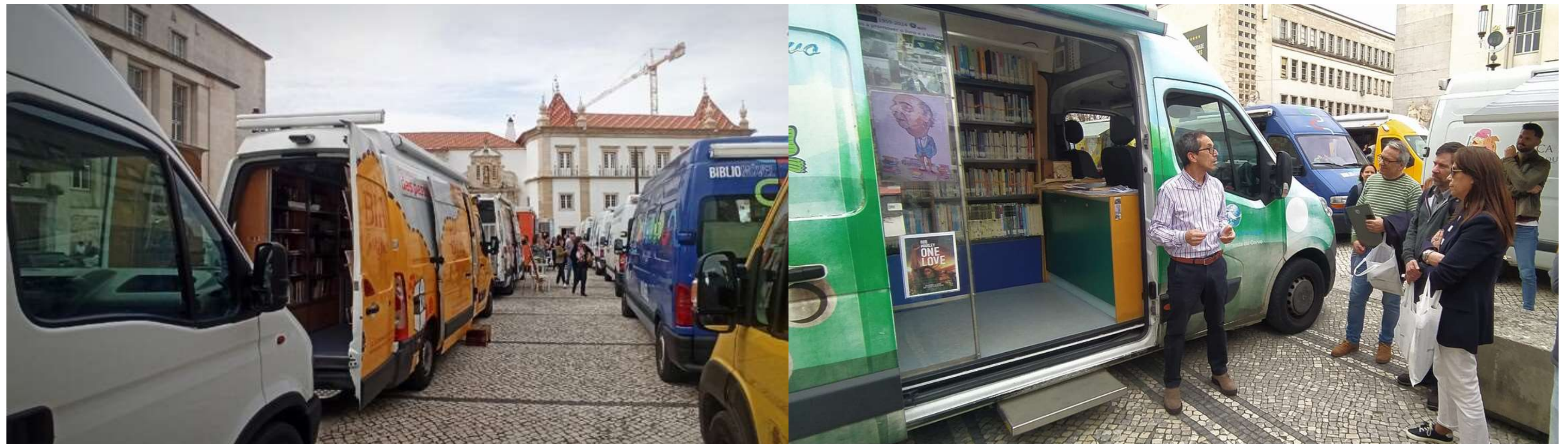
Alentejo and Ribatejo - 12

Algarve - 5

Azores - 4

Madeira - 1

- Vans adapted for this purpose [greater mobility and access and better cost control (maintenance and fuel)];
- Only two mobile libraries are mounted on buses (Mealhada and Porto municipalities);
- **Serve the community in general;**
- **Most of their activities are aimed at early years and community centers for the elderly (story telling and activities related to the perpetuation of local traditions and ethnography);**
- **Loan of books, documents on different media and searches on local and remote databases;**
- **In some inland regions, it is possible to pay for services and obtain official documents issued by municipal or central services;**





- **Despite the increase in investment in this equipment, in some cases it has not been possible to develop its activity in the community for which it is intended, either because of the high expectations created and the lack of immediate results, or because of the high associated costs (human resources, bibliographic resources, fuel and maintenance);**
- **In our opinion, only continued investment in a cultural policy to promote books and reading can ensure that they remain in business, guaranteeing the full satisfaction of their readers' information needs;**



Najlepša hvála!