

Centre for Continuing Education of Librarians in the Republic of Croatia: the Current State and Plans for Further Education

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Since 2002 the Centre for Continuing Education of Librarians in the Republic of Croatia (Centar za stalno stručno usavršavanje knjižničara u Republici Hrvatskoj – CSSU) has been running lifelong learning and continuing education programmes for librarians from all types of libraries and a vast community of specialists from heritage institutions. After attending the course, attendees receive a certificate issued by the Centre for the purpose of registering lifelong learning activities and for professional advancement. Annual programmes of continuing education offer news in the library and information science field as well as information and communication technologies on a regular basis. The work of the Centre is here represented through the thematic modules in the programme and numerical indicators related to its work in the last five years.



Image 1. The number of participants in traditional courses from 2014 to 2018

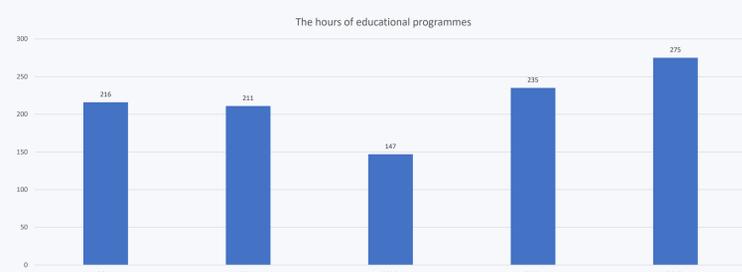


Image 2. The hours of traditional educational programmes from 2014 to 2018



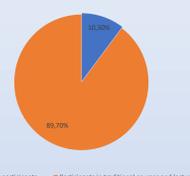
Image 3. The number of traditional courses held from 2014 to 2018

THEMATIC MODULES/PARTICIPANTS	2014.	2015.	2016.	2017.	2018.	TREND
I. INTELLECTUAL FREEDOM, ETHICAL AND LEGAL ISSUES OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE	65	10	27	209	232	↗
II. LIBRARY SERVICES	375	437	372	238	241	→
III. BUILDING LIBRARY COLLECTIONS	47	46	7	24	115	↗
IV. BIBLIOGRAPHIC CONTROL	202	65	21	174	260	↗
V. EVALUATION, RESEARCH AND PROJECT MANAGEMENT	213	139	97	163	112	↘
VI. ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES AND SYSTEMS LIBRARIANSHIP	88	233	132	179	152	↘
VII. PUBLISHING	57	48	12	14	26	↗
VIII. DIGITISATION IN LIBRARIES	0	0	0	65	45	→

Table 1. The number of participants by thematic modules and current trends (available data are presented for the years 2014 and 2015)

The Centre has introduced free webinars to its educational programme in 2018. Due to cost saving measures during the years (especially in 2016, in the absence of financial support by the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Croatia), the need for new educational forms was clearly apparent. Free webinars offered more available education for the participants all over Croatia. It was also an opportunity to build up the distance learning system under the framework of the Centre (e-courses were available from 2013). The goal was also to transform the traditional educational patterns and enhance the application of new technologies in learning and teaching processes as well as to emphasize the importance of computer literacy and exchange of professional experience.

Percentage of webinar participants in 2018 (3 webinars organized)



Percentage of webinar participants in 2019 (first half of the year; 5 webinars organized)

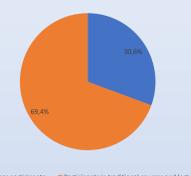


Image 4 and 5. Increasing share of webinar participants in the total number of participants of the Centre



Image 6. Data about free webinars organized from 2018 to 30 June 2019 gathered by online polls

The data about the applicability of the educational content to participants' workplaces are gathered via printed questionnaires (traditional courses) and online polls (webinars). About 85,6% of traditional courses participants and about 78,2% of webinar participants completed the survey. Various reasons for participation in educational programmes must be taken into consideration in this context: attempt to remain competitive in the labour market and to achieve new skills and competencies as well as to acquire knowledge in professional-related domains.

The topics represented in free webinars of the Centre are related to: bibliographic control, bibliometrics, digital collections and revision of library materials in school libraries. The majority of the respondents have already participated in webinars and 11,6% of them have not had that experience before. For now, there are five webinars in the Programme of the Centre. Future plans include new topics and new lectures as well as more free webinars for librarians and information specialists in Croatia. The number of participants should also continuously grow.

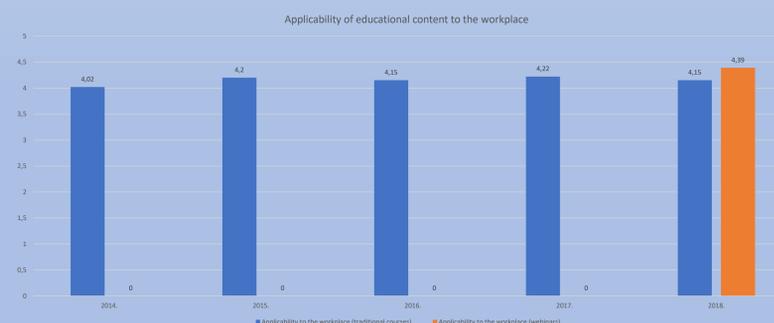


Image 7. The applicability of educational content to the workplace of participants

In 2019 the Centre started cooperating with the non-profit organization Institute for Youth Development and Innovativity (IRIM), which offered free education as well as free equipment for participants at STEM workshops all over Croatia during this year. The collaboration is a part of the newly founded Digital Laboratory of the National and University Library in Zagreb. The Centre recognized the importance of digital skills, especially in the STEM technologies, and great opportunity to offer to librarians and information specialists a new approach in professional training and development. Supported by the Programme Board, the Centre provided standard certificates for all the participants, in order to stimulate the participants by getting points for professional promotion but also to equalise the significance of STEM technologies, i.e. the process of digital transformation in libraries, with the traditional librarianship competencies. The workshop *Advanced mikro:bit and introduction to BOSON* attracted 174 participants from all parts of Croatia. After initial cooperation, the Centre should create new contents and integrate them into yearly programmes. Further plans include additional workshops in STEM field planned and organized by the Centre as continuous support for all types of libraries.