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INITIATIVES OF THE POLISH LIBRARIANS' ASSOCIATION FOR LIBRARIES AND READERS IN THE FIRST PHASE OF THE PANDEMIC



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in the use of modern information and communication tools. She is a co-author of several studies, including *Librarian, make friends with an autistic person* (Warsaw, 2016) and *Chronicles of the Polish Librarians Association in 2013-2018* (Warsaw, 2018).

KEYWORDS: Librarians. Library. COVID-19, Pandemic. Lockdown. Online training. Virtual services.

ABSTRACT: Thesis / Purpose of the article – The aim of the article is to present the activities undertaken by the Polish Librarians' Association in the first period of the pandemic, which supported librarians in two areas: maintaining communication with readers and self-improvement and improving competences in the field of remote reader service. **Research methods** – The article uses the method of

analyzing available sources, i.e., reports presenting activities undertaken by the SBP and libraries until the end of June 2020, including: reports, reports posted on websites, in social media, articles in industry magazines, surveys of training preferences of librarians and online training evaluation. **Results / conclusions** – Showed the effects of the pandemic with regard to the services offered by libraries, the impact of SBP on increasing the dissemination of digital resources and electronic services, as well as increasing the competence of librarians in the use of tools to work with the reader in the virtual space, through online training.

INTRODUCTION

The corona virus pandemic that began in Poland in March this year, continues to be a difficult experience that changes a lot in every person's life. It influences all areas of society's functioning, including the book sector – writers, publishing houses, bookstores, libraries, and readers. On the one hand, it brought about a crisis in the book industry, whereby both publishers, bookstores and wholesalers recorded a significant drop in turnover resulting from the introduced restrictions (closure of libraries, stationary bookshops) and ban on the organization of events (cancellation of fairs), a drastic reduction in publishing production. High costs were also incurred by the writers who were canceled or postponed to the fall of literary meetings "live".

On the other hand, the coronavirus has mobilized a lot of human energy in the promotion of books and reading. UNESCO has issued a message encouraging in a period of isolation to strengthen the bonds between people, stimulate our minds and creativity, and libraries to express a love of reading that symbolizes the power of books (UNESCO, 2020). Associations supporting librarians have published information services containing guidelines, recommendations, and collections of resources and tools to help libraries to carry out information work and provide services during a pandemic (ALA, 2020; CILIP, 2020; IFLA, 2020).

In the first period of the pandemic, the libraries' direct contact with the user ceased.

From March to May, librarians working remotely followed the announcements published by the Ministry of Culture and the National Heritage, the National Library, followed the restrictions while waiting for the green light for library activities. At that time, they were organizing book collections, rebuilding the library space, marking out corridors for the flow of books to be returned, places for their quarantine, etc. Virtual space, rich digital resources, and social networking sites remained.

Despite the closure of libraries in Poland (from March 12 this year), creative librarians did not leave their readers, on the contrary – the interactions intensified, and the unusual situation increased the will and desire to act. Meeting the expectations of their users, who, in isolation, were

looking for other, mainly online, forms of activity, librarians quickly developed a new offer of services for them, using only the Internet and social media. They proposed, among others online reading of books tailored to the needs of readers of different ages, discussions about them during meetings with authors on the web, they posted attractive games, quizzes, art classes for children using the content of books on social media, launched e-subscriptions to libraries and borrowing e-books on tablets, organized a virtual tour of libraries. Reports were created from thousands of various activities, which were presented on the pages of libraries and in social media (Facebook, Twitter).

The Polish Librarians' Association quickly joined in to activate librarians and readers during the pandemic. President of the SBP, Joanna Pasztaleniec-Jarzyńska, on March 18 of this year, made an appeal to librarians from all types of libraries to maintain contact with readers by undertaking remotely carried out activities, while maintaining epidemic safety. She encouraged the use of new technologies and internet tools, especially activity in social media, as well as self-education and professional development. She announced that SBP will inspire and support librarians in meeting new challenges and disseminate information about the most interesting events (Pasztaleniec-Jarzyńska, 2020). For this purpose, in the first phase of the pandemic covering the period March-June 2020, the Polish Librarians Association:

1. Launched the nationwide campaign #NieZostawiamCzytelnika (#Idon'tLeavetheReader) (SBP 2020a),
2. Developed a wide range of online training courses for librarians, some of which were free (SBP 2020b),
3. Transferred to the virtual space the flagship program for the promotion of libraries and reading – Library Week (SBP 2020c),
4. Used all available communication channels to broadly promote activities undertaken by libraries, including mainly the nationwide library website www.sbp.pl, social media, scientific and industry magazines, and local structures of the SBP.

#IDON'TLEAVETHEREADER

The action initiated by SBP was aimed at promoting online access to culture on the Internet and in social media. Writers, bloggers, journalists joined the action, incl. Jacek Dehnel, Robert Małecki, Rafał Hetman, Mariusz Czubaj, Magdalena Witkiewicz, Olga Gitkiewicz, Justyna Sobolewska. During organized webinars, they shared with librarians their knowledge of how to effectively and safely communicate with readers, prepare remotely attractive and activating cultural events for them. Libraries of all kinds gradually joined the action. The most interesting initiatives of libra-

ries were systematically published on the www.sbp.pl website and on the SBP Facebook profile.

In the period March-April 2020, the Office of the Main Board of SBP, using the existing ClickMeeting platform, organized the following webinars, which were attended by over 200 librarians in total:

1. *Social media for libraries* (March 20), a well-known blogger Rafał Hetman, during a live broadcast on Facebook, SBP shared with librarians (about 40 people) his experience in running FB, Instagram, YouTube channel, using the newsletter. In addition, 773 people heard the blogger's presentation on Facebook on the promotion of the library in social media, and the recording was viewed 5,800 times.
2. *Coffee brainstorming* (March 19 and 23); The webinar was conducted by Beata Gamrowska, graphic designer, copywriter and illustrator. A total of 104 librarians participated in the two meetings. Together with the lecturer, they discussed the ways of communicating with readers using social media, looked for inspiration and shared ideas for interesting activities. There were about 1.5 thousand views.
3. *The real story of Anaruka. The results of the literary investigation* (April 1); Dr. Agata Lubowicka from the University of Gdańsk discussed the results of research on revealing the forgotten context of the 1937 creation of the book "Anaruk, a boy from Greenland" by Czesław Centkiewicz (once belonging to the school reading canon) and the discovery of the boy's identity from the cover of the publication, and presented a panorama history and culture of Greenland in the first decades of the 20th century. 30 people participated in the meeting.
4. *Autism-friendly library. A few starting tips* (April 2); Aleksandra Sztajerwald from the Culture Without Barriers Foundation suggested what to do to make the library autistic-friendly, as well as how to meet the obligations arising from the Act on the digital accessibility of websites and mobile applications of public entities and the Act on ensuring accessibility to people with special needs. 48 librarians participated in the online meeting.

The series of literary meetings "The Author in the Evening Time", attended by over 400 people, was very popular. The guests were: Robert Małeck (April 27), Jakub Szamałek (May 4), Katarzyna Kobylarczyk – laureate of the 11th edition of the Ryszard Kapuściński Prize (May 11), Joanna Gierak-Onoszko (May 18), Marta Matyszczak (May 25), Olga Gitkiewicz (May 30), Monika Sznajderman (June 15). Recordings of meetings conducted by, among others journalists from Polish Radio were made available on the YouTube channel of SBP; 1,232 views were recorded <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCroRMIYIK5tz3ghYjsnDe7w/videos>

Through social media, the SBP also informed about other online literary meetings carried out by entities supporting the #NieZostawiamCzytelni-

ka campaign, including Union of Literature (an association of writers), the authors and publishers <http://www.sbp.pl/arttykul/?cid=22370&prev=260>

The address of the editorial office of the SBP portal received reports from events organized by libraries that joined the campaign. It is impossible to discuss all of them, they are available, among others at http://www.sbp.pl/o_bibliotekach/wydarzenia/niezostawiamczytelnika and on the library websites. There were also many articles on this subject in trade journals published by SBP: "Poradnik Bibliotekarza", "Bibliotekarz" and others. Below are examples of selected undertakings of the participants of the SBP campaign – smaller and larger public libraries:

Public Library of the Capital City of Warsaw, the Main Library of the Mazowieckie Voivodeship, as part of the series "Skarby na Koszykowej", presented the most valuable rare editions on its website, incl. selected works of W. Shakespeare, J. Milton, Japanese poetry, or books lost during the war. Several dozen recordings of literary meetings and debates that took place as part of the "Talks about books" and "Books not only for children" and "Delights of discussing art" series are available on the YouTube channel.

The Municipal Public Library in Opole has posted an online library guide on its Facebook page with suggestions for creative and cultural spending of time at home. An interactive smartphone game has been prepared for young people – *Find your destiny* encouraging them to solve puzzles about fantasy literature (Klichowska; Żółtowska; Kampa 2020).

The Public Library in the Praga Południe District of the Capital City Warsaw has launched the #czytamwdomu initiative for which: it has posted on its website sets of digital sources providing literature, as well as games, plays and crosswords using the book theme; conducted online cultural and language classes for seniors; published radio plays for children on FB; recorded and shared a video (kamishibai theater) about the genesis of St. George (April 23) and the tradition of giving a book and a rose to loved ones on that day; realized several virtual meetings with authors of children's literature and travelers; invited readers to the online exhibition "Women for Women" prepared in cooperation with the gallery "House with Art", and engaged the inhabitants of Warsaw to develop an electronic cookbook "A recipe for a book, Readers cook" (Alicka, Płocka, Wąsowska 2020).

Public Library in the Bemowo District of the Capital City of Warsaw introduced e-registration to the library via a mobile phone; it converted audiobooks from CDs to mp3 format, which enabled their remote sharing (approx. 400 e-audiobook titles and approx. 700 e-books). On the library's YouTube channel, educational videos with workshops for children, adolescents and adults were posted, radio plays (in English), stories about customs, the passions of librarians were shared, films were recommended

to watch, legends and fairy tales were read to children, literary quizzes for young people were prepared (Gołębiowska, 2020).

The Provincial and Municipal Public Library in Gdańsk launched the "Library phone for talks" – every day from Monday to Friday, librarians talked by phone for 3 hours to the elderly about literature and culture, and were also trustees of their problems, thus helping to survive the isolation at home. As they admit themselves, by listening carefully to seniors, they got to know their preferences better and recommended appropriate books that are a source of optimism, alleviate pain and sadness, and inspire them to act. In this way, "on a living organism" they conducted bibliotherapy (Dettlaff-Lubiejewska, 2020).

The Municipal Public Library and the Municipal and Communal Center of Sport and Culture in Choroszcz carried out the action "Choroszcz, engrossed in reading, or three questions to ..." addressed to the inhabitants of the community. Their reading preferences and expectations during the pandemic were examined online, and then program proposals were prepared (including small theater forms using Kamishibai, literary competitions), which were presented on regional television as part of the "Home Culture" series. In turn, the Public Library of the City and Commune in Barcin, winner of this year's SBP Master of Reading Promotion competition, offered its readers a weekly program of activity in social media, which included, among others, online meetings with the history of the area, virtual walks around libraries and museums, information about e-books and audiobooks (access to Legimi, Ibuk Libra, EmpikGo), as well as something lighter – memes, jokes, anecdotes (Chruścińska, 2020).

Public Pedagogical Library – Alfonsa Parczewski's Pedagogical Library in Kalisz focused her activity on supporting distance learning in schools and universities. ICT tools supporting education and reading were collected and published on the library website and on Facebook, indicating legal online sources, including free e-books. An absolute novelty on a national scale, which was created during the pandemic, was the educational project on Facebook "Chopin for Intermediate Level", aimed at popularizing knowledge about the composer and preparing recipients to participate in the 18th International Piano Competition. Fryderyk Chopin (<https://www.kp.kalisz.pl/html/chopin.html>).

The Pomeranian Library in Szczecin, like many other libraries, decided to send e-book access codes to e-book readers via LEGIMI (mainly fiction), IBUK Libra (scientific publications), also encouraged to use the collections of the West Pomeranian Digital Library. With the help of social media, she organized a series of video meetings with people of culture, organized literary games for children and youth, recorded and made available short films introducing readers to interesting library rooms (studios), usually inaccessible to them (Liskowacki, 2020).

The City Library in Łódź offered its readers remote language learning. For a period of 3 months (April-June), test access to the Rosetta Stone platform obtained from EBSCO was launched, which includes 30 languages. The most popular courses were language skills at B1 level.

An interesting initiative came from the Provincial Public Library in Łódź, which prepared two games for smartphones combining knowledge with fun: *Literary surfing* – a virtual walk around Łódź and discovering its literary secrets together with outstanding writers and poets related to the Łódź region, including Maria Konopnicka, Julian Tuwim, Władysław Reymont. The second game – *Around the world with a book* invites you on a journey with the bookworm. Details of the games were available on the library's website. Adult residents of the Łódź Province were invited by the library to participate in the project *Inhabitants of the Łódź Region during the pandemic* and to describe their experiences and reflections related to life during the coronavirus epidemic. Collected memories will be published in electronic form in 2021. A number of online exhibitions were also organized to present the collections held, incl. Polish comics, travel and adventure literature, lists of writers and artists in the Special Collections Department. On the library's Facebook page, readers were engaged to solve film quizzes, read encrypted literary entries, and participate in a musical knowledge game show (Szymczak-Rychez; Zwierzyńska; Baranowska, 2020).

Editors of scientific journals published by SBP also joined the campaign. "Library Review", "Scientific Information Issues. Information Studies", which undertook work on the preparation of special issues devoted to the situation of libraries and the book market in times of crisis and the role that information science can play in controlling and managing them.

Wydawnictwo Naukowe i Edukacyjne SBP made available in March this year. The Digital Archive <http://ac.sbp.pl/> containing about 280 publications useful in the professional work of librarians and nearly 1800 issues of library magazines. The editors of SBP trade journals – "Poradnik Bibliotekarza" and "Bibliotekarz" were also encouraged to reach for valuable and practical texts available in the Archives, which can be used for remote classes with readers.

The campaign #I don't Leave the Reader enjoyed great interest and support from Internet users. During the lockdown period, the number of unique users of the sbp.pl portal more than doubled and exceeded 40,000. The reach of all posts on SBP's Facebook page reached 800,000 recipients per month, and the posts with the campaign reached even 200,000 recipients at a time. The campaign was reported by nationwide media, incl. TVN, Polish Radio, Radio Plus, Gazeta Wyborcza. Local structures of the Association actively participated in the promotion through social media and websites of libraries all over the country.

REMOTE LEARNING

During the lockdown period, librarians' interest in online education increased. Answering numerous questions on this matter to SBP, which has experience in conducting this type of education, the Association quickly developed a distance learning offer that was to raise the professional qualifications of librarians and help them in communication with readers, taking on new challenges and providing online services. library. The offer included synchronous training (participants and the trainer are in direct contact at a specified time) and asynchronous (participants learn at any time using the training materials provided to them). When starting its development, the following were taken into account:

- transfer to the virtual environment of the traditional workshops planned by the SBP to be implemented in 2020,
- results of a survey conducted on the sbp.pl portal at the end of 2019, on a sample of 156 librarians. The research showed that a large group of librarians (1/3 of the respondents) had not used e-learning training so far and had no knowledge of how to use this type of teaching in everyday librarian practice. However, it favored them mainly for economic reasons (lower participation costs) and the possibility to learn at any time. At the same time, the respondents formulated their expectations regarding the subject of e-learning training that they would be interested in. The vast majority (about 70% of responses) concerned information and communication technologies, modern forms of working with the reader, and promotion of the library in social media. Coding and programming, GDPR, creating mobile applications, websites, bibliotherapy, applying copyright law, simple programs for creating advertising materials were also mentioned.

For the purposes of remote education, SBP purchased access to the ClickMeeting educational platform, on which synchronous training was held, and used the existing Moodle platform for asynchronous training. Contacts were established with experienced online training trainers, including academic lecturers, bloggers, graphic designers, librarians, therapists, and personal data protection specialists. It was agreed that asynchronous trainings will last 2 hours and may be attended by up to 25 people, and the trainers will also provide consultations. A special website was launched <http://www.szkolniadlabibliotekarzy.sbp.pl> presenting the training offer, which has been and is still updated on an ongoing basis. A new newsletter of the Association has been developed, devoted to remote education, which is systematically sent (1-2 times a month) to approximately 2,500 recipients. SBP members from local structures got involved in reaching the largest possible number of librarians from all types of libraries with the training offer, publishing it on websites and in social media of parent libraries.

The online training offer, carried out in the period March-June 2020, in the form of 19 meetings on the ClickMeeting platform, covered the following topics (Grzecznowska; Dargiel-Kowalska, 2020):

Conducting webinars and online training; participants learned about online tools for creating multimedia projects, programs supporting the visualization of library activities, projects of interactive tasks involving readers.

Webinar – a way to interact with the reader; the methods of planning and implementing webinars and building positive relations with users using this tool were discussed. Examples of virtual meetings with authors, literary games and creative activities promoting reading were presented.

Unconventional methods of working in the library; participants were introduced to gamification, book sprints, inspiration slots and other modern tools that can be used in the library to make it an attractive place.

ICT inspirations in promoting library activities; presented various information and communication techniques enabling the development of interactive presentations, e.g. selected books, creating unconventional link magazines, infographics, quizzes, and video files using the genial.ly web tool.

Creating films for the Internet; the specifics of creating and publishing videos in media such as You Tube, Facebook, Instagram were discussed. Basic techniques of filming, the necessary equipment and simple tools for film editing are presented.

Less is more, or how to interest the recipient in social media; participants learned the principles of creating creative content in social media, the basics of copywriting, constructing transparent messages that stimulate the interests of recipients, using specific graphics.

Library in changing social media; training on the use of tools in libraries such as: Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Tumblr (an application that allows you to create blogs), newsletter and YouTube channel.

Podcast – how to create an interesting podcast from scratch?; discussion of a new, simple tool for promoting library activities, which is a type of Internet broadcast that can be played anywhere and anytime.

Book and reader – (not) everyday duo; participants learned about the forms of working with a book, useful during classes with readers, including word games and ideas to encourage reading and enabling them to test their knowledge about the book, book characters, authors, etc.

Implementation of personal data protection in the library in accordance with the provisions of the GDPR, taking into account the latest legislative changes, guidelines and good practices; during the training, the experience of applying the GDPR in libraries to date was summarized, the most common errors in the documentation and procedures carried out were discussed, templates of documents in the field of personal data protection were made available.

Preparation of libraries for control and external audit; participants found out, inter alia, what checks and external audits can be carried out in libraries, how to prepare for them, how to carry out management control and ensure the protection of personal data.

In total, in the above-mentioned training courses, about 300 librarians, mainly (about 85%) from public libraries, raised their professional qualifications. The training offer was very well received by them, which was confirmed by the results of the evaluation carried out immediately after each meeting with the help of a quality assessment questionnaire. It shows that over 80% of participants were satisfied with the quality of the trainings, approx. 70% found the information obtained very useful, and nearly 90% found it worth recommending the trainings to others.

The Polish Librarians Association also obtained funding from the operational programs of the Minister of Culture and National Heritage for the implementation of 3 free training cycles, which involved not only acquiring new skills by 140 librarians, but also checking them in practice, which was the condition for obtaining a certificate by the participants:

– *Library accessibility advocates;* The aim of the project, co-financed by the *Partnership for Books* program, is to prepare librarians to act as advocates for accessibility for people with disabilities, in particular those with autism. A group of 20 librarians from all over the country (from public and school libraries), for whom in May-June this year specialists from the Culture Without Barriers Foundation (project partner) conducted 8 online workshops. The training program is divided into three thematic modules: Disability in a nutshell; Idea for partnership; Idea creator. Participants learned about the obligations resulting from the Accessibility Act, the needs of people with various disabilities, tools facilitating communication with them and the preparation of an educational and cultural offer. In the second stage of the project (which lasts until November 30 of this year), training participants develop and organize events that activate people with disabilities in their libraries. Their reports will be available on the dedicated website <http://autyzm.sbp.pl/>

– *Passion of reading – asynchronous series of free e-learning trainings for librarians from public libraries.* 3 courses for 75 librarians were prepared: *Reading websites and blogs; Electronic publications; Interview – it's simple.* People from libraries for children and teenagers were preferred to qualify the participants. Participation in the project enabled them to acquire new skills allowing them to conduct attractive activities encouraging reading and discussion about the readings. The teaching materials provided made it possible to learn about the tools for preparing simple websites, blogs, creating e-publications, rules for conducting and registering interviews, programs for recording and modifying audio files.

The trainings were carried out in the period July-September 2020, and until November 30, participants conduct classes in the local environment. Their works are available on the project website <http://szkolenia.sbp.pl/pasja-czytania/>

– *Virtual training = real competences*; The aim of the project implemented as part of the *Culture on the Web* program, conducted by the National Center for Culture, was to raise the competences of 45 librarians from various libraries (mainly public ones), which will enable them to transfer some of the existing, stationary cultural offer of libraries to cyberspace. The goal was achieved through:

a) carrying out in July this year. a substantially coherent cycle of 2 webinars and 4 online training sessions, with each participant being required to take part in the entire cycle. The webinars were devoted to the interpretation of copyright in the organization of cultural activities and the practical aspects of GDPR application in libraries in the light of the processing of personal data in cyberspace. The topics of the training courses included: planning and implementing online events, multimedia forms of communication with the reader, building relationships using copywriting and social media, as well as visual materials (posts, infographics, posters) and analytical tools that can be used to promote cultural events, maintaining the requirements caused by crisis situations,

b) development of teaching materials (electronic publications, hyperlinks, infographics, a set of tasks, recordings of webinars and online training), which were placed on the Moodle e-learning platform,

c) training participants to organize at least one online cultural event in the local environment and send its documentation to the SBP,

d) launching the project website with basic information and teaching materials and descriptions of activities carried out by the project participants www.wsrk.sbp.pl

Training activities during the pandemic were also conducted by the local structures of the Association. For example, the Board of the SBP District in Warsaw and the SBP Branch in Ostrołęka organized two online trainings: *Librarian as an animator of culture and reading in the 21st century* and *Methods and forms of working with a difficult reader*. Additionally, the district in Warsaw, in cooperation with the SBP Branch in Radom, organized the *Senior training in the library*.

ONLINE LIBRARY WEEK

Due to the pandemic and the closure of libraries for readers, the Polish Librarians' Association decided to transfer to the network the implementation of the 17th edition of the Library Week – a nationwide program for

the promotion of reading, libraries and the librarian profession, which is celebrated every year on May 8-15. The inspiration for librarians in undertaking various activities was the slogan of this year's edition of the Library Week – "Savour the Library", which convinces readers that it is worth enjoying the book so that each of them can find sources in the library to pursue their interests and passions. .

Libraries of all types throughout Poland have prepared occasional events using the Internet and social media. Thanks to applications and programs such as Genial.ly, ZOOM, Canva, Padlet, Obraz.me, librarians in an attractive way organized numerous events in the virtual space, attracting the attention of thousands of readers.

Throughout the Library Week, the editors of the sbp.pl portal posted reports of the events on the TB website www.tydzienbibliotek.sbp.pl. The statistics show that in May 2020 it was visited by 11,117 users, there were 40,914 hits. For comparison, in 2019, in the same period, there were 1,138 users and 2,944 pageviews. Many articles presenting the activities of libraries and a summary of this year's edition of the program appeared in the periodicals "Poradnik Bibliotekarza" and "Bibliotekarz" (Dargiel-Kowalska, 2020).

43 libraries submitted their initiatives in the competition for the most interesting online event announced by SBP. The winner was the Władysław Broniewski Library of Płock, who conducted the action "Sweet and bitter stories" in the form of a city game transferred to the Internet. In short stories, the profiles of the young heroes of the defense of Płock in 1920 were presented together with the atmosphere of horror of those days, as well as the flavors of the books that accompanied them. The game, aimed at young readers, combined elements of fun with education. It showed how many flavors each story can have, and at the same time it strengthened the sense of belonging to a small homeland among the participants.

The analysis of the submitted competition entries and reports posted on the program website confirms that during the Library Week many of them decided to make books available in PDF format, virtual tours with audio guides, quizzes with a book theme, numerous competitions carried out via social media: art, literary, recitation, photography, film. There were also online author meetings. Among other proposals, the following were very popular:

- virtual tours of libraries and presentations of the most valuable collections (they were proposed, among others, by voivodeship public libraries from Zielona Góra, Gdańsk, Łódź, Poznań). A film about the resources of Polish digital libraries was made available by the Pedagogical Library in Kalisz,

- online workshops for children and teenagers on comic book development, drawing illustrations,

- listening to audiobooks,
- livestreaming on Facebook – sharing theatrical performances and concerts (the actions were carried out by, among others, the Municipal Public Library in Sosnowiec, the Municipal Public Library in Słubice),
- digital exhibitions; they were organized by, among others University Library in Poznań and University Library in Toruń.

The interest of young people was aroused by initiatives of the Provincial Public Library in Lublin and public libraries in Piaseczno and Ustronie Moskie, which organized an online escape room based on literary motives. As librarians admit, the most noticeable effect of this type of event was the increase in reach and likes and an increase in the number of comments on the library fanpage, which had an impact later (after the opening of the library) on the increase in borrowing.

On the other hand, the action #payabook carried out by the Culture Station – Library in Rumia, attracted many well-known readers from the local community, incl. actors, athletes. The reading fun consisted of the readers recording short films showing the handing over of the book. The videos were shared on the library's social media. The Municipal Public Library in Wrocław organized an online literary stint – a game referring to the tradition of field fun, and at the same time testing knowledge about literature. The event was promoted in local media.

An interesting initiative was presented by the Municipal Cultural Center in Laseczno, which invited 15 people from different parts of the world, speaking in 9 languages, to read together a poem by the Nobel Prize winner, Wisława Szymborska, "Miracle Fair". The film with the recorded event was made available on the YouTube channel, and the library won a distinction in the SBP competition for the most interesting online event for young readers.

The Municipal Public Library in Kielce recorded and shared on Facebook a series of meetings with young volunteers cooperating with the Regional Volunteer Center in Kielce, who came from different countries (Armenia, Spain, Italy, England, Turkey, France) and talked about their favorite books, contemporary and those they remembered from childhood. Young people also remembered the flavors of regional cuisine associated with literature.

The local structures of the SBP also appeared with the digital offer. The Board of the SBP District in Opole prepared a multimedia presentation on the initiatives of Opole libraries carried out during the Library Week. The Zielona Góra branch was a co-organizer of the "Online Reading Marathon", under which videos of reading an excerpt from a selected book were recorded by readers and shared on Facebook. The district in Poznań carried out an internet-based nationwide photo competition "Librarian other than you think", presenting the passions outside of work for libra-

rians. The Katowice District, in cooperation with the Katowice City Hall, launched the project "Action of the novel – Katowice!" encompassing a series of online meetings with writers who located their book actions in this city. The meetings were broadcast on Facebook of the Silesian Library and the SBP District Board. The SBP circle in Dąbrowa Tarnowska recorded a spot "Challenge for a librarian" with statements from readers of the local public library on "Why are books so important?", which was made available on its profile.

The course of this year's Library Week has confirmed that libraries, despite the ongoing pandemic and limitations, are very creative in virtual space and still play a leading role in accessing culture and information, regardless of the prevailing conditions.

SUMMARY

The pandemic has shaken the principle of universal access to library collections and services. The libraries were closed to the public almost overnight. Other librarians who transferred their activities to the Internet were open. Their spontaneity, care for readers staying at home, and creativity translated into ideas and implementation of best practices. Online services have grown in importance and will most likely become the norm for libraries. Various remote classes were organized for readers, including workshops, competitions, exhibitions, meetings with authors, as well as virtual walks around libraries and presentations of the most valuable collections. Libraries promoted access to online resources through their websites, identifying e-book and e-media platforms. On social networks, they encouraged readers to stay home and read books.

The above leads to the conclusion that partial compensation of the effects of the closure of libraries was the dissemination of electronic resources and services, perhaps previously underestimated and neglected, especially in small towns, where digital documents and services were overshadowed by "paper" media and traditional services. Expanding access to digital resources in libraries is a positive direction of changes that should be continued.

The Association of Polish Librarians joined in to activate the society in the event of an epidemic, support libraries and spread online services by launching the #NiezostawiamCzytelnika campaign. Its aim was to promote access to culture in social media, organize webinars on reading, and to inform about attractive and valuable online events in libraries through the available, wide communication channels. Apart from librarians, the campaign was joined by writers, publishers and other representatives of the book market. The interest in the campaign was confirmed by the

growing statistics of visits to the sbp.pl website, information in social media, on library websites, and articles in national trade magazines.

During the pandemic, online training offered by SBP proved to be a great support for librarians, during which they learned new forms of communication with readers, promotion of the library in social media and strengthening its image. The acquired skills allowed them to transfer the cultural offer of libraries to cyberspace and build network relationships with readers.

The annual May promotion of libraries and the Librarian Day celebration were also carried out in the virtual space.

The time of the pandemic has forced an increased activity on the Internet, which brings tangible benefits – it allows you to meet many needs related to culture and education, allows you to stay in touch with existing users, and, which is very valuable, it allows you to attract new recipients. The good side of this situation was also the improvement of librarians' competences in the use of tools enabling work in the Internet space.

It is difficult to determine if and for how long the solutions used in the first phase of the COVID-19 pandemic will maintain the attractiveness of libraries for the supported communities and the general public. It is not easy for libraries to function in the conditions of limited access to them on the one hand and the competition of news giants such as Google or Netflix, providing free access to information services, or mass distribution of content at low subscription costs.

One thing is for sure, the experiences from the first period of the pandemic cannot be wasted. Libraries should be better prepared for next, unexpected situations, and SBP should be better prepared to support the activities of librarians. It is worth taking care of increasing access to network services of people at risk of social exclusion and making the library operating in a virtual space still a friendly place for them. The reality in which librarians work now, after the reopening of libraries, gives a chance to meet new challenges and expectations of various groups of readers.

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