



## **Developing New Services in a Suburban Context – Myllypuro Reading Room becomes a Media Library**

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**Session:**

**173 — Twinning physical learning spaces and new media initiatives - new ways to reach library customers — Metropolitan Libraries**

### **Abstract:**

*Myllypuro Reading Room was founded in 1997 as part of the City of Helsinki Neighbourhood Project. The Reading Room became the Myllypuro Media Library in 2011 with new premises, facilities and service model. The aim of the project is to increase the attractiveness of the declining suburban areas and to prevent the inequality between different areas.*

*The Myllypuro Media Library aims to support the inhabitants of the area as active citizens in the modern digital world. The Media Library is chosen to the Word Design Capital Helsinki 2012 program because of its new service design.*

*New services offered to users are e-journals, e-books; laptops, tablet-computers, iPads, e-readers, video cameras, studio for editing audiovisual material, presentation tools including sound reproduction equipment, lights and robot cameras; and most importantly the support of a media-assistant.*

*The Media Library collaborates with the City of Helsinki Social Services Office and local community associations. The good co-operation between these actors has its roots in the old Reading Room, where they operated in the same premises.*

*The Media Library is an open learning space for users and also for the Helsinki City Library staff to learn new competences needed in future libraries. The Media Library serves as a pilot project for the new functions of the upcoming Helsinki Central Library and hopefully also for other libraries.*

## **Background**

Myllypuro is a suburb in eastern Helsinki. The inhabitants are mostly low income people and quite a lot of immigrants live there. The Myllypuro Reading Room was founded in 1997 as part of the Helsinki City's "Neighbourhood project". The aim of the project is to increase the attractiveness of the declining suburban areas. The aim of the library is to support the inhabitants as active citizens. Reading Room was affiliated to the Library of Itäkeskus.

Reading Room premises were used both by the library and the social services department. Library served as a meeting point for the associations of local people. The premises were small and modest. Library services were restricted, for example it was only possible to read newspapers and magazines and to use computers. Library services were taken care of by one library assistant and a non-military servant.

Local people had long been hoping to get a better place for their activities. Finally in 2008 the City of Helsinki decided to build new premises for local inhabitant associations and the library. The whole suburb of Myllypuro in eastern Helsinki is in the middle of building process. The shopping centre is being rebuilt and there will be a lot of new houses and inhabitants in its vicinity.

The Library was opened in December 2011 with a new name and service profile. The new Media Library lies in the middle of the new shopping centre in the same building with the community house for associations and a Cafe.

The new Media Library itself is very small but it can use the meeting room and hall of the community house. There are very good technical equipments for meetings and events in the premises. Library acquired all the technical equipments, video projectors, sound systems, lights, robot cameras et cetera. Part of the money was received from the Neighbourhood Project Fund.

There are three regular staff members and two non-military servants in the library. They have been chosen to fit in with the new service demands. For example, special skills are needed in the studio and image processing.

## **Co-operation and models**

Myllypuro Media Library needs companions, co-operation, pioneers and models to follow.

Library still operates in the same building with the social services department. The social department hands over the use of their premises to local associations. The good co-operation between library, social department and local associations has its roots in the experiences gathered from the functions that had taken place in the old premises. Library co-operates also with other municipal organizations, e.g. the Youth Department and the Sports Department of Helsinki.

The Myllypuro Media Library is a sister project for the Meetingpoint@lasipalatsi, which was founded 2005 in the heart of the city. It is a public service point that provides guidance and advice regarding computer problems and electronic services. They have partners and network for co-operation, which are useful for the Media Library too. What happens in the heart of the city should also happen in the suburbs.

Another model to follow is the services of Library 10 in the city centre. They don't have a full traditional library collection but bestsellers and pocket books. They are specialised in music and they offer even a music studio for the clients to use. There is also a small stage for performances and happenings.

## Services

Distribution of physical materials and logistics will not be in such an important role as it is in libraries today. The Small Media Library don't offer traditional all around physical collections of a library. There are only magazines, a small bestseller- book collection and returned materials for clients to borrow. In addition, Media Library is a picking point of reserved materials.

The technical development and digitalization of materials is a challenge for most of the adult population. You may say that some groups are in danger of falling by the wayside as regards using digital media. The main task of the Media Library is to prevent displacement and to support and give guidance with new technical equipments and materials. Staff members have competences in new media and technical solutions.

New services offered:

- Library has a lot of material in digital form, for example newspapers and e-books. Library wants clients to get used to them. In the Media Library there are pc-computers, laptops, iPads, tablet-computers and e-readers.
- Library lends out video cameras, which can be used to create own media. Clients own production can be edited in the studio or with the "media laptops" of the library. Library staff supports clients in editing their own materials.
- In June 2012 Media Library got ten Samsung tablet computers for clients to borrow. Tablets have 6 new books installed to be read free of charge. Tablets and e-books are donated for the library by private companies. The aim of this project is to get clients used to new technical equipment so as to enhance their ability to follow ever changing media.
- Audiovisual material can be edited, both sound and pictures, in a small studio. The studio is connected to the community house hall, which has presentation equipment such as sound reproduction t, lights and robot cameras. Material can even be shot into internet or TV with the equipment.

- Laptop Club for clients have been full of eager “students”. Library gives courses in internet use and also on other issues that are important to the clients. Library strive to create conditions to peer mentor learning, which has proved to be very effective way of studying new things.
- During the 2012 summer library arranged a workshop for local youngsters in skateboard video shooting and editing. The workshop was organized in co-operation with the Youth Department of the City and some associations connected with the hobby.
- Library arranges movie events and other happenings so as to offer at least something also for the kids.
- Most popular service has been the digitalization of old video cassettes.
- Library lends some sports equipment such as step counters, pulsation indicators and compasses.

It's been only 7 months since opening the Media Library so staff members are learning new things every day when they help customers and use the equipment of the library, community hall and studio. It will be a long process to get familiar with new possibilities, to find best practices to serve the clients and to define new service models.

## **Conclusion**

The aim of the Myllypuro Media Library is twofold. On the other hand the goal is to support the inhabitants of the area as active citizens in the modern digital world. The Media Library wants to be an open learning environment for clients. The number of visitors (9500 /month) has doubled compared to the earlier situation. It seems that both old and new clients have found its services. Feedback from clients is positive and the future of Media Library seems promising.

On the other hand, the Media Library acts for its part as a pilot project, when services for the new Helsinki Central Library are planned. The Media Library has been chosen to the Word Design Capital Helsinki 2012 program as a new service design project.

Since many traditional library skills are becoming insufficient it is necessary to try to find new ways for staff development. The aim of the Media Library is to serve as a learning environment also for the library staff in building new skills and competences.

**Additional information:**

Myllypuro Media Library

[http://www.helmet.fi/en-US/Libraries\\_and\\_services/Myllypuro Media Library](http://www.helmet.fi/en-US/Libraries_and_services/Myllypuro_Media_Library)

Meetingpoint@lasipalatsi

<http://www.helmet.fi/meetingpoint@lasipalatsi>

Library 10

[http://www.helmet.fi/en-US/Libraries\\_and\\_services/Library 10](http://www.helmet.fi/en-US/Libraries_and_services/Library_10)

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