

Report for the Grant Offered for the Professional Visits to Germany in 2025

Comics, Manga and Japanese Activities in German Libraries

by Suciu Marian

Suciu Marian, a librarian at the “Traian Brad” branch of the “Octavian Goga” Cluj County Library, visited four German libraries between September 15th and 19th, 2025, with the support of the grant provided by the Bibliothek & Information International. The libraries he visited included the Hamburg Public Library (Bücherhallen Hamburg), Hilden City Library (Stadtbibliothek Hilden), Dortmund City and State Library (Stadt- und Landesbibliothek Dortmund) and Melle City Library (Stadtbibliothek Melle).

On the afternoon of September 15th, Marian Suciu began his professional visit to Germany at the Hamburg Public Library. He was welcomed by the local librarian who introduced him to the structure, services, and daily operations of the library. The introduction covered several aspects: a description of the Hamburg library network, from the smallest branches to the functioning of the main headquarters; the need to extend library hours without a librarian present; the development of digital media services; and the various types of library cards available. After a short lunch break, Marian continued his visit with the tour of the library, discovering the way in which the main headquarters of the Hamburg Public Library function from the information desk to the library of objects, the coffee and press area, the children’s section, the two floors dedicated to the adult section and, located on the basement level, the teen literature and makerspace area. During the tour, he discovered that the Hamburg Public Library had a significant music section, featuring a collection of books on musical notation, as well as a small performance stage.

The next day, the Romanian librarian continued his professional visit at Hamburg Public Library with a special introduction to the children’s section, where the books are thematically arranged, each thematic having its own graphic representation. In this space, Marian Suciu observed that the children's section featured dedicated shelves for 48 languages, with varying quantities of books per language. Furthermore, this section contained an impressive number of Kamishibai, which were not only available for borrowing, but were also used in creating digital stories by the children through the Stop Motion application. After learning about the children's section and its numerous activities, such as crafts, storytelling, and picture cinema, the librarian had the unique opportunity to observe how the new machine sorted returned documents and new acquisitions, directing each item into the appropriate boxes that would be delivered to the respective branch or section within the main headquarters.

In the afternoon, Marian Suciu visited the MakerLab, where the librarian learned more about how the library users could access a sewing machine, a plotter, or 3D printers after

receiving basic instructions on their use. Furthermore, the librarian responsible for the MakerLab explained to the visitor how they prepared other 3D printers for school projects and how they have previously used the laser cutter and T-shirt printing machine. After this discussion, the Romanian librarian met with several librarians and staff from the Hamburg library and presented his own projects in Romania, ranging from 3D printing to teaching about Asian languages and cultures at the “Traian Brad” Branch of the “Octavian Goga” Cluj County Library.



On the morning of September 17th, Marian Suciuc was warmly welcomed at the Hilden City Library. The visit began with a tour of the library, which is spread across three floors. On the ground floor, the librarian was introduced to the borrowing and return stations, the press corner, the information desk, a collection of popular PlayStation and board games available for loan at the librarian’s desk, as well as the library of things. Furthermore, he learned about the support program for elderly patrons, where seniors come to the library and receive assistance from fellow elderly volunteers in using smartphones or other digital devices, all while enjoying refreshments. On the second floor, he discovered the children's section on one side and adult novels on the other, while on the third floor, he found the other categories of adult books, as well as the teen section. After the tour, Marian Suciuc presented his home library, and the Hilden librarian presented the main features of their own library and the digital services available online, such as ebooks and movies. After a short break, the librarian responsible for the teen area presented their activities related to Japanese culture, designed for children and teenagers. These events range from origami and painting workshops to collaborations with other organizations to offer calligraphy and Japanese language classes. Furthermore, it was impressive to learn that in 2024, the Hilden City Library organized a Japan Manga Day, which, in addition to hosting a manga workshop, included various side activities. During the break, participants could even customize their own bowl of Japanese noodle soup. Finally, the Romanian librarian was introduced to the Japanese manga section within the teen area, where he engaged in a discussion with the other librarian about the challenges involved in developing a manga collection in a public library.



On September 18th, Marian Suci arrived at the Dortmund City and State Library, where he was received by a German librarian overseeing the comics section. Firstly, they took a tour of the library's main headquarters, which were particularly striking as they resembled a shopping mall structured with three floors rather than a traditional library. The ground floor featured an information desk and, on the right side, the children's section dedicated to picture books, which was lively due to a class visit. On the left side of the information desk were shelves containing children's and young adult literature, including a special section dedicated to comics and manga, followed by shelves with adult fiction, popular literature, and movie- and music-DVDs. While the first floor focused on literary works and a few specific subject areas, featuring a special section for art lending and press reading, the second floor was primarily dedicated to books on other varied subjects, collections of sheet music, and ample spaces for studying and reading. The librarian also visited the stacks, where he observed that the Dortmund City and State Library, in addition to managing and preserving documents related to the city and region of Dortmund, was also creating an archive of classic comics and manga. Furthermore, the Library also cooperated in the development of the Schauraum: Comic + Cartoon (Showroom: Comic and Cartoon) which displays temporary comics and cartoon exhibitions, as comics or illustrated books are most attractive for children, teenagers and others. The exhibition open at the time of the visit was showcasing Ukrainian comic illustrators and the theme was how these artists depict war.



On the last day, the Romanian librarian visited the Melle City Library. Although it seems a small city library, it is, in fact, a vibrant library where many volunteers help the few librarians maintain the library functions properly. After a short discussion regarding the way in which the library works and the presentation by the Romanian librarian of his home library and his ongoing projects, Marian Suci was given a tour of the library, beginning with the borrowing and returning station. The tour continued with the local press area located next to the coffee

machine and the children's space, which offers a wide variety of items to borrow — from picture books and board games to Kamishibai stories and Tonies. Afterwards, the tour proceeded to the adult section, where books are randomly organized by subject areas and literary genres. After a break, the tour was resumed with the introduction of the comic area with a special focus on manga. The manga corner was developed in 2025 at the Melle City Library, based on frequent requests made by young patrons during the 2024 Melle Youth Conference. The library prepared this space to include a wide variety of manga from classical titles such as *Black Butler*, *Naruto*, *One Piece* and *Fairy Tail*, to newer titles such as *Sakamoto Days*.



As a conclusion, I want to say that I was impressed by the determination of the librarians that developed lively manga sections in the Hilden City Library, Dortmund City and State Library, and Melle City Library, as they did not focus only on building balanced and diverse manga collections, but also on preparing projects through which the patrons can better understand that both manga and comics can depict serious subjects from daily life. Furthermore, the Hamburg Public Library inspired me with their amazing MakerLab and their variety of maker projects. Lastly, but not least importantly, the discovery of these wonderful libraries would have not been possible without the generous grant offered by Bibliothek & Information International, for which I express my gratitude.