

## How to Understand Yourself and People of Your Age across the World? Book Patchwork Collection for Young Adults Knows How

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### **Abstract:**

*Nowadays the new generation of young adults appears in Russia, for whom foreign languages become a necessary part of their everyday life. They travel abroad, communicate with friends all over the world and make their successful career with the help of foreign languages. Along with the internet and e-books many young people would like to read printed books in foreign languages. However, library collections no longer fit the growing needs of young users.*

*In this connection, the Russian State Library for Young Adults has developed a project called Book Patchwork – a special foreign language collection of fiction for young adults, about young people or written by young authors. The project itself is planned to last three years and its final goal is to build up the various and complete collection of young adult books in foreign languages and from different countries.*

*We expect that the Book Patchwork collection will have a significant and positive impact on young adults' interest in library services, books and reading in general. In our opinion, it gives young users an opportunity not only to read popular and up-to-date books in their original language, but to learn more about the lifestyle, thoughts and nature of interpersonal relationships of their peers. Moreover it is a great chance to form their own opinion on reading habits of today's young adults from different countries.*

**Keywords:** Multicultural and multilingual library collections, library services for young adults, resources for self-development, Book Patchwork Collection

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## **How to Understand Yourself and People of Your Age across the World? Book Patchwork Collection for Young Adults Knows How**

### **Introduction**

At all times Russian public libraries had their own foreign language collections. During the Soviet period the situation historically developed in the way that the knowledge of foreign languages didn't mean much for young people's life, social status or career. So foreign language collections were suitable only for doing homework and other school tasks: textbooks, vocabularies, reference materials and some classical fiction.

In the last twenty years, the situation has changed essentially. Nowadays the new generation of young people appears, for whom foreign languages widen the borders and become a necessary part of their everyday life. They travel and study abroad, interact with peers who come to Russia from different countries, communicate online with friends all over the world and make their successful career with the help of foreign languages. Along with the internet and e-books many young people would like to read printed books in foreign languages. However, library collections no longer fit the growing needs of young users.

In this connection, the Russian State Library for Young Adults has done some research that underlines the urgent need for forming collection of popular and up-to-date fiction books in foreign languages for young adults. Therefore we have developed a project called *Book Patchwork* – a special foreign language collection of fiction for young adults, about young people or written by young authors. In doing this, we were inspired by experience of the International Youth Library in Munich which started small in 1949, but now has the largest collection of international children's and youth literature in the world. Some years ago we hosted Dr. Christiane Raabe, director of the International Youth Library at our library and we had a fruitful discussion with her and then our staff members visited Munich and the library itself.

### **Goals**

The Book Patchwork Collection allows young users to

- read popular and current books in their original language, although lots of them are translated into Russian;
- increase their knowledge about the cultural and lingual diversity;

- learn more about the lifestyle, thoughts and nature of interpersonal relationships of their peers from different countries.

### **Collection Building**

For forming and enlarging the Book Patchwork Collection we actively develop professional relations with foreign libraries, collaborate with dedicated bookstores, cultural centers and embassies in Moscow and use official young adult booklists from different countries (for instance, Teen's Top Ten, Best Fiction for Young Adults of the American Library Association). However, references from foreign library specialists are the main guideline for us. The first step was made together with our partners in IFLA Sister Libraries Project – Stockholm's Library for Young Adults PUNKTMedis and Comics Library Serieteket. We asked our Swedish colleagues to make a list of the most popular books among young people in Sweden and buy them. From our part we purchased the best Russian books for young adults in the Russian language, then our staff members came to Stockholm in May 2013 and together with our Swedish colleagues made a book exchange. As a result we received the first twenty books for young adults in Swedish for our Book Patchwork Collection.

It is quite common for public libraries to set up foreign fiction collection by language. For the Book Patchwork Collection we suggested another idea. Since one of its goals is to give young adults an opportunity to learn more about the lifestyle of their peers in various countries all over the world we decided to put books by country rather than divide them into different languages. At the moment the Book Patchwork Collection includes young adult books from Sweden, Germany, the US, the UK, France, Austria, Italy, Denmark and Portugal. In the nearest future we are planning to add books from Greece, Bulgaria and Spain. Besides, in January 2014 our library signed the cooperation agreement with the National Library for Children & Young Adults (Seoul, South Korea), according to which the parties will share information and experience on library services for young users, exchange library materials, run various joint projects and arrange professional visits. It is already confirmed that the young adult books exchange is going to be our first joint project with our Korean colleagues.

The Book Patchwork Collection is designed to be catching and attractive for young adults and has its special place in the library's Foreign Languages Room, which total collection includes more than 20000 items in 70 languages. Besides, the information about the project and its books can be found on the renewed library's website. There you can find best titles of the collection with the scanned cover, abstract and first ten pages in a page flipping mode. Since all books of the collection are in the online catalogue, young users have an easy access to new arrivals at any time. The collection is used mostly by young adults, but we provide an open access to it for anyone who is interested in young adult fiction in original languages.

### **Activities with the Collection**

- All books from the Book Patchwork Collection can be read inside the library or checked-out;
- The books for young adults are always an essential part of the book displays dedicated to the literary anniversaries in different countries;
- We often set up comparative book exhibitions (the same books in Russian and original language) dedicated to the meetings with authors or translators (for example, it happened so with the Swedish books from the Book Patchwork Collection);
- Young participants of our English and Italian Speaking Clubs often read and discuss some books from the collection at their meetings.

### **Conclusion**

The project itself is planned to last three years and its final goal is to build up the various and complete collection of young adult books in foreign languages from different countries and provide access to it not only for young Moscow residents but also for young people from other Russian regions. We expect that the Book Patchwork Collection will have a significant and positive impact on young adults' interest in library services, books and reading in general. Moreover it is a great chance for them to form their own opinion on reading habits of today's young adults from different countries.

In addition, within the IFLA section Libraries for Children and Young Adults we are working on the project provisionally named The World through Books for Young Adults. Its idea is similar to the IFLA's programme The World through Picture Books and its aim is to

create an annotated list of best young adult books from around the world, recommended both by librarians and young users. We expect not only to produce a catalogue of best young adult books from different countries, but to involve libraries and librarians working with young adults all over the world to this project. Two exhibition collections of The World through Picture Books are based in the National Libraries of Japan and France. We would be grateful if the upcoming project The World through Books for Young Adults has one more exhibition collection based in Moscow, giving access to it for young people and specialists working with young adults from different Russian regions and Belarus, Kazakhstan, Armenia, Azerbaijan and other countries with which our library has good professional relations.