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## **THE CUSTOMER IS OUR MASTER: WHAT WE KNOW NOW, HOW WE CAN SERVE HIM BETTER**

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It is clear that many challenges exist now for public libraries right across Europe, perhaps especially in the countries of Central and Eastern Europe, who are defining their future role - and in some cases securing their position as recognizable and distinct institutions receiving public funding. In this sense, THE PUBLIC LIBRARIES DEVELOPMENT PROJECT (PLDP) UNDER THE EUROPEAN UNION PHARE PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME is at present in full progress.

This project, funded as an aspect of the "strengthening of local or regional government", is the first to emerge through PHARE with a specific focus on libraries in general and public libraries in particular. As such, it represented a significant opportunity to gain profile for the sector. It has lasted for 18 months commencing in November 1995 and had a total budget of 286,000 ECU, 50 % of which was paid by the EU, with matching financial and "in kind" contributions being provided by the partners. The focus of the project activity has been upon one county in Hungary (Pest) and one in Romania (Cluj). The partners participating in the project were: Essex County Council Libraries, the principal partner, a large modern public library network serving a population of over 1.5 million in the United Kingdom; Nederlands Bibliotheek en Lector Centrum (NBLC) which is the National Association of Public Libraries in the Netherlands and provides a centre of excellence in areas such as the promotion of the public library service; Veria Public Library (Greece); Cluj County Library "Octavian Goga" (Romania); Pest County Library "Pest Megyei Könyvtár" (Hungary).

PLDP aimed to develop the skills and knowledge capital for modern public library management available to the CEE partner's public library services. Some funding was also made available for essential equipment and the development and purchase of essential library materials in Cluj and Pest.

Drawing upon experience from the EU, PLDP identified to what extent public libraries in CEE countries, with a widespread existing network of machinery and staffing can add value in support of government reform programmes by supplying a key range of information services requested by the public (for example employment, health, welfare, "social dialogue" and democratic reform, business) and supply cost-effective services to other local institutions

(schools, colleges, hospitals, business etc.). The project also sought to demonstrate the impact and benefits of providing new services which could be taken up more widely, through a programme of dissemination under the auspices of a national body (for example the respective national Library Associations within which the CEE partners are prominently represented).

The target groups for PLDP included elected representatives and managers in local government, public library managers and their staff and information users: the public as individuals and organisations.

The main stages of the project were grouped under 8 task areas: 1 - Study Tour. A three-week study to Essex, Netherlands, Veria by senior local government and library managers responsible for the Cluj and Pest public library service. 2 - User needs survey. The definition of new services to be offered in any one location to be based on an analysis of the needs and "market" for those services in the local community. 3 - Management skills audit. Once the key issues and areas for development were identified through stages 1 and 2, management skills audits would be conducted in Cluj and Pest, leading to the identification of specific training and awareness needs for management and staff, 4 - Design of a training and awareness programme to be aimed at service managers within the Cluj and Pest public library service and backed up by the preparation of support materials etc. 5 - Implementation of training and awareness programme to be implemented over a period of about seven months. 6 - Definition and preparation of new services. Based on the proceeding work, deliverable and sustainable new services would be designed and agreed within the local authorities of Cluj and Pest. Methods of evaluation and measuring the performance of these redefined were also put into place. Funding was made available for the purchase of key items of equipment of material or for the production of necessary information materials. 7 - Implementation of new services. The aim was to fully integrate these services within the everyday framework of the Cluj and Pest public library services. 8 - Programme of dissemination. The establishment of Cluj and Pest as pilot public library systems would be followed by a programme of publicity and debate through seminars and other meetings, publications etc.) in Romania and Hungary, designed to spread awareness and debate to the managers of other public library services. It was hoped to identify a National Focus Group which would concentrate the efforts of initiators of change in the public libraries field.

One of the key issues of the project is to answer what services should public libraries be supplying. In the PLDP, the first approach to this question was to consult the public directly by designing and conducting surveys in Cluj

and Pest. The user needs survey achieved in Cluj and some of the results obtained are presented below.

The "Octavian Goga" Cluj County Library is in an intense process of modernization, consisting of the improvement, automation and diversification of the services offered to its users. In this way, it lends itself, on the one hand, to play a specific role in the assembly of the other libraries from Cluj, and, on the other hand, to be included in international trends, the ultimate target being a plenary satisfaction of its users' needs.

In this context, the user / nonuser survey's main purpose was to find out their specific needs and opinions for supporting the library management's intention to improve the existing services and to start new ones; the three new proposed services were: 1) Audiocassettes, videocassetes and CD Lending service, 2) Community Information service, and 3) European Union information service.

But, being the first project in this field, it offered more than this, namely to obtain an overall image of the public library's usage, obtaining an extensive character in two ways:

Firstly, it had in mind to learn more about its specific customers, the library users' / nonusers' characteristics, as well as to analyse the available library services, collections and environment, in terms of these users' / nonusers' needs and level of satisfaction.

Secondly, it had in view the users from almost all the sections and branches of the library: Reading Room, Adult Lending, the four branches, as well as from the two town libraries, Turda and Gherla. Eight library units were fully investigated. Two questionnaires were elaborated and applied for this purpose: 1) a library user questionnaire, and 2) a nonuser questionnaire:

The library user questionnaire was applied to a non-specific sample made on the basis of the population of the public libraries' users. The sample's representativeness was assured by its proportion of 2,000 subjects, that is 8 % from the total of users, and by its structure which features exactly the percentage of the users from each investigated library unit from the total of the public library users. Objectivity in selecting users to be included in the survey was also assured by establishing standard weekly hours when the survey was undertaken. In fact, the sample's representativeness was confirmed by the strong similarity between the age-band structure of the questioned subjects and the one reflected by the library issue statistics.

In the case of nonusers, which represent about 90 % of Cluj town and county population, the sample was constituted of 250 residents, representing a mixed population, from a block of flats from the Grigorescu district, where no

branch library exists, as well as 250 lodgers of a block in the Mănăştur district, who benefit from a strong branch of the public library. Of course, this sample is not representative, so therefore not entirely indicative of the reasons why the library was not being used in two different and distinct situations.

The samples consisted of only adult users / nonusers (apparently 15-years old or over); children were not included at this time.

After a pilot period, during which both the lack of the librarians' experience in handing out the questionnaires and, moreover, the subjects' inexperience in filling them in was discovered, it was decided that, after the librarians' thorough training, the users should be assisted, by purposely designated librarians, in filling in the questionnaires and, at the same time, in explaining to them the aim of the questionnaires in order to arouse their interest. Under these conditions, the survey lasted 20 days and was carried out at all the units over the period 22nd April to 19th May 1996. The average daily quota / unit was 15 questionnaires. Most of the users maintained a positive attitude towards the investigation, hence the low level of refusals and negligible number of spoilt returns. The response level was considered sufficient to assure confidence in the representativeness of the results. However, more than one-third of the users expressed their reserve as to the final, concrete results of the inquiry. This is why, in order to increase the credibility of future surveys, it is very important for most of the investigation findings to be followed by improved or new services, and for these to be strongly promoted.

1) Users / nonusers characteristics and main reasons for visiting / not visiting the public library.

The data obtained in this respect permitted us to establish the sociodemographical and professional characteristics of the subjects, users' frequency of visits to the library, nonusers' main reasons for not using or not visiting the library any more, that is, some essential aspects which influence or are influenced by their opinion of the quality of the existing services within the library, and of the opportunity of starting some new, future ones.

When analysing the users' age we found out that visiting the public library is especially a feature of the young: the average age in the county is 28 years; more than 50 % of users are in the range 15 to 25 years and 25 % are aged 26 to 40 years. Moreover, the users' percentage decreased concomitantly with the advancing years; every advanced age-group only representing approximately a half of the previous one. The branches, located in newer districts, with a younger population, show a relatively younger age structure: the average age being 24 years and approximately 70 % of the users are aged 15 to 25 years. The

town libraries show an older and more balanced age structure, the average age being 33 years and at Gherla town library each of the four age-groups represent about 30 % of the total of users.

The occupational structure is dominated (50 %) by youth studying, namely: 33 % are at school, and 17 % are students. In the branch libraries this statistic is higher than the county average, most of them being at school. The employed represent 34 % of the users, respectively 26 % engaged in the state sector and only 8 % in the private one - probably an occupational structure rather similar to that of Romania's present situation. The smallest percentage is represented by the unemployed.

Sexes are approximately equally represented, with a slight predomination of women, so that the sample seems to be relatively gender representative.

As to the frequency of visits to the library, although users constitute a relatively small section of population (about 10 %), they visit the library frequently, 74 % more frequently than fortnightly and 39 % once every two weeks. The highest frequencies (more often than once a week) are shown by the users (particularly the students) of the reading room.

The distance from the library has an influence upon the library visiting, in the sense that for 72 % of users it takes usually less than 30 minutes to get to the library. At the branches, 65 % of users it take less than 15 minutes, and this fact stimulates the library's visiting.

The principal reasons for visiting the library, respectively "for leisure" (42 % of users) and to "improve their cultural level" (40 %) indicate the traditional vision, particularly by the branch and town libraries' customers, and that explains, to a certain extent, the very high potential of book borrowing and the high level of demand for fiction. On the other hand, however, a combined total of 67 % of customers include "to study" or "for information" among their reasons for visiting the library.

So, the typical library user is the young man (15 to 26 years old) engaged in education of some kind, for whom it takes 15 to 30 minutes or even less to get to the library and visits once every two weeks or more often the public library. Nonusers are somewhat older, the average age being 33 years. The professional structure is shown to have opposite percentages compared to the occupational one; 50 % are employed and only 32 % are youth engaged in education, equally divided between school and students. This socio-professional structure, together with the non-emancipation of women makes, in our opinion, the main reason for the lack of visits to the library (invoked by 39 % of the nonusers, especially by women aged 26 to 40 years) is lack of time. The second

reason, put forward especially by the inhabitants of the Grigorescu district is the distance to the library, and indicates the necessity for a branch layout, or for a mobile library in this district.

Taking into account that a high percentage (45 % of the sample) is constituted of former users, that the same percentage has used the library quite recently (that is, in the last year) and that only for 8 % the reasons for non-frequency is related to the library activity (unsatisfying opening hours or collection), one can consider that the library is well-known among nonusers, that there is a good potential for the future growth of use by introducing information services of central use in their daily life.

2) Degree of using the different available library services and the level of satisfaction with these library services, collections and environment.

### 2.1. Purpose of visit

A significant percent (43 %) of customers visited the library for more than one reason or service; this demonstrates that the public library is used multilaterally. By grouping the main reasons for visiting the library in four groups, namely: 1. Book usage (borrow / browse/ read books in the library). 2. Read newspapers and magazines. 3. Seeking reference information, and 4. Visit multimedia unit or an exhibition or event, we can see that for the present users as well as for the former users the main reason for library visiting was the use of books. The highest percent is in the branches, inflated by the very high percent of those who borrow or return books. The lowest percentage is shown by the Reading Room, where it is particularly influenced by those studying or working and those who read newspapers and magazines or seek reference information.

By detailing the options concerning the use of books, for over 85 % of customers and former customers, the main reason for visiting the library was to borrow and return books. This is stated mostly by the categories of users who are under pressure of time, that is, women and employed belonging to the age group from 26 to 40 years. Reading books in the library is very rarely practised by users of branches and loan libraries, being however the main reason for visiting the Reading Room.

Seeking reference information was the next priority for 14 % of customers (9 % ) and 21 % of the former customers (13 %), followed by 13 % (8.5 %) who came to read newspapers and magazines. The highest percent of the users consulting newspapers and magazines is in the Reading Room which has, actually, the richest collection of periodicals and a room especially created for

this purpose. Reading periodicals appears a typical masculine activity and becomes more frequent with age advance, being especially practised by those from the private sector, interested in professional information, and by pensioners, interested in everyday news. Surprisingly, however, and still to be analysed by library management, is the very low percent shown in the branches, which proves either that the periodicals held do not respond to users' needs, or that there is a lack of an adequate room for consultation. Only 2 % of users and 5 % of the former users have participated in an exhibition or presentation or visited the audio-visual section; a possible reason for this could be insufficient space in this unit.

Regarding the purpose of visit it was also demonstrated that where former customers showed a higher percentage of usage of non-book services of the library they were potentially more open to some innovating projects of library services.

## 2.2. Level of satisfaction with the library stock

### a) Subject of the borrowed / read books

The first consideration to be made is that the library collections are used multilaterally, the fields to which the book asked for by the readers belongs are very numerous and a high percent (45 %) of customers required books belonging to several (2 r 8) fields of knowledge.

The second discovery was that, though fiction remains the most sought after field by users from all sections and branches of the public library, there was an increasing demand for books from social sciences and humanities. For example in the Reading Room, where the main objective is study and information, the request for books from the field of social sciences and humanities exceeds the one of fiction. With sections and branches, the request of fiction continues to be dominant, but the percentage of books from the social sciences requested is really the same. The most requested subjects are, in succession: 1. Education - particularly with the branches, whose users are, in majority, at school. 2. Philosophy - particularly in the Reading Room, Adult Lending and Turda Town Library, whose readers are studying higher education and are employed, and 3. Religion - particularly in town libraries. A possible explanation for the predilection for books from social sciences and humanities, and especially for philosophy, could be the strong move towards these fields in the post-revolution period. The very low percentage of books from Theoretical, Applied Sciences and Technology is surprising, especially with the Mănăştur branch where a special

reading room was set up, with this profile. The percentage of books of art is also inexplicably small, particularly as the Reading Room possesses a various and valuable collection of books and albums of art. A higher publicity and promotion campaign for the special collections owned by the public library would probably be necessary.

The statistics of the knowledge fields requested gives useful indications concerning the book acquisition policy of the library.

#### **b) Success rates for finding books to borrow / read**

About 60 % of users (and even 81 % at the Reading Room) came to the library looking for something specific whereas about 40 % of users were not seeking any particular book. A very high proportion of them (over 95 %) were successful in finding something to borrow or read. The highest satisfaction rate was at the Reading Room (100 %) where every customer seeking books found something of use, and the lowest level was at the Mărăști branch.

The success rate for finding books shows an increase as the demand for books becomes less specific. In this way, 85 % of customers asking for a book were successful in finding it, while out of the customers not finding that specific book, 87 % were successful in finding something else instead (by the same author or from the same subject). 93% of customers not seeking any particular book were successful in finding something to borrow or read.

The units which cope best with the demands of book are: the Reading Room which, containing the main stock of the library, responds in the highest percentage to specific demands; then the Mănăstur and Gheorgheni branches follow proving that they possess collections corresponding to their users' needs. The Adult Lending Section, Gherla Town Library and particularly the Mărăști branch will have to increase methods for improving their collections.

Catalogue use is around 41 %, but the "closed or open access systems" result in a big difference where this is concerned. The "closed access" Reading Room and Adult Lending Section (where, as a matter of fact, there are more catalogues and complex ones), have the highest levels of catalogue use. In the town libraries, which practise a mixed closed / open access system, about half of the customers use the catalogue. However, in the open access branches, the catalogues are very seldom used (12 %), and not at all in the Gheorgheni branch.

What is very striking (and can be also found out at information seeking), is the high level of dependency in consulting library staff (89 %) in all the library units. At the Gheorgheni branch, staff consulting replaces completely the use of catalogues!



### 2.3. Level of satisfaction with reference information provided by the public library-success rates for finding out information.

Finding out traditional reference information is the second principal reason for a visit to the library. A fewer but still significant percentage (38 %) of users came to the library for specific information, and to find it, they consult the reference collection (62 %) and / or a member of staff (82 %). The most visited unit in this respect is the Reading Room, where the demand for information is almost double the county average.

The most "enthusiastic information seekers" are the categories found in the core of transition and for whom information is vital: employed in the private sector and self-employed, especially men, aged 26 to 60 years.

Success rates for finding out information are good in the sense that over 81 % (less than in the case of the borrowed / read books) found a part of what they wanted, out of which 58 % registered completely satisfied. It is encouraging that one of the highest success rates is in the Reading Room, where there is the greatest demand for information.

More than half of those not finding information were not referred to another information provider, showing that this habit does not exist yet among the library staff. In seeking information the same dependency on consulting the library staff (82 %) was demonstrated, whilst a lower proportion (62 %) found exactly what they wanted in the reference collection. Surprisingly, the impressive reference collection of the Reading Room was not the most frequently consulted, whereas the reference material of the town libraries was. This suggests that the Reading Room's reference collection is not basically what the readers want.

### 2.4. Level of satisfaction with library collections and environment.

On a scale of one (very poor) to five (very good), the county overall satisfaction (all factors) showed 4.03 (good), meaning that the users are in general satisfied with the library collections and environment. Gherla Town Library (4.31) and the Reading Room (4.23) show higher levels of overall satisfaction, with ratings greater than the county average for almost all factors.

The scores for user satisfaction, rank from 3.40 (satisfactory) in the case of the number of copies / title to 4.75 (very good) in the case of staff helpfulness. Of all the factors, things to do with staff: helpfulness (4.75), knowledge (4.67) and speed of service (4.61) achieved the highest levels of satisfaction,

with very little variations between the library units. Nobody selected "very poor" and a high percentage of customers (65 % to 76 %) selected "very good".

Though the great majority of customers found the required books, the quantity and quality of the collections, namely: number of titles (3.64), number of copies / title (3.40) and selection of books from one's favourite subject (3.59) attained the lowest score, reflecting some degree of dissatisfaction (particularly at the Mănăştur branch). Higher levels of satisfaction are displayed at the Reading Room and the Gheorgheni branch (with rates greater than the county average), and that is exactly the units in which the success rates for finding books were higher.

A 3.64 rating for library layout suggests that there is room for improvement, especially in the Adult Lending Section, where the lowest rating (3.17) is due to the inadequate space for an open access system. The Reading Room, which has recently been rearranged shows the greatest rating (4.04). Library publicity and promotion obtained also low scores (3.54); only the customers from Gherla Town Library were satisfied (4.37) with this factor.

The level of satisfaction with the opening hours was higher at the Reading Room (4.65) and Adult Lending Section (4.54) which are open between 9 a.m. and 20 p.m., and lower at the branches (about 4.11) which function in an alternating program.

The reasons for the library not being visited any more show that the former users are, in general, content with the present services of the library: nobody was badly or unpolitely treated by the librarians. Only 0.81 % were not content with the library's opening hours and only 6.67 % did not find the required books or information.

### 3) Improvement of existing services and starting new ones.

The library management has agreed to improve the existing services and to implement new ones according to the users' / nonusers' greatest or / and most urgent needs. In establishing the three proposed new library services, the following aspects have been taken into account:

a) The new private centers providing audiocassettes and videocassettes lending services are wanted very much by the readers, but the annual subscription which is too high is discouraging and, in addition, no CD lending service exists so far. b) Though there are specialized institutions, the information regarding social and health care, employment, retraining, business, etc. does not reach common people in an organized and comprehensive way. c) The interest for

European issues is pretty high, given the number of PHARE projects but the Faculty of European Studies has only a very poor library.

Library users were asked to rank the new or improved services according to their importance; nonusers were asked to name those which would most likely lead them to use the public library more often.

The level of satisfaction with the available library services, collections and environment appears to be a clear indicator of what users regard as priorities: they give the highest priority to improvement of the quantity and quality of collections (a bigger loan section - place 2.02 in the rank, selected by 79 % of the users; more books in new subject areas-place 2.76, selected by 51 % of the users, and better reference collection-place 2.88, selected by 56 % of the users). For nonusers too, the improvement of collections is considered likely (score 1.78 r 1.98) to lead to a higher usage of the library. The improvement of the library layout is more important for the users (place 3.80) than for the nonusers (score 1.56 = unlikely). Opening hours and staff issues (more or better trained staff) have the lowest priority both for users and for nonusers.

The interest for audio-visual material lending services (less for CD lending) appears significant: these services were selected by almost a half of the users (averaging 5) and were relatively highly scored (about 1.80), likely to lead to nonusers visiting the library more. The potential users of these services are the young people (pupils and students). It is also significant that 61 % of the users and 52 % of the nonusers would be willing to pay for those services and even at the middle price range offered, rather than the lowest one. This fact also has a special importance, in the sense that in the future, certain paid services could be introduced without great user resistance.

Among the newly proposed services the European Union information service is considered the less important one (users - place 6.28 in the rank, nonusers - score 1.64), possibly because its objectives are not properly understood. Therefore, a campaign of publicity and promotion and explanation of its content and addressability is necessary.

The problem of introducing the new Community Information Service (that is, of a service providing access to current information for the local community) was studied intensively in a triple sense:

1. The users' / nonusers' need to introduce such a service in the public library was researched. Though this service occupies a middle place (4.37) in their order of importance for new or improved library services, it was selected by a high percentage (61 %) of users. The demand for current information is much greater in the case of nonusers, receiving a high aver-

age score (1.95), more than any other aspect, apart from a better reference collection. The setting up of this service would certainly attract more members of the public to use the library.

The demand for community information encompasses all the socio-demographic and professional categories of users and nonusers and was greater at the Reading Room, Gheorgheni and Zorilor branches. These should be the library units chosen to house such services.

2. By comparing and summarizing the users' and nonusers' information priorities, the principal fields in which the public's need to be informed is larger and / or urgent were determined. These are:

a) Social / welfare assistance (V). This is ranked 3.94, selected by about 43 % of users and scored 1.92 by the nonusers. Target group: women, pensioners and housewives, engaged in the state sector.

b) Medical / health care (III). This is ranked 3.73, selected by half of the users and highly scored, 2.05, by the nonusers. Target groups: aged people (60 years and more), especially pensioners.

c) There is a high priority among users for cultural information (VI), which is top of the list (the highest place, 3.12 in the rank and selected by about 59 % of the users). Along with the evidence that 40 % of the users came to the library to improve their cultural level, it indicates the fact that a high proportion of users see, traditionally, the public library's main function as cultural.

d) Employment (I) This is ranked 3.42, selected by about 53 % of the users and receiving a relatively high score, 1.95 (important) from the nonusers. The greatest demand for such information is shown by members of public looking for work: housewives, unemployed and undergraduates.

e) Retraining / improving professional performance (II). This is ranked 3.52, selected by about 52 % of the users and receiving the highest average score, 2.16 (very important) from the nonusers. Information from this field is requested mainly by the young people (aged 15 to 26 years), particularly undergraduates.

f) Leisure / recreation (IV). This is ranked 3.75 and selected by the highest percentage (about 62 %) of users. Lower priority, 1.96, among the nonusers. Target groups: young people (aged 15 to 26 years), especially pupils.

3. Concomitently with the survey's development, 20 organisations identified and established first contacts (on the basis of an interview guide) as community information users and / or providers. The principal aim was to find out the information they hold and their form of presentation (traditional or automated), the ways of distribution (strategy, free of charge or at cost price), and

particularly the availability and the way these organizations see the cooperation with the library in the case of setting up of the new service and also the library's role as info provider or info author in a possible partnership.

It is encouraging that the information held by the interviewed organizations are placed in the major areas of interest of the questioned subjects, that 99 % of organizations do wish a cooperation with the library, and that they are all willing to distribute this information free of charge.

Regarding cooperation, only two organizations limited themselves to the formula of putting at the library's disposal only the information concerning the nature of their activity, their address and their opening hours. Eleven of the contacted organizations (retraining, employment, medical care, social assistance, cultural information) possess and are willing to put ready-structured information at the library's disposal, most of it under the traditional form of posters, folders or leaflets. However, five of these organizations (business information, employment and retraining) also possess automated data bases. Six organizations (particularly in the field of community services), solicited cooperation with the library in structuring information.

As a whole, one can draw the conclusion that the approaches (both the investigations and organizational interviews) have been encouraging and profitable and that they must be stabilised in firm commitments of cooperation in order to create this service of current information for the local community.

Our final recommendations are:

1) Leading a campaign of attracting the nonusers (who do represent about 90 % of the population) to the public library, using the following ideas:

a) special surveys performed on representative samples, to find out the specific needs and the ways of attracting these nonusers to make use of the public library; b) setting up some branches or at least mobile libraries in the deficient districts, e.g. too great a distance to the library (or branch) being one of the major reasons for lack of visits; c) as the population is under pressure in its daily life, services must be created which are likely to attract people, by offering useful items or information in their daily life, namely, community information services.

2) Breaking with the traditional concept, whereby the services of the public library are reduced to only book lending (on the spot or at home). The library is considered only an institution specializing in book reading. In this respect, the implementation of an intensive promotion campaign concerning the content and utility of newspaper and magazine collections found in the Reading Room and in the branches, the impressive reference book collection in the Reading Room, and the audio-visual collection, must be considered.

3) The change of mentality, inherited from the communist regime, according to which the librarian was given a major role in guiding the customers' reading, in essence being officially considered a "cultural militant". Without minimizing the role of library staff, the library management must find also other means (especially automated ones) of assisting the users to find what they want, and more so as staff costs will rise in the years to come.

4) The data obtained impose diversification of the services offered by the public library, especially in two directions: a) the creation of audiocassettes, videocassettes and CD lending services, on the basis of a reasonable annual subscription; and b) creation of information services for the community, at the beginning in the Reading Room and possibly in the Gheorgheni and Zorilor branches where the demand has proved to be greater. These services could comprise, initially, the six identified main fields of community information. Because these services are totally new in the libraries in Romania, there should be an advertising campaign so that people can understand that it is, on the one hand, an extension of a type of library service and, on the other hand, a new way of providing information in the library, in addition to the traditional reference one.

5) In the future, it is necessary to conduct some more restricted user surveys, following up specific issues or special services (for instance, children services), to permit a more profound understanding of the phenomena encountered. This would be particularly useful after the effective creation and functioning of a community information service, in order to test the relationship between the library and the information supplying organizations, as well as the continuous modification of the public need for current information; in essence, the social impact of this new service.