

# Library services for incarcerated persons: A survey of recent trends and challenges in prison libraries in Croatia

Journal of Librarianship and  
Information Science  
2016, Vol. 48(1) 72–89  
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sagepub.co.uk/journalsPermissions.nav  
DOI: 10.1177/0961000614538481  
lis.sagepub.com  


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## Abstract

The article contributes to the professional discussion of prison librarianship in the context of intellectual freedom and social justice paradigm. It presents results from a nationwide survey of the prison libraries in Croatia. Survey was conducted in 2013 through a mailed questionnaire that received a 91.3% response rate. The study set off to answer the following research questions: How are Croatian prison libraries organised and managed? and What kind of library collections and services are offered to incarcerated persons in Croatia? The results show that almost all correctional institutions in Croatia provide some kind of minimal library services to their inmates. However, prison libraries in Croatia are not professionally managed nor are they regularly funded. Further, their collections are developed mainly through gifts and there is almost no evidence of any systematic programming which would lead to constructive and creative use of prisoners' free time. Although there are some shining examples, it is evident that prison libraries in Croatia are underdeveloped and in need of a new organisational and financial model. Authors conclude with concrete recommendations for improved library services to this marginalised population in Croatia.

## Keywords

Croatia, incarcerated persons, library services, prison libraries, social justice

## Introduction

The values and missions of the modern practice of criminal justice, in which emphasis has gradually shifted from punishment towards education and rehabilitation, go hand in hand with a view of libraries as important players within the intellectual freedom and social justice agenda. Within this enlightened correctional paradigm, prison libraries serve as a window and a link to the outside world and represent a safe and humane environment that provides support for educational, recreational and rehabilitative programmes (Lehmann and Locke, 2005: 4). Although prison libraries in general have come a long way since the early collections of primarily religious books to which there was limited access, they are still struggling with the mission of securing minimal civil rights for disadvantaged and marginalised members of society and providing them with access to the quality materials which meet their diverse information needs and reading interests. To initiate the discussion of the role of prison libraries in relation to

the intellectual freedom and social justice agenda, special attention in the introductory section of this paper is given to these two concepts.

The aim of this paper is to contribute to the general awareness of international library services for incarcerated populations by exploring the current state of Croatia's prison libraries. Since the most recent study of prison libraries in Croatia was undertaken almost 10 years ago, and national standards have not yet been established, the authors set out to investigate the current state of prison librarianship in Croatia's correctional institutions. To obtain a comprehensive view of this particular topic over

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time, whenever possible, the results were compared to data obtained in earlier studies undertaken in 2003 and 2005.<sup>1</sup> The goal of this study was to gain an overall picture of Croatia's prison libraries and their collections: the levels of prison library service and usage, size and scope of their collections, collection management policies, staffing and funding models. The study aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. How are Croatian prison libraries organised and managed?
2. What kind of library collections and services are offered to incarcerated persons in Croatia?

The survey results are expected to be of interest to policy-makers and all those concerned with information rights and effective justice systems.

### **Prison libraries, intellectual freedom and social justice**

In accordance with the library profession's long-established values and commitment to intellectual freedom (American Library Association, 2010; International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 1999, 2002), the universal rights of all persons, including prisoners, to freedom of expression and freedom of access to information have been repeatedly asserted in a number of high-level documents. For example, the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* (United Nations, 1948) and the *European Convention on Human Rights* (Council of Europe, 1953) state that everyone has the universal right to freedom of opinion and expression, and the freedom to seek and receive information and ideas without interference by public authority and regardless of frontiers. The *Charter for the Reader* establishes reading as a universal right and pays special attention to prisons, hospitals, retirement homes and other places where books and reading are not common (International Book Committee/International Publishers Associations, 1994). The demand for quality library and information services for the growing number of persons serving time in prisons is explicitly stated in the *European Prison Rules* (Council of Europe, 1987). Furthermore, in one of the earliest documents of this kind, the United Nations' (1955) *Standard Minimal Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners*, it has been recognised that every prison should have a library for the use of all categories of prisoners, that it should be adequately stocked with both recreational and instructional books and that prisoners should be encouraged to make full use of it.

Social justice, also known as distributive justice, is a relatively recent concept born out of the struggles surrounding the industrial revolution, the advent of socialist and social democratic views and their impact on the

organisation of society (United Nations, 2006: 2). Social justice can be broadly defined as the fair distribution of wealth, opportunities and privileges within a society. The notion of social justice refers to the ideal in which justice is achieved in every aspect of society and not simply in the legal sphere (Mehra et al., 2010: 4820). It touches on all aspects of our lives and is about everyone having chances and opportunities that allow them to make the most of their lives and to use their talents to the full (Curran, 2002). According to Mtima and Jamar (2010/2011: 83), social justice rests upon the core values of equality, liberty and general welfare and includes not only access to, but also the inclusion of everyone in, the full benefits of society and the empowerment of people to participate fully in the economic, social and cultural life of the country.

Traditions of fairness, equity, civic engagement, diversity and humanism have long characterised the library and information science profession, and literature focusing on the explicit rendering of the social justice agenda in diverse library environments is emerging (Bush 2009; Moffatt, 2005; Morrone and Friedman, 2009; Pateman and Vincent, 2012; Vincent, 2012). In the library and information science context, social justice has been defined as giving people access to the information, services and facilities to which they have rights and making sure that they are fully aware of, and know how to take up, their entitlement to these services (Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, 2007). Since libraries are committed to providing equitable access and opportunities to all members of their communities – in particular, the underprivileged and underpowered – they are inherently involved with, and must be aware of, issues related to social justice (Clark, 2011: 383). By responding to the issues of inequality and social exclusion, libraries can promote and advance social justice and social responsibility in their communities in various ways: by providing equitable service to various underprivileged and disenfranchised populations (based on race, ethnicity, class, gender, disability, sexual orientation, age and other variables associated with institutionalised social exclusion); by promoting awareness of social justice issues and providing access to authoritative and reliable materials that address social justice issues from diverse viewpoints; and by developing responsive collections, offering community-based services and designing outreach programmes that meet the requirements of underrepresented communities and those with unique needs (such as in-home delivery services, foreign language services, etc.). Finally, libraries can advance the cause of social justice by recruiting members of staff who reflect the diversity of the community. In the words of John Vincent (2012: 350), who is one of the major proponents of the social justice agenda in libraries, for libraries, social justice must involve embracing equality and diversity; focusing on a needs-based

service and directing resources towards those who need them most; knowing and understanding the components of the local community; having an active, collaborative role in empathising and working in partnership with the local community; and fully engaging the community, moving as far as possible towards the co-production of service provision.

By directing their services towards the needs of offenders – a group of people on society's margins and who are, by definition, at risk of long-term exclusion and isolation – prison libraries are in the perfect position to make a significant contribution to the social justice agenda. As integral components within the prison administration, prison libraries can support a variety of correctional and intervention programmes which focus on substance abuse, violent behaviour, anger management, cognitive skills, literacy, education and so on, and they can thus contribute not only to the personal, mental and social well-being of offenders but also to public safety and prosperity. As Peschers (2011: 522–523) points out, prison libraries are also well placed to ensure that offenders, as a distinctive underprivileged social group living in disadvantaged circumstances and in need of special assistance, are afforded opportunities to pursue cultural interests and become involved in cultural activities, as asserted by UNESCO's (1976) *Recommendations on Participation by the People at Large in Cultural Life and Their Contribution to It*. The role of prison libraries as cultural agents has been beautifully expressed in a Norwegian parliamentary report (Norwegian Ministry of Justice and Public Security, 2007/2008):

Culture must form part of the daily activities in prison in the same way it does in society as a whole. It gives individuals the opportunity to experience new and positive aspects of life and of themselves. Through culture, self-understanding and self-reflection change. Culture is a relational and interactive process that entails creating meaning, communicating with each other, and organizing social life. Cultural activities can generate aspects of general humaneness and general education that increase the ability to cope with life. (*St.meld.nr.37*, cited in Ljødal and Ra, 2011: 482)

The library is very often the only neutral, friendly and 'cultural' place – the 'normal zone' for prisoners. Libraries bring mental stimulation from the outside in the form of literature, culture, current events and knowledge, which provide opportunities and gateways for a richer life (Ljødal and Ra, 2011: 473). As centres of information and culture, agents of social change and institutions of learning, prison libraries can help inmates adjust to the realities of their lives within a correctional institution and provide skills and information that help incarcerated persons prepare for reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens (Clark and MacCreagh, 2006: 2). In short, by developing effective and responsive collections, offering programmes that are meaningful to the everyday

lives of prisoners and developing open and welcoming places where they will feel safe, comfortable and confident that their needs will be dealt with in a professional manner, correctional libraries ensure that all members of society are treated equally and that societal benefits are arranged in such a way that the least disadvantaged persons obtain the greatest benefits possible (Mehra et al., 2010: 4821).

## Literature review

Library services for prisoners can be provided both by the local public library and the institutional library. When the service is provided within the institution by a prison library operating as an integral component of the prison administration, its collections and services should emulate the public library's role. In other words, the prison library should offer materials and services comparable to those of community libraries in the 'free' world. Offenders should be provided with the opportunity to develop their literacy skills, pursue personal and cultural interests and take part in life-long learning programmes (Lehmann and Locke, 2005: 4). The provision of library services in prisons should be based on the premise that just as incarcerated persons have civil rights to adequate nutrition, exercise, recreation, medical care and so forth, they have the right to access information and culture. The goal of this short overview of the available current literature on international prison libraries is to acquire an overall understanding of the state of prison libraries worldwide and the challenges they face in light of the intellectual freedom and social justice agenda.

In her most recent account of correctional libraries in the United States (US), Lehmann (2011) indicates that access to reading materials is provided in practically all federal and state correctional institutions, which have primarily been developed in keeping with the public library model. They offer varied and innovative programmes and serve as popular reading material centres, independent learning centres, formal education support centres, leisure and recreation activity centres, legal information centres, treatment programme support centres, information centres outside the community, personal retreat centres and staff research centres (Lehmann, 2011: 497, 501). Contrastingly, Lehmann states that the quality of prison library services in the US is not easily ascertained and describes the issue of inadequate and delayed access to information and library materials, in particular by inmates with segregated status, as a significant problem (p. 501). Lehmann also indicates that not all correctional institutions in the US have a designated library space and, due to the economic downturn over the last couple of years, many are not managed by a professional librarian (p. 491). Moreover, despite the fact that prison libraries in the US subscribe to the philosophy that library services shall ensure inmates' right to

read and free access to information and that their services shall encompass the same variety of materials, formats and programmes available in the outside community, US prison libraries face the challenging issue of providing access to computer technology and networks both for internal operational tasks and for learning and information purposes. Although librarians are well aware of the fact that it makes no sense to prevent inmates from accessing information that is useful for their education, treatment and personal development, in some states, due to security regulations, inmates are prohibited from using standalone computers (Lehmann, 2011: 499). Furthermore, there is a dichotomy between the professional librarian's philosophical and ethical commitment to free access to information and the real constraints imposed on access to reading materials within the prison environment. State law and administrative regulations impose certain restrictions on the selection of materials that advocate violence and hate, contain pornography and pose a threat to the institution's security. Unfortunately, library material selection policies, which could ensure that these restrictions are not imposed arbitrarily, are not in place in all states and are sometimes ignored (Lehmann, 2011: 503).

In reviewing the current state of Canada's prison libraries, several authors indicate that they face numerous challenges which prevent them from functioning as neutral spaces offering refuge within a strict prison regime and satisfying the diverse information, cultural, educational and recreational needs of prisoners. These challenges include inadequate space, insufficient or irregular budgets, lack of professional staff and prohibited Internet access. As a result, prison libraries in Canada are currently struggling to maintain existing services and to 'keep their heads above water' (Curry et al., 2003; Ings and Joslin, 2011: 402, 407).

According to Bowe (2011), prison libraries in England and Wales have seen major changes and developments over the past 30 years and have succeeded in providing offenders with a range and quality of services similar to those found in public libraries in the United Kingdom (UK). Although every prison is obliged to provide library services on the one hand, and the government funding and implementation of national standards have led to significant improvements for prison libraries, prisoners and librarians in the UK on the other, Bowe (2011: 429) reports that, in Scotland, for example, only one facility employs a qualified librarian. Moreover, despite the fact that each prison in England and Wales receives a capitation fund to pay for library services, inmates often complain about the lack of access to the library (Bowe, 2011: 436). Bowe also recognises the difficulties of operating a library service within the prison environment, which often results in the censorship of sensitive materials. In addition, while most prison libraries have access to computers with educational or research CD-ROMs and software, Internet access is still

not available to prisoners in UK correctional institutions (Bowe, 2011: 437–438).

In 2009, the French Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Culture signed a government directive which specified the introduction of practical steps to improve incarcerated persons' access to information and artistic and cultural programmes. However, according to Cramard (2011: 557), the condition, location and size of library spaces in French prisons vary significantly from one facility to another. The libraries are often located in the only available space, whether or not it is suitable for library functions, do not have sufficient staff to operate efficiently and are not funded adequately or regularly. Prison libraries are often not directly accessible, and if inmates want to visit a library, they must take the initiative to register (Cramard, 2011: 552). This delay in obtaining direct access to the library represents a major obstacle. Limited funding impedes the development of useful and diversified collections, especially current materials, in the areas of career information, job training and skills, and educational opportunities. Furthermore, although prison librarians in France tend to develop long-term collection policies that follow public library standards, there are cases in which social workers 'simply visit bookstores few times a year and select books without paying attention to the collection development plan' (Cramard, 2011: 555). Finally, according to Cramard, in French prison libraries audiovisual materials are rarely available, and Internet access is still unimaginable (p. 557).

Addressing the prison library services in Scandinavian countries, Ljødal and Ra analyse how changes in the organisation and financing of Norwegian prison library services over the past 30 years have led to improved services, and they note that Norwegian prison libraries function as branches of local public libraries and that prisoners use the library as an access point for their public library services (Ljødal and Ra, 2011: 477). However, they also note the uneven state-level funding, which depends heavily on the prevalent political climate, and the lack of library services in some facilities (pp. 480, 482). Among the major challenges facing Scandinavian prison libraries, they note the restricted access to the Internet and limited services for foreign inmates. Although inmates are largely denied access to the Internet, on the sites where the prison librarians have Internet access, they conduct searches on the inmates' behalf. However, foreign inmates, who comprise approximately a quarter of all prisoners in Scandinavian countries, are most often denied this service due to the librarians' lack of necessary language skills (Ljødal and Ra, 2011: 485).

Zybert (2011) explains that due to overcrowding in Polish prisons, the working conditions in the libraries are generally poor. The prisons have insufficient funding, inadequate library hours, are often located in unsuitable spaces and lack professional librarians on the staff.



Although inmates generally visit the library within the institution, browse the collection and use the available catalogues, they sometimes have only indirect access to library materials. In the latter case, inmates select titles from a short holdings list brought to their cell (Zybert, 2011: 416). According to the most recent data, approximately 30% of Polish prison libraries provided designated reading areas (Zybert, 2011: 417). In Poland, as in other countries, the law prohibits inmates from accessing pornography or content that advocates violence and antisocial behaviour (Zybert, 2011: 416). The author places particular emphasis on the lack of newspapers and magazines in prison libraries and the fact that inmates increasingly have their own subscriptions to these types of reading materials, which means that there is an obvious need for them (p. 414).

Although every offender has the right to access a library during his or her free time, nine out of 16 German states, which are autonomous within the German federal government structure, do not mention the requirement to provide a library in the drafts of their new juvenile detention laws (Peschers, 2011: 522). Peschers states that the prison libraries in North Rhine-Westphalia are founded on the modern principles of public librarianship but also notes that, in all of Germany, there are only four full-time prison librarians. The author also notes that prison libraries operate under increasingly greater competition for available financial and human resources (p. 528) and explains that in higher-security prisons with restricted movement, the inmates are not allowed to visit the library and must submit a written request to obtain library materials. Similar to Poland, in cases of such indirect access to library collections, inmates select materials based on the print catalogue, which contains short annotations or reviews (Peschers, 2011: 525). Open-stack access is not provided in all prison libraries, which is an additional challenge for inmates, and, as in other countries, certain restrictions have been placed on prisoners' access to information technology. For security reasons, the Internet and other types of networking are barely available even to inmates in 'open' facilities (Peschers, 2011: 533). However, in such an environment, the Münster Prison Library won the title of Germany's 'Library of the Year 2007' thanks to its creative and innovative projects and high-quality services (Peschers, 2011).

The most recent survey of Italian prison libraries illustrates the vast inequity of the prison library service and the lack of uniform organisation of the prison libraries in that country. There are individual prisons where libraries are highly developed and thriving quite independently of each other, and there are numerous prison libraries which are barely functioning. On the one hand, Costanzo and Montecchi (2011) describe exemplary, successful and well-managed libraries, such as the one at the Bassone Prison in Como, which has become the centre for the

recreation, education and rehabilitation of inmates, with its rich library website and a library catalogue which is integrated with that of the local public library system (Costanzo and Montecchi, 2011: 516). However, on the other hand, they emphasise that there are 'still hundreds of prison sites with no library services or where the "library" consist[s] only of useless collections of discarded books that nobody want[s] anything to do with' (p. 512). Apparently, the great inequity of prison library services across the country is a result of the nonexistence of uniform, central policies and standards for prison library operations and management as well as the lack of standardised collection development policies, professional full-time librarians and adequate training. Interestingly, the Italian prison system policies do not include the position of 'librarian', and library work is primarily seen as clerical in nature (Costanzo and Montecchi, 2011: 515).

Finally, Nakane (2011) indicates in his article that although in Japan's correctional facilities a certain number of reading materials are available at various locations within the institutions, no functional library space is provided, and the materials are dispersed throughout the facility, including work areas (factories), living quarters and so-called 'library work areas'. In addition, he points out that Japanese prisons do not employ professional librarians; rather, the prison staff and inmates who operate and supervise the 'library' sporadically acquire materials and provide access to them (Nakane, 2011: 446–447, 449, 451). Nakane also emphasises that due to the decentralised locations of reading materials, not all inmates have access to library collections. In addition, according to the new Prison Act, access to books and reading materials is restricted to certain categories of prisoners (Nakane, 2011: 455). He also describes library collections as inadequate in the sense that they have limited subject coverage, irrelevant content (e.g. few magazines, insufficient legal materials), outdated items and items in poor condition (p. 453). The correctional libraries in Japan have a basic level of cooperation with local public libraries: most often, libraries donate their discarded books to prisons while regular loan service, outreach services or professional consultation are rarely available (Nakane, 2011: 454). Moreover, the new *Prison Act* allows for a certain level of censorship in prison libraries because inmates are forbidden to possess or access some types of reading materials (e.g. materials that may disrupt the safety and security of the institution or may be detrimental to the correctional treatment of inmates) (Nakane, 2011: 455).

In general, based on a survey of recent English language peer-reviewed literature on international prison librarianship, it is evident that the range and quality of prison library collections and services differ significantly across and even within countries. One of the major challenges faced by

prison libraries worldwide seems to be inadequate management policies and funding models. As a rule, prison libraries are insufficiently funded, and the relevant national policies and decisions are, in most cases, made by prison administrators who lack a fundamental understanding of library work in the prison environment. In addition, prison libraries are very often managed by prison staff who have no professional training in librarianship and are located in unsuitable and inaccessible locations. In several countries – for example, Germany, France and Poland – some inmates are not allowed to visit the library and must submit a written request to obtain library materials. In other countries – such as Japan, the UK and Poland – the lack of access to the library in general has been noted: this is due to inadequate working hours, dispersed library collections, closed-shelf systems and so forth. In countries with a substantial international prison population, such as Norway, prisoners' access to information is often challenged by the lack of necessary language skills.

Another major challenge facing prison libraries is related to the collection development policies and, in particular, the issues of intellectual freedom and censorship, which a number of authors have dealt with in more depth elsewhere (Clark and MacCreaigh, 2006; Conrad, 2012; McDonald, 1983; Mark, 2005; Sullivan, 2008; Vogel, 1995, 2009). To promote reading and safeguard the intellectual freedoms of prisoners, correctional facility librarians should actively develop comprehensive and up-to-date collections by selecting materials that reflect the demographic composition, information needs, interests and diverse cultural values of the confined communities they serve. However, in practice, library ethics and philosophies are inherently in conflict with the missions and security policies of correctional institutions, and prison librarians worldwide are required to restrict the acquisition of, and access to, so-called 'sensitive' literature. Several authors also noted that, in their countries, there is a lack of popular types of reading materials (newspapers and magazines) which enable prisoners to keep abreast of what is happening in the world outside the prison walls (Nakane, 2011; Zybert, 2011).

In all the countries studied, access to computers and the Internet has been noted as a major challenge. While information and communication technology has had a significant impact on library functions and services in general, the use of technology inside a secure prison environment is minimal in most countries, and this is a cause for major concern. As a rule, prisoners may have some access to standalone computers but no connection to the Internet. The current practice of highly limited access to digital technologies, content and skills will only exacerbate the digital divide that prisoners currently experience. Since increasing amounts of public, educational and legal information are being disseminated primarily or exclusively via the Internet, the introduction of computers and the Internet

into prison libraries is becoming a talking point in the prison library literature and is being addressed within the context of human rights and the social justice philosophy (Molaro, 2012; Payne and Sabath, 2007; Sullivan, 2000; Tubbs, 2006; Vogel, 2008).

It is challenging to adhere to professional library values and practices in correctional institutions, and prison libraries worldwide still struggle with their basic mission of providing inmates with free access to information, responsive collections with diverse reading materials and services based on their perceived needs.

### Croatia's prisons and their population

According to the most recent data, on any given day in 2012, approximately 4741 people were held in Croatian penal institutions. These offenders were held in 14 prisons, six jails, two juvenile detention centres and one prison hospital. Croatia's 23 correctional institutions, with minimum, medium or maximum security levels, are located in 19 different regions across the country. Croatia's rate of 108 prisoners per 100,000 of the national population is not much higher than that of other Western European countries, where the median rate is estimated at 98 (International Center for Prison Studies, 2013). According to the data from 2005, in 15 institutions, there were fewer than 100 inmates; in five, there were between 100 and 200; and in three, there were between 500 and 600 (De Villa, 2007: 57). Although the number of incarcerated persons in Croatia has decreased by almost 10% in the last two years, the Croatian prison system is still facing three major problems: budget cuts, overcrowded prison facilities and a lack of qualified staff. The latest report indicates that Croatia's correctional institutions have the capacity to hold only 3771 inmates and that they need 34% more staff – that is, an additional 1352 prison officers – in security, treatment and education, health care and other departments. To compensate for the lack of qualified staff, prevent violent behaviour and ensure that minimum standards are met, there is an emphasis on staff training. In 2012, a total of 550 prison officers attended some kind of training, such as aggression replacement training, prevention of recidivism, impulsive behaviour treatment and the treatment of people with special needs in prison (Uprava za zatvorski sustav, 2013: 10, 78).

On 31 December 2012, the makeup of the adult prison population in Croatia was as follows: 95.7% male and 4.3% female. There were 1263 offenders (male and female) who altogether had 2323 children under the age of 18. The majority of the prisoners fell into the 27 to 39 age group (41.1%), and, in most cases, the reason for their incarceration was a crime against property (34.5%). Prison sentences of up to one year were being served by 13.8% of inmates, and 13.3% were incarcerated for over 10 years. The largest group of offenders had been sentenced to either

5 to 10 or 3 to 5 years. With regard to their education level, the majority of the prisoners (55.8%) had a high school diploma. However, 9% of the inmates had no formal education (including primary school dropouts) and 29% had no professional qualifications. Only 3.4% of the inmates had a college or university degree. On average, the female prisoners were more educated than their male counterparts. Almost 15% of the total prison population in 2012 had problems related to drug addiction (Uprava za zatvorski sustav 2013).

On 31 December 2012, there were 84 young adults (76 male and 8 female) incarcerated in juvenile detention centres. Slightly over half were 16 to 18 years old, and 31% and 25% of the minor offenders in juvenile detention centres fell within the 18 to 21 and 14 to 16 age groups, respectively. In 81% of the cases, the minor offenders were institutionalised for crimes against property. While only 4.8% had a high school diploma, a significant portion of the minor offenders in juvenile detention centres (42.9%) had no formal education (including primary school dropouts). (Uprava za zatvorski sustav, 2013)

The Croatian prison system is regulated by the *Prison Sentence Enforcement Act* (Croatian Parliament, 2013), which builds upon international legal heritage and recognises the human civil rights and special rights of prisoners. It asserts that prisoners are entitled to certain rights related to accommodation, nutrition, health care, legal assistance, education, privacy of personal data, and so forth. According to this Act, the purpose of the prison sentence is to equip inmates with the necessary skills and competencies to prepare them for reintegration into the community as law-abiding citizens (Croatian Parliament, 2013). Therefore, after sentencing, an individual rehabilitative programme, which is updated throughout the incarceration period, is developed for each offender. These programmes may include paid work, education and training, organised leisure activities, and so forth within or outside of the institution. Literacy programmes (basic literacy, computer literacy) are organised for offenders regardless of their age, and all offenders under 21 are given an opportunity to continue their schooling. For example, in 2012, a total of 45 prisoners (adult and juvenile) obtained their primary school certificates, 19 graduated from college or university and 228 took part in some kind of training. Inmates are usually trained for simple jobs – that is, professions such as cook assistants, gardeners, waiters, house and woodwork painters, and so forth. Depending on the type and security level of the penal institution, the inmates have the opportunity to take part in different leisure activities ranging from sports and recreation to art and culture. In 2012, for example, the inmates in Croatia's penal institutions attended 21 concerts and 40 theatre shows, which were organised by the institution or the community. It is interesting to note that in three prisons, the inmates have formed music bands which perform and give concerts at other penal institutions across the

country. Furthermore, in several correctional institutions, the prisoners actively participate in literary and creative writing workshops and publish newsletters and magazines (Uprava za zatvorski sustav, 2013).

Despite the fact that the *Prison Sentence Enforcement Act* asserts that every correctional institution in Croatia must have a library stocked with an adequate number of books covering different subject areas and that inmates must be given an opportunity to borrow books from local public libraries, two earlier studies showed that the interpretation of this mandate varied widely across institutions (De Villa, 2007; Horvat and Nebesny, 2004).

## Study

To obtain answers to the research questions, a quantitative study was designed. After written approval was obtained from the Central Office of the Imprisonment System Administration, 23 print questionnaires were mailed to all the correctional institutions located across Croatia on 10 April 2013. The questionnaire was directed to the person in charge of the library, not to the prison administration.

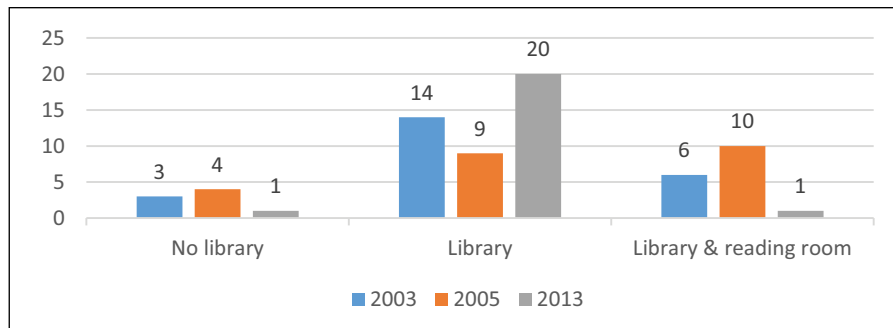
The questionnaire consisted of 31 questions, which could be roughly divided into three thematic sets: general information about the library (e.g. funding, location, staffing), management of library collections and services (e.g. quantity of stock, type of materials, collection development policy, programming) and library use (usage, user needs, satisfaction). By 10 June 2013, after one written reminder, 21 institutions had responded (91.3% response rate).

## Results

The aim of the first survey question was to identify how many Croatian correctional institutions provided onsite library services for inmates. For the purpose of this study, a library was defined as any collection of books and other reading materials, regardless of its size, location and openness to users. Bearing this definition in mind, 20 respondents answered that their institutions had a library (95%). Only one respondent (5%) indicated that, within the library, there was a study area designated for inhouse use of library materials that could not be checked out, and one respondent (5%) stated that the institution did not have a library but had plans to establish one. It is interesting to note that, in comparison with the data from 2003 and 2005, the number of libraries in Croatian prisons had slightly increased while the number of reading rooms and study areas designated for in-library use had decreased dramatically (Figure 1).

### *Library location, funding and staffing*

When asked about the funding of prison libraries, 16 respondents (80%) stated that their libraries were not



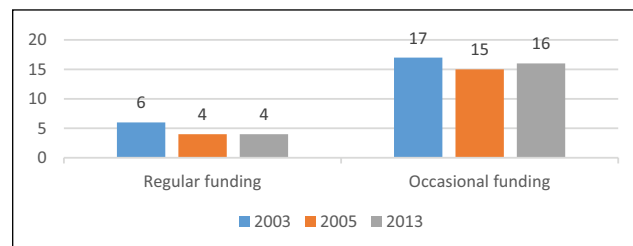
**Figure 1.** Number of libraries in Croatia's prisons.

guaranteed regular financial provision and that funding depended on the changing agenda of the prison administration. Only four respondents (20%) indicated that their institutions regularly included library expenditure in their financial planning and explained that the decision regarding how much of the annual budget would be allocated to the library is made on a year-to-year basis by the head of the correctional institution. Interestingly, the number of prison libraries with at least some regular funding decreased slightly over time (Figure 2).

With regard to the location of the libraries, the respondents gave three different answers. In 13 institutions (65%), the libraries were accommodated in areas set aside specifically for this purpose. Although the square footage was not provided, the photographs<sup>2</sup> show that the size of the facilities in which library collections are housed vary significantly (Photographs 1 and 2). In three institutions (15%), the library collection was located in the office of a prison officer or other member of staff (e.g. an education officer). Interestingly, four respondents (20%) stated that their 'library' was housed in a number of inadequate locations, such as in a hallway or under a stairway, or that the library collection was dispersed across common living areas.

The final question in this thematic group, which offered multiple answers, focused on the prison library staff. Unfortunately, the library was not the responsibility of a trained and experienced librarian in any of the institutions. In seven institutions (35%), the libraries were run solely by inmates and in five (25%) by inmates and prison officers. In six institutions (30%), the libraries were run exclusively by prison officers or other members of staff for whom the library was not the primary responsibility. In only two institutions (10%), the libraries were run by a prison officer or other member of staff whose main responsibility was library management. Changes in library staffing (a slight decrease in the number of prison officers and slight increase in the number of inmates acting as librarians) since 2003 can be seen in Figure 3.

According to their responses, the library staff (either inmates or prison officers), as a rule, have no formal or informal library training and do not take part in any professional development activities (such as reading professional



**Figure 2.** Prison library funding.



**Photograph 1.** Valtura Prison Library.

library literature, participating in library conferences, etc.). Only one prisoner who worked as a library assistant had some prior library work experience.

### *Library collections and services*

The second set of questions focused on library collections and services. When asked about collection development – and, in particular, the acquisition of library materials – the majority of the respondents stated that their library's acquisition programme was not carried out regularly nor systematically ( $N=17$ , 85%). In only two institutions, the





Photograph 2. Požega Prison Library.

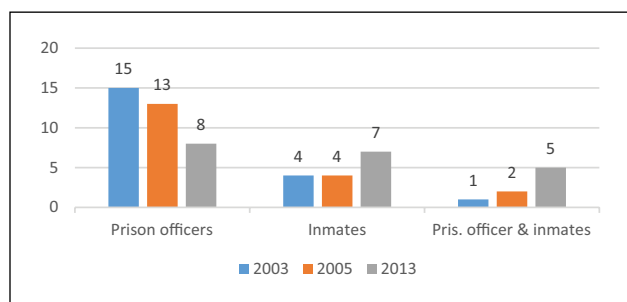


Figure 3. Persons in charge of the library.

acquisition of library materials was described as a planned and regular activity (10%). Interestingly, one respondent stated that his/her institution did not acquire library materials at all (5%). However, during the period from 2003 to 2013, there was a regular increase in the number of institutions that acquired library materials and a decrease in the number of institutions which acquired no library materials (Figure 4).

The respondents were then asked to describe library acquisition modes. In 10 institutions, library materials were never purchased and the collections were developed solely through donations ( $N=10$ , 50%). Although 10 respondents (50%) stated that their institutions purchased some library materials, they emphasised that their collections were predominantly developed based on donations and gifts. In comparison with earlier studies, a slight decrease in the number of libraries purchasing their materials was noted: in 2003 and 2005, there were 11 libraries (one more than in 2013) which could afford to purchase their materials occasionally (Figure 5).

Since donations played an important role in the collection development of these libraries, we wanted to determine if any donations had ever been rejected due to inappropriate or out-of-date content, poor physical

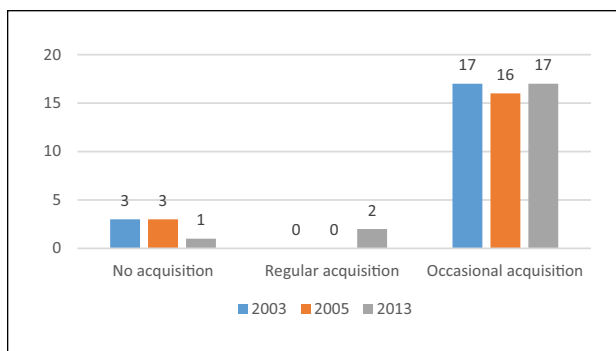


Figure 4. Acquisition of library materials.

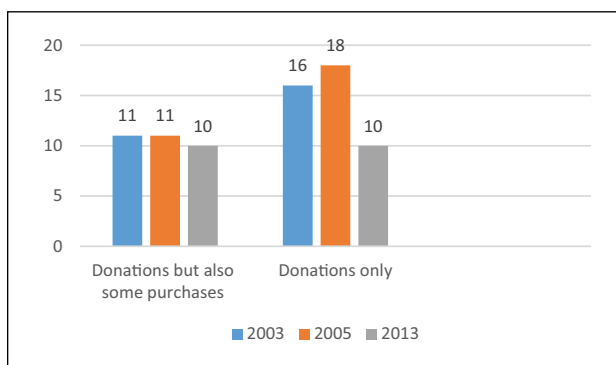


Figure 5. Acquisition of library materials.

condition of the materials, lack of equipment needed for their use, and so forth. Surprisingly, only one respondent (5%) stated that his/her library did not accept a donation on one occasion and that this was only because there had been no more room in the library (Photograph 3).

In the next set of questions, respondents were asked to estimate the size and describe the types of materials in their collections. To obtain a profile of Croatia's prison library collections, the respondents were asked to indicate on a checklist the types of materials that were available. As expected, all the libraries had monographs ( $N=20$ , 100%). While daily and weekly newspapers could be read at seven of the libraries (35%), monthly and thematic magazines were reported in only five institutions (25%). Eight libraries had music and movies on CD-ROMs, DVDs or videocassettes (40%), and six (30%) reported having board games, such as Monopoly, Ludo and chess. In only one library (5%), the patrons could check out computer games (on DVDs). Interestingly, over a 10-year period, the number of libraries providing access to newspapers, periodicals and magazines decreased slightly, but the number of institutions providing music and video materials increased. The data for computer games and board games were not collected in earlier studies; therefore, no comparisons could be made (Figure 6).

Only 10 respondents provided exact numbers for their monograph collections: the smallest collection was estimated at 450 and the largest at 6122 items. However, no valid conclusion could be made about the number of monographs per capita because the authors had no access to data regarding the number of inmates in individual correctional institutions. Interestingly, in a 2003 study, it was calculated that the size of library collections varied significantly across institutions: from 1.9 to 40 books per capita (Horvat and Nebesny, 2004: 132). Although seven respondents stated that their libraries had newspapers, only one respondent provided additional information and indicated that his/her library subscribed to two newspapers. In addition, only two out of six respondents who reported that their libraries had board games provided data on the size of the board game collection. Both of these libraries had up to 10 board games. Similarly, the

video collection was quite small – only 20 videos – in the only library for which data were obtained.

As far as the type of literature was concerned, fiction ( $N=20$ , 100%) and religious literature ( $N=17$ , 85%) were the most popular. This was followed by nonfiction ( $N=14$ , 70%), general reference ( $N=13$ , 65%), popular psychology or self-help literature ( $N=12$ , 60%) and educational textbooks ( $N=12$ , 60%). Surprisingly, only half of the respondents stated that their libraries provided access to legal literature and sources ( $N=10$ , 50%). In eight libraries (40%), the collections featured picture books. Similarly, local community resources and other reentry information could be found in six libraries (30%). Only four respondents (20%) stated that their library collected graphic novels and comic books. It is worth mentioning that in seven libraries (35%), the patrons had access to reading materials in languages other than Croatian (Figure 7).

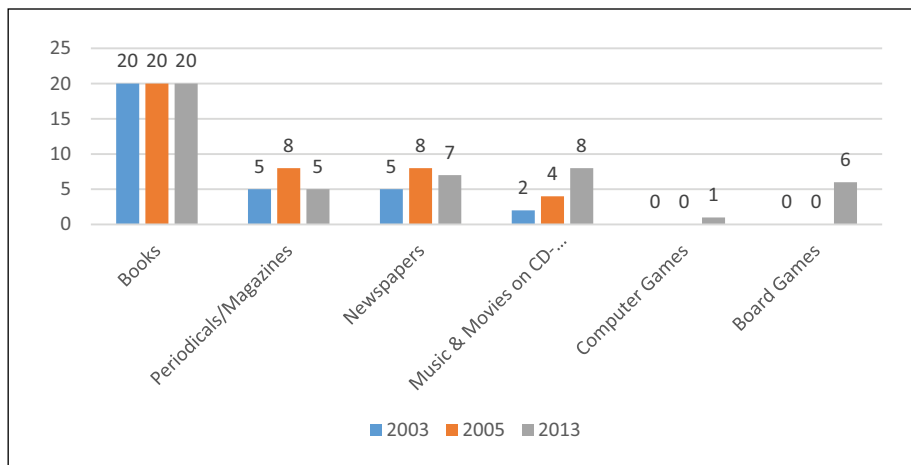
In seven libraries (35%), the material has not been processed in any way. In 13 institutions (65%), the library materials were processed in the form of the old-fashioned entry of library materials in an inventory book (Photograph 4). Eight respondents (40%) further elaborated that their collections were also searchable as MS Word document files or MS Excel sheets, and one respondent added that his/her institution had a card catalogue (Photograph 5). None of the libraries had implemented any library information software.

In comparison, the library materials were entered into an inventory book at 14 libraries in 2003 and 15 libraries in 2005. In addition, some kind of computer file containing the titles of all the books in the prison library was maintained in 12 libraries in both 2003 and 2005 (Figure 8).

When asked about collection assessment, 10 respondents (50%) stated that their collections had never been evaluated. Eight respondents (40%) reported that they conducted collection evaluation regularly, usually on an annual basis. One library collection (5%) was evaluated



**Photograph 3.** Overcrowded bookshelves in Pula Prison Library.



**Figure 6.** Types of library materials.

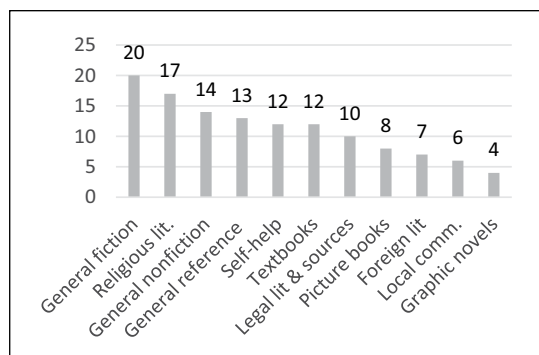


Figure 7. Types of literature.



Photograph 4. Pula Prison Library inventory.



Photograph 5. Pula Prison Library card catalogue.

once every five years, and another (5%) was evaluated once every 10 years. Further, answers to the following question showed that the libraries maintained a fairly regular programme of weeding library materials; stock that was irrelevant, out of date or physically inferior was discarded.

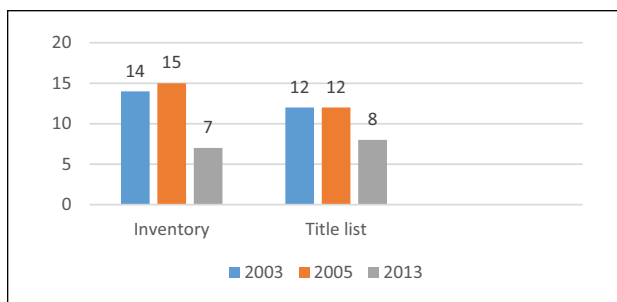
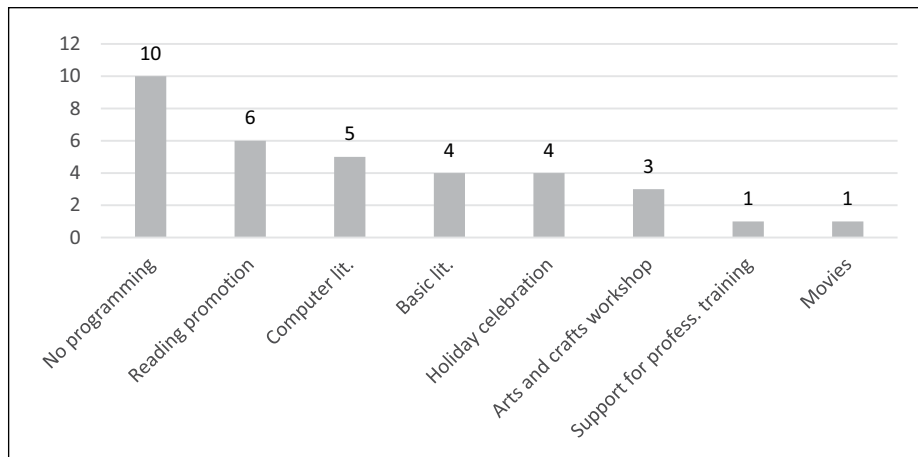


Figure 8. Processing of library materials.

Nine libraries did this once a year (45%), three libraries did it at least once every five years (15%) and three libraries did it once every 10 years (15%). However, five libraries (25%) did not comb through and discard materials from their collections at all.

With regard to programming and library equipment, the answers were quite disappointing. More than half of the respondents ( $N=11$ , 55%) stated that their libraries only served as places where reading materials could be obtained and that they did not provide any extra equipment for inmates. For example, only five respondents (25%) stated that both staff and inmates could use the computers (without Internet access) in the library. Telephone, radio or TV set, DVD player or LCD projector, printer and photocopying machine were reported to be in possession by one library each (5%).

The next question was the following: 'Which educational, cultural and rehabilitation programmes and activities does your library organise for inmates?' The majority of the respondents ( $N=10$ , 50%) indicated that no such programming took place in their library. Only six respondents (30%) stated that their libraries organised reading promotion programmes, and in five libraries (25%), computer literacy programmes for inmates were offered. In four libraries (20%), the inmates had access to basic literacy programmes (reading, writing, etc.) and were able to participate in holidays and celebrations. In three libraries (15%), the inmates were able to take part in arts and crafts workshops. In only one library (5%), the inmates were provided support for professional training, and one respondent stated that in his/her library, the inmates had opportunities to watch movies (5%) (Figure 9). Unfortunately, the inmates had no access to cultural programmes, such as concerts, movie nights, theatre shows, and so forth in any one library. What was even more disappointing was that none of the libraries organised or supported rehabilitation programmes which would provide inmates with opportunities to acquire the skills and knowledge necessary for their return to normal life and society (community information, workshops for parents, stress management, peaceful conflict resolution, preparation for job interviews, etc.).



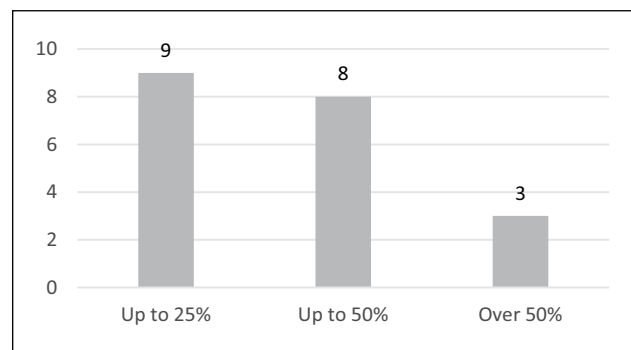
**Figure 9.** Library programming.

### Library use, statistics and satisfaction

The next section of the questionnaire referred to library users and usage. Optimistically, the respondents estimated that, in three institutions, the libraries were used by more than half of the prison population ( $N=3$ , 35%). While nine respondents (45%) stated that their libraries were used by up to 25% of the prison population, up to 50% of all the inmates used the libraries in eight prisons (40%). There are significant differences regarding the intensity of library use among inmate populations across institutions (Figure 10); nevertheless, the percentage of the inmate population using the prison libraries in Croatia is much bigger than that of the general population using public libraries in Croatia, which is estimated at 10 to 12%.

Apart from three institutions in which inmates are not permitted to visit the libraries by themselves due to security-level restrictions or the inaccessibility of the location of the libraries, in the majority of the institutions, the libraries are open from one to a maximum of 80 hours per week. The majority of the libraries ( $N=7$ , 35%) are open for up to 10 hours per week. Interestingly, in two institutions, the libraries are open 24 hours a day seven days a week, and users can access them at any time. This is probably the case in juvenile detention centres where the security measures are less strict than at prisons and jails. When asked about the security measures on the library premises, half of the respondents ( $N=10$ , 50%) stated that the inmates were allowed to visit the library in smaller groups and under supervision. In only three institutions, the libraries could be used without supervision (15%). In fewer than 50% of the institutions, reading materials were also delivered to inmates in their cells ( $N=9$ , 45%).

Due to a lack of study areas for inhouse use, it was not surprising that all types of library materials could be checked out at almost all the institutions ( $N=19$ , 95%). In one institution, outside-the-library use was reserved for monographs only (5%). In eight libraries (40%), there was



**Figure 10.** Prison library use.

no limit to the number of days that inmates could keep borrowed library materials. However, in six libraries (30%), the materials needed to be returned within a two-week period, and five libraries (25%) had set their return period at four weeks. The respondents indicated that in cases where inmates did not find a required item in the prison library collection, they had several options. They could buy it privately (through their family and friends who visited them) ( $N=14$ , 70%), obtain it through an interlibrary loan (ILL) ( $N=6$ , 30%) or borrow it from the bookmobile ( $N=1$ , 5%). However, in four libraries (20%), according to respondents, the inmates had no alternative way to access reading materials that the library did not own (Figure 11).

In most cases ( $N=12$ , 60%), the persons in charge of the libraries kept statistical records of borrowed items. Very rarely ( $N=6$ , 30%) did they keep track of individual users and their records. Six libraries (30%) did not keep any kind of statistical record of its users or collection usage. Nevertheless, the majority of the respondents ( $N=16$ , 80%) stated that they were interested in the reading habits and information needs of their users and that they had attempted to identify them (e.g. in casual conversation while in the library). Only one 'librarian' stated that he/she used a



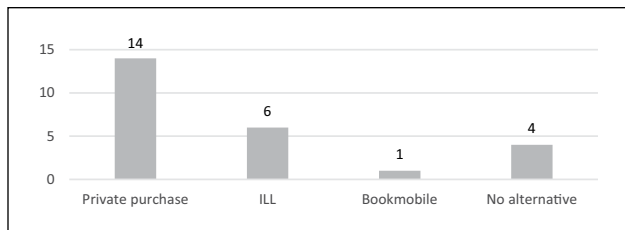


Figure 11. Alternative ways to obtain reading materials.

formal methodology (such as surveys, interviews, etc.) and designed a specific instrument to assess inmates' information needs and reading preferences. In three institutions (15%), the persons in charge of the libraries did not indicate any interest in inmates' reading habits and preferences, and user satisfaction was studied to an even lesser degree. While seven respondents (35%) indicated that they had informal chats with inmates to find out about their library experiences (35%), 12 respondents (60%) stated that they could not recall whether user satisfaction with collections and services had ever been assessed in their libraries (Figure 12).

### Library management and policy

The respondents were asked if their libraries had developed and maintained any of the strategic documents which support effective and efficient library management, such as a collection development policy, gift policy, annual plans and reports, library rules, and so forth. The majority of the respondents ( $N=11$ , 55%) stated that their libraries did not adopt any such documents. Only four libraries (20%) had produced their annual reports for 2012; in three libraries (15%), a formal document with general library rules was drafted; and two libraries (10%) had put together their annual plans for collection and programming in 2013 (Figure 13). It is interesting that only one library (5%) had in stock the *IFLA Guidelines for Library Services to Prisoners* (Lehmann and Locke, 2005), which is a primary tool for the planning, implementation and evaluation of library services for prisoners.

When asked about their relationship and the level of collaboration with public libraries, five respondents stated that there was no collaboration between them and their local public libraries (25%), and 11 (55%) indicated that they had only occasional contact with them, which was, as a rule, when local public libraries donated (discarded) materials to the prison libraries. Some libraries ( $N=6$ , 30%) operated an ILL scheme with local public libraries, and in one institution, the public library provided professional advice and guidance to the prison 'librarian' (5%). One respondent stated that the public library made the local prison a regular service point on its bookmobile route (5%) (Figure 14). The level of collaboration with local

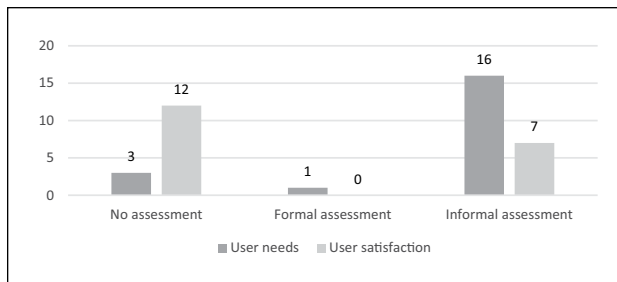


Figure 12. Assessment of user needs and user satisfaction.

public libraries had increased slightly over time: in 2003, nine libraries indicated that they collaborated with local public libraries, and there were 11 in 2005. The two main reasons for collaboration remained the same: the donation of discarded books and interlibrary lending.

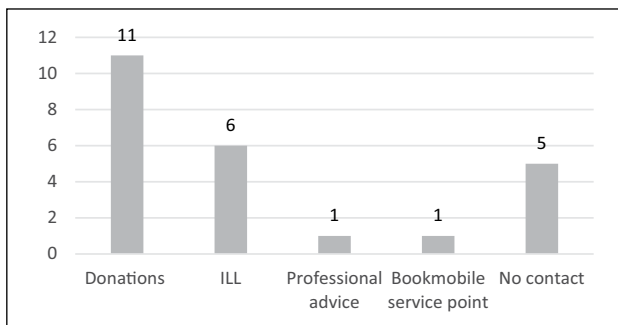
Finally, the respondents were asked to rate their agreement or disagreement on a Likert-type scale of 1 to 5 (1=strongly disagree, 5=strongly agree) with a number of statements regarding the free access to information and the role of reading and libraries in correctional institutions. It was interesting to see that although all but one respondent ( $N=20$ , 95.3%) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement that books and reading had a positive impact on incarcerated individuals (mean 4.76), fewer than half ( $N=10$ , 47.6%) believed that inmates should be granted free access to (print or electronic) information (mean 3.43). Furthermore, 19 respondents (90.5%) 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that the provision of free access to the Internet represented a security threat both for the prisons and their inmate population (mean 4.67). Although the majority of respondents ( $N=17$ , 80.5%) 'agreed' or 'strongly agreed' with the statement that libraries had an important role to play in the inmates' educational and cultural advancement (mean 4.52), the rehabilitation role of the prison libraries was recognised by fewer than half ( $N=9$ , 42.9%; mean 4.29). At the same time, while 19 respondents (90.4%) 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' that library collections and services should be based upon the needs of their patrons (mean 4.24), only nine respondents (42.9%) thought that a trained librarian was needed to provide a high-quality library service to the inmates (mean 3.43). Mean values for all statements are shown in Figure 15.

## Discussion

Although the majority of the study respondents believed that books and reading had a positive impact on incarcerated individuals (mean 4.76) and that libraries had an important role to play in the inmates' educational and cultural advancement (mean 4.52), library services in Croatia's prisons have not yet been accepted as an integral



**Figure 13.** Strategic documents in libraries.



**Figure 14.** Collaboration with local public libraries.

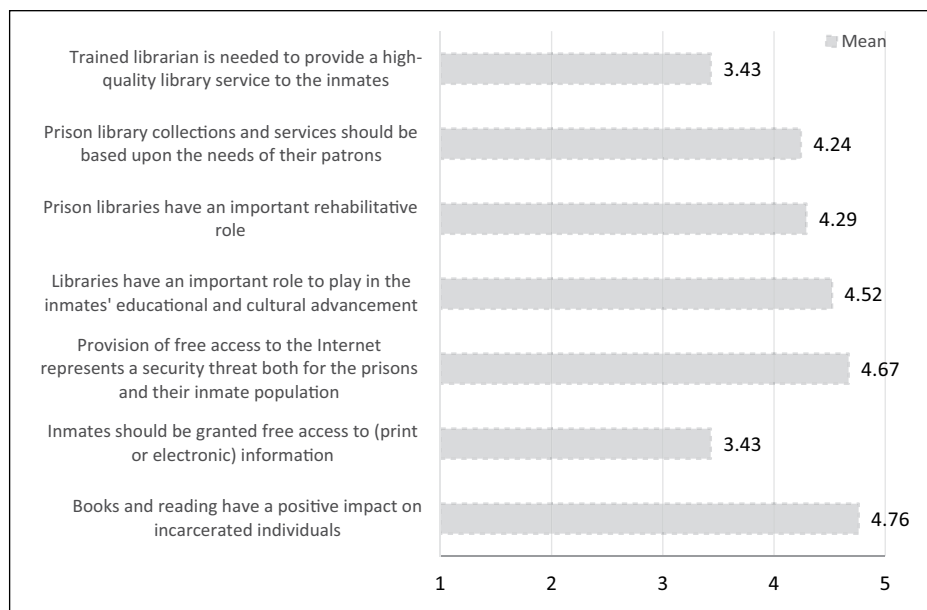
component of correctional services, and in many cases, the dated collections, sporadic programming, nonfunctional spaces and inaccessible locations can hardly be described as a 'library'. Moreover, the comparison of the obtained data with those of earlier studies showed that the situation in Croatia's prison libraries in general has worsened over the last 10 years.

While the number of prison libraries increased slightly over the period under study (20 in 2003, 19 in 2005 and 21 in 2013), the number of library study areas decreased significantly: there were six in 2003, 10 in 2005 and only one in 2013. In three institutions, the prisoners could not visit the library by themselves due to security issues and inadequate library locations. The survey also showed that the majority of institutions did not have dedicated library budgets and that library funds, where available, were unpredictable and inadequate. The number of regularly funded prison libraries decreased from six in 2003 to four in 2013. It is interesting to note that while almost half of the survey respondents (42.9%) thought that a prison librarian should possess a library qualification in order to run the library effectively (mean 3.43), none of the people in charge of the library at any of the institutions had a library degree. At only two institutions (10%), the library

was run by a prison officer whose main and only responsibility was the library. Moreover, since 2003, the number of libraries with solely inmates in charge has increased from four in 2003 to seven (35%) in 2013. The study also showed that prison librarians – that is, prison staff and inmates managing libraries – in Croatia's correctional institutions are provided with almost no professional guidance or training. It is also worth mentioning that only one respondent indicated that he regularly communicated with the local public library and sought professional guidance and advice. Therefore, it comes as no surprise that the number of libraries which have some kind of library catalogue is quite low: this figure decreased from 12 libraries in 2003 and 2005 to only eight in 2013.

The situation is further exacerbated by the fact that national minimum standards for prison libraries have not yet been specified, and different nonstandard methods for prison library operations are employed in institutions across the country. For example, none of the libraries had a written selection policy or gift policy which could provide at least a basic framework for the development of a balanced and responsive library collection. While the quality of the library collection cannot be judged without additional analysis, it is interesting to note that, according to the results of this study, religious literature could be found more frequently than legal literature in Croatia's prison libraries: 17 libraries reported having religious publications and only 10 had legal collections. It is also disappointing to see that local community resources and easy reading materials, such as comics and graphic novels, were found in only six and four libraries respectively. However, this lack of diverse reading materials is, to some extent, overcome by the possibility of personal purchases (in 14 libraries) and interlibrary loans (in six libraries).

Although this study reported a slight increase in the number of libraries which acquired materials regularly (none in 2003 and 2005, two in 2013) and a decrease in the



**Figure 15.** Perception of libraries and library services in prisons.

number of libraries which did not acquire any materials (from three in 2003 and 2005 to only one in 2013), the number of libraries which acquired materials occasionally is still quite high (17 libraries). It is also worth noting that, in 2013, only 10 libraries acquired their materials exclusively through donations, while it was the major acquisition model for 16 libraries in 2003 and 18 in 2005. Bearing all this in mind, it is no surprise that no one library has ever conducted a formal user needs analysis despite the fact that the majority of the respondents (90.4%) 'agreed' and 'strongly agreed' with the statement that library collections and services should be based upon the needs of their patrons (mean 4.24). With regard to programming, the study showed that reading promotion and computer literacy courses were the most frequent programmes in libraries although they were organised in only six and five libraries respectively. The majority of the respondents reported no programming (50%).

The situation regarding access to digital technology in Croatia's prisons is quite similar to that in other countries. In only five libraries (25%), the inmates had access to computers without a connection to the Internet. Since 19 respondents (90.5%) believed that the provision of free access to the Internet represented a security threat both for prisons and their inmate population (mean 4.67), any advancement in providing inmates in Croatia's prisons with access to computers and the Internet in the near future seems highly unlikely.

To conclude, it should be noted that the situation in Croatia's prison libraries is, to some extent, similar to the state of prison libraries in a number of other countries in which inaccessible and inadequate prison library facilities and unbalanced and unresponsive collections have also

been reported. Some other libraries in correctional facilities worldwide report similar challenges in their everyday work, the most important being inadequate and inconsistent funding, a lack of understanding of library work in the prison environment and unqualified library staff. As a result, prison libraries in Croatia have a long way to go to achieve the desired public library model and the provision of free access to diverse information and services that will meet the numerous needs of incarcerated persons.

## Conclusion

This study aimed to contribute to the general awareness of international library services for incarcerated populations by exploring the current state of Croatia's prison libraries. An attempt was also made to locate the topic of prison librarianship within the intellectual freedom and social justice philosophies. Since libraries in general are tasked with serving all communities and one of their most important roles is to improve people's lives, they must play a vital role in advancing the cause of social justice. In the paper, it was posited that prison libraries can contribute to the social justice agenda by developing responsive collections and supporting a variety of correctional and intervention programmes, providing inmates with opportunities to pursue cultural interests and becoming involved in cultural activities, helping inmates adjust to the realities of their lives within a correctional institution and providing skills and information that help them prepare for reintegration into the community.

In reviewing the current state of Croatia's prison libraries, it was found that they were unevenly developed, insufficiently funded, staffed by unqualified personnel and, in

general, did not meet the minimally acceptable service levels asserted by the international guidelines and standards for prison libraries. Their collections were developed mainly through donations and rarely provided cultural, educational or recreational programmes for inmates. Apparently, the situation has not changed much since 2003 when the first study on Croatia's prison libraries was undertaken.

In light of the present situation, immediate action is needed on several levels. The library profession should lobby for the establishment of libraries within Croatia's correctional institutions (as is already asserted in the national prison legislation), make a sustained effort to advocate prison librarianship in general and convince the Croatian prison administration that libraries are essential for a successful rehabilitation programme. It should not be forgotten that the massive endorsement of international documents propagating the establishment of and support for library and information services for incarcerated persons were, at first, the result of governments' awareness of the economic and social costs of recidivism. Once the decision makers embrace the idea of modern prison libraries, the prison administration should secure regular and adequate library funding, designate functional spaces and accessible locations, and employ qualified staff. In addition, all correctional institutions should establish tight collaboration with their local public libraries. Public library administrations, especially in communities with correctional institutions, should be reminded of their mandate to provide specific services and collections for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, visit the library (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, 1994). Depending on the prison's security level, public libraries could offer a wide array of services, such as building responsive library collections that would be regularly replaced, scheduling regular bookmobile stops and organising prisoners' visits to community library facilities. Moreover, national prison library guidelines or standards should be drafted to ensure standardised library operations and a minimal service level across the country. This document should serve as a tool for the planning, implementation and evaluation of library services for prisoners and should provide standards and benchmarks for library facilities, staffing, budgeting, collection development and programming. Substantial effort should also be made to incorporate prison librarianship into the accredited LIS curricula and professional development programmes.

Finally, if Croatia's prison libraries are to fulfil their role within the social justice agenda by upholding inmates' intellectual freedom rights, supporting their rehabilitation and facilitating their successful transition to the outside community while contributing to a reduction in recidivism, practical and moral support from the government, correctional system, the library profession and the general public is required. Only a concerted effort will result in a

fair and just community in which all are given equal chances and are encouraged to achieve their full potential.

### Funding

This research received no specific grant from any funding agency in the public, commercial, or not-for-profit sectors.

### Notes

1. The dates of publication of two earlier studies on Croatian prison libraries by Horvat and Nebesny (2004) and De Villa (2007) differ from the years in which the studies were conducted: Horvat and Nebesny carried out their study in 2003 (but published their results in 2004) and De Villa carried out her study in 2005 (but published the results in 2007). It is for this reason that these studies are referred to in this text as the 2003 or 2005 study.
2. All photographs used in the paper were taken by library staff in individual prison libraries and, in line with the ethical and security regulations stipulated by the Croatian prison system administration, do not show any persons.

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