



**Little users: big prospects: Children Library of Gandia**

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**Abstract:**

*Gandia is an open and multicultural city, where migration rate had increase year by year, this leads to a bigger society implication in new cultural and educative knowledge achievement. From Children and Young Adults Library of Gandia we try to approach with ease and without conditions to this big block of girls, boys and teenagers who come from diverse countries and gradually accede to all activities generated daily by the city. We are aware that linguistic distance can produce defencelessness and isolation on the newcomers. We think that early intercultural approach through games and reading encouragement, with programs where different cultural habits are represented, can make an easier familiarization with those “other” cultures and favour people’s awareness and understanding.*

*The library, in accordance with its user training programs, approaches both public and private schools of the city, visiting them by levels. Always with tales and through tales, inviting pupils to enjoy reading and participating in library activities, as the best learning and leisure alternative out of scholar schedule.*

*For the youngest, from 0 to 3 years old, we coordinate activities and reading proposals with children schools and kindergartens, as a part of our “Babyteque” program, in which library services are offered to mothers and fathers in order to share music, games and tales with their children, also helping with bibliography selection related with upbringing in their own language, if possible.*

*We attend schooling process, contributing with information and a personal invitation to come to the library, because we think that family, library and school is the best three-way connection to guarantee proper social, affective, intellectual and emotional development of our children. Likewise, we collaborate with different nature collectives implied on children education, both inside and outside local ambit: Intercultural Centre, Neighbours Association, Breastfeeding Support Groups, Cultural Weeks from all region schools, etc.*

*Generally, newcomer families in our city are concerned about the possibility that their children lose touch with their cultural roots and language, that is why we started a suitableness program of our facilities and services, with which we achieved:*

- *Rise and diversify of the collection, with books, videos, cd's and games in which we focus on the representation of all languages and cultures of living communities in our city and region.*
- *Offer an activity program considering the existence of big cultural diversity, favouring participation of different collectives.*
- *Improve diversity attention through the Multicultural Committee mediation, which helps on comprehension and awareness of different needs and demands that come from diversity itself.*

*We conduct all of our work with full convincement that reading can help big purposes if we take the most of it as an efficient tool in little daily challenges.*

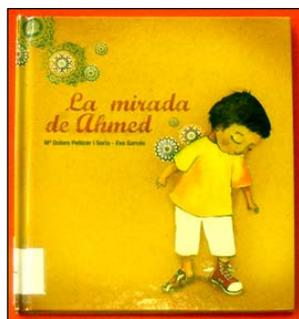
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*When Ahmed arrived to our country, didn't want to go to school.  
HE FELT SO STRANGE!*

*Also felt strange in the street, in the squares and in gardens, or  
when he went shopping and didn't understand the clerk.*

*Days when he happily ran across his town were far away.*

*He sometimes recalled that little town with narrow streets and  
the house were he was born, white and small..."*

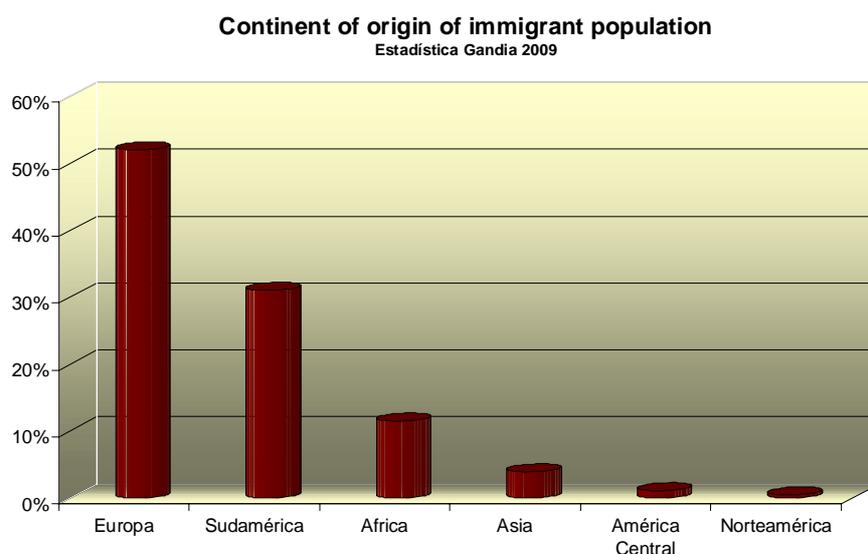


*La mirada de Ahmed  
(Ahmed's sight)  
Mª Dolores Pellicer i Soria.  
Tandem edicions*

## **I - INTRODUCTION**

Gandia is a city that has seen a rise of it's migration rate, and with it, it's population year by year-, that's why Children and Young Adults Library achieves an easy and non-demanding approach to different cultures, thinking in girls and boys, adolescents and adults, from “other countries”, that have a gradual access to

all activities generated day by day by the city, contributing a great diversity of cultures, religions and languages to community.



Fuente: Departamento Municipal de Estadística

We are aware that linguistic distance can generate helplessness and isolation to newcomers. That is why we think that early intercultural approach, through reading encouragement, games, new technologies, and the socialization that occurs at the library can generate personal and intellectual growing, it aids acquisition of new knowledge and provides a wider perspective of surrounding reality, facilitating familiarization with that “other” cultures and favouring knowledge and understanding between people. In the library were, necessary tools for solving elementary needs related primarily with scholar environment, are found.



The library not only integrates and discovers new prospects, but also has to help keeping roots, to be in touch with the present, the values and personal relations with home countries.

Achieve that all ethnic, linguistic, and cultural groups, whether minority or majority, enjoy a library service on the same level, according to the same criteria is the main goal of Children and Young Adults Library of Gandia.

Before starting to develop and plan our job, a lot of questions came to us ¿how do we receive new visitors? ¿are we really committed and personally prepared? ¿how to access to a multilingual collection? ¿do we need a different facility? ¿do we have to provide information in all languages represented in our city?... I hope that our experience serves right to see things simpler and easier to apply in other libraries. First thing needed is a big dose of commitment by library staff and users.

To carry out this programme Children Library relies on Multicultural Committee, adult people from different nationalities which collaborate with us helping and facilitating contact with different collectives, publicising our facilities and offering library as a place to meet, to study, for leisure and learning, because we think that not only linguistic distance but also heart distance can generate helplessness and isolation to newcomers.



All of our activities are publicised through the library and also local media (press, radio, TV).



Children library does not close for vacation; we are a city with an important touristic flux, that's why in Christmas, Easter and especially in summer we programme a lot of activities and workshops to experiment with the word in the most playful way.

## II - SPACES

Children and Young Adults library of Gandia counts with two rooms, a young one, from 9 to 14 year old, and a children one, intended for 0 to 8 year old, always accompanied by parents.

The children room library is on the ground floor, with direct access from a square full of games and children, restricted access to cars, which facilitates children's mobility.

Counts with colourful furniture adapted to their needs, where child tales are always the main dish and are classified by:

- 0-3 year old
- 3-5 year old
- 5-8 year old
- Special readings adapted to first readers

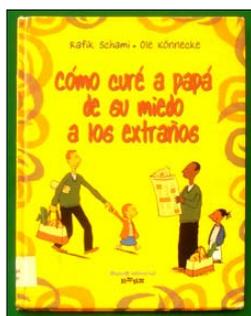


The library has audiovisual material like videos, CD, CD-R, children magazines and educational games.

Also 2 computers for children use, which can be operated with their library user card and for a maximum time of 30 minutes a day. Lending service is stipulated in a maximum of 12 items, every user can do its own choice between books, DVD, CD and CD-ROM. Lending length is 15 days for books -renewable-, and 1 week for the rest of items. We also accept reservations, suggestions of new acquisitions, and we offer the possibility to cater special library cards for collectives, with a bigger number of items and longer length.

Our facilities are thought and designed exclusively for children and young adults, where parents accompany the youngest in book and reading discovery. The fact of reading or understanding our languages (Valencian and Spanish) is not a goal for themselves, but is related to children education and learning, to help them in scholar duties and to generate a reading habit to fulfil education objectives.

*“Daddy is tall and strong and smart and kind and funny, but was afraid of strangers, especially from emigrants. He never talked about it, but I noticed. If we encountered a Moroccan in the street he startled and hold tight my hands. And one time, in the elevator, started to sweat when a hefty African came in. I was surprised. ¿What happens?, I asked him. I am afraid of them...”*



*Cómo curé a papá de su miedo a los extraños.*  
*(How I healed daddy his fear to strangers)*  
Rafik Schami, Ole Könnecke.  
RqueR editorial.

How do we achieve all considered goals and intentions? Always hand in hand with the MULTICULTURAL COMMITTEE, we develop the EDUCATIONAL READING PLAN, which aim is the development of life long learning activities integrated in society through reading.

### III - ACTIVITIES

*"Paolo, Jean, Kurt, Yuri, Jimmy, Chu and Pablo were seven, but always the same kid, that was 8 year old, knew how to read and write and rode a bike without hands.  
Now the seven have grew up and would never declare war themselves because the seven are the same man..."*



*Uno y siete*  
*(One and seven)*  
Gianni Rodari  
SM

#### ▫ Tale time

We often observe how some parents benefit from children books (imaginary, first reader tales, classic tales...) also to learn. It enforces affective links between parents and children.

All Wednesday's afternoon, open to all public (specially starting from 3 year old) library receives a story teller to get delighted with its tales.



We try to count with a wide variety story tellers and tales, because everyone with its own style and its own way to relate shapes an important background on children.

## ▫ Bebeteca (Babyteque)

Is the space of the youngest, the babies, with a collection of books chosen on purpose to cover the needs of babies and parents.

Thursday is the day that we carry out activities for the very little. Such as storytellers, games in other languages, music and traditional songs, creation workshops... All of them free, on the afternoon for half an hour, registration is needed to participate, because we only work with 13 gals and guys every session, in order to achieve optimum quality.



Children always remain carried by parent's arms. This way, activities reinforce affective ties, and let them share experiences with other children and learn to listen, to become great readers in the future.



To start this program we contact nursery schools, whit which we settle activities for the youngest from 0 to 3 year old, inviting them to know our *Bebeteca* program, where we offer library services to mothers and fathers in order to share music, games and tales with their children, also helping with bibliography selection related with upbringing in their own language, if possible.

## ▫ First schooling moment

We attend schooling process, contributing with information and a personal invitation to come to the library, because we think that family, library and school is the best three-way connection to guarantee proper social, affective, intellectual and emotional development of our children.



## ▫ Scholar user training program

The library, in accordance with its user training program, approaches to all public or private schools of the city, visiting them by levels. Always with tales and through tales (images are beyond languages), inviting pupils to enjoy reading, also to participate in library activities as the best learning and leisure alternative out of scholar schedule.

The program is about activities aimed to all schools both within our city and abroad, collectives, associations and other entities that work with children.



Scholar visits are made with 25-30 people; library suggests a different activity every year: the wolf figure, the tree, the moon, the "Ratoncito Pérez", "Don Quijote de la Mancha"...



With tales, and through tales, future library users are forged, from 3 year old they come with their teachers to know library space and out of their scholar Schedule return anxious with their relatives to pick up their library card and their *knight or princess of the library title*, which is personally given with all honours by the librarian.

Activities are made by the same librarians with a length of about 45-60 minutes, and are adapted depending on the age of the pupils that come to visit us.

## ▫ Collaboration with other collectives

We collaborate with different nature collectives implied on children education and its multiple aspects, both inside and outside local ambit, and they are aware of community minorities needs.



- \* Social interest collectives: Intercultural Centre, Neighbours Associations, Cultural Weeks from all region schools, Breastfeeding Support Groups, "Cruz Roja", etc.

## ▫ Festivities

The library, always aware of actuality, organizes activities and Workshops to commemorate special festivities: World day without Tobacco, Peace Day, Book Day, Borja Year, Carnivals, ... These are free workshops where the participants have to be previously registered.



## ▫ Workshops

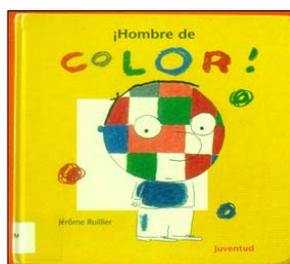
Because we think that integration not only depends on those who arrive with their cultural heritage but also from those of us who are settled in our city, learning and increasing our knowledge that every newcomer provides to our life: culture, gastronomy, art, languages..., the Children Library with the Multicultural Committee organizes workshops, storyteller sessions, typical celebrations of other countries, gastronomic activities, etc., made by native citizens from other countries.

With them we met the Bulgarian *Baba Marta*, the Moroccan *Henna* tattoos, learned how to play *Djembé* the Senegalese way, listened traditional Romanian tales, understood the Chinese alphabet, etc.



## CHILDREN LIBRARY: A PLACE TO GET ACQUAINTED WITH CULTURAL DIVERSITY

"Me, black man, I was born black. You, white man, were born pink.  
I, grew up black. You, grew up white.  
I, sunbathing, I'm black. You, sunbathing, are red..."

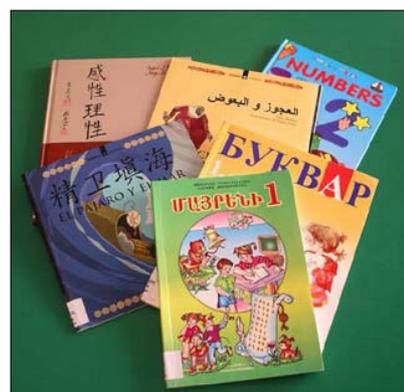


*¡Hombre de color!*  
(Coloured man!)  
Jérôme Ruillier  
Juventud

Generally, newcomer families in our city are concerned about the possibility that their children lose touch with their cultural roots and language. That is why we started a suitability program of our facilities and services, with which we achieved:

❶ Rise and diversify of the collection, with books, videos, CD's and games in which we focus on the representation of all languages and cultures of living communities in our city and region. Let's not forget that mother tongue is feelings tongue, the contact with relatives they left at home country. The library helps this

children to know, maintain, develop and not to forget their roots and at the same time to enrich their knowledge of different languages.



The new language is the key to the society that welcomes them, to the school, to the friends, to the customs, and in this case the youngest are the ones that carry their parents wherever they go and make them take part of a new reality in which, with time, will make them feel good, accompanied, providing help and answers to most questions and it will be a meeting and reference point with people of their same country.

In the Children Library of Gandia we can find classic tales in Arabic, Romanian, Bulgarian, Russian, Armenian, Chinese, French, Portuguese...



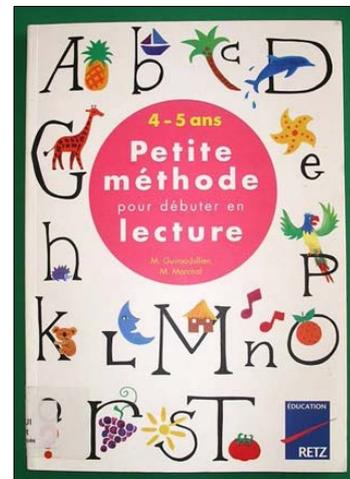
② Offer an activity program considering the existence of big cultural diversity, favouring participation of different collectives.



⑤ Improve attention to diversity through the Multicultural Committee mediation, which has its head office in the same library and counts with different origin collaborators who help on comprehension and awareness of different needs and demands that come from diversity itself, approaching every collective in their own language and inviting them to the library, showing its facilities and opening a dialogue that slowly becomes very productive for both sides.



Every time more and more adults come to the library in search of basic information, simple readings and kindness that makes easier the approach and doubt resolution, both inside and outside scholar ambit.



④ A very positive statistics of Children and Young Adults Library show use of the library by the new multicultural communities, not only on lending but also in participation in weekly library activities.



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We conduct all of our work with full conviction that books and reading are magnificent tools to open windows to the world, they can and have to serve big purposes if we take the most of it as an efficient tool in little daily challenges.

Integration must be done as the “IFLA manifest for multicultural library” recommends, from tolerance, dialogue and cooperation, making easy the right for information whatever user’s age is, because it is a necessary condition for human development, regardless of colour, language, origin or culture labels, guarantying the use of the library as a meeting space and cultural exchange, consolidating services that serve their needs and social integration.

Our primary objective is to settle and implement our project and to contribute from the library to our children natural valuation of other cultures and their coexistence.

*"We mix! Yes, after thinking a lot about it, we arrived to one conclusion. Humans get mixed."*



*Ens barregem!  
(We mix!)  
Juanolo  
Tandem*



*Lola Camarena Martínez - Gisela Sendra Pérez  
Gandia Public Library Network  
Gandia - Valencia - Spain  
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