



# **The library in Ostrava-Vitkovice**

## **Roma and Czechs on the common path**

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# Beginnings

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- Romaňi kereka – Roma circle project
- Seminar in October 2005
- Library opening in October 2006



# Beginnings

- Inspiration from abroad
- Expert consultations
  - History
  - Sociology
  - Architecture and design
  - Social work
  - Lived „experience“ of being Roma
- Librarians' experience



# The library in plans and in the reality

## The location of the children section

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- Permeability of children and adult sections
- *Spontaneous social control of visiting children*
- *Unforced contact between ethn. Czech adult visitors and Roma children*



Photo: KMO Vítkovice (archive)

# The library in plans and in the reality

## Equipment in children section

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- New, luxurious, and in sufficient quantity
- *Absence of symbolic degradation of people from socially weaker backgrounds*



Photo: KMO Vitkovice (archive)

# The library in plans and in the reality

## Computers

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- Standard equipment in modern library
- *Key attraction for children and youth*
- *Increase in PC literacy of socially weaker residents in Vitkovice*



Photo: KMO Vítkovice (archive)



## Special focus of Vítkovice Public Library: **Roma people, or socially weak?**

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- Free time activities for children from socially weaker backgrounds
  - Co-operation with social workers and community centres
  - Unforced socialization of socially weaker parents
  - Upbringing of the new generation of readers
- Library as a community centre –
- ↑ visiting rate, ↓ books lending



## Special focus of KMO Vítkovice: Roma people, or socially weak?

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- Specialized book fund
  - Roma and Romistic literature
  - Used especially by university and higher education students
- Cultural programs focused on Roma culture
  - Exhibition „Roma Revival“





# Special focus of KMO Vítkovice: **Roma people, or socially weak?**

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- Roma as clients

VS.

- Roma as an object of intellectual/cultural interest



# May the common path not end...

## Support of sustainability

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- Grants
- Employees' experience
- Co-operation with the community in Vitkovice, including schools and NGOs

# May the common path not end...

## Potential threats

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- Grants
- Employees ' experience
- Co-operation with parents and concrete people from schools and NGOs
- Spatial growth limitation
- Endangerment of the community spirit in the library:
  - Increase in visiting rate
  - Hasty profesionalization



# May the common path not end...

## Future perspectives

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- Roma speaking personnel

Thank you for your attention!

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Photo: K. Hercík (archive)