

Second life of the children's book
Project director: Zdeněk Procházka

The project for seniors ,The second life of Children's book' reacts to the economic and social changes in the society, where the books - especially in the socially weaker families, the books have become a luxury product. An especially negative effect can be seen in children's literature, which has always been a tool of cultivation and socialization of children. Nevertheless, it is clear that in many households there are tens of children's books which nobody reads. The project uses the activity of the seniors and their good knowledge of the local conditions: they search for their fellow citizens willing to donate good quality books to the new small readers. The books therefore are gaining a new meaning, the second life - they help nurture the affinity of children towards the books and eliminate intergenerational obstacles and prejudices. The project ,The Second life of children's book is part of a wider project SENSEN, which aims to helps the growing number of seniors for whom life is not only waiting, and senseless passing of a free time, and eventual loneliness, but instead an active and meaningful period of their life.

We have launched the project in May last year together with the website www.sensen.cz, which has become an informational and organizational tool of the project "The second life of children's book". We have approached our seniors' clubs SENSEN across the country, district and city libraries, which have become distribution centers of collected books. Here we are leaning on the ability of the cultural workers to appreciate and sort individual titles and find ideal recipients - especially children from socially weaker families or children from environment which is generally hostile to culture. We have chosen five of our 40 senior clubs for the pilot project: Litomerice, Prachatice, České Budejovice, Prague and Mladkov. Together we have collected thousand good quality well preserved children's books, which have found their readers in socially weaker families, asylum houses or foster homes. The clubs have closely cooperated with municipalities, the social work and non-profit organizations, which focus on socially excluded citizens. The clubs are organizing and coordinating the collections, based on the knowledge of the local conditions. The project has no time limitation. We have marketed the project through our web pages, publicity in general media and personal contacts.

At the moment, the pilot project is being evaluated and we are investigating the most suitable locations for expansion. The clubs which have already started to participate in the project, are sharing their experience with other seniors' clubs, interested to launch the project in their region. A computer application which will significantly expand the project horizons, is soon to be finished. It is a database of collected and offered books, which will be available on the SENSEN web to all the potential interested people across the country. At the same time, it will serve the seniors - participants to the project, as a simple non profit Exchange of children's books.

The Foundation's employees activity consisted of the project design, design of the computer application, project marketing, help in organizing and expansion into different regions, the gaining of acceptance with local authorities, and communication with the media.

Financial costs:

Salaries 200 000, - Kč,
The development of the computer application - the database of collected books 100 000,- Kč
Contribution to the overhead costs of the senior clubs: 80 000,- Kč,
Marketing 50 000,- Kč
Travel costs 3200,- Kč,

Applicant: Foundation Charta 77

Was founded in Stockholm in 1978 with a principal goal of supporting the dissidents' activities in the socialist Czechoslovakia. In the early 90s the Foundation relocated its activities to Prague and decided to focus on key social issues. Gradually it has become a nonprofit organization active across the whole country supporting disabled people and civil society development. Foundation Charta 77 is by the range and volume of its activities the biggest NGO in the Czech republic which without using government funds helps thousands of those indeed.