



Fédération des Ludothèques Suisses
Verband der Schweizer Ludotheken
Federazione delle Ludoteche Svizzere
Federaziun da las Ludotecas Svizras
www.ludo.ch

Annual Report Switzerland 2016

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Switzerland plays barrier-free – Toy Libraries for all

We continue with the same slogan as the year before and it will accompany us for a long time in the future.

This slogan also had an impact on our work inside the board. The phrase made us realize that we must renew and recreate a handicap friendly homepage and that we must see to it that all Toy Libraries cater to barrier free access. We could not do this on our own. We had help from an organization (Procap) which is specialized in such things. They visited all Toy Libraries that told us that they have free access to their localities and they checked if this is correct. All Toy Libraries that passed the test are now listed on our homepage with this special sign → 

Board

Luckily, we have 2 new board members; currently we are 8 women. As a result, we could distribute the workload on more shoulders. Besides the monthly meetings in Bern, we have had a 2-day meeting in Thun. That gave us more time to discuss themes like finances, board organization, required standards for Toy Libraries, project “barrier-free” and the future of our association.

Voluntary work

All voluntary work carried out by the people who are involved with the board, totaled 6,143 hours! If we convert these hours into jobs, then it would be three full time jobs. This year we will organize an exceptional event for all voluntary staff members to say “Thank you”!

Required standards

The unequal treatment of Toy Libraries and libraries in municipalities and cities was and is a never-ending theme.

With the newly revised required standards, we want to give the Toy Librarians arguments and fundamentals for negotiations with their local authorities and other institutions. We could issue a copy of these guidelines for every Toy Library, which would also be available to download as a PDF from our homepage www.ludo.ch.

Copyrights

As we all know, it can be a problem to download pictures from the internet and use them for one’s own homepage. That is why we will get in contact with the toy distributors in Switzerland to find out if it is ok to use their pictures of board games or other games. If they do not give their permission to use them, we can warn the Toy Libraries and instruct them to take and use pictures with their own cameras in order to avoid any problems.

Toy Libraries

Four Toy Libraries had to close last year. Unsuitable premises, not enough opening hours, a lack of staff and clients were the reasons for having to close their doors. Currently we have 372 Toy Libraries in Switzerland.

We offer coaching for Toy Libraries, which are experiencing problems. Of course, we cannot support them with money, but we can help with our knowledge. We visit them in their premises and sometimes it is only a matter of lack of self-presentation or self-confidence. In addition, we can help them to write their requests for money to the authorities.

Administration

Luckily, we have two administrative offices, one in the German part and the other in the French part of the country. The two women, who work part time there with a workload of 20 percent, are paid for their work. During opening hours, they answer questions from Toy Librarians and work on translations, amongst other duties. We are very proud that we could realize this and we hope that we can expand this work in the future. We only miss an own

room where we could meet or store some material. Until now, the board held his meetings in a Restaurant in Bern and we store material for our organization in our private homes.

Website ludo.ch

As already mentioned, we have a completely new website. A lot of work went into it and it kept us busy the entire last year. Our goal to publish the new website in fall 2016 was too optimistic. To check and verify the website, which is in five languages (German, French, Italian, Rhaeto-Romanic and English) was a big challenge and very time consuming. However, in the end, we could launch the new site in January 2017 and it was and is worthwhile.

Fairs

A very intense game year is over. Two women represented us at the Toy Fair in Nurnberg in January 2016. Some of the innovations, which they discovered there, could be introduced in our game forum in June.

In February two other women visited the Toy Fair in Cannes for new games for the French part of Switzerland. They had a pleasant and fruitful time there and could find new games, which are interesting for Swiss Toy Libraries.

In October four women visited the Toy Fair in Essen. It was overwhelming. It was chock full of new games which are of interest to us.

Forum

Our forum, which is held in different places in Switzerland every year, is as popular as ever. The Toy Librarians have the opportunity to get to know the newest games, which are on the market, and as a highlight, they can learn to play different games and at the end of the day, they can directly purchase the games, which are their favorites. We always try to offer the forum at a low price and after the forums; we offer the games to participants at very reasonable prices.

Game Tests

As every year, our testing team tested the new games from Essen and Nurnberg and the biannual test results were published and sent to all Toy Libraries. We have 48 test Toy Libraries, which test in total 174 games by 28 manufacturers. It is very important that a game is suitable for Toy Libraries. The Toy Librarians really appreciate these lists and most of them consider them before they buy new games. It is a very helpful tool to decide which games and toys are interesting for toy libraries.

Our Magazine “Ludo Journal”

Very popular amongst the Toy Librarians is our magazine, which is published twice a year. Each issue has a circulation of 1500 and since 2015; we have been able to print it in color. All articles are published in two languages, French and German. In order to keep the magazine attractive to readers, we need various articles from the Toy Libraries and luckily, they always send us interesting themes. However, there are also appealing themes for Toy Librarians, which we publish in our magazine like introducing new staff, and informing about fairs and events.

Besides the magazine, we send monthly newsletters to the Toy Libraries. Some themes are important and need to be shared immediately, such as news about copyrights

Training and Conferences

We offer several one-day training workshops during the year. Some are more popular than others are. The popular are easily and rapidly booked out, for example “Toy Libraries on Facebook” or “Toy Libraries from A-Z”. Last year this latter and usually very popular course could not be held, as we did not have enough registrations. Our trainers are always looking for new, educational themes for the librarians, but sometimes it is hard to fill a class and we end up with a minus in income.

Our base training and management training for Toy Librarians is very important. Toy Librarians learn how to run a Toy Library and how to lead their staff there. Unfortunately, the authorities do not acknowledge it but it always provides very good and important information, ideas and news for participants.

At the end of each training session, we give the participants a feedback questionnaire to fill in so that we know what we can optimize for future training courses.

In addition, it is also essential, that the Toy Librarians communicate with each other. They find out what is going on in other Toy Libraries and they can easily adapt new ideas from others. Training sessions are also a possibility to network with others.

Annual General Assembly

Last year our general assembly was held in the French part of Switzerland, in Porrentruy. We had to organize simultaneous translation for this event. It is crucial that we can reach as many Toy Libraries as possible and for this reason; everybody must understand what is being said during the assembly. Of course, they receive everything written but we are all sometimes a bit idle and it is easier to listen than to read. We had 80 Toy Libraries attend and in total 206 attendees. This is a relatively high number of people and we were proud to attract so many Toy Librarians. At the assembly, we present our facts and figures and what board members have done during the year. After the official part, we have dinner together and the exchange between the Toy Libraries and the board is very important and useful for everybody. The attendees and we on the board enjoy these assemblies very much. It gives them and us the chance to meet each other personally, which can be meaningful in many ways.

ETL Meeting in Bruges

As every year, we participated at the ETL meeting, which was held in Bruges last year. It was an interesting event and we could meet new people from many different European countries. We can always learn something from other organizations and we would not miss these meetings for the world.

A lot of work had been done during last year! However, there is still much more to do for the Swiss Toy Libraries. The workload will never end but we like what we do and so we go on every year.

April 2017 / Katharina Kiefer / Board Member Swiss Toy Association