



The Human Library

Inspiration for an anti stigma project in mental health ?

20/09/2014

Annual GAMIAN Convention
BUDAPEST

Rebecca Müller, Secretary General of GAMIAN-Europe



WHAT IS THE HUMAN LIBRARY PROJECT?

- The Human Library = method designed to promote dialogue, reduce prejudices and encourage understanding.
- The Human Library = mobile library set up as a space for dialogue and interaction.
- Visitors to a Human Library are given the opportunity to speak informally with “people on loan” = “Human books”
- One to one conversations (or in small groups) with the Human books (30 – 45 minutes)
- The Human Library enables groups to break stereotypes by challenging the most common prejudices in a positive and humorous manner.
- Concrete, easily transferable and affordable



HISTORY OF THE LIBRARY PROJECT

- The first Human Libabry was started in Copenhagen, Denmark.
- It started as a project of an idealistic youth organisation called "Stop The Violence", initiated by five youngsters after a mutual friend was stabbed in the nightlife (1993).
- The brutal attack on their friend, who luckily survived, made the five youngsters decide to try and do something about the problem.
- Aim: to raise awareness and use peer group education to mobilise danish youngsters against violence.
- In a few years the organisation had 30.000 members all over the country.



THE FIRST HUMAN LIBRARY - ROSKILDE

- In 2000 Stop The Violence was encouraged by then festival director, Mr. Leif Skov, to organise activities for [Roskilde Festival](#).
- So the first Human Library was born, as a challenge to the crowds of Northern Europe's biggest summer festival.
- There were 75 books available and it became a huge success. Before the first reader could take a book, the talks were going on intensively and the feeling of something special was in the air.
- The policeman sitting there speaking with the graffiti writer. The politician in discussions with the youth activist and the football fan in deep chat with the feminist. It was a win-win situation and has been ever since.



THE HUMAN LIBRARY ORGANIZATION

- The Human Library Organization is a network, founded in Copenhagen, Denmark by the creators of the Human Library, with financial aid from the Nordic Council of Ministers youth committee
- Objective = to unite active organizers from all parts of the world and to promote the use of the Human Library in efforts to create more social cohesion and respect for diversity and human rights.
- Through the global organizers forum and activities in countries around the world, the network will work to recruit and train new organisers, share experiences and further develop the methodology.



THE HUMAN LIBRARY WEBSITE

McAfee

HUMAN LIBRARY

Links Contact Us Press Archive FAQ

Readers Books Organizers Activities Gallery About

What's YOUR prejudice?

Welcome to the official Human Library website

13 August 2014 by Mikkel Steen Andersen

Human Library to open in Philippines

Slowly but surely the Human Library is spreading to all corners of the world. Coming up now is the Philippines, when on August 14th, 2014, the University of La Salle in Manila, will host the very ...

Human Library to open in Philippines »

26 November 2013 by Ronni Abergel

International Forum on Human Library development in the ASEAN

In partnership with Rajamangala University of Technology Isan (RMUTI) we are calling for all local organizers in the ASEAN countries to come together for the first International Forum ...

International Forum for Human Library Organizers in ASEAN. »

News

News - 13 August 2014
Human Library to open in Philippines

News - 26 November 2013
International Forum for Human Library Organizers in ASEAN.

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Activities - 04 October 2014
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Facebook social plugin

Neckermann Prijzverlaging

http://humanlibrary.org/activities/

Postva... GAMIA... Micros... Human... HUMA... NL 19:17



THE HUMAN LIBRARY METHODOLOGY

- The services of the Human Library has always been free to its public.
- The same goes for new organizers that want to start working with the methodology. An idea with a potential and purpose such as this must be free for all and that is the philosophy of the inventors.
- Soon after the first event, Peter Wootsch of the Sziget Festivals Civil Island, staged an event in Hungary and after that another was introduced in Norway.
- Since 2003, the [Council of Europe](#) has been the biggest supporter of the development and promotion of Human Library programs.



THE HUMAN LIBRARY – COUNCIL OF EUROPE

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Council of Europe website. The browser's address bar shows the URL <http://www.coe.int/en/web/about-us/who-we-are>. The website header includes the Council of Europe logo and the text 'Council of Europe' in both English and French. A navigation menu is visible with options like 'The Council in brief', 'Human Rights', 'Democracy', 'Rule of Law', 'Organisation', '47 Countries', 'Topics', and 'Newsroom'. The main content area is titled 'THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IN BRIEF' and features a 'Presentation' section. This section contains two columns of text: the first describes the Council as the continent's leading human rights organization with 47 member states, and the second describes the European Court of Human Rights' role in overseeing the implementation of the Convention. Below the text are four images: a large assembly hall, the Council's modern architecture, a flagpole with many flags, and a meeting room. A 'Corporate film' section is also visible at the bottom left. On the right side, there is a 'Did you know?' box and a 'PRACTICAL INFO' section with links to 'Free resources', 'Online bookshop', 'Mediatheque', 'Visits of the Council of Europe', and 'Visits of Lieu d'Europe'. The browser's taskbar at the bottom shows various open applications and the system clock at 19:57.

Accessibility | Go to contents | Sitemap

EN FR DE IT RU AZ INTRANET ACCESS This site

COUNCIL OF EUROPE
CONSEIL DE L'EUROPE

Council of Europe

The Council in brief Human Rights Democracy Rule of Law Organisation 47 Countries Topics Newsroom

You are here: [COE en bref](#) > [Who we are](#)

Who we are What we do Our history Our member States How to distinguish us Official logo

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE IN BRIEF

Presentation

- The Council of Europe is the continent's leading human rights organisation. It includes 47 member states, 28 of which are members of the European Union. All Council of Europe member states have signed up to the European Convention on Human Rights, a treaty designed to protect human rights, democracy and the rule of law.
- The European Court of Human Rights oversees the implementation of the Convention in the member states. Individuals can bring complaints of human rights violations to the Strasbourg Court once all possibilities of appeal have been exhausted in the member state concerned. The European Union is preparing to sign the European Convention on Human Rights, creating a common European legal space for over 820 million citizens.

THE COUNCIL OF EUROPE ABOUT US

Did you know?
Since 1972, the [European anthem](#) has been an excerpt from the prelude to the Ode to Joy from Beethoven's 9th Symphony

PRACTICAL INFO

- Free resources
- Online bookshop
- Mediatheque
- Visits of the Council of Europe
- Visits of Lieu d'Europe

Corporate film

Inside the Council of Europe - EN



THE HUMAN LIBRARY METHODOLOGY

- Location:
 - Public Library sector
 - Educational institutions (high schools, colleges)
 - Music festivals and other events where large groups of people meet
 - Book fairs
- Human Books:
 - Volunteers
 - Recruitment via interviews
 - Variety in titles
 - Support and follow up with the volunteers
 - Prepare them for the interviews

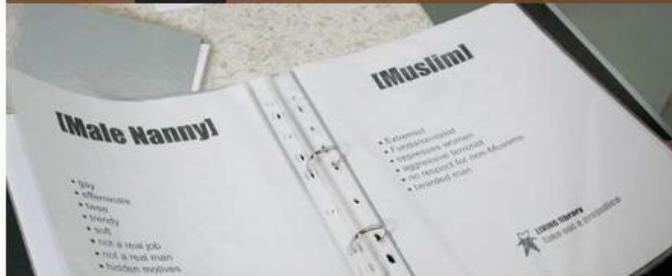


THE HUMAN LIBRARY



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What makes a bestseller in the Human Library

It's often that organizers are met with the question: "Who was the most popular book in the Human Library?" And it's not just a question coming from journalists, but also readers and books are curious to know, what the most sought after title was.



The bestsellers are defined by librarians, as the books that have the most requests for loans from readers. Here a group of readers only counts as one loan. Over the years there have been many different bestsellers in different countries.

Prejudices are similar and different from country to country. In many ways there are clear comparisons to be made, in the way some groups are perceived by the majority. But there are also big differences, and they all have an impact on the bestseller outcome.

To give an example, in Denmark at the first Human Library (Roskilde Festival 2000), one of the bestsellers was the young arabic muslim. While in Hungary in 2002, it was the ex-right wing extremist. In Portugal it was the refugee and in England the homeless and the ex-gang member. It all depends on the given situation and the atmosphere in the local community. What is being debated right now? Recent events that caught media attention? And finally traditional prejudices as those that exist about the members of the Roma community.

At every Human Library there is bound to be a bestseller or more. So you can argue, they are not necessarily to be seen as an indication of what is stirring in the pot. However it's fair to say, that the most requested titles can be linked with current events locally. In a recent London event, the ex-gang member was by far the most requested. This has to be seen in the light of sixteen gang related killings in five months on the streets of London.

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3,857 people like Human Library Organization.

Neckermann
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THE HUMAN LIBRARY METHODOLOGY

- Readers:
 - Because reading in the Human Library is unlike any kind of reading you will ever get a chance to do again.
 - You become a reader because you realise that there is information available to you, that you cannot obtain elsewhere or obtain only under these circumstances.
 - Information that can help you understand things and people better.
- Librarians:
 - Volunteers that are present at the location and welcome the readers
 - Explain how it works: loan of a human book for 30 to 45 minutes
 - Help with choosing a title



THE HUMAN LIBRARY WEBSITE

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HUMAN LIBRARY

Readers Books **Organizers** Activities Gallery About

How to become an organizer

Once you have decided you want to organise a Human Library, you need to **contact** the Human Library Organization. We will then send you an Event Application Form to be filled out. When your event has been processed you will receive a letter confirming the terms for your use of the artwork, methodology and concept. This to ensure quality in events, synergy in the brand and to avoid political or commercial abuse of the concept.

What's YOUR prejudice?

LIVING library
Takes out a prejudice

Quality events demand good preparation

It's not difficult to become an organizer, it's difficult to organise a good Human Library. The first events are usually good practice, and the free guide to new organizers is a handy tool, to help get started. But what is needed most, in order to become an organizer of the Human Library, is time and determination. Many have staged great events, and thousands more will follow, but one key thing to the Human Library, is that it needs clear aims and objectives. And must not be abused for commercial purposes, or to give profile to a specific political party.

Who are the organizers?

A wide range of different organisations and institutions practice the Human Library methodology now. The majority of organizers are working within the public library sector, and the second largest group is the youth organisations and non-governmental organisations such as the Scouts or the National Youth Council. A few are initiatives setup only to produce Living Libraries, such as this Network, Human Library UK, Kultour DK and the Living Books in Austria. For all that use this methodology goes, that they are concerned with human rights, and willing to work to introduce new ways for people to come together. All Living Libraries are free, and so is the use of the methodology with clear reference stating source and this website.

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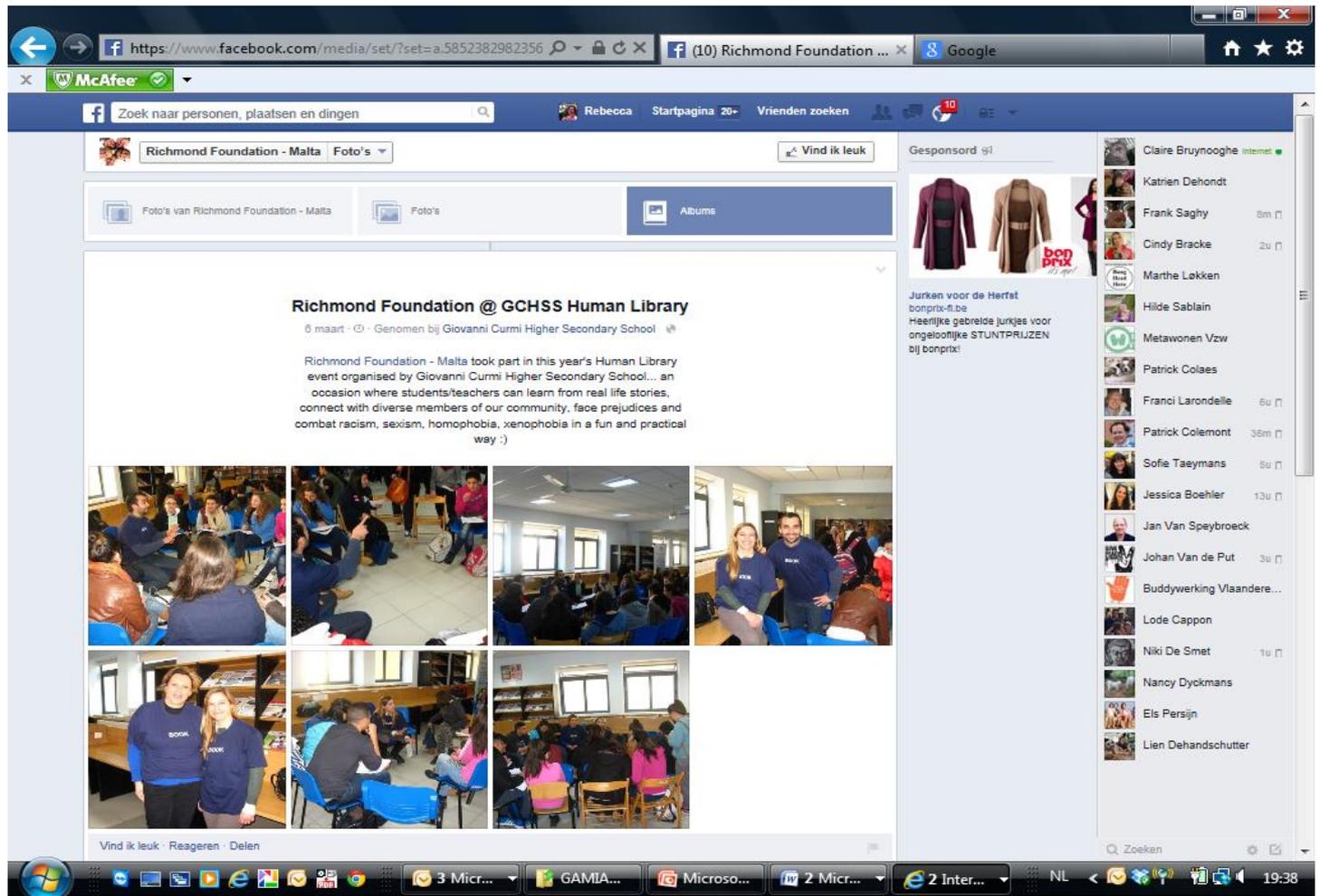


HOW TO BECOME AN ORGANIZER ?

- If you want to organize your own Human Library event you can contact the Human Library Organization and get practical support:
 - Once you have decided you want to organise a Human Library, you need to [contact](#) the Human Library Organization.
 - Event Application Form to be filled out.
 - When your event has been processed you will receive a letter confirming the terms for your use of the artwork, methodology and concept.
 - This to ensure quality in events, synergy in the brand and to avoid political or commercial abuse of the concept.

EXPERIENCE BY GAMIAN MEMBER

- Richmond Foundation organized a Human Libabry event at Naxxar Higher Secondary School on 6-3-2014



The screenshot shows a Facebook post from the page "Richmond Foundation - Malta". The post is titled "Richmond Foundation @ GCHSS Human Library" and is dated "6 maart". The text of the post reads: "Richmond Foundation - Malta took part in this year's Human Library event organised by Giovanni Curmi Higher Secondary School... an occasion where students/teachers can learn from real life stories, connect with diverse members of our community, face prejudices and combat racism, sexism, homophobia, xenophobia in a fun and practical way :)"

Below the text is a grid of seven photographs showing the event. The photos depict people sitting in a circle, some in conversation, and others standing in a library setting. Two individuals are wearing blue t-shirts with "BONPRIX" printed on them.

On the right side of the screenshot, there is a "Gesponsord" (Sponsored) section featuring a "bonprix" advertisement for winter coats. Below the advertisement is a list of friends, including Claire Bruynooghe, Katrien Dehondt, Frank Saghy, Cindy Bracke, Marthe Lokken, Hilde Sablain, Metawonen Vzw, Patrick Colaes, Franci Larondelle, Patrick Colemont, Sofie Taeymans, Jessica Boehler, Jan Van Speybroeck, Johan Van de Put, Buddywerking Vlaandere..., Lode Cappon, Niki De Smet, Nancy Dyckmans, Els Persijn, and Lien Dehandschutter.

The browser address bar shows the URL "https://www.facebook.com/media/set/?set=a.5852382982356". The browser tabs include "f (10) Richmond Foundation ...", "Google", and "McAfee". The Windows taskbar at the bottom shows the system tray with the date "19-38" and various application icons.



EXPERIENCE BY RICHMOND FOUNDATION

Selection of 'Human Books'

- Richmond Foundation staff trained in Public speaking were invited to share their experiences during the Human Library event. Housing Coordinator, KIDs Senior Therapeutic Worker and Home Support Worker offered to help out on the day.
- This did not cause extra workload for Richmond: the Foundation's public speakers are expected to attend such events on a regular basis to help raise awareness about various projects/ outreach.
- The request from Naxxar Higher Secondary School came through at a short notice (unfortunately) so it was difficult for Richmond to find clients willing to speak up.



EXPERIENCE BY RICHMOND FOUNDATION

Schedule/Topics Discussed

- Senior Therapeutic Worker attended the morning shift while Housing Coordinator and Home Support Worker split the afternoon shift.
- Groups of students gathered round; topics varied from mental health (in general) to Richmond's Services, workers' role in this sector, clarification of any misconceptions in the field etc.



EXPERIENCE BY RICHMOND FOUNDATION

Evaluation & Future Participation

- Richmond Foundation was able to engage with a particular group of people thanks to the Human Library; young citizens who are susceptible to exam stress, anxiety and other problematic psychological situations which may arise among teenagers during school/college life.
- These events are a great opportunity for the Foundation to reach out and we look forward to participating again in 2015; the effects can be measured by the number of follow up calls / messages / interactions with staff / referrals to Richmond shortly after the event.
- For the 2015 edition, Richmond will do its best to recruit 2-3 clients/people with mental health problems who are willing to share their experience's among youth



THE HUMAN LIBRARY: AN INSPIRATION ?

- The Human Library Project seems to be an event that can also be used in Mental Health settings as a tool to combat stigma and prejudice against people coping with mental illness.

Some questions arise here:

- Do we not preach to the converted: only those people with an open mind are willing to become readers ?
- Do we reach the people with strong prejudices with these kind of projects ?
- It may be better to focus on schools where young people in class room settings participate: you reach everybody at a class activity where everybody must participate, not only the open minded students?
- Can the use of patients as human books be experienced as in itself disrespectful and stigmatising ?



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Thank you for your attention

www.gamian.eu