

Project  
**LIB(e)RO**

Intellectual Output 1 / Activity 2

**National Analysis-Report**

Needs Analysis

Komm.bib –  
NÖ Fachverband Kommunale Bibliotheken

Austria

St. Pölten, March 2017

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## Introduction

### Komm.bib – the NÖ Fachverband Kommunale Bibliotheken

Komm.bib is a union called *Lower Austrian Professional Association Communal Libraries*; which purpose is to be a **service center for community libraries in order to gain or uphold quality**, to distribute latest information and to **develop successful librarian work and librarianship**.

After the „Landesverband NÖ Bibliotheken“ dissolved, Lower Austria needed a new association, that would concern itself with the development and the continuance of Lower Austrian community libraries. September 2014 the new professional association, komm.bib, was founded. The board consists of six persons and there have to be two controllers. Also komm.bib has one managing director. One of the goals is to have a close contact to the 155 community libraries in Lower Austria, so komm.bib installed ten **regional coaches**. They supervise about 15 libraries each. Also there are two regional library meetings per year in all ten regions organized by the regional coaches. There the community libraries will get to know the latest library news of Lower Austria, of Austria and international library news. They also will receive a professional training within these meetings and networking is a goal.

The regional coaches as well as the komm.bib board and the managing director are supposed to attend regular national as well as international **advanced trainings, congresses and conventions** for librarians. Komm.bib has to organize regional or national meetings and congresses to relevant themes as well.

The board and the managing director meets **relevant or governmental persons or organisations in order to develop librarianship** and report the status quo as well as the needs of the community libraries and their librarians. In that way the government of Lower Austria and the politicians who are responsible for education and librarianship get constant information. A good relationship has grown which allows openness and constructive teamwork.

Komm.bib, of course, is collaborating very intensive with libraries; actually almost all members of the board and the general manager herself are managing libraries, too. So they are familiar about the work in and around libraries. The **fall regional library meetings** included a workshop with a member of the Lower Austrian Integration Service of the government, who was teaching the librarians, how to socialize or associate with migrants. A special bookseller attended all the meetings recommending books written in different languages (f.i. languages, that refugees or immigrants would speak) or bilingual media.

Last year *komm.bib* started a **project** called „**Thinking Over Borders**“ which emphasises the importance of trying to look at situations, that seem to be difficult, in a different way, so this might help changing the point of view and the way to deal with challenges concerning migration. This project is financed by the Österr. Gesellschaft für politische Bildung and it will be continued this fall and next spring in order to strengthen people’s awareness of positive prospects of inclusion.

Since the **guiding principles of libraries consist the four pillars**: education, information, culture and social-integration – librarians have a wide range of possibilities to work with people that visit libraries – actually it is becoming more important that libraries need resources to meet the upcoming needs. *Komm.bib* will play a key role to support the libraries reaching their goals and increasing their awareness of resources.

## General situation in Lower Austria concerning the situation of libraries – facts & figures

Lower Austria has 1.653.000 inhabitants living in 573 communities.

Within the year 2016 there were 1.280.000 persons visiting the 262 Lower Austrian public libraries and the readers would borrow 1.985.000 medias of their libraries. Around 100 public libraries offer noebook – which is a digital media loan-system provided by the Lower Austrian government - additionally.

A number of public libraries have engaged refugees or immigrants in their team to help with volunteer work in the libraries. The advantages that accrued are obvious: refugees can learn the new language and they make relationships and the librarians get support in their librarian work. Many more initiatives are set by public libraries to assist their own municipalities at the work with refugees.

## General situation in Lower Austria concerning the situation of unaccompanied minors and adult refugees

Bevölkerung 2016 nach Migrationshintergrund											
Verwaltungsbezirk	insgesamt			kein Migrationshintergrund				Migrationshintergrund			
	insgesamt	Männer	Frauen	insgesamt	in %	Männer	Frauen	insgesamt	in %	Männer	Frauen
Krems a.d. Donau	24.344	11.832	12.512	19.748	81,1	9.392	10.356	4.596	18,9	2.440	2.156
St. Pölten	53.478	26.156	27.322	41.585	77,8	20.113	21.472	11.893	22,2	6.043	5.850
Waidhofen a.d. Ybbs	11.364	5.575	5.789	10.326	90,9	5.068	5.258	1.038	9,1	507	531
Wr. Neustadt	43.833	21.362	22.471	32.930	75,1	15.970	16.960	10.903	24,9	5.392	5.511
Amstetten	114.617	57.138	57.479	104.635	91,3	52.118	52.517	9.982	8,7	5.020	4.962
Baden	143.736	70.254	73.482	113.449	78,9	55.486	57.963	30.287	21,1	14.768	15.519
Bruck a.d. Leitha	44.969	22.056	22.913	36.270	80,7	17.880	18.390	8.699	19,3	4.176	4.523
Gänserndorf	99.738	49.090	50.648	84.074	84,3	41.585	42.489	15.664	15,7	7.505	8.159
Gmünd	37.557	18.678	18.879	34.784	92,6	17.275	17.509	2.773	7,4	1.403	1.370
Hollabrunn	50.617	25.179	25.438	46.583	92,0	23.182	23.401	4.034	8,0	1.997	2.037
Horn	31.452	15.499	15.953	29.251	93,0	14.423	14.828	2.201	7,0	1.076	1.125
Korneuburg	77.821	38.298	39.523	67.365	86,6	33.218	34.147	10.456	13,4	5.080	5.376
Krems (Land)	56.620	27.977	28.643	52.775	93,2	26.074	26.701	3.845	6,8	1.903	1.942
Lilienfeld	26.220	13.052	13.168	22.851	87,2	11.310	11.541	3.369	12,8	1.742	1.627
Melk	77.255	38.333	38.922	71.321	92,3	35.393	35.928	5.934	7,7	2.940	2.994
Mistelbach	74.945	37.112	37.833	67.900	90,6	33.677	34.223	7.045	9,4	3.435	3.610
Mödling	117.833	56.828	61.005	95.997	81,5	46.516	49.481	21.836	18,5	10.312	11.524
Neunkirchen	86.353	42.263	44.090	75.268	87,2	36.736	38.532	11.085	12,8	5.527	5.558
St. Pölten (Land)	99.098	49.106	49.992	89.201	90,0	44.096	45.105	9.897	10,0	5.010	4.887
Scheibbs	41.195	20.601	20.594	38.926	94,5	19.531	19.395	2.269	5,5	1.070	1.199
Tulln	74.113	36.491	37.622	64.329	86,8	31.665	32.664	9.784	13,2	4.826	4.958
Waidhofen a.d. Thaya	26.407	13.103	13.304	25.252	95,6	12.556	12.696	1.155	4,4	547	608
Wr. Neustadt (Land)	76.595	37.711	38.884	66.658	87,0	32.818	33.840	9.937	13,0	4.893	5.044
Wien-Umgebung	120.692	58.916	61.776	97.464	80,8	47.666	49.798	23.228	19,2	11.250	11.978
Zweñt	42.839	21.526	21.313	41.505	96,9	20.952	20.553	1.334	3,1	574	760
<b>Niederösterreich</b>	<b>1.653.691</b>	<b>814.136</b>	<b>839.555</b>	<b>1.430.447</b>	<b>86,5</b>	<b>704.700</b>	<b>725.747</b>	<b>223.244</b>	<b>13,5</b>	<b>109436</b>	<b>113.808</b>

Quelle: Statistik Austria, Bevölkerungsregister PopReg 1.1.2016

Tabelle 2016

This chart shows the population in Lower Austria with and without migrant background. 1.653.691 persons live in Lower Austria, and 223.244 persons have a migrant background, which is a percentage of 13,5, which is slightly over the Austrian average of around 10 % of persons with migrant background. Almost 50% of these persons are descending from Germany.

2016 14.000 asylum-seekers (families, adults) lived in Lower Austria in “Grundversorgung” (basic provision). 1/3 of them has been hosted in private accommodations and 2/3 of asylum-seekers have been placed in organized tenements. This means 0,86% of the population of Lower Austria. Top 3 of the refugee nationalities are Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq. (interreligiösesforum 2016)

As long as asylum seekers are not allowed to stay in Austria – they will receive the basic provision in Lower Austria: The specific purpose of the basic provision (“Grundversorgung”) is to ensure that asylum seekers in Austria in need of financial help have a reasonable standard of living. The details about who is entitled to receive the basic provision, about housing, rights, medical information and much more is specified at the homepage of the provincial government: <http://www.noel.gv.at/bilder/d29/Englisch.pdf>

This brochure is printed in 18 different languages such as Hindi, Farsi and Urdu.

The point of contact in the Lower Austrian government for persons with migrant background is:

*“Integration in Niederösterreich” (= Integration in Lower Austria)*

This integration office tries to connect volunteers, communities, the Austrian Integration Fond (ÖIF) and different initiatives and the funding recipients. The aim is to include persons who live in Lower Austria with migrant background in its best way. Also this office supports the migrants to settle down in the labour market.

The situation of minor refugees in Lower Austria is similar to the situation in whole Austria.

### **Unaccompanied Minors (UAM)**

In the Austrian national context the term “unaccompanied minor” is defined in the framework of the Settlement and Residence Act<sup>15</sup> as a foreign minor national who is not accompanied by an adult person accountable for the minor by law (Art. 2 para 1 subpara 17 Settlement and Residence Act).

Depending on the residence status of the UAM, the accommodation and reception arrangements are provided in the context of basic welfare support or care of the Children and Youth Service Authorities. This means that the legal framework, the responsible authorities, the financial regulations, the accommodation and the reception arrangements differ.

UAMs who stay in Austria for at least one school semester and who fall under the compulsory schooling age (which starts at six years of age and applies for duration of nine years) have access to education that is equal to children of Austrian nationality. Access to secondary education for nonschool-age UAMs, who make up the majority of the asylum-seeking UAMs, is more challenging. Private initiatives or NGO projects provide support in this regard. (Koppenberg 2014, 15-24)

In 2015 more than 8,500 unaccompanied minor refugees arrived in Austria. From January to May this year another 2,966 children have arrived in Austria without their parents. Many of them came the long way from Afghanistan, but also from Syria, Iraq or Nigeria. 2016 lived around 1.000 unaccompanied minors (UAM) in a tenement for UAMs in Lower Austria. Compared to 1.637.000 inhabitants in Lower Austria this means 0,06% of the whole Lower Austrian population. (interreligiösesforum 2016)

As all young people, young refugees need future prospects and equal opportunities.

## 1. Needs of unaccompanied minor refugees

*Numbers of minor refugees questioned: 8 (2 females of Somalia and Eritrea, 6 males of Afghanistan, Syria, Iraq)*

We know little about how young refugees live in reality, about their future wishes and what they are missing in their daily lives. Often their situation is portrayed in a misleading way. We mainly hear about numbers: numbers about asylum applications, numbers about costs, or numbers about waiting lines and so on. But especially when we talk about unaccompanied minor refugees we need to take their vulnerable situation into account and asked them what they need in order to get to their goals. (Autengruber 2016)

One interview was organised as a group interview right after a German course. The other surveys have taken place with single persons. All of the interviewed persons showed high interest to participate. The fact, that their opinion and their needs were inquired seemed to empower them or at least made them feel important. Especially the persons, that translated to other persons, who didn't understand German as well as they did.

2 of the interviewed persons, lived in Lower Austria or Vienna for 9 months, 2 of them for 6 months and 1 of them for 3 months. 3 persons lived in Lower Austria for more than a year.

All of them are attending German courses organised by volunteer persons, f.i. former German teachers, and they received the A1 and/or A2 language level certificates – at the official ÖSD (Österreich Schweiz Deutschland) exams.

All interviewed persons own a mobile phone, none of the surveyed has access or owns a computer or laptop. Only two persons did know how to use a computer. All of them wanted to use a computer additionally to their mobile phones.

5 of the interviewed persons have visited their local public libraries already, 3 of the interviewed persons attended their German course in a public library. 3 of the surveyed never visited a library in Lower Austria or Vienna.

Asked, which kind of materials or which content on the e-learning platform would be helpful to improve their German, they agreed to bilingual media and suggested more material for grammar exercising:

*A3: ja wir brauchen Programm von Computer (...) was anders ist. ZB. Wann schreibt ihr AN. A4: An? A1: an, ab, auf... A3: Ja, was gehört... I: Aha, also die Grammatik? A3: Ja! (A3: yes, we need a program for a computer... (...) which is different f.i. when do you write "to" A4: To? A1: to, from, on, .... A3: yes, which is the right one... I: Aha, you mean grammar? A3: Yes!*

All the interviewed persons emphasized the need of COMMUNICATION. The surveyed missed the possibility to speak with Austrians to practise the new language. "A1: ...in Wien ist schlecht ... in Wien alles Ausländer von Türkei und Afghanistan..." (A1:... in Vienna it is bad... in Vienna there are only foreigners of Turkey and Afghanistan..."

When questioned, if they would use a platform like LIB(e)RO, the answer was: "A2: ja, wir wollen gut Deutsch lernen und wir sind, will alles was gibt, was hilft." (A2: yes, we want to learn German well and we are, we want everything that exists, that will help us."

## 2. Needs of librarians and institutions in dealing with minor refugees

*Number of librarians questioned: 6*

Libraries in Austria have been places for migrants to feel included long before 2015 and librarians were working on inclusion as a matter of course. On the website of BVÖ (Büchereiverband Österreich), which is the service center for all Austrian public libraries, there is special tab “grenzenlos lesen” (borderless reading) for libraries that offers materials, best practise examples, information and more concerning inclusion.

The questioned librarians have contact with adult refugees or unaccompanied minor refugees, and persons with migrant background. Therefore all of them offer multi- or bilingual media, media in different languages, books without words, graphic novels or they organize events to mark inclusion.

The smaller public libraries in the rural region usually don't offer a computer-workstation, they have only one computer/laptop which is used only by the staff for lending service processes.

The libraries asked offer 1 to 4 computer-workstations and most of them free wLan; one library charges fees for the wLan usage, but they financed the costs for the UAMs by sponsoring of local companies.

2 out of the 6 questioned librarians confirm a language course taken place in the library. All of the librarians have contact to refugees or persons with migrant background and more or less intensive contact with, or at least they know about the local social-coordinators and/or language teachers.

Different challenges were presented by the surveyed. Most obvious was the fact, that there are no collaborations between the social workers or language teachers and the libraries. The librarians have bought the special media for migrants or refugees without asking them or the persons who were involved in language teaching or who are in care of UAMs. So, as a consequence, they are disappointed, that the media is not or rarely used by the target group.

One of the librarians verbalized her challenge in the lack of translators. She suggested peer-translators for the encounters in the libraries.



### 3. Needs of social workers and institutions in dealing with unaccompanied minors (UAM) and adult refugees

*Number of persons dealing with unaccompanied minor refugees or young adults questioned: 4 (3 female/1male)*

The persons surveyed have different accesses to unaccompanied minor refugees or young adult refugees. One person is a social worker, one person works as a social coordinator & volunteer German teacher, 2 persons are German teachers, one of the teacher is working in a tenement for unaccompanied minor refugees and the second German teacher is a volunteer teacher, who instructs German in a public library.

The other 3 questioned persons do not cooperate with the public library in the municipality they are working for. One person, hasn't even known about the library at all, until she has been asked for the interview. The other asked do know the library, but they don't work together or exchange knowledge.

The different accesses reveal different challenges for the surveyed:

Challenge 1: “unreliability of the UAMs/adult refugees” - Unaccompanied minors or adult refugees didn't attend the language courses regularly and they were often late. The teachers or social coordinator were not able to understand this part of their culture, but it turned out, when UAMs or adult refugees were attending the language course for a longer period, the reliability would grow.

Challenge 2: “lack of room” – The interviewed social worker was faced with the lack of rooms. She could revert on many volunteers who would offer their engagement for language or other courses, for companionship or support refugees but didn't have the room supply.

Challenge 3: “programmes for young adults aged over 18 years” – A group that is spotted by the social worker who was not considered in official inclusion programmes, but would need room and support for their spare time. The social worker perceived this problem and revealed this lack as the reason, why this group ended up mainly in the betting shops.

Challenge 4: “the course is not only a language course” - The language teachers had to work with traumatized young persons and additionally they might not have the capability to learn. These challenges required more than teaching skills of the language teachers. A variety of empathic competences were assumed of the language teachers that led to a physical and mental overload. F.i. the circumstances or facts of deportation and to take farewell of refugees when emotional bonds had grown, disappointment of unreliability in case refugees wouldn't attend the course anymore, even though they still live in the same village, and so on.

Challenge 5: “too little time to learn the new language” – The language teachers stated the periods of the official course-schedules too short. One language course level took 3 months, then the ÖSD exam had to be passed to reach the next language level (A1, A2, B1, B2...) The teachers thought that this is too little time to strengthen the language acquisition but it also didn't leave room to acclimate in the new country and culture.

Challenge 6: “uncertainty about the stay in Austria” – To live in suspense if the residence permit will be refused or granted entails inattention and difficulties to concentrate during language lessons.



Challenge 7: “few educational material and inconvenient search in the www” – All the questioned were interested in the e-learning platform to receive a tool that should save them time for research for adequate material and information to teach the language, but also culture and geography. The surveyed had difficulties to find enough and high quality learning documents.

While the social worker was critical about a learning tool in a virtual world, the other interviewed appreciated this type of support and wanted to be informed as soon as it is possible to use this instrument.

## 4. Summary and estimation of the actual situation

The interviews carried out that there is sparse cooperation between libraries, social workers and refugees. Maybe the dissemination work of LIB(e)RO develops the consciousness of participating groups within this context and the awareness of the advantages of collaboration is increasing.

The challenge of the lack of computers on one hand, but also the lack of being able to work on computers concerning the refugees on the other hand – pointed out by all three questioned groups – outlines the necessity of responsive pages on the e-learning platform, so refugees can use this platform on their mobile phones.

To develop a low-threshold opportunity for refugees the operating explanations should be written in different native languages of migrants. Also, the supporting material, important links and informations should be offered in the European languages that must be learned.

Material and information will have to be collected thoroughly in order to enable the language teachers to look up for learning documents more efficiently and to produce an e-learning platform that's contents are useful and easy to work with. In this manner the platform is getting popular and desirable because of its ability to support teachers, social workers, librarians and refugees in unison.

The collaboration of all the surveyed can lead to efficient and esteeming work and even teamwork. The librarians will get recommendations of useful media, coordinated between all the participants and the media will be used by refugees and language teachers, since they were involved in the selection.

The survey shows that libraries have been and will be the right learning environment and the place for encounters. The libraries can solve the challenge of lack of rooms. The strong request of the refugees for communication to strengthen their language capability could be accomplished by the learning and recreation room: library.

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