

## Language and Libraries: Encouraging English Learning through Book Reading

Kosovo

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While English is taught in all public and private schools in Kosovo, there are not many opportunities to further interact with the English language outside of the classroom if one cannot afford it. The goals of my project were to promote English learning through book reading and to create more equitable access to educational resources in English for all students in Suhareka.

To accomplish these goals, I organized a four-week immersive language course in the public library

writing, listening and speaking. The course held meetings five times a week, four hours a day from the 22nd of June to the 22nd of August. The age of participants in this course ranged from 5 to 25 years old from all ethnic groups of Suhareka.

Prior to the start of the project, the City Library had a small number of books in English. Most of them were donations from community members. Lack of books in the English Language was a problem that students of different ages are facing. As an alternative, they turn to piracy websites that often violate copyright laws. I used a part of my project funding to donate over 250 books in English to the library. The books were of three categories: for beginners, classics of world literature, and books for preparatory tests like SAT, GEC, and Toefl.

Throughout the project, we had over 120 readers with over 160 books checked out. We organized the book reading similar to a book club. After reading the book, the participants would return it back with a short-written commentary on it. Then, my project partner from Kosovo Fjolla Kukaj, and I would further discuss the book with the students so they could practice speaking and listening in English. To further encourage book reading, I organized a competition where top readers would get a chance to pursue an English course for a whole year after the project finishes and continue organizing the book reading classes that we started. As a result, we had four winners with a total of forty-five books read throughout the project and a significant improvement in their English reading, writing, listening, and speaking skills.

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