



Bibliotekos pažangai



MARTYNAS
MAZVYDAS
NATIONAL
LIBRARY OF
LITHUANIA



THE PROJECT "LIBRARIES FOR INNOVATION"

**SURVEY OF REPRESENTATIVES OF HARD
TO REACH SOCIAL GROUPS
2010**

(Instruments 8,9 and 10)

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1. Survey methodology

The two key methods of qualitative research were employed during the survey:

- ✓ In-depth interview (ID) – a face-to-face interview with the respondent according to a pre-established discussion guide. This method allows allotting more time for the respondent and collecting deep and detailed information about the respondent's experience, opinion, attitudes and motives. In-depth interviews were conducted in both a private environment (at the respondent's home) and public libraries.
- ✓ Focus group discussion (FGD). Each FGD consists of 4 to 8 respondents (it depends on the specific nature of target group), selected according to random sampling, taking into account the specified sampling criteria. Each discussion lasts for about two hours and is conducted according to a specific discussion guide, coordinated with the client beforehand. Various projective techniques are employed for discussions with the view of revealing the respondents' opinion, evaluations, attitude, a change in attitude, or the aspects influencing their opinion.

1.1. Target group sampling

The qualitative survey covered the following target groups of libraries' public Internet access (PIA) users:

- ✓ Elderly residents
- ✓ Rural residents
- ✓ The unemployed
- ✓ The disabled
- ✓ 12–14 year old children from social risk families or children whose parents have emigrated to seek employment abroad

Group discussions and interviews were conducted in accordance with the requirement, set by the Contracting Authority, to survey visitors of public libraries (PIA users) in four Lithuanian counties (Marijampolė, Panevėžys, Telšiai and Utena). Discussions and interviews were conducted in:

- ✓ Utena and Telšiai counties – cities and urban-type settlements (settlements with more than 3,000 inhabitants)
- ✓ Panevėžys and Marijampolė counties – villages, towns (settlements with 3,000 or less inhabitants)

The following criteria were applied for defining sample points of the place of residence:

- ✓ Not more than 2 respondents from one geographical sample point
- ✓ Retained rural/urban distribution (60/40 respectively)

A repeated qualitative survey was also conducted, and part of the respondents who participated in the 2008 survey were contacted and interviewed. Contact lists of the participants for the repeated survey were submitted by the Contracting Authority. Only those persons from contact lists, who have been currently using PIA services in libraries and who willingly agreed to take part in the survey, participated in this survey.

1.2. Survey instrument

Discussion guides (instruments 8, 9 and 10) developed according to the guidelines submitted by the Contracting Authority and coordinated with the project group by the service provider were used to conduct group discussions and interviews.

In comparison with the instruments of surveys conducted in 2008, discussion guides for this survey were developed with a view to establishing project impact assessment over a year.

1.3. Technical report of the survey

The survey included:

- ✓ A survey of PIA users in four counties (overall, 78 PIA users participated in discussions):
 - 10 in-depth interviews with the disabled (1–2 respondents in each interview; overall, 13 PIA users with disability were interviewed). Although the terms of reference envisaged 8 interviews, the number was exceeded, because the research team could not find 2 PIA users with disability in all settlements; therefore, interviews were conducted with one PIA user only (more often in rural areas);
 - 13 focus group discussions (FGD). According to the terms of reference, two FGDs with elderly residents, two FGDs with rural residents, two FGDs with the unemployed, two FGDs with children from social risk families and two FGDs with children whose parents have emigrated to seek employment abroad were conducted. However:
 - having regard to unfavourable weather conditions and the fact that the respondents from all over the county had to gather in one place, 2 mini discussions with 4 respondents in each were sometimes conducted instead of one discussion with 8 respondents (the unemployed from Panevėžys and Utena counties);
 - furthermore, the research team failed to gather all discussion participants in one place due to the same unfavourable travel conditions, thus they had to re-visit target group representatives and survey them in their place of residence (elderly residents in Telšiai County).
- ✓ A repeated survey of PIA users who participated in discussions/interviews conducted in 2008 (overall, 41 PIA users were surveyed; the remaining respondents listed in the database did not meet the principal selection criterion – they did not use the PIA service in the library; therefore, they were not invited):
 - 3 in-depth interviews with PIA users with disability. 1–2 respondents participated in each interview. Overall, 5 PIA users with disability were interviewed;
 - 3 in-depth interviews with currently unemployed PIA users. 1–2 respondents participated in each interview. Overall, 5 unemployed respondents were interviewed;
 - 2 focus group discussions with PIA users – elderly residents (overall, 12 elderly residents);
 - 2 focus group discussions with PIA users – children (overall, 11 children);
 - 2 in-depth interviews with PIA users – rural residents (3 rural residents) and 1 midi focus group discussion (5 rural residents).

1.4. Basic principles of information analysis

The principles of information analysis that should be taken into consideration while reading this report are the following:

- ✓ Comparison of **rural and urban areas**. The survey indicates urban-rural difference where a certain extent of divergence in evaluation or the situation has been recorded; absence of comparison indicates no major differences. In such cases general evaluation or the situation are presented with the indication of no differences recorded between urban and rural areas.
- ✓ Comparison of opinions of **target groups**. This type of comparison is presented according to the same principle as the comparison of urban and rural areas: it is indicated where evaluations of target group representatives diverge; whereas in the absence of any differences the situation or evaluation is described with the indication of non-divergence in opinions between different target groups.
- ✓ The information gathered during the **repeated** survey of the respondents, who participated in the 2008 survey, does not basically differ from the opinion of respondents from newly selected locations, surveyed in 2009. Therefore:
 - this difference is not specifically pointed out in the report, and the information gathered during the repeated survey is integrated in the overall report ("repeated survey" is indicated at the quotes of these respondents);

- the comparison with the last year's data is conducted basing on the analysis of the survey of these target groups carried out by UAB RAIT in 2008 and the submitted report, but not the opinion of repeatedly surveyed respondents.
- ✓ Concerning the comparison of results with the Survey of Representatives of Hard-to-Reach Social Groups conducted by UAB RAIT in **2008**, it is indicated in this survey where possible. Although this survey has been carried out in accordance with a similar principle of analysis structure and the situation analysis has been based on the same impact assessment indicators, the fragmentary nature and inconsistency of information of the report of the 2008 survey conducted by UAB RAIT does not guarantee high quality comparison of the situation. Seeking to overcome this issue, this report compares the aspects and presents information, comparability of which raises no doubts to the research team of UAB TNS Gallup.

2. Summary of survey results

Innovations and new content in public libraries (indicators 8B and 9A)

Changes in public libraries are closely related to the development of information technologies in libraries. New computers or additional equipment upgraded hardware or changed Internet speed have been noticed by most library visitors. On the other hand, the narrowed scope of traditional library services has also been noted – a smaller number of new books and subscribed press and magazines. TG representatives evaluated the quality of computers and the Internet rather positively as meeting their needs (only a part of children evaluated computers and Internet speed slightly more negatively). Due to this evaluation and the current economic situation, PIA users have not set higher requirements for information technologies in libraries, but have more often missed a better location of the library, warmer and more spacious premises or more new books.

Information technology related innovations in libraries pointed out by TG representatives – user's personal registration for Internet access and computer literacy courses for the elderly, which had been previously offered only to urban residents.

In general, the development of modern library services slightly expanded the circle of visitors. PIA users include not only visitors who do not have Internet access at home (or at work), but also visitors who use the Internet in the library due to other circumstances (the family consists of a big number of people, they do not have computer accessories at home, they need a librarian's consultation about how to use a computer and the Internet). According to TG representatives, modern library services are slightly more relevant to youth, whereas the eldest visitors can do with books or the press. However, as the assortment of books is rarely updated and the volume of subscribed periodicals has decreased, the Internet has become more relevant to elder library visitors as well.

Social benefit for individuals and communities due to public Internet access (indicator 7A)

According to TG representatives, the benefit provided by public Internet access for the community is social, rather than economic (a contrary situation was observed in 2008). The benefit provided for individuals primarily covers the opportunity to communicate both in Lithuania and abroad as well as to browse for different information – both news and topical issues (it has become very relevant after the volume of subscribed press decreased, particularly in rural areas) and information related to hobbies and social activities. On the other hand, an opportunity to communicate with peers and other persons with similar needs in the library is important in rural areas (elderly persons go out, children meet and play). It could be stated that libraries with PIA located in smaller settlements enrich the daily routine and brighten up the lives of inhabitants. The economic benefit of PIA is not a priority; however, its importance cannot be devalued: PIA in libraries provides people with an opportunity not only to directly save without having to install Internet access at home, but also to indirectly save their money without having to subscribe newspapers, but instead reading them online, or searching for information, which would have to be paid for elsewhere (calling a charged information phone line, travelling, etc.). On the other hand, Internet access in the library helps save time and more quickly handle different matters.

The library has also felt the benefit provided by PIA: it has revived, and people started visiting it more frequently (libraries have not been closed down, which is particularly important in rural areas). On the other hand, PIA has become one of the alternatives after the scope of traditional services narrowed – library visitors are able to satisfy their needs for the press and news, since they are available on the Internet.

Competences and motivation of library staff for using information technologies (indicator 2A)

Librarians' competences are evaluated as rather high; most TG representatives consider that the librarians' knowledge meets visitors' expectations and PIA usage practices, and that librarians may help in problem situations. Most PIA users are in need of the librarian's help. Librarians are mainly addressed by elderly residents and PIA users with poor skills. Children usually have better information technology usage skills than librarians, but they address the librarian when searching for information online or asking to help find the necessary WebPages. Librarians have also improved at managing Internet content: they can recommend a more interesting article online or a website according to the likings of visitors.

Information technology usage skills of public library visitors (indicators 3A, 3B and 4C)

Information technology usage skills of PIA users have been improving; library visitors have been feeling more confident when using computers and the Internet. Still, the competences of PIA users mainly depend on their age (the place of residence is also an important factor): children and youth under 30 years of age have the strongest computer literacy skills, whereas elderly visitors have the weakest skills. Urban residents have slightly better information technology usage skills than rural residents (urban residents more often have Internet access at home or at work). Generally, PIA users are mainly competent at using the Internet of all available computer programmes, whereas children (who are taught information technologies at school) or employed respondents are better at *MS Office* applications. However, visitors who have the opportunity to use computers and the Internet at home (children have special IT lessons at school) most rapidly improve their skills. The respondents who use computers only in the library have restricted computer administrator rights, and the time for using computers in the library is limited; therefore, their skills improve very slowly.

However, most PIA users (except the elderly) feel having sufficient information technology usage skills, i.e. sufficient for performing necessary operations – reading the press online or performing a search. On the other hand, most visitors know that the librarian is always there to help if they have any questions when using computers or the Internet.

Concerning the practices of PIA usage, it should be noted that both children and adults mainly use the Internet for communicating (via e-mail, Skype, or social networks). Adults also read the news and newspapers or browse for information for their hobbies or domestic work. Children perceive the library as the place for storing information and they often use Internet access in the library for their school assignments (even if they have Internet access at home, they come here expecting that the librarian will help them find the necessary information). Still, it should be noted that children often come to the library to play computer games.

Specific and hard-to-reach social groups and their experience in using public Internet access (indicators 4B, 4D)

In general, the target group of the survey included specific and hard-to-reach social groups. The findings of the survey showed no difference in the needs concerning the Internet between these groups and other PIA users. Except that the unemployed more often use the Internet in the library for job search than other visitor groups. In principle, the needs of these specific and hard-to-reach social groups differ with regard to the library as such, rather than the Internet: rural residents see the library not only as the place of information and knowledge, but also as the cultural centre; people with disability also want to be welcome in the library and spend their free time there (visually-impaired visitors positively commented on the new computers adapted to their needs); children may spend their leisure time in the library and socialise; and elderly visitors may stay there and get consultations. Elderly library visitors are in need of help, advice, explanations and reminding; they also find it very important that the librarian encourages and reassures them, and prompts them to use computers and the Internet.

It could be stated that all these groups need a place to stay and socialise – it is the library that carries out this function.

TG representatives did not remember or notice any public library programmes, mechanisms or ongoing instruments aimed at attracting the representatives of specific and hard-to-reach social groups. Among noticed instruments, computer literacy courses for the elderly and the campaign “Looking for a Job” were episodically mentioned. Events organised for children were not specifically targeted towards children from social risk families or children whose parents have emigrated to work abroad. According to other TG representatives, people with disability were not offered any instruments, and they had not heard about the campaign “Make the Internet Speak in the Library” (only visually-impaired respondents were aware of this campaign, as it was targeted at this particular group of visitors). Generally, the elderly are the group which, according to most TG representatives, needs most assistance and attention when using information technologies; therefore, this group should be offered more programmes.

Libraries in public domain (indicators 2B, 5A, 5B and 8C)

According to TG representatives, the mission of the library is to disseminate information and educate (the library stores information and knowledge, which may be used by visitors through different means (books,

the press, the Internet); moreover, the library encourages to read and teaches visitors how to use information technologies). However, with regard to the information collected during the survey, the social mission of the library could be equalled to its informational mission. Over the recent year, the informational mission of the library has expanded, because information in the library is also accessed via the Internet. It could also be stated that the social mission of the library is more relevant to rural residents who lack places where they could meet and spend their leisure time.

The library in public domain is evaluated rather positively, yet it is noteworthy that evaluation often depends on the librarian working there. It is particularly important in rural areas, which mainly have one librarian. In general, the relationship between the librarian and visitors, as well as politeness and helpfulness are very important factors, which make visitors come back to the library.

The library is most favourably evaluated by its visitors, and two particular groups stand out of all the visitors - schoolchildren and youth and the elderly. According to TG representatives, they evaluate the library very favourably because it perfectly meets their needs; moreover, they have more free time that they can spend in the library. On the other hand, the library is also very favourably evaluated in rural areas as the place for both learning the news and taking part in events, get-togethers and social activities.

Generally, the major share of PIA users consist of regular library visitors. New library visitors are attracted to the library upon the librarian's initiative (personally (most often in rural areas), through various events, by encouraging to bring friends and acquaintances), or they find out about the library, its events and services from other visitors and their acquaintances. According to TG representatives, everybody knows what a library is and what they can find there, thus it's not necessary to exert additional efforts in attracting new visitors. Society has been informed about the appearance of information technologies in the library (or the upgraded computer base) in public domain as well – through notices on notice-boards, press releases, over the radio. No special measures for announcing information in rural areas are needed, since information in smaller settlements is passed word-of-mouth. TG representatives noticed some measures for inviting to visit the library or introducing information technologies in the library; however, they found it difficult to describe how the benefit of the library *per se* for the general public was presented. It could be stated that the presentation of the benefit is not necessary, since, according to TG representatives, the purpose of the library is known to all members of society. One of the instruments of presenting the library to society – websites of libraries – are not frequently visited by users; however, TG representatives understand that these websites are useful for external communication, i.e. reaching those visitors who have Internet access at home or those who rarely come to the library.

The appearance of information technologies in libraries has contributed to the improved image of the library, attracted new and encouraged regular visitors to come more often. Due to the increased number of visitors the library is considered by the general public to be sprier and revived. The projective task performed during the discussions revealed that TG representatives associate the library with such qualities as intelligence, modernity, activeness, innovativeness, communicativeness and friendliness.

3. Innovations and new content in public libraries

3.1. Indicator 8B. New content and services in libraries

- *Even in those settlements where PIA has been launched recently, computers and Internet are perceived as an integral part of the public library and evaluated as perfectly contributing to its mission: to educate, disseminate knowledge and provide information to residents -*

According to most TG representatives, computers and Internet in the library have become a matter-of-course and they are not perceived as innovation anymore. Generally, TG representatives associate information technologies with the library.

Differently from the results of the 2008 survey, in 2009 both new PIA users and repeatedly surveyed library visitors **pointed out** certain **changes** in libraries, **which are related to both modern and traditional library services**. Generally, most visitors noted the following **changes** in libraries:

- The changes in modern services were related to information technologies:
 - **new computers** were equipped in places, where there had been no Internet access previously (more often in rural areas);
 - **upgraded hardware**: old, worn hardware was replaced with the new hardware with modern accessories – headphones, video cameras (in both urban and rural areas), and the number of available/usable computers was increased – *„We received new computers in Igliauka, fiber-optic Internet is speedier, we can use it more quickly, computers are better and their operation is faster. It's time-saving. **What makes you think so?** I can judge it from the speed of opening pages, and the computer does not lag when browsing for information. Previously, we had to wait while operations were performed. **And you say that computers are also better now?** Yes, they operate faster, are more powerful and new”* (rural residents, Marijampolė County);
 - new or upgraded other **computer equipment** – printers, copiers, video projectors (in both urban and rural areas);
 - **changed Internet quality** – Internet has become speedier in urban areas, whereas in rural areas there have been cases of interference (*“we have a very poor connection; although there is a tower ensuring connection, it is still poor... the staff often calls to report interference, but Internet providers cannot explain the reasons”* – rural residents, Panevėžys County; *“Internet is a little bit speedier, which makes it easier to work with the computer now, as compared to the old computer, still...”* – the unemployed II, Panevėžys County, rural area; *“the same, it becomes speedier if you sit and wait until... <...> It seems to me to be an average quality, at least I imagine it to be such. I hear them saying “high-speed, high-speed”, but I think that it can be faster. Of course, it's much better than previously, when we had old computers that could not operate all applications and used to lag. Internet quality is different, and it depends on the time I come to the library. Sometimes it is pretty fast, but sometimes I have to wait. I say it depends on the Internet provider”* – the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area; *“last year [the computer] would load in 20 minutes, and now it takes only five minutes, and it used to lag [previously]”* – children, Utena County, urban area).
- Changes related to **traditional** services were ambiguously evaluated by PIA users (without distributing them by age, social status or place of residence): part of respondents said that the volume of books or press had increased in the library, whereas other respondents claimed that the content of traditional services had narrowed (*“new [newspapers] every month or every three months. We have one kind of press for three months, afterwards it is unavailable, and later on it changes again. Magazines change. It's not the case of continuous subscription. We have “Ieva” for three months, and then “Laima”. It's not continuous, maybe there is a lack... I think there is the lack of funds”* – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area; *“I can say that the volume of*

literature has decreased due to the crisis; both children's and adults' [reading rooms] used to have "Zarasų kraštas", if you want to read it, you can go only there. The number of new books has also dropped" – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area; "new and more interesting books [have appeared]" – children, Utena County, urban area; "the volume of the press has decreased, and there are no books and magazines" – the unemployed, Utena County, rural area, repeated survey).

Most respondents have not yet mastered the **LIBIS system**, since it was rarely mentioned by PIA users. Still, they have noticed to a greater or smaller extent that librarians could find books more quickly, see whether the book has been taken, or order it elsewhere (more often mentioned by urban residents) – "We have accessed the general Lithuanian LIBIS system, and we can use it, which is really more convenient, with that card we can borrow books in both Vilnius and here" (the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area); "finding books... for example, a person comes... it's a problem, I don't know whether I have to say this... a person comes and inquires about a certain book, and the librarian can quickly find it, because she cannot remember whether there is such a book in the library; therefore, she can access the system and see if it is there, and if yes, whether it is available at that time. If not, she can find out which libraries have it and order the book" (rural residents, Panevėžys County).

Changes in libraries are related not only to the services provided, but also to the **exterior or interior of libraries**: cosmetic repairs have been carried out in several libraries and the premises have become lighter or warmer, or the libraries have been relocated to other premises – "repairs have been performed, the library is now in the house of culture, which was in a critical state previously, the ceiling was going down in pieces... now it has been renovated, and the floor has been replaced" (rural residents, Marijampolė County).

- Computers and Internet have not only provided an opportunity for regular library visitors to use wider library services, but also encouraged infrequent visitors to come more often -

According to the information provided by the respondents about their personal experience and the experience of their family members or acquaintances, **users of new content library services could be grouped** as follows:

- **residents who have no Internet access at home or at work** ("there was no any other place where you could go, however good your friend is, but a friend is a friend, he/she has a personal space, and you cannot go at your friends' every time you need Internet, while this place is kind of public" – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area);
- **residents who have Internet access at home, but who come to the library** because of certain **limitations**:
 - **Internet connection time is limited** at home (e.g. it can be accessed after 5 p.m.), the **connection is too slow**, there is no Internet access for some time (various breakdowns, etc.), or the computer is very old and it cannot perform all necessary operations ("I have got a "set", but it's very slow, the computer is old, its capacity is low, it needs to have a clean-up" – rural residents, Panevėžys County);
 - **there are no computer accessories** – a printer or a copier (it is very relevant to children because they need to print their school assignments) ("**I see you have a computer at home, so when do you use it in the library?** When I need to print something" – children, Telšiai County, urban area; "these cartridges are very expensive, it is therefore cheaper to go to the library" – the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area);
 - **they do not always have an opportunity to use the computer because of a big number of family members** (more often elder respondents) – "when I have to let my brother use the computer <...> when we have to fight at the computer" (children, Telšiai County, urban area); "I rarely have a chance to sit at the computer, as I have an elder and a younger brother. And there is only one computer. And everybody wants it" (the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area); "it's a quieter place here; I have three children and a husband, everybody is pushing his way, and there is only one computer, and they all sit at it, thus I come here, take a seat without anybody disturbing me, and nobody tells me to go away or urges me to finish my work" (the unemployed, Alytus County, rural area, repeated survey);

- **they have Internet access at home occasionally.** Usually, these are elderly residents whose children have a laptop and mobile Internet; their parents have an opportunity to use Internet **only when their children visit them** (*"our daughter comes home with a laptop and leaves. So we can use it for some time. Our son-in-law also brings the laptop and we can use it for browsing the necessary information, and if we need something more, we go to the library"* – rural residents I, Panevėžys County);
- **residents who have Internet access at home, but** who go to the library **for a consultation** when **they fail to perform some operation at home** (more often elderly PIA users) – *"Well, once I tried to draw something, but I failed. So you wanted to draw something, make a picture? Yes. What else do you inquire about? I want to learn something, I ask them to show me how to use e-mail, or I want to find out something new. But you inquire about all these issues not during the training? Yes"* (elderly residents II, Telšiai County, urban area); *"At home I was afraid to use it, and I used it with caution, my husband would use it more often, whereas I would go to the library, because if anything happens, I will be at a loss what to do. And can you inquire there? Yes, no problem, and I have no fear, I also send my children to the library, as I don't know what they can do at home"* (rural residents, Panevėžys County);
- **children who most often visit the library to use Internet after school** (although they may have Internet access at home), when they **have to wait for some after-school activities** (clubs, training) **or the bus.** It is one of the more interesting and easily accessible forms of leisure for children.

- The quality of computers and Internet has considerably improved over a year and it most often meets the requirements set for PIA -

Most PIA users evaluated **the quality of computers and Internet access** available in the library as **pretty high**. Since most PIA users are not the specialists of information technologies, they usually describe these technologies as *"good"*, *"high-quality"*, *"normal"*. It could be stated that the quality of computers and Internet in libraries meets the users' needs concerning the technologies to a greater or smaller extent. Therefore, the opinion of most PIA users about the quality of computers and Internet has changed over a year, since during the first survey wave most respondents evaluated computers available in libraries as old and Internet access as rather slow (*"a powerful [computer], well, like... it is a normal, good computer. The processor is powerful, there is enough RAM so that the computer wouldn't lag"* – the disabled I, Telšiai County, urban area; *"it is very good, I have discussed it with my colleagues and I can admit that I have such speedy Internet neither at home nor at work. If we need something, for instance, I want something, I make a list of necessary items, and I know what I can do at home within an hour, while here it is fast"* – the disabled IV, Marijampolė County, rural area). PIA users described Internet quality as rather good; they judge the quality from the time taken to open a webpage and display information (*"positively, it depends on the speed, nothing lags, everything's fine, I don't have to wait for 10 minutes"* – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area; *"it's much faster. What makes you think so? Well, first of all, it doesn't lag. Secondly, the loading time is faster"* – children, Utena County, urban area).

Children, being more active and more advanced Internet users, **more critically evaluate the quality of computers and Internet** (*"It's not good at our place – YouTube songs are not full... There are really few songs that can be fully loaded"* – children, Telšiai County, urban area; *"...we have normal computers, they are not very fast, but it's possible to work with them. How could you evaluate the quality of computers? Well, it's good I think"* – children, Marijampolė County, urban area) **than elderly residents** who base their evaluation on the fact that they are not the specialists of information technologies and slower Internet connection is not a problem for them, as they themselves are rather slow at working with computers (*"if it lags a bit, it's not particularly fast, but we are no experts, thus it's enough for us"* – elderly residents I, Telšiai County, urban area; *"it's speedy enough for such visitors like us"* – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area).

- The book fund is rarely updated in libraries and the volume of ordered press has decreased; therefore, Internet has become more relevant to elder library visitors as well -

Although most PIA users think that the library, as an institution, is open to everybody and it is visited by people from different age groups, when discussing traditional and modern library services, the respondents said that they are **relevant to different groups of visitors**:

- **computers and Internet** are slightly more relevant to **schoolchildren and students** for doing home assignments or browsing for information necessary for studies; furthermore, the children who participated in the discussion find these services most appealing of all available library services (*"we can find everything, while books really don't contain everything"* – children, Utena County, urban area; *"children mainly use Internet, but they are searching for anything, except valuable things"* – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"Internet is for young people, whereas newspapers and books for the elderly, for whom a computer is a new thing"* – children, Utena County, urban area; *"I think it's for younger people now. **And what about mothers, fathers, grandparents?** Well, they don't read. **But we are talking about computers, rather than books.** They don't know how to use a computer"* – children, Telšiai County, urban area; *"well, adults read more than children nowadays. **And children sit at the computer?** As one of our librarians says, *"dripping their eyes out"* – children, Telšiai County, urban area; *"I have seen only few adults sitting at that computer. Mainly youth"* – the disabled I, Marijampolė County, rural area);*
- **printing and copying services** are relevant to both **elder** and **younger** library visitors (younger visitors need to prepare information for school, while elder visitors print different information and materials related to their occupation or leisure);
- **books and different publications** are more oriented to **elder** library visitors. **The press** is very relevant to **elderly residents** (they are the main readers of the press in urban areas). **In rural libraries**, the press is more relevant to a wider age group – *"everybody who are unemployed, who have time but no money for subscription, are particularly active readers in a village"* (rural residents, Marijampolė County). Elder PIA users find the opportunity to borrow books or read the press is most appealing of all library services (*"well, I would place books at the top. **Personally or in general?** It's my personal opinion. For me the library associates with books and publications. And only then computers... this type of service is also necessary and modern, but books will most probably always remain for me"* – elderly residents I, Telšiai County, urban area).

Generally, the perception of relevance of services provided by the library often depends on the respondent's relation to the library: if he/she is an active reader, he/she appreciates books to a greater extent and finds it to be the most valuable service in the library.

- Although there is the lack of new books and latest press, in general, the range of services provided by a modern library is said to be wide and more or less meets the needs of different visitor groups -

Most PIA users do not miss anything in their libraries in terms of services or the computer base (based on spontaneous mentions of TG representatives). An assumption could be made that being aware of the difficult situation of libraries and taking into consideration the current economic conditions, they do not expect to receive more. Most PIA users, when prompted to indicate what they miss in public libraries, most frequently mentioned that they **missed more and new books** (both children and elder visitors) – *"there could be several copies of one book, instead of one copy available at present"* (children, Telšiai County, urban area).

In some areas (both urban and rural), there is the lack of **computer accessories**, for instance, a copying machine (persons who want to photocopy some documents in a village have to search for other ways or go to the city) or a printer for printing larger formats (e.g. A1). As compared to the data of the 2008 survey, PIA users (both adults and children) of this survey wave did not miss any special software. An assumption could be made that those library visitors who cared about special software had already purchased personal computers.

The complaints made by PIA users do not concern hardware, but are mainly related to the **following**:

- **the location of the library** – it is far from the city centre (*"there could be some branch where we could come to read newspapers and magazines, and now it's in the back of beyond, too far, but as they said it is a new library. And they cannot open a branch, because they don't have 15,000 people, so that's it. Yet, it's in the neighbourhood, which is almost several kilometres away from here, and if a person has difficulties with moving, it is already a problem"* – the disabled I, Utena County, urban area);

- **the condition of the building where the library is located** – it is cold, there is no heating, there is too little space, it is difficult to access by people with movement disability, because the library is on the second or third floor (*"the library is on the second floor, there is no access to it by wheelchair, and even the entry to the auditorium on the first floor has a pit, and the elder of our neighbourhood cannot arrange fixing that pit. Besides, that ascent is too steep"* – the disabled I, Panevėžys County, rural area; *"there is no central heating, just a stove, and the head of library heats the premises at her own expense"* – rural residents, Panevėžys County, repeated survey);
- **inadequate space of workstations** – computers are arranged at a very close distance from one another; therefore, no privacy is ensured and the work may be disturbed by other PIA users. Furthermore, although the library provides the opportunity to make a call online or have a video call, it's sometimes forbidden as the conversation may disturb other visitors (*"current arrangement of computers ensures no privacy: people who sit behind your back can see everything you do; or there could be wireless Internet so that you could bring your personal computer..."* – rural residents, Marijampolė County; *"there could be a separate reading room, because now the computers, book shelves, reading rooms are all in one place, very compact, you are working with a computer, and I'm sitting nearby trying to read some scientific literature, and some old lady thumbs newspapers and smacks her lips..."* – the unemployed I, Panevėžys County, rural area);
- **working time of the library** – although episodically, the respondents mentioned that they wanted the library to work longer hours or at weekends; *"well, I'm not sure, but I have such an idea; I had Internet access at home and if I needed it urgently I would arrange the time for using it with my family members... but I know that people want the library to work at weekends, because it is closed on Saturdays and Sundays, and people have more free time at weekends and no Internet access"* – the disabled IV, Marijampolė County, rural area).

Several PIA users expressed a wish to have **different events** organised by the library, for instance, events oriented to teenagers (12–14 years old) (*"there could be more interesting events for us"* – children, Šiauliai County, rural area, repeated survey), or events where people could gather for a discussion – film evenings, a book club (mentioned more often by PIA users from urban areas).

3.2. Indicator 9A. Cases of innovations in libraries brought by the project

One of the main innovations noticed in libraries is the **user's personal registration** for Internet access. The key advantages of this innovation are the following:

- an opportunity to create a personal working environment in the computer and save documents (*"it's a little bit bewildering, because the password consists of the name and surname, and then you have to ask something. Yet, it's a positive innovation. **What positive aspects could you mention?** Well you sit at the computer, register, and there are no any other extraneous applications, or those children who hack leave various viruses, and now you just open your applications, do whatever you have to, then you log out and that's it. And nobody else can log in to your account"* – the unemployed I, Panevėžys County, rural area);
- quicker Internet access, because you don't have to address the librarian and ask for help or permission to sit at the computer.

On the other hand, most often the eldest PIA users (urban residents) noted that libraries launched **computer literacy training courses for the elderly**. The courses are currently held in urban areas, and have not yet been conducted in rural areas or have been planned to be held there in the future. These courses are not mentioned spontaneously as a new service of the library due to the fact that libraries already conducted different training sessions for residents through other projects (the courses "Window to the Future" were mentioned most frequently and were attended by a number of respondents).

Rural residents expressed a wish to attend computer literacy training **courses in their libraries**, because they don't have a lot of opportunities to go to the central public library. On the other hand, a wish to have courses at their place of residence may be explained on the assumption that local inhabitants maintain a close contact with their librarian, thus elderly people would feel better if they were trained by a person they knew (it is very important for this hard-to-reach social group) – *"they could organise special courses for at least a week in every library for the elderly, but not a "flash-type" training; the trainer should explain how to turn on/off the computer and teach other things. The training should last at least a week. At first one group, then another group"* (elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area); *"well,*

it's the best thing when the trainer is the person you know, e.g. a librarian can approach you and explain what you don't understand" (rural residents, Panevėžys County).

4. Social benefit for individuals and communities due to public Internet access

4.1. Indicator 7A. The benefit for individuals and its perception

- Over a year, users' perception of the social benefit provided by PIA strengthened and significantly contributed to the formation of the image of a modern and open library among public library visitors -

A positive tendency has been observed during the discussions and interviews with PIA users: **their perception of the social benefit provided by PIA strengthened and considerably expanded over a year.**

As compared to the 2008 survey, which emphasised the economic benefit of PIA, the current situation has changed: although users talk about the relevance and importance of saving financial resources, in the strong positive emotional background, they primarily highlight the social benefit of PIA (*"it's a big advantage that we don't have to pay for it, but we have the opportunity to broaden our horizon, life becomes more interesting, and we can keep in step with the progress"* – elderly residents II, Telšiai County, urban area).

Social benefits provided by Internet access **to individuals**, as perceived by all survey participants, **may be grouped as follows:**

- **Socialising/communicating with family members and relatives as well as establishing new contacts/finding friends both in Lithuania and abroad** (via Skype, e-mail, social networks, dating websites): *"for me it provides connection with my son, who is currently studying abroad, we communicate by e-mails or have a live conversation via Skype; here I can communicate for an unlimited time whenever I want, thus it's convenient", "maintaining contacts or establishing new ones both in terms of leisure or business"* (the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area), *"I communicate with people who live at a great distance: one in New York, another in Israel", "people get acquainted online, for instance, my granddaughter found her future husband this way"* (elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area). TG representatives mentioned that they had registered in different social networks, e.g. "odnoklassniki.ru", "one.lt". Through these portals they find old acquaintances, school or university friends and relatives: *"I graduated from the technical school 30 years ago, and now I have registered at one.lt, found my school fellows and have been communicating since; I can see how they look like now", "after I registered at one.lt, I found many relatives there"* (rural residents, Panevėžys County); *"I have started to communicate with my father, who has emigrated, more often; previously I had rare opportunities to access Internet; therefore, I went to the library"* (children, Marijampolė County, rural area);
- **Obtaining/storing information and knowledge related to the respondents' occupation and the growth of the level of literacy** (reading newspapers and information portals, other webpages found through the Google search engine): *"children get many assignments at school, which can only be accomplished with the help of Internet"* (the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area); *"you can learn information which you cannot find in books"* (children, Marijampolė County, rural area); *"I look through job announcements, I have registered on the job search website, and have been sending my CV"* (the unemployed, Panevėžys County, rural area);
- **Maintaining and varying social-cultural life, entertaining, spending and enriching leisure time** – games, hobbies (e.g. home interior design, floriculture, knitting, photography, health or political issues, making announcements, etc.), everything that is related to the organisation of social activities (*"I download films for my children, and old animation movies, everything from the past which is beautiful, also music"* – rural residents, Marijampolė County, *"I want to find out what's new, thus I read Delfi news and learn the topical issues of Lithuania"; "there are no Russian newspapers which I like to read, and now I can sit at the computer and read the press", "you can see other countries online, because you cannot afford travelling everywhere"* – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"I have started playing strategic games"* – children, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"I buy books from Alma Littera, I always order them"* – the unemployed,

Telšiai County, urban area; *"I take part in social activities; therefore, I sometimes have to write press articles or collect some material"* – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area);

- **Organising/arranging daily activities and other matters** – paying the bills, e-shopping, registering in the outpatient clinic, looking through the public transport schedules, booking travels or plane tickets, buying tickets to events (*"registration at your doctor, for instance, when you have to go to the outpatient clinic, it takes half an hour or more to stand in the queue among ill people, whereas now you receive a text message: all available times are indicated, and you choose the most suitable time for you, and afterwards you receive another text message reminding of your visit"* – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"I pay the bills, which makes my life easier, as I don't have to go to the district centre"* – rural residents, Panevėžys County);
- **Being in a social environment and communicating with peers/people with similar needs** – the library has been unambiguously described as the centre of social attraction, and it is the only place in rural areas specifically, where "life is happening", a place where "both young and old people" may find interesting activities (*"we come here, meet our friends and socialise"* – children, Panevėžys County, rural area; *"previously, people used to come, take books and leave, while at present many of them stay and converse, and you can join them while waiting for your turn"* – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"those who don't have employment may go out more often and socialise, instead of sitting at home"* – the unemployed, Alytus County, rural area, repeated survey). **Elderly residents particularly pointed out the opportunity "to go out":** *"now I walk, do sports, see people and socialise", "the library and church are part of our life, we don't have anything else", "it's a chance to escape the four walls, go out, have a walk, socialise, and it's more interesting then"* (elderly residents II, Telšiai County, urban area);
- **The use of PIA services broadens visitors' horizon, encourages them to improve, keep in step with the most advanced technologies, and strengthens their self-confidence** (particularly highlighted by elderly and rural residents, and TG representatives who don't have any other opportunity to use computers and Internet, except in the public library): *"everybody is happy that there has appeared a window to the future and to the world, and we have been learning, because we are afraid to remain illiterate and lag behind others"* (elderly residents I, Telšiai County, urban area), *"I have been improving, and every time learning something new, and in the future, when I learn it, I'm planning to have Internet access at home so that I can work with my personal computer", "you feel to be keeping in step with life"* (rural residents, Panevėžys County).

It is noteworthy that TG representatives favourably commented on all listed **social benefits**. When discussing the PIA impact on library visitors' life, TG representatives emphasised that with the opportunity to use PIA in the public library their life had *"merely become more interesting"* (particularly pointed out by rural and elderly residents). The comparison of the approach of rural and urban PIA users to the benefit provided by PIA shows that **rural residents and inhabitants of smaller towns**, when talking about the benefit provided by this service of a public library, **are particularly glad that Internet helps them clear their days and make their lives more interesting**. The same could be applied to another hard-to-reach social group, **the unemployed**, who are deprived of their main source of income after they lose jobs; therefore, they limit their leisure expenses: *"it is a pleasure, and we get few pleasures in life, it's just that endless crisis"* (the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area).

The provision of free PIA service in public libraries is also definitely related to saving finances/reducing expenses. Yet, it is not the priority. PIA users' comments on the economic benefit provided by public Internet access just confirmed the information obtained during the survey of the groups concerned, i.e. economic benefits are perceived identically:

- **Saving money** in several ways:
 - **directly – through the opportunity** to use Internet **free of charge** and save the charge for Internet access (both using it in any Internet café and having installed Internet access at home): *"the library has to pay for it, but we don't spend our own money"* (children, Utena County, urban area);
 - **indirectly – through services/information accessible via Internet**, for example, reading newspapers online, registering to an outpatient clinic, paying the bills (particularly, in rural areas), looking through public transport schedules, etc. Thus, they incur no expenses on transport or charged information phone lines (e.g. 118) (*"I can even save money if I need train schedules: if I call 118, the charge is almost LTL 2, whereas it's*

free of charge via Internet, so I can spend that money on a loaf of bread instead... " – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"I don't have to buy a bus ticket and go to the city to pay the bills, and it's really cost-saving, because when I have to go to the city for every letter or payment, it's not only money I spend but it also takes my nerves and health, if I don't get a bus back home"* – the unemployed I, Panevėžys County, rural area; *"not everybody can afford the subscription of newspapers, well, maybe one or another, but the national publications like "Lietuvos rytas" and "Respublika" are rather expensive to subscribe"* – rural residents, Panevėžys County; *"you can go to the cinema for the money you save, buy some clothing or a motor-scooter"* – children, Utena County, urban area);

- **Saving time** – as compared to the results of the 2008 survey, the time-saving benefit was mentioned very frequently during this survey. An opportunity to perform a lot of tasks/arrange work without going outside the library (e.g. paying the bills, declaring taxes, checking up for milk testing results, etc.) enables not only quickly solving relevant matters, but also using the time saved for other useful activities – socialising, education, work, etc. Although the concept of time is relatively less significant for rural residents and the unemployed than financial expenses, faster pace of life makes the accomplishment of daily tasks within a shorter time period a big advantage. Moreover, this also helps save both physical and mental health: *"you don't have to stand in the queue together with ill people, wait for something and get in a fuss"* (elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area).

When evaluating the benefit of the public Internet access service in public libraries, as perceived by PIA users, **not only the above mentioned benefit for individuals** should be noted, **but also the benefit for the community, because this service changes both the life of individuals and the entire library:**

- First of all, **appearance/renewal/modernisation of the PIA service** gave a chance of survival for several libraries, **merely helped them "last out"**, otherwise, they would be closed now;
- After Internet was connected, **the life of public libraries has significantly brightened up – the PIA service attracted new visitors.** It should be noted that part of them use merely Internet in the library, and other library services are not relevant to them: *"previously it used to be silent in the library, like in a church, and now there are more visitors"* (the unemployed, Marijampolė County), *"before these computers were brought, the library was very gloomy, it even used to be closed for a week or two, while now it is visited by a bigger number of both young and elder residents"* (rural residents, Panevėžys County);
- Furthermore, the **PIA service has become** not only **one of** the new services, but also an **alternative service.** After the funding of books and the press was reduced, **Internet has ensured the opportunity to read the press and books online.**

5. Competences and motivation of library staff for using information technologies

5.1. Indicator 2A. [Improved] competences and knowledge of information technology use of librarians

- Librarians' competences and knowledge of information technology use fully meet the expectations of PIA users. Their pretty high assessment has been also affected by the fact known to visitors that library staff attended computer literacy training courses, during which they gained knowledge and improved their skills -

When asked for a general evaluation of **librarians' skills of using information technologies**, PIA users described them as **rather good** or meeting their expectations:

- **Elderly visitors and those with very poor IT skills are particularly in need of librarians' help** when working with a computer. This group has the weakest IT skills and they need not only librarians' knowledge, but also their personal encouragement to use the computer or learn how to use it. According to them, librarians have much better skills than they have, thus they may help,

give advice or teach the basics ("I have seen the librarian to explain to that woman, in detail and clearly. It's easy, but the librarian explained everything in detail, about Internet, its icon on the desktop, which you have to click twice to open the start page. Well, I mean, in detail, clearly, where to close, how to exit and how to enter again" – the unemployed I, Panevėžys County, rural area).

- PIA users who are **30 years old or elder with medium IT skills** (e.g. those who were not taught how to use a computer at school) evaluate librarians' skills as good. According to them, librarians know a little bit more than they do, thus this group also needs their help. However, cases when they address librarians for help are rarer, and mainly concern applications and how to use them ("they help, for example, I didn't know how to register in Skype, and the librarian was the first person to show me this. It's not relevant, yet she helped me" – rural residents, Marijampolė County; "if talking about me and my needs specifically, they can help, but if I wanted to start programming or creating my own game, I think that I would need a specialist's consultation..." – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area).
- **Children**, being active and advanced IT users, also **evaluate librarians' skills rather positively**. Nevertheless, this group **rarely addresses librarians** for help concerning computer and Internet issues (adult PIA users, who have learned to work with a computer at school, also rarely ask librarians for help). Children more often address librarians when they need to find some information for their studies, or when asking for a recommendation of a book or some useful website ("you don't know the sites you need. Your search via Google and can't find them. **Who else can advise you? The librarian. What sites do you need? I don't remember, it was long ago. When you come to the library, they say or enter the addresses; I don't remember**" – children, Utena County, urban area; "I wanted to do more maths tasks and she showed a webpage of these tasks" – children, Telšiai County, urban area).

As compared to the results of the 2008 survey, it should be noted that in 2009, visitors with medium or higher skills of using computers and Internet evaluated librarians' IT skills more positively than negatively.

However, a **bigger part of PIA users are in need of librarians' help**: these are mainly everyday situations of using computers or Internet, registration in the users' system, or using other technologies available in the library ("the first registration of the public access account – I couldn't do it without the librarian's help" – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area).

A number of PIA users from rural areas pointed out that librarians attended IT training – most likely libraries were closed at that time, or the training was held right after the public Internet access was introduced in libraries.

A tendency has been observed that librarians have become more skilled in terms of **managing Internet content**, since they often recommend more interesting articles or websites, which meet visitors' needs ("I remember that our librarians themselves use Internet a lot, so when I go there, they offer some pages or links, something new, or something I'm interested in, well, anything, for instance, something on health issues... if they find an interesting website, they always share this information" – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area).

6. Information technology usage skills of public library visitors

- 6.1. Indicator 3A. [Improved] competences and knowledge of information technologies of public Internet access users**
- Indicator 3B. [Changed] practices of public Internet access use**

- With greater opportunities to use the Internet and computers as well as consult or address the librarian, information technology usage skills of PIA users have been strengthening -

A tendency has been observed that the skills of PIA users have been improving, and they have been feeling more confident when working with a computer and using Internet access. Definitely, similarly to the results of the 2008 survey, the youngest and the eldest visitors have the strongest and weakest

information technology usage skills respectively. Generally, the skills depend not only on the age of PIA users, but also on the extent of their daily usage of information technologies.

First of all, PIA users differ in the way they **acquired** their **current information technology usage** skills. According to the information obtained during discussions and interviews, TG representatives could be grouped into the following categories by age:

- **Children** (12–15 years old), who started using computers and the Internet with the help of **friends and family members** or who learned the basics **at school** (more often) or in the library (less often) ("*my friend helped me in the library*" – children, Panevėžys County, rural area; "*computer at school on my own, and then my brother taught me to use the Internet*" – children, Marijampolė County, rural area);
- **20–30 year old PIA users**, who learned the basics **at school**;
- The qualitative survey revealed the tendency that most **30–55 year old female** PIA users attended computer **literacy courses** (they needed it for their work; they attended courses "Window to the Future" or any other computer literacy courses), whereas **male users** learned to work with computers **on their own** or referred to their acquaintances or special literature ("*from books, e.g. about Windows, I thumb through pages and search for the necessary information*" – the unemployed I, Panevėžys County, rural area). As compared to the data of the 2008 survey, it should be noted that, unlike a year ago, children's help in working/learning to work with a computer was less emphasised in 2009. Most likely adults (particularly in rural areas) are more willing to learn with and consult a person who is similar to them by age and who better understands the problems faced by adults when trying to learn to work with a computer (e.g. a friend of a similar age or a librarian);
- **Elderly residents**, who learned the basics during computer literacy **courses** (organised for elderly residents previously and currently) or from **personal consultations received from the librarian**.

The information obtained during discussions and interviews about the **evaluation of TG representatives' information technology usage skills** enables drawing a conclusion that PIA users' skills mainly **depend on their age**, although **locality** is also important as regards elder visitors:

- **Children** have rather **strong computer literacy skills**, because:
 - most children **have computers or Internet access at home** (most children, whose parents have emigrated abroad, indicated that they had computers and Internet access at home); therefore, they have been constantly upgrading their skills while regularly using information technologies;
 - they have **special information technology lessons** at school, where they are introduced to the computer environment and various *Microsoft Office* applications (*Word, Excel, PowerPoint*); moreover, children need them for doing their homework assignments, thus they use the *Office* package more intensively than elderly visitors;
 - children are better at quickly grasping all IT or Internet related issues, because their **English language knowledge is better**, they know how to use different software (they are able to read the instructions) and all Internet content in English is available for them ("*we are used to these technologies*" – children, Panevėžys County, rural area).
- **Young** (approx. 20–30 years old) **library visitors who were taught how to use** computers or the Internet **at school**. This group has **rather strong** computer literacy **skills**. FGD participants of this age group frequently indicated that they also had an opportunity to improve their skills at home ("*well, typing in Excel or Word, and Google, I mean, there is nothing difficult in using the Internet*" – the unemployed, Utena County, rural area, repeated survey);
- **Middle-aged** (approx. 30–55 years old) **urban residents** or **residents who have computers and Internet access at home** have **average computer literacy** skills, they usually know the main/frequently performed operations (access the Internet, open e-mail, perform a search). Most of them use the Internet in a library on their own;

- **Middle-aged** (approx. 30–55 years old) **rural residents** have slightly **weaker computer literacy skills** (using computers and the Internet); they usually need help from a librarian or other persons (children, other library visitors). The Internet content they manage is slightly limited, since their skills are insufficient for them to feel safe and confident when using the Internet ("*step by step, at least I know that I should start doing it on my own. **Is it still difficult on your own?** I take my child if I need to do something more, it's safer when he sits together with me and sees whether I'm doing it well or not. **And how is it going with the Internet?** So so, it's my age...*" – the unemployed II, Panevėžys County, rural area);
- **Elderly residents** have **the weakest computer literacy skills**, and they usually need constant help/consultation from the librarian. They rarely turn on/off the computer or open/close applications on their own, but they can independently use the Internet – open other links on webpages and use the scroll bar ("*I can open what I need, e.g. a newspaper, and later I'm able to turn pages, when I bring the mouse pointer to the right position, I can read miscellaneous issues, or articles about health or rural issues... and the pointer disappears again... and I try again and also fear of not finding it*" – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area).

Except children, other PIA user groups have **weaker skills of working with the Microsoft Office package**. Even younger (20–30 year old) PIA users cannot work with all *MS Office* applications (particularly, *Excel* or *PowerPoint*). Certainly, elder PIA users rarely have the need of using these applications, thus they do not exert efforts to learn them. Because of the absence of the need, many PIA users do not use all Internet opportunities: many users do not have e-shopping skills and a smaller part use e-banking services (they are still afraid of handling their financial matters and paying the bills online). Generally, few visitors use *MS Office* applications in the library; the Internet is the main reason for using computers in libraries.

Availability of **computer equipment accessories** (printers, copiers) in the library is said to be a great advantage; however, competences of using these accessories depend on several aspects:

- the skills are **strong**, if PIA users **have these devices at home**;
- if **the only opportunity** to print and photocopy is **in the library**, PIA users have rather **weak skills or no skills at all**. Usually, library visitors are prohibited to use these devices on their own, and they have to ask the librarian to perform all the necessary functions ("*well, they don't let us approach the printer, not everybody can use it, it's the librarian's duty, we ask her to make a photocopy and she does. Otherwise, we can damage something, or run out of paper...*" – rural residents, Panevėžys County).

Generally, most PIA users under approx. 55 years of age have skills which are sufficient to use computers or the Internet independently. Elderly residents are a group of visitors which needs most attention in both encouraging them to use computers and the Internet and providing consultations and help.

- PIA users, who have an opportunity to use the Internet not only in the library, have better PIA usage skills and progress most rapidly -

It could be stated that the improvement of PIA usage skills of both adults and children depends on where they have the opportunity to use computers and the Internet:

- Library visitors who **have** computers and Internet access **at home have mostly strengthened their skills**, i.e. they gained skills which they most probably could not acquire in libraries, because PIA users cannot fully administer computers available in libraries ("*since the computer is rather old and pretty slow, I perform defragmentation and do the clean-up, afterwards I install any new programmes I'm interested in. **Independently?** Yes, I upload free software, primarily some anti-virus software*" – rural residents, Panevėžys County);
- **Children acquire new skills systematically** – through IT lessons at school;
- PIA users who use computers only in the **library** (who don't have the opportunity to use them elsewhere) **make the slowest progress, since:**
 - the **time of using** computers or the Internet is **limited** (mainly 1 hour);

- users **cannot independently administer computers** (they are usually not allowed to install software, change parameters, write data in compact discs);
- an increased number of visitors due to newly launched Internet access or upgraded computer base **prevents the librarian from paying more attention to individual visitors**, and PIA users cannot freely address the librarian for help, because they see that other visitors also need help;
- some users **are not willing to improve**, because they know that **the librarian will always help and perform actions for them** – turn on the computer and find the necessary information on the Internet (more often in rural areas).

Generally, mainly all TG representatives mentioned that **their overall computer skills strengthened**. These skills cover quicker orientation in the computer, on the Internet and faster typing (*"previously, I would type with one finger, and now I'm more advanced"* – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area; *"well... Internet browsing has become faster. I have been mastering it step by step, as I have improved and now I orientate more quickly"* – rural residents, Marijampolė County; *"I can do it better now, the reaction is quicker, and the hand moves itself. Turning on/off, browsing the Internet"* – children, Utena County, urban area). **Children** are a group which **acquired more specific skills**; they have learned to re-install *Windows*, install the anti-virus software, and work with different applications such as *MS PowerPoint, PhotoShop, Torrent* or other file sharing programmes. **Elderly residents are the slowest in developing** or improving **computer literacy skills**; they indicated that they usually forget what they have learned and they need to perform the same action many times in order to master it (*"I forget it, and I feel uneasy to call the librarian again"* – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"we are not that quick at assimilating new things as they [youth]; today they showed us several things which we will forget in a couple of days"* – elderly residents, Panevėžys County, repeated survey).

Children acquire new skills at school, independently or with the help of **friends**, whereas **elder persons** more often improve **with the help of the librarian** – in particular, elder (30 years old and above) **rural residents** and **elderly residents** in urban areas mainly master new things when using computers or the Internet with the help of the librarian (*"I have learned to work with scanned documents in the library, it was new as I hadn't encountered it before"* – rural residents, Marijampolė County).

Children were asked **what they wanted to learn** about computers and the Internet. Generally, it could be noted that **most children already feel competent enough**, and their intentions are more related to **mastering new applications** (e.g. *PhotoShop*) or more widely applying their current skills (*"designing my own webpage"* – children, Panevėžys County, rural area). Still, according to children's FGD participants, the acquisition of these new skills only requires their willingness and time, as they feel to be rather competent at information technologies and mastering new applications should be pretty smooth (independently or with the help of friends who may possibly know slightly more). An assumption could be made that **adults** have currently average skills which are sufficient for them to **use the Internet and computers to the necessary extent**. Further improvement of skills takes place in everyday usage situations and **additional special improvement** (e.g. mastering *MS Office Excel*) **is not particularly necessary for them**.

6.2. Indicator 4C. Activities for which the public Internet access available at libraries is used most commonly

In general, **the practice of computer and Internet use by adult PIA users and children in libraries differs. A substantial share of elderly visitors mostly associate information technologies with communication and leisure time. Children** are somewhat different from adults as they **associate information technologies, more frequently than adults, with science, knowledge or information**.

Essentially, **adults** (both urban and rural population) **usually** use the Internet in libraries to serve the following objectives:

- **Communication** (over Skype or e-mails, and certain PIA users communicate on www.one.lt) (*"I communicate with my friends or my son who sometimes travels abroad and works there, it's handier this way. And do you communicate over Skype? Both over Skype and by letters"* – the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area; *"my two sisters live in England so we chat on Skype"* – rural residents, Panevėžys County);
- **Reading news** and newspapers on the Internet;

- **Searching for information** about hobbies, activities, domestic work, other matters of interest (*"we read, we look for recipes or knitting patterns"* – the unemployed II, Panevėžys county, rural area; *"have a look and make a fountain or get a wine recipe"* – the unemployed I, Panevėžys county, rural area);
- **Looking for job offers** (mentioned by the unemployed PIA users) – *"I look for a job, I search for classifieds"* (the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area).

Communication over the Internet, as one of the biggest social benefits offered by the public Internet access, **in one year has become one of the most frequently mentioned reasons for accessing the Internet in a library** (a survey carried out a year ago did not put an emphasis on communication).

Other activities, such as **e-banking or e-shopping for goods and services were not mentioned as the most frequent activities on the Internet** because PIA users do not perform them often (fees and payments are made several times a month and tickets are only ordered as needed).

The most common reasons why children use the Internet in a library are the following:

- **Communication** over the Internet (similarly to adults, children (and more often, girls) communicate over Skype or by e-mails), yet a more popular means of communication is on such social networks as www.one.lt or www.facebook.com);
- **Searching for information for studies**: doing homework, writing essays (*"for school, when you need to describe a writer"* – children, Panevėžys County, rural area);
- **Computer games** (for instance, Counter-strike, Runescape) on the Internet (more often mentioned by boys).

Quite often, children use a computer and the Internet in a library for their studies. Even if they have the Internet access at home, they sometimes prefer to do their homework here, because they find a lot of additional material in a library or can ask a librarian for help. Undoubtedly, most of the time spent in a library is for games and entertainment yet the preference of students to do their homework here shows that children perceive a library as a place which provides knowledge and information and its employees can provide help and proper guidance (*"information is more relevant when being here because you do what you need at home"* – children, Utena County, urban area; *"I don't play much because that's simply not interesting and it's more interesting at home, you are at your own place with its conditions and in a library I get information and I go there when I have to make a project"* – children, Utena county, urban area).

7. Specific and hard-to-reach social groups and the purpose of PIA use

7.1. Indicator 4B. Experience of PIA use by hard-to-reach social groups

- A possibility to use the PIA service enriches the lives of hard-to-reach social group representatives, builds their self-confidence and self-esteem (for some people, for example, the elderly and the unemployed, it brings hope or boosts their self-confidence and self-reliance)

The examination of the needs for the Internet use by the research target groups showed that their common needs are identical to the needs of other library visitors. These specific and hard-to-reach **groups** (the disabled, the unemployed, rural residents, elderly population, children from social risk families and children whose parents have emigrated to work abroad) are interested in a variety of opportunities offered by the wide open Internet spaces: getting acquainted with people, communication, information search and similar.

Having a more detailed examination of each of the research target groups and their needs, their short description could be as follows:

- **The unemployed** are frequent library visitors: having much free time they access the Internet not only **to look for job offers and send their CVs** but also to **maintain their social life and avoid being withdrawn**: *“here I also communicate with a librarian and the people I know, we read papers to be up-to-date and learn what’s in the country and the world and finally, we spend your time usefully”* (the unemployed, Marijampolė County, rural area);
- **Residents of rural areas/small towns** whose opportunities for active cultural life are strongly limited by financial resources and geographically unfavourable locations of their settlements (villages are too far away from main/major towns where cultural life is more intense) think very positively about the PIA service; their **main need for PIA is to maintain the service in libraries in the future as well**. According to rural residents, without a PIA service rural libraries would have no chances to survive and eventually they would be closed down: *“the most important is to have the Internet provided, otherwise the library will be closed and we will be left with nothing”* (rural residents, Panevėžys County);
- The research team interviewed library PIA users having a variety of disabilities (including physical/mobility, visual and mental). Although the majority of them did not mention anything they missed in the library, yet when speaking to them **there was a clear sense of their need to know that they were welcome and would be taken care of in a library**, starting with a friendly greeting and attention and ending with the help on any issue (*“librarians are very nice and sincere women, and after browsing the Internet I go to talk to them because we come to the library not only for the Internet, we come here to socialise”* – the disabled I, Telšiai County, urban area):
 - **Visually-impaired** were happy to discover an opportunity to use new computers specially designed for the blind, with the special software and audio books on discs (*“previously libraries were only for healthy people because there were no such computers and now libraries have a different life, they can accept also visually-impaired people and there’s a special programme which scans the text from the screen and turns it in into a voice”* – the disabled I, Telšiai County, urban area);
 - **Mentally-impaired** PIA users highlighted that apart from spending quality time and communicating with librarians and/or acquaintances, they feel worthy members of society: *“now it’s totally different and when I leave I feel happier and my mood is better and I do not feel so undermined and have more self-confidence...”* – the disabled, Panevėžys County, rural area);
 - However, **other TG representatives believe that people with disabilities rarely come to a library** (because most often they have computers of their own) and even if they want to come to a library they could hardly do so on their own. According to them, the majority of libraries (particularly in rural areas) are not adapted for physically or visually-impaired persons: there are no special computers or wheelchair ramps – *“our library is on the second floor and there’s no way I can access it on a wheelchair”* (rural residents, Marijampolė County).
- **Speaking with children from social risk families there was a sense of a strong attachment to the library as a very important** place for spending free time (usually, they do not have any computers at home). The majority of them come after school: they search for the information for their studies, do homework, communicate with peers, play and if they get a problem they can consult other children with stronger computer literacy skills or librarians. An assumption could be made that being among people, watching their behavioural patterns and taking part, in one way or another, in the community life of the library, they gradually socialise and integrate into society (a positive impact for socialisation is also seen from Internet games, for instance, Counter strike and Runescape, because by playing them they learn about team games, they communicate with each other, discuss issues and solve the problems they face). Undoubtedly, a very important role and influence for the socialisation of children and their social integration is played by library employees;
- **Elderly residents belong to one of those hard-to-reach groups which require special attention and encouragement**. According to all TG representatives, **a customised approach should be used for each of those people, they have to be intrigued and explained the benefits of using the Internet, they should be given moral support, and their doubts and fears related to the use of the Internet and a computer** (for instance, breaking a computer by clicking on a wrong button) **should be cleared**. The elderly, as compared to other PIA users, perceive themselves as more passive; they think that senior PIA users' knowledge and skills are

very poor (as compared to the data of 2008, there is a positive trend: the findings of this year show that elderly residents get more and more willingly and actively involved in using the opportunities offered by the Internet). Furthermore, they admitted that they were very sensitive about their failures and errors, no matter how small they were. In that way, **their main need is for customised training dedicated only for their age group** (noteworthy, in places where such training was organised, feedback received from the elderly was very positive).

Therefore, the findings of a qualitative survey shows that the need, and at the same time expectation for the library, common to all the groups, is **the need to have a place to stay and communicate with others** (this had been, incidentally, mentioned by the participants of the previous survey about the library staff and other concerned groups' representatives): *"in a town like ours, a library is a get-together place, because people are not too busy here, grannies meet, read a few papers, share the news because one of them lives uphill and the other one downhill ..., children meet here and do their homework ... I would say that the role of libraries has grown with the appearance of computers; everybody is now used to having a better quality Internet"* (the unemployed I, Panevėžys County, rural area). The library is valued as a place which is best to respond to the needs, and its community function is strengthened. Admittedly, that is extremely relevant to rural areas and small towns which have practically no cultural life and the library is expected to offer more cultural and community events (*"well, take the library in our town, it is a pivot around which all the cultural life and enlightenment is turning; for wider masses to meet there's a library because our cultural facilities are moribund and that should not be underestimated that when you go there, you get connected to the Internet, you stay with people and take part in the events"* – the unemployed I, Panevėžys County, rural areas).

With the number of computers appearing/growing and getting a quality computer base in libraries (the majority of computers in libraries have been upgraded in recent years), the number of library visitors has grown and, at the same time, backed up the role and built the image of the library as the community centre uniting various social groups and reducing social exclusion.

The analysis of information about where and in which way TG representatives learned about the PIA service in public libraries showed that in a majority of cases they learned about the service in the following ways:

- **Thanks to the streamlined actions/initiative shown by community members:**
 - the possibility to use PIA **was mentioned/told/encouraged to try by a librarian** (*"we had this community meeting with our librarian and she told everyone who have no Internet access at home that it was available and they went to see it"* – rural residents, Panevėžys County; *"the librarians came and invited the disabled and spoke about the opportunity to learn"* – the disabled II, Utena County, urban area);
 - **friends/neighbours/other family members encouraged, made interested or invited to come together to the library:** very often TG representatives mentioned that people from their closest environment who had tested the service or used it more intensively invited them to the library (*"I went there with my sister, she played and wrote letters and it happened that I learned to do that as well"* – children, Utena County, urban area; *"in rural areas, there's a strong snowball effect: one tells the others, another one says "I've been there, now it's your turn" and so residents of the same town and more distant places come to see"* – rural residents, Marijampolė County, repeated survey). Another important share of the participants mentioned that they started to use the Internet gradually, first watching others browsing it: *"I was prompted by my friend and I learned to use it because I saw others using it, it happened through my friends"* – children, Telšiai County, urban area. Noteworthy, children often use the Internet together with their friends because they want to be with them and communicate together: *"friends encouraged me, I've always found books more interesting, yet I wanted to spend more time with my friends", "my friends and me, three or four of us, would go there, sit together, play games, communicate together or over the Internet", "I would go there with my friends, then I would buy a ticket and play games and later I got interested in the information for lessons"* – children, Marijampolė County, rural area.
- **By pure accident:**
 - by paying a routine visit to the library, the visitor **noticed computers and people working at them** and decided to try them; admittedly, children, in contrast to more senior library visitors, enjoyed the opportunity without any hesitation and at ease (*"I came and saw children sitting at the computers, I asked to be put on a list and asked one kid to*

show me how to use the Internet, I asked the librarian to help me find the information for my studies or find the websites for an essay to write and librarians know how to consult and I have been using it since" – children, Utena County, urban area; "I simply came to the library to take some books and I noticed the computers there, but they were not connected and the librarian told me that they would be available for use" – the disabled, Marijampolė County, rural area; "I lived and worked in a town, I went to visit my parents and told them there was something I needed in the library, something about the history of Krekenava... I went there and I asked them what was going on: there were computers there, with Internet connection, I knew I would not have to see my neighbours or call my friends, I could go there straight away, sit down and use it" – the unemployed, Panevėžys County, rural area).

TG representatives episodically mentioned **radio ads, notice-boards or posters saying "Free Internet here"** ("I heard it on the radio about the project "Libraries for Innovation" and heard their telephone number but I didn't dare to call them and then I heard that it was also for the disabled ... and I called their hotline and I was explained everything... and then I started using the Internet there" – the disabled, Telšiai County, urban area).

7.2. Indicator 4D. Existing programmes or other mechanisms to involve hard-to-reach social groups

- Seeking to maintain the loyalty of current library visitors and attract new visitors, single campaigns or events are not enough, it is essential to create long-term, continuous mechanisms targeting every hard-to-reach group and taking into account its specific nature and its needs -

In general, speaking and evaluating the programmes/mechanisms of public libraries or follow-up measures the purpose of which is to attract TG representatives, survey participants said they **did not remember or notice** any **specific actions targeting them specifically. Only in the case of elderly residents and, less frequently, the unemployed**, the summary of their own evaluations and those of other TG representatives revealed that **special events/campaigns/training** were organised for them.

- **Computer literacy training for elderly people was already arranged or planned to be arranged.** The idea of such training and its content are evaluated very positively. It should also be mentioned that having the most of free time elderly people are more willing to attend various events organised in libraries (all of them or according to their hobbies) and actively use traditional services. Therefore every effort should be taken to directing the elderly towards the Internet space. **The campaign "esenjoras.lt" was not mentioned spontaneously either by the elderly or other TG representatives**, yet when asked directly whether the participants **had heard about it, people of retirement age** gave a positive response **more often**. The majority of them could not say anything specific about the campaign or describe the content of the website. Only those elderly people who had stronger computer literacy skills said they began to pay more in-depth attention and were more daring to manage the website or browse it.
- **A campaign "Looking for a job" was organised for the unemployed.** Although only few research participants could describe the content of the campaign, they were all aware of it happening. Today, like previously (as confirmed by the survey findings of 2008), library notice-boards or leaflets left on the shelves provide various information from the labour exchange about the websites displaying job offers ("that was also taking place here, there were also people from the labour exchange, ... it was like a conference, everybody who is registered with a labour exchange gathered in a library, we didn't have to drive to town, we watched the entire conference and then we discussed it" – the unemployed, Alytus County, rural area, repeated survey).

When speaking about themselves, **children did not identify themselves as a separate group and they said all the children visiting the library** (and also those who are not yet library visitors) **are invited to a big variety of events, competitions and exhibitions.**

According to **other TG representatives and based on the evaluation of various mechanisms, an assumption could be made that children from social risk families** or children **whose parents have emigrated to work abroad** are invited to take part and they **do take part** in library life **together with other children** without specifying their status and without singling them out of other children. **In this**

way, equal rights and socialisation of children is ensured. The majority of children aged 12–14 and a few adult survey participants heard about the campaign "Create a Song for a Star". In general, the campaign was not evaluated in the same way: those who had heard more about it before and took part in it were also more positive about it. Campaigns of similar content (with proper awareness raising and benefits of such campaigns explained) could attract more visitors.

According to TG representatives (excluding the disabled), **physically or otherwise impaired people do not receive any special programmes.** They are rarely provided with suitable conditions (with the exception of major towns) to access the library (special entries or elevators) and its services (specially adapted computers and audio books for the visually-impaired). However, **the visually-impaired mentioned that a special campaign "Make the Internet Speak in the Library" was organised for them, whereas other** survey participants **had not heard about** the campaign. It could be said that since 2008 the situation has practically remained the same and people with disability still constitute a very small share of visitors.

In response to a question about the **target groups** to be chosen by public libraries to **provide IT support to**, TG representatives were unanimous in saying that most of support and attention should be paid to the **elderly people of retirement age** due to the following reasons:

- first, **the majority of them have no skills/experience of using the computer and the Internet** (*"they should target more elderly people because these days students and schoolchildren know how to use them and some of them perhaps have it at home or something like that, whereas elderly people are still afraid... **And who are those elderly?** These are the people aged from forty to sixty, there were no computers then and so it's more difficult for them"* - the disabled, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"youngsters learn at school, those who work learn at work, and people of retirement age are probably left with the only option to go to the library and, say, learn with the help of librarian, they have no skills... and they are restrained by their fears and if they know very little about it, librarians are the best to help them"* - the unemployed, Utena County, urban area);
- second, **they have a phobia for new technologies and they are not self-reliant;** therefore, they need special attention and encouragement (*"elderly people, from 40 to 60, need more attention, they are truly afraid to touch it, there are so many buttons and you have to know what to click on first... In the beginning, you need to have someone to show you to learn"* - the disabled II, Telšiai County, urban area; *"for all the old ones. Even with a mobile phone: my husband brings me a telephone and asks me to fix time settings, it's two minutes' late, even that is a challenge, hence people aged 60 and even below 60 should be encouraged to start"* - the elderly, Marijampolė County, rural area).

Episodically, an opinion was expressed that there are several other categories of potential PIA users: low-income Lithuanian residents and those who, irrespective of their age, had never "touched" a computer (*"impoverished people, hardly putting their ends meet. I can imagine them because rural residents have a hard life because urban people have more work and they meet in different events, whereas rural people do not go anywhere, they see only their fields and you wouldn't see, so to speak, a computer in their houses"* - rural residents, Panevėžys County; *"perhaps those who see them for the first time are interested and willing to learn more, and so these people need more help"* - rural residents, Marijampolė County).

8. Library in public domain

8.1. Indicator 5B. [Expanded] mission and areas of competence of the library

One could say that PIA users identified the mission of libraries similarly to what had been said by the respondents of the survey of the concerned groups' representatives. However, in contrast to the **concerned groups, PIA users did not emphasise the social/public/community mission of them as often** (concerned groups' representatives thought that it was the second most important function). Spontaneously, PIA users associated the library with the information, knowledge and education. Therefore, an assumption could be made that **the interrelated missions of information-sharing and education of the library are the most important. Other missions of the library** (social/public/community and cultural) are perceived as **more secondary and ancillary.**

On the other hand, bearing in mind the overall opinion expressed by TG representatives, **the social mission of the library could be identified as more important and equal to information-sharing,** and speaking about the role and the mission of the library **they mostly emphasised the missions**

which naturally related to the image of the library as a place which gives information and knowledge. A hypothesis could be made that **the social mission of the library is new and has become stronger only recently**, when economic conditions worsened and people started to look for alternative as well as cheaper forms of spending time.

The overall opinion of TG representatives is that the library has the following mission:

- **Information-sharing:** knowledge and information can be obtained in the library from books, the press and the Internet as well as by consulting librarians ("*provide knowledge*", "*remind about the history of old times*" – children, Marijampolė County; "*take care of new books*" – children, Panevėžys County; "*widen the horizon, offer an opportunity to learn more*" – elderly residents II, Telšiai County, urban area; "*I think that the library is a special source for collecting information*" – the disabled IV, Marijampolė County, rural area).
- **Educational:** several years ago this mission **was more passive** (i.e. visitors were looking for knowledge and studied themselves – "*for people to be clever*" (children, Utena County), "*people become more enlightened*" (disabled II, Marijampolė County, rural area)) and it **is becoming active:** people are encouraged to read, learn and they are taught. The **encouragement to read** and the emphasis put on the value of the book is becoming one of the key directions of the educational mission of the library ("*...this is simply to have people remember because the Internet takes you away from books*" – rural residents, Marijampolė County; "*perhaps even to promote reading, they bring more interesting books to encourage children to read*" – children, Alytus county, rural area, repeated survey). Recently, the educational mission has grown to include a specialised task of the library: **develop computer literacy of residents** ("*teach them how to use the computer*" – children, Marijampolė County; "*previously it was only educational and now there's training about information technologies*" – the disabled III, Marijampolė County, rural area).
- **Social/public/community:** a place to communicate and spend free time ("*to prevent them [children] from going off the track. It's an occupation and entertainment*" – children, Telšiai County, urban area; "*in such a town, well, it can be one of those get-together places, because people are not too busy*" – the unemployed I, Panevėžys County, rural area).
- **Cultural:** various events, exhibitions and meetings. This mission was rarely mentioned by TG representatives. More frequently, cultural events in libraries were mentioned when speaking about the role of libraries and their everyday activities ("*events, a type of communication and a wish to learn and even relax. It is also about communication with people or seeing the writer in real life*" – the disabled I, Utena County, urban area).

A discussion about the changes to the library mission during the recent year showed that **the change** was sensed not about the mission but about **the library as such:** "*it was stagnant and now it's more modern, there's movement*" (the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area), "*now it's of higher quality. Why quality? Perhaps because of these technologies we can achieve higher quality and information*" (the elderly I, Telšiai County, urban area), "*for some reason I imagined the library to be purely a source of information but now it has strongly improved because there's Internet connection and it is modern and smart. A person can get much more out of it*" (the disabled IV, Marijampolė County, rural area). An assumption could be made that due to these **modern technologies and services introduced in libraries their mission, particularly information-sharing, has expanded** and a visitor may use/access the information more quickly.

As compared to the data of the previous year, the trend has remained that the **social/public/community** mission of the public library is **more relevant to rural residents**. However, it was rarely mentioned directly by rural residents (except for elderly people from rural areas), yet bearing in mind their assessment of the role played by the library and their needs, it can be concluded that the social mission of the library is extremely important in rural areas.

8.2. Indicator 2B. [Improved] representational and public relations skills

- Librarians' representation and public relations skills are assessed through the perspective of measures applied to attract more library visitors and presentation of novelties as well as services and benefits offered in libraries -

In general, all the representatives of survey participants admitted that **the majority of PIA users were permanent library visitors**. New visitors (particularly in rural areas) come rarely, usually encouraged by

their acquaintances who are library visitors (*"in a place where we live, almost everybody visits the library"* – children, Panevėžys County, rural area).

In general, TG representatives think that **the majority of residents know what a library is and what things could be found in it** (*"because it seems clear that there is a library and the services which it provides"* – the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area). The **circle** of library visitors is **expanded mostly due to the following reasons:**

- **On the initiative of the librarian** (TG representatives think that librarians do as much as they can within the limits of the library's financial resources), **because she:**
 - **encourages children to bring their friends** – *"when you come, they say next time bring your friend"* (children, Telšiai County, urban area);
 - if that is a small town or a village, **sometimes personally invites the people** she meets (in a street or a shop) (*"perhaps she meets an acquaintance and invites them to come"* – children, Panevėžys County, rural area; *"when these were changed by new computers, I went to my neighbourhood and they invited me to come and see what they have changed"* – the unemployed, Alytus County, rural area, repeated survey);
 - organises various **events:**
 - quite a few events are organised for **children** – *"fairy-tales read to primary school pupils"* (children, Panevėžys County, rural area), *"competitions are organised, new books are brought and published on the website www.bibliotekos.lt"* (children, Utena County, urban area), *"an exhibition of pictures, selection of the most beautiful portrait of an animal, you read a book written by Lithuanian authors and you look where it lives, a survey of what it is worth reading books"* (children, Telšiai County, urban area);
 - **thematic events** to celebrate various **feasts** – *"our librarian is preparing an event for the Valentine's Day"* (children, Marijampolė County, rural area) or other campaigns (collection of money to buy a book of their choice).
- **OR the circle of library visitors expands by itself:** information about library services is passed **word-of-mouth**. Due to such oral communication residents learn about events and innovations in libraries (*"people call each other and say that I've been there, it's interesting, you should register too"* – the disabled, Utena County, urban area, repeated survey).

Similar methods were used to **inform visitors** about **the newly introduced information technologies** or the expanded and upgraded computer base. There is slightly more communication about that in the public domain. The library informed about modern technologies in the following way:

- **In public domain:**
 - **Notices** put on city/town notice-boards (*"we saw notices put on notice-boards, next to our school and there was also a notice on the first floor of the neighbourhood inviting us to come and use the Internet and that those who do not know will be helped to use it. Well, news like that spread very fast"* – the disabled IV, Marijampolė County, rural area);
 - Notices in **the local press** or the radio.
- **In private domain:**
 - Encouraging library **visitors** to use **other library services** to try modern technologies (*"When I was in Kėdainiai visiting my aunt I heard about one person encouraged to come and see and read and communicate. It's very good that they encourage"* – the disabled II, Telšiai County, urban area);
 - Presentation of a service during **a meeting of the rural community or a major event;**
 - **In rural areas** such information **is almost redundant** because due to the small size of such settlements, information spreads very fast **through interpersonal contacts** (*"from one to another, people meet and speak about where they have been and what they have seen and that they have been working with a computer"* – rural residents, Panevėžys County).

According to TG representatives, **the benefit of the library** is presented in every possible way in which libraries try to attract visitors and inform them about new developments (*"there are notices about the events and invitations to come and there's information published in the regional press"* – elderly residents II, Telšiai County, urban area). **The benefit of the library as such is not presented** and it is not stated that it is worthwhile visiting a library. Usually the librarian as a representative of the body speaks with visitors and offers his services and encourages to use them (*"the event is advertised and there's a publication about it indicating that it will take place in the library. Yet as a place offering services it is not*

that publicised" – the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area). Remembering that according to TG representatives every person knows what a library does and what can be found there, an assumption could be made that the PIA users taking part in the survey think that the emphasis on the benefits brought by the library is not necessary.

8.3. Indicator 5A. Reputation, public perception and profile of the library

- The librarian's personality and ability to communicate, his/her sincere willingness to help every library visitor determines a positive evaluation of the image of a public library. During the recent year, the occurrence/development of PIA also contributed to the improvement of the image of the library -

RATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE IMAGE OF THE LIBRARY

The library, in the eyes of PIA users, **is evaluated positively by their community** ("there's a lot of knowledge there, good employees are there: they help you if you don't understand something or if you do not know something" – children, Utena County, urban area). It could be said that evaluation of the library **highly depends on the employees working there** ("people should be of high opinion about the library because I don't know... because of the employees who are good and help you around" – the disabled II, Telšiai County, urban area; "well, our librarian is a very warm person and when she came to work here the number of readers and Internet users increased significantly. Well, the Internet came with her... she is a very communicative person and she has patience with those teenagers and the little ones and the old ones..." – the disabled IV, Marijampolė County, rural area; "it's important that they accept everyone like one's own and it's very nice to know that you are welcome" – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area).

It could be said that **a librarian is a person representing the library and creating its image, particularly in smaller towns and rural areas** where residents more or less know each other. In this case the library becomes an inseparable part of the librarian's personality and character features. **Libraries in town are more depersonalised and formal.** The majority of TG representatives agreed that the librarian's relationship with visitors and his/her attitude towards them is very important in seeking to have them come back to the library: "if she is unpleasant and shouts at you, then you wouldn't want to go there again" (children, Marijampolė County, rural area).

In general, a positive evaluation of the library is based on the fact that it **meets residents' needs and consumption habits, which have changed due to the economic crisis:**

- There are no financial capacities to buy **books** – "it's impossible to buy those books, they are so expensive in bookstores and when you live only on the unemployment allowance... you want to read those novels. So where do you go to? You go to the library. You get books and new literature there and you read it" (the disabled I, Panevėžys County, rural area);
- Cannot afford subscribing to the **press and magazines** ("newspapers are extremely expensive" – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area).

The findings of the survey performed in 2008 could be reiterated: **the library in rural areas** due to its social benefit and wider mission **is evaluated extremely positively** ("the library is the only cultural hearth left, there's nothing more, buses were removed. We are living in the stone age" – the unemployed, Utena County, rural area, repeated survey).

In this case, TG representatives **could hardly identify any social groups** which would **evaluate the library negatively**. According to them, a negative opinion about the library could be expressed by apathetic people who:

- **do not read** books;
- are **social outcasts:** homeless, alcoholics ("homeless people are not respected. **Why are they like that?** They are disappointed in life" – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area). This group of people is not very keen on the surrounding world and the library is not an exception.

Children also mentioned that their parents or grandparents were negative about the time they spent in a library (similar views were expressed in the 2008 survey report). This is because children spend too much time playing the computer ("my parents say that I will ruin my eyes sitting at the computer" – children, Marijampolė County, rural area).

Undoubtedly, **the most positive evaluation of the library is given by its visitors** (*"who read and who visit it", "who go to those computers"* – children, Panevėžys County, rural area). On the other hand, sometimes two groups are identified who **visit the library more often** than others and to which **the services of the library are more relevant than to other visitors: these are learning children and the youth and the elderly** (*"the smallest and the oldest"* – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"the youth are the most curious and the elderly have time"* – elderly residents, Utena County, urban area, repeated survey). According to TG representatives, these two groups hold the most positive view of the library. On the other hand, the majority of them acknowledge that the library is also very positively evaluated in rural areas – *"if there were no library, there would be absolutely nothing for the person in that village. There would be absolutely nothing"* (the disabled I, Marijampolė County, rural area).

In general, the majority of TG representatives think that **in recent years, the library has been evaluated more positively than before** (a year or two years ago). PIA users explained the change in the evaluation of the library **by the increasing flow of expanded modern library services** (*"they appreciate it more because there were no such technologies... well, the technologies were there but they were not so developed and now they have advanced"* – children, Panevėžys County, rural area; *"when there are more services, the assessment is better"* – the disabled II, Utena County, urban area). Previously the library was less frequently visited and a visitor would spend less time there (*"A person would come, take a book and leave"* – elderly residents, Marijampolė County, rural area) and now more visitors, more bustle, more stir can be noticed in the library. The change in the evaluation of the library has also been affected by the repair works and renovations performed in them: *"in our town it's one of the most comfortable and modern places where you can truly get various information and it is comfortable as such"; "the appearance of the library itself; previously it was wooden like a church, old and cold"* (the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area). The library, which has changed from both the inside and the outside, has become attractive to the visitor and has created an image of a modern information centre where people can spend their free time.

EMOTIONAL EVALUATION OF THE IMAGE OF LIBRARIES – projective task

- The emotional image of the library is associated with very positive personality features, high intelligence, attractive and modern appearance -

During group discussions TG representatives were asked to imagine the current public library and the library a year ago which turned into a human being and/or a car. These projections opened up the emotional image of the public library and its change in one year. Admittedly, this aspect was not researched by the 2008 survey; therefore, no comparative analysis can be made.

It could be noted that the library's projection into a woman reveals the feature of nurturing the library as it is seen by society and its projection into a car shows the level of the library's perception as a computerised place supplied with modern technologies.

The **personality** of the modern library:

- **A woman** (a man was mentioned very rarely and one could think that the library is directly associated with an employee, usually a woman, working there);
- Aged **40–60** (*"has tasted life but not decrepit"* – the disabled, Kaunas County, urban area, repeated survey);
- **Smart and educated** (*"a walking encyclopaedia"* – elderly residents I, Telšiai County, urban area; *"like a dictionary, knows a lot"* – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area; *"you ask a question and you are told a lot of things right away"* – children, Telšiai County, urban area);
- **Active, interested** in everything (*"would be interested in culture and events", "this one is more cosmopolitan, and the other one [the library a year ago] is more like a village woman, stuck in her daily routine"* – the disabled IV, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"advancing with innovations"* – rural residents, Tauragė County, repeated survey);
- **Communicative**, friendly, warm, **nice, able to find a way to communicate with a person**, patient (*"should be flexible, able to adapt, listen, advise and help"* – the disabled III, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"should be a tactful person, rather composed because people of sorts come here, with their problems and different opinions. Should be very tolerant towards the others"* – rural residents, Marijampolė County; *"nice, you feel like communicating with that person, you would feel at ease"* – the unemployed I, Panevėžys County, rural area);
- **Boring** (mentioned only by children) – *"perhaps boring, because inclined towards books and the Internet" <...> **Why boring then?** Does not go outside, always sits reading or browsing the Internet, does not go out to meet with others"* (children, Panevėžys County, rural area).

A few respondents imagined a **man** whom they described as a **respectable and self-confident person** ("*confident about the rightness of his knowledge*" – the disabled II, Utena County, urban area).

The change **in one year** is related to **better knowledge** ("*now she has better knowledge*" – the disabled II, Utena County, urban area; "*less knowledge from the Internet because several years ago we did not have the Internet*" – children, Marijampolė County, rural area; "*a year has passed and there's better knowledge and more programmes which she knows more about*" – children, Alytus County, rural area, repeated survey) and the **capacity to use modern technologies**. A year ago, the library's personality was somewhat **old-fashioned**, even older ("*she's getting younger, but her knowledge is old*" – the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area).

In performing the projective task, some of the respondents also imagined the library turning into a robot rather than a human being. The image of the library/robot is most probably associated with modern technologies, ability to respond to visitors' queries, multi-tasking, provision of relevant information, rather than coldness.

The library **as a car** was imagined in the following way:

- Rather **big** ("*the double-decker Neoplan*", "*to have space for everything*" – the unemployed I, Panevėžys County, rural area) or **small but spacious inside** ("*the current one would be really smaller than the previous one and everything would fit in it, even if it's smaller but it would be more economical and have more of everything*" – the disabled II, Telšiai County, urban area; "*it would be tiny but that little machine would be very smart*" – children, Telšiai County, urban area);
- **Modern, computerised** ("*you click on the book that you want and you get it. Any book: about love, about family and then you could choose books by their content*" – elderly residents I, Telšiai County, urban area; "*at that time our car was without a conditioner and now it has been installed*" – the disabled IV, Marijampolė County, rural area);
- **Attractive appearance** ("*it has to be light, visible from the far distance and welcoming*" – the retired, Marijampolė County, rural area; "*the library itself is colourful, it has so many books and perhaps it should be colourful from the outside and it could have a variety of pictures, snapshots and photos*" – children, Šiauliai County, rural area, repeated survey);
- **Comfortable, stable, safe.**

The car-library from **a year ago would not have any modern technologies** inside, it would be slower, **older, in need of repair, its interior and exterior would be unattractive** ("*rusty, worn out. It would be an Audi or Volkswagen*" – the disabled III, Marijampolė County, rural area; "*a Russian bus*" – rural residents, Marijampolė County; "*I don't know why I associate the library with a bus: a year ago it was a Soviet "LAZ" and now it's a double-decker NEOPLAN <...> you click on a button here and there and you get a coffee and with "LAZ" it was smoke and dust and the windows which wouldn't open*" – the unemployed I, Utena County, urban area; "*un-refurbished and before there were books and now there are computers. Now you have books in the boot*" – the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area).

EMOTIONAL EVALUATION OF THE LIBRARY IMAGE: creation of a collage "An Ideal Library"

- The development of an ideal library collage reconfirmed the fact that even the most little TG representatives perceive a modern library as something much wider than a traditional service provider. Its role in the life of children is growing and expanding. The library could become one of the key centres for spending free time -

During the discussions children were asked to create a collage "An Ideal Library". For the task children were divided into teams and supplied with various tools (magazines, pencils, felt-tip pens, scissors, glue and sheets of paper) to help them perform their task.

The main expectations for an ideal library shared by the children who presented their collages **could be summarised** as follows:

- **A nice and spacious library interior, a comfortable environment:**
 - **cosy, calm atmosphere, neat and clean environment** ("*there should be rest and light interior, modern when you come to the library, maybe sometimes you don't want to simply fetch a book, sometimes you feel like reading a little, sprawling comfortably on a sofa, it's more pleasant to read this way*" – children, Šiauliai County, rural area, repeated survey; "*to have carpets and a soft sofa to sit comfortably on, it's quiet here, you can take a book and read it*" – children, Panevėžys County, rural area; "*new furniture brings beauty and more comfort*" – children, Utena County, urban area; "*there would be a clock because*

my mother told me to stay half an hour and I would not miss time, there would be a picture to make the library look nicer and vivid and there would be lamps near the computers" – children, Alytus County, rural area, repeated survey);

- **much space, separate computer and game rooms, and a room to rest** (*"to have a rest, lie down and read a book", "the elderly jump to the computers and there's a company of friends here and they can chat together and there's a corner for small kids with games" – children, Marijampolė County, rural area);*
- **Modern, high quality technologies and various devices:**
 - **new computers with liquid crystal display monitors** (*"the size of monitors shows their modernity", "a clearer image, things do not get blurry on the screen" – children, Panevėžys County, rural area; "do not occupy much space" – children, Marijampolė County, rural area);* laptops were often mentioned, which are seen as light and handy to move (*"you can take yours to your friends"* – children, Utena County, urban area). Children also mentioned an opportunity to bring a laptop to the library, which indirectly confirms the fact that the library is perceived as a place to stay and communicate with other visitors or friends;
 - **high quality printer** (*"a good one, does everything, makes good, well visible copies and the image does not get blurred" – children, Panevėžys County; rural area; "a miraculous printer that would print five hundred pages in one minute" – children, Utena County, urban area);*
 - **high quality Internet:**
 - speedy (*"the page should open in three-five seconds" – children, Marijampolė County, rural area);*
 - wireless Internet (*"for laptops, you wouldn't need wires, you could come here with your laptop" – mentioned more fragmentally, children, Marijampolė County, rural area);*
- **Ensuring a wide range of services and opportunities to engage in additional activities:**
 - **a huge choice of books and magazines** (*"more books because it happens that you come and ask and they say they don't have it and they don't have it again, and for the little ones which they need for school, they needed that book "Sigutė" and there was only one copy available in the library and the entire class needed it" – children, Šiauliai County, rural area, repeated survey); "to have more magazines... "Panelė" ("Young Lady"), "Mergaitė" ("Girl"), about cars and scooters" – children, Utena County, urban area);*
 - **a possibility to watch TV** (a huge choice of TV channels), **where needed, a possibility to use a DVD recorder, a video-camera or a camera** (*"because there are events, they show something interesting and we need to register interesting moments" – children, Alytus County, rural area, repeated survey); "we want to have films and a possibility to watch DVD" – children, Utena County, urban area);*
 - a music room (*"the library would have a room with music, there would be a guitar there for people to come and play" – mentioned more episodically, children, Telšiai County, urban area).*

The majority of children described the ideal library as intended for everybody *"various people come here"*. Furthermore, it is important to pay attention to a critical comment, although mentioned episodically, i.e. equal opportunities to use the PIA service for both adults and children: *"there's one thing I don't like: there comes a person older than me, I understand I have to give it to him but he stays there from morning to evening and all time is used this way and it's impossible for me to use it"* (children, Marijampolė County, rural area).

8.4. Indicator 8A. Increased scope of local content on the Internet (library websites)

- Although PIA users acknowledge the benefit of library websites in disseminating information about the library activities and raising the library prestige, yet few people visit them and these websites are not used for wider communication -

In general, the library's internet **website as such is evaluated positively** and PIA users understand that it is a part of the library's image (*"it builds the image because it shows that library is there for a purpose because it had nothing before and now it has the Internet, its websites, it becomes more modern and tries not to lag behind"* – the disabled III, Marijampolė County, rural area; *"if you open up the library's website and nothing happened there for two months you think right away that nothing happened in real life and you can only read newspapers"* – the unemployed II, Utena County, urban area).

Few respondents criticised library websites because they did not operate properly or they were lacking information, for instance, about new books or telephone numbers.

Library websites are rarely used by PIA users. Rural libraries often do not have the websites of their own and the information about them is placed on a regional or town public library website. However, a few PIA users had visited them. **City dwellers visit library websites more often (at least once)** but very few of them use them: *"for example, I needed a magazine and I put a query [on the website] if they had this "Aklieji pasaulyje" ("The Blind in the World"). After a while I received a response"* (the disabled I, Telšiai County, urban area), *"you can even access the fund of the Mažvydas library through that website. They promote their events"* (elderly residents I, Telšiai County, urban area). In principle, **PIA users realise the benefit provided by library websites:** they provide information about future events, new books and contact details of the library: *"it's very good, I hope they will continue with their website and it's going to be good. They describe everything, what's on, the events, what will happen shortly, the meetings, and if there's no notice or a person does not want to leave home and has the Internet at home, how else can you find out about it?"* (the disabled I, Utena County, urban area), *"that improves the image of it being a modern library"* (the unemployed, Tauragė County, urban area, repeated survey). The library website is particularly **relevant for outside communication:** to reach the residents who have Internet access at home and rarely come to libraries.

9. Conclusions and summary (based on both the information obtained from the 2009 survey and comparing it with the findings of the 2008 survey)

Public Internet access users **positively evaluate the changes** which took place in public libraries over a year. In particular, TG representatives have **felt and noticed the following important changes**:

- **The importance of the library as a cultural/social/community centre has been gradually increasing** (this trend has been particularly apparent in rural settlements) and will be growing in the future;
- The **perception of the social benefit provided by PIA has been strengthening**.

Hard-to-reach social group members have also highlighted other important changes related to the **PIA service development and improvement of quality, i.e.:**

- **Contribution to the evaluation of the image of a more attractive, modern and open library** (it is increasingly strongly perceived as a modern information centre and a place to spend one's free time);
- **Building and ensuring an increased flow of library visitors**, increasing the level of readers' activity: due to the appearance of the Internet service libraries managed to attract elderly visitors (or encourage them to visit more often) and new visitors;
- **Determining the appearance of alternatives to traditional services**, i.e. a different financial situation of Lithuanian residents, high level of unemployment and reduced financing of libraries for the press and books encourage visitors to use the opportunities offered by modern services (for instance, read the press online);
- **Creation of favourable conditions for the development/improvement of visitors' computer literacy skills** (along with the assistance and consultations provided by the librarian).

Although the appearance/provision of modern services **ensures overall positive evaluation of public libraries**, seeking to **maintain the positive image of the library and present/maintain the relevance of modern services to potential/current users**, it is essential to take other important measures:

- Development of **long-term and continuous programmes** targeted not only towards hard-to-reach social groups but also at **new and potential PIA users**. This could cover the following:
 - **computer literacy courses** of different advancement levels which would be organised in response to the skills and needs of every visitor group;
 - **campaigns**, arousing the **interest in the Internet** by community members;
 - **events**, during which **the opportunities and benefits of PIA would be introduced in a practical and comprehensive way**;
- **Continuous publication of the PIA service by communicating the opportunity to use it in public libraries** and putting a stronger emphasis on **its social need** for the general public (particularly for those residents who do not visit libraries) by invoking:
 - **current PIA users** who are the best to promote the PIA service in their environment (for example, a gift would be given for every new visitor);
 - various **traditional and non-traditional means of advertising**. Moreover, the creation of **specialised groups oriented towards potential PIA users** (for example, children, rural residents) **and advertising campaigns** ensuring that the advertisement would reach the intended users;
- **Proper evaluation of the librarian's role** in the awareness-raising process of the PIA service and the **use of a variety of means to increase their conscious motivation** to make sure that the librarian uses his/her competences for providing quality services (the librarian's efforts, work quality and ability to interest the visitor have a predominant impact not only on the overall assessment of the library but also on the willingness of a person, who comes to the library once, to come back again).