

PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN SLOVENIA

THE IMAGE:PRECIOUS TRADITION

The most prominent feature of public libraries is their openness to general public. With special regard to this characteristics origins of public libraries in territories, which nowadays form the Republic of Slovenia, can be traced back as far as to the year 1569 when the first library of the kind was founded by the States of the Province of Kranjska (Carniola), its individual instigator being Primož Trubar, founder of Slovenian literary tradition. Treasures of libraries, established from then onwards either by convents and other ecclesiastical institutions or as family assets by nobility, were hardly accessible to anyone but a very restricted circle of users, moreover, most of them remained completely closed to outsiders up to the end of the 18th Century. The only notable exception were a few proprietary libraries owned by wealthy townsmen which fulfilled to a certain degree general cultural and educational missions by allowing men of letters and scholars to make use of their holdings.

Evolution of the public function of libraries was accelerated by the enlightening, state-supported policy of Austria which decided to establish a central and publicly accessible research library in each of its provinces. Thus it came about that, in 1774, the Lyceum Library, made up mostly of book collections of abolished convents, was founded, initiating so to say the era of publicly accessible libraries.

Public libraries, established primarily in order to meet general needs of common rural as well as urban population, have their origin in the enlightenment movement of the late 18th Century which resulted in the promotion of theological and other reading societies. In the mid-19th Century, a network of 450 libraries with total stock of about 122.000 books, run by reading, educational and workers' societies, was established by Slovenian Christian Social Union, making true the initiative first explicitly proclaimed by the Slovenian Society in 1948.

In boroughs and towns the so-called public reading societies had been introduced since 1861; as a result as many as 54 reading societies were active by the end of the decade and some of them, in particular those in more developed localities, got eventually transformed into real public libraries. The second half of the 19th Century saw also appearing of societies or libraries established primarily for workers.

In the period between the two world wars the number of public libraries, mainly sponsored either by political parties or by local authorities and schools, increased considerably. Prior to 1940 there were thus already 850 libraries possessing total stock of 580.000 books. Municipal public libraries, however, were practically the only ones to be run according to professional standards as customary at the time.

After World War II, public libraries were also officially recognized as a public service; this status of theirs was explicitly confirmed by the first Slovenian Library Law of 1961. Parallel to public libraries, established in regional centres. In 1971, for all enumerated types however, libraries also serving basically general reading needs were organized by trade unions in enterprises and institutions. Public libraries with collections and catalogues of bibliographic tools for local history research, called "study" libraries, were of libraries a network of public libraries was established in order to meet general readers' needs with regard to education, information, cultural activity and entertainment. Library Law of 1982 stipulated modalities of their cooperation with other types of libraries with a view of establishing in this way a single library information system in Slovenia. Detailed standards for their management, activities and services were endorsed in 1985. Consultancy and information centre for public libraries is with the **National and University Library, The State Center for Library Development, Turjaška 1, 1000 Ljubljana, telephone +386 61 200-11-72 fax: +386 61 125-72-93, e-mail: dms@nuk.uni-lj.si** and with the following library associations:

- Union of Public Libraries
- Section for Public Libraries of the Library association of Slovenia

Libraries in figures

1. Structures of the Public Libraries Network

60 main libraries (8 legal deposit libraries)
230 branch libraries
576 mobile library service locations (9 bookmobiles) and a few collections
102 sites not serviced

2. Work Conditions

2.1. Expenditures

(Financing by: local communities + Ministry of Culture)

Accessions	23%
Capital expenditures	26%
Salaries	41%
Investments	10%
Average:	12 USD per inhabitant

2.2. Floor Space

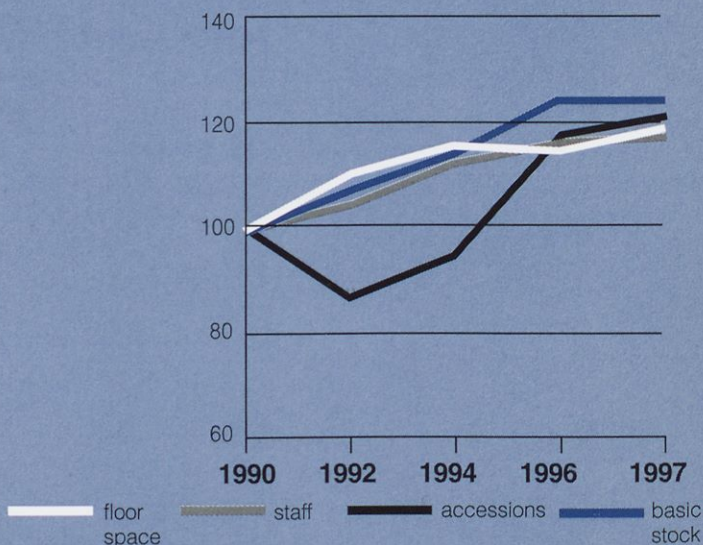
Total: 53.105 m²
Average: 26 m² per 1.000 inhabitants

2.3. Basic Stock

Total: 6.753.274 (100%)
Books, booklets: 6.159.079 (91%)
Serials (volumes): 181.748 (3%)
AV: 412.447 (6%)
Average: 3.370 physical units per 1.000 inhabitants

2.4. Accessions

Total: 372.506 (100%)
Books, booklets: 330.895 (89%)
Serials (volumes): 16.992 (4%)
AV: 24.619 (7%)
Average: 187 physical units per 1.000 inhabitants; 22% fiction for children, 26% for adults; 53% non-fiction; 83% purchase; 9% deposit copies, 8% gifts



Work conditions 1990 - 1997 (index)

2.5. Staff

Total: 786 (100%)
Professional staff: 613 (78%)
Technical and administrative: 173 (22%)
Average: 0,3 professional staff per 1.000 inhabitants;
1 employee per 2.540 inhabitants, 22.295 physical units loaned per professional member of staff.

2.6. Library Automation

Shared cataloguing system - COBISS integrated library system: acquisitions, bibliographic control, circulation, OPAC, ISSN, ISBN database, CIP, central cataloguing (printed catalogue cards), national bibliography, statistics, local functions. All central libraries as well as nearly all of their units already have access to shared catalogue and 58 main libraries and 16 of their branches have Internet. They use library automation for circulation, accessions, processing procedures, administrative work, bibliographies, compiling lists of novelties, CD-ROMs, OCLC and Internet.

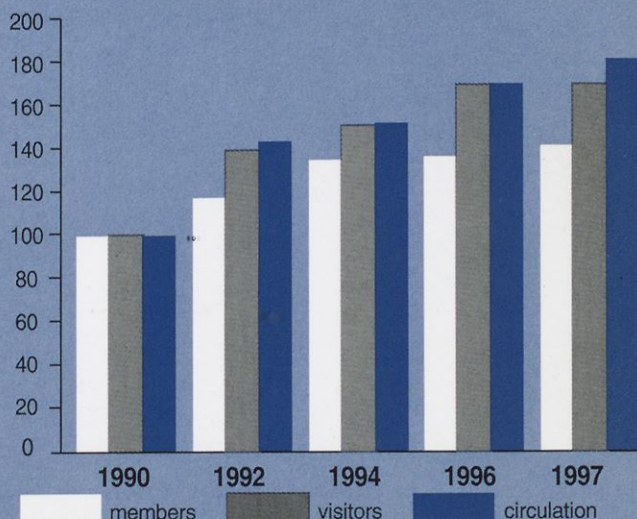
3. Users

3.1. Members

Total: 441.968 (22% of total population)
Children: 146.872 (40% of young inhabitants)
Adults: 295.096 (18% of adult population)
Average: 223 members per 1000 inhabitants

3.2. Visitors

Total: 6.153.186
Visitors - basic library services: 5.738.920
Visitors - extended library activities: 414.266
Average: 3.102 visits per 1.000 inhabitants



Users 1990 - 1997 (index)

3.3. Circulation

Total: 14.379.834

Items borrowed out of the library: 11.515.119 (55% fiction, 36% non-fiction, 2% serials, 7% non-book materials)

Items borrowed on site: 2.853.843

Interlibrary loans: 10.873

Average: 7.251 physical units per 1.000 inhabitants per year; 2.5 units per visitor

3.4. Activities Organized by Library

Total 9.515

Exhibitions 1.174

Story hours 2.879

Quiz sessions 538

Meetings 484

Lectures 298

Library tours 2.161

Other 1.888

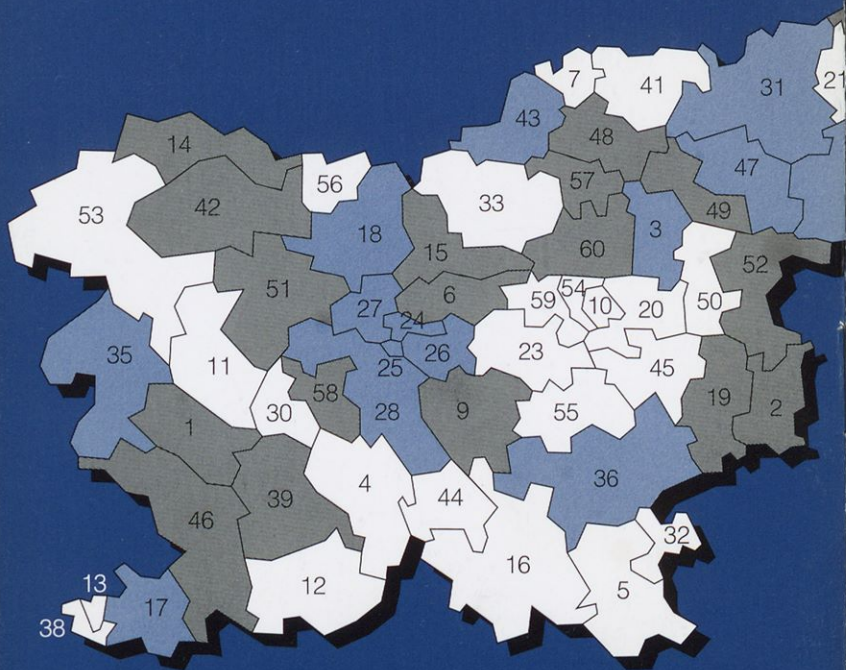
Average: 3 activities per library per week; 45 visitors per event

(Statistics 1997)

SLOVENIAN IDENTITY CARD

- Surface area:** 20.256 km²
Population total: 1.983.000
Population density: Slovenians 87,09%, Hungarians 0,43%, Italians 0,16%; the rest mainly emigrants from former Yugoslav republics.
Official language: Slovenian, in parts of Prekmurje also Hungarian, and Italian in the coast area.
Religions: 82% Catholics in three dioceses, the remainder Protestants, Orthodox, Muslims.
Gross national income per inhabitant: 9.058 USD (1997)
State borders: Italy 235 km, Austria 324 km, Hungary 102 km, Croatia 546 km; and the Adriatic coast 46,6 km
National Anthem: "A Toast", a musical arrangement of the poem written by France Prešeren (1800-1849) with the text: "God's blessings on all nations / Who long and work for that bright day / When o'earth' habitants / No war nor strife shall hold its sway..."
Political system: Slovenia is a republic with parliamentary democracy; its governing bodies are: a two-house assembly, the president of the republic, the government. In 1995, Slovenia was divided into communities; now (1998) 192.
Universities: in Ljubljana and Maribor. Number of higher education organizations 37.
Number of students per 1000 inhabitants 23,1.
Number of secondary schools 151.
Number of primary schools 823
Books (titles published) 3.194.
Daily newspapers 4.
Non-daily newspapers 156.
Other periodicals 882.

(Statistics 1995/96)



1774

National and University Library
The State Center for Library Development