Best Practices

Living Library

Meeting local personalities can be an important part of feeling “at home”. It is certainly one of the factors that contribute to living together and feeling connected to the local community.

Good Living Library practice can be a separate event or it can be part of a larger event.

The Living Library concept is based on setting up a library where books are replaced by people. For a period of 15-30 minutes, the public can ‘rent’ the time of a local personality for a conversation on an interesting subject.

Examples of “living books” are: local artists, local activists, local entrepreneurs, etc.

Objectives

- To combat discrimination by creating opportunities for conversation.
- To break down stereotypes.
- To encourage understanding and a plurality of viewpoints.
- To provide opportunities for honest dialogue.

Methods

- Identify interesting people in a locality who might be interested in sharing their experience in a 15-30 min conversation.
- Establish a concept and find attractive premises that match this concept.
- Promoting the event to citizens who are curious about destroying their stereotypes is necessary to create a movement in a “library”.

Budget

500€ – 2000€

The cost of the space and furniture required.

Remuneration for moderation and possibly for the “Living Books”.

Meals and drinks.

Materials

Equipment: a table with 2-3 chairs per “book/local personality”, flipcharts with the list of “books/local personalities”, time slots available, markers.

One photo frame per table with name tag and description of “books/local people”.

Location:

A library, a school, a local, community refreshment stands, cultural centres, alternative public cafés.

Periodicity

Once a year

Evaluation indicators

Number of “books/personalities”

Number of visitors

Number of editions organised

Quality of conversation and feedback from participants

Practical advice - DO's

- Link the library to some kind of annual celebration (e.g. a volunteering day – the books could be volunteers sharing experiences of different projects they have been involved in)
- Ensure variety of languages
- Provide direct oral translations
- Invite citizens in a personalised way
- Work together with relevant partners (reading clubs or other local associations)

Practical advice - DONT's

- Don’t leave too little time for discussion

Contact person/Possible partners

Local associations, municipal advisory committees on intercultural living together

Additional information

Living Library Esch-sur-Alzette: Living Library: Soirée d’informations et d’échanges en rapport avec la sexualité, les émotions, le genre et l’égalité