

## The Living Library

On Tuesday afternoon we want to invite you all to a Living Library, either as curious readers, or as books!

The living library (also known as human library) method, used worldwide on various events, seeks to promote understanding and dialogue between different people and to fight prejudices and discrimination. When you come to visit the living library you pick a book that sounds interesting from a catalogue, but instead of pile of paper you will get to borrow a real person – with a story to tell! You will be able to ask the book whatever questions you have in your mind concerning the topic of the book, but remember to be respectful – do not bend the pages, or spill coffee on them!

As a book you get to tell about yourself or a topic that is important for you, spreading awareness or just giving handy hints for life. You are always allowed to leave questions unanswered, or to return to the safety of the bookshelf (we'll provide our books with a cozy own area and some refreshments!). Before the library opens we will brief our books, and make sure that they are prepared to be borrowed.

Obviously, there will be no living library without books. Therefore, we are hoping that many of you will volunteer for this programme point! Do you have a story to tell?

What kind of books are we looking for?

- Do you have a cool hobby or skill? Or a typical “dream job”? Let people know how life really is as a pilot, ballet dancer, farmer, actress, policeman... *Example title: “The world is a stage - my Life as a travelling circus clown”*

- Where have you been travelling - on holidays, or with scouts? Would you like to be a tourist guide book? Maybe even with beautiful illustrations! *Example title: "sLOVEnia, where to stay, what to do"*
- Do you represent some social, political or religious group or a minority? Often we are fast forming our opinions about groups we do not belong to, but at the same time too shy to ask someone who represents them... Could you help building bridges? *Example title: "Can a Catholic teach Darwinian Evolution?" or "All you wanted to know about Polyamory but never dared to ask"*
- We hear self-help books are all the rage! Do you have some awesome method for coping in everyday life - from cleaning your home to mindfulness exercises? *Example title: "How to get started with vegan cooking"*
- Something completely different? A history book, an autobiography, a book full of jokes or poems... what would YOU like to share with others?

(While we are open to many kind of books, we are not exactly looking for songbooks or craft magazines... if you want to teach a concrete skill to the IMWe participants, please consider offering an IG or Music IG!)

If you have a clear idea for a book, please fill out the [form](#).

If you're unsure about a book, it is unfinished and/or you have some questions, contact Ronja ([ronja.kok@vcp.de](mailto:ronja.kok@vcp.de)) – she is happy to help you!

As a final point, we would like to share some hints for books from earlier Living Library events:

- Be yourself: be honest and open to talk. Listen carefully. Do not act another role or invent characteristics for yourself. The reader will eventually realize and you will lose credibility.
- It can be useful to prepare some factual information (statistics, research, etc.) or pictures, depending on your topic
- Be ready to share your reflected personal experience. If questions become too intimate, feel free to say that you do not want to answer. You have always the right to end the discussion if you feel insulted or simply need a break.
- Accept and remember that your Reader has borrowed your title and is interested mainly in that aspect of your personality. While it may feel limiting, this is normal in the context of the Living Library.
- Readers will be interested in your title for a variety of reasons. A good question to start the conversation is 'Why did you choose my book?'
- You will probably be borrowed by two or more people at the same time. While this can be very interesting, try to avoid being used to sort out differences of opinion between your Readers.
- Above all, enjoy being a Book! It can be a very enriching and interesting experience.