



Daily Innovators and Daily Educators in the Libraries

LEARNING EXPERIMENTS IN THE LIBRARIES

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Chapter 1

Status of local communities
and quality of life

What is quality of life and how can we improve it?

„Being able to measure people’s quality of life is fundamental when assessing the progress of societies. There is now widespread acknowledgement that measuring subjective well-being is an essential part of measuring quality of life alongside other social and economic dimensions.”

OECD Guidelines on Measuring

Subjective Well-being, 2013

Everybody wants to live a life which is interesting, fulfilled and happy. Everybody has their own understanding of what a „good” life is, and most people would say they could improve something in their lives. Some believe that we are responsible for our own quality of life; others believe that there is nothing we can do to change our fate. But in both cases there is the possibility to try and to improve some aspects of our life in everyday activities.

Happiness studies prove that we can improve our quality of life (Helliwell et al., 2015). One way to do so is to take care of our life and ourselves. This means being proactive in acquiring knowledge to improve quality of life and making time for learning throughout our lives. Several studies indicate that lifelong learning has a positive impact on quality of life, especially on senior citizens and people at risk of social exclusion.

Among possibilities to improve quality of life is to obtain new knowledge in different dimensions of life: from better understanding ourselves to better understanding others and the world in which we live. The next step is to obtain skills and literacy in order to undertake activities towards a more satisfied life. There are different ways to learn – we can learn from events in our life or from our own experience, we can study in schools (formal education) and we can participate in courses and programmes organised by different institutions (non-formal education). Public libraries have the potential to support, foster and facilitate a learning space for individuals from local communities.

Variety of definitions

What is „quality of life“? One of the many definitions says that quality of life is the general well-being of individuals and societies, outlining negative and positive features of life. For centuries, the study of quality of life has occupied the minds of philosophers and other thinkers. The most thorough and systematic investigations into quality of life started in the 1970s when the research of quality of life was consolidated as a research field (Gomes et al., 2010), and scientists tried to find instruments and indicators with which to meaningfully measure quality of life.

Based on several publications, the concept of quality of life can be understood in different ways. Gomes et. al (2010) says that it can be understood both as an interdisciplinary concept which combines sciences like sociology and economics, but also as a multidimensional concept – where several dimensions composing quality of life, both objective (statistics, GDP, life expectancy, average household income) and subjective (happiness, life satisfaction) are used to measure the quality of life.

Quality of life is a concept that can be studied in both individual and societal level. On an individual level it is important to understand the life situation of a person, for example health is often one of the most important indicators of individual quality of life. On a societal level it is important for policy makers to assess the living conditions and holistic life satisfaction national level.

These different ways of measuring quality of life are combined and presented in the Eurostat publication Quality of life: facts and views (2015).

„As people’s life satisfaction cannot be reduced to one single aspect, this publication presents the different aspects of quality of life, combining objective indicators with the subjective evaluation of individuals’ situations. The subjective indicators available for each dimension are analysed taking into consideration different socio-economic factors such as age, sex, labour status, etc. while their impact on self-assessed satisfaction levels are evaluated. Then the relationship between the subjective perceptions and the objective measurements belonging to the same domain are studied. Nevertheless, the dimensions are often interlinked and multi-causality appears.” (Eurostat, Quality of life: facts and views, 2015, p. 12)

overall experience of life

meaning of life, satisfaction of different areas of life, happiness, subjective well-being, presence or absence of positive and negative feelings

material living conditions

satisfaction with finances: incomes, financial resources available for spending and ownership of material goods and services, housing conditions

productive

or main activity

employment situation, satisfaction with job, etc.

education

education system, education level, knowledge and skills relevant for 21st century

health

physical and mental health, life expectancy, care about own health

leisure and social interactions

participation in recreational and cultural activities, satisfaction with time use, people’s ability to benefit from support from others when needed, satisfaction with personal relationships

economic and physical safety

economic safety includes such aspects as wealth, debt, job insecurity, physical safety – crime statistics, subjective perception of insecurity

governance and basic rights

discrimination level across genders, voting rate, level of trust to the police, legal system; political system

natural and living environment

air and water pollution, noise pollution, satisfaction with living environment

Since the model is both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary, taking into account many of the factors that influence quality of life and with a particular focus on Europe, we will use it as a basis for the analysis of quality of life in each of the countries considered in the DIDEL project.

Status of quality of life in Norway, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland

STATUS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN NORWAY

Norway and the Nordic countries rank at the top of most indexes measuring well-being and quality of life. Even when factors other than financial and living conditions are measured, the Nordic countries still score highly.

The high index scores in the Nordic countries are largely explained as an effect of the Nordic model of democracy, the welfare state, trust and wealth in these countries. Ronald Inglehart, director of the World Value Survey, emphasises the value profile of the Nordic countries as relevant for quality of life, both when it comes to development towards secularism and the individualisation and „self-expression” processes (Loga, 2010).

According to the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) report Economic Surveys Norway 2016, Norway scores well in practically every dimension of the OECD's Better Life Index:

„Household disposable income ranks third highest in the OECD area and this is echoed in good outcomes in jobs, earnings, and housing. Furthermore, scores relating to subjective well-being, work-life balance and the environment are good. Low levels of inequality and poverty are being driven by strong societal values of inclusiveness and egalitarianism and by other features of the „Nordic model”. In particular, emphasis on the quality of education, encouraging and facilitating the employment of women, well functioning centralised wage bargaining systems, good legal frameworks for business and high levels of trust in society.” (OECD, 2016).

LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The Norwegian demographic has changed over the last 50-60 years. Since the 1980s there has been strong population growth, largely due to immigration. The majority of these immigrants come to work from EU member states such as Poland, Lithuania and Sweden. However there are also many refugees coming from Somalia and countries in the Middle East. In 2015 15, 6% of the Norwegian population were immigrants or people born in Norway to immigrant parents.

It is important to involve immigrants in Norwegian social systems. Local organisations like sports clubs, amateur theatre, choir, brass band etc. are important arenas for socialising in Norwegian society. If you do not have a job where you socialise with your colleagues or are not active in volunteering, it can be hard to get to know people in Norway.

The demographics have also changed towards centralisation. Today 8 out of 10 people live in densely populated areas, compared to 50% in 1945. This change has also had an effect on the social systems, with more people becoming in danger of social exclusion when welfare structures from the past disappear.

The Norwegian population is also growing older. However, this is not yet a problem since the share of elderly people is offset by both a relatively high fertility rate in Norway and the fact that the immigrant population is young.

GOVERNANCE AND BASIC RIGHTS

As mentioned above, Norway has low levels of inequality with strong societal values of inclusiveness and egalitarianism, but there are still a way to go. There is still a „glass ceiling” for female leaders in the private sector; despite a law requiring approximately 40% of female board members in public limited companies, the number of women in senior management roles in the private sector is still low.

Studies show that many immigrants experience discrimination in various areas of society, and especially in the workplace. Studies of discrimination in Norway have shown that immigrants have trouble getting into the labour market, that they work more part-time, are often over qualified and also have poorer wage development than the rest of the population.

Norway is above the European average on voter turnout for national parliamentary elections. The numbers from Norway are also above the European average when it comes to trust in the political system, the legal system, the police and trust in other people.

ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL SAFETY

Norway ranks at number 4 in OECD Better Life Index when it comes to household net-adjusted disposable income, but only at number 30 on household financial wealth. This is due to heavy household debts; in fact, debt growth has been greater than income growth in recent years. However, interest rates have been low, so average housing costs have not increased.

The concentration of wealth has increased in recent years and is far more unevenly distributed than income. Compared with other countries and especially with other oil nations, Norway traditionally has an even distribution of wealth.

According to EU quality of life statistics (Eurostat, 2015), Norwegians feel both financially and physically safe, and Norway has the lowest rates of people reporting crime, vandalism or violence.

EDUCATION

Norwegian society and working life is changing from labour intensive industries, oil and primary industries, to a modern society where technology and knowledge is increasingly important. Previous generations were able to get a job and a good income with little or no education, especially in the rural areas.

The number of people with higher education in Norway is increasing. A larger proportion of women than men have higher education, and in previously male dominated study programmes as medicine, psychology and law, women are now the largest group.

A larger proportion of immigrants than the majority population have a higher education qualification: 10% have studied for more than 4 years, compared to 8% of the non-immigrant population, and two thirds of these are women.

PRODUCTIVE OR MAIN ACTIVITY

Almost half of the Norwegian population has a job. For people aged between 15 and 64, 74,8% are in employment.

Women account for half of the Norwegian labour force, but on average, a woman's monthly wage amounts to 86% of a man's monthly wage. Women also work more part-time than men, increasing from 47% of women in 1980 to 62% in 2015. The percentage of men in full-time employment remains steady at 85%.

However, the downturn in the Norwegian oil industry in recent years has hit men harder than women. At the start of 2016, the unemployment rate was 5,7% for men and 4,0% for women.

According to Eurostat (2015), Norway scores highly when it comes to job satisfaction. This trend is the same in all the Nordic countries.

HEALTH

Unsurprisingly, life expectancy in Norway is among the highest in Europe, but unlike other quality of life indicators Norway and the Nordic countries share this high score with some southern European countries. During some periods in history, Norwegian women have had the highest life expectancy in the world, but today women in a number of other countries can expect to live longer.

Being in good health is important for life satisfaction and wellbeing. The number of years lived in good health in Norway has increased more than life expectancy; Norwegians live a greater part of their lives in good health than they used to. Eight of ten Norwegians say they are in good health, which is higher than the EU average of 66%.

Mental health is, as for other European countries, a significant public health issue. Anxiety, depression, sleep deprivation and a low perceived degree of control and life mastering are some of the reported mental issues in Norway.

LEISURE AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

The Norwegian government focuses on culture as a tool for increasing quality of life. The report to the Storting (white paper) Culture, Inclusion and Participation (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 2013) says:

„For people who experience marginalization due to unemployment, illness, or other reasons, participating in cultural activities can contribute to a sense of belonging: it can help give meaning to everyday life, improve self-esteem, and increase quality of life. The arts and cultural sector must therefore be open and inclusive.”

Norway has a large number of people participating in cultural activities compared to other European countries, and this number has increased over the past decades. In the report above, the Norwegian government states that Norway normally scores highly in measurements of social capital. One of the most important sources of social capital is thriving and active organisations. However, as in other countries, there are socioeconomic differences when it comes to participation in professional and voluntary arts and culture.

To be a member of and be active in a volunteer organisation is common among people in Norway and the Nordic countries. Some researchers explain the high scores on quality of life indexes as a result of an active cultural politics and a large volunteer sector in the Nordic countries.

A special social phenomenon in Norway is the activity „dugnad”. Dugnad is a Norwegian term for voluntary work done together with other people. Dugnad often refers to a community of people coming together and doing something for the greater good for people living in that community. Dugnad can occur in kindergartens, elementary schools, houses, garage buildings or outdoors. Dugnad has been an important part of building local communities and bringing people together. Community houses, churches and other local meeting places are often created and run by people on a voluntary basis, or as Norwegians say: dugnad.

As for other cultural activities, participation in voluntary activities increases with higher levels of income and education. Immigrants from outside EU/EEA and North America are underrepresented in the culture and volunteer sector, which seems to be very important for well-being and quality of life. Disabled people also face barriers to participating in these activities.

Cultural participation surveys from Statistics Norway (Statistisk sentralbyrå – SSB, 2017) show that the social differences in cultural participation have largely remained stable in the past decades, despite efforts to reduce these differences. In other words, many people still do not relate to important arenas for learning, creativity, experience, and community and identity development. This is a challenge. It is particularly concerning when children and youth are not included in leisure activities and community arenas offered by the cultural sector.

CHALLENGES

An analysis of surveys on living conditions done by SSB shows that certain groups of people are more prone to problems and low quality of life. Low income, poor health and little social contact can lead to a form of accumulation of poor living conditions for some of the adult population. People who are unemployed, disabled and with little education are especially vulnerable. These are the same groups that tend to be underrepresented in culture and volunteer activities. Since there are very strong indications that participation in these activities are important for well-being and quality of life, it is important to work more actively to involve these at-risk-groups.

STATUS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN LITHUANIA

Subjective well-being in Lithuania is determined by many factors, but with satisfaction regarding health and finances being the most important. The most satisfied people tend to be employed, well educated, socially active (married, with children, involved in the community), but most importantly financially satisfied and healthy (Degutis, Urbonavicius, 2013).

According to Eurostat (Eurostat 2015, infographics), in general, Lithuanian people are less satisfied (6.7/10) with their life than EU average (7.1/10). The majority of the population (53.3%) assesses their overall life satisfaction on a medium level. However, it is interesting to note that Lithuania's capital has a higher quality of life than the other Baltic State capitals, Riga and Tallinn, and is ranked as the fourth best city in central and eastern Europe to live in according to research conducted by Mercer in 2015 (Collinson, 2016).



LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Currently in Lithuania there are at least 1,700 local communities, approximately one hundred of which are in cities. Over the last decade, both rural and urban communities in Lithuania greatly intensified their efforts to strengthen neighborhood cohesion by paying attention to different sections of the population and focussing on providing assistance, promoting cultural events, organising charity events, etc.

In Lithuania, people tend to get involved in community activities to fulfill the need to communicate, to help their neighbors, to address environmental issues, and to share their knowledge and experience with other members of the community and contribute to the common good.

The most active members of community-based organisations are women of retirement age (31%), women who are employed or students (22%) and women who participate in community arts groups (20%).

Observing Lithuanians' participation in communal activities by age group, it was found that the most active people are aged 27-40 and 41-60. In this regard, the situation is similar in both in urban and rural communities. However, people aged 61 years and older are more involved in communal activities in urban communities than in rural (BGI Consulting, UAB, 2011).

GOVERNANCE AND BASIC RIGHTS

Lithuania has been a democratic country since 1990. According to the explanation by its constitutional court, Lithuania is a democratic parliamentary republic with elements of a semi-presidential republic. This means the parliament, „Seimas”, is the most powerful institution, and the government is selected by the parliament (TrueLithuania.com, 2016). After the reestablishment of independence in 1990, Lithuania has taken significant strides to work more closely with the international community: it joined the World Trade Organization in 2001, the European Union in 2004, and, after operating under a currency board for the preceding 25 years, the euro area in 2015. Since 2011, economic growth has been one of the highest among European countries, reflecting a swift recovery from the global financial crisis thanks to the economy’s high flexibility. Market-friendly institutional arrangements have helped; Lithuania was ranked 20th in the World Bank Ease of Doing Business Index for 2015 (OECD, 2016). According to Eurobarometer 2015, 55% of the population in Lithuania has a positive image of European Union (European Commission, 2015) and trust in the legal system is 4.9 out of 10, higher than EU average of 4.6.

In Lithuania, women and men are almost equally represented in the labour market. The employment rate of women in Lithuania is higher than EU average. Comparing the unemployment rate of both genders, the unemployment rate of men is higher than women. Despite that gender pay gap is still below the EU average (European Commission, 2012).

EDUCATION

Almost all children in Lithuania receive quality basic education and more than half of young people receive quality higher education. In 2014, 53% of Lithuanians aged 30-34 had tertiary education, compared with 38% in the EU. Nevertheless, firms report inadequate technical skills of graduates as a key factor behind labour shortages (European Parliament 2015). This reflects both failings in the skills being taught and the fact that lifelong learning is low, with only 5% of workers engaged in training activities, half the level in the EU.

OECD adult skills 2015 survey data shows that:

- Adults in Lithuania show above-average proficiency in numeracy and average proficiency in literacy compared with adults in the OECD countries participating in the survey;
- Lithuania is one of the two participating countries where men and women show similar proficiency in numeracy and literacy;
- Young adults in Lithuania have higher proficiency in literacy than on average across all participating countries and economies;
- A large proportion of adults in Lithuania show low proficiency in problem-solving in technology rich environments;
- Lithuania has one of the largest shares of workers who have higher literacy skills than those required for their jobs (OECD, 2016).

The Lithuanian government has prioritised reform of the vocational education and training system as well as strengthening lifelong learning. All Lithuanians have opportunities to engage in lifelong learning.

ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL SAFETY

Income level is one of the main factors affecting quality of life. Lithuania currently faces considerable economic inequality; according to the OECD report Economic Surveys Lithuania 2016, this reduces well-being and feeds high emigration, which in turn leads to an ageing population:

„Although Lithuania’s growth has been impressive, inequality is high, the risk of poverty is one of the highest of European countries, and life expectancy is comparatively low and strongly dependent on socio-economic background. The low job satisfaction reduces well-being and feeds high emigration” (OECD, 2016).

Since 1990, 22% of the population has emigrated. The average emigration rate accelerated from 7% of the population in 1990-2000 to above 12% during the 2000s, and the average net rate of recent years is one of the highest in the EU.

The economic situation in Lithuania has re-stabilised and even improved after the economic crisis, with the unemployment level falling by 2 percentage points a year on average since 2010 (affected in part by emigration). However, the overall unemployment rate is still above the OECD average and seniors and the low-skilled still face a high risk of unemployment, and this also feeds high emigration. In terms of employment, 67.2% of people in Lithuania have a paid job and people work 38,3 hours on average per week (both higher than the EU average), and job satisfaction surveys show that more people in Lithuania are happy with their job than on average in the EU.

HEALTH

Lithuania provides free state-funded healthcare to all citizens and registered long-term residents. Generally a Lithuanian will see a doctor five times per year and life expectancy in Lithuania is 74.7 years (compared to the EU average of 80.9). This comparatively poor life expectancy mainly reflects the prevalence of unhealthy lifestyles and a lack of access to modern medical treatment and prevention among lower socioeconomic groups (Jasilionis, Stankūnienė, 2014). Only 44% of Lithuanians claim to have good or very good health, compared with 66% on average in Europe. Lithuanian spending on healthcare has increased but remains rather low, similar to regional peers.

LEISURE AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

In general, Lithuanians are satisfied with their social relationships. Most of the population also believes that they have someone to rely on in case of need. Data from the Civic Empowerment Index (Civil Society Institute, 2015) show that Lithuania has not found the remedy to strengthen its civil society yet, demonstrated by a mean value in the CEI of 33.4 points in 2015. As stressed in the CEI 2015, the majority of Lithuanians stated that they had not donated to charities or supported people and organisations in need in other ways. During the research respondents were asked about their membership in all kinds of organisations, including trade unions, charities, apartment communities, parish prayer groups, choirs and even school parents' committees. The study revealed that 22% of respondents participate in one civic organisation or gathering, 10% participate in a few, but as many as 68% do not participate in any.

CHALLENGES

Lithuanians are less satisfied with their life because of all the reasons mentioned above, but the main challenge is low income as it affects all other aspects of life. A large proportion of population chooses to emigrate (the emigration rate is one of the highest in the EU) which leads to an aging society. High skilled emigration has reduced Lithuania`s pool of human capital. Low income, inequality and significant emigration has led to a rapidly declining population. Many of these challenges can be addressed by prioritising reform of the vocational education and training system.

Lithuania is situated in a region that has a troubled history, ranging from the Polish-Lithuanian state of the Middle Ages to being a neglected province of the Russian Empire in the nineteenth century. Its cultural history and heritage is as complicated and colorful as its political legacy (Macevičiūtė, 2014). Despite that Lithuania is rather mono-ethnic country consisting of over 80% of Lithuanians, according to the researchers: „Lithuania is kept more like ‘one nation’ country than multicultural one”. The dominance of one culture is an issue not only in Lithuania, but also in terms of an EU political focus on implementing a multiculturalism doctrine which is focused on cultural diversity and cultural integration (Greblikaite J. et al., 2016). The current situation with migrants and refugees in EU has led to concerns of safety for native people in Lithuania, which in turn present challenges to promoting multiculturalism.

STATUS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN POLAND

The year 1989 was a milestone in Polish twentieth century history. The first post-communist government introduced far-reaching and radical economic reforms that affected the economy and social development, including making Polish currency convertible into other currencies at market rates, allowing people to work and study legally abroad, restoring freedom of expression and independence of the media.

Despite many political turbulences during this time, 1989 still makes Polish people proud. Nowadays Polish communities are varied in terms of social and economic structure, geography and culture. Where people live (the region, in urban areas or in villages) has an important impact on their quality of life; 61% of the population in Poland lives in urban areas (this figure is 80% for the EU as a whole). The standard of living also depends on the region: the East and North-East regions tend to provide fewer job opportunities and less social services.



LOCAL COMMUNITIES

Poland has one of the lowest levels of average household disposable income per capita in the OECD and also has relatively high labour market insecurity. But at the same time less than 9% (compared to an EU average of 11%) of the Polish population live in households which spend 40% or more of their disposable income on housing. The cost of living in Poland is much lower in comparison with other EU member states of the EU. The unemployment rate is similar to the EU average, although the employment rate among older people (50 years old and above) is the lowest in Europe at 45.8% (the EU average is 50.9%).

Poland is ranked below the EU average according to the European Gender Equality Index (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015) but with a slight increase of 1.6% between 2005 and 2012. However, the profile of graduates of tertiary education (people aged 15-74) shows a significant gap between women and men: 23.8% of women (EU average 24.1%) compared to only 17.3% of men (EU average 22.8%).

There are global factors affecting quality of life and the way people get involved in community activities, such as an aging population, increasing mobility and common access to new technologies. This has had a positive impact on the living standards of the population but has also led to a breakdown of traditional relationships (in families and the local neighborhood) and diminishing circles for self-identification. Economic emigration and increased mobility have resulted in intensive changes in the labour market and an increase in adult education activity.

GOVERNANCE AND BASIC RIGHTS

After 1989 Poland became engaged in a democratic transition which led to the foundation of a democratic government. Poland then joined the EU in 2004. Thanks to increasing mobility and the EU's support towards local communities and non-governmental organisations, both rural and urban communities have become more involved in community activities.

There seems to be a dissonance between personal life (family, close friends) and social (political) life in Poland. There are a large number of Poles who are disappointed with democracy, yet surveys show that most people are generally satisfied with their personal lives. According to the data of the Polish general social survey (Czapinski, Panek, 2015), after a temporary growth in 1997, the number of people satisfied with democracy in Poland started to decrease. The percentage of those supporting the opinion that democracy is better than any other form of government is very low at 20.8% in 2015. Voter turnout, a measure of citizens' participation in the political process, was 55% during recent elections; lower than the OECD average of 68%.

ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL SAFETY

The perception of quality of life in Poland has continued to grow and is now higher than at any time in the whole study period, and over twice that of the lowest rating which occurred in 1993; the percentage of very and quite happy Poles has grown to 83.6 %, with 81% of households stating that their income allows them to fulfil their needs.

The economic stratification of Polish society is being reduced and the income of the poorest households has increased faster than that of the richest ones, leading to a decrease in inequality between groups of the highest and the lowest income earners. However, 3.3% of Polish households lived below the level of extreme poverty in 2015.

After Poland's accession to the European Union and accession to the Schengen Area in particular, a significant number of Poles (estimated at over two million) have emigrated, primarily to the United Kingdom, Germany, France and Ireland, and it is understood that most are unlikely to return.

EDUCATION

In Poland, education is compulsory until the age of 18. There are public schools and non-public schools, comprising civic schools, church-administered schools and private schools, which can be financed from tuition fees paid by pupils' parents or from other sources such as private business or foundations. The majority (73%) of Polish parents wanted their children to complete their education at Master's level in 2015.

Educational activities for adults over the age of 18 mainly take place in schools or higher education facilities (89%). For adults over the age of 24, there is a higher use of educational services outside the formal school system in the form of programmes and training, both at work and outside the workplace, financed by various sources (e.g. personal, employers or the European Social Fund).

Lifelong learning is not very popular in Poland. Women, people with above secondary education, residents of large and medium cities and people younger than 44 are those who are most likely to improve their qualifications through lifelong learning. Only 9% of people aged 25 or over participate in activities concerning improvement of their professional qualifications and other skills.

PRODUCTIVE OR MAIN ACTIVITY

Between 2013 and 2015 the Polish labour market improved significantly. The unemployment rate fell below 8% and professional activity increased, which balanced the trend of a decreasing working age population. Among reasons for taking up work, the unemployed respondents usually indicated the possibility of working part time (12%), flexible working time (9%) and a possibility to do some part of the work at home (7%). However, almost 60% of unemployed respondents did not want to work at all, regardless of the circumstances and opportunities.

HEALTH

Health care in Poland is delivered through a publicly funded health care system, which is free for all the citizens. In terms of health, life expectancy at birth in Poland is 77 years, three years below the OECD average of 80 years. Life expectancy for women is 81 years, compared with 73 for men. Health, like in all previous years, is most often indicated as a cardinal value in Poland with 65% of respondents, followed by a successful marriage (50.3%), children (48.7%) and work (30%). Health is cited as important to quality of life most often by women, older people, the least and the most educated, pensioners, farmers and single people. Six out of ten of Poles conduct no physical activity, but the largest number of people who do cycling (27.7%), with football or other team games in second place for men (11.2%) and fitness for women (9.5%).

LEISURE AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Since the fall of „Iron Curtain” in 1989, the 90% of the Polish population that declare feeling „loved and trusted” has remained just as high. Only 20% of respondents feel lonely against their will. In 2014, less than half of those surveyed (48.3%) were satisfied or very satisfied with the quantity of their free time (49.9% women and 46.0% men). The percentage of such people in urban areas was higher than in rural areas.

However, Poland fails to meet a single criterion of civil society. In terms of general trust, it occupies one of the lowest places among the countries covered in the European Social Survey (ESS). In 2015 only 15% of Poles agreed with the opinion that most people are trustworthy, which was four times less than in Denmark, Norway and Finland.

It is remarkable that there are approximately 80,000 registered Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) (including 11 foundations and 72,000 associations) in Poland. Most of the organisations (55%) are regional and work for their neighbourhood.

Poland is perceived as a deeply Catholic country; in 2015, 42.7% of adults declared that they systematically participated in services and other religious ceremonies.

Poland seems to be one of most homogeneous countries in Europe because of its citizens' nationality and cultural identity; over 98% of the Polish population was born in Poland and only 1.5 % declare an ethnic identity other than Polish. As such, multicultural awareness is not an essential skill for many people.

CHALLENGES

Poland is aging rapidly. In 1950 half of the Polish population was younger than 25.8 years old, but today this has increased to 38.2 years old and, if current trends continue, this could rise to 51 years old by 2050. The number of children born in Polish families is one of the lowest in Eastern Europe. As the population is aging, it has also started to decline, mainly due to low birth rates and continued emigration (especially a „brain drain” of well educated people) which in turn impacts negatively on the economy.

While urban Poland seems to be moving towards the 21st century, there are rural areas which remain stuck with small and archaic farms, continued grinding poverty and unemployment, and a poorly educated population. The gap between wealthy people in well-educated cities and poor villages continues to widen.

Poland used to be a multicultural country before the Second World War. Nowadays it has the lowest proportion of foreigners in the EU and Poles are not really educated in terms of how to coexist with immigrants (such as refugees from the Middle East), which means that the arrival of immigrants poses a new challenge for local communities. In addition, general interpersonal trust in Poland (an indicator of social capital) is one of lowest among the countries covered by the European Social Survey.

Nowadays one of the most of the urgent problems in the country is air pollution. Poland regularly surpasses EU limits on pollution owing to a heavy reliance on coal and a lack of government action on green technology. With a staggering 33 out of Europe's 50 most polluted cities, according to the World Health Organisation report this year, Poland is the continent's capital of smog.

STATUS OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND QUALITY OF LIFE IN LATVIA

Like many of its formerly-Communist peers, Latvia has gradually delivered greater prosperity over the past decade after continuing to push free market reforms and democratisation (Legatum Institute Foundation, 2016). But in general, Latvian inhabitants are less satisfied with their lives than EU average (6.5 out of 10 compared to 7.1 (Eurostat, 2015)). The majority of Latvians (56,6%) assess overall life satisfaction on a medium level, and the OECD Better Life Index (OECD, 2015) confirms the result: when asked to rate their general satisfaction with life, the Latvians gave 5.9 out of 10 on average, which is lower than the OECD average of 6.5.



LOCAL COMMUNITIES

The population of Latvia is historically diverse and has experienced great changes due to industrialisation, wars, migration politics etc. Over the past few decades, after joining EU and the Schengen Area, many Latvians emigrated to work in other European countries such as the United Kingdom, Germany and Norway. At the same time, the influx of immigrants that has been a challenge in many other European countries is not significant in Latvia. According to an EU agreement, over two years Latvia will offer help for 531 asylum seekers; so far, in the first year Latvia received 207.

According to the Housing and Population Census (2016), 61.8% of the Latvian population identify as Latvians. The largest ethnic group after that are Russians (25,6%), followed by Belorussians (3,4%), Ukrainians (2,3%), Poles (2,1%), Lithuanians (1,2%), Romanies (0,3%), Jews (0,3%), Germans (0,1%), Estonians (0,1%), Estonians (0,1%) and others (2,8%).

A high proportion of ethnic minorities in Latvia live in Riga. The population of Riga is approximately 700,000, which constitutes around one third of the total Latvian population. The ethnic composition of Riga comprises 43% Latvians, 39% Russians, 4% Belorussians, 4% Ukrainians, 2% Poles and 8% representatives of other ethnic minorities.

Regarding quality of life, statistics (Eurostat, 2015) show that Latvians are generally satisfied with their personal relationships with an average score of 8.1 out of 10, higher than the EU average of 7.8. OECD data (2015) shows that 84% of Latvians believe that they know someone they could rely on in a time of need. Social networks, personal contacts and the community provide support in good and bad times and as such are crucial aspects when measuring personal wellbeing.

NGOs also have an important role to play. At the beginning of 2017 there were 21,809 registered and active public organisations, associations and foundations established in Latvia (Lursoft, 2017). According to a review of NGO sector in Latvia (Caune E. et al., 2016), in 2013 there were approximately 8.5 associations and foundations per 1,000 inhabitants. In the beginning of 2016 this number had risen to 9.4. The report found that most associations and foundations operated in the field of advocacy (13.5% of the 164 organisations which had stated their field of operation). Other educational activities (12.9%) and economic and social community development (11.1%) were also among the top three in the list of NGO fields of operation. Despite the growing number of NGOs, Latvians remain skeptical about their ability to influence the decision-making process, which can be explained in the context of a post USSR country where active citizenship was unacceptable for many years. The main reason for development of a strong NGO sector is as a response societal needs that are not satisfied by the state, municipalities or businesses. For young people, NGOs can also serve as a first work experience. Libraries and NGOs traditionally are successful partners in implementing different projects that bring together local communities and address their needs.

GOVERNANCE AND BASIC RIGHTS

The Constitution of the Republic of Latvia („Satversme”) defines the nation as a parliamentary republic represented by a unicameral parliament (the „Saeima”, which has 100 members) and the Cabinet of Ministers. The Republic of Latvia, established in 1918, regained its independence and returned to the global community of free nations in 1991. Latvia joined the European Union in 2004.

The constitution determines a basic principle that „persons belonging to ethnic minorities have the right to preserve and develop their language and their ethnic and cultural identity”. Further implementation of the principle is stipulated by the 1991 law „on the Unrestricted Development and Right to Cultural Autonomy of Latvia's National and Ethnic Groups” which states that government institutions should promote the creation of material conditions for the development of the education, language and culture of national and ethnic groups residing within Latvia's territory, through allocating funds from the national budget for such purposes. Latvia has ratified all the major international human rights instruments, including the Council of Europe's Framework Convention for the Protection of National Minorities in May 2005.

For a number of years, several national programs have been developed and successfully implemented in the field of societal integration. The Guidelines on National Identity, Civil Society and Integration Policy (2012–2018) (The Ministry of Culture, 2011) is the major policy paper for social integration in Latvia. The policy enshrines a strong and united nation of Latvia, rooted in the Latvian language, culture and national identity, as well as in European democratic values. The guidelines define social integration as inclusion of all people living in Latvia, irrespective of their ethnic background and individual identification. A state support system for national minorities and their NGOs has been set up with the aim of preserving their cultural heritage and identity, promoting tolerance and the development of an intercultural dialogue.

OECD data analysis shows that there is a strong sense of community and a moderate level of civic participation in Latvia. Participation in the political process was 59% during recent elections, which is lower than the OECD average of 68%. Latvians are not very optimistic about legal system; trust in legal system is rather low at 4.5 out of 10, which is not much lower than the EU average of 4.6. In terms of gender equality, the situation is contradictory. Latvia is ranked below the EU average according to the European Gender Equality Index (European Institute for Gender Equality, 2015) but has an indicator above the average only in one area: power. This is due to a relatively high participation of women in economic and political decision making. Latvia has had a female president and prime minister in the past and women have had the right to vote since 1918. Despite the fact that only 35% of men have higher education compared to 65% of women, women are underrepresented in the Latvian parliament at only 16%. It is a similar picture in leadership positions of Latvia's top private companies, with the exception of department managers. On average Latvian women earn only 83% of what men do.

ECONOMIC AND PHYSICAL SAFETY

A sufficient income level is one of the key instruments for improving quality of life on an individual and state level, as insufficient income can lead to serious social problems such as depression, emigration and insecurity. As mentioned in the Better Life Index (OECD, 2015), Latvia has made rapid progress in adjusting its economy since the economic crisis, as illustrated by its successful entry to the Eurozone at the beginning of 2014.

Data shows that there has been progress in unemployment in Latvia but long-term unemployment and emigration remain issues. In terms of employment, 68.1% of people in Latvia have a paid job and average weekly working hours is 39 hours (both above the EU average), and job satisfaction is on a medium level at 7.3 out of 10, higher than EU average (7.1). One reason preventing job satisfaction from being higher could be a low income level; the annual median equalized net income in Latvia (EUR 5,828) is much lower than the EU average (EUR 16,101). This influences all material living conditions and 58.5% of Latvians rate their satisfaction with finances as low.

EDUCATION

Comparing data of different dimensions of quality of life in Latvia with EU averages, it is clear that some of Latvia's most important achievements are in education. Latvia's ranking is above the average in education and skills: nearly 90% of adults aged 25-64 have completed upper secondary education, and of those 31.6% have tertiary education (compared to the EU average 30.1%).

As stressed in OECD research, graduation rates, while important, speak little to the quality of education received. The OECD's Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) reviews the extent to which students have acquired the knowledge and skills that are essential for full participation in modern societies. The average student in Latvia scored 494 in reading literacy, maths and sciences, lower than the OECD average of 497. Latvia has made remarkable progress in improving its education system since independence in 1991. Children now start their education at a young age – younger than in many OECD countries. Student performance has also improved significantly since 2000, to the point that Latvian students scored near the OECD average in the 2012. Now the challenge is to raise the teaching standards and to ensure that all students can succeed - which is why there is currently a focus on reform of the education system and in particular teaching methods and organisation.

When it comes to education provision for minorities in Latvia, the state finances national minority education programmes in Latvia in seven languages: Russian, Polish, Hebrew, Ukrainian, Estonian, Lithuanian, and Belarusian. In the 2015/2016 academic year, 811 schools of general education received state funding. Of those, national minority education programmes were implemented in 104 schools. Both Latvian and minority education programmes are implemented in 71 schools, and 3 private schools run general education programs in English (two schools) and French (one school). There are also 28 evening schools, extramural and distance learning institutions, 14 of which offer both Latvian and national minority education programmes. Several schools provide education to Roma pupils. In the 2015/2016 academic year, 59,418 pupils were enrolled in national minority education programmes, accounting for 26% of the total number of students.

HEALTH

Healthcare in Latvia is decentralised, with local government and the Ministry of Health sharing responsibility for the provision of healthcare services. The Basic Care Programme ensures that free care is available for all citizens and registered foreigners in the country. The programme covers care of serious diseases, preventive health care, child and maternity care, emergency treatment, the treatment of sexually transmitted and infectious disease, surgery, rehabilitation, immunisation programmes and free prescription medicine to entitled groups. Free dental treatment is available for the under 18s. Eurostat data shows that life expectancy at birth in Latvia is 74.5 years, lower than the EU average of 80.9 years. Only 45.8% inhabitants (EU average - 67.5%) believe that they have very good and good health.

LEISURE AND SOCIAL INTERACTIONS

Regarding leisure and social interactions in terms of quality of life, satisfaction with use of time of Latvians is medium (7.1 out of 10) and higher than the EU average (6.7). Latvians are satisfied with social relationships (8.1 out of 10 compared to an EU average of 7.8) and 89.3% believe that they have someone to rely on a case of need, slightly lower than the EU average. Hence Latvians appear to have good level of social capital, which in turn leads to a relatively high sense of well-being, happiness and life satisfaction. As stressed in Eurostat analysis, „more frequent and more rewarding social interaction is also associated with better health, improved chances of finding a job and even of living in a better neighbourhood (with less crime, for instance). More specifically, having someone to rely on in case of need is particularly important”.

While NGOs represent the formal side of communities' capacity to engage socially, a significant number of activities that fall into the category of „leisure and social interactions” are outside of the formal framework defined by NGO activity. There are a multitude of self-initiated activities that a community may engage in such as a local tradition of joint communal work, adult education, lifelong learning activities and other vocational activities like folk dancing and choir singing in particular. In 2016 there were 425 amateur theatre groups in Latvia with 6,400 participants, around 625 folk dance groups, 132 folklore ensembles, 364 amateur choirs and 96 folk decorative art collectives. This gives a perspective of just how many people are interacting in informal cultural activities.

CHALLENGES

As outlined earlier, Latvians are generally less satisfied with their lives than others in the EU. A particular challenge for Latvia is emigration, much more so than immigration which has been a huge concern in other parts of the EU. Most Latvian emigrants are young people and people of working age. In order to encourage a reversal in this movement, in 2013 Latvia approved the Economy Ministry's re-emigration support plan. This includes giving more information about the Latvian labour market, improving cooperation with Latvian diaspora abroad, organising Latvian language courses for the spouses and children of Latvian residents returning to Latvia, regardless of their nationality and Latvian language level. However, the plan was widely criticized and numerous re-emigration initiatives were not carried out. Economic motivations are still the most common reason to leave the country and this is a much more complex issue to address.

Another challenge is the integration of Russian-speaking minorities. A recent study (Ozoliņa, 2016) concluded that the Russian-speaking community in Latvia is diverse: „Russian speakers living in Latvian-dominated areas (Zemgale and Kurzeme regions) do not feel excluded from Latvian society and do not tend to distance themselves for the purpose of protecting their language and identity. On the contrary, their sense of belonging to Latvia is very high and they associate their future with the country they are living in, while in such regions as the city of Riga and region of Latgale, due to the widespread use of the Russian language and tools of influence used by Russian „public diplomacy” — media, culture, textbooks in schools, and many others, Russian speakers prefer self-exclusion, because of self-sufficiency, instead of expressing an interest in becoming an integral part of Latvian society. In Riga, for example, students are more critical about bilingual education and more resistant to learning the Latvian language.”

Finally, mass emigration and falling fertility rates have provoked a demographic challenge. According to Eurostat data, by 2030 more than 45% of Latvia's population is expected to be aged 50 or above, compared to a figure of around 39% currently. The total population by then will be just 1.6 million, which risks creating numerous problems such as efficiently using the potential of the existing labor force, providing quality healthcare services and environment, and making available lifelong education.

COMMON CHALLENGES IN PARTNER COUNTRIES AND ON A EUROPEAN LEVEL

In the European Parliament publication Research for CULT Committee: Public Libraries - Their New Role (Lison et al., 2016), the authors have described some of the challenges facing European countries today:

„Local authorities face enormous challenges regarding current social, technical and economic change in order to make their communities fit for future developments. These challenges mainly rise from the increase of economic and social inequalities, from the transformation of workplaces and jobs, from the emerging digital society, from demographic change, from climate change and much more. At the same time there is a growing need for social security, for a sustainable environment and for social behaviour based on the principles of human rights. Europe’s citizens must be prepared for this and should be provided with the tools and strategies necessary to cope with these changes. One of the basic tasks in this regard is to establish new effective policies for education and training of the population; this is crucial for future success in today’s knowledge society with its ever-changing demands and conditions. Local politicians and authorities must find new partners and actors who can give answers and offer support for this complex task.” (Lison et al., 2016)

These challenges above resonate with those outlined by the DIDELE project partner countries. Economic emigration of young people and a „brain drain” is a big challenge for Eastern European countries such as Latvia and Lithuania. Norway and other Western European countries on the other hand are benefitting from this emigration. One of the challenges for Norway, for example, is integration of work immigrants, refugees, asylum seekers and other at-risk groups in society.

Low income, poor health and little social contact can lead to a form of accumulation of poor living conditions for some of the adult population. People who are unemployed, disabled or with little education are especially vulnerable. This is a challenge in all the partner countries on different levels, and with different social groups.

THE ROLE OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND HOW THEY CONTRIBUTE TO QUALITY OF LIFE

„The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision-making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.”

(IFLA.org, 1994)

So far we have explored the Eurostat dimensions measuring quality of life. We have also described the status of quality of life in Norway, Lithuania, Latvia and Poland along these dimensions, and defined some of the common challenges in our partner countries and on a European level. In this section we will look at how public libraries can play a role in improving local communities and quality of life. Public libraries are functioning on a local level, improving life for people in their neighbourhood. Together, the result of the work done in public libraries can have an impact on a national level, but the work they do is customised to the needs of their local community.

There have been several studies conducted on libraries and their role in the community. Kretzman and Rans (Kretzman, Rans, 2005) found that public libraries contribute to community development by providing a free community space, technological resources, a connection to local economy, a sense of ownership by the community and a high level of community trust. Other researchers found that public libraries provide a positive social impact on their communities (Kerslake, Kinnel, 1998) and that libraries support stability, safety and quality of life in their neighbourhoods (Greenhalgh, Worpole, Landry, 1995; Manjarrez, Cigna, Bajaj, 2008).



CHANGING LOCAL COMMUNITIES AND THE „FOUR SPACES” MODEL

Our local communities are changing and so public libraries must change with them. In the article *The Four Spaces – A New Model for the Public Library*, the Danish researchers Dorte Skot-Hansen, Henrik Jochumsen and Casper Hvenegaard Hansen explain the need for a new model for libraries:

During the last 10-15 years the societal context and thereby also the libraries’ societal legitimacy has changed in a crucial manner. Tendencies towards globalisation, de-traditionalisation, cultural liberation and a development towards an increasingly multi-cultural society are now significant. Leading sociologists such as Zygmunt Bauman (1998) and Anthony Giddens (1991) have evolved concepts like „post-modern” or „late-modern” societies indicating that we have gone through a radical change or at least: that certain tendencies, such as the disappearing of traditions, the demand for both personal and institutional reflection or the lack of social cohesion have been radicalized (Hvenegaard Rasmussen and Jochumsen, 2007). This means that more than ever we need to know who we are, that we open up in relation to other people and to society as a whole, that we believe in our own strength and value, and that we are able to relate to – and ourselves initiate – change. This is the case not only for the library-users or citizens in general but also for the library as an institution, and this is actually the substance behind a catchphrase like „from collection to connection”. Seen in the light of this development a new library model is needed that takes into account the challenges the societal development poses in relation to the library and which, at the same time, highlights the potentials of the library of the future (Skot-Hansen, Rasmussen, Jochumsen 2013).

During the last 10-15 years the societal context and thereby also the libraries' societal legitimacy has in connection with the report The Public Libraries in the Knowledge Society, the researchers introduced the „Four Spaces” model describing the transformation of the public library from a passive collection-based space to a more active space for experience, inspiration and community interaction.

The model consists of four different overlapping spaces: the inspiration space, the learning space, the meeting space and the performative space. The overall objective of these four spaces is to support the following four goals for the public library in the future: experience, involvement, empowerment, innovation.

„Where the first two goals especially concern individual's perception, experience and involvement in her or his quest for meaning and identity in complex society, the other two objectives to a greater degree underpin societal goals. Empowerment concerns the development of strong and independent citizens who are able to solve everyday problems, while innovation has to do with finding new answers to practical problems or developing completely new concepts, methods or artistic expressions. (...) However, creativity and innovation are important for other, less prosaic reasons too. In the future we need not only something to sustain us, but also something to live for. Here the library can make a contribution by making space for learning, experience, engaging meetings and possibilities for expressing oneself in a creative way” (Skot-Hansen, Rasmussen, Jochumsen 2013).

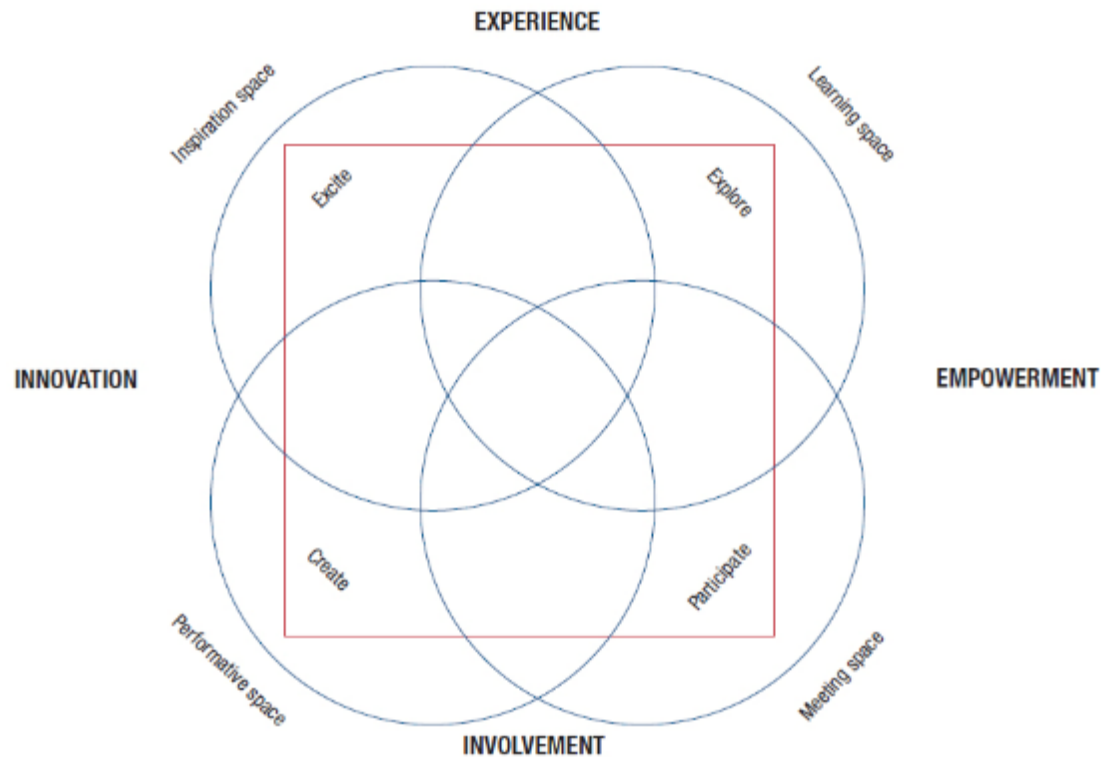


Figure 1. The four spaces by Dorte Skot-Hansen, Henrik Jochumsen and Casper Hvenegaard Hansen

The „Four Spaces” model has been used in different ways by libraries. It has been used as an instrument for rearranging libraries and a tool for building new libraries. The model has also been used in connection to the development of library plans and politics. The most interesting use of the model in this context, as a basis for the development and articulation of public libraries role in a democratic society.

In the context of this model, libraries can contribute to increasing quality of life according to the Eurostat dimensions („governance and basic rights”, „economic and physical safety”, „education”, „productivity and main activity”, „health” and „leisure and social interaction”).

There are certain dimensions where libraries perhaps have the potential to be particularly relevant and influential. „Governance and basic rights”, „education” and „leisure and social interaction” are areas where public libraries make an impact today, and where they might play an even more important role in the future. These areas coincide well with the goals from the „four space” model: experience, involvement, empowerment and innovation.

GOVERNANCE AND BASIC RIGHTS

Eurostat writes in the introduction to the chapter about governance and basic rights in the report Quality of life: facts and views:

„The quality of democratic institutions and the elimination of discrimination constitute important aspects of the quality of life of European Union (EU) residents in the public or civic sphere. EU residents distancing themselves from political life and the empowerment of women in society still remain a challenge” (Eurostat, 2015, p. 186).

Eurostat refers to the dimension „governance and basic rights” as:

- trust in institutions and satisfaction with public services;
- aspects related to discrimination and equal opportunities;
- active citizenship.

Public libraries contribute in various ways to all three areas above, especially with regard to discrimination and equal opportunities and active citizenship. The IFLA/UNESCO library manifesto (ifla.org, 1994) guides library services in most countries. The manifesto emphasises that public library services should be provided on the basis of equality and access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status.

An example of recognition of the important role of libraries in this area of active citizenship is the Finnish government, which included the important role of libraries in their National Development Plan for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals to achieve objectives set out under the UN Agenda 2030. Libraries are acknowledged in the context of the action plan as a tool to prevent hate speech and racism and to promote social inclusion: „the role of public libraries as promoters of active citizenship, cultural diversity and democracy shall be strengthened” (Maarno, 2017).

Libraries have shown their important role as fighters for democracy recently in their action against fake news. Fake news became an issue during the presidential campaign in the United States in 2016, but fake news and bending the truth for political gain is nothing new. In the form of political propaganda, fake news is something many countries are familiar with. The creation of social networks like Facebook and Twitter allows people to exchange information and news on a much greater scale than before, but make it even more complicated to identify who is behind the original message.

Along with other institutions, libraries have organised events like #DayofFacts and international campaigns like IFLA's How to Spot Fake News campaign (see below).

Another relevant area where libraries acted rapidly to accommodate people's right to equal access to information was during the refugee crisis in 2015. Public libraries in countries receiving a large number of asylum seekers and refugees created offers and services to help newcomers. Providing immigrants access to information and meeting places enabled participation in the local community.

The goals of „empowerment” and „involvement” in the four space model are important when increasing the quality of governance and basic rights. Libraries' actions against fake news and towards inclusion of immigrants are ways to empower and involve people in the local community.



Figure 2. Infographic „How to spot fake news”, available at: <https://www.ifla.org/node/11174>

Libraries also underline their important role as institutions that preserve core democratic values, such as diversity, openness, freedom of speech and equal rights for all. Whereas Europe's recent right-wing populist movement may pose a threat to those values, librarians stand strong and continue to serve their diverse communities. A good example is a series of images accompanied by the message „Libraries are for everyone”, created by the librarian Rebecca McCorkindale (Nebraska, USA) for the annual Collaborative Summer Library Program, and translated into various languages, made available to share, modify and use by libraries all over the world.



Figure 3. Rebecca McCorkindale's image
„Libraries are for everyone”

EDUCATION

Eurostat writes in the introduction to the chapter about Education in the report Quality of life: facts and views:

„Education affects the quality of life of individuals in many ways. People with limited skills and expertise tend to have worse job opportunities and worse economic prospects, while early school leavers face higher risks of social exclusion and are less likely to participate in civic life. In the same way as employment, education is at the very heart of European Union (EU) policies, in that the level of education of its residents can have a major impact on their employability, hence reducing their risk of poverty, by providing them the necessary skills and expertise to adapt in a rapidly changing labour market and society. By enhancing creativity, entrepreneurship and innovation, education can also contribute to job creation and growth. Moreover, beyond pragmatic considerations, education is one of the greatest values of society, since it allows for a better understanding of the world we live in” (Eurostat, 2015, p. 82).

As a dimension of the Eurostat quality of life framework, education refers to acquired expertise, skills and continued participation in lifelong learning activities and to aspects related to the access to education. Expertise and skills are measured through data on educational attainment of the population, including an early school leavers indicator. These are complemented by measures on self-reported (knowledge of a foreign language and computer literacy) and assessed skills. Lifelong learning covers the proportion of the population in further education and training.

Public libraries have traditionally been a key institution in society that provide possibilities for lifelong learning. This will also be an important task for libraries in the future. One of the spaces in the four space model is the learning space:

„The learning space particularly underpins experience and empowerment. This is the space where adults can discover and explore the world and thereby increase their competences and possibilities through free and unrestricted access to information and knowledge. Learning in the library is always an offer. It happens through play, artistic activities, courses and many other activities” (Laerkes, 2016).

The emerging trend of makerspaces, creative hubs, fablabs, hackerspaces and similar offers in libraries is a way to facilitate new learning experiences for both young people and adults. On the website MakerBridge, makerspaces are described as „tools + support + community”:

„In makerspaces, people share tools, skills, and ideas, and often work together on projects. In these spaces, learning is hands-on, collaborative, and often crosses traditional divisions such as age or level of formal education. Instead, makerspaces focus on bringing together people to explore and create around projects that interest and excite them.”(MakerBridge, 2017)

The „four space” model catchphrase, „from collection to connection”, is relevant in terms of learning in libraries. Knowledge and learning materials is no longer contained between book covers, but is increasingly digital:

„Lifelong learning – the voluntary, and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge throughout our lives – is today an established phenomenon. The majority of learning now occurs informally outside the classroom. A shift away from traditional spaces to e-learning can enable less resource heavy solutions, for example, they might require less physical space and minimise waste from printed materials. With this shift, the role of the library might evolve from one supporting learning to increasing learning opportunities facilitated by the library.” (Arup University, 2015).

Public libraries have taken on the role of a provider of digital competences through access to both equipment and training (which are often not available to users at home, school or in the workplace). Libraries not only run trainings in basic digital skills, but many libraries also offer opportunities for more advanced training in areas as 3D-modelling, graphic design, programming and more.

The public library has to be a place where people feel free and encouraged to obtain new knowledge and skills in order to improve their quality of life. In the report Future Libraries, Jonathan Douglas, the director of the National Literacy Trust, is quoted on seamless learning services in libraries:

„A nice, warm destination for families, children and adults that can merge education and entertainment makes it something you want to take part in. Many people’s aspirations these days are wrapped up in their consumer experiences, so it becomes important to benchmark other things to those experiences to compete and win. [...] Libraries are and will continue to be places where information is accessed and new knowledge is created” (Arup University, 2015).

LEISURE AND SOCIAL INTERACTION

Eurostat writes in the introduction to the chapter about leisure and social interaction in the report Quality of life: facts and views:

„A social life, in which people can enjoy a balance between work and private interests, spending sufficient time on leisure and social interactions, is highly associated with life satisfaction. Being able to engage in social activities is important for an individual’s psychological balance, hence wellbeing. Having someone to rely on in case of need was chosen as a headline indicator for the United Nations World Happiness report, highlighting its importance for an individual’s well-being” (Eurostat, 2015, p.134).

The leisure sub-dimension within Eurostat's quality of life framework covers the quantitative and qualitative aspects of leisure, as well as an assessment of accessibility. The quantity of leisure concerns the availability of time and its use (including personal care), including satisfaction of people with the amount of time they have to do things they like. The quality of and access to leisure are measured for the moment with indicators on self-reported attendance of leisure activities that people are interested in, for example cinema, theatre or cultural centres.

The social interactions topic focuses on activities with people, activities for people, supportive relationships and social cohesion. Activities with people (including feeling lonely) are measured in terms of the frequency of contacting, meeting socially, getting together with friends, relatives or colleagues and satisfaction with personal relationships. Activities for people concern involvement in voluntary and charitable activities, excluding paid work. An assessment of the existence of supportive relationships is based on the proportion of people indicating that they have someone to rely on for help in case of need and to discuss on personal matters. Social cohesion considers interpersonal trust, perceived tensions and inequalities.

Research shows that local communities can benefit in many ways from the public libraries, both from the active work of librarians and from the actual library space. Public libraries are free and open meeting places in the local community.

The definition of the meeting space in the Four space model is:

„The meeting space is an open, public space and a place between work and home where the citizens can meet other people, who are both like them and differ from them. In a segmented society, you need platforms where you come across people with different interests and values from your own and encounter opinions that challenge you through discussion and debate. The meeting space provides the frames for non-committal, accidental meetings in both small intimate spaces as well as in lounge areas with newspapers and café facilities and as in more organized meetings, where topics and problems can be analyzed and discussed. Meetings can happen live as well as on the net through chat groups, blogs or other social technologies.” (Laerkes, 2016)

The Norwegian library research project PLACE (Public Libraries – Arenas for Citizenship) studied the library's role as a meeting place and its potential in promoting a sense of community and building social capital. In connection with the project, researcher Ragnar Audunson introduced the concept low-intensive and high-intensive meeting places: „Audunson (2005) argues for the need of low intensive meeting places, arenas where we meet people with other interests and values than our own. These places can be seen as an alternative to high-intensive meeting places, which rather creates borderlines and differences” (Skot-Hansen et al.,2013).

High-intensive meeting places are arenas where we meet people with the same interests and values as ourselves. This can be a workplace, political party, football club, or church, among others. Low-intensive meeting places are environments where people are exposed to values and interests other than their own. Public libraries are one of few places in our communities where people from most social groups and cultures meet. Public libraries may be important in creating bridges between people with different values and belonging to different cultures.

The PLACE project argues that the concept of „social capital“ is applied when studying the potential of public libraries as meeting places and trust-generating locations. According to Robert Putnam, social capital can „be defined as a feature of social organization, such as trust, norms, or networks that improve the efficiency of society by facilitating coordinated actions and reducing transaction costs (Putnam 2000)“. According to Eurostat, „social interactions, i.e. interpersonal activities and relationships, apart from satisfying a primeval human need for existence in a social milieu (loneliness being a factor that is detrimental to quality of life), also constitute a ‘social capital’ for individuals.“ (Eurostat, 2015, p. 137).

Public libraries enable personal meetings between people. „Sometimes the local librarian is the only person a user will talk to in a day“ (Anonymous, 2016). Having someone to rely on in case of need, which has been shown to be very important for individual well-being, is, for some, their local librarian.

Events and activities in libraries give people a cultural and/or educational exposure, but also enable social interaction between people. A common activity such as a reading group in the library can have a considerable positive impact on the well-being and happiness of the participants. The English organisation The Reading Agency and the Department of Information Science at Loughborough University (LISU) found in their research that public libraries make a significant contribution to health and well-being in communities, particularly through reading groups and the other creative activities they offer (readingagency.org.uk, 2014),

LIBRARY AS A SECOND AND THIRD PLACE

Sociologist Ray Oldenburg says in his book *The Great Good Place* (Oldenburg, 1989) that „third places” are important to civil society, democracy, civic engagement, and establishing a sense of place. In community building, the third place is the social surroundings separate from the two usual social environments of home („first place”) and the workplace („second place”).

The characteristics of a „third place” are: „a communal arena with a low threshold, frequented by regulars, where the main activity is talking, and where it is possible to buy something to drink. Third places are regarded as important in building community and social capital” (Aabø and Audunson, 2012).

A study on how library users in three different districts in Oslo used their local branch of the Oslo Public Library was a part of the PLACE project. They studied activities that went beyond the borrowing of books and other media, with a special focus on how public libraries functioned as meeting places in their local communities. The researchers found that: „a high proportion of the observed uses constituted the library as a place related to work and educations, that is a second place. The library is an extension of the school or work place. Many of those in difficult and transitory life situations use the library as an alternative to a second place – a place that structure everyday life in the same way the work place does to the employed” (Aabø and Audunson, 2012). In describing the library as an alternative or extension to a „second place”, the researchers contribute to the argument that libraries are indeed a vital „third place”. The observations did not include activities such as lectures, author evenings, programmes and courses where the characteristics of the library as a third place is stronger. The dominating impression of the study is that people float between „life spheres” in terms of their roles: „Users float between roles and spheres – between that of a student, that of a family member, that of a friend and neighbor, that of a citizen, and so forth.” (Aabø and Audunson, 2012).

Not only libraries claim to be a third place, but compared to coffee shops and other places considered third places, libraries are free to use and people can bring their own food and drink if they can't afford to buy anything. The floating between spheres are also an important feature of libraries, where users can go from sitting down with their studies to talking to friends and family over a cup of coffee, or attending a lecture or concert.

Public libraries contribute to community development, building social capital and quality of life in many ways for different groups of people. We've explored how public libraries can make a positive impact on quality of life in the areas „governance and basic rights”, „education” and „leisure and social interaction” without forgetting the role they play in the other three areas as well („economic and physical safety”, „productivity and main activity” and „health”). Developing libraries and library offers with the goals from the „four space” model in mind (experience, involvement, empowerment and innovation) will help libraries create a community space that contributes to the quality of life for individuals in their local communities.

LIBRARIES AS ADULT EDUCATION PROVIDERS WITHIN THE EU POLICY FRAMEWORK

The values of the European Union (EU) are: respect for human dignity and human rights, freedom, democracy, equality and the rule of law (Mosaiikki, 2013). The EU was created to defend these values in order to ensure the wellbeing of the Union's citizens. Underpinning all of these fundamental values is education. Education is a human right without which citizens are unable to fully participate in society.

According to the principle of subsidiarity – that the EU does not act unless action taken at EU level is more effective than at national, regional or local level – the EU does not set a common education policy. However, the EU institutions set educational benchmarks and targets, monitor progress across member states, and offer guidance and funding to ensure that quality education is provided for all.

Education is a priority across the EU's policies at various levels. This section will look in particular at:

[Europe 2020](#)

[Education & Training 2020 \(ET2020\)](#)

[Education & Training Monitor](#)

[The Paris Declaration](#)

[Renewed European Agenda for Adult Education](#)

[The New Skills Agenda for Europe](#)

[Sustainable Development Goals](#)

[Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe \(EPALE\)](#)

The common features and priorities of these initiatives regarding adult education in Europe demonstrate how the this project can contribute at a local, national and European level.

Europe 2020

According to the European Commission, „Europe 2020 is the European Union’s ten-year jobs and growth strategy. It was launched in 2010 to create the conditions for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth” (Europe 2020 in a nutshell, n.d.). Every year as part of the European Semester economic cycle, progress is measured against a set of targets concerning five critical issues, including education. Specifically, under Europe 2020 strategy the EU should aim to achieve the following education-related targets by 2020:

- Raising higher education attainment from 32% to 40%,
- Reducing the share of early school leavers from 14% to less than 10%.

Although this project will not directly influence these particular targets (given that the focus is on non-formal education and not school or higher education), the inclusion of education targets in the Europe 2020 strategy is a political commitment to progress on education and an indication that this is an important part of the EU’s vision, not only for the good of its citizens but for economic growth and employability.

Education & Training 2020

Education & Training 2020 (ET2020) is the EU’s education policy framework. As stated by the European Commission, „EU policy is designed to support national action and help address common challenges (including skills gaps, digitalization and an aging population) through a series of objectives, benchmarks and guidelines”. As such, „ET 2020 is a forum that allows exchanges of best practices, mutual learning, gathering and dissemination of information and evidence of what works, as well as advice and support for policy reforms (What is the EU’s role in education & training?, n.d.)”.

As part of the ET2020 framework, four objectives were established in 2009 with the aim of encouraging and supporting member states to address specific education and training challenges, by 2020:

- Making lifelong learning and mobility a reality,
- Improving the quality and efficiency of education and training,
- Promoting equity, social cohesion and active citizenship,
- Enhancing creativity and innovation, including entrepreneurship, at all levels of education and training.

Implementation of the ET2020 framework is supported by Erasmus+ funding, therefore this project has been inspired by, and seeks to contribute to, these objectives, by providing librarians in the partner countries with the tools they need to deliver innovative adult learning programmes. The EU's 65,000 public libraries are an often under-utilised resource that in fact have much to contribute in terms of lifelong learning and social inclusion in their communities.

ET2020 underwent a mid-term review in 2015, the results of which were published in a Joint Report. The Report identifies key challenges and sets new priorities in education and training for the next five years up to 2020.

These new priorities are as follows:

1. Relevant and high-quality skills and competences for employability, innovation, active citizenship.
2. Inclusive education, equality, non-discrimination, civic competences.
3. Open and innovative education and training, including by fully embracing the digital era.
4. Strong support for educators.
5. Transparency and recognition of skills and qualifications.
6. Sustainable investment, performance and efficiency of education and training systems.

Progress towards these priorities are to be measured against an agreed set of benchmarks to be achieved by 2020:

- at least 95% of children (from 4 to compulsory school age) should participate in early childhood education,
- fewer than 15% of 15-year-olds should be under-skilled in reading, mathematics and science,
- the rate of early leavers from education and training aged 18-24 should be below 10%,
- at least 40% of people aged 30-34 should have completed some form of higher education,
- at least 15% of adults should participate in lifelong learning,
- at least 20% of higher education graduates and 6% of 18-34 year-olds with an initial vocational qualification should have spent some time studying or training abroad;
- the share of employed graduates (aged 20-34 with at least upper secondary education attainment and having left education 1-3 years ago) should be at least 82%.

To take the most relevant benchmark in the context of this project concerning adult participation in lifelong learning: data from 2014 shows that only 10.7% of adults participate in lifelong learning, a slight improvement from 2010 (9.3%) but still far off the 15% target for 2020. Public libraries in Europe have a key role to play in both complementing the formal education system and filling in the gaps with a huge range of non-formal learning activities. Public libraries have always been a trusted, neutral space, and often have lower barriers to entry (both in terms of time and money but also psychologically) for adult learners who might have been failed by the formal education system.

This contribution to the EU's education and training objectives is recognised in the Joint Report in the following references:

Open learning environments, such as public libraries, open adult education centres and open universities, should be empowered as a means of promoting social inclusion.

Open learning environments – such as public libraries, open adult education centres and open universities – can help collaboration between educational sectors, including for disadvantaged learners (OJ C 417/25, 15.12.2015).

This project's MIC model pays particular attention to multiculturalism and social inclusion by first assessing the level of integration of society that the library users belong to – reiterating statements in the ET2020 Joint Report that make a clear link between public libraries offer and social inclusion.

Education & Training Monitor

Progress against the Europe 2020 targets for education and the ET2020 benchmarks is measured in the annual Education & Training Monitor. The Monitor brings together data on education and training across the EU from a variety of sources to document the evolution of various educational systems and assess what progress is being made. It is accompanied by 28 separate country reports that include country-specific data on policy and performance.

To quote the 2016 Education & Training Monitor report: „in a fast-changing working environment adults need to not only acquire, but also continuously update and improve their skills to remain competitive and productive. Adult learning systems must respond to a large variety of needs expressed by learners, companies and society. They need to ensure that all individuals have easy and equitable access to learning opportunities. In particular, those who have left initial education or training without the minimal level of skills needed in the contemporary economic and social environment should be given opportunities to obtain those skills later in life. Through upskilling and reskilling, adults can ensure that their skills remain relevant and up to date, not only within the work environment but also for active participation in society” (Education and Training Monitor 2016).

The Monitor reports that there was no increase in adult uptake of lifelong learning opportunities from 2014 to 2015, with the percentage of adults participating in lifelong learning still at 10.7%. The 2015 (2014) data for the project partner countries vary (% of total population):

- Poland: 3.5% (4.5%)
- Lithuania: 5.8% (5.4%)
- Latvia: 5.7% (7.2%)

Since Norway is not a member state of the EU data was not collected for the Education & Training Monitor.

Worryingly, in Poland and Latvia the proportion of adults taking part in lifelong learning activities has decreased, and in Lithuania has only increased by 0,4%. This is a clear indication that there is still work to be done in order to achieve the EU's 15% target by 2020, and reinforces the importance of empowering public libraries to deliver non-formal learning activities to adults in a structured and innovative way.

As a complement to the Education & Training Monitor, the Adult Education Survey was launched in 2007, with an additional survey conducted every 5 years or so. The survey collects information on education and lifelong learning activities of people aged 25-64 in the EU. The initial phase of this project surveying libraries in partner countries and collecting data on adult learning activities taking place in libraries could feed into future Adult Education Surveys. In the future, there could be a role for the project partner the Reading & Writing Foundation as a dissemination partner to explore data collection channels and to use the data collected as part of the DIDELE project to reinforce current data in the survey.

Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning

Within the framework of Europe 2020 and ET2020, the Renewed European Agenda for Adult Learning refers specifically to the EU's adult learning policy, and encourages member states to increase participation in adult learning (be it in formal, non-formal and informal educational establishments) for both work and personal life, focusing in particular on low-skilled and older adults. As the Agenda notes:

The Europe 2020 strategy for smart, sustainable and inclusive growth acknowledges lifelong learning and skills development as key elements in response to the current economic crisis, to demographic ageing and to the broader economic and social strategy of the EU.

The crisis has highlighted the major role which adult learning can play in achieving the Europe 2020 goals, by enabling adults — in particular the low-skilled and older workers — to improve their ability to adapt to changes in the labour market and society. Adult learning provides a means of up-skilling or reskilling those affected by unemployment, restructuring and career transitions, as well as makes an important contribution to social inclusion, active citizenship and personal development (OJ C 372/1).

The Paris Declaration

Social inclusion and active citizenship have become an increasingly important theme in the EU's position on education and training, notably since the Paris Declaration, adopted on 17 March 2015 following the terrorist attacks in Paris in January 2015. The Declaration concerned four areas of EU-wide cooperation in the fight against terrorism through education:

1. Ensuring young people acquire social, civic and intercultural competences, by promoting democratic values and fundamental rights, social inclusion and non-discrimination, as well as active citizenship.
2. Enhancing critical thinking and media literacy, particularly in the use of the Internet and social media, so as to develop resistance to discrimination and indoctrination.
3. Fostering the education of disadvantaged children and young people, by ensuring that our education and training systems address their needs.
4. Promoting intercultural dialogue through all forms of learning in cooperation with other relevant policies and stakeholders (Education and radicalisation, n.d.).

Special attention was also given to the implementation of the Paris Declaration in the ET2020 Joint Report 2015. With one of the this project's main curriculum features being multicultural (along with socially innovative and creative), collecting best practice examples and encouraging future library projects to integrate a multicultural aspect into their non-formal education delivery, the project indirectly supports the EU's Declaration to promote tolerance and active citizenship. Consideration of the level of integration of minority groups as part of the development of the MIC model also addresses these important issues and ensures they will be implemented in a way appropriate to the society in each country.

New Skills Agenda for Europe

A flagship initiative of the Europe 2020 strategy is the New Skills Agenda for Europe. The European Commission explains that, „the new Skills Agenda for Europe launches a number of actions to ensure that the right training, the right skills and the right support is available to people in the European Union. It will aim at making better use of the skills that are available; equip people with the new skills that are needed - to help them find quality jobs and improve their life chances” (New Skills Agenda for Europe, 2016).

The Skills Agenda is first and foremost a tool for bridging the skills gap and mismatch in Europe in order to get Europeans (back) into work, but it recognizes that education and training is a key tool in achieving this, especially given that „70 million Europeans lack adequate reading and writing skills, and even more have poor numeracy and digital skills, putting them at risk of unemployment, poverty and social exclusion” (European Commission, 2016).

The agenda was partially adopted by Council in 2016 along with the Commission’s proposal for ten actions to be taken forward over the following two years. These include the following two actions of particular relevance to this project.

Upskilling Pathways (formerly the Skills Guarantee)

The Upskilling Pathways action specifically targets adults with low basic skills (including digital skills). Identifying low basic skills and low qualifications as a barrier to adults finding work and participating fully in society, Upskilling Pathways encourages the EU’s member states to provide flexible learning pathways for adults to acquire a minimum level of literacy, numeracy and/or digital skills, and/or making progress towards a qualification at EQF level 3 or 4.

The Pathway would be delivered via the following steps:

1. Skills Assessment,
2. Tailored offer (a learning plan suited to the learner’s specific skills needs),
3. Validation and recognition (including identification and documentation of learning that takes place non or informally).

The European Commission recognizes Europe’s public libraries as a key partner for delivery of the Upskilling Pathways, particularly using their unique qualities to provide in guidance and outreach. As noted in the European Commission’s Staff Working Document accompanying the Proposal for a new Skills Agenda, and referencing figures from the Public Libraries 2020 project (Public Libraries 2020, 2014): „innovative use should be made of already existing infrastructure such as public libraries. Europe’s 65,000 public libraries are the first place to which people of all ages and abilities can go to gain minimum levels of literacy, numeracy, digital and foreign languages. In 2013, 24 million adults in the EU participated in training organised by libraries and 2.3 million people attended digital literacy courses in libraries” (New Skills Agenda for Europe, n.d.).

By reinforcing the capacity of librarians to deliver learning activities and guidance to adults through the MIC curriculum, this project is well placed to contribute to delivery of the Upskilling Pathways initiative in the countries concerned.

Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition

To address the lack of digital skills in the workforce in particular, another action as part of the Skills Agenda is the launch of the Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, continuing the momentum of the Grand Coalition for Digital Jobs that ran from 2013-2016. On the one hand, the coalition invites member states „to develop comprehensive national digital skills strategies by mid-2017 on the basis of targets set by end-2016. This includes:

- Establishing national digital skills coalitions connecting public authorities, business, education, training and labour market stakeholders.
- Developing concrete measures to bring digital skills and competences to all levels of education and training, supporting teachers and educators and promoting active involvement of business and other organisations” (Digital Skills and Jobs Coalition, 2017).

On the other hand, the coalition encourages stakeholders to make concrete pledges to support and/or deliver digital skills training in order to reduce the digital skills gap. Many private sector providers have pledged to offer digital training, many of whom work with libraries in some capacity (such as CISCO, Google, Intel) as well as Telecentre Europe which has many library members, including the Information Society Development Foundation, the leading partner on this project. The Reading & Writing Foundation’s Public Libraries 2020 project is also a member of the coalition.

Since public libraries often focus on digital skills provision (through digital literacy courses, access to computers and MOOCs, informal ICT guidance from a trained librarian), this project can make a contribution to the coalition through identification and dissemination of best practice as well as via its creation of an innovative training curriculum that also covers ICT.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the New European Consensus on Development

In 2015, the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) took over from the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) to take forward the global sustainable development agenda. The aim of the SDGs and of the UN 2030 Agenda is to „mobilize efforts to end all forms of poverty, fight inequalities and tackle climate change, while ensuring that no one is left behind”.

The seventeen global goals cover core issues from gender equality climate action and economic growth. The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) has positioned libraries as contributing to all SDGs by offering free access to information – just as important in traditional developing countries as in Europe.

Although traditionally the EU has had an external facing role in the context of implementing the UN2030 Agenda (through support and finance to developing countries), the New Consensus on Development,

announced by Vice President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans in November 2016, aims to streamline the SDGs into all internal EU policies. As Frans Timmermans said, „to build a future for our children and our planet to the benefit of everyone we are making the SDGs and sustainability a guiding principle in all our work. Implementing the UN 2030 Agenda is a shared commitment and needs everyone's contribution and cooperation, including Member States and civil society at large”.

According to the Staff Working Document, Next Steps for a Sustainable European Future, that accompanies the Communication on a New European Consensus on Development, many existing EU policies already contribute to progress on the SDGs in Europe. Looking particularly at SDG 4 („Ensure inclusive and quality education for all and promote lifelong learning”), the policies mentioned in this chapter such as the New Agenda for Skills, Education and Training 2020 and even the Erasmus+ funding programme, directly support progress towards achieving quality education across Europe as part of the UN 2030 Agenda.

This project's aim to develop an innovative resource for non-formal adult learning programmes in libraries therefore directly contributes to SDG 4 and the EU's priorities in education. Though it should not be forgotten that, as IFLA documents in its publication „Libraries Can Drive Progress Across the Entire UN 2030 Agenda” (IFLA, 2017), merely by providing communities with free access to information both in print and online, supporting libraries in their day-to-day work is already a big step towards reaching all SDG targets by 2030.

Electronic Platform for Adult Learning in Europe (EPALE)

EPALE is an online hub for sharing ideas, experience and best practice examples in the field of adult education with a wide range of interested parties across Europe. The outputs of this project – the data collection, model, best practices and tools – will be shared on the EPALE platform to inspire and encourage replication across other countries not involved in the project, via The Reading & Writing Foundation who already engage on the platform through the Public Libraries 2020 project.



Libraries **and their users**



LIBRARIES AND THEIR USERS

LIBRARIES There are 65,000 public libraries in the European Union, and every year 100 million people visit their public library. Libraries play an important role in providing free access to information in various formats – this is not only a human right but also an important factor in determining quality of life.

The role of libraries as an education provider greatly expanded over recent years. This goes hand in hand with EU policy objectives highlighting the value of informal and non-formal education and the importance of lifelong learning. Lifelong Learning statistics (Eurostat, 2016) show that in 2015, 20,1% of Norway population aged to 25-64 participated in education and training activities, as did 5,8% of Lithuanians, 5,7% of Latvians and 3,5% of Poles, with an EU average of 10,7%. Although libraries are not the only providers of educational activities, according to the Cross-European survey to measure users' perceptions of the benefits of ICT in public libraries: Final Report, 2013, about 24 million adults across the EU (one in four library users) have taken part in informal learning activities in libraries in the last 12 months, and around 2.3 million adults attended a computer training class in a library in 2012 (Quick et al., 2013a).

In 2016, EBLIDA (the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation and Associations) and the Latvian Library Association conducted a survey on non-formal and informal activities taking place in public libraries across Europe. The data collected shows that target groups and types of training are similar for both non-formal and informal educational activities in libraries. Students and unemployed people are the most common target group of educational activities, and the focus is usually on digital literacy, reading promotion and communication (Eblida, 2016). This mainly illustrates that libraries are providing educational opportunities to the most in need, filling a gap left by formal education.

In this subchapter we present short descriptions of libraries and their contribution to the lifelong learning provision in the project partner countries, as well as the national lifelong learning situation, educational needs of library users, and a detailed presentation of the DIDEL project findings.

LIBRARIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO LIFELONG LEARNING

National strategies of lifelong learning

The focus of the Norwegian government, when it comes to lifelong learning, is to give adults better opportunities to strengthen their competences, increase opportunities to undergo training, and get their previous formal education validated. The goal is that all Norwegians should have the skills and competences that ensure a stable and lasting connection to working life. The whitepaper *Fra utenforskap til ny sjanse: Meld. St. 16 (2015–2016)* (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2015) is the government's strategy for adult learning and social inclusion, and is also the strategy for lifelong learning.

The Norwegian society and working life is characterised by high employment and a population with high levels of expertise. Nevertheless, a significant proportion of the population is outside or in danger of falling outside the labour market, and unemployment is rising. Competence is a source of independence, social mobility and participation. Meanwhile the knowledge society is challenging.

When the level of competence increasingly affects the life of the individual, the consequences are also greater for those who fall outside

(Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2015, transl. from Norwegian).

Norway has experienced a large increase of refugees and asylum seekers recent years. To avoid exclusion, it is important that newcomers learn the Norwegian language and gain the skills necessary to participate in working life.

The whitepaper has three priority areas that together aim to give better access to training for adults and create a better foundation for cooperation between education, integration and labour market authorities:

- better training for adults with poor basic skills,
- better opportunities for upper secondary education,
- better quality of special services for immigrants.

Research on participation in lifelong learning

The report Livslang læring 2008-2016: Resultater fra Lærevilkårsmonitoren (Zachrisen & Bjugstad, 2016) presents results from the Learning Conditions Monitor. A survey was done among adults between the age 22 and 66 years. The Monitor measures how many of the people surveyed have taken part in formal, further formal and non-formal education in the past year. In the survey, formal and further formal education is education provided by an educational institution, such as public schools, universities, university colleges etc. Non-formal education consists of courses, seminars, and conferences where training is the main aim of participation. This is the same kind of educational activities that are provided in libraries. The report is only concerned with people within this specific age bracket and does not take into account young people and seniors.

The Monitor shows that 9 out of 10 people participating in non-formal education are employed and take part in educational activities organised by their employer or union. Job related topics are frequent and the number of people attending non-formal education with no relation to their work is low. In all, 42% of the population in Norway between age 22 and 66 took part in non-formal education during the last year.

There is a connection between level of education and participation in non-formal education. More than 50% of people working as leaders, academics or in professions requiring higher education took part in non-formal education. By comparison, only 1 out of 5 people with work requiring little or no education did the same. People with a permanent position participated far more than people with a temporary contract.

Thirty percent of unemployed people take part in non-formal education, but only 5-6 percent of people outside the working force do the same.

Libraries and their role in lifelong learning

The research above shows that people with little or no education and with temporary employment are in greater need of an educational offer from institutions like libraries. Most of the educational offer in Norway is organised either through people's workplace or through formal educational institutions like universities and university colleges. This leaves a gap for libraries to fill by targeting their education offer at the unemployed, retired and people outside the workforce.

Skills development and training courses necessary for keeping up with working life are especially vital for people who are not offered this by an employer. The challenge for libraries is not only to provide education and training but also to reach these groups with information about their services. Studies of usage of cultural offers in the population show correlation between educational level and participation in cultural activities such as visiting libraries, theatres, museum, and concerts.

Research on participation in lifelong learning

The National Strategy for Libraries 2015-2018 emphasises the role of public libraries as learning arenas:

Libraries must also fulfill their functions as a learning arena and knowledge commons. They are intended to be physical and digital places of study for a wide spectrum of target groups ranging from children to elderly people. The government's aim is to give everyone access to greater knowledge – regardless of social, cultural, and economic background. Library services thus form part of the government's strategy to counteract the negative impacts of child poverty. The government has pointed out that school owners must have a general perspective in their planning work and must be aware of how schools can make use of other occupational groups and their expertise. Public libraries as an extended learning arena have a natural place in fulfilling this ambition (Kunnskapsdepartementet, 2015, transl. from Norwegian).

Lifelong learning in libraries is also a priority area in regional and municipal public library plans and strategies.

The Norwegian public library act defines education as one of the core tasks of the public libraries: „the task of public libraries is to promote the spread of information, education and other cultural activities through active dissemination and by making books and other media available for the free use of all the inhabitants of Norway” (The Public Libraries Act, 1985, section 1). Education in the form of lifelong learning is therefore a natural focus area for public libraries.

Survey on library usage and library users needs

An observation study conducted in public libraries in the biggest cities in Norway shows that people under the age of 14 and above 61 are the most frequent users of events and educational activities in libraries (Sentio Research Norge, 2015). The study also shows that one out of five visitors in the main libraries use the library for studying, work, or to attend events or training sessions.

According to Statistics Norway's report Undersøkelse av bibliotekbruk 2015 (Lagerstrøm & Revold, 2015) there has been a decrease in the traditional use of libraries. On the other hand, there is a growing tendency in the use of libraries for other activities: "a third report seeing an exhibition at a public library last year, while one in four attended meetings, performances, courses, debates, and similar activities organised by the library.

There has been a particular growth in those aged 45 and older" (Lagerstrøm & Revold, 2015). The survey shows that 23% of library users attended meetings, performances, courses, debates and similar activities organised by libraries. When asked what they wanted the public library to prioritise, if it were to receive extra funding, 16% wished to use more money on activities such as theatre, meetings with authors, courses, debates, concerts, and other cultural offers. This is more important for users than, for instance, better opening hours and increased access to e-books.

National strategies of lifelong learning

In 2012, the Lithuanian parliament agreed on a state progress strategy Lithuania 2030 in which lifelong learning is mentioned as one of the keys to ensuring that Lithuanian society is prepared for global challenges and can enable the creation of an intelligent society. Strengthening lifelong learning is a high priority, because currently adult participation in learning activities is by far one of the lowest among EU countries (21st place). Working-age population in Lithuania is rapidly shrinking, which underscores the need to educate existing and potential staff competencies in order to meet the needs of the labour market and society in general (Visionary Analytics, 2015). One of the aims of the EU's Europe 2020 strategy is 15% of adults to be taking part in lifelong learning by 2020, meaning that one sixth of people over age 25 would be consistently improving their competencies. Lithuania is currently behind by this EU target about three times.

Research on participation in lifelong learning

Research conducted in Lithuania has analysed the reasons why people participate in lifelong learning activities and the barriers they face, and also makes suggestions for reaching a better index of lifelong learning.

Identified reasons for participating in lifelong learning:

- Most are related directly to employment (vocational development, deepening of knowledge);
- Aiming to remain in or enter the labour market (career opportunities, formal requirements);
- Personal development;
- Communication and socialisation (Rutkienė, 2015).

Barriers to participating in lifelong learning:

- Lack of funding;
- Limited access to education often because of work or family circumstances;
- Employers' attitudes;
- The quality of teaching (content, lecturers);
- The lack of motivation;
- Low mobility (Rutkienė, 2015).

Suggestions to improve lifelong learning in Lithuania:

- Legislation and an evaluation methodology to improve recognition of non-formally and informally acquired competencies;
- Improving access to learning and reducing exclusion; research shows that: women engage in learning more than men, people who are higher educated tend to take part in learning more, those who live in cities take part in learning more often than those who live in rural areas, those who have higher income take part in learning more than those who have low and middle income, and older people (55+) tend to take part in learning less than younger people;
- Analysis of educational needs: educational needs tend to change often, so analysis has to be done systematically;
- Change of learning methods (technology based learning, open educational resources) and improvement of connection and equipment;
- Innovative funding mechanisms such as reallocation of existing funds or private fundraising;
- Exploitation of learning opportunities provided by other EU countries (Rutkienė, 2015).

Libraries and their role in lifelong learning

Nowadays libraries are considered more than before as informal learning providers especially for seniors, adults (employed people) and teenagers, they are getting more popular as integrated learning spaces. In 2013, once the Lithuanian project Libraries for Innovation (funded by the Bill

and Melinda Gates Foundation) ended, TNS (an independent research company) conducted research which aimed to find out how the project affected the life of library users. The research was made up of two elements: a public survey (1018 adult interviews) and a survey of library users (1046 adult interviews). This study showed that libraries are offering a variety of opportunities for non-formal education, including free courses, qualification classes, study groups and learning circles, but research concluded that only one in ten users (9%) went to a library for this purpose in the last 12 months. People who participated in the library training sessions tended to use library computers and internet connection more than those who did not. It shows that trainings or other kind of educational activity helps to fulfill an information need in a preferred way. A third of users said that thanks to the library's offer they were more prepared to get a job.

The project Libraries for Innovation 2 had a direct connection with lifelong learning. During the project, the information competences of public library staff was strengthened and librarians became active educators in helping members of the local community to master technology capabilities (Visionary Analytics, 2015). In June 2016, representatives from the Libraries for Innovation 2 project conducted a public opinion survey about public libraries. The results revealed that people still perceive the library in traditional way: as place to borrow books, read the latest press materials or find particular material in an archive. Only one sixth of Lithuania's population believes that library is a space for information, community gatherings and informal education space.

Another survey, Users' perceptions of the benefits of ICT in public libraries in Lithuania (Quick et al., 2013b), showed that in 2013, 75% (of 1106 respondents) of library users participated in educational activities, 32% participated in lectures or conversations and 23% in debates or presentations. Respondents said that training and individual consultations are very helpful for everyday activities, such as making an appointment with the doctor, buying tickets or just using Skype – they were also very positive about digital literacy training provided by libraries as this topic is increasingly useful in today's society.

It is important to mention that the Libraries for Innovation 2 study Forecast of public libraries of 2015, showed that majority of directors of Lithuanian public libraries believed that until 2022, most public libraries will organise training for local residents at least once a week. However, some respondents had further insight worth considering, such as: in small district libraries there are not enough people who are interested in attending training sessions; some residents are only interested in certain themes; district libraries do not have enough human resources; there is a lack of qualified staff who are able to organise training; some people consider that there is no need because people are already enlightened enough; and the estimated range is too frequent (Lietuvos nacionalinė Martyno Mažvydo biblioteka, 2016). These propositions show that Lithuania is facing a range of challenges resulting in a level of adult participation in lifelong learning activities, which is one of the lowest in the EU. Looking forward, libraries in Lithuania have an opportunity to become lifelong learning centers for rural regions, providing not only training but also advice and guidance for the community on what, where, and how to learn (Visionary Analytics, 2015).

National strategies of lifelong learning

In 2013, the Polish government issued a strategic document Lifelong Learning Perspective, which is regarded as a base for the lifelong learning policy in Poland. The document is coherent with the Human Capital Development Strategy, adopted also in 2013. The document outlines national policy directions for lifelong learning in Poland. It combines the process of education, adult learning and the gathering of occupational experience into one process of learning throughout a lifetime (The Lifelong Learning Hub (LLL-Hub), 2015). Strategic goal of the policy is: children and adolescents are well prepared for lifelong learning, and adults broaden and complement their competences and qualifications according to the challenges that face them in their professional, social and personal life. The aim of the policy is to provide all learners with the opportunity to improve their skills and to acquire and validate qualifications in accordance with their needs and the requirements of the labor market and civil society.

The basis for a policy in the area of lifelong learning is:

- focus on learning outcomes – emphasizing the widest possible access to good quality learning (regardless of where it occurs) and opportunities to acquire qualifications which can be recognized both in Poland and abroad;
- supporting the needs of people who learn in various situations (at school or college, on internships or courses, at work, during activities provided by various organizations, and directly in everyday life situations) and at all ages – emphasizing the need for coherence between the actions of many institutions, organizations, sectors, and partners;
- equal treatment, appreciation and promotion of learning in various forms and stages of life – emphasizing the need to support less developed forms and stages of learning, especially early education, practical education closely related to the needs of the economy, civil society, and adult education, including seniors education (Ministry of National Education, 2014). Personal development;

Research on participation in lifelong learning

In the EC Directorate-General for Education and Culture's Education and Training Monitor 2016, Poland's adult participation in learning was described as „one of the lowest in the EU”, basic skills levels among adults are as „comparatively poor, particularly in ICT” and the country's „challenges in the teaching of transversal skills” were underlined. The research revealed that adult participation in lifelong learning (the share of 25 to 64 year-olds who received formal or non-formal education or training in the four weeks preceding the survey) in Poland is only 3,5%, while the average for the EU is 10,7% (Education and Training Monitor, 2016).

Another European-level research, the Adult Education Survey, carried out in 2011 as a part of a collection of EU Statistics on lifelong learning, revealed that 40% of adult Poles were active learners (Eurostat, 2011). The main objective of this survey was to obtain information concerning the participation

of persons aged 18-69 years in formal, non-formal and informal education, as well as information on their foreign language skills, computer literacy, and the participation of the surveyed persons in cultural events and social life.

According to the Polish edition of the research report, 40% of Poles took part in some type of educational activity within the past 12 months before the survey; 5,4% took part in formal education activities, 21% in non-formal education activities, and 29% in informal education activities (GUS, 2013).

Characteristic for learning processes in Poland is focus on formal education, provided by schools, colleges, and universities, in which Poland is regarded as successful. For example, in the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) Polish students' scores are above the OECD average, reading literacy levels are relatively high, and between 2000 and 2012, the highest increase in the EU in the number of people aged 30-34 with higher education (213%) was recorded in Poland. However, despite the high interest in formal learning (including higher education), adult participation in education and training is declining significantly after completion of this process.

According to the Poland's Human Capital Development Strategy (Ministerstwo Pracy i Polityki Społecznej, 2013) the reasons for this are insufficient incentives for employers to create learning opportunities in and outside the workplace for employees, as well as lack of national system for validating the learning outcomes of non-formal and informal learning. A broad range of paid-for educational opportunities that many Poles cannot afford is also a barrier to participation in lifelong learning.

But still the vast majority of Poles regard further education as important. In 2009, the Polish Centre for Public Opinion Research (CBOS) issued a survey report, where educational aspirations and motivations of Polish people in the years 1993-2009 were reviewed. The survey revealed that as much as 91% of adults in Poland agree that it is worth continuing with education. When asked why adult people should continue their education, responders gave the following reasons: high income, interesting occupation, easier life, independence, self-reliance, intellectual and personal self-development, avoiding unemployment, easy job, being respected, self-employment, working abroad, authority and power (CBOS, 2009).

Libraries and their role in lifelong learning

Although numerous statistical data concerning libraries in Poland are collected each year, public libraries' educational activities are rarely the subject of thorough investigation, as are educational needs of people who use libraries mainly for learning. There is also no research methodology in Poland that could explain the meaning and range of „educational activities” of public libraries, that are, as a rule, institutions of culture. For example, according to research *What Libraries Are Used For?*, based on the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Common Impact Measurement System – CIMS (Borowski, [2014]), which covered smaller public libraries in Poland (mainly those participating in the Library Development Program funded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation), only 3% of adult library users above 25 years of age participated in educational activities in libraries. At the same time, 30% of users declared that they had

participated in various non-traditional library activities (i.e. activities not related to borrowing books), such as computer classes, courses, meetings, conferences, or had benefitted from individual guidance (especially in using technology). The discrepancy may be the result of stereotypical views on the library as a book-centered institution of culture, not associated with education. In fact, public libraries not only undertake activities that help people learn, develop their knowledge and broaden various kinds of skills, but also they do not charge for their offer, provide safe, friendly space as well as competent educators. Research findings (Giza-Poleszczuk, 2012) reveal that such activities are recognized by Poles as highly beneficial.

According to the National Library yearly report *The State of Libraries in Poland - selected data and indicators* (Jeziarska, [2016]), based on data provided by the Central Statistical Office of Poland, nearly 7,000,000 people took part in approximately 304,000 cultural events (literature related and exhibitions) carried out in public libraries in Poland in 2015. Nearly 2,000,000 people participated in various trainings and educational activities and nearly 1,000,000 people in library orientation.

In the programmes and campaigns supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation Global Libraries initiative, there are a number of research studies aimed at analysing the benefits that public libraries offer to individuals and communities. In Poland, research was carried out resulting in the publication *Why Poles need libraries? Report on the three years experience of the Library Development Program* (Giza-Poleszczuk, 2012). The results are limited to public libraries participating in the Library Development

Program (i.e. operating in villages and small towns), but a significant number of advantages and benefits that are described relate to libraries' educational activities. For example, the research shows that the majority of library users that participated in the Library Development Programme (61%) declared that they used the library for various reasons related to education. As many as 37% of respondents used a computer for the first time in their life in the library, and the library provided a unique opportunity to gain basic digital skills. This was particularly important in case of social groups associated with the digital exclusion: farmers (55%), pensioners (48%) and unemployed people (52%).

The benefits offered by libraries in Poland that were related to the acquisition and development of new skills or knowledge were most often indicated as important by those surveyed as part of the research. Library activities that users particularly appreciated were meetings with experts (e.g. psychologists, doctors, artists), which were organised by 25% of libraries participating in the programme. Responders gave such opinions as: „You learn about the world, politics, religion... I use the library very much to become a wiser and more educated person...” (Giza-Poleszczuk, 2012).

The study also revealed that library activities such as creative workshops, computer classes or language courses, particularly those addressed to adults and seniors, gave the participants various benefits related not only to the development of skills and knowledge but also to social integration (e.g. spending time with others) and communication (e.g. keeping in touch with relatives living abroad by means of instant messaging tools).

Labour market analysis shows that Latvia is expected to face shortages of specialists in science and engineering, information and communication technology (ICT), agriculture, forestry, and fisheries. At the same time, there will be an oversupply of specialists in human and social sciences. Therefore, Latvia's lifelong learning offer should play a key role in addressing the imbalance in shortages and oversupply of specialists by providing opportunities to acquire and/or improve knowledge and skills.

National strategies of lifelong learning

Lifelong learning is one of the components of Latvia's strategy as part of the National Development Plan 2014-2020 to reduce inequalities in income, poverty and bring prosperity throughout Latvia. According to the Education Development Guidelines 2014-2020, the overarching goal of the education system in Latvia is to provide citizens with a „quality and inclusive education for personal development, human welfare and sustainable development of the country”. One of three sub-goals highlights the need to promote development of individual skills, both professional and social, based on education for life and competitiveness in the work environment. To achieve this goal Latvia needs to promote and strengthen the principle of lifelong learning that gives every citizen an opportunity to obtain and/or develop knowledge, skills and competences required by the labour market as well as to develop individual interests and skills.

The EU target for 2020 is to have 15% of the adult population actively involved in lifelong learning. However recent numbers are still a long way from meeting this value - EU result in 2015 is 10,7%, Latvia - 5,7%.

As part of the process of Latvia's accession to the OECD, Latvian education policies and practices in skills development (including adults' participation in lifelong learning) were analysed and published in 2016 in the report *Reviews of National Policies for Education: Education in Latvia* (OECD, 2016). In Latvia, lifelong learning includes formal and non-formal education, as well as informal learning. Despite the fairly high availability of a range of formal and non-formal education programmes and courses available to the working-age population – that may or may not lead to a professional qualification – as well as the availability of wide range of non-formal adult education opportunities provided by national and local governments and private education institutions, and even growing popularity of informal learning acquired through working and personal life (professional competences acquired outside formal education can be validated by accredited education providers and examination centres in Latvia), the OECD report concluded that „adult or lifelong learning in Latvia is underdeveloped while many of the working-age population are missing the skills to become more productive”.

Research on participation in lifelong learning

Participation rates in both formal and non-formal forms of education and training among the working age population are very low compared to international standards. The European Commission's recent edition of Education and Training Monitor 2016 shows that in 2015 only 5,7% (down from 7,2% in 2012) of 25-64 year-olds participated in either formal or non-formal education and training. This is considerably below the EU average of 10,7% and the EU 2020 target of 15%. It should also be mentioned that there is a gap between the average population and adults with a relatively disadvantaged status (e.g. unemployed and low-qualified); low-qualified adults are less than a half (2,4%) of those who participated in learning activities in 2015.

The gender gap in education and training in Latvia is also a challenge, with women outperforming men significantly both in terms of qualifications and basic skill proficiency. According to the Adult Education Survey conducted by Eurostat in 2015, there is a higher proportion of Latvian women (37,3%) participating in education and training than men (26,9%). Though the participation rates in Latvia are lower than the EU average (39,9% of women and 40,7% of men), this is very different from many other EU countries where the difference is reversed. It may then be concluded that encouraging low-skilled adult men to engage in lifelong learning should be a priority in Latvia.

The OECD's evidence suggests that one of the barriers preventing lifelong learning from prospering in Latvia is the lack of demand for training and adult learning. The OECD's experts conclude that adults „are simply unaware of the need and benefits of continued learning, while others face difficulties in investing in education and training” (OECD, 2016). The most common barriers to engaging in lifelong learning are time, family circumstances, and costs.

An analysis of lifelong learning policies, strategies, and providers shows that both the policy and the market are fragmented. Both central government and municipalities are responsible for providing residents with adult non-formal education and lifelong learning opportunities. Ten different governmental institutions (possibly too many, especially for a country as small as Latvia) oversee implementing Latvia's lifelong learning strategy in collaboration with a range of other stakeholders. Currently there is little or no information available on non-formal education and training offered by municipalities, but the OECD suggests that the Latvian government should carry out and strengthen data collection in order to have a full overview of the formal and non-formal education and training opportunities offered throughout the country (OECD, 2016).

Libraries and their role in lifelong learning

Public libraries are just one of many non-formal training providers that share the market at municipal level, and yet libraries are not often recognised among other stakeholders as doing so. Users' individual interests and skills have never been analysed comprehensively at national level nor at regional or local levels - although statistical data concerning public libraries' educational offer has been collected as part of different projects in Latvia.

As part of the Library Advocacy for EU project and in cooperation with the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA), the Latvian Library Association (LLA) conducted research to explore the scope and impact of non-formal and informal learning activities in public libraries across Europe. The results of the study in Latvia, carried out in February and March 2016, suggested that non-formal training in the form of organised, pre-planned lessons held face-to-face or online and hosted by library staff or external experts are provided at 60% of public libraries. In 2015 more than 65,000 individuals received non-formal training in public libraries in Latvia, of which around 40,000 were adults.

In addition to non-formal training activities, 9 in 10 public libraries in Latvia provide citizens with informal learning opportunities; these activities take place in an unplanned or ad-hoc manner in the form of informal assistance or individual consultation provided by library staff in response to a need that arises for a library visitor. Use of e-services including online

banking and payments, digital literacy and internet searches, online communication and employment activities such as online job searches and creating a CV, are the main topics of individual consultation by librarians in public libraries in Latvia. In 2015, library staff helped more than 145,000 individuals in this way, thus contributing to development of their skills. This contribution of public libraries to the development of digital literacy, use of e-services and employment development in local communities where 50% of unemployed people, 65% of seniors and 40% of employed citizens have no other place to access non-formal and informal learning opportunities is invaluable.

Based on data from the research study *Latvian public libraries and the Internet: technologies, services and impact* (SKDS, 2013), conducted as part of the public library development project *Father's Third Son*, it is clear that the role of informal learning in libraries has considerably increased during the last ten years (in 2013, 51% of public library internet users used librarian consultation on the use of computers, internet and online resources, compared to 27% in 2007). Informal learning through librarian consultation ranked 6th among the highest used public library services in 2013.

The research study (SKDS, 2013) also looked at the skills, motivation, objectives and impacts of public library use. At the time of the last assessment in 2013, half of public library internet users assessed their ICT skills as good, an increase of 5% from 2007, while the number of users with poor skills halved (13% in 2007 to 6% in 2013). Despite high self-assessment of skills, users asked for a librarian's assistance during the use of computer

and internet more frequently, so the library staff play an increased role in assisting users. The number of users who have never asked for a librarian's assistance halved since 2007 (40% in 2007 to 18% in 2013). The frequency of user consultations in public libraries has increased; almost half of librarians who work with users (53% in 2013 an increase of 13% since 2007) confirmed that they are consulting users daily.

A growing number of users (41% in 2013, an increase of 27% from 2007) confirmed that they obtained and improved their ICT skills at public library. It is interesting to note that the majority of public library internet users would prefer individual consultations in the library to training in groups. Indeed, almost half of these users said it was enough to benefit from a few individual consultations and they did not want to participate in organised training sessions.

Research into the existence of training programmes for users of public libraries shows that in 2012 about half of public libraries had developed some kind of training programme for their users; 39% targeted elderly people, 23% the unemployed, 13% children (up to 11 years old), and 10% household workers (not employed). These groups are the same as those most frequently taking part in individual consultations with librarians.

In the same survey, librarians were asked to identify and rank the three most important benefits for users of ICT training and consultations at public libraries. These were:

- Support of users in the use of e-services (identified by 75% of librarians in 2013, an increase of 6% from 2009);
 - Accessibility of ICT training for those who otherwise would not have access to training (identified by 66% of librarians in 2013, an increase of 14% from 2009);
 - Improvement of information literacy (identified by 59% of librarians 2013, constant from 2009).
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COMMON FINDINGS OF LIBRARIES AND THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO LIFELONG LEARNING IN THE DIDEL PROJECT PARTNER COUNTRIES

The importance of lifelong learning at EU level is stated in European Commission publication Education and Training Monitor 2016:

In a fast-changing working environment adults need to not only acquire but also continuously update and improve their skills to remain competitive and productive. Adult learning systems must respond to a large variety of needs expressed by learners, companies and society. They need to ensure that all individuals have easy and equitable access to learning opportunities. In particular, those who have left initial education or training without the minimal level of skills needed in the contemporary economic and social environment should be given opportunities to obtain those skills later in life. Through upskilling and reskilling, adults can ensure that their skills remain relevant and up to date, not only within the work environment but also for active participation in society. (Education and Training Monitor, 2016)

The DIDEL project partner countries represent the same values in their national strategies. A strong focus on improving access to lifelong learning is seen in Lithuania, Latvia and Norway, while adult participation in lifelong learning is below the EU average (and the Europe 2020 target) in Latvia, Poland and Lithuania. Participation in Norway, on the other hand, would be above the EU average. Most project partner countries exhibit a connection between education level and participation in lifelong learning, i.e. people with higher education tend to participate in more educational activities. This shows that more efforts must be made to direct less educated people towards lifelong learning opportunities.

Libraries in DIDEL project partner countries are one of many institutions providing informal and non-formal educational activities. However, libraries are not always recognised as educational establishments. All partner countries agreed educational activities in libraries tends to target the elderly, unemployed, less educated and youth - groups that are often „hard to reach” via formal education. Although there has not been much detailed research into the educational needs of library users in partner countries, it is clear that libraries are committed to lifelong learning by providing various types of training and can contribute even more if they are supported and empowered to do so.

LIBRARIES EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL CHANGES AND LOCAL NEEDS: MAIN CONCLUSIONS FROM THE SURVEY

Educational activities in libraries were the main focus of our survey run in the four DIDELE project partner countries. In designing the survey we accepted a fairly broad definition of education, including various activities undertaken by library (including those that are book-centered), broadening horizons, enriching the knowledge of library users and equipping them with new skills. We paid special attention to three areas of present library performance: multiculturalism, social innovation and creativity, since they seem to constitute the foundation for creating the library of the future as an institution immersed in the local community, open and available for all, and addressing the crucial current issues.

The survey consisted of two parts: an on-line questionnaire and a qualitative sample. The quantitative survey was answered by 331 libraries and 91 users across the four DIDELE project partner countries, as well as a sample of 1000 non-users in Poland. The qualitative survey consisted of interviews with library workers in selected libraries in which 5-6 librarians (per participating country) took part.

The surveyed encompassed the following areas of libraries educational activities:

- Reading promotion (reading, meeting with authors);
- Digital literacy (basic computer skills, software skills, Internet search, use of e-services etc.);
- Culture and entertainment (getting to know more about different cultures, improving hobby skills etc.);
- Communication (learning to use communication technologies, like Skype, e-mail, social networking, blogging etc.);
- Promotion of the city or region;
- Education (skills to use education related software, language lessons etc.);
- Employment (learning to use online job sites and databases, creating CVs and other employment materials, completing job applications, financial literacy etc.);

- Social inclusion (any training for or related to social risk groups, such as the disabled, migrants etc.);
- Creativity and innovation (digital design skills like picture and video editing, 3D modelling, traditional arts and crafts etc.);
- Health and prevention (skills to search for health-related information, consulting a doctor electronically, health related courses etc.);
- Professional development;
- Environment and agriculture (green living etc.).

Despite the fact that the survey only takes into account the views of a select number of libraries in our partner countries, we hope that the processed results will highlight the main challenges that libraries more broadly may expect in coming years and indicate the areas of development that are influenced by global trends, local needs and library resources (people, infrastructure and equipment).

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LIBRARIES EDUCATIONAL ACTIVITIES IN THE CONTEXT OF GLOBAL CHANGES

Questions concerning the consequences of technological and social shifts on libraries' role and how they function in society (also with more limited subsidies) have started to arise more and more often. One of possible scenarios of the library development is the adaption to global challenges while maintaining the library identity, as described by Paul Shapiro:

The library fulfills its promise when people of different ages, races, and cultures come together to pool their talents in creating new creative content. One thing to think about is whether this change from analog to digital can happen in libraries without changing the name of the library... I'm not sure this is necessary – but I think we need to just rebrand libraries and market them properly and keep their name. (Endard, 2014)

In line with a library's mission to maintain its identity (in particular regarding its duties to extend, protect, and select collections) while at the same time responding to social changes, we can identify its key activities as follows:

1. Facilitating the processes of lifelong learning and personal development through knowledge provision, expanding competences and offering tailor-made services for the lifestyle and needs of inhabitants.
2. Creating an inclusive and supportive environment in the library – providing equal access to knowledge and information and promoting cooperation and participation.
3. Promoting regional awareness by providing information and activities about the community and/or region, environment and health.

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How are libraries currently performing in these areas?

Facilitating the processes of lifelong learning and personal development through knowledge provision, expanding competences and offering tailor-made services for the lifestyle and needs of inhabitants (for example employment and professional development, skills to use education related software, language lessons)

Lifelong learning

This category may be perceived as a weak point of libraries' performance. Respondents pointed out just a few educational activities of libraries that are theme-specific, and some others of

letters, job application documents, searching for job offers, and helpful websites;

- Organised training for groups on the following subjects: creation of CVs and motivation letters, job application documents, searching for job offers, helpful websites, financial literacy (for the unemployed), job search databases (as part of general ICT courses);
- Organised workshops supporting career and professional development such as „Create your success” or „Career planning” meetings conducted by external specialists. Special training courses for the unemployed take place in libraries in Latvia (one library even supplied methodological material for unemployed people to guide them through all steps of a job search);

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- A file of useful information resources for people who are searching for a job;
- Inspirational activities such as providing opportunities to meet a person who succeeded professionally at the young age;
- Projects such as „About finances in the library” with workshops and e-learning courses on how to open a bank account, how to compare interest rates on loans, how to manage the family budget (in reality the curriculum was focused on information useful for private life rather than professional development);
- Meetings for particular groups – for example on how to get EU funding for entrepreneurs or how to work with seniors for employees of cultural institutions;
- Meetings concerning the creation of a business strategy, innovative project and investment;
- The „Where to study” event for school children in order to guide them towards their choice of profession;
- Computer programs and internet usage courses, foreign language courses, psychological workshops, creative labs to develop different skills such as the use of library e-catalogue from mobile devices;
- E-learning courses: mostly English, German & French language courses but many libraries mentioned the Polish „Funpakiet” platform for other languages, run in the library by employees, volunteers or partner institutions. Language courses can sometimes be enriched by country-specific cultural content;
- Thematic workshops, for example on journalism, diet, psychology, hobbies, history of the region, presentation skills, photography and the basics of Photoshop, fast reading and finances (bank cards, loans and loan traps, parabanks);
- Access to an e-book platform;
- Multicultural meetings such as meetings with culture of Armenia and Czech Republic;
- Third Age University courses for seniors;
- Electronic classrooms (for example in Latvia, some libraries provide software where parents can follow the performance of their children at school);
- Information literacy courses (learning to use library databases, source criticism), both in groups and individual.

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Creating an inclusive and supportive environment in the library providing equal access to knowledge and information and promoting cooperation and participation.

Examples of these activities can be divided into several categories.

Digital literacy

The survey showed that the recipients of educational activities in this field are mostly seniors and the unemployed. Skills acquired during classes make it easier to reconnect with old friends and get back to feeling relevant and up-to-date with what is going on, which is especially important for elderly people. In today's era of the so-called „digital natives“ (a generation for whom the internet is a natural part of their surroundings), supporting older people helps to build bridges between generations, which makes education in this field all the more important. Children and youths tend to perfect their knowledge of computers elsewhere (mainly at school).

Examples of activities:

- Basic courses of computer and internet use;
- Courses of selected computer programmes – the indicated examples include programmes concerning financial activity over the internet (online payments via Internet, usage of bank account and banking), peer-to-peer learning, calculation sheets, graphic design programmes and photo processing;
- Learning to use service-oriented and information interactive websites (e-shopping, e-government, travel planning);
- Usage of smartphones and computer devices, such as tablet, laptop, iPad and other multimedia devices, like projectors;
- Learning to use online communicators (e.g. blogs) and social media – this is often one element of a general course, but in the survey it was recognised as a separate topic within the library offer;
- Computer usage in the creation process (e.g. with LEGO robots, jewellery);
- Coding classes;
- Internet safety and online advertisements – how to react, what to avoid;

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- Instructions on how to use digital library services, such as the e-book app „ebokbib” and movie lending service „filmbib”;
- Introduction to scientific databases and other online information sources for researchers and students;
- Internet-oriented courses, including communications (e.g. e-mail, Skype);
- Individual support and consultation upon user request (by an ICT specialist or by the librarian), e.g. support in creation of e-mail account, social networking and blogging;
- Contributing to a common blog run by the library users;
- Etiquette of virtual communication.

Social inclusion

Social inclusion is a subject that seems to have entered the library as a byproduct of other programs being introduced. The idea is that people should work together in mixed teams of those susceptible to exclusion and members of the majority – hence adults are an important user group. In Norway, again, libraries work a lot with the immigrant community and build their offer with them in mind.

However, even if a library recognises the need for activities that promote social inclusion in their local community, by themselves librarians often lack the skills or resources to organise them on a larger scale. If there is a local institution caring for the elderly or the disabled, librarians often invite their clients to participate in and co-create library events, which is also a way of building new partnerships. Educational activities aiming at social inclusion are quite often implemented in partnership with another institution, e.g. National Centre of Culture, Polish Association of the Blind, social aid organisations, adult day care centers and other organisations. Despite these flourishing partnerships, further education of library employees is probably needed in this field.

Examples of activities:

- Activities, e.g. workshops dedicated to the groups at risk of exclusion, mostly addressing seniors and physically or mentally disabled people. Examples include special computer classes for seniors (or the visually impaired), cross-generational bibliotherapy, doorstep libraries (for elderly or sick people) and educational emergency programmes for struggling students. Two particularly interesting examples were engaging volunteers from a group at risk of exclusion, and reading for the blind – a special event in Latvia;

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- Meetings with interesting people, especially for socially excluded, prejudiced or intergenerational groups;
- Human libraries such as „Borrow a Norwegian” in Norway;
- Involving socially excluded group in events such as theatre festivals, talent shows and exhibitions of works by disabled people;
- Individual assistance on how to apply for social care services and grants;
- Outreach services to people who cannot physically visit the library;
- Providing a social meeting place for learning languages or culture (eg. language and knitting cafes).

Creativity and innovation – promoting the idea of cooperation (e.g. digital design skills, like picture and video editing, 3D modelling, traditional arts and crafts etc.).

The definition of creativity is quite broad. Some librarians perceive it as any kind of activity that is innovative not only because of what is required of its participants (activities involving

creative thinking) but also with reference to organizing classes (creative educators). Creativity is also quite often associated with new technologies. **Examples given were:**

- Digital graphic design, 3D modeling, 3D printer usage, animation;
- Photography and video workshops on different levels, from simple photo processing to professional photography courses and photo album creation;
- Talent development workshops, traditional art classes, courses in writing, handicrafts;
- Exhibition presenting alternative solutions of urban design – original and innovative active in comparison to the other examples;
- Home and interior design;
- Storytelling.

Majority of activities examples in this category contains the elements of creativity, innovation is much less represented.

Creativity is a category that pertains to all age groups.

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Culture and entertainment

This is a very broad category covering many diversified kinds of activity, most of which are also educational. Lots of them are linked to the local life, since the library in this context is a place where the local talents are displayed and traditions are cultivated. In Lithuania, local libraries function as local cultural centers, especially in small communities. In Latvia, hobby and interest development activities are organised in the form of creative laboratories providing hands-on practical experience. The recipients of the library offer in this field are mainly adults. The events are usually quite universal and can cater to a wide group of potential participants. The offer for seniors seems especially important – in all of the countries involved, apart from Norway, they are the second biggest group of recipients.

Examples of activities:

- Handicraft – definitely the most often indicated category. This includes various courses of decoupage, ceramics, carving, quilting, origami, scrapbooking, as well as a significant number of activities related to folk culture, such as making traditional decorations (e.g. for Christmas or Easter);
- Developing hobbies and interests. This covers activities on various themes, from amateur writing to Irish dancing and making board games. Art classes addressing different age groups are very common. Libraries also organise special interest groups around theatre, speeches and poetry, e.g. theatrical, vocal, poetry. The forms of these activities are very different – from traditional lessons to creative laboratories providing hands-on practical experience;
- Concerts, exhibitions and performances, very often promoting the local talents;
- Meetings with people in the library - mostly authors but also travellers and „people with passion“;
- Meeting with various cultures – this offer contains different forms of activities which aim to bring closer particular cultures to the library users;
- Competitions and tournaments (e.g. recitation, chess, football, nativity scenes or for the best traditionally baked bread);
- Participation in the events organised by different local institutions (e.g. museum night, harvest festival, National Poetry Day);
- Trips outside the library (e.g. bicycle field game, theatre trip, and even trips abroad in the case of Poland).

A

Reading promotion

This is a broad category of library activities, addressed to various user groups of all ages, which is quite universal, but also may be regarded as the easiest to undertake. Promotion of reading can be carried out in a variety of forms, including exhibitions, meetings with authors, literature competitions, recitation contests, poetry festivals, storytelling workshops, or reading labs (e.g. to develop literary thinking). Libraries in Poland often rely on tried and tested activities, such as book lovers' clubs and author meetings. In Lithuania and Latvia book clubs are a relatively new activity, and therefore not very frequent. In Latvia libraries are very focused on meetings with authors as well as various events carried out as a part of national programs.

Examples of activities include:

- Book clubs are the most common form of readership promotion in libraries. These clubs can be aimed at kids, youth, seniors and adults, and can be general or specific to a particular genre such as sci-fi or crime stories;
- Meetings with authors, writers and critics and presentations of new books are the second most common activity in this category;

- Libraries take part in initiatives at national or regional level (e.g. National Reading Week, Night of Museums, All Poland Reads To Kids, Nordic Library Week, Christmas of Books, Book of the Year) as well as smaller scale actions (e.g. family reading, women reading, reading while travelling, „I am reading Polish” or „Reading in Loud” in Latvia);
- Workshops, exhibitions and competitions for users (e.g. literature, poetry, recitations, beautiful reading, creative labs (to develop literary thinking), storytelling or literary readings.

Promoting regional awareness
by providing information and activities
about the community and/or region,
environment and health.

A

City and/or region promotion

This kind of activity goes beyond the traditional role of the library as a „book place” and beyond its most popular educational focus on new technologies. Activities relating to city and/or region promotion are, however, being undertaken in many libraries, especially when it comes to taking care of regional collections. This underlines the importance of the library in the local community. It is concerned with both the past (local heritage) and the future (promoting the region/town). In Lithuania, libraries traditionally collect information about local heritage and actively prepare publications, databases, etc. In a way, local libraries function there as local museums. In Latvia, one of important roles of the library is to develop local history and heritage collections and events. Educational activities in this field are customised for different age groups.

Examples of activities:

- Visiting outside of the library: trips, rides, city games, guided tours to get in contact with the local environment (e.g. visiting monuments, famous people, cemeteries, traces of different cultures);
- Events to promote local sites (natural objects or buildings) and games or other tools created to promote the city and/or region;
- Promotion of publications coming from the region and digital collections such as digitised local history archives. Collaboration on national and regional digital dissemination platforms for local history (e.g. Local History Wiki);
- Lectures or meetings with urban and regional history experts or local celebrities, or multimedia trips around the city;
- Regional competitions (e.g. on local poetry, literature, photography, dialect, folklore);
- Organisation of an interest group linked to the history of the region (e.g. history of my family, Club of Local History Lovers, Silesian Hiking Forum);
- Creation of a special library collection with regard to the local/regional history, including the library’s own publications (albums, yearbooks, newspapers, magazines, e-resources);
- Participation in locally organised events: harvest festivals, town anniversary/jubilee, celebration of European Days of Heritage;
- The local tourist information centre is sometimes part of the library;
- Promotion of work and life of local people.

A

Environment and agriculture

Libraries presented relatively low activity in this field; there was an opinion in one of the questionnaires that the demand for the educational activities in ecology is not high. Instead, libraries tend to join more widespread campaigns, e.g. Clean Up the World, Global Education Week or events organized by EEPA – Distributors of Electronics Association, which educates society on waste sorting. In Latvia, libraries are quite active in working with rural farmers as a separate target group by providing assistance in filling in different forms to get agricultural state subsidies and using other services provided by a special institutions. For the general public activities are more about green lifestyles generally as well as developing some hobbies related to gardening or looking after animals. Green education is directed at both adult and young users.

Examples of activities:

- Ecological actions (e.g. Clean Up the World, waste segregation promotion);
- Exhibitions and meetings with environmental journalists to explore green lifestyles;
- Workshops, meetings or competitions dedicated to different groups of recipients. The content is usually broad and quite general, although one library ran a more specific approach on fishing ecology;
- Visits to landscape parks;
- Gardening lessons with specialists;
- Consultations and assistance in using electronic services of the rural support services or using the online animal registration system EZIS (a requirement to register animals in Latvia).



Health and prevention

Health and ageing are definitely issues of the future. This global trend is also very much visible on a local scale. The need for knowledge and skills to access to health-related services (medicals, screenings etc.) as well as health-promoting activities (exercising, sports) will only continue to grow. There is a strong connection between public health and public library. Libraries can help people to access health information, provide the space, technology, and resources to help improve health literacy, create programming to address issues relevant to specific user groups (e.g. with diabetes), and also advocate for health promotion—the process of enabling people to improve and increase the control over their health (Carlton, 2015).

Examples of activities:

- Meetings, lectures, exhibitions and medical consultations in the library (e.g. on physiotherapy, dietetics, kriotherapy) as well as educational programs addressing specific groups (e.g. pregnant women, seniors, families with small kids) and cyclic practical courses (e.g. First Aid);
- Sport and recreation (e.g. Nordic walking, yoga, or theoretical elements of selected sports explored at the library);
- Events and parties (e.g. picnics with sports and culture, shows presenting life with diabetes, cycle rides);
- Help with the use of health portals to improve skills related to finding health information and services online (e.g. completing medical insurance forms online);
- Practical classes on the preparation of natural products with health benefits.

B EDUCATION IN THE LIBRARY IN THE CONTEXT OF LOCAL NEEDS

When developing the library offer, librarians follow not only their own ideas and intuition but also take into account the needs and interests of the library users, with whom they remain in touch at all times. Librarians must also consider their own capabilities when it comes to partnerships, infrastructure and technology. This is their *modus operandi* when they organise something themselves, as well as when they apply for grants.

The libraries that took part in our research explain the gradual increase in the importance of education in the library as a feature of:

- a. the need to follow social trends (ageing society, economic migration, growing unemployment rates, the need to improve and acquire professional skills or develop hobbies and passions, the ever-growing pace of technological advancement). People describe the library of tomorrow as „a place of progress and personal growth, a place where you come across books, new technologies, but also other people (Municipal Public Library in Sopot, Poland)“;
- b. the chance for institutional growth and acquiring a new kind of user who is not necessarily interested in the traditional library offer;
- c. looking for ideas to revamp the existing offer and the way in which libraries work – education in this case being a tool for promoting readership, making people more active and developing the library community;
- d. the sense of a social mission, of fulfilling the role of a library as a public institution.

In most of the project partner countries, informal and non-formal learning activities (categorised as educational activities in this project) are organised in libraries. However, given the lack of relevant data on the educational needs of library users, we conducted a survey to better understand this need as part of the DIDEŁ project. In this part we present the results of the research done with the participation of library users from project partner countries. It is important to mention that the majority of respondents were senior citizens, so their voice and point of view dominate the results.

B

In this section we explore the results of the survey we conducted among the users of the library's educational offer. The results show that it is not only the subject matter that is important, but also the form that library activities take and the fact that more and more often library users want to actively participate in educational activities, instead of only being their passive recipients. This invokes a model of informal education where the roles of teacher and student are defined differently than in the case of formal education: the relationship is closer and both parts take the active role.

What are library users' expectations?

Starting from the most frequently mentioned, the fields of activity are as follows:

- Various kinds of activities built around hobbies;
- „Pure education” in the form of language courses – the library offer in this field is especially attractive since it is one of the few institutions to offer language classes for free;
- Activities dealing with health and illness prevention. Here, the voice of the elderly users may be particularly instrumental;
- Digital literacy activities on a more advanced level (although there is also a need for improving basic skills). This could include learning how to use electronic equipment, programmes and apps, using the internet for communication purposes or using different kinds of e-services;
- Learning about the culture and history of the region;
- Support in coping with the ageing process and age-related challenges (children leaving home, relationships with grown-up children and teenage grandchildren, caring for the ill etc.);
- Entertainment, which involves not only exhibitions and plays, but also educational activities (lectures and courses) which are often an important part of social life;
- Classes, courses, meetings with people susceptible to exclusion – this could have been brought up by both minority and majority members, but either way, the survey shows that the library is or could be an important and inclusive local meeting place;
- Improving professional skills;
- Innovative or unusual activities;
- Environmental and financial education seem to be a relatively less attractive part of the library offer.

B

The users of library educational offer are people who only come to library courses as well as those who participate in activities organised by other institutions, such as NGOs, Universities of the Third Age, culture centres, museums or galleries. Many of these users are so-called „hard users”, i.e. people who take part in many different courses in the library and are open to new ideas. In small towns, library educators are up-to-date with the needs and interests of their users. It is harder, however, to reach out to new user groups and promote the library’s educational activities among members of the community who do not come to the library on a regular basis. As a result, libraries can get stuck in responding to the needs of the same user groups, making those people more and more attached to the library.

Our research shows that library educational activities are the most popular with senior citizens. The educational offer is shaped according to their needs, hence the great popularity of the digital literacy classes. The courses are usually free, which is crucial for this user group (and others). Digital literacy classes are very much appreciated – most respondents gave them a 5 on a 1-5 scale.

How would you rate educational activities in your library?

RATE	5	4	3	2	1
NUMBER OF ANSWERS	62	18	4	0	0

The library offer first of all satisfies the need for self-improvement and progress, but it also gives users the opportunity to fill the gaps in their education – these are the two factors that motivate people the most to come to library events. The social aspect is relevant too; library events are fun and offer a chance to meet other people, which is especially important for those in danger of social exclusion. What is more, library education is in itself inclusive as it is open for everyone (users do not need certification or money to take part in library courses).

B

Taking part in educational activities in libraries often meets the societal need of being up-to-date, since the topics covered often relate to current affairs, trends, or new technologies. The offer provides people with topics of discussion, enables them to impress others with new skills and knowledge, which they can also share, which in turn makes the library offer more attractive and inclusive. Another important aspect is giving the participants the chance to learn about things they will not learn elsewhere – such as new technologies, some of which (e.g. 3D printing) are not easily accessible, or new forms of education (e.g. creativity workshops).

Many people like interactive and experimental labs where they can try new technologies and things that are not possible elsewhere. (A Latvian librarian)

When asked about their expectations beyond the basic library offer, they suggested:

- Any activities to do with hobbies. This category includes a broad spectrum of topics and it may involve many different kinds of activities. Arts and craft is a very popular example;

- „Pure education”, which first of all means language courses. These are especially attractive to people who cannot afford a language course elsewhere. Secondly, anything to do with health and disease prevention, although it is worth remembering here, that the majority of respondents were senior citizens;
- Digital literacy (usually on a more advanced levels, although basic courses are in demand as well), including working with computers and other equipment, using the internet, communication via software and apps, various kinds of e-services;
- The library not only as a „book place” in the local community, but also a place where people cultivate local traditions or learn about the culture and history of the region;
- Psychology is an interesting subject matter which may involve many different kinds of activities. Senior citizens often need support dealing with the ageing process and various challenges of old age (children leaving the house, relationships with grown-up children and growing-up grandchildren, caring for the ill etc.). These are difficult issues, and specialist advice is not usually easy to access – the library may play a crucial role in this area;

B

- In informal education, the social and entertainment aspects are more important than in the case of formal education. That is why, according to the respondents, entertainment is one of the tasks libraries should fulfil. As we mentioned before, entertainment includes exhibitions or concerts, but sometimes even lectures or courses are treated as social events;
- The respondents are interested in meeting people from groups in danger of social exclusion. Therefore a library is or can become an important, inclusive local meeting place;
- Activities from the fields of environmental care and financial skills seem relatively unattractive, although maybe the offer should be made clearer, and its attractiveness may depend on the specific subject matter;

The other, less popular spheres may, on the one hand, go beyond the respondents' needs (as was probably the case when seniors considered activities related to the job market or expanding professional skills), and beyond their comfort zone (here, any creative or innovative activity may serve as an example of something that may have been hard to understand or even intimidating).

It is clear that the form activities take is as important, if not more so, than the content. In libraries, the form can be very diverse. The following chart shows different forms of activities ranked from most to least attractive according to users surveyed.

Activity	No. of answers
Courses run by experts	42
Meetings with interesting people	39
Exhibitions, shows, concerts	31
Individual classes	27
Workshops	Workshops
Lectures	20
Trips, walks, urban games	17
Consultations, counselling sessions	14
Outdoor events	12
Online courses	9
Competitions	8

B

This shows that one of the most popular forms of library events are meetings with interesting people: experts, authors, representatives of different cultures etc. Individual classes or workshops are also popular – this could be due to the added value of having a trained librarian, who is trusted and knowledgeable about community needs, on hand. According to our respondents, library classes should take place not more than once a week, and preferably less often, e.g. once every two weeks. Competitions or online courses are the least attractive, perhaps because they lack the element of direct contact.

Therefore the conclusion seems to be that library users wish to be active participants, not passive recipients. This is one of the principles of informal education where the teacher-student relationship is different than in a more formalised context, where both sides work more closely with each other and can be equally active. That may be a useful clue for people who work on their library offer for adult users.

Library non-users

At the time of budget cuts, redefinition of library roles and financing models of public institutions, questions concerning the non-users or potential users become a burning issue. In order to find out:

- how library non-users perceive the library,
- why they do not use libraries,
- if they use educational offer delivered by other institutions,
- what kind of educational activities would be interesting or beneficial to them,

the non-users survey was conducted in Poland on a random sample of 1000 people.

B

The research shows that a typical non-user is 25-39 years old, lives in a rural area, and is a high school or a vocational school graduate (interestingly, there was little difference between men and women). The smallest group (13%) are 18-24 year-olds living in big cities who either have a bachelor's degree (this is the smallest group of all), or are primary school graduates.

Most of the non-users (92%) do not turn to the library for its adult educational offer. When asked why, they did not point to any actual obstacles: the most common answer was „I never thought about it“ (39%). The second most popular one, „If it was possible, then why not?“ (30%), proves that there is potential interest. People who do not use the library are potentially interested in its adult educational offer – this is an important conclusion which shows that people do want education and it is just a question of reaching those potential users with the right offer. Another interesting answer was „I don't know how to find them“ (15%), which is another indication of how vital it is to reach people who would be potentially interested.

The respondents were asked which subjects they would be interested in. Most respondents pointed to advanced classes

which teach concrete skills such as languages (36%), professional skills (34%) and health-related information (22%). Anything more general, theoretical, or purely entertaining was considered less attractive.

The answers to the question about factors people consider when picking an activity prove that too: 65% pointed to usability and 63% to affordability. The third most important factor was accessibility – 53% were interested mainly in activities close to their homes or easy to access, and happening at a convenient time.

The following types of activity were considered the most attractive:

- Courses run by experts (64%);
- Workshops (63%);
- Lectures (33%);
- One-to-one classes (27%);
- Meetings (24%).

B

The respondents were also asked to respond to 10 statements concerning the library educational offer. The responses did not vary greatly, the average on a 5-point scale (where 5 means „definitely yes“ and 1 means „definitely no“) being around 2.9-3.4. However, these variations give us an interesting image of a library as an education centre.

What kind of image emerges from the responses?

Non-users perceive library services as free of charge and dedicated mainly to older people and families – so young people are not a priority (it is worth keeping in mind, though, that age definitions are changing and people who identify with the word „young“ may be not only 18-24 or 25-39, but even 40-59 years old).

Non-users also seemed to believe that in order to take part in library activities, you need to be a registered library user (i.e. to have a library card). They also assumed that the computers used for computer classes in the library would be out of date. In both cases these were not true. In fact, registration is not obligatory in Polish libraries in order to take part in educational

<p>Probably yes</p> <p>Hard to say</p> <p>Probably not</p>
Education in the library is free.
Libraries adapt their services to the needs of senior citizens.
You can learn computer skills in the library.
You need to be a registered user to take part in library activities.
Technical equipment in libraries is out of date.
Library services are attractive for families.
Library services are adapted to the needs of the disabled.
Library services are limited to books and readership promotion.
Librarians are experts only in books and reading.
Library services are dedicated mainly to young people.

B

activities or cultural events held in public libraries, and technical condition of the library equipment varies among specific libraries. But such stereotypical views on how libraries operate may pose a problem for people who are not familiar with the library offer.

Furthermore, you cannot be sure of the librarian's qualifications and expertise. They know a lot about books, but you cannot be certain if they are experts in other fields. Such an opinion may be the result of a belief, that the librarian's job boils down to just collecting and passing on books, as well as reading in the workplace for pleasure.

The non-users were also asked to identify activities they associate with the library. Here are the results:

Educational activity	Percentage
Readership promotion (meet-the-author, book clubs etc.)	63%
Multicultural activities, workshops, exhibitions	32%
Children's education (e.g. language courses, computer courses, arts and crafts)	28%
Culture (exhibitions, film screenings, concerts)	25%
Adult education (e.g. language courses, computer courses, communication workshops, job seeking)	23%
Crafts and hobbies	15%
Health and disease prevention	15%
Language courses	13%
Activities for people who are marginalised or in need of support	12%
E-learning courses	10%
External actions (trips, exercises etc.)	6%

B

We can see that the respondents associate the library with many different kinds of activities, but meeting other cultures (32%) and adult education (23%) are pretty far from traditional „meet the author“ sessions. Therefore, we can conclude that the stereotype of a library as a „book place“ is not an obstacle for some non-users – it is easy for them to imagine it as a much more versatile and open institution.

90% of respondents knew where their nearest library was (6% didn't know and 4% weren't sure). 49% declared that they were willing to take part in free educational activities in the library (34% couldn't say for sure, 17% were not interested). So once again – there are no serious obstacles that make it difficult to make a decision about lifelong learning. It seems like the biggest challenge is reaching people who do not use the library with information about its activities and competences in the field of adult education, especially regarding subject areas which are perceived as useful and practical.

Creative educational activities of libraries and what people can learn from them

When analysing needs and expectations of library users, a different perspective can be taken to discuss educational activities of libraries and how they can affect various user groups. This kind of exercise was carried out by the DIDEL project representatives and librarians during a workshop in the Regional Public Library in Cracow, Poland.

First, the workshop participants watched presentations of creative educational projects of the library in Cracow. These included DIY classes for women and a sci-fi festival for young adults with games creation, 3D printing, clothes design workshops etc. Then they discussed numerous skills and knowledge that users could acquire while taking part in those, or similar, library activities as well as how and why these workshops could be useful for them. It is worth seeing the recipients of creative education as a diverse group with different needs, expectations and potential, so the problem was discussed with respect to three selected target groups: seniors, young adults and adults with special needs. Seniors comprise a very diverse group which can differ in terms of age, health status, family situation, finance and other personal

B

problems or limitations. They can be retired people, pensioners, elderly, lonely, or still active people who have unlimited leisure time and wish to be needed in society. Young adults, on the other hand, can be unemployed, wishing to change their job, entering the job market for the first time in their life, young entrepreneurs, or young parents. Adults with special needs can be: people with disabilities, the homeless, refugees or immigrants, people with a criminal past, the long-term unemployed – all of whom are groups at the risk of social exclusion.

The workshop revealed that according to the participants' beliefs taking part in creative activities in the library gives all those groups an opportunity to gain various kinds of useful skills and knowledge, not necessarily related to the subject of the activity. A broad set of soft skills was discussed in relation to specific groups. For example, seniors or adults with special needs could learn how to communicate better and how to be more self-confident and open to other people just by taking part in these activities. Rhetorical and conversational skills were also mentioned as useful competences to improve communication between adults. As well as some knowledge of

how to improve the quality of life, discovering new things to do, different ways of living, learning new languages. Specific skills – technical, digital, manual – that can be acquired during creative workshops, particularly related to new technologies, can be beneficial for senior citizens or socially excluded people, and so improve their lives significantly.

When discussing young adults who take part in creative activities in libraries, specific skills were mentioned, such as creative thinking, producing new ideas, thinking „out of the box“, working in teams, managing tasks, learning how to learn - all skills which are recognised as being highly valued in the 21st century job market. Also various digital skills were identified, including social media, blogging, advertising, searching the Internet, using new technologies, graphics, specific software skills. More advanced technological activities which some libraries are providing, such as 3D modeling and 3D printing workshops, help young entrepreneurs to design and prototype their products without incurring costs. Coding workshops or technological clubs where people meet and learn from each other by „making“ things together and implementing collaborative projects (for example in library makerspaces,

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creative spaces or FabLabs) also provide an opportunity for young adults to access specific commercial software, for example to advertise or promote their business.

Creative workshops in the library can also help integrate into the community those residents who represent different cultures and backgrounds, for example refugees, immigrants or other minority groups. When engaged in a creative activity and working together, the participants take new perspectives, learn about other ways of living, races, religions, or sexual orientations, which may help understand others better, reduce prejudice and prevent discrimination.

Library educators

Access to information is a human right and a cornerstone of democracy. Both a lack and an excess of information can hinder human development and contribute to some of our most serious global problems; prejudice, exclusion and poverty are all exacerbated by a limited capacity in literacy and navigating information.

A library's first priority has always been to provide citizens with access to information; for millennia they have acquired resources, preserved them and made them available to all. However, the way we acquire and process information is changing. As technology advances, information becomes increasingly easy to access, and its existence is no longer exclusively physical. As information changes, as does the role of the traditional gatekeeper to that information: the librarian.

The role of the library has changed rapidly over recent decades. Libraries are now seen as any combination of:

- a guide to information navigation, where information is made accessible, attractive and enriching,
- an ICT literacy center, providing a route for self-directed learning through digital & technological means,
- a community hub, giving users & visitors a wide range of opportunities to participate and learn, and meeting their needs.

B

Libraries are increasingly expected to perform unconventional functions as a result of evolving community needs. Librarians are already required to perform a vast range of roles: scholars, teachers, curators, listeners, customer service providers, information navigators, community advocates, cross-culture communicators, managers and ambassadors for their profession. Critically, libraries are now expected to meet modern, often digital, needs of users. As the information society becomes more and more complex, in order to fully benefit from access to information & knowledge, people need not only information navigators, but also the learning facilitators.

Library services of the future must reach out proactively, engaging with their communities and discharging their core purpose by enabling, seeking out those who would benefit, helping communities self-organize and navigate information – making a difference through their creativity and expertise.

Arts Council England, 2013

In order to do this, librarians must be equipped with the right skill sets themselves, both to adapt library infrastructure to new technologies and to pass on digital skills to users. Librarians' professional preparation must reflect the reshaped concept of the librarian profession.

This section will provide the analysis of delivered and desired librarians competences as well as perceived gaps between the university and/or vocational preparation and actual needs in relation to the range of library services.

University & vocational library training analysis

There are formal, non-formal and informal educational options for librarians in all project partner countries: Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, and Poland. The main common features in all countries are the following:

- higher education is organized according to the Bologna system;

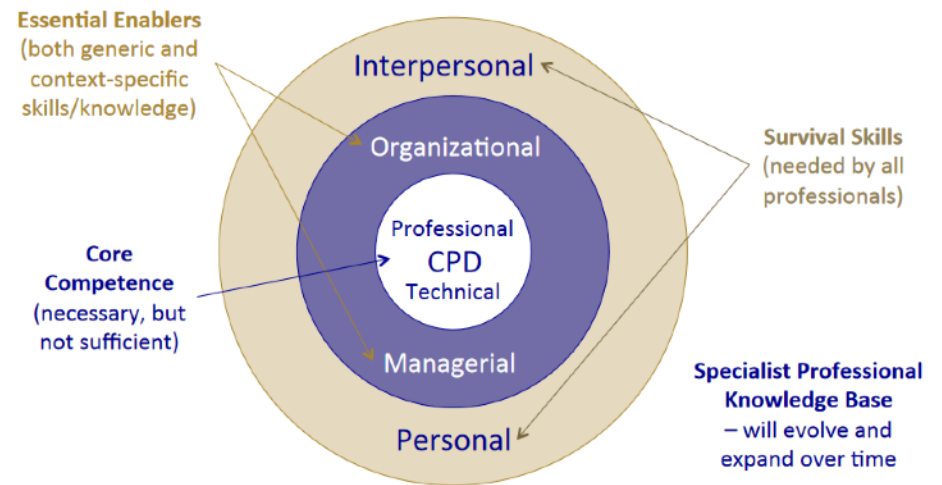
B

- there are no definite educational requirements for library positions;
- the majority of programmes provide more traditional knowledge and curricula are not so focused on the new roles of librarians as educators for innovation, creativity, and multiculturalism.

In order to assess what kind of competencies are provided by the study programmes for librarians in all four countries we can use the model of competencies developed by S. Corral, Professor of Librarianship & Information Management.

Based on the model of S. Corral, librarian competencies can be divided in three concentric circles or groups:

- Professional (or core) competencies;
- Generic and context specific knowledge / skills;
- Survival skills (personal characteristics and 21st century skills) (Corral, 2005).



(Corral, 2005, p. 35)

Figure 4. S. Corral's model of competences

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Professional competencies are **core competencies** which establish a professional knowledge base. Professional competencies can be divided in four fields: information resource management, information service management, information institution / organisation management, skills of information and communication tools and technologies (Abels E. et al., 2003). But professional competencies is the field which is currently changing very fast due to the rapid development and convergence of digital technologies. S. Corral admits that the professional competencies of information specialists in general are expanding in the direction of teaching, publishing and research (Corral, 2016). Therefore, continuous learning is required. Professional knowledge is a base which is necessary, but not always sufficient, for work in the library.

Generic and context specific knowledge and skills are connected with the type of library and its environment. A librarian has to know the local community (demographics, social structure, employment etc.) and technological infrastructure of it, understand the general tendencies and developments in society (for example, the network society as participatory culture), as well as develop managerial skills to deal with this. Librarians have to understand how context influences the need

for information and for new services. Nowadays, it is necessary to see new service models which are based on the „concept of space-as-service (physical/virtual) and moving beyond service-as-support to practitioner-as-partner“ (Corral, 2016).

Survival (or 21st century) skills are skills needed by all professionals. This also includes personal attributes (openness, positive attitude) and skills (such as time and task management, creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, multi-tasking, learning to learn) and interpersonal skills (such as teamwork, communication skills etc.). Competences as described above apply to members of 21st century societies, which means, in theory, that everybody – including librarians – should seek to acquire them in order to increase their chances for successful performance in both their professional and personal lives. In addition to that, as a part of educational activities offered by the library, the librarians have an important role to play in supporting community members in their learning experiences, as learning facilitators.

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The CEDEFOP's *Terminology of European Education and Training Policy* (CEDEFOP, 2008) defines a „learning facilitator“ as anyone who promotes the acquisition of knowledge and skills by establishing a favourable learning environment, including anyone exercising a teaching, training, supervision or guidance function. The facilitator helps the learner develop knowledge and skills by providing guidelines, feedback and advice throughout the learning process.

Libraries are among the institutions that provide lifelong and lifewide learning opportunities in non-formal and informal settings. Libraries are sometimes referred to as the learning „hubs“ or „labs“ (Association of Science-Technology Centers, Urban Libraries Council, 2014)). Not only organised educational activities, but to some extent the whole library environment (free access to resources in various formats, favourable rules and regulations, friendly atmosphere) supports both directed (also: self-directed) and unintentional learning. The library environment includes, of course, qualified, trained and competent library staff, who very much fit the definition of learning facilitators.

In the *Competency Index for the Library Field* (Gutsche, B, Hough, B, ed., 2014), compiled by a U.S. nonprofit organisation, WebJunction, the need to foster 21st century skills in communities is emphasised as a critical new direction, but the authors note that „in order to do this, library staff must be equipped with the right skill sets themselves“. Core technology skills and strong interpersonal skills have been mentioned in the publication as fundamental for everyone who works in a library in any position.

The first section of the Index elaborates on the following 21st century competences, labeling them as „essential library competences“:

Collaboration

- Develops and maintains effective relationships with others to achieve common goals;
- Works effectively in teams with strong team-building skills and attitudes;

B

- Applies effective strategies to manage organisational politics, conflict and difficult coworker behaviours.

Communication

- Communicates effectively using a variety of methods;
- Communicates effectively with a variety of audiences and individuals from diverse backgrounds;
- Selects and applies the most appropriate and effective communication means to meet situational needs.

Customer Service

- Manages the library environment to enhance the user experience;
- Develops and evaluates standards and practices for the delivery of quality customer service;
- Applies customer service skills to enhance the level of user satisfaction;
- Applies effective techniques to address difficult situations with users.

Ethics and Values

- Understands and acts in accordance with the basic values and ethics of library service.

Leadership

- Aligns efforts with the vision and direction of the organisation;
- Demonstrates leadership qualities and behavior;
- Employs sound project management principles and procedures in the planning and implementation of programmes and services;
- Anticipates and adapts to change and challenges effectively.

Learning and Innovation

- Manages the development of one's own learning and ongoing improvement of skills and knowledge;
- Demonstrates critical thinking and problem-solving abilities;
- Uses creative and innovative approaches.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- Referring to Eurostat Lifelong learning statistics in 2015, 20,1% of Norway population aged to 25-64 participated in education and training activities as also 5,8% of Lithuania, 5,7% of Latvia and 3,5% of Poland when EU average is 10,7%. Though not only libraries provides educational activities, according to Cross-European survey to measure users' perceptions of the benefits of ICT in public libraries: Final Report, 2013, about 24 million adults across the EU (one in four library users) have taken part in informal learning activities in libraries in the last 12 months, and around 2.3 million adults have attended a computer training class in a library.
- People who do not use the library are potentially interested in its adult educational offer – this is an important conclusion which shows that people want education, and it is a question of reaching those potential users with the right offer.
- The challenge for libraries is not only to provide education and training but also to reach these groups with information about their services. Studies of usage of cultural offers in the population, shows correlation between educational level and participation in cultural activities such as visiting libraries, theatres, museum and concerts.
- We can see that the respondents associate the library with many different kinds of activities – meeting other cultures (32%) or adult education (23%) are pretty far from traditional meet the author sessions. Therefore we can conclude that the stereotype of a library as a „book place” is not an obstacle for non-users – it is easy for them to imagine it as a much more versatile and open institution.
- The users of library educational offer are both people who only come to library courses and those who participate in activities organized by other institutions, such as NGOs, University of the Third Age, culture centres, museums or galleries. A lot of them are the so-called „hard users”, i.e. people who take part in many different courses in the library and are open to new ideas.
- The library offer first of all satisfies the need for self-improvement and progress, it also gives the opportunity to fill the gaps in one's education – these two factors motivate people the most to come to library events.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- Library users wish to be active participants, not passive recipients. This is one of the principles of informal education where the teacher-student relationship is different than in a more formalized context, both sides work more closely with each other and are more or less equally active. That may be a useful clue for people who work on the library offer for adult users.
- All formal education study programmes are focused on providing core competences (information resource management, information service management, information institution / organisation management, and skills of information and communication tools and technologies) at the different levels of higher education.
- Higher education study programmes provide generic and context specific competences, for example, subjects in communication science, political science, sociology, economics, legal system, culture history, management, pedagogy.
- „Soft” skills, survival skills and personal characteristics necessary to the librarian profession are mostly developed indirectly – by completing different tasks (like workshop preparation) but not by special courses.
- Formal education for librarians are provided in all four countries. The responsible institutions for higher education are mainly universities.
- Non-formal education provides special courses and programmes for up-to date competencies (especially focussing on the impact of technology), both core and generic, and tend to be organised by libraries themselves or other professional institutions.
- There should be more courses for developing the competencies of librarian as an educator: pedagogical and psychological skills, creative thinking, problem solving, teamwork, time management etc. and as well as for development of personal characteristics relevant for work in the library in information society with participatory culture.

MAIN CONCLUSIONS

- In order to keep up with technological developments and requirements of labour markets it is necessary to constantly update knowledge, skills and competences.
- Several „key” competences have been identified in the 21st century as essential; these include: communication, collaboration, critical thinking, creativity and innovation.
- Libraries provide lifelong and lifewide learning opportunities in non-formal and informal settings: „lifelong learning” meaning learning throughout life, and „lifewide learning” – learning in every possible situation.
- Librarians play an important role in supporting community members as learning facilitators, and libraries – as learning „hubs”.

Chapter 2

Learning experiments in libraries and local culture centres.

Case studies series of different models and approaches
to the learning offer of library

Culture is the key sphere of human life, holding an decisive impact on the development of individual and collective identity and increasingly important for strengthening the productive capacity of societies. (...) a non Hierarchical cultural space becomes the giant social experiment, where, together with the development of new media, creation and participation, the new forms of social organization are being constituted.

Poland's Social Capital Development Strategy 2020

The main concept underlying the DIDEL project is a transformation of library: from the centre of traditional book exchange and transfer to the ultra-modern space, equipped with cutting-edge technologies, providing the comprehensive services for the old inhabitants and newcomers, helping people to understand the world, become active citizens and expand their passions. These less conventional functions are performed as a result of public demand and certain global development trends redefining the role of community centres and their importance for individuals. Being a part of worldwide community, we (the DIDEL project team) are observing and analysing phenomena affecting libraries. The three areas of present library performance: multiculturalism, social innovation and creativity were picked for in-depth exploration within this project since they seem to constitute the foundation for creating the library of the future.

The below described case studies have been elaborated during the qualitative survey encompassing 4 DIDEL countries (results of quantitative survey are presented in the chapter no. 1. Status of local communities and quality of life).

Just like education in libraries itself, we realised that the understanding of three areas considered within the project (multiculturalism, social innovation, creativity: M-I-C) could be

ambiguous - lots of librarians are following some new paths instinctively without a clear view of their context or arguments justifying their choice. The interpretation of M-I-C depends to a great extent on the local context and related very much to some individual, particular preferences.

Our respondents struggled with defining and interpreting elements given in the characteristics of each area, even though their undertaken actions have clearly carried traces of M-I-C. For that reason the definitions should have been kept both simple (to avoid unnecessary intricacies or confusions) and comprehensive (to show the variety of understandings in our countries) . A good example of this approach is a multiculturalism - for a multinational community, multicultural activities are mainly those which aim to bring closer people of different backgrounds living in the same area. In more homogenous communities, however, even a language course may be associated with multiculturalism, provided it contains an element of discussing the culture of the country whose language is being studied.

Therefore - quite a lot depends on the context, the libraries and their local communities live in and to some extent, it's their choice how they could adapt and adjust the given know-how to the neighborhood circumstances.

multiculturalism

Definition

For the purpose of this survey, we define multiculturalism as any activity that supports harmonious cohabitation and interaction of different cultures, that promotes cultural diversity or that stimulates cross-cultural dialogue. Multiculturalism is generally understood as openness to diversity and multicultural activities often involve minority groups.

In Norway this term is easy to understand because libraries have been working with it for years – for them the library itself is a multicultural place because its users come from different cultures. In Lithuania, on the other hand, this idea can be hard to grasp since the society is fairly homogeneous.

Multicultural activities often involve foreign partners or experts in a foreign culture: foreigners, embassies, or foreign culture centres.

Learning experiments

Below, we describe some examples of multicultural educational activities taking place in libraries in the project countries.

Povilas Višinskis Siauliai
County Public Library

The American Corner



COUNTRY

Lithuania



PARTNERS

Embassy of the United States



LINKS

<http://www.savb.lt/en/>

The American Corner is almost a library within a library. Its aim is to familiarise library users with the United States (US) in terms of its culture, economics, literature and history, and to promote cultural cooperation between the two countries.

The initiative to establish the American Corner came from the Embassy of the United States in 2005. American reading rooms were already part of public diplomacy, but library staff managed to develop activities, uncolored by politics or ideology, related to personal experience. Nevertheless, the initial stage of promotion was difficult. There was a psychological barrier in local community along the lines of: “Americans in Lithuania? What do they want to show us?” But soon, people realised how much they have in common with the United States. Librarians working as educators in the American Corner and various experts from the American Embassy work together to organise various activities for all age groups: an English language club, movie reviews, webinars for English language teachers, cross-cultural meetings (with artists and diplomats from the United States, including American-Lithuanians), and tours around the city. All events and educational activities are in English and that draws a lot of interest from the local community. Strong human resources, collaboration and financial support ensures that more and more people from the community are able to get involved in the activities on offer.

Vilnius County Adomas
Mickevičius Public Library

Vilnius Jewish Public Library



COUNTRY

Lithuania



PARTNERS

Civil and cultural activists as well as government agencies and non-governmental organisations



LINKS

<http://vilnius-jewish-public-library.com/en/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=noTb9F2gWKY>

Many famous rabbis and judaica scholars have lived in Vilnius, which was called the Jerusalem of the North, and for 700 years Jews in Lithuania created a rich and diverse culture. In 2011, at the initiative of the private book collector Mr. Wyman Brent,

Vilnius Jewish Public Library was established as a structural unit of Vilnius County Adomas Mickevičius Public Library. Although the history of Jewish libraries began in the 16th century, nowadays Vilnius Jewish Public Library is the only one in Lithuania. The library not only continues the Jewish public library tradition of the accumulation of books, but it also promotes cultural diversity and intercultural dialogue between the city communities by using the library for exhibitions, presentations of books, conferences, discussions, lectures and other educational and cultural events. With strong support from the Jewish community in Vilnius, people in the city are becoming increasingly involved in the history of the Holocaust, through dialogue, learning about history and wanting to know more about Jewish culture in Lithuania. All of the library books are donated, as are most of the educational activities which are provided by library staff, various authors and other guests. With a strong conviction, collaboration and societal vision, Vilnius Jewish Public Library is now known all around the world.

Miejska Biblioteka
Publiczna w Opolu

Chat in Opole



COUNTRY

Poland



PARTNERS

Opole University, local NGOs



LINKS

<http://mbp.opole.pl/projects/view/biblioteka-miejscem-spotkan-wielu-kultur-617/>

Ukrainians are the largest and fastest growing group of migrants in Poland. Most come to Poland to work or to study. Unfortunately, prejudices toward Ukrainians are strong, to the extent that the word “Ukrainian” is sometimes used as an insult.

There are many foreign students in Opole and most of them are Ukrainian. They often feel isolated and unwelcome; they are accommodated in different dorms from the Polish students and although they live in Poland, they don’t have many opportunities to speak the language as they lack direct contact with Polish people.

Once, someone from Opole University came to the local library asking if the Ukrainian students could come in and to get to know it a little better. That’s when idea of “chats” was first formed. These chats aimed to make Ukrainian students feel more at home in Opole and to get Ukrainian students meet, mix and integrate in the library. The chats were designed as a series of informal meetings in which Ukrainian students and librarians took part. They consisted mainly of language classes, but also conversations about Polish culture and literature, walks around the city and visits to cultural establishments, especially those offering free activities.

The meetings were a great success. They were designed by users – they had flexible structure (no fixed day, formula, topic or group) because users wanted it that way. There was close cooperation between users and librarians (exchanging mails every week in order to arrange the next meeting). The process was fun and satisfying for both users and librarians.

After a series of meetings, the librarians felt that they had gained new competences and perspectives, and moreover, they felt that they had developed themselves by going out of their comfort zone. The library extended their network of contacts and acquired new users and volunteers; some of Ukrainian students are now volunteers in the library, and some are preparing meetings on Ukrainian culture for the local community.

Now it is possible to bring the two communities together. People living in Opole can get to know the Ukrainian students, challenge their own prejudices and stereotypes and increase tolerance as a society.

Miejska Biblioteka
Publiczna w Proszowicach

Peace-painting in Poland and Norway



COUNTRY

Lithuania



PARTNERS

Stiftelsen Peace-painting, Academy of Fine Arts, other libraries, municipalities, schools, NGOs



LINKS

<http://www.peacepainting.proszowice.pl>

<http://www.peacepainting.org>

In our modern world, children (and adults) are constantly being weighed, measured and judged. Peace-painting is an idea of being together without being judged.

“Peace-painting in Poland and Norway” was a series of artistic activities with local communities in small villages. The idea came from Norway, where a Peace Painting Association operates. The Association began working with Polish partners within a programme of Polish-Norwegian cooperation operated by the Polish and Norwegian Ministries of Culture.

The main activity of the project was peace-painting – that is, painting together. It was designed for both children and adults and allowed them to express themselves through a wordless language. The project was rooted in the belief that peace begins in the individual’s heart. The objective was to have the participants leave the workshops feeling positive. They were not judged on their painting ability. They worked in a safe non-judgmental environment that facilitated personal development. The aim was simply to paint together with people from different cultures.

Participants also took part in lectures about art and culture, meetings with artists, presentations, museum visits and exhibition curation. During their visits, Norwegian participants stayed with Polish families, and vice versa. They visited interesting places, met people and did many things together (hiking, painting, dancing). After the project they reported feeling safer in the world and had higher self-esteem and a lot of good memories.

Although the idea behind the project was strong, peaceful and powerful, the project itself came up against some practical difficulties. It was a big challenge to manage and communicate within the international team. Polish and Norwegian librarians had different work cultures and different approaches towards working with the group. The other problem was that participants didn’t have the opportunity to contribute to the shape of the project. As a result, not all participants were fully interested in all of the workshops or lectures.

Kongsvinger Municipal
Public Library

Chai-Time



COUNTRY

Norway



PARTNERS

The local asylum reception centre, the adult education centre and social services



LINKS

<http://bibliotekhedmark.blogspot.no/2015/12/chai-time>
[i-kongsvinger-bibliotek-chai.html](#)

The initiative for the project “Chai-Time” came from an employee of the social services in Kongsvinger. He had just moved to Kongsvinger and was eager to do something to create a better understanding between different cultures in the city. He had experience from a similar project in Oslo, the capital of Norway, but he really wanted to bring the idea to his new hometown. He needed someone to work with, and therefore he went to Kongsvinger municipality public library. Together they created “Chai-Time”: a multicultural project with the aim of bringing different cultures closer to the library users, and facilitating a dialogue between them. The ultimate goal was to bring the local community closer together.

To do this they created an event where representatives of the different cultures presented themselves through their food, music, culture, clothes and everyday objects by making a “living room” in the library. On this day the different “living rooms” took up almost the whole library space. Through music, food and dance, a friendly atmosphere was created where different cultures could meet. The social services were the project leader of this event, while the representatives of different culture presented themselves and the library staff only helped them with their presentations. It was a huge success and about 150 people attended the event. It was almost like a party at the library.

Looking back at their experiences from this project, it is clear to the library staff that the project helped to break down barriers and create understanding and tolerance in their local community. It seems to have given the people who presented their culture self-esteem and a feeling of pride. It is also clear that this project established a good collaboration between the partners and brought new users into the library.

Key to achieving this was a well chosen topic. This topic was of importance to the local citizens and to the partnership of the four institutions interested in working together on multiculturalism. The participation of members who presented their cultures was also crucial since the “living rooms” were prepared by them. In the beginning, it was also very important that the originator – a social service worker who came up with the idea - already had known how to do this. It was important to start the project with enough resources (money and staff) to make this as good as it could be.

“Chai-time” got a lot of attention in Kongsvinger, and has been organised every year since it started in 2014. It got even more attention when the mayor of the town attended the opening last time it was organised

Riga Central Library
(9 children library
branches)

Dialogue. Bilingual



COUNTRY

Latvia



PARTNERS

City Municipality

Addressing Russian speaking families with preschool age kids in Riga, the aim of the project “Dialogue. Bilingual” was to improve Latvian language skills with the help of games and plays.

Within the project, nine children's library branches in different areas of the city organised bilingual events where kids were encouraged to learn or improve on their Latvian language skills. The target group was families with pre-school age children (age 4-7), particularly those who were not attending pre-school education institutions or had an insecure status which meant that they had limited opportunities to learn Latvian.

The project was realised in several steps. First, the librarians acquired knowledge in special seminars on how to organise bilingual events with the professionals from the Latvian Language Agency. Second, information and materials were gathered and an article was written in the topic. Third, information about the event was distributed in the city and events were organised. Finally, material was put together showcasing best practice and suggestions on how to organise such events successfully.

During the project (March - November), 40 classes were organised with 116 attendees. Due to high demand, some of the libraries continued to organise similar events even after the project finished.

This kind of project has real potential to expand the target group to the parents and relatives of the children who were originally targeted. Since the parents generally accompanied their children to the classes and so were already in the library, it would make sense to organise similar classes in parallel aimed at the adults.

Pelci Library (village/one person run library)

Spanish language classes for adults



COUNTRY

Latvia



PARTNERS

Municipality support (Librarian can create an appropriate environment.

Library's funding allows them to buy textbooks, make enough copies of printed materials etc).

Pelci Library developed its offer based on the demand from users and on the librarian's own initiative; people knew that the librarian spoke Spanish, so the library users asked to organise a Spanish language club, because learning Spanish elsewhere could be very expensive.

The library put a lot of emphasis on the entertainment element, creating events and activities that are not directly associated with the services of library. According to the librarians, there are other places to access formal education, but for the library users, socialising and feeling comfortable are important factors. This is what users expect from the library; they are interested in things like language classes (Spanish, German) or even gardening classes, and often new opportunities (like projects and new partners) are more important than the strategy. In 2016 Pelci received EIFL Public Library Innovation Award for the project "Little School of Local History" where children researched the library's digital history collection and made animated films about the past.

For project of Spanish language classes, the target group was adults. Study groups were organised every Friday and participants acknowledged that as a very pleasant way to conclude the working week. The results were clear - users were motivated and interested and the library kept receiving inquiries about future courses. Two students who started their learning at Pelci Library even continued their training in Spain and were awarded diplomas. The success of the project most likely came from the mutual engagement both from the librarian/teacher and the students. The teacher was the motivator, creating a positive atmosphere and developing targets for language learning.

Scale

The scale of the activities described above differed from local (American Reading Room, Chat in Opole, Chai-time) to regional (Gates to Vilnius Region), to international (Peace Painting). However, based on experience we can conclude that activities initiated by the library are often realised on a local scale as they relate to the cultures cohabiting in a given area, the challenges they face and the opportunities that arise.

Target groups

Multicultural activities are usually aimed at a broad spectrum of participants: the local community in general. The American Reading Room is an interesting example as it contained many different activities adapted for participants of different ages. As far as international projects are concerned, they often benefit librarians as well, because they get the chance to learn how to work with people of different nationalities or cultures.

Impact

The effects were similar in expanding the knowledge of different cultures or nationalities, starting closer relationships with people of another culture, making people more active and facilitating dialogue. Many projects also produced publications or websites aimed at a wider audience, with useful information about the region.

social innovation

Definition

Social innovation is the most complex area to define. The “innovation” element automatically makes people think of new technologies, although this is hard to combine with the first word, “social”. In this project, we take social innovation to mean coming up with and implementing new ideas: products, services or models that respond to diagnosed social needs, help build new relationships, or promote cooperation.

In the survey on educational activities of libraries, run in the four DIDEL project partner countries, the respondents did not associate the term “social innovation” with civic values, social inclusion or social experiments. It is important to remember, though, that we interviewed just some of the librarians. Certainly, social innovation is not a widely known term, neither do people understand it in a universally clear way. The understanding of activities fostering social innovation differs from library to library. Most respondents felt like they definitely need to learn more about it.

The Norwegian respondents presented an interesting approach, seeing the library as an institution which by definition implements social innovation due to its crucial role in the local community.

The library has a very important social role in the local community, and it is important to find ways to connect with the users who are in need of a place to be and find ways to help them with what they need. One of the libraries explained it as creating some processes that change the society. To work together with others to identify and solve problems in their community.

Norwegian team member

Learning experiments

Below, we describe some examples of social innovation in educational activities taking place in libraries in the project countries.

Kaunas County Public
Library

LinkINjob: job-hunting with the help of librarians



COUNTRY

Lithuania



PARTNERS

International project partners: Mestna knjižnica Ljubljana (Slovenia); Regional Public Library “Petko Rachev Slaveikov” (Bulgaria); Monaghan County Council Library Services (Ireland); Volkshochschule-Stadtbibliothek Linz (Austria); Biblioteca Judeteana “George Baritiu” Brasov (Romania); Vantaan Kaupunki (Finland).

The aim of this international project funded by Erasmus+ was to reduce the number of low-educated unemployed people and to promote new and innovative learning methods especially with the use of ICT. The project partners believed that by providing the necessary knowledge and skills, libraries can contribute to the integration of the unemployed into the labour market.

It was important that the librarians running the learning activities for the unemployed had the necessary skills and competences. Therefore, the “LinkINJob” project consisted of two phases: training for library staff and then learning activities for the unemployed. The library staff were trained by external experts and then the unemployed and job seekers were trained by librarians. The educational activities involved in this training were mainly based on financial literacy, computer and information literacy and entrepreneurship - subjects that the community really needed to know more about.

The impact of the project on learners was unambiguously positive. By participating in the training, the job seekers clearly improved their employability. Some individuals who completed courses in the library continued to pursue informal educational activities or chose formal education programmes, while most of the others quickly found employment. Participants of the trainings stated that the good atmosphere was the main reason that they got involved in the activities on offer. In particular, learners appreciated the fact that teachers relied on their own personal experience; this approach helped to motivate participants, make them feel equal, and showed that the library was there for help. The libraries involved in the project developed or upgraded their educational activities for unemployed people in order to support the needs of local communities. As a result of the project, e-Guidelines for librarians were also created.

LINKS:

https://www.kvb.lt/images/Naujienos/2015/Linkinjob_eguide_2016.pdf

<https://www.kvb.lt/en/projects/62-straipsniai/4075-international-project-linkinjob-job-hunting-with-the-help-of-librarians>

<http://www.linkinjob.eu/>

Panevezys City Public
Library

Health is the Royalty of the Wise



COUNTRY

Lithuania



PARTNERS

City Council, National Health Insurance Fund, and
City Public Health Bureau



LINKS

<http://panbiblioteka.lt/en/>

Librarians noticed that their users, especially seniors, were coming to the library for information about health and disease prevention. This was the reason behind the project, whose title roughly translates as “Health Is the Royalty of the Wise”, started twelve years ago.

Library staff sought to expand the community’s knowledge about health, diseases, disorders and prevention methods, and to promote healthy lifestyles and prevent addictions. In order to reach this goal, various activities were organised by librarians who were experienced in the field of health and disease prevention, along with expert partners. These activities included lectures on various health-related topics (e.g. risks of obesity), meetings with health professionals and authors of popular healthy lifestyle books, and practical activities. There was a constant demand for this kind of information and activities as healthy lifestyle became a more popular topic in the community.

In order to provide even more information regarding this topic in an easily accessible format, in 2011 Panevezys library decided to develop a blog called “Healthy Library”, where users could find more information about health related events and publications in the library. This project was highly valued by library users, but despite the fact that the project was co-funded by partners, the library still struggled to continue activities due to a lack of funding and resources. On the other hand, this lack of funding forced librarians to create low-cost alternatives, such as the blog.

Ukmergė District Vladas
Slaitas Public Library

Faculty of e-services: Knowledge is Useful When it Can Make Life Easier



COUNTRY

Lithuania



PARTNERS

Ukmergė District Municipality and University of the
Third Age



LINKS

<http://www.ukmergesvb.lt/en/>

As everyday activities move online, digital literacy, online communication and e-services classes in libraries have become in high demand among seniors, especially among those who live in small villages. The aim of the project Faculty of e-services: Knowledge is Useful When it Can Make Life Easier was to improve the digital literacy skills of senior citizens and help to make their lives easier.

The seniors involved found this project interesting and useful; in fact, attendance was so strong that some users had to wait for several months to get a spot. During the project, training rooms with computers and other technical support were established in seven rural libraries which were selected according to their size, population and attendance record. Over a two week training course, seniors from the community learned how to use Google, create an e-mail account, use applications such as Skype, Facebook, Google Maps and so on.

The participants were very happy with the knowledge they gained, as this allowed them to communicate with their relatives who lived abroad, get an appointment with the doctor, pay bills online – all simple things which make their lives easier. Because of this positive outcome, the library ended up running even more training courses than originally planned in the project preparation.

This result would not have been possible without the librarians being so active and open to innovation by organising unconventional activities. The only barriers experienced by the library during this project were some technical issues and financial obstacles.

Libraries for Business in the counties of Bauska and Rundāle in Latvia and regions of Pasvalys, Pakruojis and Birzai in Lithuania.

Establishment of business support library cross-border network



COUNTRY

Latvia



PARTNERS

Partner libraries in Latvia and Lithuania



<http://www.bauska.lv/en/project-business-library/>

The concept and the business support strategy were developed within a cross-border cooperation project together with Lithuanian libraries. Best international practices of libraries that offer business support services served as inspiration for the project. The aim of the project was to develop seven business-support libraries in the Bauska region with the target group of local business people. The idea was to offer a space in the library where people could work, get inspired, come up with new ideas and find necessary information to be able to achieve the best in their business. The project's main task was to improve the library infrastructures to enable them to support businesses.

Apart from ICT training courses which were delivered by librarians themselves, all other educational activities on offer as part of the project were facilitated and provided by experts from outside of the library. Experts and specialists were selected based on the specific knowledge and/or skills that were required to run a particular workshop or activity.

A network of 33 libraries were involved in the project

Storytelling libraries (since 2009)



COUNTRY

Latvia



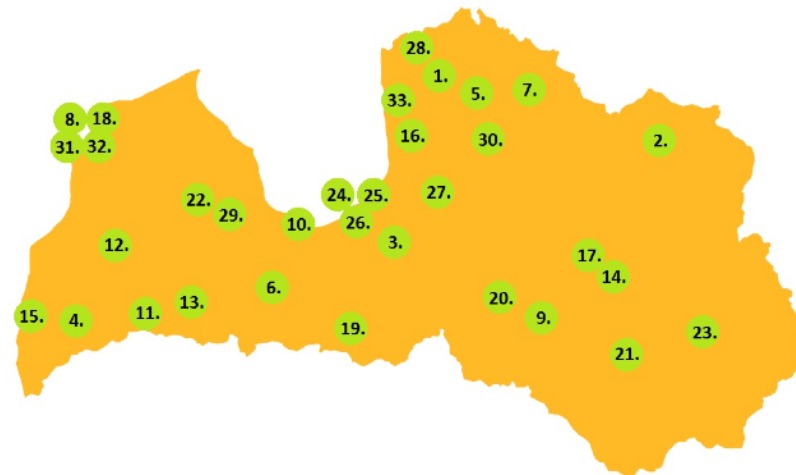
PARTNERS

The initiative of the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO. UNESCO LNC in developing the network cooperated with well-known storytelling experts – Ms Mara Mellena, Traditional Cultural Society "Aprica" and Mr Guntis Pakalns, Institute of Literature, Folklore and Art, University of Latvia. <http://www.ukmergesvb.lt/en/>

The network „Storytelling Libraries” was created to improve the informal education provision in the library through wide range of activities related to storytelling as an important part of unlocking elements of local cultural heritage that are less visible. The aims were to develop storytelling as a method for collection of undocumented local history, to create a social memory, consolidate the community and strengthen ties between generations.

The target group was all members of the local community, researchers of folklore and librarians as professionals. In collaboration with a network of experts, members of the local community were supported with methodological knowledge about the maintenance and preservation of storytelling traditions and development. Librarians and participants were encouraged to develop individual storytelling skills.

At least twice a year, UNESCO LNC arranged training seminars for members of the "Storytelling Libraries" network, thereby encouraging them to share their experiences, gain new knowledge and encourage innovation. However, a large part of the success of the project was thanks to the librarians' enthusiasm and volunteer work.



Kraslava Central Library

Seniors School of Life



COUNTRY

Latvia



PARTNERS

Professional psychologists and sociologists

The inspiration behind this project came from the international movement “The University of the Third Age”, whose aims are the education and stimulation of mainly retired members of the community - those in their “third age” of life. The initiative came from a partnership between a sociologist and a psychologist who developed this project out of their own experience with starting studies after age 40, and wanted to share the knowledge they acquired with other seniors.

The Seniors School of Life target audience was seniors, but the project was open to anyone in need of the topical and helpful information on offer. Once a week, the library gathered around ten interested users with a focus on various themes determined by both participants and staff, such as the influence of advertising, aging and longevity, healthy diet, or emotional health. There were no exams or tests in the project, but the golden rule was to respect each other. Once a month the library organised a handicrafts event where participants shared their skills and taught one another, which helped to involve people in active participation and not just listening.

In order to vary the activities and make them more attractive, as well as spending time on the library premises, seniors were invited to go on city tours to learn more about the town in which they lived. This part of the project was particularly successful thanks to the cooperation with other institutions of the city - for example, the seniors were able to visit the Art and History Museum of Kraslava, the Tourism Information Centre and a local primary school.

Municipal Library in Moraġ

Cooking Up Ideas



COUNTRY

Poland



PARTNERS

Information Society Development Foundation,
local TV, municipality, residents of the city



LINKS

<http://www.bibliotekamorag.pl/2015/08/02/spotkania-z-kuchnia-pomyslow/>

“Cooking Up Ideas” was a series of meetings with residents of the city and representatives of local authorities, during which participants discussed the needs of the local community. The initiative originated from the library’s participation in the Information Society Development Foundation’s nationwide project “Innovation Zones”, where various public libraries were encouraged to come up with new innovative ideas to address local issues and help their communities develop and grow.

The main objective of the “Cooking Up Ideas” project was to seek solutions to the community’s most pressing problems together with residents of the city, and to invent and test new ideas as well as experiment on them. This provided new opportunities for residents to come up with their own ideas and decide collaboratively about the city’s future and development. This also made people more active, gave them chance to spend their leisure time well, to be heard by others and bear responsibility for the community’s common issues.

The first idea to come out of the meetings was to install street fitness equipment around the city. This was done in partnership with the Moraġ City Hall, who came up with funding for several outdoor gyms.



Municipal Public Library
in Sopot

Senior 21 Club



COUNTRY

Poland



PARTNERS

University of the Third Age, a photography school



LINKS

<http://mbp.sopot.pl/senior-xxi/>

<http://seniorxxisopot.blogspot.com/>

What did the library in Sopot, the “University of the Third Age” and a photography school all have in common? All three used their resources to do something no-one had done before, rewarding collaboration, supporting e-inclusion for seniors by offering new learning opportunities and creating a close-knit community in which older people could play an important role.

Inspiration for the project came from the local community and librarians who noticed growing needs of a group of senior users. Sopot is a small seaside city, health-spa and tourist resort destination in Poland with a relatively high proportion of people aged 65 and above (it ranks at number 32 of 2496 municipalities for % of senior inhabitants). In an age where communicating with a friend or family member on the other side of the country takes no more than a few clicks of a mouse, research indicates that people are actually more lonely than ever. Perhaps no other age group feels the keen sting of loneliness more than the elderly.

Municipal Public Library in Sopot already offered its elderly users opportunities to meet people and capture their interest. But since the launch of their Senior 21 Group in 2015, senior citizens have been able to take part in ICT courses, citizen journalism, video editing workshops, and training in the use of smartphones. One of the librarians involved in the project said that the goal of the activities were not necessary to complete a final product, but instead is to maximise interactions between the people taking part. Therefore, librarians and trainers would focus on creating an interactive process rather than just getting to an end product. As a result of the project's success (expanding the participants' skills and bringing them closer together), Municipal Public Library in Sopot decided to continue the Senior 21. Club. It is now so popular that one of the participants said, “it's easier to get a hip operation from the National Health Fund than it is to get into the library classes!”

Østre Toten municipal
public library

Language Cafe



COUNTRY

Norway



PARTNERS

The Municipal Volunteer centre, Volunteers



LINKS

<http://www.ukmergesvb.lt/en/>

The municipality of Østre Toten is a small rural community with a few villages and an administrative centre, Lena, where the public library is situated. In recent years municipalities like Østre Toten have experienced an increase of immigrants due to a large number of refugees, asylum seekers and work immigrants coming to Norway. The municipality sees the immigrants as a resource and a way to sustain their community and grow in number.

Often one of the first places newcomers visit when arriving in a new community is the public library, and this is also the case in Lena. The librarians saw a need to address the difficulties of learning Norwegian among the foreign language visitors. They realised that the immigrants in the community needed a place to both learn the language and practice their language skills with Norwegian speaking natives.

The library decided to organise a “Language Cafe”, offering Norwegian language training classes in the library. The “Language Cafe” differed from regular language classes by being informal. The focus was on conversation and social interaction around a coffee table. One of the librarians had trained as a school teacher and developed a plan for the training sessions. Together with volunteers, the library organised “Language Cafe” sessions every other week. The library cooperated closely with the local volunteer centre, who helped in promoting the offer and recruiting both volunteers and participants.

The aim of the “Language Cafe” was to help immigrants to communicate and find their place in Norwegian society. The offer was free to everyone, even illegal immigrants, as well as work immigrants and asylum seekers waiting for a residency permit.

There were some challenges in organising the “Language Cafe”. Participants were not required to register beforehand, so the library didn't know how many people would show up. The librarians also found it challenging not to know much about the background of the users and their situation, for example if they were refugees who had a permanent residence, or lived in a refugee centre or were asylum seekers who could have been relocated any moment.

Sel Municipal Public
Library

Equipment Bank



COUNTRY

Norway



PARTNERS

Sel social services office



LINKS

[http://www.sel.kommune.no/utstyrsbanken.](http://www.sel.kommune.no/utstyrsbanken.5792818-343956.html)

[5792818-343956.html](http://www.sel.kommune.no/utstyrsbanken.5792818-343956.html)

Several communities in Norway have developed “Equipment Banks” to loan outdoor activity equipment in order to prevent social exclusion of poor families and especially children. Being able to participate in outdoor activities at school and with friends is important for children in Norway. Outdoor activities are important in Norwegian culture. Sel is a small municipality in the mountain area, and a big part of the local culture is activities like cross country and alpine skiing, hiking and mountain biking. And yet equipment like backpacks, bikes and skis are often expensive and not a priority in poor families.

Equipment banks are organised in different ways around the country, but in Sel the library was asked to run the bank. The idea came from the local social services as a part of a larger project with the aim of ensuring social inclusion across the municipality. The equipment was loaned out like books to everyone with a library card. Since this was an offer to everyone in the municipality, not just poor families, people did not feel ashamed of borrowing equipment from the library that they couldn’t necessarily afford.

This was a particularly good solution for people who needed the equipment for only one occasion but did not really need to own it. Shared equipment is also a good environmental action. Norwegian people are the biggest consumer of sporting equipment in the whole world, but a lot of it is stored and hardly never used.

The project has given the library a lot of new users and helped in equalising some of the differences in access to sport equipment. The library also got a lot of positive press coverage both locally and in the region, which boosted the local community’s perception of the library. A significant success factor was the cooperation between a number of institutions and services in the municipality who worked together to establish the offer.

There were also some challenges with the equipment bank. In the beginning there was not enough space in the library for all the sports equipment and maintenance. There were also some resistance among the staff who did not perceive lending out sports equipment as a part of their regular library job.

Scale

Most of those activities were organized on a local scale, apart from one international project (the business libraries in Latvia-Lithuania). This was probably due to the fact that social innovation is about solving local problems in innovative ways, and libraries are best places to do this in a local level within their immediate communities.

Target groups

These activities were addressed to local community members, often senior citizens or the unemployed (first job seekers, less educated unemployed etc.) and other groups with special needs or at a risk of social exclusion. Norwegian libraries often offered their socially innovative educational services to immigrants, refugees, or asylum seekers, because Norway is the most frequent destination for those groups out of all DIDELE partner countries. Local entrepreneurs and businesses were recipients of the services offered by libraries in Lithuania and Latvia, cooperating in an international project.

Impact

Some effects were concrete, like setting up a health blog, installing outdoor gyms or growing the number of library users, whereas other were softer: more ICT literacy among the elderly, integration and empowering of communities, and strengthening the library image.

creativity

Definition

In this project we define creativity as the ability to create something new and worthwhile. That “something” may be conceptual: an idea, scientific theory, a musical piece or a joke; or it may be more palpable: an invention, a book or a work of art. Creative activities often require contribution from library users, for example, to take part in a creative writing class the users need to be creative themselves. Educational activities fostering creativity include the development of skills needed for different hobbies, arts and crafts.

Creativity, nowadays, is useful in every area of life and in almost every profession. Creative people work better and solve problems more effectively. It is worth being creative and learning how to develop this ability. To be creative also means to use knowledge, ideas, resources, skills, or materials in a novel way, for something new to come into being. This is why we think that the library - both as a knowledge repository and as a community institution - is a perfect place for developing creativity as well as for creation itself.

Polish team member

Learning experiments

Below, we describe some examples of creative educational activities taking place in libraries in the project countries.

Zorgi Library

Creative Laboratory



COUNTRY

Latvia



PARTNERS

External trainers, the municipality



LINKS

Gallery from classes

The “Creative Laboratory” offered painting classes for adults in the library, once a month. The target group were adults without previous experience in painting. The people who attended these classes continued to develop their skills. In the words of a participant, “when painting I lose myself in time. It’s like a meditation that improves health and mood.”

A crucial success factor for the project was that the library had strong support from the municipality which provided financial resources. This meant that when librarians invited users to take part in the creative laboratories, everything was taken care of – snacks on the table, materials provided etc. - and the only thing they asked from the participants was to get involved.



Valmiera Integrated Library

"Find Yourself in Europe" board game (also in electronic version)



COUNTRY

Latvia



PARTNERS

Europe Direct Information Centre (EDIC)



LINKS

Electronic version of the game

Valmiera Integrated Library is both a public and university library. The basic principle is that the libraries are legally and financially independent but collaborate and coordinate to maximise the use of information and personnel resources and expand the services offered to the local community.

In 2014, in cooperation with the Europe Direct Information Centre (EDIC), Valmiera Library created an educational board game for children "Find Yourself in Europe". To make the game comprehensive and interesting, the team of game creators consisted of librarians that work with adults, children, students and a specialist from EDIC. The game was created with the aim of teaching students in Valmiera more about their immediate surroundings: the city they live in but also the European community that they are part of. The idea is to demonstrate that personal success is rooted in one's birthplace, but real achievement depends on hard work, determination and curiosity. It also aimed to give an insight into ten professions (baker, fireman, actor, driver, librarian, craftsman, doctor, entrepreneur, hairdresser, teacher) and the knowledge and skills necessary for these trades.

The board game was created for school children but was also useful for adults to improve their knowledge about the topic as well as to play it as a break from everyday life activities. Playing the game all together offered a way to unite family members as well as to strengthen relationships between parents and children. The game has been played in region book feast, city festivals, in libraries and many different events organised by EDIC and library. The game was given as a gift to all schools in Valmiera and to all groups of students coming to visit the library. The game could be played in the library but could also be borrowed for up to two weeks.

Arteteka Provincial Public
Library in Cracow

GRART Festival of Games and Crafts



COUNTRY

Poland



PARTNERS

Sci-fi and Fantasy club "Cracow Dragons",
Foundation "Historia Vita" as well as many portals
and e-shops dedicated to games, sci-fi, computers,
pop culture and gadgets



LINKS

<http://grartfest.pl/>

<https://www.facebook.com/grart.krakow/>

Arteteka is a special division of the Provincial Public Library in Cracow and a joint initiative of the library and the Malopolskie Garden of Art (a municipal institution of culture). Its aim is to stimulate creativity with new media, visual arts and modern design and has created spaces organised around three themes: words, images and music. Equipment available in the library includes computers with professional multimedia editing software, tablets, e-book readers, game consoles, board games and a rich comic book collection.

GRART is an annual event devoted to various forms of electronic entertainment and games, including board games, role playing games (RPGs), live action roleplay (LARP), consoles, computer games, and smartphone games. The aim of the festival is to draw attention to, discuss and elaborate on the most valuable aspects of games: artistic works, soundtracks and stories, for example books that have inspired the game's plot, or have been based on games.

The festival takes place every year in the Arteteka library. It was the original idea of a young library user who presented it to the library and offered his contribution. Originally he was responsible for the first edition of GRART as an individual who cooperated with the library, but he then started working as a librarian so although the next editions of the festival were also managed by him, they became a real library event.

Gaming and having fun were an inspiration for participants to create their own projects as well as an opportunity to merge creativity with various manual, technical, communication and technological skills. During the GRART festival numerous practical workshops were conducted on cosplay (costume design workshops), creation of games, and production of gadgets using 3D modeling and printing. There were also thematic lectures, demonstrations, animations, and exhibitions of old consoles and computers.

So far, the different editions of the festival have been very successful, mostly thanks to the contribution of the Arteteka library: its resources (including large collection of comic books and board games), hi-tech, modern design and engagement of the - very creative - library staff. The librarians themselves were interested in the science fiction fan movement, games, pop culture and digital technologies. A challenge for a library was to attract such creative and talented staff and be able to offer the librarians good working conditions (otherwise they could choose other, more lucrative, careers).

Arteteka Provincial Public
Library in Cracow

D.I.Y. Act and Create!



COUNTRY

Poland



PARTNERS

Małopolskie Garden of Art, volunteers, non-government organizations



LINKS

<https://dzialajwarte.wordpress.com/>

"D.I.Y. Act!" is a series of workshops for adult women interested in arts and crafts and who want to follow their passion and engage in creative projects. It offers a forum for a group of women to meet regularly in the library, inspiring each other and gaining knowledge via various online resources.

The idea came from two librarians, who were passionate about new media and the D.I.Y. movement, and also - themselves - very creative. This was how they advertised the first workshops in the library: "Want to renew an old t-shirt? Do not want to waste money on an expensive case for your ebook reader? Remembered, at the last moment, your friend's birthday and have only basic office supplies? You do not even realize how many simple solutions there are".

Arteteka is a special division of the Provincial Public Library in Cracow and a joint initiative of the library and the Małopolskie Garden of Art (a municipal institution of culture). Its aim is to stimulate creativity with new media, visual arts and modern design and has created spaces organised around three themes: words, images and music. Participants in the "D.I.Y. Act!" project were able to take advantage of the multimedia equipment hosted in Arteteka such as tablets, iPads, graphics tablets and e-readers.

During the workshops, together, participants also explore blogs, websites and other internet resources to get inspiration for their creative project. An important tool is the blog www.dzialajwarte.wordpress.com where reports of activities are published together with sources of inspiration and organisational information (eg. what materials should be brought together for the next meeting).

Ideas for workshops come from the librarians and the participants who suggest the topics, the materials and also the uses for objects to be created. For example, in response to the participants' suggestion to engage the "D.I.Y. Act!" in charitable activities, the librarians invited a local coordinator of the international initiative "Little octopuses for premature babies". The action, launched in Denmark, is based on the idea that squeezing the tentacles of a little toy octopus will help a premature baby to breathe. So, crocheting little toy octopuses (that will be delivered to hospitals) was one of activities during the workshops.

Arteteka Provincial Public
Library in Cracow

D.I.Y. Act and Create!



COUNTRY

Poland



PARTNERS

Małopolskie Garden of Art, volunteers, non-
government organizations



LINKS

<https://dzialajwarte.wordpress.com/>



Ringsaker Municipal
Public Library

100 Reads for 1000



COUNTRY

Norway



PARTNERS

Municipality and volunteers

“100 Reads for 1000” was a creative way to promote literature and a love of reading, and at the same time create publicity for the public library. The library recruited volunteers to read a chosen story for an audience on unusual places at exactly the same day and time. A popular crime novel had been chosen, and on March 14 at 12.00 the story was read at bakeries, schools, offices, petrol stations, hairdressers, canteens, railway stations, the sheriff's office and the bank. After the reading, the listeners could submit a solution to the crime mystery online - in the end almost 300 did so.

The library came up with the idea for this project after a suggestion by a member of the municipality council, who asked the library to organise an event around crime literature before Easter (there is a tradition in Norway to read crime novels during the Easter holiday). The library wanted to reach a broader audience than their regular users, and therefore sought to create an event that could get a lot of attention in the local community. An important focus of the project was the promotion and cooperation with the municipal communication department. A particularly successful way to create a buzz was to recruit well known people from the local community, like the mayor, to read aloud.

The project was a success and was repeated the following year. In fact, a nice outcome was that many participants ended up becoming regular library users as a result.

Scale

The projects tended to be rather small-scale, for specific target groups, but with multiplication potential (“metropolitan-style” or nationwide campaigns would not be considered a primary source of inspiration).

Target groups

Creative library activities or activities aimed at developing people's creative skills may have broader audience: local residents, the adults, or the whole families. However, inventing and launching such activities in the library also requires more open and creative minds, so the librarians working with children, youth, or young adults may be better suited for the job. The above-mentioned examples present the activities addressed to specific user groups, such as young adults, adult women or school children (but also educators who teach school children).

Impact

In the creativity section, the results are usually directly related to the subject matter – the increase of its popularity or knowledge on the subject, or improved skills. In case of the above-mentioned examples, there was usually an added bonus: stepping outside of the library improved its visibility and positive image (the library was perceived as more accessible, open, modern) which may translate into increasing the number of its users. It is therefore great publicity for the library. An additional effect of the 100 Reads for 1000 project was readership promotion.

mixed categories

While listing their examples, some librarians participating in the DIDEL survey indicated the existence of “mixed” categories in which the different areas overlapped. It was difficult for them to choose one of the main three areas (multiculturalism, social innovation, creativity) as a predominant one. This was often the case with “creativity”, because this area (understood both as an ability, or as a tool) was recognized as essential to implement innovative projects as well as projects dedicated to novel (for most libraries from DIDEL partner countries) ideas, such as multiculturalism.

Learning experiments

Below, we describe some examples of “mixed category” educational activities taking place in libraries in the project countries.

Klaipėda County I.
Simonaitytė Library

Guide to Regional Heritage



COUNTRY

Lithuania



PARTNERS

Klaipėda Tourism and Culture Information Centre,
Klaipėda County Guide Guild, Germany association
"Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Memellandkreise e.V.", IT
company "Dizi"



LINKS

<http://www.krastogidas.lt/en/>

<https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?>

Klaipėda County I. Simonaitytė Library was responsible for digitising materials, but the library staff wanted to do this in more attractive way. They came up with the idea to create an interactive guide to regional heritage which would allow members of the local community and tourists from other parts of Lithuania and abroad to get familiar with local history in the town.

It was not easy to attract members of the local community at first. Librarians also experienced technical problems and lacked certain competences in this field, but together with their partners the library managed to create an interactive map with a digitised description of Klaipėda city's cultural monuments, buildings, streets, squares, sculptures and other objects and their history, displayed with photographs. The project was successful in that people now use the map during their visits to the city. The project has the potential to be expanded to other regions and eventually cover the whole of Lithuania.

Staicele Public Library

Photovoice Strengthens the Family and Activates the Community



COUNTRY

Latvia



PARTNERS

Municipality, NGOs, museums, tourism information centres, a school, a culture house and other local institutions.

During this project, families were invited to take photos of current events and problematic issues in their local community. The aim was to involve whole families into engaging with the community and solving problems, all while improving their creative photography skills.

The photos taken as part of the project were later discussed together with local municipality representatives and the local community. To implement this, the library organised a four day photography laboratory and creative labs and purchased all the necessary equipment. At the end, the best photos were displayed at an exhibition that attracted significant interest. Most active participants were engaged in voluntary work in the library to continue activities and became “library assistants”.

Valmiera Integrated
Library

Nord Plus adult education project: “Creative Dreams Forum in the Library”



COUNTRY

Latvia



PARTNERS

Turku library in Finland, Turku Women Centre,
Tallinn Central library in Estonia and the Valmiera
Zonta club



LINKS

The project handbook - diary

The goal of the “Creative Dreams Forum in the Library” project was to improve the skills of the local community and to enable understanding about contemporary culture. The project aimed to empower the library so that, together with its partners, the librarians could help people understand the processes of today's society and see their surroundings and life situations as comprehensible, manageable and meaningful. With this vision, the library hoped to give participants confidence in their actions and encourage them to act for the good of community.

The project included creative laboratories, including, “Learning by doing”, a workshop for strengthening professional capacity, training on the use of social networks such as Facebook, an insight into e-books, and modern photography. Public “open mind” lectures were also organised with a diverse range of speakers including a social anthropologist, a metal sculptor, a music journalist, a writer, a literature scientist Bārbala Simsons and a translator and poet.

The unique thing about the project is that it was aimed at exploring new partnership models. Project activities were collaboratively planned and implemented and the library expanded its borders of client engagement into the development of library services.

The target group was 25 socially active women - in particular Valmiera Zonta Club members, businesswomen and charitable association activists - who participated in the project as cooperation partners. These women were involved in implementation of the educational program, acquiring practical skills and providing an evaluation of project activities, along with ten librarians from Valmiera public library and the general public.

This project was the continuation of a project called “Future Literacy Net”, the goal of which was to enable collaboration and engagement in community, to get NGOs and public libraries working together, and to research ways in which NGOs could implement activities by using the library as the platform. The resulting network of partnerships was the basis for the “Creative Dreams Forum in the Library” project. The international aspect of the project gave the library an opportunity to work outside of their usual circle of contacts and therefore helped them to approach problems from a different perspective. The project diary could serve as a guidebook for similar projects as it describes project development and cognitions from the process.

Scale

Mainly local events with the exception of one local event whose product is available globally (The Interactive Guide to Local Heritage).

Target group

Mainly adult members of local communities. One project was targeted at families (Photovoice).

Impact

Many projects led to Increased popularity of the subject matter and an improvement in participants' skills. There was one tangible effect: a website with helpful information for tourists visiting the area. An added bonus was increased involvement in local communities.

Main conclusions:

- In the DIDEL project we define "multiculturalism" as any activity that supports harmonious cohabitation and interaction of different cultures, that promotes cultural diversity or that stimulates cross-cultural dialogue. Multiculturalism is generally understood as openness to diversity and multicultural activities often involve minority groups.
- In Norway the term "multiculturalism" is easy to understand because libraries have been working with it for years – for them the library itself is a multicultural place because its users come from different cultures. In Lithuania, on the other hand, this idea can be hard to grasp since the society is fairly homogeneous.
- Multicultural activities are usually aimed at a broad spectrum of participants: the local community in general. As far as international projects are concerned, they often benefit librarians as well, because they get the chance to learn how to work with people of different nationalities or cultures.
- In this project, we take “social innovation” to mean coming up with and implementing new ideas: products, services or models that respond to diagnosed social needs, help build new relationships, or promote cooperation.
- Most of library activities in the area “social innovation” are organized on a local scale. This is probably due to the fact that social innovation is about solving local problems in innovative ways, and libraries are best places to do this in a local level within their immediate communities.
- In this project we define “creativity” as the ability to create something new and worthwhile. That “something” may be conceptual: an idea, scientific theory, a musical piece or a joke; or it may be more palpable: an invention, a book or a work of art.
- The projects in the "creativity" area tended to be rather small-scale, for specific target groups, but with multiplication potential.
- Creative library activities or activities aimed at developing people's creative skills may have broader audience: local residents, the adults, or the whole families. However, inventing and launching such activities in the library also requires more open and creative minds, so the librarians working with children, youth, or young adults may be better suited for the job.
- While listing their examples, some librarians participating in the DIDEL survey indicated the existence of “mixed” categories in which the different areas overlapped. It was difficult for them to choose one of the main three areas as a predominant one. This was often the case with “creativity”, because this area (understood both as an ability, or as a tool) was recognized as essential to implement innovative projects as well as projects dedicated to novel ideas, such as multiculturalism.

Chapter 3

Challenges and success factors in developing
an adult education offer in libraries

GLOBAL LEVEL

Libraries are built to serve their communities. So, as the world changes, communities change, and so too must libraries. These global changes are far-reaching and can present both challenges and opportunities when it comes to developing the library offer. Over centuries, the mission of libraries across the globe has been to provide access to information. This is still the case now and is likely to be the case long into the future – but the ways in which information is shared and accessed has already transformed enormously. The need for different information and spaces in which to utilise that information have also changed along with socio-demographic fluctuations, especially in Europe. If librarians are to meet the information and education needs of the local community, they must be aware of and react to the challenges and opportunities created by societal changes on a global level.

Breaking down borders

Globalisation has been one of the clearest trends over recent decades. As technology and transport links have improved, travel has become faster, cheaper and easier, even across borders. This trend is even more prominent in Europe, in large part thanks to the principles of free movement in the European Union and in particular the Schengen Area, which has literally dissolved

borders between European countries. European citizens have become much more mobile and are now more likely to travel and live in more than one country in their lifetime. Mobility has opened up opportunities for individual growth, career development and better living conditions, resulting in economic and social migration especially from Eastern to Western Europe.

This means that local communities that were traditionally homogenous are diversifying. Where before, people were surrounded by neighbours who looked, spoke and behave just like them, the dynamics are now changing. Communities are increasingly mixed – especially in regions close to the border – and libraries are having to respond.

This change presents both opportunities and challenges. New users bring new ideas. Many library activities are inspired by user needs, and so when those users come with a different cultural perspective, this opens up possibilities to discover new and exciting ideas. Mixed communities also have the potential to broaden the horizons of those who may not have really ventured outside of their local community – improving both the library offer and the mindset of other users, as they mix with and learn from new people.

However, this success depends on the openness of both library staff and users – and on the ability to see different as exciting rather than intimidating. Libraries have the potential to build a secure and sustainable environment for community development based on human rights. As a minimum, the library is a living room for the community, no matter who makes up its members. But libraries also have the potential to go further and be a key actor in creating a welcoming and thriving community, and being a leader in the integration process.

As has become clear in just the last few years, Europe has seen increased flows of people not only within its borders but also from outside. War, poverty and other dangerous situations have forced people to leave their homes and seek a better quality of life in Europe. For these migrants, refugees and asylum seekers, moving to a new country is an infinitely better option than staying put (indeed, many risk perilous journeys even to get here), but that is not to say it is easy. They are forced to learn a new language, understand a different culture and face economic disparities – not to mention hostility from people who do not want to accept them.

Libraries are often the only place migrants and refugees can visit to have a roof over their heads, access to information and books, an internet connection, and a supportive professional to help them. The challenge for libraries is to maintain a space that allows and encourages this – being aware of and seeking to

overcome resistance from both librarians and users, and making sure the library continues to serve the needs of both the traditional users and the new. The opportunity for libraries is to go one step further, and to transform the library into a space for sharing and integration – for example by adapting resources and activities to target people coming from other countries, but also by adapting the existing offer to work for mixed community groups.

Increased inequality

Social and economic inequality is a sad reality in much of the Western world, including Europe. For many of the DIDEI project partner countries, this trend is apparent (the rich are getting richer and the poor are getting poorer), with the notable exception of Norway.

Public libraries have always been the great equaliser by providing free access to information. People who cannot afford to buy books and newspapers can come into the library and read them for free. People who do not have a quiet space to study at home can come into the library to work undisturbed. People who do not have internet access at home can get online at their local library. In this sense, libraries in Europe have both a duty and an opportunity to provide equal opportunities for personal and professional development. This means taking into

account the disparities in user needs when developing educational activities, and especially delivering special services for people in difficult situations who need the library most (such as the homeless, unemployed, disabled, elderly or sick). Libraries also stand to make a real difference to communities by establishing themselves as a democratic space, providing equal access for everyone regardless of background, race, gender, sexual orientation, ability and age. As with migrants, libraries can also make a real difference by going one step further and developing an offer which actively promotes and celebrates diversity and engenders a culture of acceptance.

The rise of digital and the decline of reading

Technological advancement is undeniably one of the most transformative trends of the last century. Even in the last ten years, technology has transformed the way that people interact with each other and the way they spend their leisure time.

One of the common challenges in library development in developed regions of the world such as Europe is a decreasing number of readers. Technological developments have brought about new activities which compete with reading when it comes to how people – especially young people – spend their leisure time. Various social media platforms, video games and platforms for accessing films and series at home have all become more

(take place inside, the storytelling element) and so likely to be taken up by the same kind of people who would otherwise read, and also can be done in the same timeframe as reading (before bed, on the commute, with a flexible element unlike group activities).

This leaves libraries with two challenges, which are not necessarily mutually exclusive: to position themselves as reading promoters and encourage people to get (back) into reading, and/or to adapt their offer to meet the new leisure time preferences of their users. Libraries have always placed books collections at the centre of what they do. Very few librarians think that someday, libraries will no longer house books. The older generations (who have perhaps been less keen on taking up new technologies) still tend to be avid readers, and children are still encouraged to read by their parents and teachers even if only to develop their basic literacy skills. So, it is likely that there will always be library users who want to borrow books.

However, libraries are a public good and must serve their community. As users diversify their hobbies and demand activities other than reading, libraries need to listen and adapt their offer. As community centres, libraries are well placed to provide a space for users to come and learn and entertain themselves, both alone and in groups. Since many of these new

hobbies are technology-dependent, this can pose a challenge for libraries in several ways: up-skilling librarians who may not have had enough ICT training; being able to re-think the library space and come up with new, innovative, and fast-changing ideas; and investing in technological equipment (tablets, computers, headphones) that is demanded by users.

In some countries there is also an alarming trend of local funding to libraries being cut due to the misconception that fewer readers means a lower demand for libraries. This is a vicious circle, since closing libraries then removes the very institutions who have a key role to play in promoting reading, and also removes resources from a sector that desperately need them in order to adapt.

New ways of learning

Libraries were created as centres for access to information and knowledge. However, in the early days, the only reliable source of information were books, and later on, other forms of media. The library education offer was somewhat passive, offering a wealth of information for people to utilise, but on their terms, with the help of a trained professional only if they sought it out. More active methods of learning took place in educational establishments such as schools, colleges and community centres.

But as time has gone on, libraries have discovered how to create their learning environments more consciously. There are more sources of information – the internet has opened up accessibility (all while making it more difficult to find the right piece of information) as well as the ability to share articles, reviews, and so on. Technology has also changed the way we interact with information and learn, allowing for more interaction. Not only technology, but also research and development, has led to the introduction of more non-conventional teaching methods, putting the learner at the centre and developing around his or her needs – for example, better understanding the needs of adult learners and developing collaborative learning spheres in which they can thrive.

Whereas formal educational institutions have picked up on this fairly quickly – perhaps in part due to the fact that teaching is their „raison d’être” – libraries are somewhat behind the curve. Yet these new ways of learning present an opportunity for libraries to move from being passive places of education to active. But where there is change, there is also resistance – be it from library staff, who, after all, are not teachers, or from policy makers who are trapped in their traditional perception of a library as a room full of books. Libraries have to work internally to harness the potential of these new learning methods, as well as externally to challenge perceptions of what libraries offer and convince policymakers of the need for investment in innovative educational activities. The redefinition of the library image needs to be described, promoted and supported by all stakeholders as a consequence of global changes without undermining the underlying public service.

LOCAL LEVEL

The learning experiments that took place in DIDEL project partner countries (outlined in chapter two) were achieved with various degrees of success. Although all of the activities described were delivered to at least a small group of library users – thus improving their skills or knowledge in some way – the librarians who conducted the activities were faced with different circumstances which affected the ease of organisation and success of delivery. Even across different cultures, there were some common risks, challenges and success factors.

Partners

Strong partnerships were the key to success for many of the learning experiments. Libraries are part of a broad public service offered to communities, and so in order to strengthen their offer and ensure that they are truly serving the needs of the community, it makes sense to work in partnership with other local public services, where appropriate – for example the Lithuanian library partnering with the American Embassy to develop the „American Corner”. Many librarians interviewed in the project partner countries mentioned the role of the local municipality – either in bringing an idea or need to the library to execute, or by working together to pool resources and publicise the offer more widely to potential users.

In fact, users were also cited as important partners. Often the most successful projects were those that consulted with library users to develop an activity, making sure that it really was fulfilling a local need. Volunteers – either from the library staff, local community or volunteers centre (as was the case for the Norwegian „Language Cafe”) – were also crucial to success in many cases. This was especially the case when the librarians were lacking either the skills and expertise in a particular area, or quite simply the resources. Libraries across Europe continue to struggle for resources and as such depend on volunteers. On the one hand, this can be beneficial in allowing members of the local community to take ownership of the library offer, to meet others, and to use their time in a positive way – especially for the elderly, unemployed, or those who are simply lonely. However, despite the important role of volunteers, none of the learning experiments could have happened without trained librarians. Whilst volunteers do add value, it would be a mistake to think that they could replace library staff.

An interesting example of where working in partnerships was a challenge rather than a success factor was the cross border partnership between Poland and Norway as part of the „Peace Painting” learning experiment. The librarians interviewed identified that communication was a problem given the different

cultures and approaches. What is important is that the librarians were able to overcome this challenge, by learning how best to deal with these differences and by focussing on the outcome of providing their users with an experience that left them feeling more enlightened and peaceful.

Resources and financing

If there was one factor that was cited as critical to the success of nearly all of the learning experiments, it was financing. This is unsurprising given the relatively tight budgets of libraries across Europe, and the fact that they are constantly competing for resources with other local services. Moreover, in most European countries, there is an expectation that libraries should provide their services for free. This is a perfectly reasonable expectation of a state-funded public service, but can be difficult when the activities incur an additional cost for the library.

Introducing something new and innovative into the library often incurs a cost, especially when it involves pieces of equipment or digital tools. Therefore it is important for the library to secure funding, often at a local level but also through national or even European funding streams, so that the other, perhaps more traditional, services are not adversely affected. But even less ambitious learning activities can incur costs that need to be financed – for example, the librarians who ran the „Creative Laboratory” in Latvia mentioned that it was important for the

users to feel like everything was taken care of (such as snacks, creative materials), so that all they had to do was show up and participate.

In some cases, a lack of financing and resources can force librarians to get creative – as was the case in Lithuania when librarians struggled to continue offering their health education services, and so instead looked for low-cost alternatives and ended up running a „Health Library” blog that proved popular with users. However, this is clearly not the best solution, and further financing would have allowed the library to continue providing a service which was explicitly asked for by its users.

Librarian skills and experience

In many cases, the librarians’ enthusiasm, creativity and openness to new ideas facilitated the process of introducing new learning activities in the library. Some learning experiments initially faced resistance from librarians – for example, librarians who were asked to run the Norwegian „Equipment Bank” were initially reluctant and they did not see this as a part of the job they had signed up for. Particularly when faced with unfamiliar concepts, resistance to change and an unwillingness to try can be a huge challenge in developing the library’s educational offer.

It is not only the attitude of librarians, but also their skills, that is a factor of success. As described in earlier chapters, in all of the project partner countries, traditional librarian education is somewhat lagging behind when it comes to training librarians in the latest, practical skills that are required of them as libraries develop into flexible, digital, community spaces. This is particularly the case in the fields of multiculturalism and social innovation, where user needs are changing so rapidly (for example, the influx of migrants in Norway), that formal librarian education cannot keep up – so librarians are having to learn on their feet.

In some cases, this challenge was overcome by providing librarians with additional training courses to develop specific skills – for example in Lithuania, the „LinkINJob” project started with a first phase of training for library staff to ensure they were able to implement the relevant activities for the unemployed users. Of course, training of this kind depends in large part on financing and resources, or working with partners who are able to provide this. An alternative solution is by bringing experts into the library to deliver the service – such as in the business support network set up in Latvia where the educational activities were facilitated by external business experts. It is interesting that the librarians involved in the Polish „GRART Festival” saw a challenge in attracting creative and talented staff, as these experts tended to pursue more specific and well paid roles outside of the library.

It was not only resistance from the librarians that proved a challenge in some cases, but also resistance from users. Often library users, especially those who have been using the library for a long time, have a very specific idea of what it should offer. Since creative activities have long been a part of the library offer, this didn't seem to be so much of a challenge – whereas when trying to introduce activities relating to multiculturalism and social innovation, some users questioned the relevance. For example, the Lithuanian librarians who worked to develop the „American Corner” noted that initially there was a psychological barrier as users could not understand what that had to do with Lithuania, and with the library. This is where perseverance and interaction with users had a key role to play – as well as maintaining the good reputation of the library.

On the flip side, it is important to choose a topic that is relevant to local citizens. Librarians had to strike a fine balance between expanding the library offer and exposing users to new horizons (either different cultures or different technologies and approaches), but not going too far so that the activity has no added value at all for users. This is where librarians' expertise in knowing their users comes in. Although it is interesting that the Polish librarians who ran the „Chat in Opole” programme actually felt that they had developed their own personal and professional

competences by going outside of their comfort zone. In this particular example, the innovative idea of bringing Ukrainian students into the library came from outside the library, in the form of an employee from the local university. In fact, several of the learning experiments started out from an idea suggested by somebody external to the library staff – but depended on the librarians listening to these ideas, analysing them, and having the courage and motivation to implement them.

Regardless of the subject matter, several of the librarians interviewed underlined that the format of the activity was also important to its success. Part of the success of libraries' educational offer is the non-formal nature of the activities. Often described as a „third space” (after home and school or work), users come to the library to learn, but mostly to complement or add to their existing skills and not in the same way as at formal institutions. Therefore it was important to maintain the informal nature of the activities: being flexible with the level of commitment required, involving the students in the teaching process and giving space for chat and debate.

Ongoing impact

Finally, some librarians spoke about their ability to ensure an ongoing impact of the activities. In some cases, such as with the „LinkINJob” project in Lithuania, the new skills that the librarians had developed as part of the initial training could ensure their ability to continue delivering similar activities even after the formal project had ended – and thus impact a greater number of users. The librarians in this case also mentioned that the availability of e-guidelines also helped them keep up to date and offer the training for longer.

Having an online presence was also identified as a success factor – for example, as part of the Polish project „D.I.Y. Act!”, the online blog was a source of inspiration and organisational information, but also allowed the activity to have a lasting impact and wider dissemination.

Chapter 4

National perspectives

LATVIA

OVERVIEW

Population (as of January 2015): 1.99 million

Size: 64,573 km²

GDP: €25,018 billion (2016)

GDP per capita: €12,760 (2016)

Average monthly salary: €631 (net income, 2016), €858 (gross salary, 2016)

Average librarian monthly salary: €445 (net income, 2015)

Unemployment rate: 9,6% (2016)

Religion: Christianity (Catholic, Lutheran, Orthodox)

Political system: republic, parliamentary democracy

Distribution of population by degree of urbanisation (2014) – cities: 43.1, towns and suburbs: 20.8, rural areas: 36.1

EDUCATION

Highest level of education successfully completed	Total Population	Share in total population, percent
All population aged 15 and over	1,776,143	100
Doctorate	6,657	0.4
Higher education	401,323	22.6
Professional secondary and vocational secondary education	521,629	29.4
General secondary education after basic or vocational education	407,534	22.9
Basic education or professional basic education	318,925	18.0
Primary education	62,645	3.5
Without formal education, less than primary education or not indicated	57,430	3.2

Source: Population and Housing Census - Latvia (2011)

CULTURAL MAP

Overview of cultural institutions

The highest level policy planning document regarding culture in Latvia is The Cultural Policy Guidelines 2014-2020: Creative Latvia. This is a medium-term policy planning document which determines the state's cultural policy objectives and priorities for the time period up to 2020. Guidelines states that „cultural and educated, value-oriented and creative people are the richness of any society and state, regardless of the field in which they are active. Therefore, the task of culture and cultural heritage institutions, as well as cultural education institutions is to promote individual growth, education and unlocking of the creative potential of any person, as well as the participation of as large an audience in cultural processes as possible” (The Ministry of Culture, 2014).

As part of the process of creating the Creative Latvia guidelines, strategies containing detailed action plans for each cultural sector were established – museums, libraries, archives, cultural monuments, intangible cultural heritage, digital cultural heritage, cultural education, literature and book studies, music, theatre, dance, visual arts, films, architecture, design. In 2006, the Cabinet of Ministers accepted the Programme for Improving the Infrastructure of Culture 2006-2018 which includes the implementation plan and plans for financing improvements to the infrastructure of 46 state cultural institutions.

Participation in culture

The research about cultural consumption and participation in Latvia since restoration of independence in 1990 (Council of Europe/ERICarts, 2014) shows that since this time, there has been a drastic decline in the number of people participating in cultural life; consumption of culture and arts activities decreased in all fields. Data shows a general stabilisation and improvement in participation levels starting from the end of the 1990s. In 2007-2008, the highest attendance rate at cultural events occurred. A decline started along with the economic crisis in 2009. Meanwhile, cultural consumption of free events has increased. In some fields, an increase in visitors to cultural events could be seen in 2010.

Eurostat data on culture statistics (Eurostat, 2011, updated 2016) shows that the percentage of people participating in cultural activities at least once in the last 12 months were as follows:

Cinema – 35%

Live performance – 58%

Cultural sites – 52% (a significant 9% increase since 2007)

Book reading also continues to play a significant role – 64% of people had read at least one book in the last 12 months (53% women, 74% men).

It is worth noting that public libraries have experienced a smaller decrease in the number of visitors than other public culture organisations. Since 1994, the number of visits to public libraries has constantly grown and a particular increase is visible for visits to public municipal libraries during the period of economic crisis. The research highlights several reasons for that. Thanks to digitisation, the role of public libraries in local communities has been diversified and libraries are more often used as information centres because of free public access to the internet. VAT on books in Latvia was increased from 5% to 21% and later reduced to 12%, followed by dramatic fall in book sales. This period of crisis changed consumption patterns of inhabitants and made them look for free-of-charge culture activities.

Since in 2018 Latvia will be celebrating its 100 year anniversary, many cultural projects and initiatives are being supported and implemented by Latvia's „Centenary” budget. Celebrations will take place across five years from 2017 to 2021. Some examples of projects and events include:

- A national costume for everyone – a project that tells a story about the origin and history of Latvian national costume and teaches how to complement and wear it.
- Latvian films for Latvia's centenary – this project aims to create six full-length documentaries and one animated film that would supplement Latvian film heritage with high-quality, genre diverse and socially relevant films about Latvian history, statehood and national identity themes.



Source: <http://www.lv100.lv/en/programme/lielnotikumi-en/>

- National encyclopedia – universal and reliable information source that will provide concentrated knowledge about the country, its history, culture, nature, economy and other areas.
- Cultural school bag – „the biggest gift of Latvia to its more than 200 000 pupils. Starting September 2018, it will integrate exploration and experiencing of natural and cultural values, scientific achievements and successful business models into the school programmes and make it accessible to every schoolchild in Latvia” (The Ministry of Culture, 2016).
- 26th All-Latvian Song Festival and 16th Dance Festival – one of the largest amateur choral events in the world and an important event in Latvian culture and social life. It is also a Masterpiece of the Oral and Intangible Heritage of Humanity. The All-Latvian Song and Dance Festival has been held since 1873, normally every five years.
- 2017 – European Choir Games – it is planned that the European Choir Games will take place on July 15 in Riga, and will gather 200 choirs and more than 8,000 singers.
- 2017/2018 – Light festival Staro Latvija all around Latvia.
- 2018 (April) – The Big Clean-Up: the biggest national volunteers’ campaign to make Latvia the cleanest country in the world.



Source: <http://www.lv100.lv/en/programme/lielnotikumi-en/>

These and many other initiatives in the context of centenary celebration will involve many people in cultural activities and should contribute to raising awareness of it.

LIBRARIES IN LATVIA

Basic data

Total number of libraries: 1,687 (as of 31 December 2016)

Contemporary Latvian library system consists of:

- The National Library of Latvia
- 48 academic libraries
- 804 public libraries (including Library for the Blind with 7 branches)
- 30 specialized libraries (in museums, hospitals etc.) 30
- 804 school libraries

Total number of registered users – 823,831, of which:

- The National Library of Latvia: 119,283
- Academic libraries: 69,473
- Public libraries: 428,190
- Specialized libraries (in museums, hospitals etc.): 6,152
- Libraries of general education and vocational education establishments: 200,733

Libraries and skills in Latvia:

Population: ~2 million

Library per residents: 2,442

Adults used public library: 500,000

Book loans in a year: 12.4 million

% of adults used public library: 30

% of users taking part in educational activities at the library: 30

% of adults participating in lifelong learning activities: 5

(source: Reading & Writing Foundation, Public Libraries 2020)

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LATVIA (NLL)

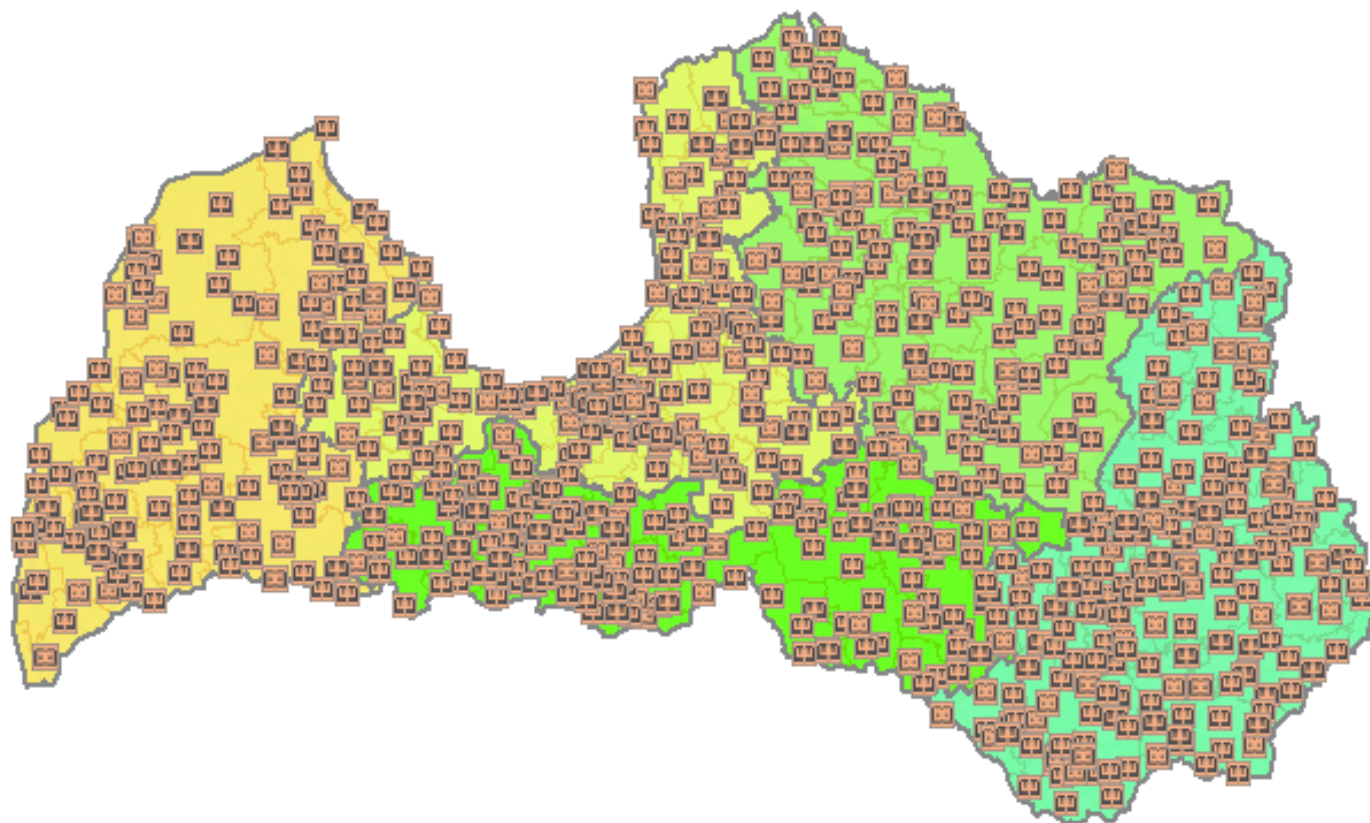
The NLL's vision and mission policy states that the NLL is a cultural, scientific and educational centre of national importance, which safeguards the published heritage of Latvia and the world, ensures its public accessibility and promotes its creative use.

The collection of the NLL (4.5 million units) embraces all branches of science, its basic profile being social sciences and humanities. Library readers are offered special collections – rare books, manuscripts, Letonica, the Baltic Central Library, maps, scores, sound recordings, graphic documents, small prints and periodicals. At present, most of the library's activities and events are based on supporting higher education, research and life-long learning. The NLL is a centre of theoretical research and practical analyses of the activities of Latvian libraries. The Library carries out the functions of the Latvia Interlibrary Loan centre, ensures the library and information service to the Parliament of the Republic of Latvia, and implements the standardisation of branches. Since the very beginning its main focus has been a national bibliography.

PUBLIC LIBRARIES

The public library network consists of more than 800 libraries and covers the entire territory of Latvia. Public libraries ensure availability of information in all municipalities and it is one of the most democratic ways to access information regardless of the age, wealth, or social status.

Public libraries in Latvia are established under regional municipalities, and the services provided by the library are integrated in the set of services provided by the municipality. It is the municipalities who determine which services at the local library will carry a charge for users. However, this is done in accordance with Latvia's Law on Libraries and regulations on chargeable services. Most funding for public libraries comes from local municipalities. There are also state grants provided for targeted use by libraries, individual projects carried out and revenues from the services that libraries charge for.



Source: The network of public libraries in Latvia (source: kulturaskarte.lv)

LIBRARY ORGANISATION

The network of libraries is well developed in Latvia and covers all territory, offering services in the library itself and remotely. Library activity depends on state policy and development strategies, regional and municipal development policy and institutional policy. The libraries' work is affected by membership of various international library organisations, international guidelines and benchmarks and policy that relates to library work. Depending on the founder and functions delegated to library, the Law on Libraries has defined three categories that together make up a state library system: Libraries of National importance, Libraries of Regional importance and Libraries of Local importance. Libraries of Regional Importance (currently 29 libraries) support those of Local Importance.

LEGISLATION

The Constitution of the Republic of Latvia states that „everyone has the right to freedom of speech, which includes the right to freely acquire, hold and distribute information and to express one's opinion freely. Censorship is prohibited”. This statement is the foundation of library legislation in Latvia: the Law on Libraries, On Latvian National Library Law, Legal Deposit Law as well as other laws and regulations referring to the operation of libraries (e.g., law On Municipalities, On the protection of Cultural Monuments, etc.).

Libraries in Latvia are under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Latvia. The Ministry develops state policy in the library field and organises its implementation, develops normative acts and ensures policy implementation in institutions.

Libraries provide diverse services and the basic services are free of charge. Additional services may be charged accordingly to rules of the library and the price list. Provision of library services are determined by:

1. Law on Libraries
2. Freedom of Information Law
3. Law On Information Society Services
4. Copyright Law
5. Library regulation / statute
6. Rules of the Library
7. The Public Library Service: IFLA/UNESCO Guidelines for Development

To provide opportunities for library users to utilise the library services, regardless of their gender, age, race, nationality, physical status, place of residence and location and other factors, as well as to develop appropriate equipment for the use of the library by persons with impaired movement and vision (section 15, subparagraph 8).

To ensure users of the library free access to the Internet and generally available electronic information resources, as well as to ensure the possibility of utilising computers free of charge (section 15, subparagraph (2) 4).

Libraries, which provide services to children and young people, have the obligation to pay special attention to improving the quality of the library collection, to introduce new information technology in order to encourage the inclination of children and young people to read, and to improve their skills in mastering information technology and information resources (section 15, subparagraph (3)).

Source: the Law on Libraries, 1998

POLICY

According to the Law on Libraries, the Ministry of Culture is responsible for the activity of the Latvian Library Council (LLC). This is a public consultative institution, which participates in the formulation of a national strategy in the field of libraries, facilitates library development and cooperation, and is involved in decision-making on matters which pertain to the operations of libraries. The LLC developed The Strategy of Latvian Library Sector 2014-2020, whose aim is to develop libraries as a key contributor in building a smart and sustainable society. The Strategy states that libraries should: ensure access and knowledge about national cultural heritage; improve reading literacy and information literacy skills; support educational and cultural processes; stimulate the creative potential of individuals and national union processes, and ensure availability of state and municipality services.

BASIC PRINCIPLES OF LIBRARY WORK

Services provided by library are available for everybody regardless of the race, nationality, age, gender, religious beliefs, language, physical or mental dysfunctionality, level of education and economical status.

- Building up the collection cannot be restricted by political, ideological or religious motives.
- Taking into account copyright rule, information in the library is freely available. Services of the state and municipal libraries are free of charge.
- State and municipalities ensures accumulation, saving and availability of the cultural heritage.

Source: The Strategy of Latvian Library Sector 2014-2020

The main services provided at public libraries in Latvia are:

- ICT training classes and Individual consultation on ICT;
- Lending (books, newspapers, CDs, DVDs, music; scores, magazines, etc.);
- Use of reading rooms;
- Use of PCs and Internet;
- Services for library users with disabilities;
- Printing, scanning and photocopying;
- Organisation of public events and exhibitions;
- Reference services;
- Online and offline book reservations;
- Delivery of books from other libraries;
- Home delivery of books;
- Organising sightseeing tours or theatre/concert visits;
- Movie screening;
- Use of video or audio resources;
- Access to online databases;
- Entertainment (e.g. computer games);
- Use of Skype;
- Saving of information (on CD, DVD, USB or other drives).
- Library development

INTEGRATED LIBRARY INFORMATIONAL SYSTEMS

Since 1992, the Advanced Library Information Service (Alise) has been functioning in the network of public libraries. Alise is the first professional library information system in Latvia and in Baltics. Since 1998, libraries of National Importance for the bibliographical data collection and creation use the library informational system Aleph 500. In order to maximise the accessibility and value of collections, in 2017 libraries started to introduce the Ex Libris Primo search engine – a single search interface to the library collections.

Lightnet (Gaismas tīkls) is a State Unified Information System for Libraries. The project aims to establish a coherent national and public library information system that gives libraries the possibility not only to collect, store and systematise national cultural and scientific values and to provide access to them, but also to use modern information technology for the provision of universal information service activities – searching for information, books, publications, reference and documents from Latvian and international sources of information.

Public library development projects

The public library sector in Latvia has been greatly reinforced by grants coming from foreign donors. In the fall of 2006, Latvia received 16.2 million US dollars from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF), for the development of municipal public libraries in Latvia. The project was a cooperation between BMGF, the Latvian state and local authorities. The grant given to Latvia was the first outside of the Americas and the first in the Eurasian continent. All means were used to develop Latvian public libraries in the fields of information and communication technologies. The aim of the project was to ensure free access to computers (around 4,000 computers were installed as part of the project) and internet connection in all Latvian public libraries (17 libraries were connected to internet for the first time), to provide IT skills training for library staff and to provide special equipment for users with visual impairments (the Latvian Library for the Blind with its seven branches and main regional libraries were equipped with special computers for sight-impaired users).

Latvian National digital library

The National Digital Library of Latvia (LNDB), formed in 2006, is a significant and growing part of NLL. Digitising collections at the NLL started in 1999. At present the LNDB holds digitised collections of newspapers, pictures, maps, books, sheet-music and audio recordings and is the largest publicly accessible digital documentary heritage storage in Latvia. The total number of digitised text documents (objects) at the end of 2016 was over 362,000, with the total number of scanned text pages at over 4,000,000 and almost 55,000 pictures. It is worth noting that LNDB is a leading partner in the ERAF funded project „Cultural Heritage Digitisation” (2017-2020), together with many other memory institutions of Latvia that will significantly enrich the content and availability of national heritage.

Challenges

The role and functions of the library has changed, and this has been a great motivation to change the library buildings, architecture and design. Over the last 10-15 years, many public libraries in Latvia have been built or reconstructed and the NLL has a new building. This transformation has changed the image of the library and librarians in the eyes of the society. The challenge is to utilise this chance and fulfill new expectations, to be a centre of knowledge and culture for local society.

The challenges faced by the Latvian library system comes from the same components as in other countries, including: high demand of quick access to information, information overload and necessity to orientate oneself in it, development of technologies and need to be up to date both in skills and equipment. A recent study conducted among LIS professionals in Latvia about competences of the 21st century librarian aimed to evaluate the adequacy of the current educational offer for librarians in the context of real life challenges. It concluded that while university education for librarians gives theoretical knowledge and skills, it takes at least half year to acquire practical experience and context knowledge needed to become competent specialist. The challenge today is lifelong learning and admitting that a university degree is not the end of the education process but a good and stable platform for further self-development. Results of the study was presented and discussed at The 74th Scientific Conference of the University of Latvia LIS Section on 18th February, 2016.

Public libraries manage a comprehensive amount of information resources that help users to orientate themselves. Often, the library is the most technologically equipped public institution in the region and librarians are critical in helping users take up this opportunity. Every public library in Latvia is connected to internet, and Lightnet gives access to a wide range of information sources. Alongside the traditional librarian duties, librarians engage in community activities, integrating different social groups with different needs. A study Economic value and impact of public libraries in Latvia (Strode, I. et al., 2012), concluded that services like open-access computers and internet services, reading, lending and exhibitions are the most highly valued services by library users and can be considered to constitute the core of what public libraries offer today. This highlights the new role of libraries as a source of learning new (IT) skills and as a locus of social life in regions.

LITHUANIA

OVERVIEW

Population (as of January 2017): 2.8 million

Size: 65,286 km²

GDP: €37.1 billion (2015)

GDP per capita: €12.8 thousand (2015)

Average monthly salary: €636.9 (net income, 2016), €822.8 (gross salary, 2016)

Average librarian monthly salary: €465 (net income)

Unemployment rate: 7.3% (2016)

Religion: Roman Catholic

Political system: parliamentary republic

Distribution of population by degree of urbanization (2014) – cities: 42.9, towns and suburbs: 9.5, rural areas: 47.6

EDUCATION

Highest level of education successfully completed	Total population	Share in total population, percent
All population aged 10 and over	2,758,069	100
Higher education	585,841	21.2
Professional secondary and vocational secondary education	466,686	16.9
General secondary education after basic or vocational education	843,225	30.5
Basic education or professional basic education	404,418	14.6
Primary education	411,892	14.9
Without formal education, less than primary education or not indicated	45,790	1.6

Source: Population and Housing Census - Lithuania (2011)

CULTURAL MAP

Overview of cultural institutions

The Lithuanian Ministry of Culture is the main body that form Lithuanian cultural policy. The renewed cultural model in Lithuania aims to identify, preserve and develop a public cultural identity and creative potential (Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros ministerija, 2014). In 2010, the National Parliament of Lithuania approved Lithuanian cultural policy guidelines which aimed to establish culture as a strategic direction of development, reform and democratise cultural management, improve the existing cultural funding system, ensure copyright and related rights, develop cultural human skills and creativity, form a common integral heritage protection, ensure the sustainable development of Lithuania, improve access to culture, expand the Lithuanian cultural space, and spread Lithuanian culture abroad (Lietuvos Respublikos seimo nutarimas, 2010).

As a result of these guidelines, the Lithuanian Council for Culture was established in 2012. The Council administers the Culture Support Fund whose resources comprise mainly state budget allocations and is dedicated to financing culture and arts projects. This significantly contributes to the development of national culture, promotion of public initiatives in cultural expression, building and supporting the cultural potential of artists, presenting arts in its various forms to Lithuanian citizens, strengthening cooperation between artists and cultural workers, and encouraging a rise in cultural education etc. (Lithuanian Council for Culture, 2017).

At the same time, the National Parliament of Lithuania approved a national strategy document, called Lithuania 2030. This is the most important long-term strategy focussing on strengthening fundamental public capacities, thus ensuring harmonious development of the state and helping to respond to global economic and environmental changes and pressure from the global competition. Annex 1 of the Strategy (in particular the section on smart society) stresses several things which are relevant to libraries. First of all, it stresses creativity and openness: „Society's ability to adapt to change, using it for a generation of wealth and as a competitive advantage, is basically determined by the degree of openness and creativity in society”. Secondly, it stresses lifelong learning: „One of the most important factors in social development is a well-developed and successfully operating lifelong learning system”. Thirdly, it encourages public involvement, social activism, and self-governance: „A particular role in national progress is given to social activism, which manifests itself through self-governance and civic awareness (...). The formation of socially active society is largely influenced by active involvement in community life” (State Progress Council, [n.d.], pp. 20-21).

Non-private cultural institutions in Lithuania are subordinated to municipality government or the Ministry of Culture. One of the substantive functions of the municipality government is to ensure general and ethnic culture education for citizens. That means participation in cultural development projects and the cultivation of museums, theatres, cultural centres, municipal public libraries and other cultural institutions. Culture centres must provide at least two functions from the following:

1. Create conditions for the dissemination of culture, promote the ancient cultural traditions, guarantee the continuity of ethnic culture;
2. Organise amateur art group activities;
3. Take care of amateur artistic group preparation and participation in local, regional, national and international events;
4. Organise recreational, educational and other events;
5. Organise commemoration of public holidays and memorable dates;
6. Take care of children and young people's artistic upbringing;
7. Develop and give meaning to contemporary modern art forms of activity;
8. Organise events that promote ethnic culture, amateur art, or that meet other community cultural needs;
9. Facilitate the dissemination of professional art;
10. Meet the socio-cultural needs of the community (Lietuvos Respublikos Seimo kanceliarija, 2014).

Participating in culture

In 2014, the Ministry of Culture conducted a survey: Participation of the population in culture and satisfaction with cultural services. The results showed that the majority of respondents do not agree that participation in cultural life makes them more creative, but more than half of residents had visited a cultural heritage site in the last year. Women, young people (up to 29 years), students or persons who had completed higher education, those working in high-skilled jobs and people with relatively high income tend to visit museums, galleries and exhibitions more often. Museums and exhibitions are most rarely visited by the elderly (60+), unemployed or employed in lower-skilled jobs, people disposing of a relatively low income, villagers, and those of non-Lithuanian ethnicity. This socio-demographic snapshot of people who tend to visit museums, galleries and exhibitions more often is similar to those who tend to visit cultural monuments, historical or archeological sites. The survey also showed that in the past year, more than half of the population (aged 15+) read a book, 37% visited a library and 57% saw some kind of performing arts. Those who used library services more were women, 15-29 year old readers, people of Lithuanian nationality, people with higher education, people in high-skilled work, or studying or working in the field of culture (at all income levels). More than half of library visitors noticed an improvement in the quality of library services.

According to Eurobarometer 2007, Lithuania lagged behind in cultural participation rates compared to the average of the other 27 EU countries. Fewer people in Lithuania read, went to the cinema, visited historical sites, galleries and museums, visited public libraries, or went to the theatres. The Eurobarometer 2013 showed that the use of cultural services significantly dropped. It is likely that the economic crisis had an impact, because the situation was similar in all EU countries. However, there have been a number of positive developments: in 2013 the gap between cultural participation levels in Lithuania compared to the EU-27 average was reduced in all cultural fields (Lietuvos Respublikos kultūros ministerija, 2014).

LIBRARIES IN LITHUANIA

Basic data

In 2014, the Ministry of Culture conducted a survey: Participation of the population in culture and satisfaction with cultural services. The

Total number of libraries: 2,505 (as of 31 December of 2016)

Contemporary Lithuanian library system consists of:

The National Library of Lithuania

5 county libraries

1,257 public libraries (60 central libraries)

1 Library for the Blind (with 5 branches)

14 Museum libraries

2 libraries in other cultural institutions

35 specialized libraries (medical, technical and etc.)

Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences

4 libraries of research institutes

40 academic libraries

68 libraries of vocational schools

1077 libraries of educational institutions

Total number of registered users: 1,213,460, of which:

- The National Library of Lithuania: **10,740**
- County libraries: **70,230**
- Public libraries: **560,607**
- Library for the Blind: **4,369**
- Museum libraries: **735**
- Libraries in other cultural institutions: **281**
- Specialized libraries (medical, technical and etc.): **19,965**
- Library of the Lithuanian academy of sciences: **10,105**
- Libraries of research institutes: **320**
- Academic libraries: **173,701**
- Libraries of vocational schools: **39,820**
- Libraries of educational institutions: **322,587**

Libraries and skills in Lithuania: (source: public Libraries in 2020)

- Population: 2.8 million
- Library per residents: 2,300
- Adults used public library: 600,000
- Book loans in a year: 19.5 million
- % of adults used public library: 25
- % users taking part in educational activities at the library: 75
- % of adults participating in lifelong learning activities: 6

(source: Reading & Writing Foundation, Public Libraries 2020)

Library organisation

Lithuanian libraries are either state libraries, founded by state agencies, municipalities and other institutions, or non-state libraries, which are established by businesses and non-governmental organisations and individuals. There are five nationally significant libraries: Vilnius University Library, The Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, the Lithuanian Library for the Blind, the Lithuanian Technical Library and the Lithuanian Library of Medicine. The Ministry of Culture is in charge of these libraries as well as the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, five county public libraries and the Lithuanian Library for the Blind. National significance libraries and county public libraries are funded by the Lithuanian state budget. Municipal and secondary school libraries are financed from municipal budgets. County public libraries support municipal public libraries.

There are several organisations which unite Lithuanian libraries and librarians, namely:

- The Lithuanian Librarians' Association is the biggest librarians' association in Lithuania. LLA was founded in 1931, and has been a member of IFLA since 1936. However, during the years of Soviet occupation, LLA activity was forbidden. It was restored in 1989. In 2016, LLA had 2744 members – around 44% of library employees in the country. All activities within LLA are performed on voluntary basis. LLA organises and takes part in various events such as National Library Week. The association has strong voice in cultural policy and advocacy for libraries: it has representatives in the Lithuanian Council for Culture, Lithuanian Library Board, Lithuanian Culture and Art Council. During the recent global economic crisis, funding for libraries was greatly reduced. LLA is actively fighting to increase funding and purchase new books for public libraries. In 2016, it was as little as €0.69 per capita.
- The Association of Lithuanian Municipal Public Libraries. On 1 January 2016, there were 60 municipal libraries in Lithuania. The number of public libraries with branches was much higher at 1267. The Association not only unites and represents Lithuanian municipal public libraries, but also helps librarians to expand their knowledge through training and meetings with colleagues from other counties, for example on themes such as soft skills, inter-regional dialogue and change management.
- The Association of Lithuanian County Public Libraries. There are five county libraries in Lithuania: in Vilnius, Kaunas, Klaipėda, Šiauliai and Panevėžys. It is important to note that Lithuanian county libraries serve as methodological centres for other libraries of that particular county.

- The Lithuanian Research Library Consortium. The main objectives of the consortium are subscription to electronic databases for Consortium members and other libraries, promotion of the development of virtual libraries, preparation and implementation of advanced technology and innovative projects in the libraries.
- Lithuanian Academic Libraries Directors' Association.

National Library

The Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania is the main research library open to the public, also operating as a parliamentary library. The National Library functions as a state universal repository of Lithuanian, Lituanica and foreign documents; the national archival fund of published documents; the national bibliography centre; the centre for statistical accounting of documents published in Lithuania; the centre of assigning and registration of international standard numbers; the information centre for social sciences and humanities, politics, economy and culture; the national coordinating centre for research and methodological activities in library science; the centre of the Lithuanian Integrated Library Information System (LIBIS); a deposit library of the European Union, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank, the World Trade Organisation, the International Monetary Fund and the International Atomic Energy Agency.

Public libraries

There are 60 municipal library systems operating in Lithuania that usually consist of a central library situated in the center of municipality and its branch offices located in towns, settlements and villages. There were 1,257 public libraries in municipalities in 2016, 60 of which were central libraries (128 city branches, 12 specialised branches for children and 1,057 branches in rural areas).

The services of public libraries of Lithuania may be divided into:

- TRADITIONAL services, the main aims of which are to preserve written heritage and to promote reading, to provide the public with conditions for self-education and self-development, and to develop creativity and imagination;
- ELECTRONIC library services that include the digitisation of the cultural heritage, development of digital databases of local information (organised through cooperation of interested communities), and the development of information competencies of the population and other e-services provided by libraries;
- COMMUNITY services encouraging residents to interact, to participate in civil and educational events, to initiate projects, to form opinions independently and to develop tolerance. The library facilities serve the community as public spaces (Putnaitė et al., 2012).



**THE MAP OF
THE PUBLIC
LIBRARIES OF
LITHUANIA**

Source: *Public Libraries: preserving, creating, cooperating* (Putnaitė et al., 2012, p. 6)

Legislation

On 29 April 2016, the Strategic Directions of Library Development 2016–2022 were approved by the Minister of Culture. The document is aimed at the effective use of libraries as an efficient information infrastructure, ensuring the development of lifelong learning of citizens as well as their social and economic welfare, and maximizing the impact on national and regional development.

The Republic of Lithuania Law on Libraries requires each municipality to have a public library. This provision can be adjusted only if the municipal public library functions are performed by the county public library. The law requires making libraries available to the residents of each municipality and to establish branches in cities, towns and villages. The decision regarding the number of public library branches is made by each municipal council, but there is guidance available depending on the population, as follows:

- Library branches in cities usually serve an average of 20-30,000 people;
- Library branches in towns and villages are usually established on average for every 700-800 people (Lietuvos Respublikos Kultūros Ministerija, 2012).

The Ministry of Culture defines the strategy on the development of libraries founded by the state or municipalities, prepares and finances strategy implementing programmes, carries out administration of the provision of public services by libraries, draws up and coordinates documents governing library activities, and carries out the other functions of state administration of libraries.

The primary document regulating library activities is the Republic of Lithuania Law on Libraries; adopted in 1995 (the new version became effective on 23 December 2013). The Description of the Procedure of Certification of Librarians was approved by the Minister of Culture in 2010. It regulates the goals, assessment criteria, certification and appeal procedures related to the certification of library specialists working in libraries as founded by the state and municipalities or their institutions.

Libraries can apply for the funding from Lithuanian Council for Culture, which was established in 2012. The Council administers the Culture Support Fund whose resources comprise mainly state budget allocations which are dedicated to financing culture and arts projects, programmes and other measures. This contributes significantly to the development of national culture, promotion of public initiatives in cultural expression, building and supporting the cultural potential of artists, presenting arts in its various forms to Lithuanian citizens, strengthening cooperation between artists and cultural workers, and promoting cultural education. In 2016, over 100 library projects were funded by the Lithuanian Council for Culture.

Library development

In the case of Lithuania, it is crucial to mention that two major projects were implemented in the library sector over the last decade – Libraries for Innovation and Libraries for Innovation 2. The first project was aimed at reducing the digital divide in Lithuania, while the second aimed to teaching librarians how to independently develop and implement projects in order to help communities deal with relevant issues.

In the period from 2008 to 2012, together with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the National Library of Lithuania implemented the Libraries for Innovation project. The main goal of the project was to increase opportunities for Lithuanian people, especially those from remote parts of the country and „at risk” social groups, to make use of information technologies for access to information resources and communication. This resulted in the following:

- 11 training centres for library staff and residents were established.
- Public internet access points were installed or updated in 1,276 urban and rural public libraries.
- Special software for the blind and people with visual disabilities was installed in 72 libraries and library staff were trained how to use it and to train visitors.

- Material for the trainings of libraries' staff and residents was prepared and distributed in all libraries. The material included printed publications, online training material and tutorial videos for self-training library staff and residents.
- In total, approximately 2,700 public library staff members participated in training courses organised by the project Libraries for Innovation. Most of them participated in more than one programme, with over 200 of library staff improving their competencies in more than five areas and 29 participating in seven or more programmes. In total, 7,500 participants were recorded as taking part in the training courses organised by the project over four years.
- In 2008-2010, large scale communication campaigns were implemented to attract residents to libraries and encourage them to use public internet access more actively. This campaign included contests for library staff and users, events for the elderly, the unemployed, and children from families at social risk and for children whose parents had emigrated. In the regional press, hundreds of articles and announcements about the new services and opportunities of libraries were publicised.

(Source: Bibliotekos pažangai, 2012)

Practically, the problem of access to a computer and internet was solved across the entire territory (in both urban and rural areas). A network of specialists was created to consult residents on a daily basis and help them to gain or improve digital skills in public libraries.

The first Project was followed by Libraries for Innovation 2, which was implemented again by the National Library together with the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation from December 2013 to November 2016. The aim of the project was to strengthen the capacities of Lithuanian libraries to meet the needs of developing communities and to position the libraries as self-sustaining community institutions that are able to improve quality of life for Lithuanian people. Training on different topics were conducted for librarians, regular consulting activities took place, and, experience sharing meetings for librarians were held.

Trainings for librarians:

- User and partner need analysis. Creating innovations (2014)
- Representing and search for funding (2014)
- Initiating the project: theory and practice (2014)
- Public relations (2014)
- Impact evaluation (2014)
- Public procurement (2014)
- Project management (2014)
- Impact evaluation (2015)
- Change management (2015)
- Impact evaluation (2016)
- Virtual community creates real communities. Utilisation of social networks (2016)
- Customer experience management in operation processes (2016)
- Strategic planning sessions (2016)

The other goal of Libraries for Innovation 2 was to support new projects and services: as many as 45 projects developed by public libraries were granted partial funding under Libraries for Innovation 2. A qualitative survey of library users (age group from 16 to 85) who participated in Libraries for Innovation 2 projects or were visitors of the libraries which participated in Libraries for Innovation 2 was carried out in 2016. The survey showed that the most popular services were:

- new technologies in libraries – e.g. 3D printers;
- cultural events – e.g. meetings with famous people, exhibitions, book presentations;
- training courses – e.g. programming, foreign languages;
- new spaces in libraries (thematic, leisure or devoted to specific target group) – e. g. for youth, for comfortable reading;
- interactive events, when various technologies are used and participants go outside the library – e. g. robotics, preventive measures for abusing substances;
- online broadcastings and seminars on various topics.

These services were evaluated very positively: they help to introduce innovations, keep people busy and active, bring people together and attract „at risk” groups to the library.

The year 2016 was not only the finishing line for Libraries for Innovation 2. It was also an exceptional year for libraries of Lithuania because it was announced to be the „Year of Libraries” with the slogan Strong Libraries – Strong Society. The general idea behind the Year of Libraries was to attract more public attention to the activities of libraries, to show libraries’ significance in Lithuania, and to invite people to make greater use of library services. The Year of Libraries commemoration was attended by the implementing partners: the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and Science, the National Library of Lithuania, the University of Vilnius, schools, libraries, and librarians’ association, in cooperation with publishers and other educational and cultural partners and local communities. The focus of the Year of Libraries was on books and reading. One of the most prominent initiatives was called Summer with the Book, which invited children and young people to read in libraries. These reading sessions reached even the most remote country towns and villages. They became the main focus of the summer, inviting children and young people to spend free time in a meaningful way, to discover the pleasure of reading a book and not to forget the summer. Over 1,300 events were held, with the most spectacular being the opening of the renovated Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania in September 2016.



Source: Achievements of the Libraries for Innovation 2 Project in 2016

Challenges

Ethnic Lithuania has two parts: Lithuania Minor (that was mainly under the control of the German states), and Greater Lithuania. This division is important for cultural history because Lithuania Minor played a huge role in the development of Lithuanian culture, literacy, book publishing, and education provision. Lithuania's modern cultural and information institutions are the result of its complicated past, as well as the richness of the mixed traditions inherited from the different people who have inhabited the region (Macevičiūtė, 2014). Number of persons in the largest ethnic groups:

	2011 (Population and Housing Census 2011)		2001 (Population and Housing Census 2001)	
	Number	Share in percent	Number	Share in percent
All population	3,043,629	100	3,483,972	100
Of which:				
Lithuanians	2,561,314	84,16	2,907,293	83,45
Poles	200,317	6,58	234,989	6,74
Russians	176,913	5,81	219,789	6,31
Belarusians	36,227	1,19	42,866	1,23
Ukrainians	16,423	0,54	22,488	0,65
Jews	3,050	0,10	4,007	0,12
Tatars	2,793	0,09	3,235	0,09
Germans	2,418	0,08	3,243	0,09
Roma people	2,115	0,07	2,571	0,07
Latvians	2,025	0,07	2,955	0,09

The biggest changes in the library sector have been influenced by the international professional community and national and international funding agencies: „close partnerships with librarians from the Nordic countries have influenced the directions of development within Lithuanian libraries. Adopting the best international practices, Lithuanian librarians have begun to thrive” (Macevičiūtė, 2014). New modern concepts stimulated the creativity of librarians which in turn drew the attention of authorities to the importance of libraries. However, despite the fact that libraries in Lithuania are undergoing a modernisation process, the number of visitors and registered users is decreasing every year. This might be due to high emigration, a low birth rate and other socio-economic problems, but in any case this unfortunately tends to result in more libraries being closed.

A study of the LIBITOP project (2011-2014) which aimed to develop strategic advice to library authorities and managers, revealed the weaknesses of national significance and county public libraries: the absence of a framework for competence improvement, ineffective work organisation, low use of traditional library collections, and low use of virtual services (Manžuch, Macevičiūtė, Adomavičius (2014). This shows that libraries of Lithuania are experiencing some challenges and positive changes are necessary.

ICT is one of the most influential drivers for change in libraries. Digital competency between librarians has improved significantly, but as everything is moving so fast, improvement has to be continuous. Digital competencies of librarians has led to the library becoming a medium for helping communities to master information technology: „A new – community training – content and services allow a public library to become a community centre where members of a community may develop their abilities and competences and to participate in lifelong learning programmes” (Kiminaitė, 2012). Challenges for public libraries as new community training centre could include:

- Drafting of a relevant legal basis;
- Obtaining sufficient financial sources;
- Recruitment of new highly qualified personnel;
- Preparation of attractive training programmes;
- Development of professional qualifications of librarians on a regular basis;
- Establishment of competent Training Evaluation Departments in public libraries (Kiminaitė, 2012).

NORWAY

OVERVIEW

Population (as of January 2016): 5.2 million

Size: 385,180 km²

Municipalities: 426 (2016)

Counties: 19 (2016)

GDP: NOK 3,131 billion = €348 billion (2015)

GDP per capita: NOK 603,300 = €67,100 (2015)

Unemployment rate: 4,8% (October 2016)

EDUCATION

Level of education for men and women 16 years and older – numbers and per cent				
	2015		2015	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
Total			2,117,010	2,104,975
Below upper secondary education	27,1	26,7	570,495	557,697
Upper secondary education	44,1	37,7	927,460	787,750
Higher education, short	18,7	27,3	394,123	570,821
Higher education, long	10	8,3	211,317	173,438
Of this:				
Ph.D.	1,2	0,8	24,909	17,117

Source: Statistics Norway, SSB

IMMIGRATION

Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, by country background (January 2016)				
	Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents, total	Immigrants	Norwegian-born to immigrant parents	Immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents in per cent of total population
Total	848,207	698,550	149,657	16,3
The EU28/EEA, USA, Canada, Australia and New Zealand	372,867	339,465	33,402	7,2
Asia, Africa, Latin America, Oceania except Australia and New Zealand, and Europe except the EU28/EEA	475,340	359,085	116,255	9,1
EU28/EEA countries	359,508	326,982	32,526	6,9
European countries outside EU28/EEA	71,163	55,863	15,300	1,4
Africa	114,304	86,093	28,211	2,2
Asia including Turkey	265,721	196,110	69,611	5,1
North America	11,072	10,271	801	0,2
South and Central America	24,256	21,119	3,137	0,5
Oceania	2,183	2,112	71	0

Source: Statistics Norway, SSB

The 10 largest groups of immigrants and Norwegian-born to immigrant parents (2016):

- Poland 105,725
- Lithuania 41,626
- Somalia 40,100
- Sweden 39,955
- Pakistan 36,026
- Iraq 31,490
- Germany 27,770
- Vietnam 22,363
- The Philippines 21,945
- Denmark 21,762

Source: Statistics Norway, Source: Statistics Norway, SSB

According to Statistics Norway, SSB the Norwegian population has increased more than 1.7 million since 1950. The population projections are positive and a prognosis based on medium-level fertility, life expectancy and net immigration, indicates continued growth over the next 40 years.

Indigenous groups and national minorities:

The northern parts of Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia are the settlement of the Sami people. They are recognised as an indigenous people of Norway. The area is traditionally called Sápmi by the Sami people. There's no exact number of the Norwegian Sami population, because it is not common practice to collect statistics on this. There is also a difference between how many Sami people speaks one of the different Sami languages and those who don't speak the language – but both are generally recognised as Sami. The Sami Parliament is a national, representative elected assembly for the Sami people in Norway. The Sami Parliament is controlled daily by the Sami Parliamentary Council, which is headed by the Sami parliamentary president. Sametinget and the main administration are located in Karasjok in Finnmark county. The Sami Parliament is a political tool to strengthen the Sami political standing and contribute to fair treatment of the Sami people.

National minorities are groups of people with a long-standing attachment to the country. In Norway these minorities are: Kvens/Norwegian Finns (people of Finnish descent in Northern Norway), Jews, Forest Finns, Roma and Romani people/Tater. The protection of minorities is an important element of human rights directives and is based on the principles of equal treatment and non-discrimination. The UN's International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights was incorporated into Norwegian law with the Human Rights Act of 1999. The Norwegian government is obliged to work to assure national minorities their rights to express, preserve and further develop their culture and identity.

Cultural map

Overview of cultural institutions

The Norwegian government's cultural policy is based on the unique intrinsic value culture has on the individual. A diverse cultural life gives people possibilities for development through experiences as well as through their own participation. Knowledge about and experience of our common heritage strengthens the sense of identity and belonging to society's various communities. Knowledge of one's own and other cultures widens the understanding of the society we are part of and creates identity and commitment. This provides safety and good conditions to meet influences from outside in a constructive manner. A rich and diverse cultural life is therefore an important prerequisite for a good society with creative people who contribute to growth at all levels.

Transl. by Silje Grøtan Torp

Culture is where the people are. The government's cultural policy seeks to stimulate a cultural life that emerges out of local involvement. A regional profile is important for cultural policies. The present government has a strong focus on volunteering as a fundamental part of human life and work. It is a prerequisite for a good society, not only a supplement to the public sector.

Public libraries are considered one of the most important cultural arenas in local communities. There are many small municipalities in Norway, where the library sometimes is the only non-commercial meeting place. About 25% of Norwegian municipalities have fewer than 2,500 inhabitants and 30% of municipalities have between 2,500 and 5,000 inhabitants. By law, there must be a public library in every municipality.

Villages and neighborhoods traditionally have a community house where people can meet and organize activities. These are normally owned by local community organisations like residence associations or churches, but recent years they have seen a decrease in numbers. A culture house with facilities for theaters, orchestras and cinema is voluntary, and therefore not always a priority in small communities.

Participating in culture

In an European context, Norway has a high rate of participation in cultural activities and this participation has increased over recent decades. According to the English summary of Meld. St. 10 (2011-2012) Report to the Storting (white paper), Norway has a large and active cultural sector. The report states that “targeted political efforts in combination with the general increase in the standard of living have made art and culture more accessible” (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 2013).

According to Norwegian cultural barometer, the most popular cultural offer in 2012 was: cinema (67%), concerts (61%), sport events (55%) and public libraries (49%). More women than men are users of traditional cultural offerings such as theatre, ballet, art exhibitions, public libraries and religious or philosophical community meetings. Men are more active participants in sport events.

Cultural and social capital

As mentioned in earlier chapters on quality of life, Norway has a large number of people participating in cultural activities compared to other European countries, and the number has increased over the last few decades. In the report referred to above, the Norwegian government says that Norway normally scores highly in measurements of social capital. One of the most important sources of social capital is thriving and active organisations. However, as in other countries, there are socioeconomic differences in the use of and participation in professional and voluntary arts and culture. People with an immigrant background from Asia, Africa, Latin America and Europe outside the EEA are underrepresented in several areas of culture and the organised voluntary sector. A person's income and education has a large bearing on their use of most cultural offerings; those with a high education level are greater users of cultural offerings than others.

The before mentioned whitepaper about culture, inclusion and participation the government states:

Cultural participation surveys from Statistics Norway (SSB) show that the social differences in cultural participation have largely remained stable in the past decades, despite efforts to reduce these differences. In other words, many people still do not relate to important arenas for learning, creativity, experience, community and identity development. This is a challenge. It is particularly concerning when children and youth are not included in leisure activities and the community arenas offered by the cultural sector (Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 2013, p. 8).

LIBRARIES IN NORWAY

Basic data

population: 5,214,000 (January 2016)

library per residents: 0,0129 (627 – 2015)

book loans in a year: 8,100,000

% of adults used public library: 40*

% of users taking part in educational activities: 19**

% of adults participating in lifelong learning activities: Formal education: employed – 15, unemployed – 39; Non-formal education: employed - 49, unemployed – 18 (1. quarter 2016).

*Source: Statistics Norway, SSB – Library use 2015 – an estimate from different categories combined

**Source: Statistics Norway, SSB – Library use 2015 – people using libraries for homework, study or group work

Contemporary Norwegian library system consists of:

- The National Library of Norway – employees (FTEs): 423,9 (2015)
- 19 county libraries – employees (FTEs): 144,5 (2015)
- 676 municipal public libraries – employees (FTEs): 1753 (2015)
- 190 academic and research libraries – employees (FTEs): 1648 (2015)
- 2289 school libraries (352 in upper secondary schools and 1937 in primary schools) (2014) – employees (FTEs): no exact number available

The History of Public Libraries in Norway

The value basis and legitimacy of the Norwegian libraries are based on the idea that knowledge and education should be available for everyone regardless of social, economic and geographical divides. This applies to all types of libraries: academic and research libraries, public libraries and school libraries. Libraries should give everyone the opportunity to learning and personal development throughout life.

Modern public libraries in Norway have their roots in the tradition of so-called „Allmuebibliotek” (libraries for the commons) and „leseselskaper” (reading companies) in the 17th and 18th century. These institutions were established as tools of enlightenment and democracy especially in the countryside. From 1836 public libraries received state aid, and in 1876 were permanently funded from a national budget. In 1902 a library reform developed standards for public library activities, and in 1935 the Norwegian Library Act was introduced. With a new Library Act in 1947, providing a public libraries in every Norwegian municipality became mandatory.

Activity in Norwegian Public Libraries

According to the national library statistics collected by the National Library, the number of loans in public libraries in 2015 was 22.7 million. This is 2% decrease from 2014, mainly due to lower numbers of music and film lending. The numbers of book loans was stable, though there are differences in development between literature for children and adults and between fiction and nonfiction; the increase in loans of children's fiction literature is the reason the lending numbers on physical books have not declined.

In 2015, public libraries in 393 Norwegian municipalities could offer e-books. The number of downloads increased from 250,000 in 2014 to 460,000 in 2015. This equals to approximately 2% of total loans in Norwegian libraries. E-lending is organised by county libraries as consortiums. Most libraries lend out e-books through the app eBokBib on smartphones and tablets.

The number of visits to public libraries in 2015 was 22,4 million. This is an increase from 2014 of 4,6%. There has also been a rise in number of events in the libraries; in 2015 libraries organised 22,000 events, 18% more than the previous year.

LIBRARY ORGANISATION: NATIONAL LEVEL

The Norwegian Ministry of Culture is responsible for the policy areas of culture, copyright, the media, sport and the voluntary sector. One of the tasks of the Ministry is to govern and monitor subordinate agencies. The Ministry set goals, provide frameworks, supervise and follow up results in subordinate agencies in accordance with current laws and rules and political guidelines.

Strategies and policies for public libraries on a national level is a responsibility of the Ministry of Culture. The Ministry of Education and Research has the same responsibility for school libraries and academic and research libraries.

STRATEGY AND POLICIES

The Public Library Act

The Public Library Act defines the objectives and purpose of public libraries. It also states duties and responsibilities on a municipal, county and governmental level regarding public libraries.

The National Strategy for Libraries 2015-2018

In 2015, the Ministry of Culture published a National Strategy for Libraries 2015–2018 related to public libraries and the National Library (not for school, academic and scientific libraries, which is a responsibility under the Ministry of Education and Research). The purpose of the National strategy is as follows:

The national strategy for libraries shall provide an overview of central government responsibility and tasks in promoting the development of a future-oriented public library. The municipalities themselves have the main responsibility for developing public libraries, but this strategy plan presents an overview of how the central government will contribute specifically to achieving the policy goals for libraries set out in Proposition to the Storting No. 1 S (2014-2015). For the most part the National Library of Norway will implement the measures in the strategy (The Norwegian Ministry of Culture, 2015), p.6).

National Library of Norway

The National Library of Norway is responsible for library development on a national level and is financed by the Ministry of Culture. The head of the National Library, The National Librarian, is appointed by the Minister of Culture. The library is located both in Oslo and Mo i Rana, where the digitisation centre and repository for the legal deposit collection is housed.

The National Library's ambition is to be to be the nation's memory and a multimedia centre for knowledge and culture. The main goals of the National library are:

- be one of Europe's most exciting and modern national libraries;
- preserve, give access to and actively mediate cultural heritage through the development of modern digital library services;
- be a source of and an infrastructure for research, learning, culture and language development;
- contribute to making Norway's research and public libraries into active and topical institutions of society.

Within strategically important fields of its enterprise, the National Library is a national competence and resource centre for other institutions in the cultural sector. This applies to copyright, conservation of paper, photography and film, digital preservation and the development of authority systems and metadata standards.

The National Library is responsible for advertising and distributing project money within prioritised areas of development in order to stimulate better library services. The national budget sets aside money for grants to library development projects. This applies to both projects of a general nature and projects in prioritised areas. The National Library disposes of approximately 40 million NOK in project funding for libraries in 2017. The funding is limited to public libraries, county libraries and university and university college libraries.

Planning for library development takes place as part of a dialogue between libraries and the entities that operate them. The National Library establishes suitable forums in order to handle this dialogue in a way that creates reciprocal understanding and support. The dialogue covers all areas of development, and the ways in which the grants are distributed and applied.

The Arts Council Norway

The Norwegian Arts Council is the main governmental operator for the implementation of Norwegian cultural policy. The Arts Council functions as an advisory body to central government and the public sector involved in cultural affairs, and is fully financed by the Ministry of Culture. The Arts Council Norway administers the Norwegian Cultural Fund and is in charge of a broad spectrum of administrative tasks and functions within the cultural field, including artists' grants, the Audio and Visual Fund and a number of other funding schemes.

The Norwegian Cultural Fund administers five purchasing programmes for literature and one for periodicals. The purchased books and periodicals are distributed to all public libraries in Norway. The libraries have to keep the books from the Cultural Fund in their collection for five years. Through the purchasing programme, the Cultural Fund buys approximately 500,000 copies every year, of both paper book and e-books. Within the programme there are five strands: new Norwegian fiction for adults and children and youth, translated literature, new Norwegian non-fiction for children and adults, and comics. The books from the Cultural Fund are an addition to the libraries' own book acquisitions.

There are also purchasing programmes for Norwegian short and documentary films and video games. These are administered by the Norwegian Film Institute, who has developed digital lending systems for library users.

LIBRARY ORGANISATION: COUNTY LEVEL

The county council's library duties

Norway is divided into 19 administrative regions, called counties. The counties form the first-level subdivisions of Norway. The county municipality has a county council, whose members are elected by the inhabitants. The county municipality is responsible mainly for upper secondary schools, public transport organisation, regional road planning, culture and some more areas.

In recent years, there has been some political debate as to whether counties are a practical, economical, or even necessary level of administration. In the beginning of 2017, the government launched a regional reform, with the purpose to merge several counties into bigger regions.

The county libraries in Norway are a part of the county municipality and they are given their responsibility from the Public Libraries Act, Chapter III:

The county library shall safeguard regional library tasks and regional library development, including providing advice to local governments, provide professional guidance and assistance and arrange meetings and courses on library issues. The county may enter into agreements on joint library operations and lend cooperation with one or more municipalities (Act relating to public libraries, 1986).

The way the different county libraries are organised differ, but they all try to fulfil the tasks asked of them by law. The county libraries organise various courses, seminars and studies, and are often responsible for an agreement on library transport in Norway. This arrangement makes it possible on a national level to transport material such as books, audio books, DVDs and CDs easily between libraries. The transport is also used to distribute internal mail and exhibitions. The county libraries also administer regional consortiums for e-book lending in public and school libraries.

Strategies

Some county libraries have developed regional library strategies to fulfil their tasks as outlined in the library act. Others have strategies which are part of a broader cultural strategy in the county municipality.

LIBRARY ORGANISATION: MUNICIPAL LEVEL

The objective and activities of public libraries

There are 676 public libraries in Norway. The number includes both main libraries and branches. According to the Norwegian Public Libraries Act, chapter II, section 4:

All municipalities shall have a public library for the purposes mentioned in chapter I. The public library may be run by the municipality alone or fully or partly together with another municipality, county council or government institution. The municipality determines the rules governing the public library (Act relating to public libraries, 1986).

In chapter II, section 5 the act defines requirements for the competences of the chief librarian: „All municipalities shall have a professionally qualified chief librarian”. A qualified librarian is someone with a bachelor degree including 120 CET in library specific subjects or with 60 CET supplementary to a bachelor degree.

The purpose of public libraries is explained in chapter I, section 1 of the Public Libraries Act:

The task of public libraries is to promote the spread of information, education and other cultural activities through active dissemination and by making books and other media available for the free use of all the inhabitants of Norway. Public libraries are to be an independent meeting place and arena for public discussions and debates. The individual library shall place emphasis on quality, versatility and topical relevance in its services for children and adults. The library’s contents and services are to be made known. The public libraries are part of a national library system (Act relating to public libraries, 1986).

An important change was made to the section above in 2014. The addition of the sentence: „Public libraries are to be an independent meeting place and arena for public discussions and debates” and the emphasis on „active dissemination” changed the role of the public libraries in Norway significantly. The number of events and visits increased since this amendment.

Library organisations

Bibliotekarforbundet (The Norwegian Union of Librarians) is the trade union for Norwegian librarians. The union has more than 1,800 members in public and private sector across the country. Bibliotekarforbundet has solid expertise in legislations and regulations in the workplace, and extensive experience in negotiations and wages. It was founded as a result of an emerging desire to have a union that served librarians' interests, wherever members may work. It also works to highlight library research and library development, and sets library policy issues within the political agenda both locally and nationally.

The Norwegian Library Association is an organisation for libraries and library enthusiasts. Its purpose is to strengthen and develop the libraries' position in society, and to promote libraries' interests to public authorities and society in general. They have 3,000 members, made up of 2,000 people and 1,000 institutions. The association works for a good framework for all libraries. This means that they engage in matters like digital resources, developing the library as integration arenas, the library's importance in improving literacy, debate arenas and municipal amalgamations.

Library development

As mentioned before, the National Library has an important task when it comes to library development in Norway. The means of development through projects is divided into two parts: firstly the „arena development funds”, which are interconnected with the National Library Strategy 2015-2018, while the other part is allocated to the National Library's permanent development funds which are also connected with the strategy.

Arena development funds aim to help in highlighting public libraries as meeting places, as well as cultural and learning places, while also helping to improve the exchange of projects to promote development and cooperation locally. The funds should make public libraries better equipped to undertake various forms of dissemination and events, and to be cultural venues for the future – as vibrant libraries that spread knowledge, content and culture to municipal residents.

To develop libraries further as a venue for events, there are two essential factors: physical premises suitable for events, and hosting and programming expertise. In the strategy period, the National Library through funding are trying to develop both these areas in Norway's libraries. The funds have already led to many libraries in Norway are better equipped to carry out events on a larger scale. They can also be used to strengthen the promotion and marketing of library content and services.

The second part of the National Library's tools is their project funding for development in public and academic libraries. The funded projects will have value beyond the individual library, and should promote a new offer. The framework for the project and development funds is determined by the National Library in line with the allocation of profit from the Norwegian State Lottery and guidelines from the National Strategy for Libraries 2015-2018.

The strategy allocates the development funds to three main areas:

1. Development of joint infrastructure run by the National Library, available to all libraries.
2. Development of public libraries as a debate and learning arena, meeting place and dissemination institution.
3. Free, innovative projects and development initiatives.

And the priority areas are:

- development of new library services,
- dissemination of library content, both digital and physical,
- new forms of cooperation and partnership,
- everyday integration.

County libraries play the role of active developer, which they execute through projects supported externally, or that the county library initiates. An important task of the county libraries is to consult librarians in municipalities and to be available as advisors and mentors.

Some county libraries has a subsidy for library staff, where they can apply for funding to develop their skills and also for library projects. There are some county libraries who have several operational tasks such as a functioning library with a book collection, interlibrary loans services and bookmobile offers. All of this is done to try to secure equal library opportunities for inhabitants in Norway.

Organisations supporting and cooperating with public libraries

Leser søker bok is an association that works for everyone to have access to good books. To achieve that, they give support to authors, illustrators and publishers who want to publish books adapted for people with different reading disabilities. They provide support for between 12 and 15 books each year. In order to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to obtain copies of these books, Leser søker bok cooperates with 346 libraries across the country. These libraries are called „book to all libraries”. They have their own shelves with easy to read and personalised books. The books are labeled and librarians know about the particularities of the books and the challenges many readers have. Studies show that one in three adults struggle with the contents of plain text. This is an issue for the individual, but also a major challenge for society.

Foreningen !les is a nonprofit organisation that was established in 1997. It works to promote reading in all parts of life, and distributes literature for children, youth and adults. Its main aim is to inspire people to read more, and to promote contemporary literature accessible to different audiences. One of the organisation’s projects focuses on reading role models for youth, while another focuses on campaigns for expression of opinion, critical reading and conversations about literature. Every year they also facilitate the Norwegian Youth Critic prize.

Fritt ord is a non-profit private foundation. Their primary purpose is to safeguard and strengthen freedom of expression in Norway, especially by encouraging dynamic debate and the fearless use of free speech. Fritt ord can also support other aspects of Norwegian culture, primarily the part of culture that makes use of the word. They do this through providing scholarships for people and organisations working to promote freedom of speech, including libraries. In special cases, Fritt ord help promote freedom of expression in other countries.

There are many literature festivals in Norway. The Literature Festival in Lillehammer is the largest literary festival in the Nordic countries. The festival has a varied programme for readers of all ages, and lasts for 6 days, with 25,000 visitors and 400 writers and artists from around the world. The festival holds meetings with authors, readings, debates, lectures, award ceremonies, performances, exhibitions, seminars, quizzes and other festivities. The Norwegian Literature Festival has events for kindergarten children, students and adult readers with different preferences and caters to a wide audience. The festival is also the largest meeting point for authors, translators, critics, publishers and librarians. Throughout the years, the festival has organised different library seminars and debates together with partners from the library sector.

Challenges

One of the major changes in Norwegian public libraries is the transformation from a place for book collections to an independent meeting place and arena for public discussions and debates. The traditional librarian competences connected to collection management is still important, but librarians and library staff experience a need for new skills and competences when it comes to new tasks such as organising events, event programming, dissemination, communication and marketing. In large cities, libraries recruit people from outside the library field to meet their needs. In small libraries with a only a few employees, the librarians have to acquire some level of these new skills themselves.

The new tasks of the library also demands changes in the physical library space. People borrow fewer books, but visit the library more. In order to offer a meeting place and to host events, the library needs to design less space for bookshelves and more space for people.

Another challenge for libraries is the large number of immigrants. Big city libraries and librarians have been working with immigrants for many years, but recently the number of work immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers has increased significantly and libraries all over the country are faced with a new group of users with different needs.

POLAND

OVERVIEW

Population (as of December 2016): 38.4 million

Size: 312,679 km²

GDP: €430 billion (2015)

GDP per capita: €11.3 thousand (2015)

Average monthly salary: €705 (net income, 2016), €990 (gross salary, 2016)

Average librarian monthly salary: €619 (net income, 2015)

Unemployment rate: 8,8% (2016)

Religion: Roman Catholic

Political system: parliamentary republic

Distribution of population by degree of urbanization (2015) – cities and towns: 60.3%; rural areas: 39.7%

ETHNIC GROUPS

Population background	%	Population
Total population	100%	38,512,000
European	98.6	37,962,000
European Union	98.2	37,813,000
Ethnic Polish (including Silesians and Kashubians)	97.7	37,602,000
Other EU member states (primarily German)	0.5	211,000
European Other (primarily Ukrainian and Belarusian)	0.4	149,000
Other background (primarily Vietnamese and Chechen)	<0.1	29,000
Mixed or unspecified background	1.4	521,000

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland, 2011

EDUCATION

Highest level of education successfully completed	Share in total population, percent
All population aged 10 and over	100
Higher education	23
Professional secondary and vocational secondary education	18.1
General secondary education after basic or vocational education	12.4
Basic education or professional basic education	32
Primary education	13.1
Without formal education, less than primary education or not indicated	1.4

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland, 2015

OVERVIEW OF CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

Legal basis

Article 73 of Constitution of the Republic of Poland directly refers to the field of culture and states that everyone is granted the right of freedom of creation, to conduct scientific research and announce their results, freedom of education and use of cultural assets. After 1989, Poland underwent a process of political and economic transformation and the state re-established its new responsibilities with a social character.

The new principles for organizing and financing cultural activities were formulated in 1993 and presented in the governmental document entitled The Principles of State Cultural Policy. According to this document, the Polish cultural policy should therefore achieve three main goals:

- decentralization – shift competencies from the central administration to the provincial level, and from the provinces to the lower levels of administration: districts, municipalities and communes;
- provide public financial support for selected cultural institutions and crucial cultural events;
- provide support for the development of non-public cultural institutions and funding mechanisms which could supplement the public funding of culture (Ilczuk, 2015).

Decentralization means the state authorities as well as regional and local ones are responsible for supervising cultural institutions, financial support for cultural events and protecting cultural heritage according to the principles of the basic legal documents: Act on Organizing and Running Cultural Activity of October 25 1991 for all the cultural institutions and additionally for libraries: Act of 27 June 1997 Libraries Law.

Cultural resources management in Poland is provided on the three independent levels: central, regional and local.

Central level

Ministry of Culture and National Heritage is in charge of the central level located institutions. Its main goals cover:

- developing and implementing legislation and policy,
- supervision of national institutions: National Library, National Museum, National Opera, Philharmonics Hall,
- supervision of artistic schools of each level (starting from primary): music, arts, ballet, theatre,
- promoting Polish culture abroad,
- protecting public art education,
- protecting national cultural heritage and conserving monuments.

As well as supporting cultural institution and organisations through its thematic-oriented agencies: National Centre of Culture (capacity development of cultural institutions and organisations), Adam Mickiewicz Institute (international cooperation), National Audiovisual Institute, Polish Film Institute, Dance and Music Institute, National Institute of Frederic Chopin, Book Institute (supporting also libraries infrastructure), Theatre Institute, Heritage Institute and Institute of Museum and Collections Protection.

Ministry significantly supports the independent initiatives through the open calls for proposals, organized twice a year within the framework of operational programs: artistic events, collections, promotion of literature and readership, education, cultural heritage, infrastructure of culture, digital culture, accessible culture etc.

Regional & local level

The territory of Poland is divided into 16 „voivodships” (provinces); these are further divided into „powiats” (counties or districts), and these in turn are divided into „gminas” (communities). The responsibility of cultural assets corresponds with their administrative division. The authorities of each level are independent and autonomous deciding about cultural institutions, historical monuments and public cultural events they are responsible for. However, the national culture institutions, most valuable monuments (e.g. Unesco World Heritage List) and world-famous festivals are financed by The Ministry of Culture and National Heritage (central level). The local governments may apply for financial support to the higher level administrative unit, especially for the historical monuments maintenance.

Non-government or church institutions of culture are not widespread in Poland, but their number is still increasing. They are mostly financed from local government sources (local and regional level) and sponsors. They can also apply to the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage or National Centre of Culture – the national agency which inspires and supports social movements and NGOs operating in the fields of culture and national heritage. Most of the culture NGOs work as a support for institutions – museums, theatres, culture centres – or as artists' associations. In the villages and small towns there are local activists (formal and non-formal groups) who organise events and take care of monuments, local traditions and non-formal education. There are sources of funding dedicated to these initiatives, among others Civic Initiatives Fund – a governmental long-term programme.

Local cultural landscape

Most cultural institutions are situated in the cities, but there are two types which enter in the landscape of small towns and rural areas: culture centre (house of culture) and public library. The local cultural institutions are a vital element on the map of local connections between various types formal and non-formalised social actors. In many cases, these institutions are flow nodes in kind of relations, connecting and integrating stakeholders and thus moderating social activities in the communities.

Culture centres are providing a various spectrum of activities including: spectacles, concerts, movies as well as folk festivals, picnics and holiday activities for children. There are also places for amateur artistic movements. Very often they contribute to tourist activities: organizing various events, trips and hiking expeditions. Local public library in this landscape is more a place to borrow books, use the Internet but more and more frequently it is also a place for education and skills developing. Libraries so far are successfully targeting the older people – for whom popular IT classes, language courses and discussion clubs are being organized. Libraries provide also especially dedicated classes for children, cooperating with local primary and secondary schools and kindergartens.

On the contrary to the culture centre, it is obligatory by law (for each commune) to run a library. However, what is really country-specific for Poland in this context, is the fact that many local administrations (in particular from smaller locations) decide to combine cultural services (entertainment, art education) with sport, promotion of local resources and library. In this type of organisation the library acts within a bigger institution – usually called a culture center, which is not appreciated by librarians (being perceived as degradation of their

status). In spite of different organisational schemes the responsibilities of each institution are strictly determined. The phenomenon of so-called „resortowość” (bureaucracy-based process of decision making and profiling the activities, meaning that only tasks and duties from the restricted list may be performed by a certain institution) is still valid. There have been efforts made by the central-level institutions to promote and instill the cooperation tradition between libraries and local cultural centers. Yet their cooperation capabilities are not sufficient to fully synchronize and integrate organized events.

Participation in culture

People in Poland regard culture as a very important value and they perceive themselves as „cultural persons”. However, „to be cultural” means ability of proper, tradition-driven behaviour and not directly connected with the competences and education.

According to 80.3% of Poles aged 15 years or more, culture is important (very important or fairly important) and for 16.5% – unimportant (not very important or quite unimportant). According to the opinion of the surveyed Poles, most important features of „cultured man” are: the ability of proper behaviour in every situation (so thinks 64.0% of people aged 15 or older), paying attention to the way of expression and not using profanities (56.5%). These opinions shared both women (respectively 65.5% and 58.5%) and men (respectively 61.9% and 53.9%) and urban inhabitants (respectively 65.3% and 61.8%) as well as people living on rural areas (respectively 58.7% and 53.0%). Contrary to the popular opinions, education was placed by the respondents only on the third position among the features of a „cultured man” (25.7% of respondents). Education is more important for women (26.3%) than for men (24, 9%) and more important for rural residents (28.1%) than urban inhabitants (24.2%).

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland, 2014

Most people in Poland (both in the cities, small towns and rural areas) prefer to remain passive participants of culture: for example as spectators and customers of TV entertainment. They are also customers of cultural products (books, newspapers and magazines, CDs, DVDs, audio-visual and multimedia devices).

The most common form of participation in culture is watching TV. 97.6% of respondents watched TV, of which 10.3% – more than 4 hours a day. However, compared with 2009 the percentage of TV viewers was reduced by 0.9 pp, of which those watching TV above 4 hours per day – by 9.4 pp. Very popular is the use of multimedia devices. Significantly increased the percentage of people using computers and the Internet, both among women and men and in urban and rural areas. The computer was used by 62.5% of respondents (65.8% men and 60.1% women), and the Internet – by 62.2% of respondents (65.6% men and 59.7% women) – while in 2009 respectively by 52.6% and 48.4% of respondents. The percentage of people listening to the music on the radio, from the playback devices (stationary or portable) or on live concerts remained at the 2009 level. Listening to music on the radio, with playback devices or on live concerts was declared by 80.9% of respondents.

Source: Central Statistical Office of Poland, 2014

Active participation in culture meaning e.g. being a member of an amateur artistic team or developing cultural competencies (cultural education as a lifelong learning) is not popular in spite of the fact that most Polish people have an easy access to the local library and cultural center. What is interesting is the fact that Poles living outside the big cities are rather critical of the cultural institutions' offer, although they regard most of these institutions as an essential element of local landscape. Quite often, attempts to close down a cultural centre or a local library are not successful.

Significant differences in the assessment of the cultural offer were noticed in the urban and in the rural areas. While among the urban population 34.5% assessed the offer addressed by local cultural institutions positively and 15.6% negatively –people living in rural areas were decidedly dissatisfied with the proposals of cultural institutions operating in their place of residence (46.0% vs.8.9% of satisfied and very satisfied).

The growing importance of inclusive culture events is especially relevant and visible in the big cities. Theaters and philharmonics provide cultural education programs to prepare children to enhance participation and perform „on the streets” to attract and familiarize people with elite arts. Participating in culture is for many a life-style issue; the concerts, performances and movies you attend determine your world outlook as well as your political and social attitude.

Even though the offer of cultural centres and public libraries is positively changing into the direction of more interactive, needs-oriented services, the attendance is still not satisfying and people are not taking a full advantage of provided opportunities. Artistic competences are not perceived valuable and perspective for kids' future; lack of interesting programmes implemented jointly by schools and cultural centres is also one of reasons.

There are also very few cities/communities in Poland where a holistic strategic educational plan (within a strategy of development) is implemented by the whole socio-cultural sector: institutions of culture, schools of all levels and social welfare centres.

LIBRARIES IN POLAND

Basic data

Total number of libraries: 31,553 (as of December 2015; in case of school libraries and parish libraries – as of 2012)

Contemporary Polish library system consists of:

- The National Library of Poland
- 8,050 public library units
- 1,001 research libraries
- 272 pedagogical libraries
- 388 special libraries (trade libraries, trade and fiction libraries, libraries in information centres etc.)
- 13 scientific societies libraries
- 20,363 school libraries (2012)
- 1,480 parish libraries (2012)

(Several public and pedagogical libraries have a research status, so they are included also as research libraries)

LIBRARIES IN POLAND

Basic data

Total number of libraries: 31,553 (as of December 2015; in case of school libraries and parish libraries – as of 2012)

Total number of registered users (2015): 10,962,795, of which:

Public libraries: 7,746,564

Research libraries: 2,844,430

Pedagogical libraries: 569,393

Special libraries (trade libraries, trade and fiction libraries, libraries in information centres etc.): 78,967

Scientific societies libraries: 3,204

(Due to lack of relevant, up-to-date data, school libraries and parish libraries are not included in the statistics.)

Libraries and skills in Poland:

Population: 38.5 million

Library per residents: 4,596

Adults used public library: 6.6 million

Book loans in a year: 119 million

% of adults used public library: 20

% of users taking part in educational activities at the library: 13

% of adults participating in lifelong learning activities: 4

(source: Reading & Writing Foundation, Public Libraries 2020)

National Library of Poland

The National Library acts as the central library of the state and one of the most important cultural institutions in Poland. Its mission is to protect national heritage preserved in the form of handwritten, printed, electronic, recorded sound and audiovisual documents. The primary task of the National Library is to acquire, store and permanently archive the intellectual output of Poles, whether the works of citizens living on Polish soil, the most important foreign works, or publications related to Poland and published abroad.

Following this fundamental function, the National Library is also responsible for a number of tasks that are of crucial importance to Polish culture. Serving as the chief archive of Polish literary output, the National Library is also a national bibliographic agency, a large research library focusing on the humanities, as well as a nationally and internationally recognized centre of preservation and conservation. It also fulfills a surpassing role in research, documentation, and methodological activity in bibliography, library, and information science (National Library of Poland, 2016).

At the end of 2015 the National Library's collection numbered a total of 8,946,146 items, and the staff consisted of 805 employees.

Public libraries

There is a three-level structure of the public libraries network in Poland, which reflects the country's administrative division: „voivodeship” (province), „powiat” (county or district) and „gmina” (commune). The network consists of 18 regional public libraries (of provincial level) that operate in 16 voivodeships (provinces) – in two cases there are two regional libraries in one province, 102 powiat libraries (41 in rural counties, and 61 in cities with „powiat” status) and 2,487 libraries of commune level (273 urban, 592 urban-rural, 1,618 rural, 4 other). The total number of public libraries in Poland at the

end of 2015 was 2,607 libraries (as institutions) and 8,050 all library units (with branches). The network is supplemented by 1,295 so-called „library service points”, which also provide residents, particularly in smaller localities, with access to books. Approx. 65% of all public libraries in Poland are located on rural areas.

The characteristic feature of public libraries landscape in Poland are libraries (approx. 20% of public library entities) being merged with other institutions, mainly community culture centres. In some cases the organisational status of such institutions does not pose a threat to the functioning of the library and fulfilling its tasks. In others, the library’s situation is unstable and the management’s, or local authorities’ decisions may hamper its day-to-day operations, or prevent development.

In 2015 the collections of Polish public libraries accounted for 129.9 million non-electronic items (including 128 million books), 172,653 catalogued electronic materials, and 3,302,168 licenced (i.e. accessed remotely) electronic resources.

Library organisation

Libraries in Poland may be established and maintained by the central government (e.g. The National Library), local governments (e.g. public libraries), universities or other scientific institutions, as well as by various kinds of organisational units (both legal and unincorporated), non-government organisations and individuals. Libraries may function as independent institutions (e.g. public libraries), or may be part of another institution (e.g. school libraries, academic libraries).

Libraries organisers are obligated to provide libraries with suitable conditions for their functioning. Therefore, public libraries maintenance costs (the premises, equipment, staff, collections etc.) are covered by local governments. Collection development costs are also covered partly by Poland’s central government, within a special yearly funding programmes

of the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage. There are several additional funding opportunities provided by Poland's central government, including the multiannual programme „Library +. Library infrastructure”, operated by the government institution Book Institute, which allows for co-finance refurbishing, rebuilding, extending and constructing library premises.

Funding basis of public libraries daily operations is yearly budget provided by the library organiser (i.e. local government). To cover the costs of additional library operations (including educational or social activities, non-standard cultural initiatives, digital services as well as various innovative projects) public libraries use other possibilities of finance and more and more often raise funds from numerous sources: regional, national and international. In 2015 the organiser's donation constituted as much as 92% of the whole public libraries budgets, the rest coming from other sources of finance: grants from the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, non-government organisations, private corporations, or local sponsors.

Libraries and librarians in Poland are supported by a number of organisations (including professional associations), that provide training, integration as well as other opportunities for development. The largest and oldest professional organisation that unifies librarians in Poland is the Polish Librarians' Association (PLA). The PLA is a public benefit organisation with a nearly 100-year tradition and over 7,500 members: librarians, researchers, educators and specialists in various areas of library and information science. Its mission is to support the development of librarianship in Poland, build a librarian's identity, integrate the library community, and strengthen a positive image of both the library as institution and librarian as profession.

Following the Poland's administrative division, the Association's structure consists of 16 provincial units acting as regional boards. The basic organisational bodies, known as circles, function within the sections subordinated to the regional boards. Apart from regional structure, the PLA established professional sections, committees and units to perform specific tasks, to solve important problems in the field, or to discuss new trends and ideas. Every year the PLA organizes conferences, workshops, national and international seminars, publishes professional journals and monographs. The Association is a member of international professional organisations, including IFLA, IAML, LIBER and EBLIDA (PLA Structure and Activity 2010).

Legislation

Provision of library services in Poland are determined by:

- The Act of 27 June 1997, Libraries Law,
- The Act on Organizing and Running Cultural Activity of October 25, 1991,
- The Act Of 8 March 1990 On The Municipal Government.

According to Polish law, public libraries in Poland are financial responsibility of local governments (which is reflected in legal regulations, including The Act of 27 June 1997, Libraries Law (with further amendments) and The Act on Organizing and Running Cultural Activity of October 25, 1991 (with further amendments). It is mandatory for each commune (municipality) to organize and finance at least one public library entity.

Article 7 of the The Act Of 8 March 1990 On The Municipal Government states that municipal libraries are the obligatory task of each municipality. The obligation has also been established by the Act of 27 June 1997, Libraries Law, where the article 19, subparagraph 2 states: „Gminas [which means "communes"] shall organize and run at least one gmina public library along with adequate number of branches, local offices and library outlets”.

According to Article 4 of the Act of 27 June 1997, Libraries Law:

1. Libraries' fundamental responsibilities include:

- 1) the gathering, developing, storage and preservation of library materials,
- 2) provision of services for library users, including, in particular, access to the collections and information, informing about own collections and those of other libraries, museums and academic information centers, as well as cooperating with archives in this respect.

2. Moreover, libraries' responsibilities may also include bibliographical activities, activities related with documentation, research and development, publishing, education and popularization, as well as instructive and methodological activities.

Based on Chapter 2 of The Act of 27 June 1997, Libraries Law The National Library Council has been established, to operate at the ministry responsible for matters of culture and national heritage protection. The Council's responsibilities should include:

- 1) to draft expert opinions on legal acts regarding libraries,
- 2) to coordinate national librarian initiatives,
- 3) to stimulate the development of crucial directions in the Polish librarianship,
- 4) to draft expert opinions on the activities and initiatives crucial for the development of libraries,
- 5) to periodically evaluate the activity of libraries and the effectiveness of the librarian policy.

Article 18, subparagraph 1 of The Act of 27 June 1997, Libraries Law states that „Public libraries shall serve to satisfy the educational, cultural and information needs of the general public and shall contribute to the diffusion of knowledge and culture”.

Policy

The largest strategic programme concerning libraries in Poland, implemented by the Polish government, is the National Readership Development Programme 2014-2020. The programme covers the most important areas related to books and readership, such as promotion of books and reading, as well as the legal provisions concerning the publishing market. An important element of the programme is strengthening the role of the library as the primary contact point with the book.

Therefore, the National Readership Development Programme 2014-2020 supports the modernisation of library buildings, development of library collections and library activities such as the Book Discussion Clubs, as well as training of librarians.

Library development

The largest programme addressed to Polish public libraries and their branches is the Library Development Program – a joint initiative of the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and the Polish-American Freedom Foundation, implemented by the Information Society Development Foundation. Its aim is to transform public libraries in rural areas and small towns into modern, multi-function information, cultural and education centers stimulating civic involvement. Between 2009-2015 the programme was implemented in partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, as a part of the Global Libraries initiative.

Under the Library Development Program support was provided for 3,808 libraries from 1,256 communes. Over 11,000 people participated in training courses for librarians. Libraries received modern equipment, including computers with software provided free of charge by Microsoft, laptops, tablets, multifunction devices, projectors and digital cameras – in total over 12,000 devices. An important part of the Library Development Program was also the cooperation with institutions and organisations of the library environment and supporting regional public libraries, the National Library, and the Polish Librarians' Association. Numerous activities were conducted to foster integration and exchange of experience and good practices through study tours, nationwide conventions, regional conferences, as well as networking of librarians who develop and disseminate innovative ideas for library activity. Under the programme there was also a significant transfer of knowledge from NGOs to libraries in such areas as work and professional career, civic issues, personal finance or healthy lifestyle. As a result, libraries introduced a lot of new services for residents in response to their needs (Information Society Development Foundation, 2015).

The Library Development Program operator – Information Society Development Foundation – is one of few in Poland and most active non-government organisation that assists public libraries in implementation of new tailor-made services for their users. Its mission is to support community development by combining access to global expertise with experience in implementing locally social innovations. The Foundation's example programmes addressed to public libraries include:

- **Link to the Future. Youth, Internet, Career**

The project is aimed at supporting young people in planning their future careers, by teaching them coding with the use of educational robots. Within the project, supported by the Microsoft Corporation, the FRSI encourage libraries (and other institutions in small localities) to set up Local Coding Clubs, offer training, inspirational meetings and sets of Finch educational robots for rent.

- **About finance... in the library**

Project conducted with the National Bank of Poland under the Economic Education programme. In hundreds of libraries across Poland adult inhabitants of small localities learned how to manage their household finances and how to use electronic banking. Over 6,500 people have participated in training courses organized by librarians.

- **Innovation Zones**

Project financed by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation under the Support of the Library Development Program. The Zones in 25 public libraries have been established so that residents, local institutions and organisations can jointly find solutions to problems important to their community.

Challenges

In spite of successful programmes and modernisation projects that have transformed public libraries into modern centres of education, culture and social activity, Polish libraries still face organisational, financial and space problems that hinder their development. The libraries network is shrinking, and library units (especially in small localities) are being closed down or merged with other institutions each year. Due to insufficient funding for the development of library collections many libraries are not able to purchase enough books to provide their users with valuable, or newly published, sought-after titles.

Public libraries are becoming increasingly attractive institutions, offering their users more and more complex, innovative services, but the number of users is going down, mainly due to a decreasing interest in traditional library services, particularly among young people. There is a continuous decline in the usage of public libraries by users in the age group up to 24. In 2015 they accounted for 45.8% of total users, while in 2000 – for more than 70%, and in 2002 – 68.1% (National Library of Poland, 2016).

For many public libraries in Poland too small or inadequate library space makes it difficult to expand their services beyond traditional, „book-lending” offer. A challenge is an outdated infrastructure which sometimes makes it impossible to introduce modern digital services. Old, „antiquated” library buildings and interiors affect the library’s image and prevent people, particularly the youth and young adults, from visiting them. Most modernisation and development programmes that have been implemented in Poland before 2016 were addressed to libraries located in villages and small towns. Libraries operating in large and medium-sized cities still remain neglected in this respect and, often, in need of greater support.

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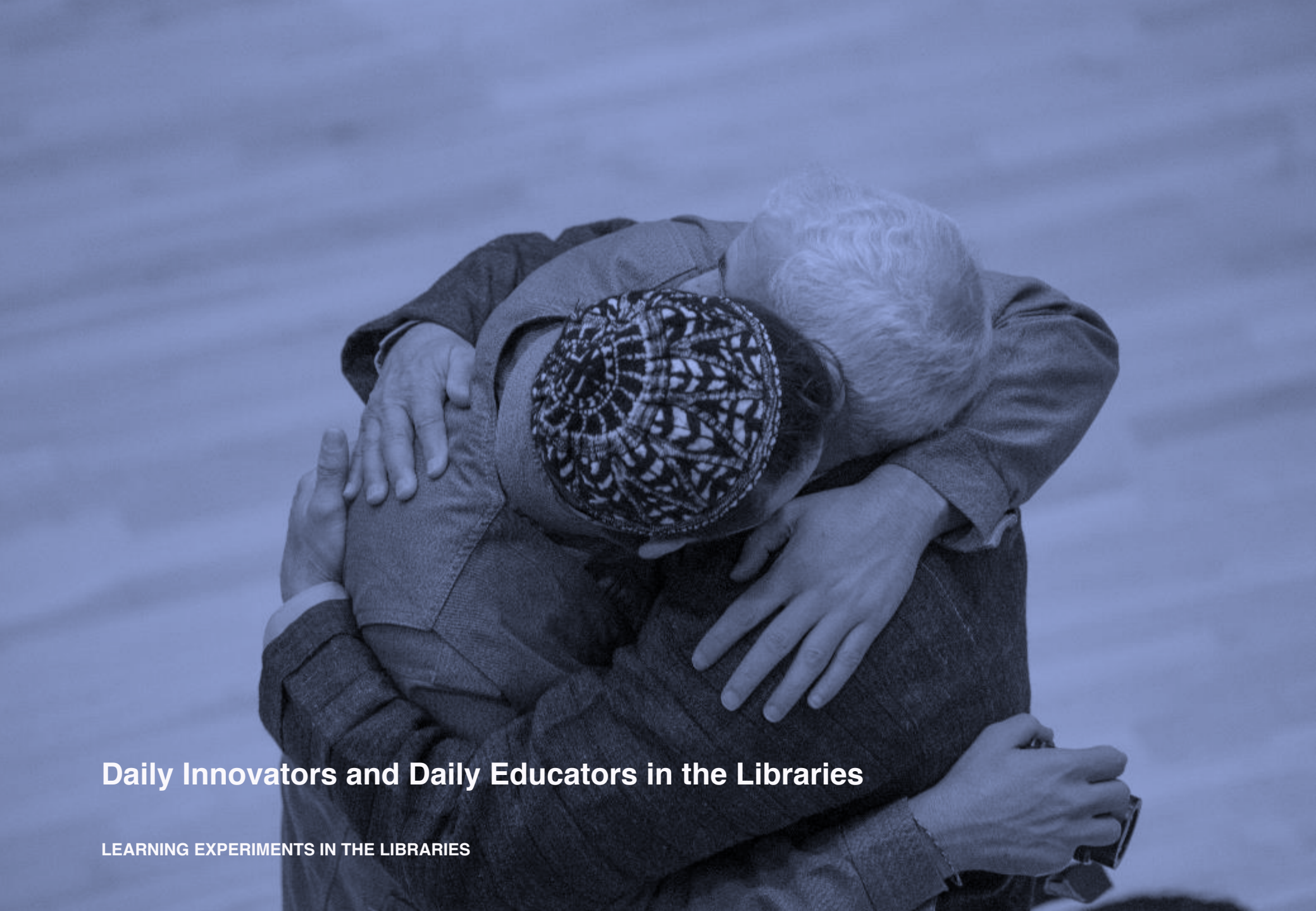
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