

Background

The Library "Stevan Jorgović" was founded in 1963. Located within the Serbian Orthodox Church "Holy Trinity" in Westmount, Montreal. The library's mission is to bring the Serbian language, history, science and culture, closer to the local community in order to motivate and inspire them to maintain their Serbian identity and cultural heritage.

Without a budget, the library was formed from donations and had not acquired any books for years. A reorganization was necessary as the existing collection was obsolete with many items in bad and irreversible condition, with some being irrelevant for the community. In addition, the library was closed for two years (2015-2017), after a long-term librarian retired.

The work started in January 2017 and involved 4 MIST students, as well as other volunteers.

Mother Tongue

A "mother tongue" (also known as a first or native language), is the language to which a person has been exposed from birth or from a very young age. It may also designate the language of a person's ethnic group.

The importance of mother tongue and the rebirth of a community library

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In immigrant or minority groups, the mother tongue may cease being a person's dominant language. Losing fluency in such cases becomes a major risk.

The importance of the mother tongue lies in being part of a people's cultural heritage and identity.

Future

There are less than 1000 resources available in other libraries in the Montreal area in the language shared by the Serbian, Croatian and Bosnian people. To contribute to supporting the Serbian cultural heritage, we envision the following:

- ✓ Continuing to weed and grow the collection to reflect the needs of the community
- ✓ Expanding the literature available for both children and adults
- ✓ Making more audio books available
- ✓ Providing access to e-books
- ✓ Organizing community events that connect all demographic groups of the Serbian community
- ✓ Organizing artistic, cultural and literary workshops

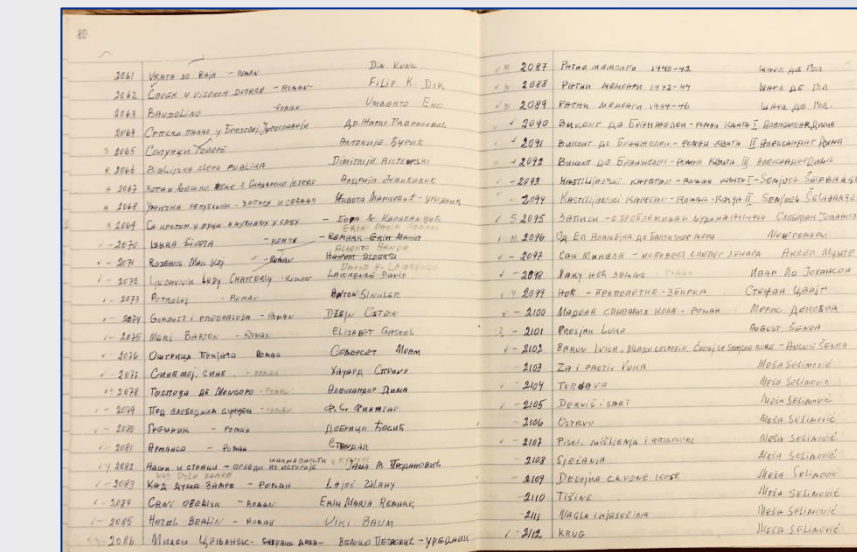
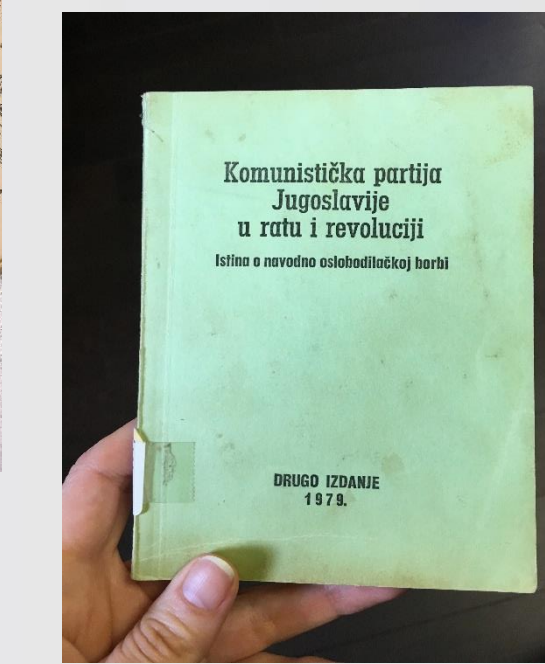
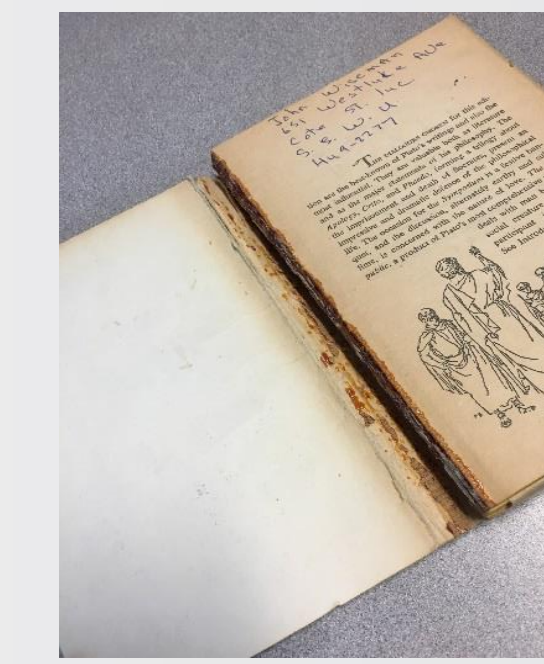
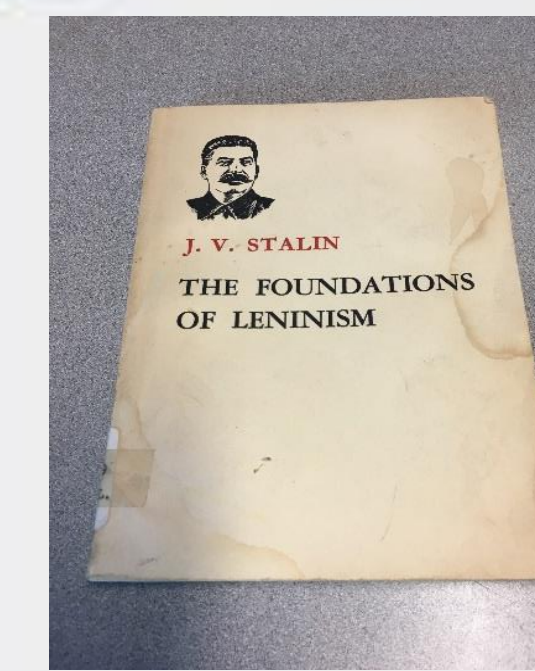
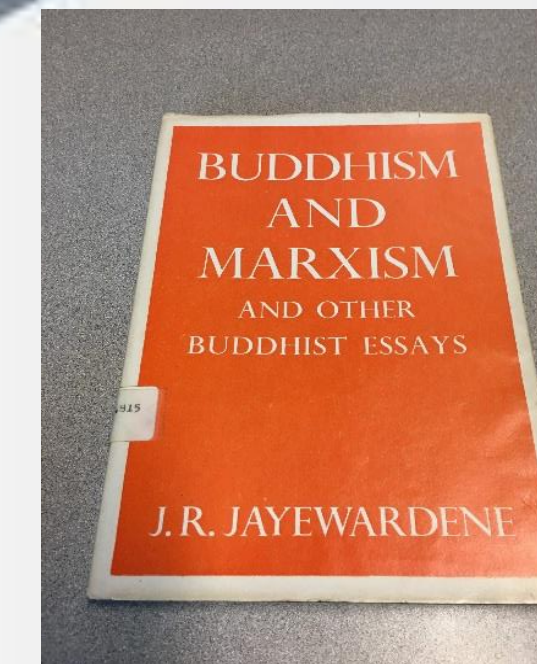
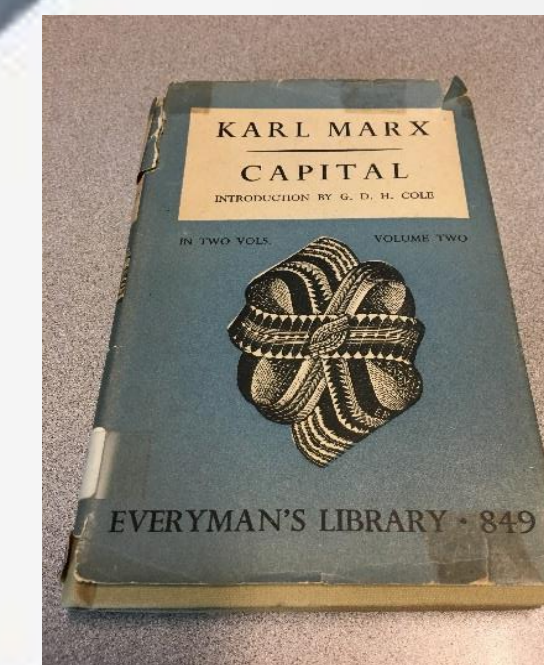
Project Phases

- ✓ Collection evaluation and weeding
- ✓ Collection development without a budget
- ✓ Networking
- ✓ Selection of appropriate open source Integrated Library System (ILS): three ILS tested, OpenBiblio selected



- ✓ Selection of library classification and in-house system for sorting books
- ✓ Creation of library rules
- ✓ Cataloguing
- ✓ Creation of library website and integration with the chosen library system
- ✓ Library promotion

Past



Library Catalogue



Donors



Donations



Results

All this was achieved without a budget:

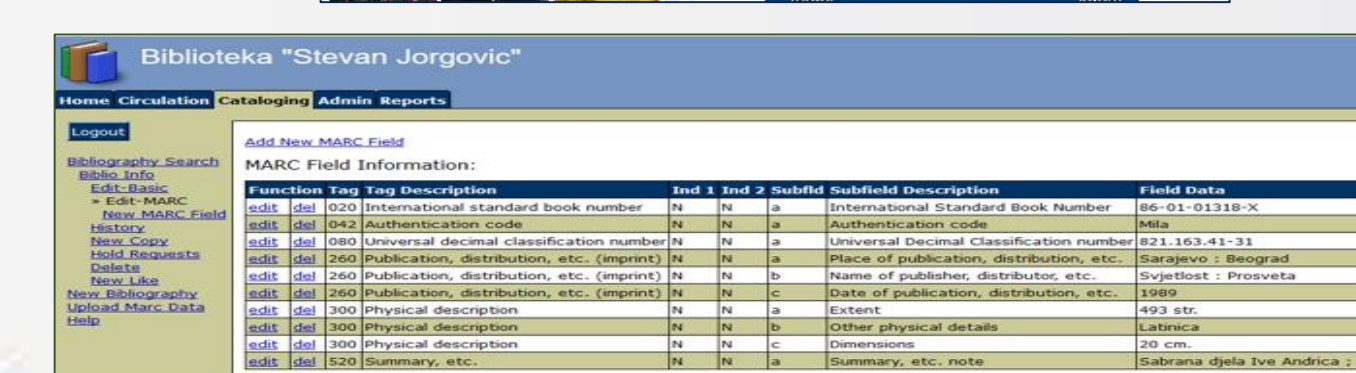
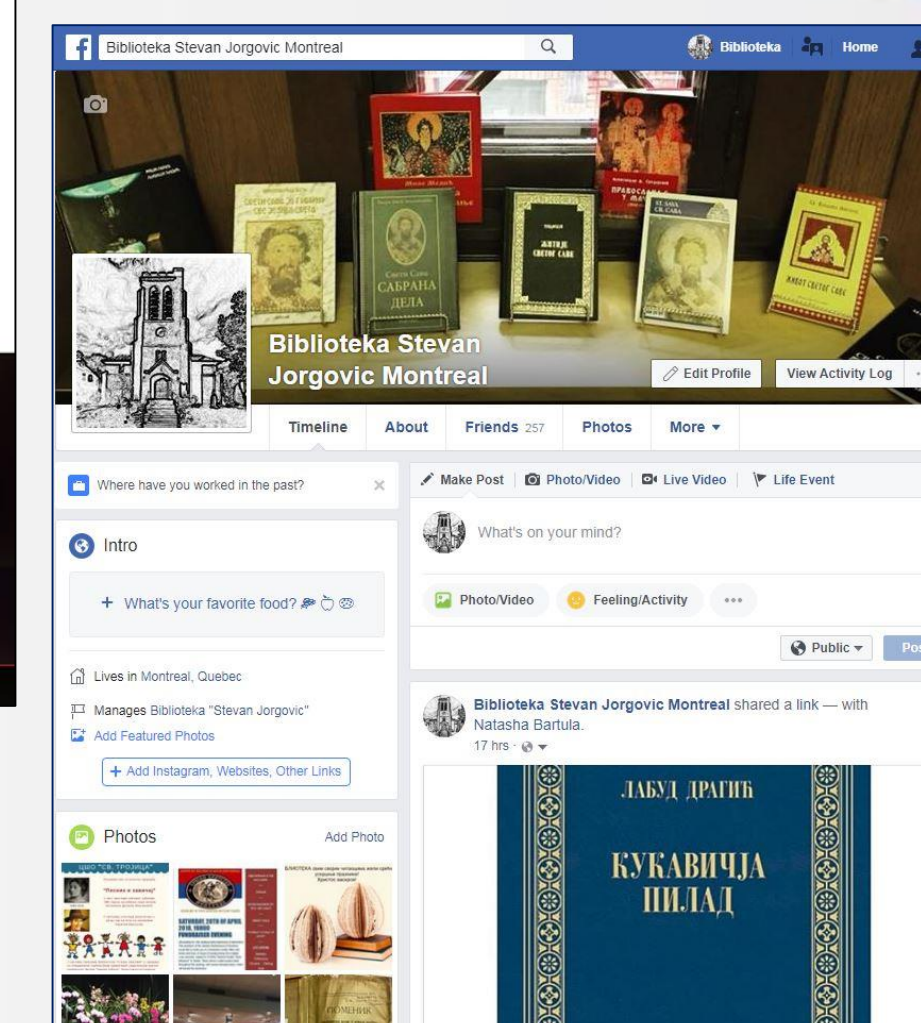
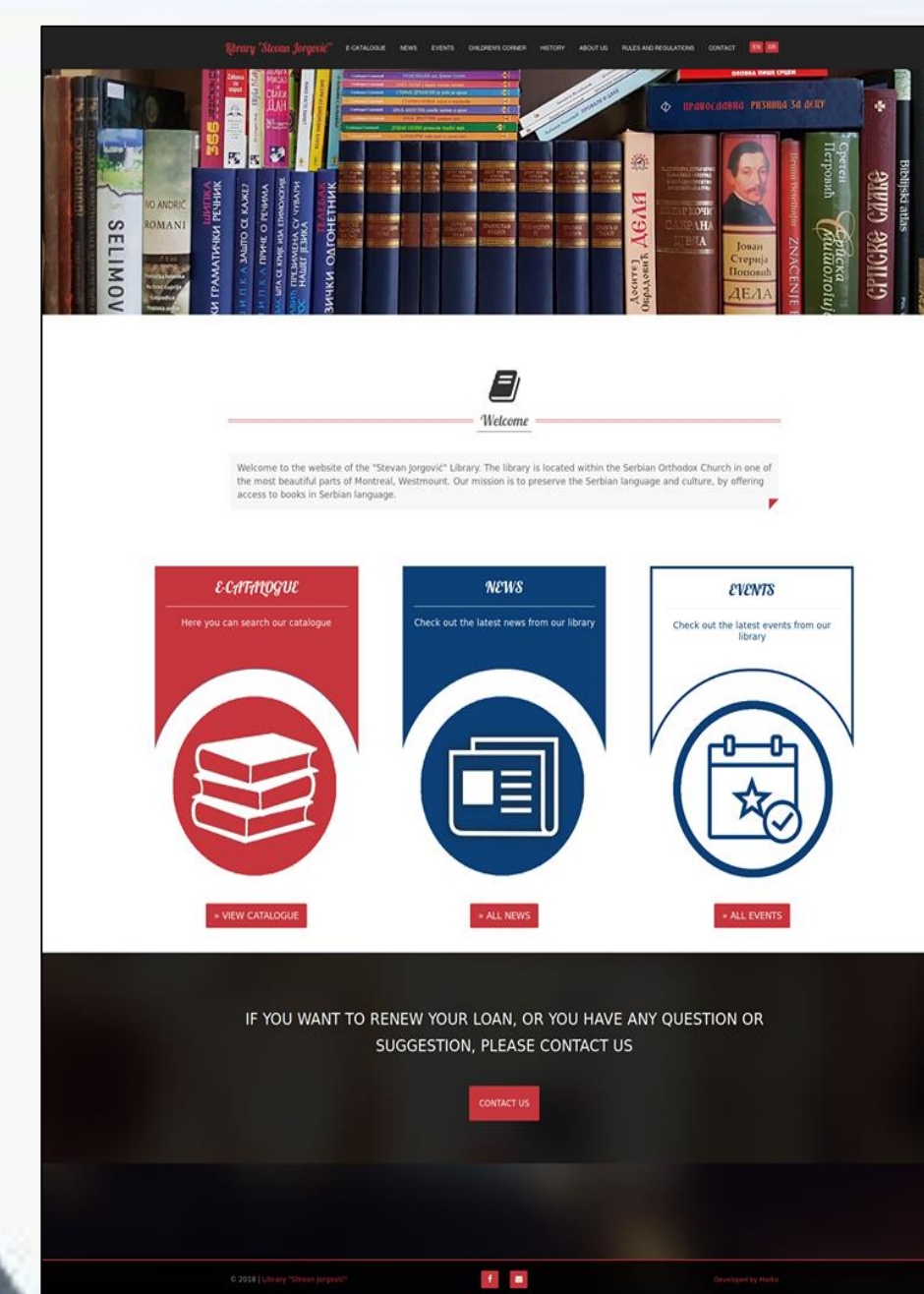
- ✓ 300 damaged books discarded
- ✓ 350 new books & 15 audio discs received from the National library of Serbia
- ✓ 99 new books received from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs
- ✓ New laptop
- ✓ Furniture acquired (office chair, new bookcases & bookshelves)
- ✓ More than 2000 books catalogued
- ✓ September 1st, 2017 library re-opened
- ✓ More than 100 users registered in 6 months
- ✓ More than 200 books received from members
- ✓ 2 grant applications submitted (the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Culture and information of Serbia)
- ✓ Web page created / library catalogue searchable online
- ✓ Two library events organized and one planned for May 2018 :
 - Children from the Serbian school in Montreal visited the library
 - Screening of "Hedgehog's Home", short stop-motion animated film, directed by Eva Cvijanović

Serbian Community Library

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On-line



Present



Conclusion

There is a connection between the mother tongue and a people's cultural heritage. In an environment where the mother tongue assumes a marginal role, cultural heritage is likewise threatened.

To contribute to the transgenerational continuity of cultural heritage, the "Stevan Jorgović" Library promotes the preservation and accessibility of written and audio resources which both young and old can enjoy.

It is our hope that the value of cultural heritage, to which the mother tongue is a key, will be more widely appreciated. Our library can become a model for other communities of the values and efforts that can be put in place to safeguard the mother tongue.