



## **MONTHLY NEWSLETTER**

**February 2010**

*This newsletter provides summarized information on the activities of the Program Management Unit under the Glob@l Libraries – Bulgaria Program in February 2010.*

### **PREPARATION OF THE CAMPAIGN FOR INVITING LIBRARIES /CHITALISHTE TO APPLY FOR THE SECOND PHASE 2010**

The last days of February saw the intense preparation for the target libraries/chitalishte application campaign under Stage 2010 of the Glob@l Libraries – Bulgaria Program, which started on 1 March and will continue until 14 April 2010. The Program Management Unit (PMU) prepared the application packages and launched a publicizing campaign about the commencement of Stage 2010. Following an analysis of the most expedient and effective approaches, it was decided that the information campaign must focus mainly on direct contact with the target libraries/chitalishte and the mayors of municipalities.

Individual letters and application documents were drafted and forwarded to the mayors of all 264 municipalities in Bulgaria. Information letters about the program, an application form and memoranda of understanding were sent to all 1227 target libraries/chitalishte throughout the country.

The partners in the program and the regional coordinators were informed with letters about the campaign start; they were furnished with the application documents package, information about the libraries and partnering organizations web portals and with a press release to be disseminated to the media by the district coordinators. Announcements were delivered to the national media about the campaign initiation. On 1 March 2010, classified ads will be published in three national dailies: *24 hours*, *Trud* and *Telegraph*.

The program web-portal at <http://glbulgaria.bg/page.php?c=64> contains detailed information about the application procedure and a downloadable application form.

### **REPORTS AND WORK PLANS**

After sending a Final Report about the planning phase of the Program (May 2008 – October 2009) to the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in January, in February, we prepared and Annual Report about the implementation phase (June – December, 2009).

The summary report is available in Bulgarian at: <http://www.glbulgaria.bg/page.php?c=52&d=145>.

In January, the 2010 Work Plan was agreed with the experts from the Working Group and the district coordinators, and further endorsed by the Program Board on 24 February. The updated version of the plan is uploaded on the web portal of the Program at: <http://glibulgaria.bg/page.php?c=43&d=126>.

### **MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING FOR STAGE 2009**

By the end of February, a total of 450 four-partite memoranda of understanding were signed between the Ministry of Culture, UNDP, the municipalities and the chitalishte/libraries for Stage 2009.

The signature of the memoranda constitutes the libraries as target beneficiaries under the Glob@l Libraries – Bulgaria Program. Three of the libraries, in the municipalities of Antonovo, Byala (Ruse District) and the Komatevo Area (Plovdiv), will sign tripartite memoranda of understanding. Only one municipality (Parvomay) did not sign a memorandum for two of the libraries in its territory.

The signature of the memoranda of understanding will entitle 453 chitalishte/libraries to support from the Program during Stage 2009.

The signed memoranda were officially handed to mayors at the General Assembly of the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria (NAMRB) on 18 February in Plovdiv. The Program Manager Trendafil Meretev extended his gratitude for the commitments undertaken by the local authorities and presented the progress of the Program to delegates of the NAMRB General Assembly. He stated that Stage 2010 will start in early March, pursuant to the approval by the Program Board, and expressed his certainty that municipalities will support applicant libraries for Stage 2010, too. On behalf of the Ministry of Culture, Mr. Shteryu Nozharov read a greeting note to the mayors from Dr. Todor Chobanov, the Deputy Minister in charge of the Program.



Mr. T. Meretev welcomes the delegates at the NAMRB General Assembly, 18 February 2010, Plovdiv



S. Kiskinov speaking with the mayor of Lesichovo Ivan Stoev.  
NAMRB General Assembly, 18 February 2010, Plovdiv



N. Georgieva speaking with the Deputy Minister of Labor and Social Policy Krasimir Popov.  
NAMRB General Assembly, 18 February 2010, Plovdiv

### **FIRST ANNUAL MEETING WITH DISTRICT COORDINATORS**

The first out of five planned working meetings for 2010, with the district coordinators was held on 2 - 4 February at the Velingrad Grand Hotel. The meeting was attended by the members of the Program Management Unit, the district coordinators, representatives of the Ministry of Culture and UNDP.

The discussions during the first day covered the Work Plan of 2010, as well as the specific tasks of district coordinators. Also, the Methodology for selection of target libraries for Stage 2010 was considered. Most of the opinions stated at the meeting were incorporated in the final version of the Application Methodology for Stage 2010.

The second day focused mainly on ICT connectivity and the equipment service maintenance for the target libraries at the local level. Field coordinators and district coordinators discussed and agreed the ICT packages of the 128 libraries, which had stated different ICT package parameters in the 2008 questionnaire and the 2009 Application Form.

A heated debate unfolded over the training component in the program and the training organization issues pertaining to the 2010 Pilot Phase.

The Glob@l Libraries – Bulgaria Program offers a large-scale multiannual form of continuous training for librarians. The most effective solutions are sought, so as to ensure process sustainability. A number of issues were handled by the participants in group discussions: what approach to apply for setting up the various groups of trainees? How must the training cycle be organized, how long should the training day last, how to structure the topics within the various training components? What conditions must a training center offer in order to ensure quality training? What type and which organizations would be the most suitable partners for libraries to conduct the trainings?

The ideas generated by each group were summarized at the end of the meeting: some of them will be applied during the pilot phase of the training component in 2010.

The district coordinators were also familiarized with the Communication and Advocacy Plan for 2010. The issue of setting up a Public Council was debated in groups. Interesting ideas were formulated about the composition, the functions and the manner of work of the Public Council.

The meeting attendees were very inspired about the idea of special teamwork games and demonstrated involvement, creativeness and enthusiasm. However, the Working Group got the overall impression that all people committed to the implementation of the Glob@l Libraries – Bulgaria Program, the PMU, the program partners and the district coordinators belong to the same team and support one cause.



During the working sessions



Teamwork games

### **THE FIRST MEETING OF THE PROGRAM BOARD FOR 2010**

The Program Board of the Glob@l Libraries – Bulgaria Program meets several times a year in order to discuss program documents and decisions and give their implementation the green light. The meetings are attended by the Minister (Deputy Minister) of Culture, the UNDP Resident Representative in Bulgaria and by representatives of the other partnering organizations: the Ministry of Transport, Information Technology and Communications, the Bulgarian Library Association and the National Association of Municipalities in the Republic of Bulgaria.

At the first meeting of 2010, which was held on 24 February 2010 at the Ministry of Culture, the 2009 June-December Report and the updated 2010 Work Plan were approved.

The Program Board approved the Methodology for the selection of target libraries in Stage 2010 <http://glbulgaria.bg/page.php?c=64>, as well as the ICT packages for target libraries in Stage 2009. The implementation concept for the training component of the 2010 Pilot Phase was considered and approved.

The approval of the application documents actually launched Stage 2010 of the Glob@l Libraries – Bulgaria Program.

### **TRAINING**

8<sup>th</sup> of February was the submission deadline for documents by applicant trainers for the 2010 Pilot Phase.

A total of 550 applications were received from the entire country for the four thematic areas of the training.

The training experts from the PMU and the partnering organizations are reviewing carefully every CV and motivation letter, so as to make a preliminary selection of the most suitable applicants and come up with short-listing solutions in each thematic area. The interviews are planned to begin after 15 March 2010.

Four meetings were held in February with the key trainers for the 4 thematic areas: Information and Communication Technologies; Library Management; Library Services; Soft Skills. The trainers presented some of the teaching aids intended for the training program.

With regard to the specialized training needs of the regional libraries teams, a questionnaire was compiled with the possible training topics for 2010. The two topics rated highest by the largest share of the respondents will be included in the training courses for regional library teams in 2010.

With the support of Glob@l Libraries – Bulgaria Program, 27 regional libraries received a one-year subscription to access 6 databases of the CIELA legal information system: Ciela Regulations, Ciela Procedures, Ciela Euro, Ciela Info, Ciela InfoMedia and Ciela Education. The subscription provides an opportunity for two password-enabled multiple logins, which are executable from all workstations in the library.

The subscription will allow each regional library to offer free access to CIELA and consult citizens about searches and use of the information.

The CIELA databases will be used for the training under the Glob@l Libraries – Bulgaria Program in the thematic area of Contemporary Library Services.

The concept for the pilot phase of the training program for 2010 was discussed by the Working Group on 12 February. The Program Board approved the concept proposal at a meeting of 24 February.

### **ICT EQUIPMENT**

The ICT packages for the target libraries (number and type of PCs and periphery devices) were agreed with the libraries themselves, the district coordinators and the experts from the Working Group, whereas the final list was approved at the meeting of the Program Board on 24 February.

On 15 February, a competition was launched for recruiting regional IT professionals. The application deadline is 1 March.

The regional IT specialists will be in charge for checking the ICT readiness of target libraries in the respective district, before the equipment is supplied and installed. The PMU will draw a shortlist of the most suitable applicants and invite them for an interview. The selection of regional IT specialists will be finalized at the end of March.

In February, the commission made up of PMU members and UNDP representatives continued its work for assessing the applications of ICT equipment vendors to target libraries. The full set of documents for all filed applications was sent to the UNDP Headquarters in New York. Following the review and approval procedure, the PMU will address a call for offers to the companies selected at the preliminary stage.

### **ADVOCACY AND COMMUNICATIONS**

In addition to the Communication and Advocacy Plan for 2010, the Working Group, at its meeting of 12 February, 2010, approved a 2010 Group Communications Plan for the Program Management Unit and the local partners in the country. The Plan covers the information transfer methods between the PMU, the district coordinators, municipalities and libraries.

As a continuation on the discussion about the composition of the Public Council, which began at the meeting with district coordinators in Velingrad, on 25 February, the PMU conducted a brainstorming session to single out specific persons, who would commit to the cause. The composition of the Public Council will be discussed and approved in March, whereby preliminary meetings of nominees will be held. The Public Council must become operational in the summer of this year.

In February, 3000 leaflets and 3000 posters of the Program were printed. The first leaflets were disseminated among mayors, the chairpersons of municipal councils, and municipal counselors and media representatives at the NAMRB General Assembly on 18 February, 2010, in Plovdiv. District coordinators will also receive leaflets and posters for identifying the 2009 target libraries and for diffusion among library visitors.



The first poster of the Program

**PROJECT PREPARATION COUNSELING FOR THE PLIP PROGRAM (Public Library Innovation Program)**

28<sup>th</sup> of February was the deadline to file project proposals for the international innovative library services contest, <http://www.glbulgaria.bg/page.php?c=48&d=64>.

The PMU assisted applicant libraries with counseling for supporting their project concepts, the choice of partners, clear English rendering of their proposals, appropriate usage of specialized librarian terminology, financial estimates for the planned activities, etc.

The information at the PMU is about 10 projects submitted from Bulgaria in total. The best innovative ideas will be awarded a grant of USD 30 000. The winning libraries will be announced in April 2010.

**In March we expect to accomplish the following:**

- Launch the application process for chitalishte/libraries for Stage 2010;
- Select trainers for the pilot phase of 2010;
- Prepare training aids (manuals, a set of presentations, texts and exercises) for the four thematic areas of the training program;
- Develop standards for the training centers, which would be considered by the Working Group;
- To prepare and disseminate a questionnaire for checking the capacity of the 27 regional libraries and the 20 chitalishte centers to conduct a training on ICT package 2;
- To draw a Work Plan for training PMU members;
- To select regional IT specialists;
- To send a call for offers to the ICT vendor companies approved at the pre-qualification stage;
- To specify the list of software products (Microsoft and open source) intended for target libraries;
- The PMU and the Bulgarian Library Association will discuss potential participation in the IFLA Global Congress (the International Federation of Library Associations) in Göteborg, Sweden, in August, 2010;
- The PMU and the Bulgarian Library Association will prepare a joint application under the program for Building Strong Library Associations launched by the Glob@l Libraries Initiative of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and IFLA.