

Are we ready for bibliocyclists?

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LEADERSHIP AFTER COVID- 19

Rijeka, 2021.



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10TH PAR INTERNATIONAL SCIENTIFIC-
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ARE WE READY FOR BIBLIOCYCLISTS?

JESMO LI SPREMNI ZA BIBLIOCIKLISTE?

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Abstract

Today, if we move away from the building where library is situated, we will often encounter the term green library, which involves, critical thinking about the development of knowledge and skills that are an integral part of quality community and society. Cyclotourism as a recreational and fast-growing form of tourism is based on health care, active vacation and experiences; therefore, therefore cyclists are people who are more likely to escape from everyday life, go on short but more frequent trips, to care about the environment and mostly travel in groups and share their experiences. There are bibliocycling campaigns around the world that represent cycling from library to library, while cultural and social events are organized in libraries in which cyclists participate. For the purpose of this paper, a survey questionnaire was conducted in Croatian public libraries to examine whether libraries are familiar with this type of visitor, if they have experience with them, and if they have prepared programs and whether libraries are interested in bibliocycling.

Keywords: *bibliocycling, library, cyclotourism*

JEL classification: L83, Q01

Sažetak

U današnje vrijeme često se sreće pojam zelene knjižnice, ako se odmaknemo samo od zgrade u kojoj je smještena knjižnica, ono označava i kritičko razmišljanje o razvoju znanja i vještina koje su neizostavan dio kvalitetnog života zajednice i društva. Cikloturizam kao rekreativan i brzorastući oblik turizma

zasnovan je na brizi o zdravlju, aktivnom odmoru, doživljajima i iskustvu; stoga su upravo cikloturisti ti koji teže bijegu od svakodnevnice, kraćim, ali češćim putovanjima, brinu o zaštiti okoliša te uglavnom putuju u grupama i dijele svoja iskustva. U svijetu se održavaju kampanje bibliocikliranja koje predstavljaju kretanje biciklom od knjižnice do knjižnice, a u knjižnicama su organizirana kulturno-društvena događanja na kojima biciklisti sudjeluju. Za potrebe ovog rada proveden je anketni upitnik u hrvatskim narodnim knjižnicama kojima se htjelo ispitati jesu li knjižnice upoznate s ovakvim vidom posjetitelja, imaju li iskustva s time, imaju li pripremljene programe te jesu li zainteresirane za bibliocikliranje.

Ključne riječi: bibliocikliranje, knjižnica, cikloturizam

JEL klasifikacija: L83, Q01

1 INTRODUCTION

The paper presents the perspective of the development of the relationship between libraries and cycling tourism, with special emphasis on the development of bibliocycling as a newer concept related to the tourist offer of the library. Through the primary research on a sample of 40 libraries, the offer of tourist content in libraries, the information role and the availability and readiness for the possibility of library services in Croatian libraries were examined. In the conclusion, the interpretation of the data is given, which points to the recommendations that libraries in the Republic of Croatia should adopt and apply in their work.

2 LIBRARY INFORMATION FUNCTION

The library is the information and communication center of every local community in which it exists and operates. Through its information activity, the library is a place where everyone, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, nationality, language or social status, can access information that will contribute to the improvement of their education. The library is also a great bearer of the cultural identity of the community and thus empowers the individual in his educational and social development, because we are aware of the role of reading and the development of reading habits in society. According to the UNESCO manifesto for public libraries from 1994, age groups must find material for their needs. Collections and services must, in addition to the traditional city, include all appropriate types of information carriers and modern technology. High quality and suitability to local needs and conditions are fundamental. The material must reflect current movements and social development and be a

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memory of human aspirations and imagination. Collections and services must not be subjected to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship or trade pressure.

According to Tadić (1994), the creation of libraries stems from the distant past and the need for certain recording of notes and their storage. Furthermore, the author cites the definition of libraries: *“We will define a library (German and Bücherei, Italian la biblioteca, French bibliothèque, Russian library) as a cultural and information institution which, following the generally accepted goals of society and the principles of professional work, selects, procures, processes, physically and informatively arranges and preserves and makes available library materials, and through organized services provides a variety of services to active and potential users. This definition explicitly states the tasks of each library: systematic and continuous selection of library materials; arranging and professional processing of library materials; logical and appropriate placement of library materials; preservation and protection of library materials; giving the use of library materials; providing information on library materials in one or more libraries.”*

The library is socially determined, society determines its role, it is a product of society, therefore social changes alter the needs of society and the requirements of society, and all of the above affects changes in the library, its services, products and services, because the user changes, therefore the library must keep up with its users (Vidak, 2010: 128). According to Gorman (2006), libraries are in interesting times, on the one hand endangered due to fewer and fewer resources, and on the other hand endangered by technological requirements, and in order to achieve balance it is necessary to look at the current situation and create a clear vision for the future. There are actually those who will make the library interesting, warm and inspiring, because without a good librarian there is no good library, in any sense. So for the future, as well as the present, for the library are certainly still valid Ranganathan's Five Laws of Library Science from 1931 stating that libraries serve humanity, respect all forms of knowledge transfer, intelligently use technology to increase service, protect free access to knowledge and respect the past and create the future (Kovačević, 2017).

3 LIBRARIES AND BIBLIOCYCLING

The Green Libraries portal, which collects information on green and sustainable library buildings in North America, states that a green building is one whose construction includes the following characteristics: selection and development of a sustainable location; water protection; energy efficiency; local resources, material sustainability and waste reduction; quality of the internal environment; innovation in design. Another meaning of the term “green library” refers to library programs and services aimed at the development of green literacy,

i.e. strengthening awareness and information about sustainable society and environmental protection, the development of critical thinking skills. The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) in its 2013 Statement on Libraries and Development emphasized that libraries have a natural role in providing access to information content and services that support sustainable development, and called on decision-makers to recognize them as reliable institutions for the implementation of green programs, to which they can make a significant contribution to addressing community-wide sustainability issues. This applies equally to all types of libraries, providing that public libraries have an advantage because they are publicly available spaces open to users of all ages (Dragaš, 2017).

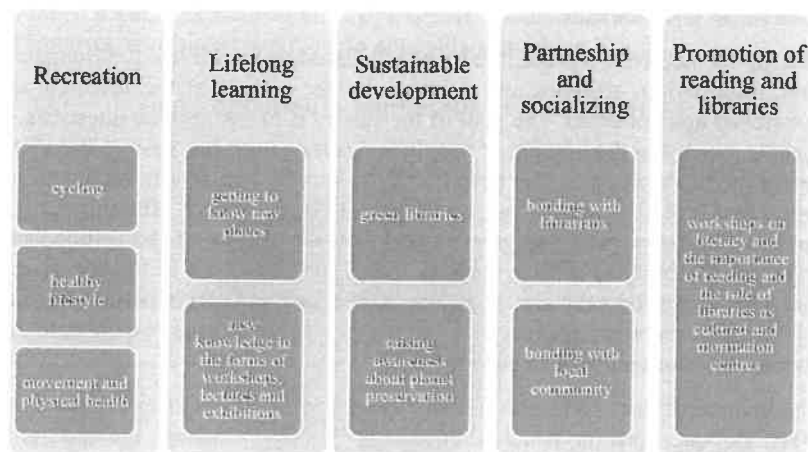
Libraries, along with other information intermediaries, are highlighted as places that have the capacity and resources to assist governments, institutions and individuals in managing their own development, or in making responsible decisions that are essential to achieving a sustainable future, by providing information and connecting stakeholders. Dragaš (2017) talks about the role of green libraries through informing about environmental protection with a healthy lifestyle. Such a healthy lifestyle affects the developed physical and intellectual abilities. Žilić (2019: 16-17) states *“An example of one such activity, which is at the same time a creative and innovative way of promoting a healthy lifestyle and reading, is cycling for libraries, i.e., bibliocycling. The international campaign Cycling for Libraries is a professional gathering and open discussion that promotes libraries, reading and international professional cooperation, and encourages movement and physical health.*

Also, according to Žilić (2019), bibliocycling is an example of non-formal learning, but on each tour, there are default daily topics that help participants direct the discussion. Every year on certain tours there are moderators who help the participants to channel the discussion, and every day of the campaign, the topic changes. Some of the topics discussed are lifelong learning, free libraries, green libraries, construction and use of library spaces, digital inclusion of society, etc. As expectations for this campaign became the organization of scheduling made it easier for many professionals who share common interests to connect with colleagues and providing opportunities for free and creative conversation with librarians from other societies, localities, regions, countries and even professional practices.⁵³ Participating in a project like bibliocycling allows you to connect with colleagues from all over the world because everyone travels together, sleeps together, lives together, help each other to solve not only professional problems but also private ones, so bibliocycling is an example of useful learning, learning about new, different solutions and practices, and networking and connecting.

4 CYCLOTURISM, CYCLOTURISTS AND BIBLIOCYCLISTS

Tourist activities within specific forms of tourism are the opposite of mass tourism which places an emphasis on passive rest. Active vacation is becoming increasingly popular and through cycling tourism includes cycling with the purpose of relaxation, a healthier lifestyle (Vuradin, Horvat and Gregorić, 2018), getting to know the local cultural and historical heritage and natural resources (Krušec, 2019). Cycling tourism can be defined as a form of tourism that implies an active vacation within which tourist sites are visited by bicycle individually or in groups accompanied by a licensed guide (Tubić, Bosnić and Blažević, 2012); while a cyclist is defined as a person who travels outside his / her place of residence for at least 24 hours for a private or organized holiday based on cycling (Israeli and Gasul, 2019). Cyclists can be characterized as groups of middle or highly educated people, mostly men (60%) of various age groups who almost always organize their trip independently (90%). They most often travel in pairs, and most (60%) change accommodations several times during the trip (Cyclotourism Development Action Plan, 2015). In addition to the above, the characteristics can be read from Figure 1, which includes the following indicators: recreation, lifelong learning, sustainable development, partnerships and socializing, and the promotion of reading and libraries.

Image 1 Bibliocyclists' features



Source: authors

Kos, Klarić and Feletar (2014) talk about the interdependence of cycling and landscape, and state that cycling creates opportunities for interconnection and freedom of movement within the landscape. Given that cyclists are environmentally aware (Makarić. 2015) and that they support sustainable development policy, their interest in green library programs is unquestionable. It is precisely the programs on sustainable society and environment that can be one of the basic motives for cyclists / bibliocyclists to travel to a certain destination, i.e., the library. The general term bibliocyclists has not been defined so far, but given the characteristics and motives of travel can be defined as tourists traveling by bicycle outside the place of residence for the purpose of new educational knowledge and spreading the same population that uses green libraries.

5 OBJECTIVE, METHODOLOGY AND RESULTS OF THE RESEARCH

5.1 Objective and methodology

The aim of this study was to determine whether libraries in the Republic of Croatia are familiar with this type of visitors, whether they have experience with bibliocyclists, whether they have prepared programs and whether they are interested in bibliocyclists. At the end of the paper, a conclusion is given on the basis of the obtained data.

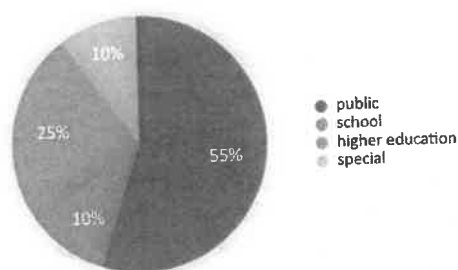
The survey method is a procedure by which, based on the survey questionnaire, data, information, attitudes and opinions on the subject of the research are researched and collected. The goal of the survey is to ask specific questions, a specific group and the number of people in a certain way. It is first necessary to determine the topic, goal and purpose of the survey then determine the target group that will give the best answers to the questions asked. The answers or insights that the survey can give depend on the sincerity of the respondents and on their ability to answer the questions. The advantages of the survey are that after completing the survey by the respondents in a short period of time, the statistics recorded as answers can be easily read, and the respondents are guaranteed anonymity when completing the survey.

The method of data collection in this research is a survey. Respondents were asked 26 questions in which they were allowed to answer the questions anonymously. The survey was conducted in February and March 2021 via the online Google form, and the topic was related to the concept of bibliocyclism in libraries in the Republic of Croatia. The research was conducted on a sample of 40 libraries, and the respondents were independent directors, i.e., heads of libraries from all over the Republic of Croatia.

5.2. Survey results

Data were collected from different types of libraries in the Republic of Croatia and from all regional areas, which was important due to the division in terms of tourism in maritime and continental Croatia, Graph 1 shows that 55% are public, then 25% higher education, and 10% % special and school library.

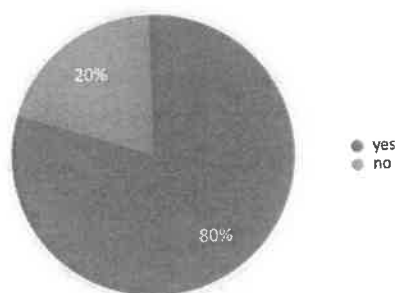
Graph 1 Type of library



Source: author's work

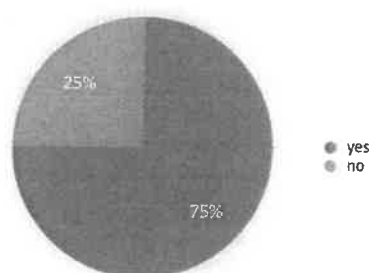
On questions related to the book fund, 25% of the surveyed libraries contain material on tourism in their fund, 75% do not (Graph 2), as for the material of interesting tourists such as fiction, city plan, schedule of cultural and tourist events (Graph 3) as many as 80 % of libraries contain such material, while 20% of libraries have stated that they do not contain anything listed.

Graph 2 Material on tourism as part of the book fund



Source: author's work

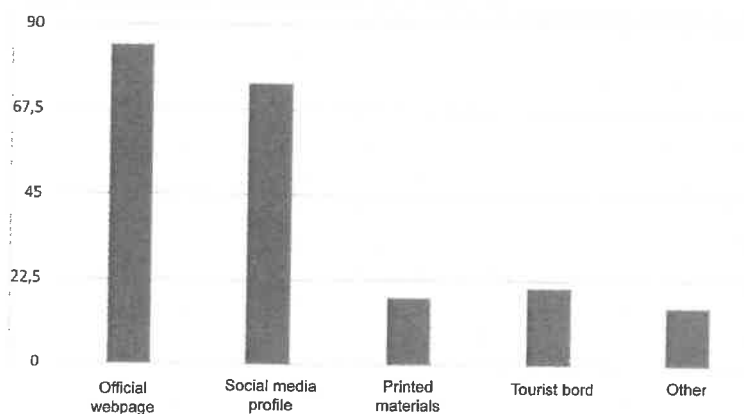
Graph 3 Book material of interest to tourists



Source: author's work

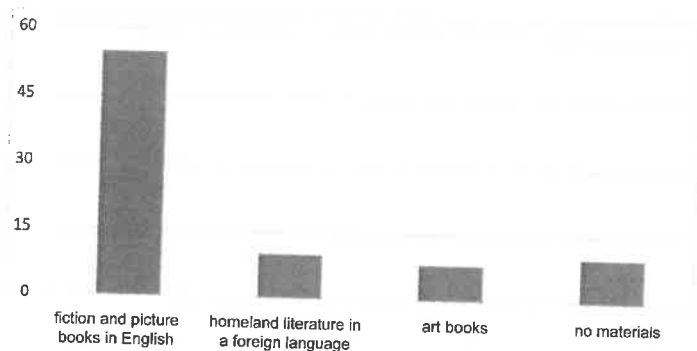
Observing the sources from which tourists can learn more about the offer of libraries, their contents and general information, the official pages of libraries proved to be the most frequently used source (84.6%), then profiles on social networks (74.4%), then printed materials (17.9%), then the Tourist Board (20.5%) and then something else (15.4%).

Graph 4 Sources of information on library supply



If we take a look at the book collection that is interesting to tourists, libraries stated that they are mostly fiction and picture books in English (55%), then literature on the homeland in one of the foreign languages (English, German, Hungarian, Italian) of 10% , books on art (8%) and finally that the library has none of the above in its collection (10%).

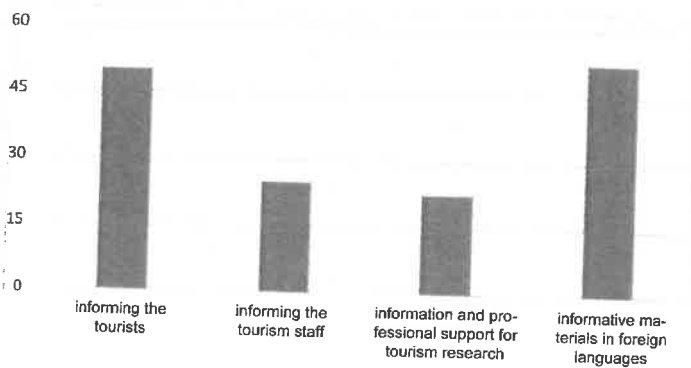
Graph 5 How to meet the needs of foreign tourists



Source: author's work

Furthermore, when asked which activities of the library they carry out in the function of tourism (Graph 6), most libraries answered that it is only in the form of information materials in foreign languages (promotional material of tourist boards), informing tourism workers (25%) and informing and providing professional support to tourism research (22.5%).

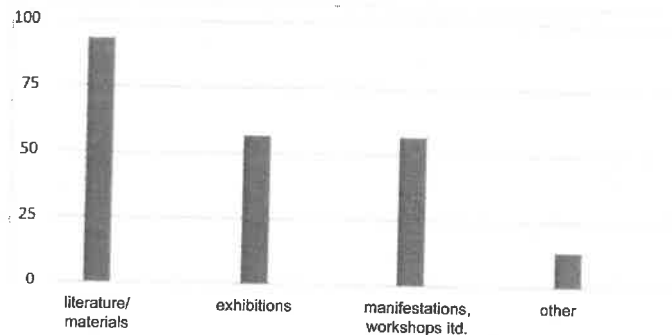
Graph 6 Library activities in the function of tourism



Source: author's work

When it comes the possibility of getting to know the local and national culture in the library, 72.5% of libraries answered that they have this possibility in their activities, while 27.5% said no. Of those 72.5% of libraries that answered in the affirmative, they stated that these opportunities were realized through literature / material (93.3%), exhibitions (56.7) and events / workshops (56.7%) and finally something the second undefined (13.3%), which can be seen from Graph 7.

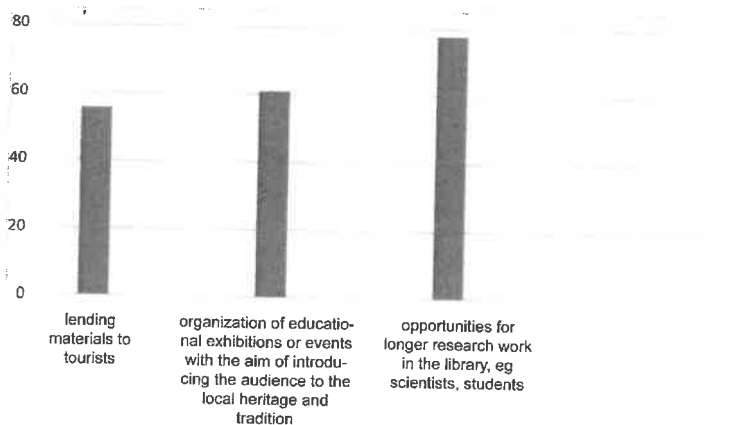
Graph 7 Possibility for tourists to get to know the local and national culture in the library



Source: author's work

When asked whether the library offers educational and cultural content for tourists, 57.5% answered that it does not offer, while 42.5% answered in the affirmative and that they do so through the possibility of longer research work in the library, eg scientists, students (77, 8%), organization of educational exhibitions or events with the aim of introducing the audience to the local heritage and tradition (61.1%) and lending materials to tourists (55.6%), as shown in Graph 8.

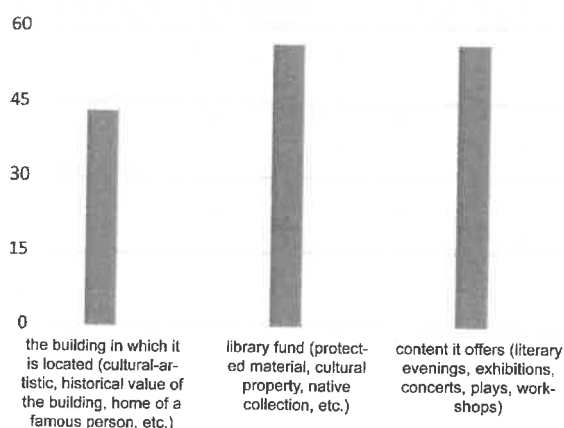
Graph 8 Cultural and educational contents for tourists in libraries



Source: author's work

When it comes to the tourist attraction of the library, 12.5% stated that the library is not attractive at all, 12.5% not very attractive, 45% moderately attractive, 22.5% very attractive, and only 7.5% extremely attractive, due to the building in which it is located (cultural-artistic, historical value of the building, home of a famous person, etc.) 43.3%, library fund (protected material, cultural property, native collection, etc.) 56.7% and the content it offers (literary evenings, exhibitions, concerts, plays, workshops) 56.7%, as shown in Graph 9.

Graph 9 Reasons for the tourist attraction of the library

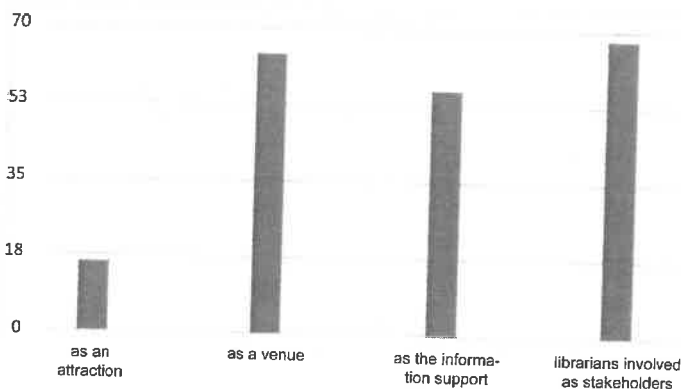


Source: author's work

Regarding the working hours of the library, as many as 76.3% stated that it is not adapted to tourists, and 23.7% answered that it is, which is then 70% as weekend work and 60% as extended working hours. When asked if the library is involved in local tourism events, 53.8% answered affirmative and 46.2% negative. Most often, the library is involved in such events by the local unit (77.3%), then the tourist office / community (68.2%) and finally some other associates (18.2%).

As for the way in which the library is involved in local tourist events (Graph 10), it is included as an attraction (16%), as a venue (64%), as information support in the preparation and organization, for data, etc. (56%) and librarians were involved as stakeholders in the event (68%).

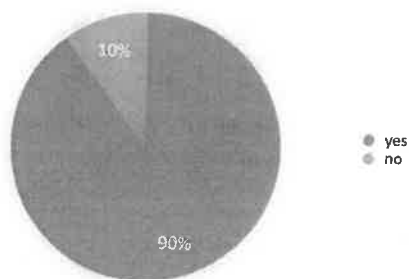
Graph 10 Involvement of the library in local tourist events



Source: author's work

The focus of this paper was primarily the notion of bibliocyclism, this term was encountered by 82.5% of libraries, while 17.5% of libraries had not heard of this term. In terms of the infrastructure needed to accommodate bibliocyclists (bicycle stands, a special bicycle storage room with lockable options, etc.), 52.5% libraries have them and 47.5% do not. 82.5% of libraries are ready to include in their program programs of interest to librarians in educational workshops, thematic exhibitions, guest appearances, etc., while 17.5% are not ready and willing to do so and 87.5% would be willing to participate in education related to cycling and bibliocycling, and 12.5% did not. The very notion of a green library was also examined and it was asked whether the library implements sustainable development programs (energy efficiency of the library building, education, etc.) to which 48.7% of libraries answered affirmative, and 51.3% did not.

Graph 11 Bibliocycling as a new opportunity to get closer to users



Source: author's work

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In conclusion, bibliocycling sees as a new opportunity (and a new program) to get closer to users, as well as to attract them to come to the library, as many as 90% of libraries, while 10% think that it is not an opportunity for something new and attractive (Graph 11).

6 CONCLUSION

The research above shows that only a quarter of the surveyed libraries contain material on tourism as part of the book fund, which is worrying given the current development of tourism in the Republic of Croatia and the development of educational institutions that include tourism as a subject of observation and study. Most of the surveyed libraries contain material interesting to tourists, which is positive because it can be read from the cooperation with other institutions and communities that supplement the city fund with their city plans, maps and information. Official pages and social networks have proven to be the most used sources of information, which speak of the adaptation of today's libraries to all generations who use various sources when searching and informing about certain materials and the like. The activities of the library in the function of tourism are more focused on informing tourists than on informing employees in tourism, which is not a complete role of libraries that need education and information to offer the whole community, because all stakeholders in tourism make the whole picture of attractive tourist destination. Most libraries offer the opportunity to get acquainted with various educational and cultural contents, most often in English or languages characteristic of the local location (e.g., minority languages or the languages of tourists who visit the place most frequently). Libraries see their appeal in the building where they are located (cultural and artistic, historical value of the building, home of celebrities, etc.), exhibitions, performances, concerts and similar events, but the problem lies in unadjusted working hours for tourists. Although most of them do not have adjusted working hours, libraries try to get involved in local tourist events both as a place of events and as stakeholders, and thus participate in the entire tourist offer. If we are talking about the tourist offer, then it is necessary to mention the term of recent times, and that is bibliocycling, which connects libraries and cycling tourism. The research shows that most libraries are familiar with the concept of bibliocycling, but only half of them have the necessary infrastructure for cyclists, which means that there is still room for improvement. Also, most libraries want to include librarianship in their programs, as well as are willing to participate in trainings in which they would learn more about the concept of cycling and bibliocycling, because today they are aware of the role of sustainable development in society and certainly see potential in attracting new user. For the purposes of further research, it will be necessary to determine how many Croatian libraries have begun to apply the characteristics of the green library and sustainable development and, consequently, bibliocyclism,

as a new form of sports and educational activities either as a stakeholder with other libraries in the area or with the tourist board of the local unit. Also, it is recommended that tourist boards as well as umbrella library associations and organizations offer workshops and educational content for librarians regarding the relatively new concept of bibliocyclism.

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