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EXEMPLIFICATION OF INTERLIBRARY COLLABORATION OF THE LIBRARY AT POPE JOHN PAUL II STATE SCHOOL OF HIGHER VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN BIAŁA PODLASKA

Key words: interlibrary collaboration, interlibrary loans, interlibrary exchange of publications.

One of the tasks of the elaborated and implemented Development Strategy for the Library at the Pope John II State School of Higher Vocational Education in Biała Podlaska (SSHVE in Biała Podlaska) is the development of various forms of collaboration with local and national libraries as well as establishing contacts with foreign libraries. It has been known for long that no library is capable to accomplish the tasks set to it by itself, and that multi-aspect areas of collaboration enable developing actions both in the field of library processes and services.

The multitude and multi-diversity of library materials, a vast and constantly developing information infrastructure and, finally, the development of a new category of readers, *i.e.* customers with highly individualized educational, scientific and informative needs, make that no library, even the largest one, has resources able to satisfy expectations of all users. Hence, the collaboration between libraries in different areas and in various configurations, involving all library processes, is becoming necessary and undisputable (Wojciechowski 2006, p. 32). Its major objective should be to improve library and information services of particular collaborating libraries. Taking all these into account, a question arises: how and, most of all, whether the current library policy of the state and the binding library legislation help in building solid grounds of collaboration?

The currently valid Act of the 27th June of 2007 on libraries refers sparsely to scientific libraries, namely *e.g.* libraries of higher school. "The whole" issue referring to that type of libraries has been addressed by the legislator practically in only one small chapter six, and likewise a number of other types of libraries, the scientific libraries have not been included by the legislator to a nation-wide library network which, by the force of the Act,

associates only public libraries (Ustawa z dn. 27.VI. 1997 r., rozdz. 10, art. 27, ust. 2 [Act of the 27th of June 1997, Ch. 10, art. 27, par. 2]).

Paragraph 5 of art. 27 of the above-mentioned Act obliges libraries included into the nation-wide network for cooperation in the area of:

1. gathering, elaborating, storing and delivering the resources,
2. preparation and dissemination of bibliographic and documentary data,
3. research activity as well as additional training and occupational improvement of librarians,
4. exchange and transfer of library materials and information.

Libraries other than the public ones may, on the organizer's motion, be incorporated into the network and then, in accordance with the Act, be obliged to collaboration (Ustawa z dn. 27.VI. 1997 r., rozdz. 10, art. 27, ust. 3 [Act of the 27th of June 1997, Ch. 10, art. 27, par. 3]). No cases of submitting such applications by universities are known whatsoever. Therefore, formally our library is still remaining outside the nation-wide network and is are not legally obliged for collaboration. Hence, the library would not break the law by not undertaking that obligation. But still, may the lack of legal regulations and executive acts exempt our library from such an obligation? The awareness of the need of cooperation, its effect on the development of services, professional responsibility and care over our true and potential users are an indicator and a driving force of activities, and there are no regulations of the Act that would change that. It is for the readers that we are extending the range of services, building and developing information space as well as helping in reaching the needed sources of information and documents. This is also facilitated by the mutual interlibrary collaboration.

Taking care of our readers, in the year 2004 the Library of the Pope John II State School of Higher Vocational Education in Biała Podlaska (SSHVE in Biała Podlaska) has signed the first agreements referring to interlibrary borrowings with the Institute of English and German Studies, University of Warsaw. In spite of the fact the accounts have been opened according to student's interests, we have not realized any order. Such a situation might have been due to the fact that the titles requested, being especially useful in writing semester or seminar works or dissertations, were provided to students by lecturers in a rapid quantitative and qualitative increase of neophilological collections. Another agreement referring to Interlibrary borrowing has been signed with the Main Library of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, and in the year 2008 with the Library of the Warsaw School of Economics.

Based on that form of cooperation, we have received 35 orders from our readers. We have executed 32 orders, submitted mainly by Ph.D. students.

Only 5 queries were submitted by students. Three orders were placed by readers for non-borrowable titles, hence they have not been executed.

Queries submitted by SSHVE Library to Library of Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin		Executed	Non-executed	Execution pending
by employees	by students	26	-	-
21	5			
Total queries: 26				

Queries submitted by SSHVE Library to Library of Warsaw School of Economics		Executed	Non-executed	Execution pending
by employees	by students	6	3	-
9	-			
Total queries: 9				

• **TOTAL**

queries from both Libraries		Executed	Non-executed	Execution pending
by employees	by students	32	3	-
30	5			
Total queries: 35				

The reasons of the minimal exploitation of that method of reaching to the sought publications include, most of all:

- its small popularity amongst readers – in spite of the fact that one of the issues discussed on a library training for students are interlibrary borrowings,
- poor skills of readers in searching for literature in computer data bases and OPAC catalogues,
- a displaying mode of borrowed publications – becoming aware of that, the readers often resign from that service,
- a lack of a uniform system of borrowings affects considerably the extension of the time of order execution – it takes weeks from a written request for opening an account for a library interested in establishing collaboration, through exchange of agreements, to the practical opening of the account in the partner library – this often discourages the readers who are usually placing their orders at the very last moment and expect their immediate execution,
- a lack of the possibility of opening a computer library account and ordering books online – not all libraries offer that possibility.

We are noticing those problems in the effective functioning of the system of interlibrary borrowings from the perspective of a library that is mainly placing orders, if at all we may say about any system and uniform rules of executing those services. In order to protect our potential future partners, to which the Library of the State School of Higher Vocational Education in Biała Podlaska will be the borrowing library, and to shorten the time of a query execution to the minimum, we have launched an “Interlibrary borrowing” bookmark at our web site. By unrolling the bookmark, a reader may automatically open an account and after receiving a password may also place orders.

In the Library of the State School of Higher Vocational Education in Biała Podlaska, an account for online ordering of books has been opened for the Library of SSHVE in Gniezno and for Maria Dąbrowska Municipal Public Library in Świebodzice.

Making a one step further and being aware that the term “interlibrary lending” is no longer enough to encompass all contents the contemporary practice has been inscribing into it (Biliński 2006, p. 34), we are planning to introduce a new service referred to as “interlending and document supply”. In order to popularize it, we have commenced preparations for an intensive informative campaign. The advertising campaign will be run on a school large screen, on notice boards, library trainings and at seminar groups.

The short presentation of our activities in the area of interlibrary loans enables drawing an explicit conclusion that the effective functioning of that system necessitates the elaboration of common, uniform rules of reciprocal lending the collections, and the usage of interfaces enabling the ordering from the level of a user. This will help, first of all, the readers in faster reaching publications they need, it will also considerably facilitate the work of librarians, and will affect the quality of services and positive image of libraries. Since it is common knowledge that the effectiveness of the system determines opinions on libraries and librarians.

Another extremely important area of interlibrary collaboration is the exchange of publications, that is highly significant for the collection of resources.

The Library of the State School of Higher Vocational Education in Biała Podlaska has been conducting such an exchange. It is based on works published by educational institutions, and the major partners are libraries of most of the State Schools of Higher Vocational Education.

With the beginning of the publishing activity of our School, we have established exchange with all contemporarily-existing vocational schools, and were successively incorporating the newly-founded ones. With some institu-

tions the cooperation is expanding, with others it is loosening or terminating. This might be due to:

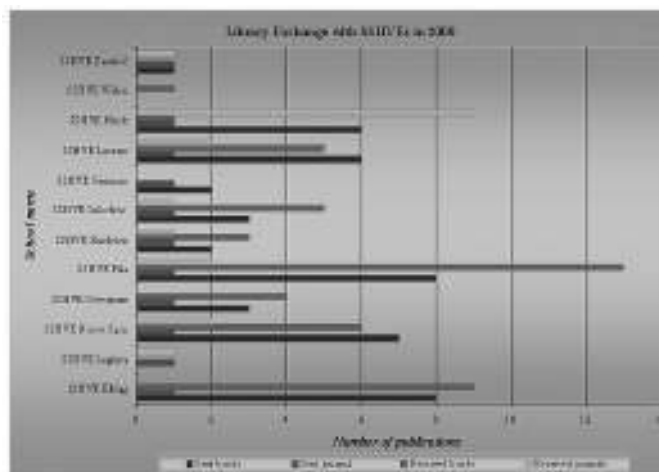
- various intensity of the publishing activity, the number of titles published or the edition size – by receiving less publications than we are sending out, we obviously feel some discomfort and perhaps we are losing the confidence in contractors, which affects the loosening of collaboration,
- internal regulations of particular schools/universities referring to the rules of exchange and possibilities of obtaining titles for exchange from the Publishing House,
- differences in educational profiles – the scope of published works restricts possibilities of exchange, we are trying to send books corresponding to educational majors, since they, above all, determine the profile of library collections,
- a lack of agreements determining common principles of exchange.

The list of partner libraries is slowly crystallizing.

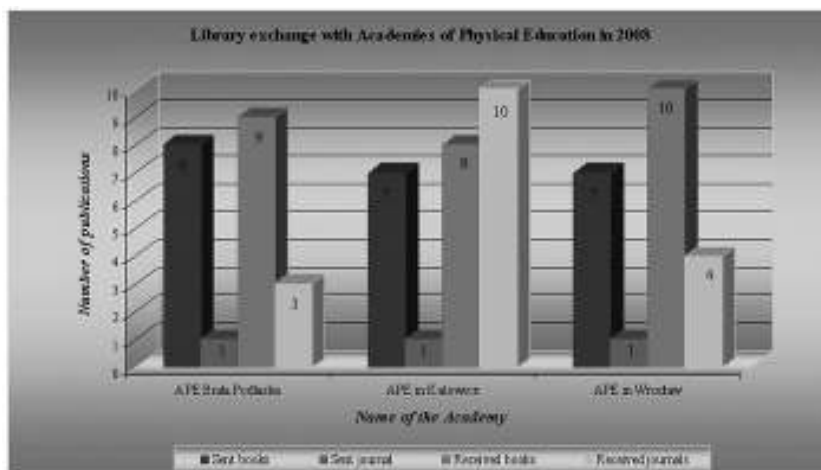
The most intensive exchange is conducted with schools having similar educational profiles. Apart from the State Schools of Higher Vocational Education, we are running the exchange with three academies of physical education and other higher schools offering education at the following majors: tourism, recreations and hospitality management. The existing circle of partner libraries determines mainly the canon of titles published by the SSHVE in Biała Podlaska.

Formal agreements, the main clause of which is the principle of barter, have been signed with six higher schools, including two SSHVEs – in Gniezno and Krosno. In the case of the other schools, the exchange is conducted based on letters inviting for exchange sent with first publications.

In the year 2008, we have received 47 copies of books and 19 issues of journals from SSHVEs, whereas we have sent in exchange 46 copies of books and 11 issues of a *Rozprawy Naukowe* periodical.



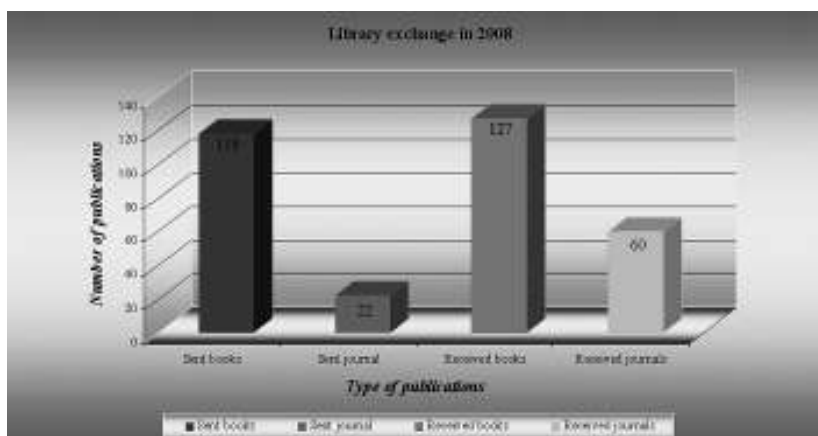
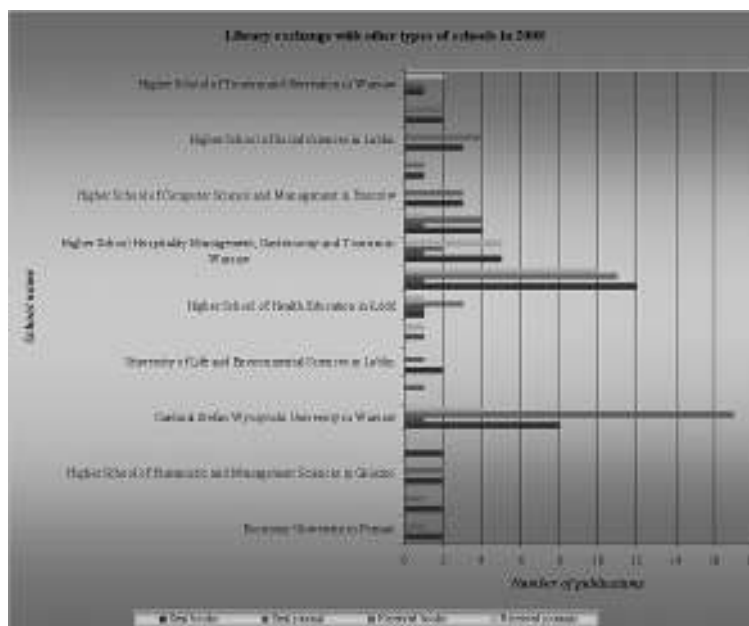
In the case of exchange conducted with academies of physical education, we have received 27 copies of books and 17 issues of journal; and we have sent them 22 copies of books and 3 issues of journals.



In the case of the exchange run with other schools, the Library at the State School of Higher Vocational Education in Biała Podlaska has received 53 copies of books and 24 issues of journal, whereas the numbers of the respective books and journals sent by the Library to those institutions accounted for 50 and 8, respectively.

In summary, the exchange of publications in the year 2008 was as follows:

- 127 copies of books and 60 issues of journal received from other schools,
- 118 copies of books and 22 issues of journal sent to the collaborating libraries from particular higher schools.



The balance of exchange is positive to our Library. It results, among other things, from the fact that the group of partner institutions encompasses schools whose publishing activities is more intensive than that of ours. A high number of publications, often with multiple copies, has been delivered by the Cardinal Stefan Wyszyński University in Warsaw, which has a significant impact on our positive balance of the exchange.

We are achieving a number of publications *ad hoc* – we are searching for interesting titles and we are inviting schools for reciprocal exchange for a specified title. Often, but not always, those transactions are finalized positively. Along with the development of publishing activity and acquisition of new titles, our activity in publication exchange will inevitably increase, which in turn will result in the establishing of a network of partner libraries satisfied from common collaboration.

The exchange of publication is not only a source of new acquisitions, but also:

- promotion of school publications in the environment of higher schools,
- information on the scientific activity of the school,
- winning a potential sale market for school publications.

Despite a lack of formally-functioning nation-wide network of scientific libraries and a unit coordinating the organizational and methodological activities of higher school libraries; and despite a lack of executive regulations to the Act on libraries (trying to avoid problems with the elaboration of regulations to art.28, that were supposed to refer, among others, to interlibrary loans and exchange, by introducing a revision the legislator simply removed that article), everyday practice shows that we are functioning well, that we are becoming more effective in organizational and methodological aspects, and that collaboration is one of the key activities of a library. It is invaluable in maintaining links and in communication in the library environment, as well as enriches and completes library's offer, thus affecting the positive perception of the library by readers.

Abstract

No library is self-efficient and capable to accomplish the tasks set to it by itself. Since none of the libraries can satisfy various needs of its users by itself, for it does not possess sufficient funds nor space for collecting all necessary materials. Thus, the collaboration of libraries in different areas and in various forms is one of the factors enabling the optimization of library activities as well as the improvement in the quality of services offered.

One of the examples of interlibrary collaboration undertaken by the Library of the Pope John Paul II State School of Higher Vocational Education in Biała Podlaska, are interlibrary loans and interlibrary exchange of publications.

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