

A modern and multicultural library

Municipality of Ancona Local Action Plan

November 2012

The Municipality of Ancona chose to develop a local action plan focusing on the role of the Local Library in the strengthen of the social inclusion of immigrants that live in marginalized area.

The main objective of the LAP is the development of URBAN STRATEGIES TO REDUCE IMMIGRANT'S SOCIAL AND SPATIAL EXCLUSION AND TO CHANGE THE PERCEPTION OF MARGINALIZED AREAS and the perception that Immigrants have about the existing institutions.

The LAP main objectives are: to re-define the perception of the local library, not only as a reading room but a central community hub fulfilling cultural, educational and information functions, promoting awareness of the positive value of cultural diversity and fostering cultural dialogue; to develop new services, improve the existence one in order to be open and accessible to all, with any distinctions for languages and cultural

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Foreword

The Municipality of Ancona is facing unprecedented socio-demographic changes, with an increasing number of immigrants, that will have a major impact on the whole of society. In particular, the Municipality is re-designing the mission of the Municipal Library to function as a multicultural and modern library, to provide materials and services which reflect the cultural diversity with a valuable social impact.

“Library and multiculturality” is a perfect duo representing the debate around the Library that should favour the social inclusions, be accessible and relevant to all sectors of the community and more close to the areas where immigrants live, incorporating changes in information technology, increased diversity and changing community expectations.

Thanks to the OPACT project, the Municipality of Ancona has established a Local Support Group composed by the main local immigrants organizations and associations (e.g. women immigrants, specific minorities), teacher, general representative of ONG, cultural intermediaries to launch a new bottom up debate around the new role of the local Library “L.Benincasa”. The aim is to develop library services which are culturally and linguistically sensitive to the needs of the community- and at the same time – modern for all.

In this way the Local Library will be not only a “reading centre” but a modern centre favouring the dialogue among the different cultures, expanding the understanding between the local communities and favouring the social inclusion.

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Introduction

The Municipality of Ancona is facing socio-demographic changes, mainly due to the increased number of immigrants (tripled in the last years) that lived on few, marginalized areas hosting mono/bi ethnic communities.



For that reason, the Municipality of Ancona is developing urban strategies to reduce social and spatial exclusion of immigrants and to change perception of marginalized areas. The main focus of LAP was on the municipal “L.Benincasa” Library that is currently restructuring with the aim to develop a modern and multicultural Library.

Thanks to the project, the Culture Department of the Ancona Municipality has started a dialogue

with local associations working with immigrants to discuss with them the opportunities related to the Library as new meeting place for immigrants with multicultural and modern services and multipurpose rooms.

Objectives and goals of the LAP

The Municipality of Ancona aims to develop urban strategies to reduce social and spatial exclusion of immigrants; one action aim at upgrading the local public library “L.Benincasa” and creating a new model for intercultural library services. In particular, to re-define the perception of the local Library and to boost its new role as a central community hub, fulfilling cultural, educational and information functions to support the social inclusion of immigrants. At the same time, it is also a meeting point for multiple purposes and a place for building social relations within the multicultural society as a gateway to a cultural diverse society in dialogue. The objective of the Library is to be intercultural by creating an open space for equal access to information as well as maintaining the development and satisfaction of each visitor’s cultural needs. In this sense, the Library promotes social inclusion and integration at the local level while also facilitating contact with the cultural heritage of other nations and cultural diversity.



Target groups for the LAP

- Immigrants
- Associations and organization representing immigrants
- Citizens

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Main steps, means and instruments suggested by the LAP

In order to develop a modern Library, close to all citizens, the Library should be decentralized in the areas where immigrants live

Some rooms of the local Library “L.Benincasa” is still restructuring; thus the actions in the LAP will be implemented after the new full opening and according to the financial provisions of the Municipality.

One of the main activities was started within the OPACT project implementation thanks to the setting up of LSG. Library activities should not be developed in isolation. Cooperation with relevant user groups and key

stakeholders at local, national or international level have to be encouraged in the planning and development of new services.

1. Easy access

Providing information and services to all citizens, in appropriate languages and scripts: e.g. leaflet of the Library in more languages, new opening during the week end and the afternoon, clear information on how to reach the Library, etc...;

2. Reception

The library should appear welcoming. That should offer many different opportunities in public spaces designed to accommodate needs of different target groups (immigrants, elderly, young, disabled people). It is also important the presence of multilingual staff.

3. Easy to use

Easy to use for all. The first step is find out what the population composition is: thanks to the support of LSG members, collecting statistics on the population’s ethnicity, age, gender, and existing linguistic and religious minorities in order to develop the most appropriate documentary collections and newspaper library, integrating documentation in the major languages in the city; providing free access to the major part of the library collection through open shelves.

4. Signage

It is the library signage that gives easy access. The signs have to be essential, clear and understandable and in multiple languages.

5. Young branch library

A specific target branch of the library dedicated to teens with specific tools and services (TV, internet, cameras) with multi purposes such as training, learning, free time, playing...

6. Periodicals and Newspapers

Domestic and international Newspaper and periodical available in different languages (paper and/or digital version)

7. Collection



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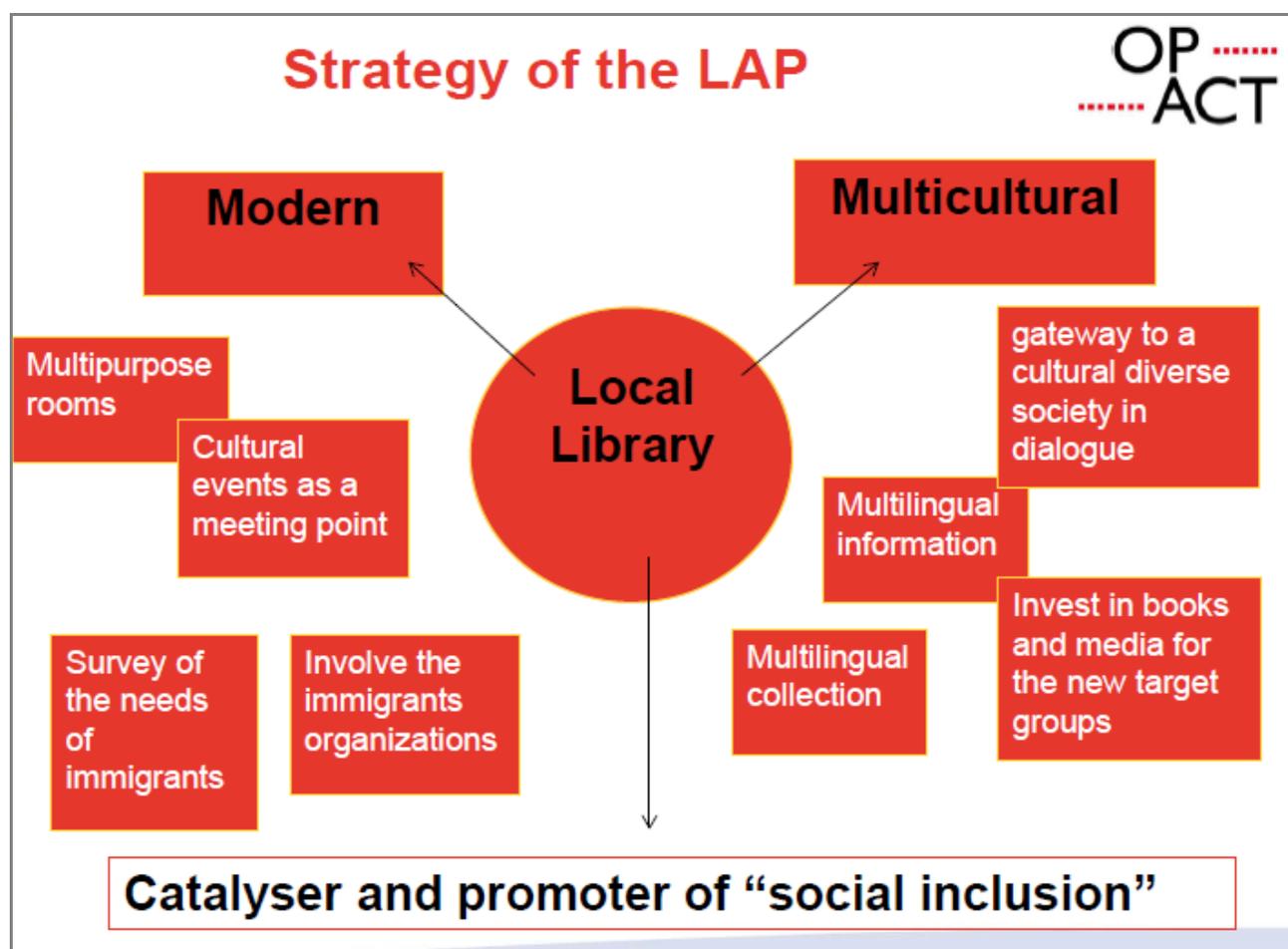
The multicultural library should develop culturally diverse and multilingual collections and services, including digital and multimedia resources;

8. Free internet access
9. Library as training and information center

In particular computer courses; languages courses; information desk

10. E-book

Decentralization of some service to the marginalized areas where the immigrants live



Possible obstacles, hindrances to implementing the LAP

- Lack of public resources
- Difficulties in the establishment cooperation with other specialized organisations
- Absence of resources to systematic monitoring of the migrants' needs

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Stakeholders involved

In order to make the strategy more efficient and to ensure the reach of the results, the Municipality has started since 2011 a discussion with the LSG addressing questions of the immigrants isolation and the role that the Library can play in this process of social inclusion

The LAP was elaborate according to the bottom up approach. Thanks to the OPACT project, the Municipality “mapped” the existing NGO, cultural organization, association representing immigrants, association representing women etc and with them start a constructive and useful dialogue. The LSG is composed by the main local immigrants organizations and associations (e.g. women immigrants, specific minorities), teacher, general representative of ONG, cultural intermediaries etc... LSG shared and transferred to local public authorities the immigrants’ needs, proposing solutions, provide some answers to specific questions (while assessing the needs of migrants) and also advise the Municipality, because they also work directly with the migrant communities.

The engagement of private and public stakeholders in the Local Supporting Group is an excellent results that will be maintain beyond the end of the project in order to work constantly together in a new bottom up approach to redesign the role of the Library in urban space and to develop new Library services.

THE DIRECT INVOLVEMENT OF THE IMMIGRANTS OR THEIR REPRESENTATIVE WAS OF OUTMOST IMPORTANCE IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE LAP

The LAP is one of the first result of the interaction of the key stakeholders that every day work with the immigrants and know their needs. The Municipality is collecting all needs in the re-definition of the Library services.

In the LAP implementation phase LSG will ensure the direct involvement of immigrants and will support the Municipality in the reaching the specific target groups

Embedding the LAP into the (overall) strategy for your city

LAP will be integrated in the 2012 - annual strategic objectives Plan of the Cultural Services – Municipality of Ancona according to financial resources availability.

