



Facts about the Library Landscape in the State Brandenburg

- 140 full-time run public libraries
- 77 part-time or volunteer run public libraries
- 5 mobile libraries with ca. 500 stops
- ca. 40 academic libraries (University, Research-Libraries etc.)
- 440 school libraries (which usually means one room libraries)
- 220 volunteers in 210 public libraries excl. school libraries and academic libraries (German Library Statistics, DBS 2009)
- ca. 570 librarians work as employed-staff in a public library excl. school libraries and academic libraries
- ca 3 m visitors, annually in public libraries
- ca. 10 m loans, annually
- ca. 11.000 events, annually

Problem Areas

- From 2000 to the year 2007 the acquisition budget of public libraries fell by a third.
- 421 staff positions in public libraries in 2009 (440 positions in 2005).
- Since 2005 seven community libraries have had to be closed, plus a county library and a mobile library.
- 78 % of full-time public libraries collect annual fees.
- Approximately 43 percent of full-time libraries have less than 5.000 € acquisition budget, so that basic services with current media is at risk. (Quotation from the Culture Development Concept of the State Brandenburg, 2009)

The honorary board of the Regional Association Brandenburg into the German Library Association – what it does, what it advocates and what type of projects are currently running

- We are fighting for a library act law in the State Brandenburg which defines libraries as duty and not only as a voluntary task.
- We supported a project (finished last month) with 21 librarians as participants to analyze their environments, to run a needs analysis, to develop new and target group oriented services and to improve the position of the library before the decision makers.
- Right now we are working on a library development concept for public and academic libraries in our federal state.
- Currently we are renewing the master agreement between the Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports and our Library Association to achieve a better cooperation between school and community libraries.

Statutes of membership to the German Library Association instructs that only full-time run libraries could be member as institution.

Standpoint from the State Agency for Public Libraries in Brandenburg (2007): Part-time and volunteer run libraries are characterized by the fact that they offer some parts of their range of services of a public library, where full-time run libraries in terms of local needs would be uneconomical. Both types of these libraries have additional functions in the network of full-time libraries. They cover mainly the basic library services in rural areas where the way to the next full-time library is far away. End 2005 showed 28% of the Brandenburg Public Libraries from an part-time or volunteer status.

Seefeldt/Syrés: Portals to the past and to the future, 2007 (2nd revised edition), p 63: Today there are approximately 20,000 fulltime trained professionals in Germany in the general sector of libraries and similar institutions. In addition, there are 40,000 volunteers or part-time staff in smaller public libraries and school libraries supported by municipalities and churches, and who acquire their practical skills for their library and information work through specialist continuing education courses and training sessions.

Editor: Dr. Frank Seeliger
Typesetting, Layout, Production: Nicola von Amsberg
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2011, 4th of June

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Entrance to the Public Library, Fürstenberg/Havel



Evelin Adebahr,
Head Librarian,
Library Guide



Place of Event: Municipal Park, Fürstenberg/Havel

Library in Transition

„Bibliothek Fürstenberg“ – a library under part-time management supported by volunteer citizens

Since 2006, the library in Fürstenberg has been a library under part-time management supported by volunteer citizens. In 2004, the local city library was closed following a decision by the city parliament due to the financial situation. This measure was not uniformly welcomed by the public, and there were a couple of voices raised in parties and parliament requesting the library to be opened again for the public.

The city could no longer operate the library for reasons of cost, however, was willing to make an annual financial contribution if the administration of the library was transferred to a responsible body (Tourismusverein Fürstenberg). The precondition for this was that the library would not be run by full-time staff.

In autumn 2005 volunteer work in the library was advertised in the public media. In December 2005 first meetings took place, in which citizens participated who were willing to support the library. By pure coincidence one of these citizens was a retired certified librarian who was willing to assume the technical guidance of the volunteer staff and to take care of the individual transactions.

After intense cleanup work and inventory taking as well as a visual inspection of the overall stock, everything was reorganized and a classification (the library software Allegro stayed in use) and lending system (conventional) was set up. The premises, furniture and technical equipment as well as the limited financial scope required a high degree of improvisation.

On April 11, 2006 the library could be opened to the public for two days a week following the model “library under part-time management supported by volunteer citizens and run by the Tourismusverein“ and was warmly welcomed. After a trial period of several years it has now found its place in the city’s cultural life.

The initial status quo (being run by the Tourismusverein) was suspended at the beginning of 2010, when the Mittelzentrums-

gesellschaft Regio Nord took over the administration of the library. This brought a couple of technical advantages. The library received an Internet connection, and with the introduction of a uniform library software (Bibliotheca net by Bond) for the libraries in Fürstenberg, Gransee and Zehdenick these could be connected to the Bibliotheksverbund Oberhavel (www.bibliothekenverbund-oberhavel-nord.de). Users can now search in the stocks of the 3 libraries, reserve and lend books without any restriction.

At the same time the library was faced with new challenges. Inventory taken with Allegro could not be converted and had to be re-recorded. For this purpose a combined-wage position with 30 hours/week was made available for media acquisition with the support of the librarian.

Today the library has a stock of approximately 10,000 media units of all genres for children and adults. The collection was extended by the purchase of audio books and regional literature, which met with strong demand by local users as well as tourists. For reasons of cost it is not possible to purchase newspapers and magazines. The budget for purchases is very low, and the stock is continually expanded mainly by means of book donations.

Due to the demographic change in our rural region the average age of the users is 50 plus. It is regrettable that so few young readers find their way into the library. The distance from the school and its school library, which was built with the help of public funding, definitely contributes to this situation. With her limited working capacity (8 hours/week) the managing librarian does not have much scope for publicity work.

However, on the positive side it should be noted that annually approximately 8 events enrich the city’s public life. There are readings, lectures and library tours. In this sense, the library in Fürstenberg regards itself as an important link in the education chain, and the users appreciate that.

However, it should be noted critically that libraries run by volunteers cannot be a model for the future and no replacement for public full-time libraries in municipalities who have a significantly higher effectiveness in terms of providing education to the public without restrictions.

Text: Evelin Adebahr

Talking Points

The relaxing atmosphere of the idyllic location is, however, deceptive. This area is suffering from the negative impact of a huge demographic change plus the added problem of the flight of well-educated people. Nevertheless, the political leaders and decision makers of the water town decided to resurrect the library which was closed down six years ago. The library will be run by a part-time librarian and volunteers.

The library is not on its own but works with two other libraries nearby. Together, they have founded a modern and inter-municipal supported development association (named Regio-Nord) which is a large project but with a small budget with which to organize and offer a common webOPAC and an internal loan, which has been running for one year.

For this reason, the main speeches held by the mayor, the project manager of the Library Network Oberhavel North and two representatives of the German Library Association (dbv) during the programme, will be concerning and highlighting these two points, voluntary work at libraries and library networks.

The rural areas of the federal state Brandenburg in particular, with over 80 volunteer-run libraries, more than 200 counted colleagues are involved in this and more than four hundred part-time run school libraries in Brandenburg will be debated at this meeting in order to come to an important decision and a critical position. Maybe would enrich some of the cycling participants the discussion with his own statement, or to share his experiences with so called “open libraries” or “do it yourself libraries” (libraries without any staff at all).

Speakers



Seeliger



Philipp



Deifel



Schulz

Frank Seeliger, Chairman of the board of the Regional Association Brandenburg into the German Library Association and Head of the University Library in Wildau

Robert Philipp, Mayor of Fürstenberg an der Havel

Ralph Deifel, Deputy Head of Department of the Consulting Centre for Public Libraries in the Bayerische Staatsbibliothek (Bavarian State Library), member of the task force to prepare an official standpoint about libraries and volunteering

Irina Schulz, Project manager of the Library Network Oberhavel North and Chief of the public library in Gransee