



# library

small ideas for a great change



The Polish-American Freedom Foundation has partnered with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help Poland's public libraries provide access to computers, the Internet, and training. The Library Development Program is implemented by the Information Society Development Foundation.



Dear Readers,

Studies conducted prior to starting the Library Development Program showed that residents of small towns in Poland need friendly meeting places, local centers of activity and integration. This role could be filled by libraries – open and accessible places that facilitate various ways of accessing information and offer interesting ways to spend time. The same studies also showed that libraries in small towns need investments in book collections, IT equipment, Internet, furniture etc.

The purpose of the Library Development Program is to improve access to modern information and communication technologies for residents of villages and small towns. We will provide IT equipment and conduct many practical workshops and trainings for people running libraries and active members of local communities. We want libraries to become interesting and attractive places to spend time in. Our initiative has received very important support from Telekomunikacja Polska, which has offered to connect communal libraries to the Internet free of charge.

Residents of small towns, librarians and com-

munal authorities, all emphasize the need to change the appearance of libraries which should become more attractive both aesthetically and functionally. More and more libraries are beginning to transform their interiors. This is made possible thanks to the public library modernization program implemented by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage which provides financing for refurbishments and adaptations of existing premises, as well as construction of new library buildings.

We want to be part of this process. This document contains advice and guidelines on interior design, ideas for changing the appearance of libraries, simple and inexpensive ways to make them attractive places for local residents.

A team of experienced architects and designers from the Polish Architects Association, in consultation with the Polish Children and Youth Foundation has developed this guidebook in particular for libraries in small towns.

We hope that it proves a great inspiration.

We wish you perseverance and success in transforming your library.

The Library Development Program Team





## The local library in a global network

Our civilization, characterized by free flow of information is based on the concept of the network. A net projected on the surface of the sphere of Earth creates an effect where every point of the network becomes its. Each of us entering the network finds himself or herself in its Center. In order for this place to become our center of living, we must actively join the network, and equally actively join life in the place where we live. Connecting our place of living in a specific town or village in Poland with the consciousness, volition and space of the world is the way to democratize globalization. It requires concurrent organizational and material efforts to build our capacities and to develop our will and awareness. It requires that we create Our values in Our space so that our life here and now is connected with reality, not with virtual advertisements, myths and goals set by others, driven by their natural desire to dominate. The way to democratize globalization requires that we start with the simplest things – establishing networks of local exchange of information, ideas and views around the Place where we access the network, the computer and learn to use them. We must begin by creating our own, real space, virtually connected to the rest of the world in a way that is useful and familiarly beautiful to us. These projects can become a model. Libraries in Europe are experiencing a revival.

They are becoming centers of cohabitation of the old and the new, of the local and the visiting. A place of cohabitation of books and computers, art and technology. A place where contemporary culture is created. A place where we can understand and maintain local traditions. A place where the network and the book open the world to us. Our library can also be this place.

We know that there are direct relations between us and our space. We are created of the same. There exists a very subtle and complex organization of processes that create and maintain life. We also know that the process of creation continues. Globalization is part of it. Our will, desire and skills determine whether this globalization will belong to us and whether we will participate in it creatively, although locally. It also determines whether we, as Polish people, will also become citizens of the World and creators of our reality.

Marek Budzyński, Professor of Architecture.

Warsaw, August 22, 2009.

Professor Marek Budzyński is the author of numerous architectural designs of housing complexes and public utility buildings and winner of the contest for the architectural design of the Library of the University of Warsaw. The Library was designed in cooperation with Zbigniew Badowski, built in 1995–1999 and commissioned in 1999. Marek Budzyński is the winner of the Association of Polish Architects Award of Honor (1993).



Does the perfect library exist? Is the library that we call our own the perfect one? We should strive to have the best possible solutions. First of all we should ask about the current and future role of the library. Seeking knowledge, but also seeking to find ourselves within the sphere of culture, among people, we need to leave the house and go to the center – an important place on the map. The public library can be that place. It is a fixed place in the landscape of villages, small towns, cities; the scene of many expected and unexpected meetings, a place of reminiscences and opportunities for a better future.

Many libraries are located in attractive areas and possess respectable architectonic values. Communal libraries differ in size, equipment, standards, book collections, and readership, but they often share the passion and sense of mission of the people working in them. This guide book is primarily addressed to those people, who desire to realize the ideal of the contemporary library in their home towns: libraries that will attract and contribute important values to their local environments. New user groups and new tasks require new approaches to spatial arrangement and functions of libraries. This guidebook will present a selection of qualities that characterize a place that we can consider “our own”: accessibility, attractiveness, convenience and multi-functionality. On the example of three existing libraries we will discuss changes

that can help improve the aesthetics and functionality of small libraries. We also include an interview with a person involved in the development of Local Information Centers by the Polish Children and Youth Foundation. This guidebook also includes information about important qualities of space such as color and lighting. Topics include ergonomics and accessibility, environmental friendliness and their relation to economics. The chapter entitled “From ideas to implementation” will encourage readers to take part in an interesting game – a workshop for cooperative change planning. The final section of this guidebook is a list of things to remember when designing and implementing modernizations. The document as a whole provides a list of ways in which libraries may realize their existing potential.

# perfect library



## Open

A library's openness may mean convenient working hours or an inviting exterior. The idea of openness may involve time and space, but also attitudes towards people. A library is open when its offering is addressed to various user groups and when it is always ready to receive new visitors. These will be primarily readers but also others who might need it fill a social or cultural need. An open library excludes no one. There are over 5,000,000 disabled persons in Poland (over 14 percent of society) and each of them should be firmly convinced they can and should go outside. A recent assessment of library needs indicates that only 2% of libraries included in their refurbishment plans the adaptation of sanitary facilities to the needs of disabled persons.

A modernized library can be accessed by people on wheelchairs or crutches; people with visual impairments can access special keyboards. It is good to provide audio books on CDs or cassettes as well as books in Braille. Children should have access to a story corner and a place for activities with logopedists, therapists and fluent reading training, for example with volunteers. Openness means accepting new ideas. One example is a „library night“, an event similar to „museum nights“ where children have the opportunity to be in a „magical place“ at a time when it is usually inaccessible. Such

an unusual experience will be something to tell others about. Openness also means relations between employees and users – creating an atmosphere conducive to dialogue. Implementing openness means “going outside” is a library program – organizing meetings with authors in a nearby day center, coffee shop, school, cultural center, or even in a garden. An open library is one which invites people and events under its roof and is in turn invited elsewhere.



## Attractive

A modernized library will attract people with its appearance and friendly atmosphere. It will become a fashionable place, a place worth visiting to keep in touch with current educational and cultural trends and with good company. A place that is not considered our own will not be an attractive place. We can be attracted through emotions that accompany active participation in implementing changes, volunteering, organizing events. An attractive library is one which is original and has an identity. Its spatial expression should be connected with the character of its surroundings – utilizing and co-creating the difficult-to-name qualities that constitute the genius loci – the spirit of a place. The new situation will promote the development of new ideas for local activity: promotion of readership, social and cultural animation. Changing the image of a library involves creating an attractive entrance. This includes not only the front of the building, but also the path leading to it. A gate in the fence is also part of the “entrance zone”, a mark of the place. Is the entrance inviting? Is it clearly marked, visually interesting, accessible? Is there someone taking care of the plants outside? Is there a signpost and sign-board on the door? Are the opening hours and program of the library as a point of culture on the map known to everyone? Do local media talk about them? Is there information about it

on a well-designed bulletin board? Attractiveness also includes a perceivable interior concept – a motif (for example special colors in the children's corner, something associated with music for the adolescents). Sometimes the attractiveness of a place is determined by small details: a bulletin board with children's artworks, where parents can spot their own child's painting, a colorful pillow, a beanbag for reading in comfort.



## Convenient

One of the goals of the changes implemented in libraries is to create a comfortable place for everyone. In order to make it comfortable or at least a functional, it is necessary to determine the specific needs of readers and other library users, as well as its employees. We need to remember that first of all it is necessary to ensure the proper functioning of the interior of our modern library which contains a reading room, a lending room and the necessary computer infrastructure. Using bookshelves and other pieces of furniture it is possible to acoustically isolate the reading room from the entrance and the lending desk. The passages between the bookshelves should be broad enough to enable people with reduced physical fitness access to the book collection. An armchair for reading may also be useful for creating convenience. It is also useful to think of a workroom function for groups of several users, with tables or pulpits that can be put set as needed. Convenience considerations should apply to the basic functions of the library, but even the smallest elements of comfort are important: a gate that is easy to open, a even path, a safe place to leave your bicycle, a well lit entrance, and awning to protect against the rain, and a doorbell that is easy to reach if the user needs help carrying books inside. The entrance should have a place where users

can leave their overcoats and umbrellas, or sit down to rest or wait for someone. Employees should have a place to prepare and eat lunch. Convenient bathrooms should be available to everyone and be proof of refinement and pro-environmental thinking. Cleaning products, brooms and vacuum cleaners should have a separate storage place. Making the library a comfortable place can mean doing more than was required by official guidelines and regulations. There can be many examples of elements that create comfort, but we will leave this to the creativity of our readers.



## Multifunctional

Modern public libraries have several functions apart from keeping and providing access to collections. Lifestyle changes and development of information technologies change the image of libraries, as their offering evolves. Even the smallest libraries are no longer just book-lending places. They become centers of community integration with modern equipment. They fill but also co-create complex social, educational, cultural and sometimes even economic needs of both residents and visitors. Their space and technical infrastructure must be adapted to changing expectations. The library may become an attractive place for meetings of informal groups or discussion clubs, attracting people of various age groups. Its space can be used as a small art gallery, therefore it is useful to think about which walls could be used for that function and to enable works to be hanged or affixed there in an aesthetic pleasing way. A preview of plein-air art or photography will become an important social and cultural event. Pursuing the artistic function, the library can organize a workshop. It is important to focus not only on the artistic quality of the works but also to think about mundane aspects such as a place to store equipment (easels, painting materials). If the library has computer equipment, a printer, copier, fax machine, it is worthwhile to put

them together, creating a “multimedia corner”. This enhances safety, facilitates maintenance and cleaning, and prevents the equipment from dominating space in a chaotic way. It is worth noting that libraries need to be transformed from time to time. The placement of furniture, especially in the reading room section, should enable easy rearrangements (moving and joining tables, chairs, etc). Various types of seating help enhance an informal atmosphere.



Changes in the library space should be their result of shared, creative work of teams focused on projects, and be based on the knowledge and professional skills and experiences resulting from previous implementations. The authors of this guidebook believe that it is much more worthwhile to focus on positive examples than to analyze numerous mistakes.

In order to illustrate the approaches of designers who participate in these processes, we will present the proposals for change concerning three libraries. We chose libraries from one region, but differing in status, housing conditions and needs. These differences influenced the proposals of the Interior designers in response to the spatial problems observed and noted during study visits. These proposals should be treated as concepts for discussion. They are designed to encourage a fresh look on library interiors and their surroundings, and inspire the search for the best solutions. These guidelines are examples of directions of designs and implementations. The projections and visualizations in each case referred to existing conditions. We have illustrated and described a number of universal changes that can be applied in almost any library. We have also included proposals that fit the specifics of individual premises and take into consideration the architecture of individual buildings. Preparing for modernization should begin with an in-depth analysis of what is available. You should define the weak points

that definitely require change, but also look for qualities that, with some inexpensive effort, can yield excellent “added value” and become a strong point of your library. An example of this is the existing garden house – a part of the premises of the library in Wola Mystkowska which serves both as a summer reading room and a place to play table tennis and other games. This guidebook proves that improving a library (as a whole consisting of both interiors and a garden) doesn’t have to involve a radical reconstruction or refurbishment. There are numerous examples of libraries which, with little financial investment and community effort, have improved their functionality, for example by properly situating and equipping the librarian’s workplace. In each reviewed case the four qualities of a good library, described in the chapters above, were taken into consideration. It is worth noting that these changes create a space which offers more opportunities for work, study, meetings and play. Such transformations will attract new users. A well prepared library will be ready to welcome them and begin a new life.

# good examples



# Library in Suchcice

branch of the library in Czerwin

Under the new concept, an open space can be home to several utility areas located in a way that will make users comfortable. Opposite the entrance is the lending desk and the librarian's station. On the right, the activity room with computers and a children's corner. On the left, the book collection. Behind them, the reading room, at a distance from the entrance and the activity room. The entrance is preceded by a hallway separated from the neighboring areas. Toilet facilities accessible to disabled persons. The entrance is bright and warm, offsetting the insufficient natural light.

| area: 74,4 m<sup>2</sup> | 6500 books | 70 users |



photo: current condition

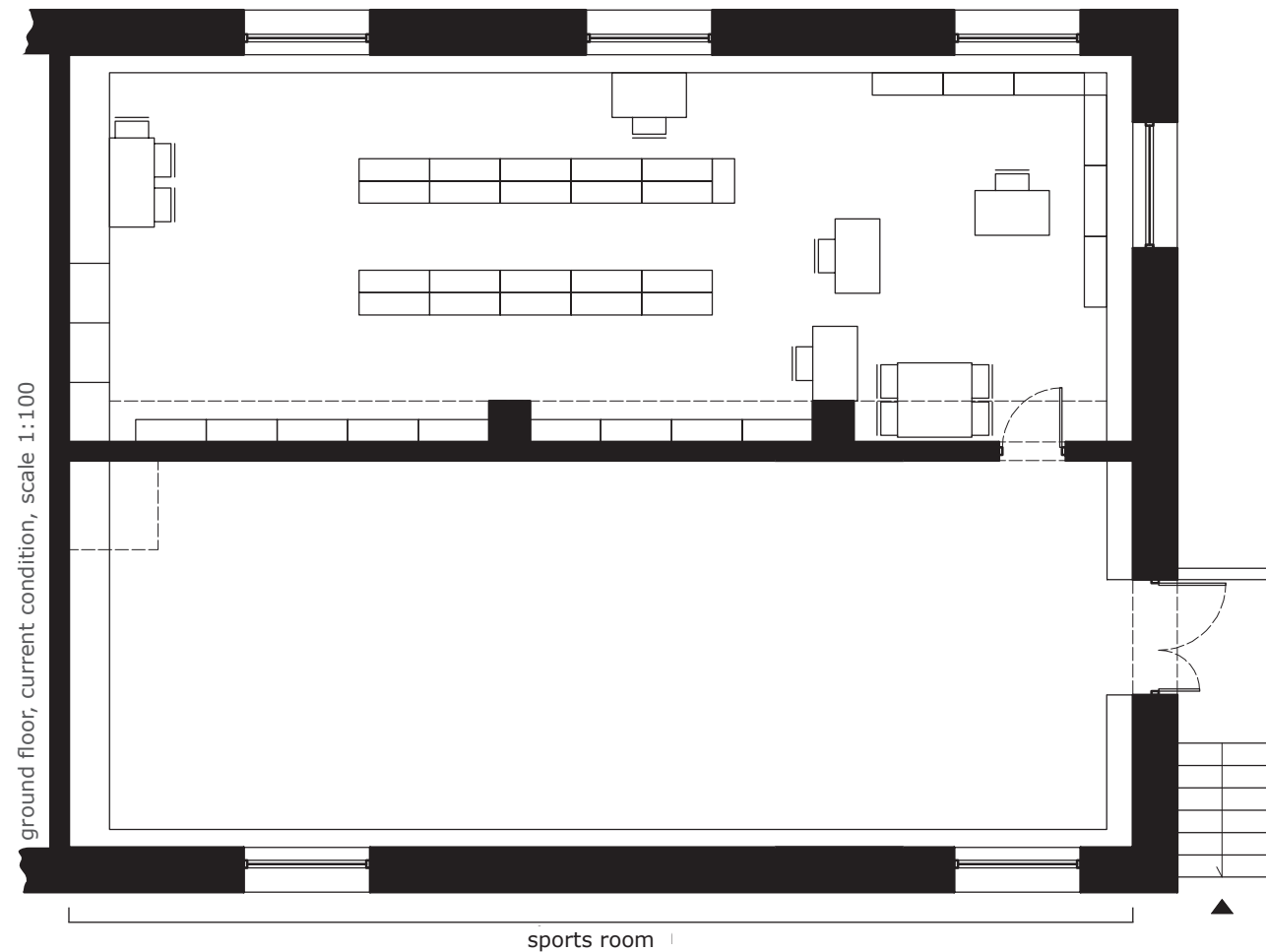
The librarian's workstation is a central point that should be visible immediately upon entering the library. Locate it a certain distance from the main entrance. The desk should have an upper section of no more than 110 cm from the ground level to cover the necessary tools and computer equipment.

The bright and warm colors of the walls introduce a cheerful atmosphere in rooms which lack natural light.

Instead of spending money on new furniture, consider renovating the ones you have. A little effort can create a surprisingly good result.

Plants look best when they are grouped.





#### advantages

- + large area
- + open space

#### disadvantages

- limited natural light
- lack of access for disabled and orderly users
- lack of toilets

#### utilizing advantages

- ✓ increase functionality

#### overcoming disadvantages

- ! bright, warm colors, proper lighting
- ! adapt the entrance and toilets
- ! separate a suitable area



The library should be equipped with furniture such as folding chairs and wheeled bookshelves. This will make it easier to arrange space for larger meetings.



The reading room should be a comfortable and quiet place situated as far as possible from the noisy lending section. Apart from tables and chairs, consider comfortable sofas and armchairs that will encourage users to stay longer and read.

Unusual elements of architecture such as alcoves can be used as a place for shows or storage / presentation space for books.

Apart from general lighting, reading stations should be equipped with independent spot lighting with warm light. These can be hanging lamps or fixtures solidly attached to the desk or floor.

Colorful walls are not the only way to liven up your library's interior. A better effect can be achieved by combining neutrally colored walls with colorful additions.





## Library in Czerwin

Under the new concept, the library consists of three rooms. A hall that can be created by combining the corridor with two rooms will house the lending room and the book collection. The children's activity room in the reading room will be in separate rooms. Thanks to soundproof glass doors, the rooms can be separated without breaking eye contact between the users and the librarians. The library is located in the Communal Authority's building with social and sanitary facilities. This makes it possible to do without a separate hallway and restrooms.

area: 72,4 m<sup>2</sup> | 16500 books | 800 users



photo: current condition

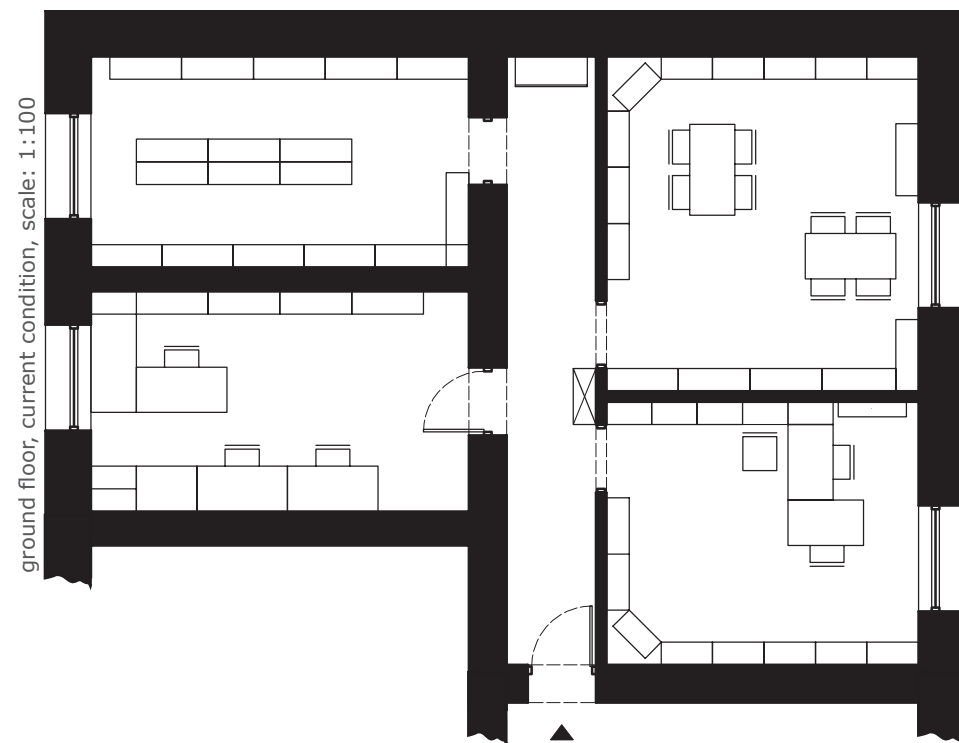
If possible, leave open space to give the interior more openness and facilitate the organization of meetings.

In order to maximally utilize the available space, place ceiling-high shelves against the walls. If you implement this, remember to equip your library with a ladder to make it easier to reach the higher shelves.

Library collections can be stored on wooden shelves, which will make the interior appear warmer.

Wooden floor paneling is warm, easy to assemble and maintain. Take care to choose a product of the right hardness class. For public utilities such as libraries, use AC4 or AC5 class paneling, or as a second choice, W4 or W5.





#### advantages

+ ample daylight

#### disadvantages

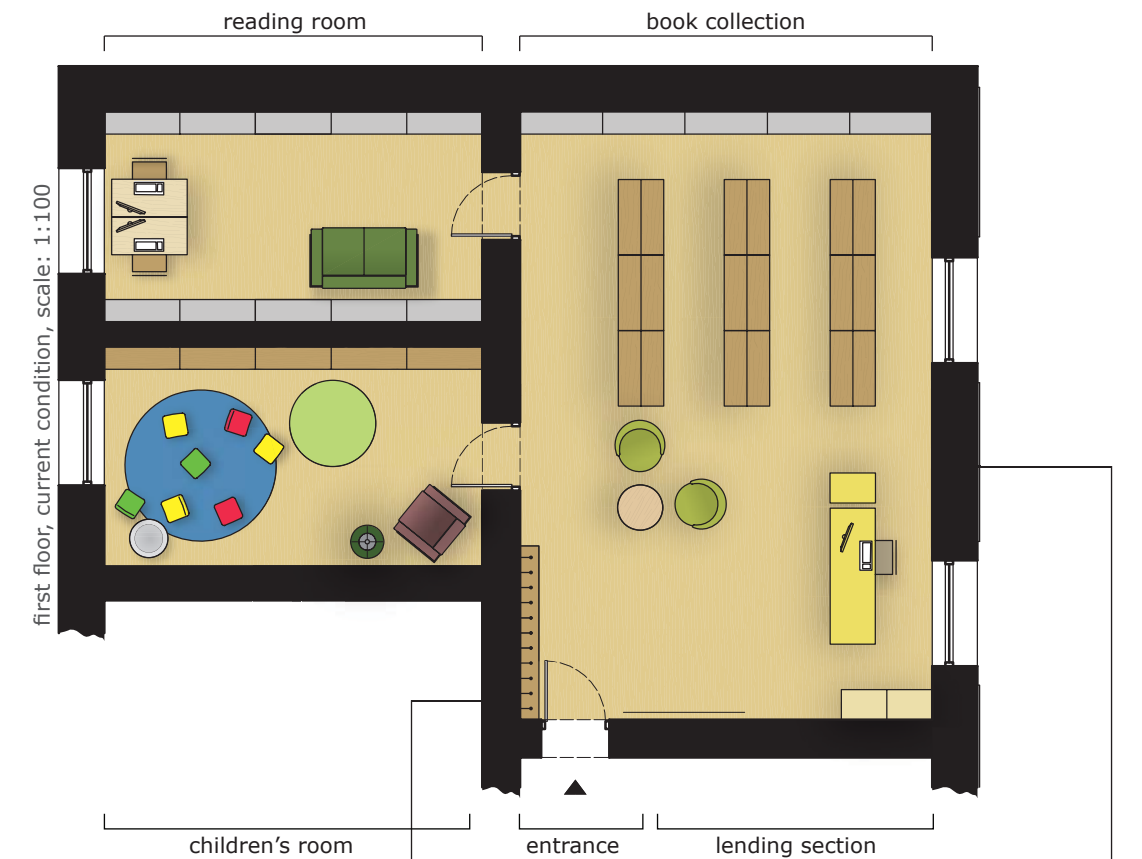
- inconvenient entrance
- functionalities not clearly separated
- no cloakroom

#### utilizing advantages

✓ good placement of work stations

#### overcoming disadvantages

- ! remove narrow corridor
- ! reorganize space
- ! work out a space for coat hangers



The librarian's workplace should be equipped a locker for personal belongings.

When designing the interior, do not be afraid of large empty walls. They will make the room seem larger.



Children are the most frequent visitors and libraries. Consider creating a special place for them, equipped with carpeting and pillows for sitting or lying down.

If there is an empty section of the wall, put up a projection screen.

Traditional light bulbs can be replaced by energy-saving lighting fixtures with warm light. They aren't more expensive in use, and they make the interior look more friendly.

A corkboard will make it easier to present children's works. Magnetic paint can also be used.

Before painting the wall with the desired color, buy a small amount of paint and paint a 1 m<sup>2</sup> in a corner, let it dry and make sure the result is what you wanted.





# Library in Wola Mystkowska

branch of the library in Somianka

The library is located on the first floor and occupies three rooms. According to the new concept, the lending room will house the larger part of the book collection and will also be the librarian's workplace. The two other rooms are a reading room and a children's room. The walls of the staircase can be painted with magnetic paint to be used as an information board and for presentations.

This library's strong point is a roofed terrace which can be transformed into a seasonal reading room. Adding colorful garden furniture will make it a more friendly place.

area: 41,4 m<sup>2</sup> | 8000 books | 180 users |



photo: current condition

In order to increase the library's available space in the summertime, a seasonal reading room can be arranged outside. A terrace or garden will fit this purpose very well.

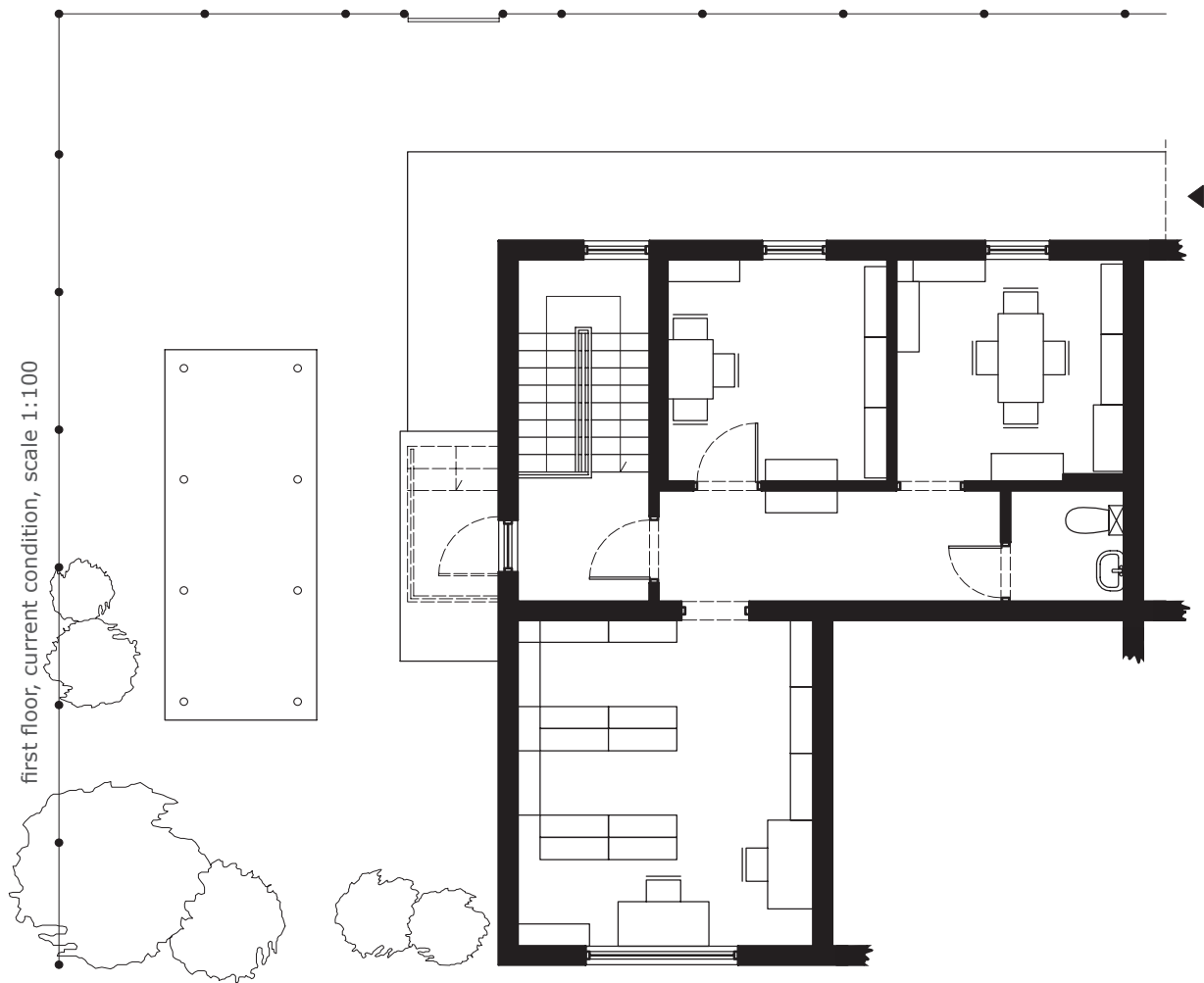
Consider providing some form of roofing for the summer reading room to protect against the sun and rain.

Any equipment used in any summer reading room should be light and waterproof. Furniture pieces that can be stored in piles are a good solution.

A good way to liven up a boring space is to put together a set of furniture in intense, seemingly mismatched colors.







#### advantages

- + roofed terrace (awning, garden house)
- + activity room on the ground floor

#### disadvantages

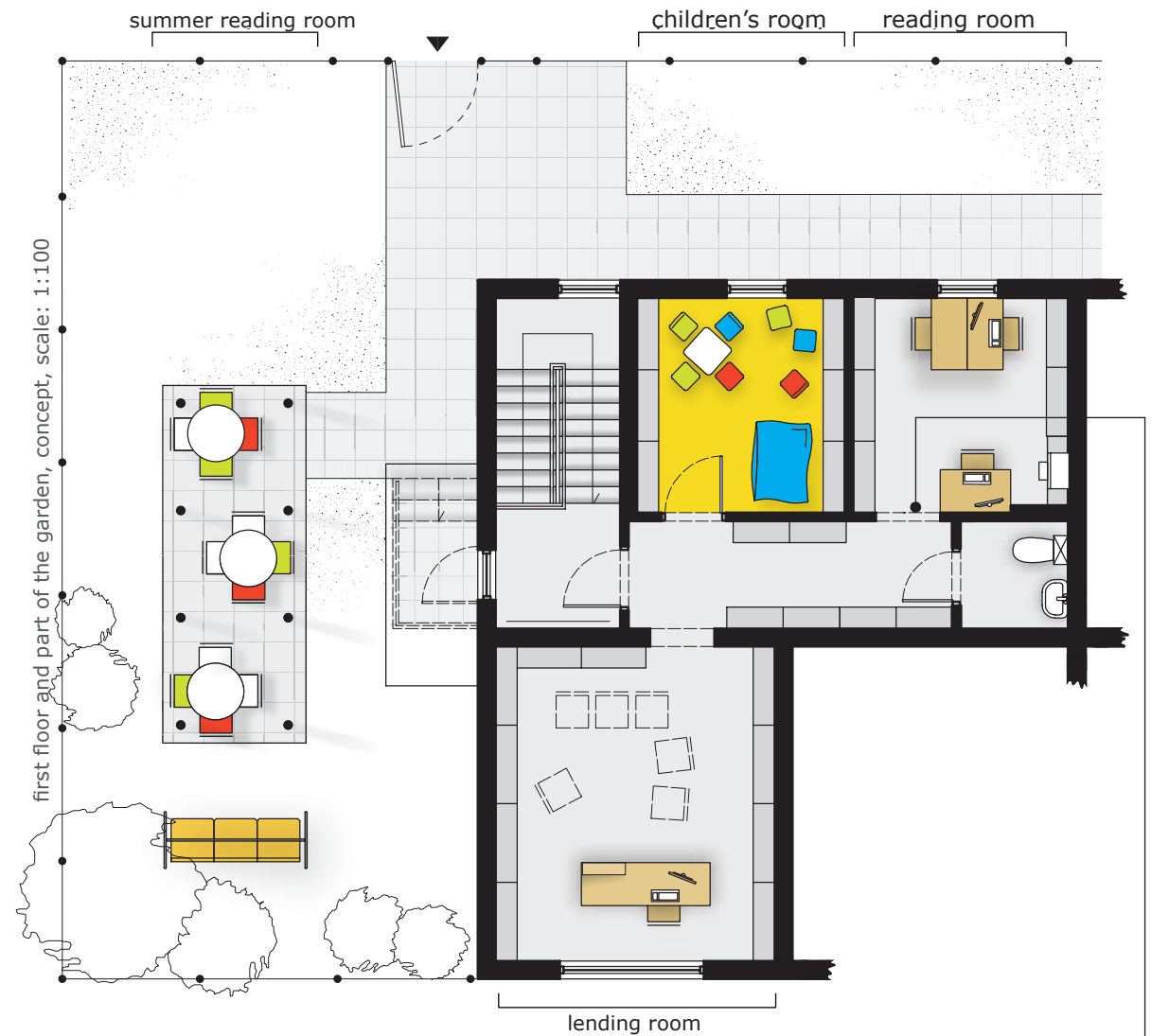
- entrance is not visible from the street
- no access for the disabled and elderly

#### utilizing advantages

- ✓ summer reading room outside
- ✓ the library's meeting place

#### overcoming disadvantages

- ! create a path and additional gate
- ! install a doorbell near the entrance



A simple change: moving the doorway about 10 inches creates much more place for bookshelves.

## Library in Rzecznów

interview with Krystyna Wójtowicz – director of the Commune and County Library in Rzecznów near Radom

The library in Rzecznów was established in 1947. It is currently located in a school building. Krystyna Wójtowicz has been working here for 23 years. On her initiative, between 2004 and 2008 the library took part in the program of the Polish Children and Youth Foundation entitled “The Library as a Center for Local Information”. The purpose of the program – to adapt communal libraries to new forms of activity – was implemented with the help of designers to modernize library premises, purchase equipment, expand the book collections and conduct study visits in cultural institutions.

**What do local residents visit the library for apart from lending books?**

– They come to read the press. To encourage them, we subscribe to various titles for children and young people such as “Young Tech” “PC World Computer”, magazines for girls, dailies, weeklies such as “Polityka” , “Newsweek” and “Farmer” for our farmers. We also have caller magazines. Sometimes we even get the Wall Street Journal in English.

**Is this effective?**

– Yes. We have over 1000 readers in the main library and its two branches. Our youngest readers are two years old, our oldest – over 70. They are attracted by many things. We have separate shelves with new publications

and audiovisuals. We organize meetings with authors, sometimes with even over 60 people attending. We have a well-equipped computer workshop with a scanner, printer, copier and fax. Sometimes people walk in for the first time just to print something, and then they come again to lend a book. We have a telephone service for our older users. We organize art and reading contests. We conducted library classes but also workshops, for example on consumer knowledge for young people. We participate in the „Reading to children” project.

**Are you able to accommodate all these initiatives?**

– We have limited space but it will always seem that way. We don’t have any storage for additional materials or an archive. We have moving shelves but that does not help us fit in the art exhibits.

**What was important in the “Library – Local Information Center” program?**

– Communal authorities often don’t see the need for change in libraries. It is different when there is a Center, where everyone focuses on upholding standards. The programmatic combining of both functions is an excellent idea. We have received comprehensive assistance from interior designers. We thought about the functions that the library is supposed to offer us as residents.

**How are these defined?**

– One important task that we put forth is attracting young people. One of the ways to do this is to respect the fact that adolescents come in groups. They come and sit down together, and it is important to create an informal area for them to stay. Whether this is a computer desk or an armchair, there needs to be some space around. Young people like to sit around unhindered, close to each other, on the armrests or on the floor.

**What else happened during the implementation of that program?**

– It was important that we had the opportunity to modernize, in particular to redo the flooring, purchase furniture and modern equipment. But it was also important that we participated in training

**What about lighting?**

– We ran out of funds for that. The computer wiring was laid on the outside, and parts of the other installations had already been done before, so the other wiring is also exposed. Too bad, because lighting, as well the electrical installation as a whole are very important in a library.

**Your windows have vertical blinds. Why did you choose this solution?**

– For practicality. They can be adjusted in several ways to the needs of people working on computers.

**How did the flooring job go?**

– We had worn PCV tiling before. We thought about carpeting but after talking with people in other libraries it turned out it is very impractical – it gets dirty quickly, and it’s difficult to remove mud stains. We decided to get new PCV tiling – it’s nice but costly to maintain, because it needs special chemicals and a cleaning machine. We have to borrow it from the school, but it’s okay.

**And who chose the color?**

– Several people did. We consulted interior designers, and some volunteers also helped





choose it. Finally, one person suggested yellow and reconciled us all.

**Did you create any new places in the library?**

– A friendly corner for children. Every library, even the smallest one should have such a place. People often visit us even with two-year-olds. We did our best to adapt the appearance and equipment to their needs. Unfortunately, there are tracks in the floor for the sliding shelves, but this was the only place where we could separate some space for the children. When the shelves come together, there's more space available.

**Was it easy to choose the right furniture?**

– initially we chose the cheapest offer but that involved various inconveniences, for example we would have had to assemble it all by ourselves. Then we found a vendor that helped us with everything – they sent in their employees to measure our rooms. Some pieces of furniture were delivered ready for use, others were assembled on location. We had a problem with the tables. Initially we ordered one-legged tables, because they were interesting, but it turned out that they were very unstable, especially when children sat down and rested their elbows on them. As a result, we used the legs of our old tables and ordered new tabletops.

**What advice would you have for people planning changes in their libraries?**

– Make sure to buy a large desk or table top, because it will fulfill several functions – it will be a place for your administrative work, for preparing for lectures and meetings and for the collaborative work of several people. It's also useful to have a trolley for the books. And my general advice is to be bold and try new things. Many things seem impossible in the beginning, but can be achieved with the help of others.

## Library in Cybinka

Another good example is the library in Cybinka (photo opposite). This design was created not only with library users but also with library employees in mind.

Simple, inexpensive measures have created a unique and warm atmosphere. „I wanted this to be a place to which people would want to come back” says Grażyna Łyżwińska, library director. „It was also a good idea to put out a sofa and armchairs. We painted our wicker furniture white and black, put some comfortable pillows on them, and fixed a number of elegant lamps. People found this very attractive.



Standards are an acknowledged set of features that an object should possess in order to fulfill its functions. A library is a public utility, therefore its structure, interior and equipment must comply with regulations and standards. The surroundings of the building as well as the premises themselves must not only comply with construction law regulations but also with the requirements of functional, environmental, aesthetic and social nature. However it should be indicated that higher or lower standards are the basis for the creation of a quality whose certain features, such as harmony or beauty are difficult to measure.

When implementing standards, remember to satisfy basic needs, but doing more is nonetheless worth the effort. When ensuring safety – for example in the entrance area of the building – take the effort to make visiting the library a pleasure for the users. Consider planting greens of sufficient height to create a perimeter without limiting visibility, create a flower bed and install a pleasant (preferably modest-looking) fence with an attractive gate. Sanitary facilities should be accessible to disabled persons and meet standards of hygiene and aesthetics. Maintaining cleanliness in the library should be made easy: use environmentally friendly cleaners, and store the necessary equipment in a specially designed place. One of the basic standards is providing the right temperature and humidity, which necessitates a well designed heating

and ventilation system. In order to meet occupational health and safety standards it is necessary to create at least a small social room or corner for the employees, so that items such as a kettle and dishes could be used to serve a larger group of people.

Compliance with fire protection standards will be ensured by a specialist. It is worth to be in contact with that person to ensure that the location of fire extinguishers and the necessary markings harmonize with the interior design. Remember to ensure sound insulation to prevent noise. Acoustic problems should be particularly carefully considered in places where loud reading and children's play will take place. Use the properties of interior finishing materials to your advantage and place furniture and equipment accordingly. When designing the interior remember to keep the proper distance between the shelves (90 cm minimum), but leave more room whenever possible. Library standards include providing privacy to the personnel and the readers. In order to comply with ergonomics, install lighting that is good for reading and think about furniture that will make long reading sessions possible. Computer stations should be arranged in a way that comply with vendor operating standards, and ensure that devices are within reach.

# standards



## Color

Color perceptions are subjective. The most important thing are color impressions – reviewing samples or listening to descriptions over the phone will not suffice. When we visit the library we expect that the spatial expression will be different from that of a store or office – friendly, but also original. However, the colors should be positively received by everyone. The purpose is harmony, although accents are permissible – for example by employing contrasts to emphasize the space for people with visual impairments. Avoid excessive numbers of colors and chaotic, tiring color combinations. Remember that color plays an important role in the way we receive information. Our reception of color is impacted by the environment – lighting, the qualities of materials, cultural considerations and fashion. But also personal factors – temperament, mood, experiences with individual colors and space. For the youngest users we recommend pastel colors which do not distract. Restless children will be helped by natural colors, shades of green, white with warm pigments and blue. Shades of yellow, navy blue, turquoise and lavender create positive associations. Note that it is not only the colors of the walls or flooring that will determine the color impression of the place. Furniture and equipment, color publications on display, and even the color of clothing create color impressions on neutral, prefer-

ably light surfaces. When consciously choosing equipment remember that bright, aggressive reds may expand blood vessels and increase blood pressure. If you are looking for a color in this range, consider cherry. Take care that the intensity of colors does not cause discomfort, especially in the elderly. The flooring should be in one shade of the same color. The ever-popular green, which represents the color of living vegetation, may constitute not only an integral part of the interior, but also a natural complement of the library's surroundings.



## Light

Light creates part of the interior's atmosphere. Sunlight is good for eyesight, emphasizing color and contributing to depression prevention. It is necessary for plant life, it provides energy, prevents unwanted biological processes (development of bacteria and mold). But direct sunlight may be detrimental to books and electronic devices. Use natural light whenever possible, but provide for ways to adjust intensity, prevent reflexes and ensure flexible use of rooms – e.g. by completely covering windows during a slide show or film screening. Sides of the building exposed to direct sunlight should be equipped with light dissipating blinds, and where needed – opaque, dark roller blinds or curtains. When trying to provide more light inside you can use a glass door (made of safety glass), and when providing ventilation consider windows with vents or pivoting. Remember the importance of artificial lighting. Replacing the installation will be costly but it is a technically and esthetically important part of your modernization. Commission this job to a professional. Plan ahead the positioning of your electrical devices. When choosing lamps, consider the color temperature and the breadth of the light stream. Avoid excessively focused white lighting which covers a small area but tires the eyes. Light that is warm in color and similar to natural sunlight will not cause eyestrain,

migraines or skin irritation. Light should reach every place where it will be needed. Diffused light is best for reading and working. Consider the importance of bright, reflective surfaces and adjust the placement of furniture and light sources accordingly. To help keep your interiors flexible in terms of utility, consider standing (stable) lamps or lamps that are affixed to desktops.

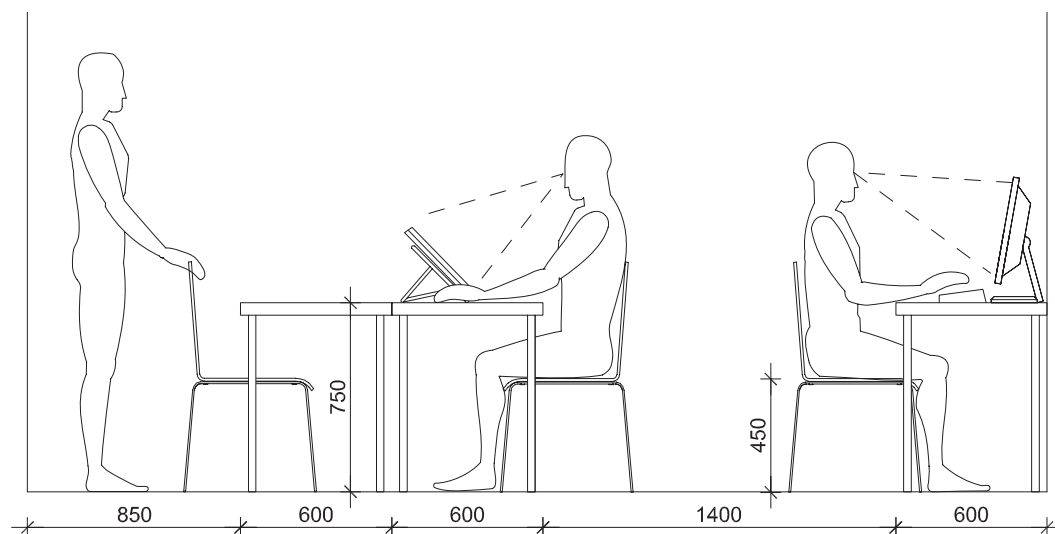




## Ergonomics and accessibility

Complying with ergonomics means adjusting workstations to the needs and natural capacities of people. It won't be difficult in a small library as long as you choose the right equipment and use it accordingly. When reading and working on the computer, avoid positions which cause back tension – this depends on the functionality of chairs and other seats, tables and computer desks. Consider buying adjustable furniture (office chairs and desks) and pulpit-type stands for books and laptops. It is important to locate your equipment correctly (in a quiet place, away from light reflexes); the monitor should

be at an appropriate height, and the keyboard placed so that the hands are not cramped, with wrist support. Adapting the library to the needs of people with various degrees of disability involves the removal of “architectonic barriers” – adapting corridors and sanitary facilities (providing ramps, wide passages and maneuverability for wheelchairs, markings on floors and easy-to-read signage for the visually impaired). This will require the involvement of consultants and designers.



It is important to adjust work stations to user needs. Laptops should be placed on a stable surface, preferably on a special stand.

## Ecology and economics

A pro-environmental approach involves balancing the spiritual and physical needs of people as well as respecting the natural environment understood as a complex whole. In a library, dialogue with the environment can be realized by striving to make the interiors were friendly, and by taking care of the surrounding area. Working in a group, planning and implementing, results in ongoing care for a place that is treated as one's own. The rules of sustainable development tie ecology with economics. Providing comfort and a healthy microclimate is combined with maintaining and increasing existing natural and cultural values. The costs of change will be justified when the materials and solutions applied improve the standards and quality of the library without increasing operating costs. Minimizing investment costs should not be the decisive factor. In many cases it is better to pay more for solutions that are friendly, durable and cheap to maintain. This pertains among other things to materials (natural and without harmful components whenever possible), but also pro-environmental ways of keeping clean. Insulation works, refurbishments or window replacements should respect the existing architectural quality of the building. Old materials and equipment need not become waste. You can look at certain old elements of your equipment with a fresh

eye. One example of a pro-environmental and economic approach is renovating existing bookshelves. Waste should always be treated as recyclable raw materials (segregating them at the source requires setting out marked containers). The library supplements the functions of the school and the home – it is something between a living room and a school room, sometimes even a kitchen or a place where one reads before going to bed. More people and for longer periods of time will be using electrical energy, hot and cold water, „producing“ waste in the process. Modernizing heating, water and ventilation systems will require the participation of professionals. See whether it's possible to achieve comfortable interiors, while respecting natural resources, by using renewable energy sources. Focusing on avoiding energy loss, install aeration nozzles in faucets. If you are replacing a toilet tank, make sure you get one with an adjustable dispenser. As part of your efforts to care for nature and visual quality, greenery inside the building can be planted in hygienic but not necessarily plastic pots. Place them where conditions are as similar to natural. When you set out a bicycle rack, remember to have your library included in the local cycling map.

The purpose of this guidebook is to inspire action to make libraries more open, convenient, attractive, multifunctional, as well as to improve their standards. But where to find and note the best ideas? How to achieve results? How to effectively plan and implement changes that will meet expectations? The following pages contain tips on how to collaboratively define what is really needed, how to estimate costs and meet budget limits while choosing the best solutions, and how to progress on implementation. Everyone may think they know what the needs of library users and employees are. But do we know how they will perceive the new, changed space? How do you create a place that will better serve people of different characters and expectations? How do you create a place where everyone will find something for themselves? You should answer these questions before beginning your work. It would be hard to find these answers on your own. In the part concerning planning you will find ideas for involving current and future library users. How to do it? You can use a practical workshop methodology – a game that will enable a larger number of people to take initiative and responsibility. These methods are employed by modern businesses that wish to foster creative thinking and capture new ideas worthy of implementation. By undertaking a shared project, everyone becomes, in part, a designer and implementer.

Be prepared for the fact that your budget will allow you to implement only some of the creative ideas, and that meeting certain needs will have to wait to the next modernization. It is important to gain knowledge and use it in a way that will help you choose the best and most economic solutions. Your readers and neighbors will also be of help. Look for inspiration in the Internet. Once you've gathered your ideas, develop a list of works, materials, purchases, determine work schedules and establish a budget that will help you in your grant application. It'll also be necessary in your negotiations with vendors and contractors. Waiting for the formalities to be processed is a good time to think more about your choice of furniture, to try out colors, paint types, etc. Once you've started implementation, most of your difficult choices will have already been made. At this stage it will be most important to organize the work, supervise your contractors and maintain good relations with professionals. They should also feel involved in the project. Library users who will feel that the changes are being implemented first and foremost for them, will surely volunteer to help. A list provided at the end of this chapter will help you test the basic knowledge necessary to coordinate activities within a group of professionals and volunteers.

# from ideas to implementation



## Planning

Set aside enough time for planning the project with the participation of library users. Project based work gathers many people around the idea of change. This method will objectively identify needs and find ways to fulfill them. Debating the pros and cons, coming to shared conclusions and ideas is fascinating work and also an exercise in democracy in practice. Group work fosters a creative atmosphere. It is best when group work brings together generations, takes place in an atmosphere of openness and focuses on the objective. Planning changes in a library can be compared



to an interesting game, the results of which will change reality. The game – conducted in the form of a workshop – revolves around the collaborative planning of changes inside (and possibly also outside) the library. This game can involve both children and adolescents as well as adults (especially the elderly who usually have more time). The proposal for change in graphical form, similar to a mockup, is created on a specially developed plan (drawing) in scale. Interior design is assisted by paper or cardboard cutouts of furniture and other elements of library equipment made to scale according to your own design or a schematic available at [www.biblioteki.org](http://www.biblioteki.org). These workshop meetings conclude with a presentation and a debate about the viability of ideas. Finding volunteers and organizing the workshops will be facilitated by the Participant Card and poster (templates also to be found on the website). The posters should be put up in visible places. It is important that the interested persons declare whether they are willing to participate in the workshops or only to fill out the Participant Card. The list of players should include, for example, 10 people (half of them children and adolescents, the other half adults). Mixed-generation groups can also participate. The Participant Card is designed to fire up the participants' imaginations (filling it out takes approximately 15 minutes).

## The game

**1. Participant self presentation (45 minutes).** Requirements: filled out Participant Cards. Participants present their Cards (3 to 5 min.).  
**2. Preparing the board (45 min.).** Requirements: measuring tape (5m minimum), a sheet of paper laid out on a table/desk, a long ruler, drafting triangle, pencils, markers.  
 The board is an architectonic "inventory" of the existing condition – a drawing or fragment of the drawing of the library building in 1:10 scale (one meter is represented by 10 cm) or 1:20 (1 m = 5 cm). A 50 x 100 cm sheet of paper will be convenient for the



workshop's purpose. You can adjust the scale to these dimensions. The plan should mark the doors, windows, stoves or heaters, sanitary facilities, stairs (if present), as well as any part of the library building's exterior that belongs to the library and fits on the sheet. When preparing this projection you can use the building's construction documentation or its evacuation plan. The best solution is for the participants to measure the interiors themselves and reflect the data on the sheet. Preparing the chart can be considered a warm-up.

**3. Working in groups (45 min.).** Requirements: sheets of color paper, also from magazines, scissors, color markers, crayons, etc.

The workshop game is based on the collaborative planning of changes in the library space. Whenever possible, form two groups that will compare and negotiate their ideas and propositions. For example, one group can prepare their proposition bearing in mind the needs of the other group, and vice versa (e.g. young people design library furniture and equipment for adults, and adults – for young people). The chart will be filled with furniture and other pieces of equipment cut out from a stencil and made by the participants themselves.

# The game

On the chart, mark (with a thick line) those elements of the space that should be kept and used. Then the participants will place the pieces of equipment on the projection while discussing the current and the postulated style of library work and its spatial organization. Participants can postulate changes concerning individual rooms and areas. The goal is to find an arrangement that will satisfy everyone. Before each iteration, the participants can argue for their moves by using such goal-oriented statements as:

„When I enter the library, I...“;

„Children, adolescents and adults would spend more time in the library if...“;

“I believe that everybody would like it if...”

4. Summary (45 min.). Requirements: charts with changes written down, paper, pen (or marker)

During the workshop game, there will certainly be many impressions that the participants will want to share. That is why you should organize a meeting in which the participants (groups) will find out their mutual expectations and agree on them. This meeting should involve discussing the chart (or charts), or even brainstorming. All ideas should be written down.

To make sure that all participants are satisfied, the group should stick to its predetermined rules – people can state their opinions when it is their turn, and the objective is to agree on a shape of the library that will serve the group as a whole..

This meeting can be a good opportunity for library users and employees to become familiar with the people who have the authority to make decisions concerning the library.

The most important thing in the planning phase is to identify the needs of the users and to come up with ideas. You will have to make difficult decisions involving adjustments to various solutions. Planning changes will involve negotiations and will require consistency or even persistence, but also compromise and rejection of solutions that do not fit the whole.

# Costs

Developing a detailed cost estimate will be the work of not only the potential or current contractors. You can make your own practical cost estimate that will give you a view of the project’s budget at any time. Consider writing down (in a notebook, for example) all information provided to you by people experienced in similar situations.

Take sufficient time before starting the works to find the available services, materials and equipment – including information available only to a small number of local professionals. You can check the price estimates of individual works. You should find out whether the stated price covers just the materials, the materials plus cost of purchasing and transportation, just the cost of work, or the cost of materials plus work. It is also important whether the price includes VAT and in what amount. You need to know the way walls, ceilings and floors are measured. Consider the rising costs (both financial and environmental) of removing construction waste. You should develop a detailed cost estimate as soon as

possible. Everybody knows just how much time and energy is needed to visit stores, choose the colors and pieces of equipment, especially when a product is urgently needed. Determining this ahead of time will help you avoid rush purchases. It will also help you in your negotiations with contractors. You will find it easier to match the colors, materials and equipment to your design and your (often modest) budget.

The Internet can be a great help in finding stores and information about products that are available only to order (young people are often surprisingly proficient at this). A large part of the task can therefore be completed without leaving the library or your home. In other words, it is worth taking the time to make conscious choices and to provide the proper transportation. Remember that the main criterion of your project’s success is the quality you achieve, not finding the lowest price or having the works done in the shortest time possible.

Examples of cost estimate notes:

No.	Product/service	Quantity	Vendor/contractor	Cost	Source of information
	Window joinery	Per list	Vendor A		
			Vendor B		
			Vendor C		



# Implementation

Effective implementation requires a plan that details the technical and material solutions, and a corresponding detailed cost estimate. It is important to plan the works in the right order. Start with (if applicable) demolition, bricklaying, joinery and installations. When you come to the finishing works, start with the walls, then do the floors. There is a multitude of products available in the market, but that should not tempt you into fitting in too many solutions. Consider reading some professional literature on construction and planning, and in many cases seek the advice of professionals.

Important matters that should be agreed on in writing with contractors include responsibility for material purchases and cleanup during and after the works.

Some works can be done by library users integrated around an important goal. Be sure to comply with occupational health and safety regulations.
































# Checklist


















Below is a list of items that you should remember about when planning and implementing your project. In order for your library modernization to be successful, include as many of them as possible. This checklist is a practical tool. It will help you keep in mind (during and after the implementation of the changes) the

problems that library users and employees deal with on a daily basis.
















-  Open
-  Comfortable
-  Attractive
-  Multifunctional

Entrance		Done	to be completed
	Road signs in town, leading to the library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Signboard – legible, pleasant looking, compliant with library signage	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Information board on the outside	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Current information in a specified place inside	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Building entrance accessible to disabled persons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Convenient and safe access (path, sidewalk)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Lighting over the access path and entrance	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Awning over the entrance; windbreak	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Doorbell at the proper height – accessible to children and people on wheelchairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Coat hanger and umbrella rack	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Bicycle rack that enables the bicycle to be secured by the frame	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Wastebasket	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Lending room		Done	To be completed
	Eye contact with people entering the library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Easily accessible catalog	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	The height of the librarian's desk adjusted to the height of all users (including children, the elderly and people on wheelchairs)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Convenient, "discreet" position of the library's computer	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Wheel cart for books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Presentation place for new books	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Book collection			
	Comfortable distances between shelves (90 centimeters minimum)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	In case of tall shelves – an easily accessible, safe ladder	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Lighting over the space between the shelves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Clear visual identification of the book collection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Reading / meeting room			
	Freely available seating: various types of seats (chairs, beanbags, so-fas, pillows)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Ability to ensure peace and quiet	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Convenient, configurable desktops	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Window blinds or curtains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Friendly lighting (ceiling and spot) – warm color temperature	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Easily accessible power sockets for laptops and other equipment	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Magazines laid out in an easily accessible and visible place	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

		Done	To be completed
	Screen or open space on the wall (for projections)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	One large cork board for works and presentations	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A place for focused work (e.g. with speech therapist)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Wastebaskets: for paper and other types of waste	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Multimedia corner			
	Easy access to equipment (computer, copier, printer etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Comfortable computer workstation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Equipment adapted to the needs of disabled users (special keyboard, at such)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Windows with blinds or curtains	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Easily accessible power sockets with surge protection	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Internet connections (preferably wired)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	A place for audiovisual collections	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Easy cleaning (dust prevention)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Children's corner			
	Soft seats on the floor	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Free play spot for the children and their caregivers	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Cabinets, containers, baskets for toys, materials and educational games	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Furniture adapted to the needs of children: low tables, chairs, shelves	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Children's book reader's chair	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



		Done	To be completed
	Place for pinning up children's artworks (one large cork board)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Special collection for children	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Children's furniture fixed safely and securely	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Flooring made of friendly, soft material	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Friendly, warm lighting (artificial and natural)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Pastel colors on the walls	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Sanitary facilities and storage rooms</b>			
	Sanitary facilities are easy to find and accessible to disabled persons	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Employee corner that can be used during meetings (kettle, dishes, etc)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Separate storage room (cleaning products, etc.)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Rooms and pleasant and easy to clean	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Water-saving fittings (toilet tanks, faucets)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Summer reading room</b>			
	Safe place outside in a clearly delimited perimeter belonging to the library	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Direct connection between the interior and the summer reading room	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Awning or roofing to protect against the wind and rain	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Light, movable furniture that is easy to store	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## **RECOMMENDED WEBSITES:**

### **EBIB bulletin**

[www.ebib.info/content/view/257/79/](http://www.ebib.info/content/view/257/79/)

### **IFLA - Library Building Guidelines**

<http://books.google.pl>

### **Library – Local Activity Center**

[www.pcyf.org.pl](http://www.pcyf.org.pl)

### **Friends of Integration Association**

[www.integracja.org](http://www.integracja.org)

### **Building Research Institute**

[www.itb.pl](http://www.itb.pl)

### **Murator Magazine website**

[www.muratorplus.pl](http://www.muratorplus.pl)

### **Association of Polish Architects**

[www.sarp.org.pl](http://www.sarp.org.pl)

### **Ministry of Infrastructure**

[www.mi.gov.pl](http://www.mi.gov.pl)

### **Ministry of Culture and National Heritage**

[www.mkidn.gov.pl](http://www.mkidn.gov.pl)

## **INSPIRATIONS AND FOREIGN- LANGUAGE ARTICLES**

[www.designinglibraries.org.uk](http://www.designinglibraries.org.uk)

„Better by Design”

[www.facetpublishing.co.uk](http://www.facetpublishing.co.uk)

[www.librisdesign.org](http://www.librisdesign.org)

<http://pandora.lib.hel.fi/conf02/>

### **National Institute of Building Sciences**

[www.wbdg.org/design/public\\_library.php](http://www.wbdg.org/design/public_library.php)

### **Contemporary libraries**

[www.wsp.krakow.pl/konspekt/19/nowocz.html](http://www.wsp.krakow.pl/konspekt/19/nowocz.html)

## **SITES OF SELECTED COMPANIES OFFERING LIBRARY PRODUCTS AND ACCESSORIES:**

[www.alton2.pl](http://www.alton2.pl)

[www.biblioteki.gropius.com.pl/biblioteki/](http://www.biblioteki.gropius.com.pl/biblioteki/)

[www.casmet-system.pl/](http://www.casmet-system.pl/)

[www.famar.com.pl/](http://www.famar.com.pl/)

[www.ikea.com/pl/](http://www.ikea.com/pl/)

[www.lift.com.pl/](http://www.lift.com.pl/)

[www.lustrum.com](http://www.lustrum.com)

[www.polmarco.pl/album/biblioteki/](http://www.polmarco.pl/album/biblioteki/)

[www.ramykultury.pl](http://www.ramykultury.pl)

[www.realizujemy.com/biblioteki.html](http://www.realizujemy.com/biblioteki.html)



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