

New model of library marketing for farmers and promotional creativity in action

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Abstract:

This paper speaks of an innovative idea of AgroLib-Ja project (Agricultural Library in Jagodina, Serbia) and solving the problems of the people in the local community. Innovativeness of the idea refers to the recognition and solving the problems of farmers and improving their economic, social and cultural status through education and use of ICT in the revitalized network of rural libraries. Rural libraries were given a new role in society. They have become information centers in their local communities, the seats of the cultural and social life of the rural population, the catalysts of economic changes.

The Public Library "Radislav Nikcevic" using the explicit knowledge and the results of the research on the identification of needs of farmers in Jagodina villages within the project of AgroLib-Ja made a good platform for the implementation of a new marketing model of farmers in their cultural practices. A key role in achieving good project results played an implicit knowledge of project team members. A marketing strategy has been created that includes:

- *creating and launching a website for AgroLib www.agrolib.rs and an online market for farmers www.agrolib.rs/pijaca,*
- *extensive and creative marketing through mass media, (print, TV and electronic media),*
- *making promotional films, posters, brochures, labels, flyers,*
- *making and distribution of business cards to farmers,*
- *social networks, forums and blogs for the purposes of promotion and free advertising of farmers,*
- *knowledge and useful information of the project partners in order to improve the competitiveness of farmers,*
- *promotion project AgroLib-Ja at professional conferences at home and abroad.*

This kind of marketing strategy has improved the competitiveness of farmers – users of AgroLib-Ja service.

The aim of this paper is to present that with modest financial resources for the project marketing and with great creative energy, enthusiasm and outreach activities that directly benefit the residents, the Jagodina Public Library actively offers unique services that provide great economic opportunities for farmers. By mobilization of the project partners, activation of local governments on action and animation of farmers to actively participate in the project, it allows broader perspective to maintain the project of AgroLib-Ja. The project is carried out for three years and received an award from the Serbian Ministry of Culture and two international NGOs, EIFL and Beyond Access.

Keywords: AgroLib-Ja project, a new model of marketing farmers, new web technologies, economic opportunity for farmers

Introduction:

AgroLib-Ja Project of Public Library „Radislav Nikcevic“ in Jagodina, Serbia

In the municipality of Jagodina there are 52 villages. Demographic data shows us that urban and rural populations are balanced. There are 36.092 people in the town of Jagodina and another 35.103 in the rural villages – a total population of about 71.195.¹

According to guidelines of IFLA/UNESCO Manifest for public libraries, libraries should provide services that would be equally physically available to all the members of community and adjusted to their needs both in rural and urban areas. That also means “field services for those who cannot visit the library.”²

A report from 2008 made by National library of Serbia tells that “library from Jagodina had no stationary or mobile branch, but only eight local – rural libraries worked on non-up-to-date literary funds and without access to distant places. Thus, around 50% of inhabitants of the municipality has not had a public library in the place of residence or any possibility to use remote resources.”³

Serbian Library standards recommended that local branches of rural libraries should have funds and facilities to suit the needs of local populations. With all these developments and issues in mind, in consideration of measures for revival of village libraries and improvement of life for people who live in villages, the Public Library “Radislav Nikcevic” conducted in 2009 a research to identify the needs of rural people. The AgroLib project was designed as a result of this research.

The project description

“The project, titled AgroLib-Ja, was aimed for revitalization of five rural libraries and creation a network of rural libraries that provide information and communication services especially for farmers. The project is coordinated by the Public Library „Radislav Nikcevic“ in Jagodina. Five rural libraries have been renovated and equipped with computers and technical equipment and monographic and serial publications of different field of agriculture. The project team members train farmers to use ICT to research farming methods and to advertise their produce. The library also regularly host lectures by agricultural experts from various fields of agriculture which are supported by local government officials and other organizations partners in the project.

The innovative idea of AgroLib-Ja project is bringing together organizations and experts involved in agriculture through a network of rural libraries, and using Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to improve farming methods and increase farmers’ income. „⁴

¹ City of Jagodina, Population, <http://www.jagodina.org.rs/o-gradu/stanovnistvo/>, (taken on April 29, 2013)

² IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines for development of public libraries; [translator Gordana Ljubanovic].

- Belgrade: National Library of Serbia: Belgrade City Library, 2005.

³ Network of Serbian public libraries in period 2000 -2008 / Vladimir Sekularac, (in Serbian) http://www.nb.rs/view_file.php?file_id=2623, (taken on April 29, 2013)

⁴ Public Library "Radislav Nikčević" Jagodina, Serbia, Impact Assessment Results, May 2011, <http://www.eifl.net/public-library-radislav-nikcevic-jagodina-serbia>, (taken on April 29, 2013)



Revitalization of the network of village libraries - map⁵
of Jagodina town and 52 villages

Arrows on map indicate the network of revitalized village libraries in the municipality of Jagodina (Glogovac, Bagrdan, Bunar, Glavinci, Majur) within the project AgroLib-Ja

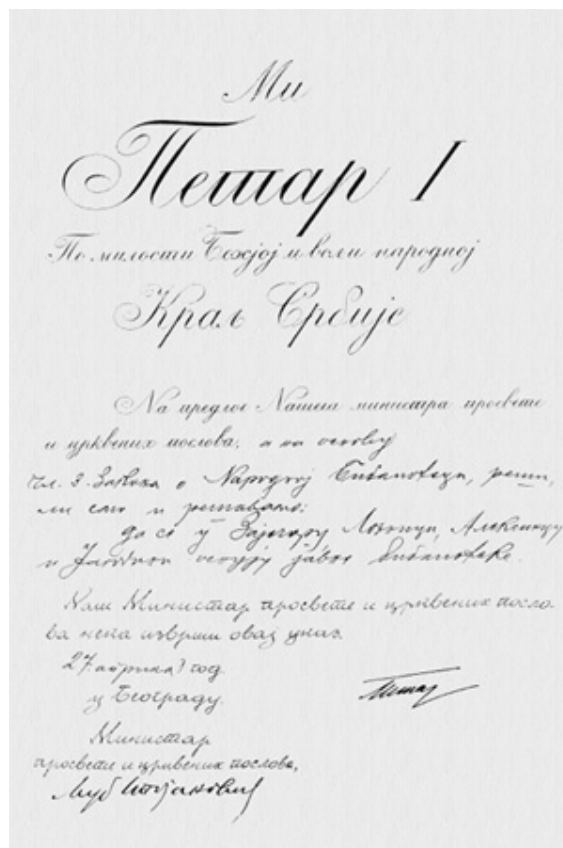
Development of Public library in Jagodina

Library „Radislav Nikcevic“ has had a long history. The roots of the beginning of today’s library goes back to the middle XIX century when for the first time in 1851 a Reading room in Jagodina was mentioned.

“By the foundation act – Decree of Peter I from April 27, 1909 – Public library in Jagodina was established.”⁶

⁵ AgroLib site, The Objectives of The AgroLib-Ja Project, http://www.agrolib.rs/?page_id=118&lang=en, (taken on April 29, 2013)

⁶ Librarianship of Jagodina (1851-2011) / dr Mila Stefanovic.-Jagodina : Public library „Radislav Nikcevic“, 2011. P. -95 (in Serbian)



Decree on establishment of libraries, 1909.

Public library „Radislav Nikcevic“ in Jagodina belongs to the type of public libraries. It is the oldest institution of culture at this area that has tradition 162 long and as Parent library it represents the seat of librarian-information center for Pomoravski region.

Public Library of Jagodina has experienced many transformations and changes since its foundation till nowadays. By the use and permanent development of ICT it has transformed its operation from a model of traditional passive library into a model of modern library, library of modern age, which is not only both active and interactive but also socially integrated into the local community. Today, library „Radislav Nikcevic“ in Jagodina promotes and improves a model of operation which is based on sharing knowledge.

In XXI century, where the *society of knowledge* (*knowledge = the greatest capital*) replaced the paradigm of *information society*, public libraries as treasuries and guardians of knowledge become the main centers for education, informing, and social integration of a broad strata of people. The concept of operation of Public library has been changing from devotion to the reader (reader friendly) to devotion to the user (user friendly). In XXI century Piter Brofi remarks “public library is one of the most used public services of local community”⁷. Public library in Jagodina has in recent years worked on development of a service toward satisfaction of user needs of marginalized groups (people with disability, elderly population, farmers...).

⁷ Library in the twenty first century: new services for information age / Piter Brofi; [translated from English Tanja Tasic]. - Belgrade: Clio, 2005. -P. 16.

Public libraries and Knowledge Management

In the long history of the development of libraries that has lasted for more than four thousand years, public libraries has existed for relatively short time, a bit more than thousand and five hundred years. The entire development of librarianship has been marked by finding a model which would enable equality and freedom in the access to information and knowledge for all the structures of society, which represents the key principle which is the basis for work of modern public libraries.

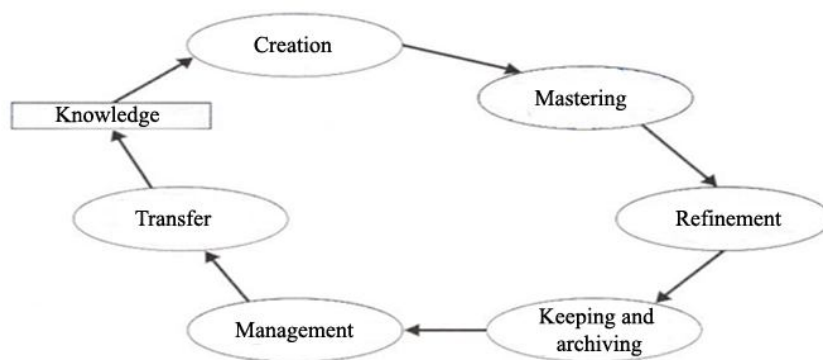
Each epoch of human development records one form of communication that obtrudes itself as dominant. Thus, XX century is marked by one of the most influential metaphors of our time - *information society*. The explosion of information due to rapid technological development in the 1970s strongly influenced all the spheres of society. However, it soon became clear that the technology itself cannot resolve all the issues regarding human knowledge.

And Bill Gates himself has indicated the fact that *knowledge management* cannot be reduced only to technological category, but it has to develop consciousness of the need of sharing information: „By establishment of an atmosphere that motivates cooperation and sharing of knowledge, business managers must initiate in their organizations specific projects of sharing knowledge and together with that, to make sharing of knowledge an inseparable part of the work itself, and only a fashionable addition that can be bypassed without any consequences for work... The old adage “Knowledge is power” sometimes makes some people accumulate knowledge, and they think as if it makes them irreplaceable. The power does not come from the knowledge kept for oneself, but from sharing of knowledge.”⁸

It is the upgrade of the concept of information society by human aspects of sharing and free use of human knowledge which will lead to establishment of the *society of knowledge*, the new paradigm of XXI century.

It should be emphasized that knowledge is to key to success in the future for it is not addition to other sources, but a replacement for all other sources. The future belongs to those who are rich with knowledge and in such societies the key role will be assumed by the organizations and managers who know how to use the existing knowledge for productive purposes.

The knowledge has to be improved during time, and because of that it has to be updated in order to express changes. The system of knowledge management can be shown as a cycle of six related steps:⁹



Cycle of knowledge management

⁸ Business the speed of thought / Bill Gates. -Novi Sad : Prometej, 2001. -P. 233. (in Serbian)

⁹Information technology for management / Ephraim Turban. -Beograd : Zavod za udžbenike i nastavna sredstva, 2003. -P. 395. (in Serbian)

There are several factors which conditioned the development of knowledge management, out of which two are the most important.

The first factor favors professional and scientific knowledge, as well as creativity and capability of innovative thinking and organizing.

The second factor is related to everyday dramatic increase of the range of information.

With respect of aforementioned factors, it is necessary to differentiate data and information on one side and the knowledge on the other side.

Pure data are the facts out of context, which are thus without significance, unlike the information that represent a set of logically connected data placed into some understandable context. Usually, the information are expressed in form of some message. As opposed to it, the knowledge is much more complex concept as it can be concealed (implicit, tacit) or explicit.

Tacit knowledge is informal, non-documented, and it is transferred to someone else in a hard way. It is personal knowledge and consists of skills, deliberation, and intuitions possessed by the people, and which cannot be easily explained and represented as it is a product of acquired life and working experience. It involves skills and intangible factors of creativity, innovativeness, personal beliefs, perspectives, and values. Tacit knowledge is understood and applied subconsciously, it is hard to be articulated, so that it is usually shared – transferred through interactive activities such as conversation.

Explicit knowledge is formal and clear, documented on paper or electronically saved in databases. It relies on the facts which can be described and transferred to others.

These two types of knowledge, implicit – tacit and explicit, together create new knowledge.

The knowledge has value only in use and for that reason the right way should be found for using available knowledge.

Once it was enough for librarians to help users to obtain as much information as possible. One of definitions says that *knowledge is information in action*. Today, it could be explained in the following way: not all the information are useful for the user but only those that help him to resolve some life problem in given moment and to make a concrete decision. Knowledge is becoming strategic resource of each society, which is not spent when used but which gain value and the librarians, as holders of polyvalent knowledge and active factors in sharing such knowledge, create the future.

However, in addition to positive sides born by information society, it also led to marginalization of those parts of society for which modern ICT are not available. Key role in the society in XXI century is acquired by public libraries (especially those in developing countries), which, by means of new services based on the use of internet and new technologies, reach the unreached users with aim of education of such social groups and the improvement of quality of their lives. Project AgroLib-Ja addresses marginalized social group of unreached library users – farmers.

Marketing of Library on the example of the project AgroLib-Ja

Public library in Jagodina has used explicit knowledge it (Registry reports, analyses, and researches conducted by the Library) as well as the implicit knowledge of employees for creation and implementation of new innovative model of revitalizing village libraries.

For the needs of promotion of the project AgroLib-Ja a marketing strategy was designed according to the following matrix, which was implemented in phases:

- I Market research;
- II General concept of marketing – image;
- III Strategy of advertising campaign;

- IV Realization of total design of institution;
- V Public advertising of product/program;
- VI Information – animation and advertising program.¹⁰

I Market research – creation of project

Creation of project was preceded by a research conducted in 2009 by Parent department of Public library in Jagodina. The aim of the research was *identification of the needs of farmers and the role of village libraries in satisfying those needs*. Target group were farmers from 52 villages of the municipality of Jagodina.

The results of the research were starting point for creation of the project AgroLib-Ja, which was awarded in 2010 by \$30.000 by EIFL non-profit organization within the framework of PLIP (Public Library Innovation Program) program. The aim of PLIP program was to stimulate the development of innovative services of public libraries which will improve lives of people in local communities by using new technologies. PLIP program is implemented in three phases. In the first cycle 12 innovative ideas were awarded, among them the project AgroLib-Ja for a period of one year. In the second cycle the programs which replicated the ideas of the most successful project from the first cycle were awarded. The idea of AgroLib-Ja project was replicated and adjusted by three public libraries from: Latvia, Lithuania and FYR of Macedonia. In the third cycle the most successful project from the first and second cycle are awarded.

II Establishment of general marketing conception

General conception of marketing is based on the results of previously conducted researches of the institution of culture.

The essence of advertising strategy of an institution in culture such as Library is to expand the audience, to reach those social groups which were unreached and which should be motivated for participation in cultural life. In case of Public library in Jagodina, and the project AgroLib-Ja these are the farmers of the village of Jagodina, as users of new services in village libraries.

The name of the institution has a significant role in attracting or refusing the audience. In cultural public the name of the institution should achieve such effect that guarantees safety when implementing program. Target group which is addressed by a certain program should be identified with the name of institution. In such context a logo of the company which reflects the identity and image of institution should be used. The name "Public Library Radislav Nikcevic in Jagodina" has existed for a very long time; it is recognizable as a synonym for tradition and it is a guarantee of the holder of cultural development on the territory of the entire Pomoravski region. In addition to the name of the institution, the name of the project is also important for the success of realization of certain program from the marketing point of view. For the project the name AgroLib-Ja (Agricultural Library in Jagodina) was designed, which is brief, effective, easy to remember, directly associative and explicit for it indicates the area of the activity of institution.

III Determination of strategies and forms of advertising campaigns - Realization of project

The essence of each concrete advertising action consists in not to offer the product, but the lifestyle and way of thinking that should be adopted. The aim of advertising campaign for AgroLib-Ja project was to make farmers adopt the idea of permanent acquisition of knowledge and IT skills for improvement of product competitiveness. The final aim is the improvement of work and social-economical position of farmers.

¹⁰ Milena Dragicevic – Sestic, Branimir Stojkovic, Culture - management, animation, marketing, Belgrade : Clio, 2003. -P. 204. (in Serbian)

After established conception the advertising means should have chosen for addressing target group. In addition to means of mass communication such as radio, TV and press, for the needs of promotion and advertising the project AgroLib-Ja a marketing strategy was created, which included:

1. “Creation of a website www.agrolib.rs for the needs of advertising activities of the project and within the site an online market was created for the needs of advertising farmers, www.agrolib.rs/pijaca/, people who are in the business of tourism and preservation of old crafts and advertising their agricultural products and services.

Public library in Jagodina has come to conclusion by a research that farmers need the following information in order to be competitive on the market:

- Examples from successful agricultural practice;
- New scientific achievements in area of agriculture;
- New legislation in area of agriculture;
- Condition for obtaining incentive means by the Republic of Serbia;
- Supply and demand of agricultural products;
- Weather forecast.

In order to meet the needs and information demands of farmers AgroLib Web site was created. The site enabled the project to leave the local frameworks and to offer information, except the information available in village libraries, to farmers from whole Serbia. The site contains sections with news related to the realization of the project and news in area of agriculture, expert articles, weather forecast, digitalized monographic and serial publications and internet market.

The news are the result of the fieldwork of the members of AgroLib team in and cooperation with the partners on project.

Weather forecast is updated several times a day with data from the service <http://www.weather.com>, which offers up-to-date data on weather for the most part of the world.

Digital collection contains old numbers of agricultural magazine Dobro jutro (Good Morning) (one of our oldest and most prestigious magazines for agriculture) and books on the life of people in villages.

AgroLib market is a place for all those who look for or offer products or services in area of agriculture, old crafts, and rural tourism. Everyone can be registered and independently include his/her products into the base. The site is with bilingual interface, available in Serbian and English. Parts of the site also involve automatic translation of the text from Serbian into English in case the user did not enter the contents in both languages.

By creation of AgroLib site the free software of open code (FOSS) was allowed in the Public library in Jagodina. The use of free software represents a strategic and ethical choice which, in compliance with librarian codex, enables everybody the right to learn and share acquired knowledge. Free flow of information is easier to be realized if the software platform is based on the same idea. Software of open code offers greater flexibility with lower price compared to proprietary software. On the other side, the use of the free software demands from librarians greater engagement and permanent improvement.

Free software on which is relied AgroLib site involves: Linux operating system, Apache web server, MySql database, PHP program language, Wordpress blog platform, Yii framework – software basis for development of web applications, ImageMagic library for image processing, GCC collection of

compilers, Google Web Toolkit tools for development of applications that are executed in the reader of web pages...¹¹

The data of total number of visits to the sites www.agrolib.rs and www.agrolib/pijaca (since their setting up on 7th July, 2010. up to 15th May, 2013.) is 83,370 visits, show that the site fulfilled its purpose in advertising project and farmers (see graph below).

¹¹ Information as a key to improvement of the life of farmers / Suzana Tanasijevic, Ivica Lazarevic// Savremena biblioteka : NB Kruševac. -God.XXIII, 2011, br. 28. -P. 41. (in Serbian)

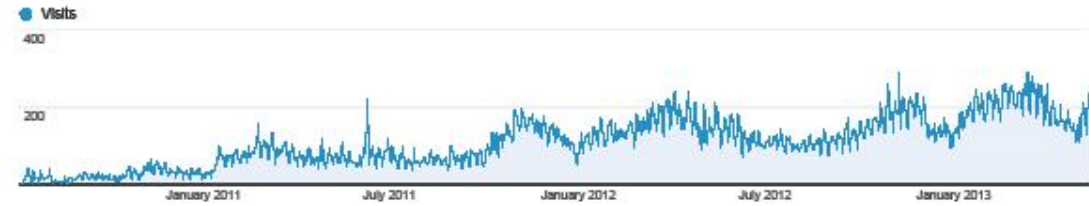
http://www.agrolib.rs - http://www.agrolib.rs
www.agrolib.rs [DEFAULT]

Audience Overview

Jul 7, 2010 - May 15, 2013

% of visits: 100.00%

Overview



83,370 people visited this site



Language	Visits	% Visits
1. en-us	62,243	55.19%
2. sr	33,828	29.99%
3. en	8,299	7.36%
4. en-gb	1,620	1.44%
5. hr	1,404	1.24%
6. de	789	0.70%
7. fr	597	0.53%
8. hr-hr	501	0.44%
9. de-de	291	0.26%
10. ru	286	0.25%

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2. Extensive and creative marketing through mass media (printpress, TV and electronic media)

Before the start of the realization of AgroLib-Ja project, a press conference was organized, which was held in the Library where the representatives of press, TV and electronic media were present. Three members of AgroLib team have thoroughly exposed the aims of the project and answered numerous questions of journalists.

Public library Radislav Nikcevic traditionally has a good cooperation with the following media: Novi Put (leading local newspaper), Vecernje Novosti, Politika, Blic (national newspaper), TV Jagodina (municipal TV station), Palma Plus (private TV station), RTS - National Television, Radio Jagodina, Gong Radio Station, Radio Morava. These media have reported on each activity realized within the project.

3. Making promotional films, posters, brochures, labels, flyers

It is very important for each new program and service organized by the Library to be presented to wider audience by means of media.

Great contribution in presentation of new concept of work in rural libraries was provided by local television that enabled their professional TV reports to be put on Youtube video channel in order to promote the project in a better way. Total of 44 promotional films were recorded on each segment of the project (a number in production of TV Jagodina, and most in production of AgroLib team).

Visits of the members of AgroLib team to farmers in several villages of the municipality of Jagodina were essential for the success of the project, acquisition of farmers; trust and their joining the project. When visiting farmer's households, through a direct contact and conversation with farmers, the aims of the project, importance of adopting new knowledge and IT education for improvement of agriculture were explained. For the purpose of advertising farmers promotional films on their households were recorded. Each visit was a recommendation with other farmers. After emission of the first video report on recorded farmer in the news of local TV Jagodina, the farmers started themselves to call the Library with a wish to join the project.

The members of the team showed great engagement in supporting farmers to use the AgroLib online marketplace, creating users' profiles, filming short promotional videos about successful farmers and organizing IT training, lectures and other project activities. As time went by, because of these activities, villagers' trust in AgroLib work team grew. They began attending more lectures, learning new ideas from professional agriculturalists and meeting partner organizations. Appearing in the news of a local television station soon became a matter of prestige for the farmers. For the purpose of advertising each upcoming project activity hundreds of posters and flyers were produced and distributed. For the most engaged farmers – users of site, as an award, except business cards, the other promotional material such as brochures and labels for products was printed.

4. Making and distribution of business cards to farmers

After putting into work the website in order to achieve as fast advertising as possible it has been designed that the first 10 farmers who register themselves as users of the site will get 50 free business cards each. The idea of advertising farmers through business cards was accepted exceptionally and it is still used. Production of visit cards for users of AgroLib market was useful in multiple ways. On one side the business cards contain the data on user, and on the other side the logo and data on AgroLib-Ja project, so that business card is good advertisement for both the user and the project. As each form of advertising is very expensive, business cards showed themselves as the cheapest and most efficient means of advertising. Business card symbolizes seriousness in business contacts and the best advertisement was realized when farmers were visiting agricultural fairs. Due to massive scale and international character of such manifestations thanks to business cards, users of AgroLib market today

are the farmers from all over Serbia, some even from neighboring states. So far more than 10.000 business cards were produced for the farmers.

5. Social networks, forums and blogs for the purpose of promotion and free advertising of farmers

After the adoption of IT education, farmers started using the Internet, professional books and magazines in the domain of agriculture and AgroLib Internet market for advertising their agricultural products and services, as well as other websites for agricultural business. Farmers started connecting through social networks like Facebook. For that purpose the groups on Facebook were created: AgroLib project, Public library in Jagodina-funded by EIFL.net, and <https://www.facebook.com/projekat.agrolib?fref=ts>. Members of the Association of beekeepers Bagrdan, after presentation on the forum of the Association of beekeeper organizations of Serbia increased the sale of their products and gained buyers from all over Serbia.

6. Knowledge and useful information of the partners on the project in order to improve competitiveness of farmers

Each professional lecture held in village libraries was supported by a partner on the project. Farmers were getting the most actual information on measures of local and state government and stimulating measures for the development of agriculture.

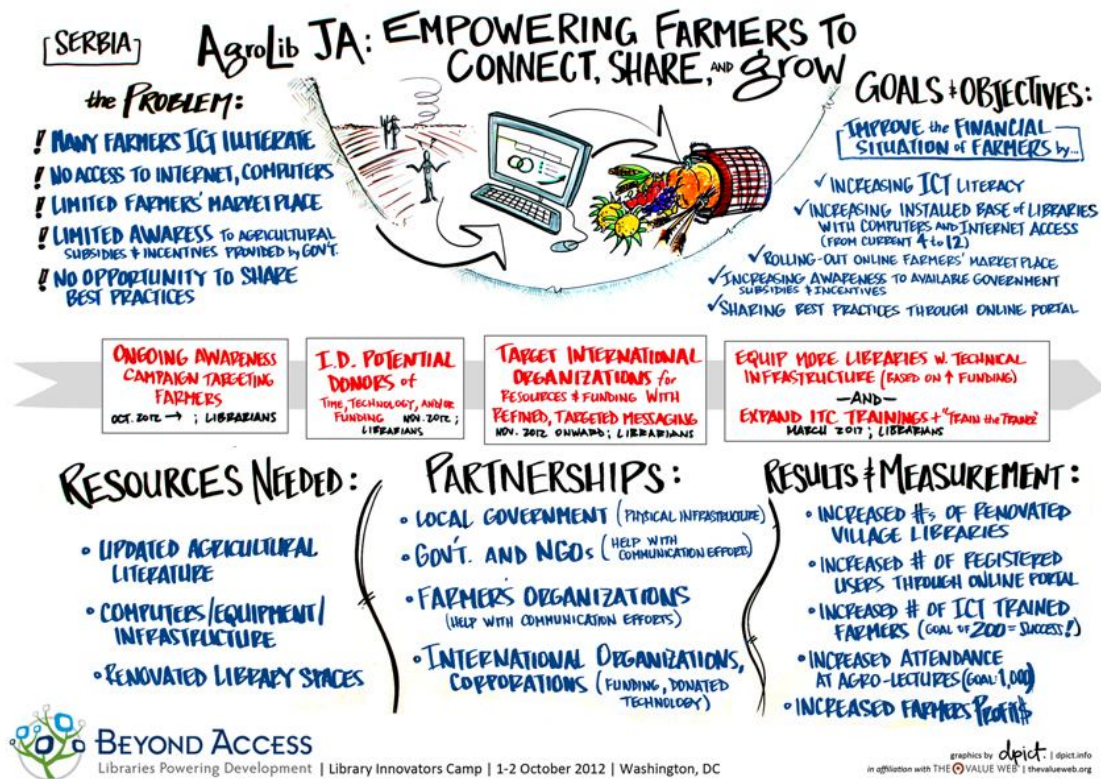
7. Promotion of AgroLib-Ja project on professional meetings

The idea of AgroLib project was presented and promoted at professional meetings and conferences in the country and abroad, formally and informally (through direct communication and conversations with participants of meetings):

- At the first grantee meeting within the PLIP program, organized by EIFL held on May 23-28, 2010 in Ljubljana, Slovenia.
- International professional meeting of librarians of public libraries of Serbia and Bulgaria "Library without borders" held in Nis from November 25-26, 2010.
- At the second grantee meeting within the PLIP program, organized by EIFL held on 27.11 - 2.12.2010 in Nairobi, Kenya.
- International scientific meeting of the Society of librarians of Republic of Srpska and National and university library of RS "Old habits, new challenges" held on April 12-13. 2011 in Trebinje.
- Professional – scientific meeting of the Community of parent libraries BIBLIONET 2011¹², with the topic "Unreached users" held in Jagodina from June 22-24 2011. Public library in Jagodina was the host and the success of AgroLib project was the inspiration for organizers to determine the topic of the meeting. AgroLib project was also presented in the official program in form of a professional paper and at the forum held in revitalized village library in Bagrdan which could be visited and seen by the participants of the meeting. The topic was Information as the key to improvement of farmers' life. The achievements of the project were presented in form of video presentation of short movies, through conversation with the users of site and partners on the project. At Biblionet awarded EIFL - PLIP projects from Macedonia and Bosnia and Herzegovina were also presented.
- At the third international EIFL - PLIP meeting held in Ljubljana, Slovenia 29.1 - 2.2012.
- 78th IFLA General Conference was held in Helsinki, Finland, from 11-17 August 2012. Representative of Public Library in Jagodina presented the project AgroLib-Ja at two sessions, New directions for public libraries in the developing world, organized by NGO Beyond Access and the other session was Social Networking for Agricultural Research, Education and Extension Service: an International Perspective.

¹² AgroLib site, Biblionet 2011, <http://www.agrolib.rs/?p=2358&lang=en>, (taken on April 29, 2013)

- Public library in Jagodina became in May 2012 a member of NGO Beyond Access i thus got the opportunity to participate at the Beyond Access Local Alternatives for Global Development: Rediscovering Libraries event on October 3rd. 2012. During the Libraries for Development Innovation Fair and Contest, participants presented their project proposals to a panel of judges and the voting public. Each team worked with a graphic recorder to present their idea on a poster for the innovation fair. Public library in Jagodina won in the category of economical development for the idea of AgroLib-Ja project and won a \$10.000 prize for continuation of the project. With the support of Beyond Access within the AgroLib-Ja project on April 1, 2013 one more library in the village of Majur in the municipality of Jagodina was opened (see winning posters below)¹³.



- AgroLib was also presented at Regional conference "Public libraries encourage innovations in the community" held on 14-15. 2. 2013 in Radovis, Macedonia.
- Global Libraries Peer Learning Meeting (PLM) was held from 23-25. 4. 2013 in Cape Town in South Africa with the topic of Innovative library of tomorrow: inclusion of users, services for local communities and improvement of resources. Library of Jagodina presented the AgroLib project through a discussion on the topic of Libraries for Development.
- At WSIS forum 2013 held in Geneva from May 13 to May 17, Public library in Jagodina received the award for achieved results within the project AgroLib-Ja in the category *Availability to knowledge and information*.

IV Realization of total design of institutions

Realization of total design meant designing advertising messages for each activity apart that was conducted within the project (within total design of institution as an advertising campaign of the project). Within the existing recognizable identity of Library (logo and so-called total design of

¹³ Beyond Access, Libraries for Development Contest Winners Announced, Economic Opportunity, Serbia, Jagodina Public Library, <http://beyondaccess.net/blog/2012/10/10/libraries-for-development-contest-winners-announced/>, (taken on April 29, 2013)

institution) a work has been done on visual solution and the slogan that would have a unique, universally recognizable character and that would cover a wide spectrum of propaganda activity through catalogues, posters, brochures, flyers. A visual solution was designed for the header of the front page of AgroLib site which was later used for all mentioned forms of advertising activity (See below).



**Logo of The Public Library
Radislav Nikčević in Jagodina**



Logo of The Project AgroLib-Ja

V Implementation of advertising campaign - PR and advertising

This phase took part on two levels: *public relations* and *media plan*.

Public relations means that the relations were established with cultural public (other cultural institutions), with representatives of local political authorities, with potential donors and sponsors. Good Public relations in the first year of project realization resulted in numerous donations: 1. Donation of the National Library of Serbia – new books for all village libraries, 2. Software from Microsoft (value of 18.000 \$), 3. Free printing of one agricultural magazine (for all village libraries for a year), 4. The biggest donation by Local authorities – financing the adaptation of the complete infrastructure for five village libraries.

Project manager was a guest in numerous TV emissions reporting the public on each successfully carried out action and at the same time informing journalists on future activities. Members of the team made statements to local TV on each upcoming and already conducted activity. After each completed professional lecture agricultural experts – lecturers made statements to media and the reports were emitted in the prime time news (three times a day). After each completed cycle of IT training of farmers and village librarians the public was also informed.

Media plan involved selection of media for advertising and dynamic of public advertisements.

Dynamic of public advertisements (it was conditioned by project plan and schedule of implementation of project activities) demands to be accessed and chosen the best possible moment for paid advertisements. Since some delays existed in project implementation, it was decided to pay an advertisement for AgroLib site in order to advertise in the fastest possible way to the widest possible range of people. An advertisement was put on Autentik.Net, the most visited site for the area of Pomoravski region. The advertisement had a good repercussion and after the advertising great number of users registered themselves on AgroLib site.

VI Information – animation and advertising programs

Information animation programs also involved intensive advertising of the project during placing into public.

Good promotion was done before the beginning of the project, and during realization it was intensified and covered each project cycle. In addition to mentioned forms of advertising various forms of

animation were also used: with the lectures video presentations and informal conversations with farmers were used; when visiting farmers and ethno fairs flyers were distributed, and the brochures with direct contact and conversations; at forums video projections were shown with the live interaction with audience; each computer school and IT trainings of farmers were used for promoting the idea of the project.

New Library services increased farmers' sales and income

- Dejan Stankovic, a young farmer from the village of Staro Laniste, till joining the AgroLib project used to sell his products only on the green market. After opening the profile on AgroLib marked Dejan declared: "I was surprised when people who saw me on the internet started to call. I also got new buyers. I think the Internet is a good way of uniting farmers and also a good way for exchanging experiences."¹⁴ One of the buyers of Dejan's products declared he was delighted with the existence of a site such as AgroLib through which he learned about a dietary cheese that is produced in a traditional way and which is good for diabetics.¹⁵

After advertising on the site, a number of buyers of dietary cheese produced by the family of a young farmer Dejan Stankovic increased.

- Users of the site are also various associations like the Association of beekeepers from the village of Bagrdan.¹⁶ Members of the Association, after presentation on AgroLib market and forum of the Association of beekeeper's organizations of Serbia, increased the sale of their products. "After advertising on the Internet the number of people calling with interest for our products, for bee swarms and other products in beekeeping increased."¹⁷
- Zoran Milosevic, a graduate engineer of agriculture and quince orchard owner, (user of AgroLib market), after placing his article about quince on the AgroLib website, made contacts with a farmer near Kragujevac, who deals with brandy production and sold 1.500 kg of quince... "At the beginning I didn't really have such expectations, however the first day after opening profile on AgroLib market I was called by a producer from a village near Kragujevac called Trnava. In such way I succeeded in selling a part of my production!"

"I got important contacts, and I think I will easily be able to sell the entire amount next season."¹⁸

Afterwards, he held two lectures in village libraries on fruit production and alternative fruit species. Lectures and articles on the site were of a great interest and a lot of people called him from all around Serbia asking for expert advice and information about fruit planting, and most of them were interested in quince¹⁹. Mr. Milosevic is an associate in the project from the beginning till now. By Skype and mail he provides expert advices to farmers from all over Serbia and e was also contacted from abroad.

Thanks to advertising on AgroLib market Mr. Milosevic has become an expert correspondent for agricultural magazine Dobro jutro.²⁰

¹⁴ AgoLib market, Profile, <http://agrolib.rs/pijaca/korisnik/dejan>, (taken on April 29, 2013.)

¹⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=de1qXnC-kbs>, (taken on April 29, 2013.)

¹⁶ Agrolib market, Profile, http://agrolib.rs/pijaca/korisnik/pcelar_bagrdan, (taken on April 29, 2013.)

¹⁷ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2UkbimYT0zc>, (taken on April 29, 2013.)

¹⁸ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nWbGt54pXTw&feature=player_embedded , (taken on April 29, 2013.)

¹⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uczb-yC4OWc&list=UL2UkbimYT0zc>, (taken on April 29, 2013.)

²⁰ AgroLib site, Articles, <http://www.agrolib.rs/?p=2814>, <http://www.agrolib.rs/?p=2739>, (taken on April 29, 2013.)

After lecture that Mr Milosevic held in village libraries about quince production, Mr. Rade Damjanovic who is the owner of a nursery garden, decided to expand his productions and raise a quince orchard²¹

- After she lost job in a state company where she used to work for 25 years Ljiljana started job with weaving mats (she learned the craft from her father-in-law). The business was poor as she did not have finances for investment. However, Ljiljana's professional life started moving upward due to her advertising published on the Agrolib market by the coordinator and editor of the site. Thanks to the help of the Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises and Registered Households (the partner of the Public Library in Jagodina on AgroLib Ja project), she got a subsidy from the state. She started handicraft shop and at the moment she is the only mat-maker with a certificate in Serbia. Thanks to the advertising on the site www.agrolib.rs/pijaca she gets orders from all over Serbia and thanks to the business cards and advertising material funded by the Public Library from means intended for the project AgroLib-Ja. Ljiljana is known as the only mat-maker in Serbia with a certificate and earning from mat-making. "People from Public Library in Jagodina presented me and my products on the site. Agency for small and medium enterprises and registered agricultural households...helped me. Thank god and them, my job started developing"²²

Role of partners and village librarians in the project

Partners and librarians also had a large contribution and impact on the success and sustainability of the project.

- *The local self-government* invests in infrastructure, staff and books. The town assembly of Jagodina has provided a large financial support for adapting and renovating the five village libraries, equipment and furniture. They enabled Public library in Jagodina to open three new jobs and to employ three village librarians. Moreover, they provided the means for renewal of literary funds by new books and school reading. During implementation of the project AgroLib-Ja, communication between Local authorities and farmers was raised to a higher level and resulted in resolving many important problems²³
- *The Agency for Small and Medium Enterprises and Registered Households*, provided assistance in registering agricultural households and gave support to education farmers. Thanks to cooperation on the project AgroLib-Ja, the number of registered agricultural households and number of users of the Agency by the farmers has increased (registration is important because only through registered agricultural households the farmers can realize the benefits provided by the state). The representative of the Agency attended and observed each professional lecture organized in the village libraries and farmers were informed about current measures of local and federal government to support farmers. The representative of the Agency was a mediator between local self-government and farmers, helping solve many problems.²⁴
- *The Ministry of Agriculture through its Rural Development Support Network*, provided technical and administrative support and help in educating farmers. During the lectures, which were held in rural libraries Network representative took active part in lectures and discussions and gave many important information about stimulating means, loans, credits, and competitions for farmers.²⁵

Village librarians played an important role in introducing the project to farmers and to rural people. The success of the project depended on the engagement and reputation of rural librarians.

²¹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=A8z5EtDnOFg> , (taken on April 29, 2013.)

²² <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EYocJ8ND7BM> , (taken on April 29, 2013.)

²³ http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=za_KAayRVKQ&feature=related , (taken on April 29, 2013.)

²⁴ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YvHkCwyWuGE&list=ULuczbyC4OWc>, (taken on April 29, 2013.)

²⁵ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y4vHzLjDLLA>, (taken on April 29, 2013.)

- Examples of farmers who made significant decisions about agriculture after the help of librarians were recorded. The librarian in Bagrdan helped a farmer from Batocina to find out what type of nuts is the best to be grown in that part of Serbia. These examples show that librarians adopt the concept of librarians' work as guides through knowledge, who in addition to using books and magazines, use websites to help library users. A report on that was published by Serbian national TV.²⁶
- Another example of a successful initiative and good cooperation between rural librarian and locals resulted in introduction of speed internet into the village of Glavinci. From the beginning of the project realization by far the greatest interest in using the internet was in this village. However, poor connection and bad signal (3G Net), prevented on a daily basis numerous locals to access the internet. One day "the villagers brought their petition to the village library, and asked the librarians to contact the town library'It means that the villagers now see the library as an initiator of change in the community."²⁷ The Public Library addressed the local self-government and the problem was solved. A wireless repeater was set for speed-internet whose antenna covers a radius of 20 km, so that today the villagers of surrounding villages, around 4.500 people, have the access to speed internet (they haven't had till now).

Key achievements

- Public Library „Radislav Nikcevic“ has revitalized five village libraries, in Bunar, Bagrdan, Glavinci, Glogovac (supported by EIFL- PLIP, 2010.) and Majur (supported by Beyond Access 2013.), transforming them into information centres for rural communities, where people can meet, exchange experiences, learn and find information. Serbian Ministry of Culture has funded the project during 2011. and 2012.
- Libraries have equipped with computers, printers, Internet connections, books and magazines from agricultural domain.
- AgroLib website (www.agrolib.rs) and an online market for free advertising of agricultural products and services (www.agrolib.rs/pijaca/) has been launched.
- Farmers are being professionally educated by:
 - agricultural books and magazines,
 - hosting lectures and discussion sessions in various fields of agriculture,
 - IT Training in the school of computers increased information literacy of farmers.
- IT educated and trained librarians to provide services within AgroLib.

Conclusion

What have we learned in the case of project AgroLib-Ja? A library is a good place for anyone. There are no unreached users. There are innovative models that should be successfully implemented and adjusted to each local community. Theoretical concept of awarded project is ideal only on paper. In order to realize successfully a project in practice, to begin to live and bring the results, it is necessary to overcome many obstacles and difficulties. Deviations, flexibility and adjustment to social circumstances are necessary and also to both cultural and valuable forms of people from the target group. It is necessary much energy, enthusiasm, adroitness, wit, personal contacts and life experience of each team member in order to realize successfully the project goals. Team work, connection of explicit and implicit knowledge, transfer and adoption of knowledge by users provides new quality,

²⁶ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rvOaVE4RNZU>, (taken on April 29, 2013.)

²⁷ EIFL.Net, Public Library "Radislav Nikčević" Jagodina, Serbia, Impact Assessment Results, May 2011, <http://www.eifl.net/public-library-radislav-nikcevic-jagodina-serbia>, (taken on April 29, 2013.)

opens many economic perspectives, and changes lives of people in the community towards better ones.

Through the project of AgroLib-Ja, Public Library in Jagodina developed the idea of changing the libraries according changing of users needs.

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