



MARTYNAS
MAZVYDAS
NATIONAL
LIBRARY OF
LITHUANIA



THE PROJECT "LIBRARIES FOR INNOVATION"

**SURVEY OF THE LIBRARIES' STAFF AND OF
THE OTHERS GROUPS CONCERNED**

2009

(Instruments 5,6,7)

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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 are conducted both in a natural environment (at home/work of the respondent) and in the premises of our organisation.
- ✓ Focus group discussion (FGD). Each FGD consists of 4 to 8 respondents (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 fully 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:

- ✓ Experts concerned with public libraries or the Libraries for Innovation project
- ✓ Heads of libraries
- ✓ Librarians from urban and rural library branches, using or planning to use public Internet access

The list of experts with specified priorities was submitted by the Contracting Authority. It also presented contact lists for the selection of librarians and heads of libraries.

Group discussions with librarians were held in accordance with the requirement, set by the Contracting Authority, to survey librarians working in 4 Lithuanian districts (Marijampolė, Panevėžys, Šiauliai and Utena districts).

Seeking maximum representation of the situation of libraries in Lithuania, heads of libraries were invited from different Lithuanian districts.

1.2. Survey instrument

Discussion guides (instrument 5, instrument 6 and instrument 7), submitted by the Contracting Authority, were used to conduct group discussions and interviews.

In comparison with the instruments of surveys conducted in 2008, discussion guides for the 2009 survey were adjusted in consultation with the Contracting Authority and with a view to establishing project impact assessment over a year.

1.3. Technical report of the survey

The survey included:

- ✓ 8 in-depth interviews with experts (conducted in Vilnius)
- ✓ 2 focus group discussions with librarians (overall, 19 participants) in Kaunas and Šiauliai
- ✓ 3 focus group discussions with heads of libraries (overall, 19 participants) in Kaunas, Šiauliai and Vilnius. Although the terms of reference envisaged 2 FGDs (10 participants in each discussion), taking into consideration the aspects of gathering and conducting the group, the decision to organise 3 midi FGDs (6–7 participants in each discussion) was coordinated with the Contracting Authority. It was based on the following reasons:
 - Due to considerable busyness of the target group representatives (heads of libraries), it is difficult to arrange a meeting of ten heads of libraries in a specified place at a predefined time.

- Furthermore, due to the nature of their functions, heads of libraries may typically provide a lot of interesting and useful information. Therefore, a smaller number of participants provides better opportunities for each of them to elaborate on his/her opinion or evaluation.

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.
- ✓ Concerning the comparison of results with the Survey of Staff of Libraries and Representatives of Other Groups Concerned 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 (several new indicators were introduced in this year's survey*), 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 TNS Gallup Lithuania.

* New indicators:

- 2C. [Improved] competences and knowledge of Internet resources use and e-services of librarians
- 2D. [Improved] competences and knowledge of librarians in service of visitors with special needs
- 3A. [Improved] competences and knowledge of information technologies of public Internet access users
- 3B. [Changed] practices of public Internet access use
- 4B. Experiences of public Internet access use of difficult to reach groups

2. Summary of survey results

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

Innovations and new content in public libraries are basically related to modern library services. Traditional services (lending of books, press, various events) have not been expanded or the new content hasn't been developed. Development of modern services and new content are mainly related to the Libraries for Innovation project: the computer base has been replenished with advanced hardware, high-speed Internet has been connected and competencies of librarians have been trained. Concerning the new content in urban and rural libraries, it should be noted that although several rural branches already had Internet access due to the previous projects, a large number of these branches had neither computers nor Internet access before the Libraries for Innovation project took place. After the project was implemented, they started providing free of charge public Internet access services. The hardware base of urban branches (funded by this project) has also been upgraded (e.g. old computers have been replaced with new ones).

Target group representatives did not indicate specific innovations launched within the framework of the project Libraries for Innovation. Overall project contribution is assumed to be perceived as the essential innovation in public libraries. Computer literacy training for visitors is perceived as a future innovation in libraries, directly related to the project.

Support for public libraries having public Internet access (indicators 10A and 10B)

Technical maintenance in public libraries is related to the number of IT specialists and quality of technical support. On the one hand, no cardinal changes have been recorded in relation to technical maintenance, since no new IT specialists were employed, although the number of workstations has increased. On the other hand, technical support of the modern computer base is inadequate due to the insufficient number of IT specialists and tighter budgets of public libraries (particularly evident in rural libraries).

The quality of methodological aid for public libraries is evaluated as of very high quality. Materials delivered to libraries are numerous, very clear and comprehensible. Methodological materials developed under the Libraries for Innovation project are much more advantageous than the materials delivered to part of the libraries during previous Internet access launch projects. However, these methodological materials are insufficiently resorted to in practice (when servicing visitors or solving problems). No differences in evaluating methodological aid have been observed between rural and urban libraries.

Social benefit for individuals and communities due to public Internet access (indicators 7B and 7C)

According to librarians, the benefit provided by public Internet access to the community is social, rather than economic. Social benefit encompasses not only the opportunity to communicate with friends and other close people online, search for information or engage in leisure activities online, but also the opportunity for the library to become a centre of attraction, a place where people can stay, spend their time and communicate. Expansion of the public Internet access network contributes to the creation of a modern and open library and reduction of social exclusion. Social benefit for the community is greater in rural areas (as compared to urban areas); due to more complicated communication, vanishing cultural centres or a weak local community, a library remains the sole source of information and culture in a rural area, which fulfils an important function of the community centre. Experts have more frequently highlighted the overall benefit provided by Internet, which is related to the economic aspects (saving time and money).

Competencies and motivation of library staff for using information technologies (indicators 2A and 2C)

Over a year, the competencies of librarians improved due to a greater number of public Internet access points, training, methodological materials and daily practice. However, librarians develop slower than public library *per se* because of the lack of librarians' motivation and their conservative attitude towards innovations. Generally, librarians' motivation is forced, rather than conscious; they are likely to resign themselves to inevitable learning of using various IT, and they learn. With the services rendered by libraries becoming more modern, librarians remain rather conservative; they do not perceive that librarians are becoming providers of more modern services.

When assessing librarians' competencies, both heads of libraries and librarians are likely to evaluate them as satisfactory (7 points out of 10). As compared to the competencies of public library visitors, librarians' competencies are more likely average: their skills are less developed than the skills of younger library visitors, but more developed than the skills of senior visitors who need assistance and consultation.

Overall, librarians possess strong skills of working with special software such as LIBIS. These competencies are developed better than those of library visitors. Competencies with Internet Explorer are also rather strong; however, librarians' opportunities for using Internet resources are restricted by the lack of command of the English language. The skills of working with MS Office package are weaker: they are better with Microsoft Word, but weaker concerning other package applications.

According to the data of the qualitative survey, a librarian is currently a facilitator for a public Internet access user, rather than a consultant or trainer. Librarians' ability to help is directly related to the level of their personal skills. It should be noted that librarians typically try to help visitors in any situation – by invoking their colleagues, family members or relatives, other library visitors or library IT specialists. Several experts indicated that at present librarians find themselves in a situation where they are forced to help visitors, although this type of help is not expressly specified in their job description. Visitor service training to be launched will help to develop librarians' pedagogical skills.

Information technology skills of public library users (indicators 3A and 3B)

According to librarians, heads of libraries and experts (librarians could better evaluate the change in visitors' competencies over a year due to their constant contact with visitors, while heads of libraries and experts could evaluate the change more hypothetically), the skills of public library users improved over a year. According to TG representatives, the level of skills of rural library visitors is lower than that of urban library visitors. Generally, improvement of skills depends not only on the expanded network of public Internet access points and greater opportunities to use Internet, but also on the personality and inquisitiveness of the person. According to TG representatives, librarians' contribution to the improved skills of visitors is also present – seniors in particular are in greater need for training and consultations, thus the help they receive from librarians is very useful for the development of their skills.

Specific and hard to reach social groups and their experience in using public Internet access (indicators 4B, 4D and 2D)

According to librarians and heads of libraries, Internet usage practice of representatives of specific and hard to reach social groups does not basically differ from other groups. On the other hand, their attitude towards a library as an institution differs; for them it is a place to spend their free time, stay, socialise and meet peers (in particular, children from social risk families, pensioners). The only specific, hard to reach social group which does not have full access to library services is people with disabilities. Due to poorly developed infrastructure (not adjusted pavements, stairwells in multi-dwelling buildings, public transport) and part of libraries that have no special approaches and entrances, people with movement disability cannot access public libraries. However, the image of a library as a community centre has strengthened, and a library as an institution has been increasingly contributing to reducing social exclusion (in particular, rural libraries).

According to librarians, special events are not organised for children and pensioners (library events are targeted at all visitors). Since representatives of these specific groups (children from social risk families, pensioners) visit libraries very often, they do not need to be additionally motivated. Events oriented to the unemployed are organised in libraries together with the Labour Exchange or other institutions. These events are more purposive and oriented towards strengthening job search capacities. Special events for the disabled are rarely organised, since they are rare visitors to libraries due to insufficiently developed infrastructure.

Although librarians and heads of libraries believe that library's staff is ready to serve visitors with special needs (e.g. visitors with sight disability), their readiness is more likely theoretical, because librarians have not many opportunities to demonstrate their skills of serving these visitors, as they rarely come to libraries. People with movement disability are serviced at home, by delivering books and taking the books they have already read. The knowledge and competencies of librarians in servicing representatives of specific groups (e.g. visitors with sight disability) have improved, which has in turn made the work process easier and increased self-confidence.

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

The qualitative survey revealed that over a year public libraries expanded their mission (e.g. particularly the mission of information with the appearance of new sources of information search due to public Internet access; and reinforced social/public mission which corresponds to the social benefit provided to society). According to target group representatives, the mission of libraries in rural areas is even wider (as compared to libraries in urban areas) due to the insufficient number of cultural and educational institutions. Public Internet access points provide rural population with new opportunities (which existence they could never imagine or have just heard about them).

Generally, libraries to the public are introduced by employing old, traditional methods. Librarians and heads of libraries evaluate this fact favourably and consider themselves to adequately present library services and benefit to society. Meanwhile, many experts think that these measures do not reach potential visitors and are oriented only to regular library visitors. As an institution, a library does not have an innovative and long-term public relations campaign which could strengthen the image of a modern library and introduce it to the part of society who are rare visitors.

Librarians' competencies to represent the library when communicating with the politicians could be considered very weak; however, a library, being the place that attracts communities, is very appealing to politicians when introducing their political programmes. Representation of libraries in media is mainly limited to local media which releases information about the events and innovations in libraries on a regular basis.

Despite the fact that libraries do not conduct any purposeful and long-term public relations campaign, librarians and heads of libraries are of the opinion that the image of a library has improved in the general public. The main reason for this improvement is the processes that took place within the framework of the Libraries for Innovation project. These processes cover renovation of libraries, development of modern information technologies, and the advertising campaign which reminds society of a library. One of the indicators of the improved image of libraries is the increasing number of visitors. Surely, the number of visitors has grown not only because of the new content of services in libraries, but also due to the economic situation, where limited financial resources prevent from buying a book or subscribing to/buying a newspaper. Still, libraries are most favourably evaluated by their visitors, whereas evaluations of the part of society, who are not regular visitors, are based on their recollections of their last visits.

The projection task (TG representatives were asked to imagine present public library as a person or a car, and try to describe the person – age, sex, character traits, occupation, or the car – appearance, technical properties) carried out with all target group representatives revealed the emotional image of a public library, which has improved over recent 1–2 years. During this period, libraries became more modern, "unbent", and "became more self-confident". However, several experts were likely to believe that present libraries remained conservative and shun innovations.

One of the possible ways to disseminate information about libraries is the libraries' websites. Their potential has not yet been used to the full, although heads of libraries assured that the focus on library websites had intensified. Librarians contribute to library websites through providing information on library events to the central library.

Local, regional and national funding (indicators 6A and 6B)

Generally, the financial state of libraries is rather poor (regardless of whether it is a rural or urban library). The Government has cut down the funds allocated; therefore, the book stock has been replenished inadequately, subscription to several periodicals has been renounced, and the number of employees has been reduced (several branches are likely to be closed, too). All this may result in increased dissatisfaction of visitors, and the library may lose its visitors or become incapable of satisfying their needs in the long run.

According to the target group representatives, funding of public Internet access has significantly increased, which helps to retain current visitors and attract new ones. On the other hand, heads of libraries are slightly more pessimistic with regard to the future and funding of public Internet access. Libraries have already faced difficulties concerning payment for Internet services due to reduced funding. After the completion of the project "Libraries for Innovation", no positive changes are observed concerning funding of libraries in the long range. Consequently, libraries will not be able to upgrade hardware, which will result in the decreased number of visitors.

3. Innovations and new content in public libraries

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

- Launching modern services is viewed as one of the most important indicators of innovation in public libraries -

With a view to evaluating the changes implemented in libraries, focus should be shifted to whether and how the services rendered by libraries have changed and what is considered to be a change in the package of services provided.

When analysing the services provided by the libraries, heads of libraries distinguished between **traditional** and **modern** services. According to them, traditional services included lending of books, accessible press, various events and cultural activities in libraries. They generally related modern services to information technologies and their introduction in libraries – “*Internet, scanning, copying, printing, faxing*” (heads of libraries). Training is the latest service that has already supplemented (training for librarians) or will supplement (training for visitors on how to use public Internet access) the range of services provided (as compared to the data of the 2008 survey, training has undergone great changes; training for librarians is now considered to be a consistent and purposefully planned activity, unlike a year ago). Other target groups also indicated these services, yet they did not distinguish them into the groups differentiated by heads of libraries. According to TG representatives, **provision of modern services under difficult economic conditions is practically the only chance for libraries to survive, since modern services fill the gap of traditional services which has emerged due to reduced national funding** (e.g. an opportunity to read books/periodicals online compensates the lack of new books and publications).

The analysis of most valued services revealed that:

- **librarians** consider traditional services, specifically **books and lending of books**, as the true representative of genuine **spirit of the library**;
- meanwhile **most heads of libraries and experts** have a wider approach, and they value **“knowledge”** and **“information”**, the source of which (whether it is a traditional product/service – book/lending of books, or a modern product/service – Internet/provision of Internet) is irrelevant.

Still, although according to librarians, lending of books is one of the most valued services, **traditional services have not expanded**, or the new content related to traditional services has not been introduced in public libraries over a year (agreed by all target group representatives). All **changes** indicated by survey participants are basically **related to modern services of libraries**, which have been introduced mainly due to the Libraries for Innovation project or through financing by other funds (e.g. the Ministry of the Interior, or the case of Klaipėda District Public Library where overall modernisation was carried out with the help from other funds and projects). Target group representatives felt these changes through:

- **improved skills of librarians due to training** – they enable them providing assistance of higher quality to visitors whose skills are weaker than those of library employees (“*we had training and received certificates – although we completed 4 modules out of 8, we have learned something anyway*” – librarians; “*we are able to provide knowledge for readers – teach and help them, whereas previously we did not have that knowledge*” – librarians);
- **upgraded technical base:**
 - **increased number of Internet access points.** Several libraries which had a larger number of computers equipped separate computer rooms for children and adults (“*in Alytus, there were 7 old computers in the reading room, and now another reading room with 10 workstations was equipped. So, we have 17 computers*” – heads of libraries; “*previously we had a common computer room for children and adults, but thanks to this project, we equipped a new room for adults only, with brand new computers, because children are not considerate about equipment, they do not save it, be it 10 or 15 computers, thus we wanted adults to have a quiet place, without all that children’s noise*” – heads of libraries);

- replacement of old **hardware** with the **new, more advanced** hardware;
- introduction of **modern accessories** to computers (video cameras, headphones, different multifunctional equipment for scanning, printing, etc.) (*"what we had was really old, and now we can have new tools: we have headphones, thus children may listen to music, play games, may use anything they want, besides, there is Skype – they may communicate" – librarians*);
- **increased Internet speed** and improved Internet quality (*"there is no lagging" – librarians, "Internet was really slow and of low quality, connection was constantly really poor" – heads of libraries; "the quality is really different now, we can work normally, and TEO connection is particularly good" – heads of libraries*).

This resulted in improved services rendered by public libraries:

- Services related to **different types of equipment** for printing, copying, scanning or video-conferencing. Urban libraries and several rural libraries already had part of this equipment, yet over a year it was upgraded or new equipment was provided to libraries which had not had it previously (*"they ask to print or scan something, and you can do it very quickly" – librarians*);
- Services related to **Internet content** (occasionally related to new services by all target group representatives) used by senior visitors, e.g. income declaration (*"if the distance to the city is 75 kilometres, they really come to the library and declare their income with our help and needed application is available online" – heads of libraries; "very evident declaration through the State Tax Inspectorate. It is a positive thing for people. You don't have to go anywhere, when you have login data; I had as much as 40 declarations this year, last year it was 25, whereas the initial number was 5–6" – librarians*), registering for health care services or e-banking.

However, the changes in the services provided by libraries (both when compared to the data of the 2008 survey and viewed generally) are more likely related to **improved quality**. On the other hand, it should be noted that these **modern services are completely new** in some **rural areas**, since they had no public Internet access previously.

Expansion of services provided basically faces the lack of additional funding. Still, the services occasionally mentioned by target group representatives could be grouped under the following **directions of improvement/development**:

- **Improving service of visitors:**
 - Extended service of visitors by extending working hours of libraries and providing the opportunity to return books after working hours through special boxes set next to the library (the latter project is planned to be implemented across the country next year) (mentioned by experts and heads of libraries; *"the project that will be implemented next year – returning of books, for instance at weekend – there will be special boxes and readers passing by will be able to put the book in that box, where our employees will find them on a workday" – heads of libraries; "there are libraries [abroad], where you don't necessarily have to come during working hours if you want to return a publication or a book; there are special counters, where you bring the book and leave it there; you can do it even at night if you pass by the library; it is really a flexible system" – expert 5, Information Society Development Committee (hereinafter referred to as the ISDC)*);
 - Delivery of books at home for people who do not have time to come to the library (this service was mentioned hypothetically as one of the possibilities; and considered to be charged) (mentioned by the expert; *"it's delivery of books to the place, i.e. libraries bring books to the place of residence or a workplace. For example, I'm now a very busy person and have no time to go to the library. And I would like to have a book delivered to the place I indicate" – expert 1, Lithuanian Research Library Consortium*);
 - Information search service (this service was mentioned hypothetically as one of the possibilities; and considered to be charged) (mentioned by the expert; *"if a person does not need a whole book, for instance a text book or some scientific article, but only a part of it, he could pay and have this part delivered to him" – expert 5, ISDC*);
- Services related to **content available in libraries**:

- Development of new content accessible via Internet – books, articles, digitalising information, cooperation with other institutions (e.g. by transferring material from archives and adding it to the information stored in the library) (mentioned by heads of libraries and the expert; *“for instance, archives where you could find your family tree – we don’t have it; libraries could be connected to archives”* – heads of libraries; *“if the document or book is scanned, there is, of course, copyright and other issues that have to be observed, but in such a case you don’t have to go to the library physically”* – expert 5, ISDC);
- **Making** library services **public** and updating current services – improving **traditional services** through the change of conservative events for visitors, e.g. creating new reader clubs (mentioned by the expert; *“I don’t want that libraries would refuse meetings with writers – it has been a tradition from the Soviet times, but now there is a need for more professional and more interesting events where children would be involved in the process. I think it lacks such things as reading clubs. There is also lack of communication with schools. Well, the number of discussions and reading clubs for adults is really small, as compared to the number of libraries”* – expert 4, Office of the President).

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

When asked to enumerate examples of innovations in libraries, target group representatives found the task difficult and **could not indicate or did not know any other innovations** that were introduced while implementing the Libraries for Innovation project. It could be assumed that many new things were introduced over a year, and they are generally related to the improved quality of information technology base; therefore, they found it difficult to point out specific cases of innovations, or the **overall contribution of the project was viewed as one essential innovation in libraries.**

Librarians more often related innovations to the implementation of the project “Libraries for Innovation”:

- **Renovation of libraries’ buildings** – related to the implementation of the project to a greater or lesser extent, because the premises had to be adapted for the installation of public Internet access points (*“this year, we had windows, doors and electricity installations replaced, some things repaired, and burglar alarm system installed”* – librarians);
- Computer literacy **training for librarians**, which they attended or planned to attend. Although previously there was also computer literacy training offered by other projects, the training conducted by “Libraries for Innovation” promoters was attributed to innovations due to the exceptional training quality, consistency and organisation (*“employees received certificates attesting to their participation in training”* – librarians).

Similarly, heads of libraries did not indicate any new innovations introduced in libraries that could not be related to the overall implementation of the Libraries for Innovation project and higher quality of the computer base and services provided.

Innovations indicated occasionally by target group representatives were the following:

- Registration of users to public Internet access through their personal reader’s cards (*“it’s a novelty that readers can register for using a computer themselves, via their reader’s card, while previously I had to do it for them”* – librarians);
- Introduction of mobile libraries (“library bus”) with public Internet access (*“they go to small villages, and local residents are provided with the opportunity to use laptops and Internet”* – heads of libraries).

When talking about future innovations, survey participants (more often heads of libraries) pointed out one important innovation **to be introduced** in libraries – **computer literacy training for visitors**, which had never been conducted by libraries in the form it will be held. The importance of this type of training was particularly stressed by several experts as contributing to reduction of social exclusion and providing most people with the opportunity to learn to use Internet resources and e-services.

4. Support for public libraries having public Internet access

4.1. Indicator 10A. [Improved] technical maintenance in libraries

- *The number of public Internet access points is increasing, whereas the number of IT specialists has remained unchanged; they ensure high quality, yet not expeditious technical maintenance -*
- *The need for an IT specialist appears when a librarian faces more serious problems related to the use of computers -*

According to heads of libraries, technical maintenance remained practically the same as in the previous year: **no new positions for IT specialists** who should take care of new equipment delivered to libraries were created. Generally, IT specialists, working in libraries, like librarians, have to **resign themselves to significantly increased workload** without an increase in their remuneration (*"we are content with what the project gave us, but municipalities did not offer any additional workplaces or more IT specialists; we had to do with the same employees and available capacities"* – heads of libraries).

The increased number of public Internet access points and insufficient number of IT specialists in central libraries **prevent solution of arising problems**. An IT specialist, working in a library, cannot expeditiously react to the problem and if it cannot be solved via phone consultations, an IT specialist **may come to the branch in several days** (late solution was also highlighted in the 2008 survey). Still, librarians are **in greater need** for IT specialist's help when they encounter **serious problems** (the computer or any other device is not operating), while in the event of minor problems (different issues related to computers and software) they seek for help in their immediate environment (other librarians, family members or relatives, visitors). It should be noted that, due to reduced funding for libraries, the funds for business trips are also limited (IT specialists are likely to wait until problems occur in several branches, or these trips are arranged with other trips) (*"if there is something wrong with a computer, we call an IT specialist to fix the problem, because we are not computer specialists at all"* – librarians).

4.2. Indicator 10B. [Improved] methodological aid in libraries

- *The quality of methodical materials is very good, but its application in everyday situations is limited due to a need to find a quicker solution of the problem -*

Methodological aid in libraries is perceived as materials delivered during training courses or sent later (manuals, guidelines). Training and visual aids (various short videos) were also occasionally attributed to methodological materials.

In general, methodological aid provided by the project "Libraries for Innovation" was **very positively** evaluated by both librarians and heads of libraries. Both target groups could compare methodological materials delivered within the framework of this project to the materials received from previous projects of equipping libraries with public Internet access points (PIAP ("Public Internet access points") or "Window to the Future"). Comparison with the results from the 2008 survey shows an evident significant positive change in evaluation of methodological materials. Last year, methodological aid was evaluated as inadequate, formal and hardly applicable in practice.

The key advantages of methodological materials delivered through the project "Libraries for Innovation", indicated by employees of libraries, are the following:

- The **amount** of methodological materials **is greater**, as compared to the materials developed by other projects, and these materials are accessible to both librarians and visitors. Several target group representatives indicated that they had not received any methodological materials when introducing Internet access points in previous years (*"we had not had or received any methodological materials so far, thus we had to prepare them ourselves"* – heads of libraries);

- The materials are **clearly structured, comprehensible** and their **quality is superior** to the quality of methodological materials from previous projects ([as compared to the materials from the project "Window to the Future"] *"it is more comprehensive: how to use, how to learn; there are various references and recommendations"* – librarians);
- **An comprehensive website of the project**, where you can find any necessary information, was mentioned occasionally (*"I could say, it's information from your Libraries for Innovation websites, where you can find news and have them sent to our e-mails; they induce us to see what's happening today; besides, information is constantly updated and the course of the project's implementation is presented"* – librarians).

The **use** of methodological materials **when servicing visitors was mentioned only occasionally** during the discussions with librarians (they also occasionally mentioned that these materials are indicated to those visitors who are learning to use a computer). It could be assumed that when problems occur, librarians are not likely to waste time for searching for a solution in the methodological materials, but instead try to solve them basing on their own skills or ask for consultations from other people, thus quickly solving the problem.

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

5.1. Indicator 7B. Librarians' perception of the benefit provided to the community by public Internet access

- The previous practice of using a computer for games and entertainment is being replaced by an understanding that public Internet access may be used not only for spending one's free time, but also for communication or information search -

According to librarians, an overall perception of the benefit provided by Internet access has significantly changed in recent years, in particular among representatives of hard to reach groups (e.g. seniors, rural population). Librarians assert that previously computers and Internet were mainly associated with entertainment and games, whereas such an attitude is very rare nowadays. Due to consultation of library employees, training and public communication, people started believing that Internet access provides very wide opportunities and it is not only a means for leisure, but also a tool for communication, information search and work (*"primarily they all thought that computers and Internet were just for kids, and now they know that they can do more than just play", "we provide information on what they can do with a computer, teach them, show them, and they become interested"* – librarians).

According to TG representatives (more often pointed out by librarians), the increased number of library visitors shows that both individuals and the community appreciate **integrated services** provided by libraries, which cover not only free of charge Internet access, but also upgraded information technology base and related new services. **An opportunity to learn to use a computer and free of charge Internet**, and, when needed, **receive consultation and advice** encouraged even those people who were not library visitors to come here more often. Furthermore, all this prompted visitors who used traditional library services to try to learn to master modern technologies.

- Expansion of public Internet access points strengthens social benefit of public libraries for the community and creates an image of a modern and open library -

According to librarians, who help visitors and provide consultations on the use of Internet on a daily basis, the benefit provided to individuals and communities is considerable. Among the enumerated benefits (there is no difference in perceived benefit provided by public Internet access to individuals and the whole community) **social** and **economic** benefit could be pointed out. **Social benefit** to the community is more frequently mentioned and **stressed to be more important to individuals/communities**. Perceived **social benefits** provided by Internet are the following:

- **Maintaining contact/communicating with relatives and close people** who live or have emigrated abroad (via Skype, e-mail) (*"they write messages to their children living abroad"* – librarians; *"there is a family who come once a week at the end of a working day in order not to disturb others and communicate with their children"* – librarians, rural library);
- **Obtaining relevant information** related to both work/studies and leisure (e.g. searching for different information, downloading schemes for needlework, uploading announcements, etc.) (*"One painter is looking for pictures; another woman searches for information related to health and medicine"* – librarians);
- **Spending leisure** – social networks, dating websites, games, hobbies, reading newspapers (particularly relevant at present, when possibilities to subscribe to publications are limited) (*"there are senior readers who want to read newspapers online"* – librarians);
- **Being in a social environment and communicating with peers/people with similar needs** – the opportunity to use free of charge Internet even more strengthens the image of a library as a *"social refuge"* (particularly concerning children from social risk families or senior population in rural libraries), and the library becomes kind of a **centre of attraction**. In a library, representatives of specific groups feel to be the real members of the community, And, although indirectly, free Internet access in the library ensures occupation of children (*"children do not stroll around the streets, they do not go home where their parents are drinking alcohol, but they come here to socialise, play games or play with other children, and they feel safe and welcome here"*) and, concerning seniors, helps to reduce social exclusion;
- **Concerning smaller settlements, in particular villages, it is often the only opportunity to maintain contact with the outside world**, i.e. for people living in remote villages with poor infrastructure it is an opportunity to arrange all their matters online (e.g. check up for milk testing results, fill in the tax return, pay for public utilities, etc.), which is really useful and hardly replaceable (*"we have adult visitors: they check their lottery tickets, check up for milk testing results, browse the sales-purchase announcements; men are also interested in cars. Everybody came here after the New Year party to watch the video record, as they wanted to see themselves. Everybody is curious; it's like an attraction"* – librarians, rural library).

Although, according to TG representatives, the above mentioned benefits are more or less relevant to all groups of library visitors, naturally, **senior visitors** find it more important to communicate and maintain contact with their children and grandchildren; **students** primarily care for information search; whereas **kids and teenagers** are interested in all possible forms of spending their leisure online.

Economic benefits are perceived as:

- **saving money in two ways:**
 - **directly – through the opportunity to use Internet free of charge** (they have to pay for this service elsewhere);
 - **indirectly** – through services/information accessible via Internet (e.g. no transport expenses if you register for a visit to a health care provider online) (*"you don't have to pay for a bus ticket, thus you can save money for bread"* – librarians, rural library);
- **saving time** – an opportunity to perform a lot of tasks/arrange work without going outside the library (e.g. paying the bills, registering in the outpatient clinic, declaring taxes, finding out bus schedules, etc.).

Although librarians more often pointed out social benefits provided by public Internet access, they did not underestimate economic benefits for visitors: sometimes, taking into account visitors and their needs, librarians give priority to introducing them to the economic benefit provided by Internet (e.g. encouraging them to use e-banking services, thus saving money spent when paying the bills by other means).

It should be noted that social benefit provided by public Internet access was very fragmentary in the 2008 survey report. This fact and the data of this year's survey lead to the assumption that social benefit provided by public Internet access has become increasingly noticeable among public Internet access users who attach great importance to it.

5.2. Indicator 7C. Other concerned groups perception of the benefit of public Internet access

Among all TG representatives, experts found it most difficult to talk about the benefit provided by public Internet access (except those who were actively involved in library work, e.g. a representative from the Lithuanian Research Library Consortium). In their rather hypothetical answers to this question, they **emphasised general economic benefit provided by Internet (saving time and money)**, and occasionally mentioned social benefits enumerated by librarians. A hypothesis could be raised that social benefit provided by public Internet access is not sufficiently clearly and actively communicated externally (this hypothesis should be verified in the next stage of the survey, when interviewing public Internet access users).

6. Librarians' motivation and competences of IT use

6.1. Indicator 2A. [Improved] competences and knowledge of information technologies of librarians

In general, over the past year librarians' knowledge and competences of information technologies have increased – both staff and their directors, and experts share this opinion (in 2008, the level of competences of IT use was evaluated as low). Increased competences of librarians were determined by several main reasons, namely, better opportunities to use information technologies due to **higher number of Internet access points, training, adequate methodological material and everyday practice** of working with visitors. It is also appropriate to add that during training the majority of librarians were only consolidating their skills acquired in prior computer literacy courses provided through installation of *PIAP* or *Window to the Future* Internet access points, or had some basic knowledge from prior courses not connected with the installation of Internet access in libraries.

- Library innovates faster than librarian -

Librarian's development is hindered by:

- **Motivation** and its nature. In general, librarian's motivation can be (this differentiation is based on the information obtained through research):
 - **Forced** – librarian is forced to adopt new technologies since their use is required in librarian's work and is necessary living in modern society. Usually, librarian strives to acquire new skills to retain their job as any extra competence could potentially contribute to retaining the job (*"Have to survive until pension, so they have to learn,"* - heads of libraries; *"There is a piece of equipment, therefore one must know how to use it,"* - heads of libraries). There were several casually provided examples confirming that a portion of librarians who strongly refused to learn working on a computer lost their jobs (*"of course, there is one or two librarians who strongly refuse the change; I personally know one, two, four libraries which dismissed employee who stated that he will not sit at that box, 59-60 years olds say "I managed without it and I'll manage in the future",* - heads of libraries; *"you either work in the context you are in, or you can only blame yourself for dropping out of that context, therefore you have to find that motivation and competences within you"* - heads of libraries).
 - **Conscious** – when a librarian strives for professionalism: the quality in servicing the visitors, greater problem solution skills, greater competences to explain operation of one or another programme, Internet search engine. Librarian would also like to have more self-confidence when working with information technologies, being able to convey (assist, consult) their knowledge to visitors.

Both head of libraries and librarians **stressed more the presence of forced motivation** rather than the conscious one, though it was also observed that there is a number of employees who are actively involved in acquiring new or deepen existing skills. Discussions with the heads of libraries allowed the conclusion that **staff of retirement age or soon to retire** is most unmotivated to learn using information technologies. Employees of retirement age are in the risk group of losing their jobs due to the current economic downturn and the necessity of lay-offs,

therefore acquisition of new skills for them seems to be purposeless and unnecessary thing ("they are thinking "why do I need that if I will be dismissed anyway" – head of libraries).

- **Traditional perception of the librarian.** Current changes are **associated with libraries, not with the librarian**, his job description *per se*. Librarians find themselves in a situation where their job description is expanded but future prospects remain uncertain and development of qualifications does not guarantee climbing up the career ladder or better salary ("*of course, bonuses would do the trick but we are realists*" – heads of libraries). On the other hand, modern technologies have never before been associated with libraries, and the librarian still finds it difficult to shift from conventional duties and to understand that he/her must also acquire completely new skills and provide different services to the visitors (this shift is taking place/ took place more rapidly in the libraries where modern technologies appeared through other projects and before the project "Libraries for Innovation").

- Even though librarians' competences increased over the past year, their skills remain rather average, and the knowledge they have is rather sufficient to assist elderly people with weaker competences -

Target groups representatives pointed out that **over the past year competences of librarians grew**, but they are still in the process of training and there are areas that require an improvement ("*My competences grew significantly, and before that I didn't even have a computer, I worked in the depository and didn't know a thing*" - librarians; "*We are still learning*" - librarians).

Heads of libraries assessed competences of their staff by giving them approximately **7 points out of possible 10**. Naturally, it was observed that higher scores for staff competencies were given by the directors heading public libraries housed in renovated buildings. Heads of libraries believed that competences of librarians in rural areas were slightly weaker as compared to the staff's in urban areas ("*In rural areas there's only one librarian who is neither able nor knows how to do everything. Computer requires connection, he does not know whether that connection is there or not, if computer crashed, he does not know how to cope with the situation.*"). Librarians themselves agreed with lower evaluation of competences of librarians in rural areas, and they also indicated the same reasons for insufficient skills – one librarian is required to provide all library services in rural branches, hence they lack time to put more efforts in additional capacity building. Over the past year this situation has not changed – competences of librarians in rural areas in the use of IT technologies were assessed as weaker and in qualitative survey of 2008 (as compared to competences of librarians in cities).

In general, when talking about their own competences, **librarians'** own score of their experience was around **6-7 out of 10** – however the knowledge librarians have is not so extensive or deep as they would wish, or as it could be as compared to other library visitors (both in terms of working with Windows Vista and attaching attachment to an e-mail letter). It is interesting that in 2008 librarians also valued their competences as satisfactory; therefore we can presume that the absence of any change in evaluation is related to increased personal requirements. Now librarians use technologies more frequently and due to this they notice the insufficiency of knowledge/ competences they have.

Experts were unable to value skills of librarians in an objective manner since they rarely visit libraries simply as visitors, or observe librarians' work up close. Nevertheless, after assessment of work under the project "Libraries for Innovation" and expected amount of training, they believe that the efforts, that were already put, should have increased the librarians' level of computer literacy. On the other hand, experts frequently mentioned the human factor when discussing competences of librarians (desire to improve and adoption of change) and its influence on the level of competences – "*if a librarian is thirsty for knowledge, he will be involved and will be able to help others, but I believe that many people have this image, conscious or not, of librarians that they are people sitting amid bookshelves, arranging them and are scared of new things and ideas.*"

When analysing librarians' competences, one should take into account that **librarians' knowledge of different programmes varies. In general, competences of working with different programmes (from stronger to weaker) could be rated as follows:**

- **LIBIS**, registration of readers, other various programmes – librarians are perfectly capable to working with **special programmes**, necessary to perform their direct work responsibilities;

- **Internet Explorer** – librarians believe that their knowledge of this Internet browser is rather high (however, there are situations where librarians' knowledge is insufficient, for example, how to download a movie, view live broadcasting online, or what to do, when a system or website do not allow to log on) (*"It is so simple"; "Opportunities provided by Internet are so vast, I cannot give myself 10 points out of 10, but 9, however, I can"* - librarians)
- **MS Office** programme package – in general, slightly **weaker competences**:
 - Slightly better competences of using **Microsoft Word** (*"There's not trouble with word"* - librarians)
 - Competences of using presentation tool **Microsoft PowerPoint** or spreadsheet **Microsoft Excel** are even weaker (*"knowledge of Excel is minimal"; "I have gaps working with Excel: I mean not to calculation particular functions, but doing things library needs"; "cannot really work with pictures and slide programme PowerPoint"* - librarians)

Still it remains unclear whether knowledge of these programmes is relevant to all librarians – for some, knowledge of these programmes could potentially be useful fulfilling their everyday work responsibilities, for others, however, material of training might remain only a theory as these programmes will not be used in actual work. As a result there is a difference between urban and rural areas – librarians working in city libraries have better skills working with these computer programmes as compared to librarians in rural areas.

When comparing librarians' skills with the skills of visitors/users of public Internet access, both heads of libraries and librarians noted the following differences:

- **Younger visitors** (schoolchildren, students) have **significantly better skills using information technologies** as compared to librarians. However, the youngest children, who usually spend their time in library playing games, do not yet have sufficient knowledge of text editing programme or Internet browser (*"Children know more about crashing down a computer"* – head of libraries), and not all high school students (senior pupils)/university students know how to use the LIBIS catalogue and they need consultation from a librarian.
- In most cases competences of **elderly visitors** are slightly **weaker** (in particular, that of retirement age visitors), therefore librarian's knowledge is essential and useful to them (*"I feel better when explaining something to elderly people, I know more"* - librarians).
- **Librarians** have better knowledge of **specialized library programmes** (LIBIS).

Conclusion could be made that, in general, skills of librarians, in the context of visitors and VIP users, are rather average – they are no match for young people, but are able to assist, teach elderly and less competent visitors.

- Librarian builds competences by resolving everyday problems arising in their work with public Internet access -

Competences acquired during training are often further strengthened in everyday situations. Each new experience with information technologies stimulates a librarian to grasp the subtleties of how to apply information technologies. When dealing with visitor queries and requests for assistance, librarian tries to respond and resolve problems. In such cases, if personal competences are insufficient, librarian turns to the following ways of resolving a problem:

- Involving assistance of **other library staff** who might have better knowledge of information technologies (*"Since I am not the only employee in the library, I can consult other, I am never afraid, it turns out the way it turns out. I always ask if I do not know something"* - librarians);
- Seeking assistance from **closest people of their environment** (children, grandchildren) – this in particular happens in rural areas where libraries have only one employee with no one to consult with when a situation occurs;
- Seeking assistance from **younger visitors of the library** (*"We were stuck because we did not know how to create an e-mail account, so we asked for help from 10th grade pupils who came and they helped"* – librarians, rural area);

- Seeking assistance from a library's **IT specialist** (more often noted by head of libraries rather than librarians).

Even though librarians **do understand that their competences are somehow lacking** (*"I can do archiving, but I also know that there are other ways to do it. Other tricks, other ways... yet now I know only one [manner] and I am afraid of losing it"*), yet they also agree that consolidation of knowledge held and building of new competences requires everyday practice.

6.2. Indicator 2C. [Improved] competences and knowledge of Internet resources use and e-services of librarians

- Librarians' knowledge of Internet resources is often limited to contents available in the Lithuanian language -

Both librarians and heads of libraries gave equally **rather high scores** for librarians' **competences** in the use of the Internet, Internet resources and e-services. Assessment provided by the heads of libraries depended on the fact that they were not aware of visitors' complaints or problems librarians faced. Similar to evaluation of information technologies usage skills, heads of libraries occasionally mentioned that Internet usage competences of librarians in rural areas were weaker as there a single librarian has to perform all responsibilities which leaves no time for the librarian to develop individually.

On the other hand, data of the survey allow the conclusion that librarians' **skills** working with **Internet resources of Lithuanian contents are truly good**, however processing of information available in other languages (mostly in English) is **hindered by ignorance of the language** (the need to study the English language was already mentioned in the report of 2008 survey). This reduces librarian's ability to use various data bases (for example, heads of libraries mentioned a popular data base EBSCO), relevant articles, more complex search on the Internet. So, the language barrier **prevents the librarian from fully exploring possibilities provided by the Internet resources**.

As far as the use of **e-services** was concerned, both librarians and heads of libraries in majority of cases mentioned **online income declaration and e-banking** as examples of these services. These also were e-services of Lithuanian contents. Competences with regards to online income declaration were assessed as rather good since the Tax Inspectorate provided special training on working with this programme. Competences of the use of e-banking were slightly weaker since these competences are more likely to depend on librarian's personal experience – there was no mentioning of any special training dedicated to e-banking during group discussions.

- Librarian can assist a visitor, but cannot provide consultations or teach visitors -

In general, librarian's **ability to help a visitor** is directly **dependent** on librarian's **level of competences and skills to use a computer and Internet resources** – librarians can only help on matters they are personally well familiar with (*"If you know something, you have the confidence to explain, and if you don't know, you try different ways"* - librarian). Since librarians' competences to use information technologies over the past year have increased, analogous increase was observed in their ability to help library visitors. On the other hand, their **ability to provide consultations or teach visitors is considerably weaker** – in order to provide adequate assistance to a visitor or educate them, librarians have to have much greater competences. Heads of libraries agree with this observation. They believe that assessment of librarians' competences to provide consultations and educate visitors could be done only after libraries' staff completes specific training and starts educating the visitors.

Nevertheless, one can observe that a number of librarians are already **knowledgeable enough to teach visitors fundamentals of computer use** – show how to turn on a computer, explain about the operating environment of a computer, key functions (librarians compared their present competences with those of the previous year). Often learning computer fundamentals is more necessary for **elderly visitors** – as a rule, this group of library visitors more often require librarian's assistance, and librarians themselves feel that they are able to provide this assistance since librarians' **base of knowledge is a bit more extensive as compared to that of elderly visitors**.

The situation differs between library branches in **urban and rural areas** because competences of a librarian in rural area are weaker, and, in most cases, libraries in rural areas have only one member of staff. This means that if a librarian in rural area is unable to help a visitor and fails to find a solution the

same instant (by contacting central library or similar), the visitor is encouraged to come back some other day and librarian starts **looking for the ways to solve the problem** (if a librarian has children, in most cases they will be the one the librarian turns to in these situations). Whereas in libraries in **cities** a librarian **can engage a colleague with better knowledge** and find a solution/ answer visitor's questions.

The majority of **experts** believe that librarians find themselves in a situation where they are **forced to help a visitor** – provide consultations, solve problems (“*Library has a computer and when a visitor comes who does not know how to use a computer, librarian is forced to help him*”). Still, in their opinion, librarian's **consultation and teaching competences** are weak. The conclusion is based on the perception that librarians have both weak competences of working on a computer and on the Internet and insufficient pedagogical abilities.

7. Public library visitors' competences of IT use

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

- In general, knowledge and competences of public Internet access users to use information technologies strengthen, and practice of public Internet access use gradually grows. The level of user competences and use essentially depends on socio-demographic characteristics of a person, personal qualities and general needs -

Most of the information about changes in knowledge of and competences of public Internet access users in information technologies can be obtained from **librarians** who have a direct contact with visitors on a daily basis, whereas **heads of libraries and experts had difficulty evaluating these changes**. Given that the spread of public Internet access points over the past year was very rapid and librarians were able to provide consultations to library visitors, experts **speculated** that essentially competences of visitors had to grow even more over the past year.

Based on the data of qualitative survey showing that in some libraries in rural areas public Internet access service was introduced only recently and competences of librarians there were weaker, it is possible to presume that competences of **public Internet access users in rural areas are slightly weaker** as compared to those of users in urban areas.

Representatives of TG believe that **knowledge and competences** of public libraries' internet access users in information technologies **started gradually building** even before the project Libraries for Innovation, when through other projects (*Window to the Future*, campaigns by the Tax Inspectorate etc.) libraries' visitors were offered a chance to start using a computer and the Internet. According to libraries' staff, back then a **great deal depended on persistence and desire for knowledge of visitors themselves** (“*They learned as much as they wanted to learn*”).

So, since the launch of the project Libraries for Innovation, libraries' staff was provided with computer literacy training, and intensive social campaign about free Internet access in public was started. All this **contributed to increasing public interest and considerably increased the number of people wishing to learn how to use the Internet**.

- For elderly people library is a place where they are not afraid to come and ask for help how to use a computer -

Analysis of the information obtained from the survey on changes in competences of visitors over the past year allows clear conclusion that there is a **positive shift**. Libraries' staff expressed content that those who started training of computer literacy in 2007 have **progressed considerably, as far as knowledge and skills are concerned, and became more independent** (“*They have better knowledge, before had more questions, some of staff could only turn the computer on, yet now are more engaged in teaching.*”). Libraries' staff has also observed that the **number of elderly people who come to libraries for computer literacy training grew. Even though elders' competences are very weak for now and**

knowledge is very superficial, the fact itself that they dared to try and return to library is pleasing and leaves room for optimism.

Representatives of TG (more stressed by librarians) believe that courtesy of library's staff and staff's knowledge to solve a specific problem of a visitor **play a big role** in the process of **building and strengthening visitors' competences of Internet use**. This was in particular relevant for less advanced **public Internet access users** who need the assurance that there is someone able to help/ provide advice/ explain. **This way in a modern library**, with the increasing users' need for information technologies, **increases the need for consultations**. However, it needs to be pointed out that **not all librarians** (due to psychological aspects and/ or lack of practical knowledge) **are prepared enough to provide consultations** (more stressed by heads of libraries and experts).

More detailed analysis of visitors' **competences of information technologies use** would be difficult to carry out, as the latter are **directly connected with visitors' personality traits** (desire to grow, openness to new ideas) **and incentives and objectives of use** (conclusion of experts draws basis from the information supplied by libraries' staff). According to librarians, some people have the need for the Internet for minimum uses (for example, paying utility bills, classified ads), whereas others do not stop with exploration of one opportunity and go on building their competences and deepening knowledge of the Internet environment. Librarians also believe that a lot of things depend on **how much time** a potential Internet **user can allocate for browsing on the Internet** – young people have more free time as compared to working adults.

8. Specific, difficult to reach social groups and experiences with public Internet access use

8.1. Indicator 4B. Experiences with public Internet access use of difficult to reach groups

- Availability of public Internet access service strengthens perception of members of difficult to reach social groups that they are fully-fledged members of their community, and contributes to the reduction of social exclusion -

A special place among all visitors of public libraries is given to specific social groups which the project Libraries for Innovation seeks to attract to libraries through making available free of charge Internet service. Before analyzing their needs and library mechanisms designed to attract these groups to libraries, it is important to find out how participants of this survey perceive these groups.

In general, representatives of the target group asked to provide a spontaneous description of **specific, difficult to reach social groups divided them to the following groups**:

- **Socially difficult to reach** groups:
 - **Low income** earning **residents, unemployed people**
 - **Children from social risk families** (parents abusing alcohol, children from large families)
 - **Pensioners, disabled** (more often stressed by experts)
- **Difficult to reach groups due to "different" lifestyle** for whom services of a public library are irrelevant – **employed, high income earning people** (more often stressed by heads of libraries), **lecturers, professors** (their need for academic literature are poorly met in a public library)

The majority of representatives of TG did not attribute residents of rural areas to specific, difficult to reach social groups. This might happen because, if compared to the other groups, residents of rural areas are not perceived as strongly isolated from society. More over, this group is not regarded as specific because it encompasses all surveyed groups of people – children, pensioners, unemployed etc.

According to all representatives of TG (librarians had the most information on this question), the needs in connection with the Internet use of these specific, difficult to reach social groups (disabled, pensioners, unemployed, residents of rural areas, children from social risk families and children with parents working abroad) essentially do not differ from the needs of other groups of society visiting public libraries – they are interested in various things: from internet dating and communication to information search. Unemployed people often use the Internet for job search (*“While at library they ask to do a search for open jobs, open website of labour exchange”* - librarians), but spending their free time browsing the Internet is not less important to them.

- Visits of the disabled to libraries are hindered not by library, but rather by the infrastructure of the state -

Representatives of TG believe that the below listed social groups have slightly **different needs for a library as an establishment** as compared to other groups of society:

- **People with disabilities** obviously have specific needs related to their disability –people with sight disabilities need special computers or books, people with mobility challenges need special **accesses/ elevators** – unfortunately, in majority cases special facilities or access paths are not available in rural areas (there is no such access path, for example, in the library of A. Mickevičius in Vilnius District) (identical situation was observed in the 2008 survey data). On the other hand, **the overall state infrastructure** is essentially not adapted to the needs of the people with disabilities (stairwells in apartment buildings, sidewalks, public transport). Still libraries’ staff attends to these visitors as well – they bring books to the people with disabilities at homes, meet a them outside and help to access the library. For people with mental disability library is a place to come and socialize.
- As far **children from social risk families** are concerned, opportunity to use the Internet and computer at a library plays an important role in reducing their **inferiority feeling towards the children** who have Internet access at home (*“I also have the opportunity and can be equal to you”* - librarian). Essentially, library serves as a place where children from social risk families can spend more or less quality time, socialize with other children, work on their homework in a bright and warm environment (*“Better with us than on a street” “children come, warm up, spend an hour or two they are allowed to [use Internet], they warm up”* – heads of libraries). Game areas (“toys libraries”) in libraries also contribute to better satisfaction of the needs of children from social risk families.
- **Pensioners** still are shy to use the Internet and the most important thing they get, together with the public Internet access, is consultation and opportune assistance if there is a problem. The principal need of this group would be training.

In general, data of the qualitative survey allow the conclusion that the common need connecting these groups is the need for a place to come and socialize (*“Children seek for a shelter, it is the same for people with disabilities – no one tries to get them off here, they are in a safe place”* - librarians, more often in libraries in rural areas). It should be noted that members of these groups do not necessarily interact with librarian – elderly people socialize with other elderly people, children come together to play games. This way library strengthens its community function. On the other hand, this socialization phenomenon is observed more in libraries in rural areas and smaller towns. In particular, residents in rural areas, where there is no school or house of culture, expect from library more cultural and community events (*“People want library to organize Mother’s Day events and other events”* – heads of libraries).

To summarize, it can be stated that for these specific, **difficult to reach groups better quality computer base in libraries contributed to overall benefit provided by library and strengthened library’s image as a community centre who works to reduce social exclusion.**

8.2. Indicator 4D. Presence of programmes or other mechanisms designed to include difficult to reach groups

- Taking all difficult to reach groups into account, children and pensioners are the more frequent visitors of libraries. Therefore, it is natural that library's employees works more to attract and retain them in libraries -

Librarians and heads of libraries say (majority of representatives of other stakeholders (experts) did not know much about it) **that** special events to attract those difficult to reach groups do not take place on a regular basis: in most cases events are dedicated to all visitors with no special distinction of the said specific groups.

Briefly it was observed that the nature of these groups and events in libraries dedicated to these specific groups:

- Events for **children** from social risk families **are organized without separating these children as a group**, and all events for children are also dedicated to the children from social risk families (*"As far as socially troubled children are concerned, we do not need to put in any special effort, they more than keen to come to us"* - librarians). Even though in some public libraries there are special programmes more targeted to this group of children (for example, day care centres), organization of these special programmes in majority of cases depends on active nature of the librarian (*"Children play games, they try to play some easy computer games, we read them books aloud"* - heads of libraries; *"As far as I know there is one very dedicated librarian working in Vilnius District's Naujoji Vilnia library branch <...> She is well aware that there is a large number of kids out there who come back into an empty home - their parents are away or out drinking. She organizes events for children in the library at her own initiative. For example, she did a project in summer for children who had nowhere to go - she invited them to the library"* - expert).
- Some libraries organized/ organize special events for **pensioners** which involved/ involves libraries' employees going to retirement homes and encouraging people to read, held/ hold meetings with famous people - still this project is regarded as one time project and it is believed that with the end of funding for the project the initiative will cease. Still, pensioners are more often to frequent **library events, exhibitions and various meetings**.
- As far as **unemployed** people are concerned, it should be pointed out that the majority of **libraries collaborate with Labour Exchange**; therefore, unemployed people may instantly find information and job vacancies in a library. One of the most recent campaigns for the unemployed was *I am looking for a Job*. Librarians evaluated this campaign positively. Still they said that there was an inadequate reaction of unemployed people during the campaign since some expected that they will be actually offered a job rather than educated on how to search for a job.
- Usually there are no special events for the **people with disabilities** because they are rare visitors to libraries (due to the above mentioned poor access to libraries). It is possible to claim that situation as of 2008 has virtually not changed and people with disabilities still account for a very small portion of library visitors.

8.3. Indicator 2D. [Improved] competences and knowledge of librarians in service of visitors with special needs

- Librarians' knowledge of attending to users with special needs is more of a theoretical nature -

Librarians, heads of libraries and some experts believe libraries' staff to be fully prepared and able to attend to visitors with special needs. Their opinion is based on the fact that the staff had training and some public libraries are already equipped with new facilities designed for people with sight or mobility disabilities. However, given the fact that people with disabilities rarely visit libraries, it can be claimed that (the same was observed by experts) **competences of librarian to serve visitor with special needs are more theoretical**. Meaning, that it is unclear how staff will act in a particular situation (for example,

if a visitor is a blind person and needs accompanying, how to do it the right way; if a visitor is of short height, how to help him to reach things needed), and whether staff is psychologically prepared to attend to visitors with disabilities. It was also noted that there is a shortage of material base for such visitors – there are a few of audio books, lack of literature in Braille code, not all libraries have access for wheelchair users. This was confirmed by part of managers who indicated that they weren't aware of the fact that some libraries were not equipped to welcome people with special needs prior to training (for example, colour schemes in libraries do not take into account colour blind people).

It is important to stress that in spite of the mentioned restrictions of library access visitors unable to visit libraries due to mobility disability, old age or medical condition are nevertheless attended – librarians visit them at their homes with books. As many managers of libraries noted, this in a way is a continuation of book smuggling tradition.

Additional skills to attend to visitors with special needs are also needed, for example, knowledge of sign language. On the other hand, there is a dominating pessimistic sentiment that building of librarians' competences and learning of new things are not accompanied by any financial incentives. Therefore both managers and libraries' staff are slow to approve new innovations and training, or have rather sarcastic opinion of new efforts – "What else a librarian has to know for such a measly salary?" (managers). Negative opinion of building competences of librarians was expressed during 2008 qualitative survey also. Given that librarians' salaries were cut down starting with 2008, it is possible to presume that discontent of librarians over imbalance between scope of responsibilities and salary will only keep on growing.

9. Library in a public sphere

9.1. Indicator 5B. [Wider] mission of libraries and areas of competence

- Public Internet access strengthened informational and social/ communal missions of library -

Representatives of target groups **unanimously claimed that library's mission encompasses:**

- **Informational** – in a way library is place for storage of knowledge, and librarian is a person to help library's visitor to find information needed ("*Provide information to visitors. Before it was the same, now the pace is more rapid and responsibility is bigger*" - librarian)
- **Social/ communal** – reduction of social exclusion, a place to spend one's free time
- **Educational** – various educational events to introduce novelties, theme exhibitions, expositions
- **Cultural** – various events, meetings with writers, artists, expositions in library

The first two missions perceived by libraries – **informational and social/ communal – were most strengthened and expanded during the project.** These two missions are strongly connected to social benefit of a library to community; therefore, development of these missions increases social benefit to the community.

As far as libraries in rural areas are concerned, their mission is seen even wider since without any other centres of culture – school, house of culture – library remains the sole place where residents of rural areas can satisfy their needs (not only read books, newspapers, but also perform other essential tasks - check milk testing results, declare land, taxes, make appointment with a doctor), meet with neighbours and attend library's organized events).

In the past year library's mission expanded and now include wider range of services to their visitors. Today's public library **meets its users' needs, and areas of library's competence expanded to include greater technological opportunities,** namely:

- Better information services – as a result of the growing number of Internet access points visitors have greater opportunities to search for information through other channels rather than being limited to books

- Educational function was expanded with training – librarians contribute by helping visitors with the use of information technologies

9.2. Indicator 2B. [Improved] competences of representation and public relations

- Librarians still (as compared to findings from 2008 and prior ways of conduct) use conventional methods to publicise library. This way librarians spread information about library's services to regular visitors instead of reaching the general public -

LIBRARY AND ITS SERVICES PRESENTATION TO THE PUBLIC

In general, **presentation of library's services** to the public takes place through **old and trusted methods** – organizing expositions, presentation of books, meetings with writers and artists. Still, not all services of libraries are clearly introduced to the public, and might be known only to a small portion of the general public who actually go to libraries. For example, people do not know that if a book is not available at their library, it can be ordered from another. **The main problem, why there are no innovative and long-term public relations campaigns, is not only the shortage of funding but also passiveness of librarians and lack of initiative.**

Opinions of representatives from the three target groups (librarians, heads of libraries, and experts) on publicizing of library's services divided as follows:

- Librarians and heads of libraries believed that they are **successful in presenting library's services to the public**. In their opinion, this presentation embraces conventional library events or tools, the presentation of library's benefit was also directly associated with these events/ measures. Conventional library events and measures included:
 - Events of "Libraries Week". Both librarians and library managers mentioned the national "Libraries Week" as the event which best represent library's benefit to society ("*What we do – we put our best effort to signal that without us, without libraries, there's darkness*" – heads of libraries). Whereas experts said that **information** about events of the "Libraries Week" **does not reach all potential visitors** ("*If one does not show special interest, it is not like information follows you everywhere. <...> They offer traditional things which do not interest or attract me because I lead an active way of life and I am overwhelmed by information and variety of events. That is why I make very personal decisions.*") On the other hand, it might be that opinions of experts were influenced by the fact that they live in Vilnius – in the largest Lithuanian city which has active enough cultural life. Therefore one may presume that in smaller cities and towns the general public is more familiar with the "Libraries Week" since libraries' staff disseminates information of events not only in nation wide, but also in local media.
 - Events – meetings with authors, presentation of services, and various expositions
 - Events in conjunction with Labour Exchange, Tax Inspectorate, various associations and communities
 - Information about library activities on the website
 - Publication of articles on events, expositions and meetings in the local print media
 - Dissemination of information on library events in townships, information boards, publication of brochures
- The majority of experts believed that publicizing of library as an establishment is poor. Since experts comprised the group which looked at public libraries from outsider's perspective, their evaluation was that representation of libraries in society could still be defined using conservative parameters – **use of trusted methods, no efforts to look for new tools** – "*... there are enough good things taking place in libraries, but we do not know how to share them or explain them to all.*" Therefore, even though libraries have their tool/ structure – association, which

represents them actively in relations with policy makers and the public sector ("*Probably one of the first interest groups which asked for a meeting first, at its own initiative*"), it can be presumed that associations' efforts do not suffice, or direction of action is not adequate in the current economic and political situation.

As several heads of libraries pointed out (participants of directors discussion in Vilnius), **librarians remain modest and shy** while presenting themselves to society and accepting reward for their efforts. Experts, who valued public libraries from outsider's perspective, agreed with heads of libraries opinion and stressed that incompetence of librarians to advocate libraries or stress library's benefits first and foremost reflects decreasing funding of libraries ("*their positions could be professionally demanding, and even though libraries have their organizations and their voice is heard, it could be stronger.*") Nevertheless, experts gave positive opinions that, because of a changing image of library and new contents of services, in the long-term and the need for libraries and their services will be understood and library funding problems will be resolved.

Still, it does directly prove that existing **public relations campaigns of present** public libraries **are not consistent or focused** (except all measures taken by the organizers of the project "Libraries for Innovation"). It is clear that the situation is a result of persistent conservatism in the establishment, lack of active effort, and absence of consistent strategy. On the other hand, head's of library personality and initiative, desire for change pay an important role. Director, who does not adopt new ideas, might prevent his subordinates from proposing and implementing innovative measures designed to spread awareness of library's benefits to society.

One could also speculate that due to active project awareness campaign (regarded by representatives of all target groups as a very strong means of publicizing) to publicize and promote libraries, libraries themselves fail to take active steps to promote library's benefits and services to society (this hypothesis could be explored in the next stage of the project by interweaving public Internet access users).

CONTACTS WITH POLITICIANS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- Librarians' contacts with politicians and representatives of local authorities is mostly limited to issues of lease of premises -

Librarians perceive the communication with **politicians** not as advocacy of library as an establishment, but rather as an establishment where politicians can present their own promotional campaign or projects to people ("*Had to contact with them before the election, we were over flooded with politicians' requests to meet*" - librarian). Majority of librarians in both urban and rural areas find themselves in situations where politicians wish to use premises of the library. According to them, collaboration with politicians is based on good-faith and library carries out its communal functions by allowing politicians to meet with potential voters on the library's premises.

Library's manager plays the main role in communication with **other representatives of the public sector** (for example, municipal councils). On the other hand, in rural areas relations with elderships (*smallest administrative division in Lithuania*) are rather close; moreover, in majority of cases librarian and the head of eldership communicate directly. Active librarians can expect some kind of support to organize events or arranging the library. Sometimes libraries in rural areas share the same premises with local eldership administration, and common burden of maintenance of the premises ("*Payment of bills for heating, electricity, repairs – all is done by municipalities*" – heads of libraries).

Librarian in rural area may also be a head of community, in which case he/her communicate directly with local authorities. Head of libraries value this rapport as rather positive since librarian who is also head of community can exert greater influence on decisions of local eldership.

CONTACTS WITH THE MEDIA

- Librarians' efforts do not suffice, they fail to interest the national media and as a result there is no communication of modern library's image (conclusion is based on the statements of library managers) -

As far contacts with the media are concerned, one needs to make a distinction between the national and local media. **The national media** is little interested in libraries' work or events. It can be explained that the objective of the national media is communication of current political, social and criminal affairs.

Whereas librarians' contacts with **the local media are** regular as the local media is more likely to publish information on library's events, various pieces of news in relation to libraries, and this information is more likely to be positive/ is exclusively positive. In such a situation, librarian is confident enough to communicate with the media, invites representatives of the media to library's events (done more often by heads of libraries, deputy directors or unit managers).

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

- Project "Libraries for Innovation" contributed to formation of a more positive and modern image of a Lithuanian public library. In the eyes of librarians and heads of libraries, reputation of libraries grows, whereas experts believe this growth is not strongly observed in society -

Innovation of library is a continuous process further accelerated by the project "Libraries for Innovation" (*"Innovation goes step by step, and the project accelerate and qualitatively contributed to this innovation, perhaps in a rather narrow area of information technologies where the impact of the project was most considerable, but libraries innovate at their own pace"* – heads of libraries).

In general, representatives of the target group believed that the **improvement in image was determined by:**

- **Better quality of services/ technologies.** Technologies were linked to computer base and its updating, better Internet speed. Services included such things as installation of LIBIS system and creation of a uniform base of library readers when a reader with reader's card can go to any public library.
- **Repairs of some libraries exterior and interior**, and appearance of newly constructed, **modern libraries** (*"I visited several newly opened regional libraries and was pleasantly surprised by the appearance of the libraries and provision of services there equal to every other Western library"* - experts).
- **Continuous dissemination of information** on the opportunity to freely access the Internet in the libraries, to learn how to use the Internet (awareness campaign of the project "Libraries for Innovation") – *"Let's say over the past year the public was reminded of libraries and reminded in a positive way - as many pieces of information were positive, for example, "visit and learn", Libraries for Innovation, nice logo and so on"* - expert.
- **Better competences both** working with information technologies and LIBIS programme **of librarians lead** to better quality of help for the visitors (*"I feel respect, people stop me on the street, inquire when they can visit and we agree on time of their visit. I feel like I can teach them things"* - librarian).

Heads of libraries believe that changes in how libraries were viewed began with the introduction of first information technologies – installation of PIAP, *Window to the Future* Internet access points.

- Importance of library grows in the time of economic downturn -

As far as the growth of library's reputation is concerned, both **librarians** and library **managers** mentioned that this is evident from the growing number of visitors. The growth in visitor numbers was linked to availability of Internet access and economic situation – people no longer can afford books and magazines, have more spare time because they are unemployed. This means that the current reputation of libraries is maintained and supported mostly by the innovations done under the project "Libraries for Innovation", Speaking about traditional library services, because of decreasing funding book fund is rarely updated, libraries subscribe fewer magazines, and the narrowing of traditional library services has no impact in growth of library's reputation (*"Visitors are coming back – better Internet speed and better opportunities. We did not have this with the "Window to the Future", only with "Libraries for Innovation"... Before we did not have access to Skype and Internet speed was very slow, people did not have patience to wait. Now visitors are coming back, and their feedback is positive"* - librarian).

Other important aspect of library's perception is a **stronger role of the library as a community centre** (in particular in rural areas). As a community centre library is:

- A meeting **place** – libraries host a number of events, meetings, expositions and performances
- **Organiser of measures spend spare time/stay occupied** – librarians organize and attend various events – performances, meetings

Many **experts** tended to value the growth of library's reputation more moderately, for some of them library still associates with a conservative institution and slow progress.

CHANGES IN LIBRARY'S IMAGE – EMOTIONAL VALUATION

- Library's innovation is focussed and library is regaining self-confidence -

During group discussions representatives from target groups were asked to visualize current public library and library in previous year becoming a person and/ or car. These projections revealed emotional image of a public library and its change over the span of one year.

When valuating the change over the past one year representatives of target groups noted that the change was not significant. The insignificance was determined by the fact that this amount of time is too short for serious changes. Respondents unanimously agreed that in the past there was greater uncertainty as to where library was heading to and whether things were done in the right way (*"Drivers alike did not know where to go. Now they do. They have a roadmap and know where to turn"* – heads of libraries).

Personality of modern library:

- Well educated, knowledgeable and versatile;
- With positive attitude, friendly and tolerant, *"in a good mood, peaceful, pleasant, warm and easily approachable"*;
- Over the past year gained confidence, conviction, knowledge and competences (*"Today's person stood upright"* - heads of libraries)

Visualization of library as a **car**:

- Modern, bright, comfortable and safe vehicle (*"The one which will take you far without tiring you"* - mentioned more often by experts)
- Computerized, with innovative technologies ensuring vehicle's speed and drive
- Over the past year probably a tiny external change took place (*"New paint job"*), equipped with new, better quality equipment, or larger quantity of equipment (*"Was a vehicle in need of constant repairs, now runs smoothly"* - librarians)

Even though there were division among representatives from TG concerning the gender, it was observed that the claim it was a **male** was linked to information technologies in library and knowledge in general, whereas library as a **female** was traditionally associated with pleasant communication, courtesy, understanding, preparedness to help out in any situation. Some representatives from TG in their projections visualized library as a robot, machine rather than a human being (*"A human computer enters, it visualizes in its mind pressing of a button and everything around will proceed magically"* - managers). This fact indicates a threat to the library's image since the image of a **robot** is cold, calculative and associated exclusively with information technologies. Given that currently greater focus in library communication is given to the Internet and other missions of the library grow secondary, it is very important to retain key missions of the library in continuing/ renewing communication (see *Section 10.1 [Wider] mission of libraries and areas of competence*). This would allow retaining warm and considerably more attractive image of a public library in the eyes of present and future users.

Some experts' opinion was radically different from others' as they believe that modern library remains closed, conservative, unwilling to innovate and expand range of provided services, quiet and idle (*"Seems to me to be a lady between 40 and 55years. Let's say dedicated enough to her job, but not really looking*

to embrace innovations, yet does not really object to them. Does not show own initiative – seems to be happy the way things are.”). Drawing from its conservatism, library seems to be steady and durable. It is likely that such valuation of experts resulted from poor contact with modern library – and most importantly, not going to the library.

LIBRARY’S VALUATION AT NATIONAL AND MUNICIPAL LEVELS

Library’s image improved and among representatives of the public sector:

- Librarians are perceived as a separate group among other employees in the cultural sector. It is agreed that librarians have their own, special needs (“*Just listen to the debates over wage cuts, now there is a distinction between people in the cultural sector, librarians, and others. Before all debates were more or less generalized*” – heads of libraries).
- Due to obligations to the project and continuous publicizing of libraries, municipalities give more consideration to the needs of libraries.

LIBRARY’S VALUATION IN SOCIETY

The majority of representatives from TG believe that society **values library positively**. For visitors **children** and **pensioners** library is a place not only to exchange books or read a newspaper, it is also a place to spend time, socialize with peers or chat with a librarian. Mature young people have a positive view of libraries though library has a bit different function for them – it is a place for targeted information collection. Occasionally it was mentioned that there is a possibility of least positive valuation from people who are rare visitors at libraries, namely, working people, otherwise occupied people – their knowledge of libraries is based on the impressions from their last visit to library during studies or school years.

Change in the contents of public library was mostly observed by its visitors; therefore, representatives of TG believe that the visitors value the library best. That is why it is important for libraries to expand their circle of users. Attraction of new users to public libraries today takes place in a number of ways: some libraries do not take any special measures to attract visitors and rather use conventional cultural events by inviting not only library visitors, but also all residents who do not necessary go to the library; other libraries conduct special programmes intended to attract new members (for example, invitations to newborns to become library members given to his/her parents, or give-aways of reader cards). It was observed that various promotions often are **targeted at the youngest members of society** – children of kindergarten age, schoolchildren. Children are taken on field trips, libraries closely collaborate with all levels of educational establishments (“*We have a puppet theatre, visit kindergartens and invite children to visit us*” – heads of libraries).

Nevertheless, a new visitor is attracted only if the **services provided by the library are relevant to him/her**, that is, a person must be in need of services library can offer (in later surveys it is necessary to itemize which services could be relevant to potential members).

Librarians indicated that retention of readers depends not only on the satisfaction of their expectations – potential **visitor’s intent to visit again is strongly related to librarian, that is, how librarian meets a visitor and attends to them**. The human factor is one of more important factors determining why a visitor comes back even though library’s services are less relevant to them.

9.4. Indicator 8A. Websites of libraries

- The potential of libraries’ websites is not fully explored, and library’s staff does not understand benefits of a website in publicizing the library -

In general, the **majority of libraries already have their websites**; others plan to start the website’s creation process, or are already in the process of creating one. It was observed that newly built libraries, or fundamentally renovated libraries, more often launched totally new Internet websites over the past year, or substantially updated old ones (for example, public libraries of Utena and Klaipėda Districts).

Heads of libraries believe that, as far as libraries’ websites are concerned, there is a **considerable and active effort** put in creating ones as compared to previous years (“*These days we pay great attention to websites – earlier updates were made sporadically, now we are constantly working to ensure timely*

updates of information of the website" – heads of libraries). More and more population and stakeholders **notice library on the Internet** – there are persons wishing to advertise on library websites, include links to other sites (more often requested by state and municipal bodies). Internet websites ensure another channel to communicate with the library – visitors can find a contact e-mail and can communicate via e-mail letters with library's staff. This way library moves to virtual environment when a visitor can obtain information of the library without actually visiting it or contacting by phone.

Administration of Internet websites is done by library's staff with various responsibilities – unit managers, deputy directors who collect, systemize, and process information, and library's IT specialist who is responsible for the entire technical process of inputting information. No outside specialists working specifically with libraries' websites were mentioned during discussions or interviews.

As far as ordinary librarians' input in their library's Internet websites is concerned, essentially it means **continuous updating of website contents** – placing information on events, novelties introduce in the library, newly arrived books. Still one could claim that attractiveness of an Internet website to a visitor depends on whether there is an enthusiastic and professional person in the library who could be actively involved in creating website contents and encourage library's branches to do the same (*"Bleak, inconsistent with modern requirements, mechanical changes in information on events and that's it. Our website has no attractive information, we are not asked to provide one, yet we have ideas and suggestions, but there is simply no specialist to do so"* - librarians).

Librarian's contribution to website administration is **provision of information** about events that took place in the library, novelties (*"We do send images of library and from events"* - librarians). In general, librarians **are not active creators of website's contents**, and probably are not encouraged to do so. It is possible to claim that librarian's contribution to website contents creation depends on **librarian's personality, initiative** and director's compulsory instructions to do so.

Even though work with libraries' Internet websites is a bit more intensive as compared to previous years, libraries and their staff still do not share their experiences and **contribute little or almost none to creation or administration of other organisations' websites**. The causes behind this process could be:

- Absence of the need for library's support
- Librarians have weak competences of website creation and their support would be more that of an amateur rather than that of a professional

It is necessary to mention that a **small portion of libraries collaborate with other organisations** by helping them to organize their websites, or by creating new websites relevant to the region where the library is located (*"Currently we are creating new data base with funding from the Ministry of Culture, we call it e-heritage of Pasvalys Region, in other words, the e-library of Pasvalys Region heritage, and we are including other organisations by encouraging them to provide documents which we later on will scan and include on the data base. Others are very enthusiastic about the idea and eagerly participate. This effort will eventually evolve into a separate website"* – librarians). Nevertheless, involvement of these libraries, collaboration with other organisations depends on personality and initiative of library's director.

10. Local, regional and national funding of libraries

10.1. Indicator 6A. Funding earmarked for libraries

- With decreasing state funding, funds within the framework of the project "Libraries for Innovation" allocated to the public Internet access service mean a life line for libraries keeping them afloat -

Survey participants' discussion about funding allocated for libraries were not limited solely to assessment of funding received in the past year. Representatives from TG unanimously stressed that over the past several years (from around 2006 to 2008) state funding allocated to the libraries for purposes of book fund formation has considerably increased, and majority of libraries over this time had the chance of upgrading both on the outside and on the inside through a state modernisation programme (*"Over the past two year, excluding 2009, there was a major breakthrough with funding increase from 2 to 8 millions, meaning that libraries received huge investment inflow and it was the first libraries received this*

attention" - experts; "It is a major advantage; since as a result new and modern libraries appeared in Lithuania – inviting, housed in beautiful buildings, result of major investments as it should be" - experts).

As far as 2009 are concerned, **financial situation** of libraries, as is the case with any other budgetary establishment in Lithuania, is seen as **very poor** ("Very bad, this year funding was cut down by half", "as is with every other establishment, only cuts, everything goes downhill", "in other words, absolute collapse" - librarians, heads of libraries). Representatives from TG claimed to understand that due to the economic downturn state funding to libraries, and to any other public institution, was cut down forcing libraries and municipalities to look for solutions to cut costs. Still **there is an acknowledgement that given the obvious benefits of libraries to society, there should be no doubts over the importance of library's role, and investments into libraries as well as into any other educational, cultural institutions should not be cut down.**

Representatives from TG believe that the **"sad" evidence of reduced state funding** is felt and clearly visible already today:

- **Wages cuts, lay-offs, holidays without pay for librarians**, which in turn diminishes **librarian's motivation**. The role and responsibilities of librarians over the past year had changed dramatically, work load kept on growing, yet remuneration for librarian's work remained measly ("Qualifications and current nature of work of a librarian have changed, there are so many things to do and respectively they should be better paid to do the job" - experts). And personal motivation of staff alone to continue does not suffice any more ("With wages cuts sentiment of librarians is growing pessimistic, equally as their will to do something" - experts).
- **Narrowing range of services provided by the library , compromised quality of services:**
 - **There are no possibilities to subscribe newspapers, or update book fund**, therefore libraries are unable to provide with the latest print media or boast availability of new books ("The number of subscriptions of periodicals went down dramatically, we can't afford anything other than a few major newspapers, let alone new books" - librarians; "Public library with no new books is a disaster" - experts).
 - Libraries are **forced to reduce working hours and close down on Saturdays** ("Funding was cut down so we had no choice but to remain closed on Saturdays" - librarians).
 - As a result of decreased funding from municipalities, **debts for heating, electricity keep growing, sometimes libraries have no money to pay for Internet access** ("We asked our Internet provider to send us a warning letter so we could address the municipality" - librarians; "We took a credit to pay up our bills for heating" – heads of libraries).

This means that **consequences of reduced funding could potentially lead to:**

- **In the short term – user dissatisfaction**
- **In the long term:**
 - **Decreasing visitor numbers and adverse impact on reputation of libraries** (considerably strengthened by this project). Although all target groups hypothetically touched the subject of the future of Lithuanian public library, heads of libraries in particular stressed that with the end of the project situation of libraries will turn to tragic – "worst case scenario, if funding is cut down by 25%, there will be only three branches out of five, this way everything will be closed down."
 - Due to lack of funds **contents and quality of library's services will over time fail to meet visitor's requirements and expectations** (for example, when libraries will be unable to subscribe new books and new periodicals), **this way the role of library as an educational establishment will diminish** which in turn will **limit visitor's opportunities to deepen knowledge, competences** etc.

10.2. Indicator 6B. Funding for public Internet access

When discussing **funding for public Internet access** all participants of the survey **unanimously claimed that for the duration of the project "Libraries for Innovation" funding is considerably higher**. Funding for the project allowed acquisition of new, technologically more advanced, modern computers, the number of computers is growing (this means that more people have the opportunity simultaneously and uninterrupted to use a computer/ Internet), better Internet speed and quality, computer and Internet literacy training for librarians were carried out, librarians are more able to help visitors on matters of computer or Internet use, and there are plans for training courses in the near future.

Thanks to these investments Lithuanian public libraries do not lose their attractiveness, pace of progress and remain more or less relevant to users (*"Internet access compensates for and allows for at least this stability, and don't let, please, to end it with this project"; "We retain visitors only due to the project, they shift to virtual environment, Internet websites, for example Delfi, which compensate the lack of periodicals"*).

Note that during the **discussions with the heads of libraries** one very important **nuance**, associated with the funding for Internet access, was revealed and needs to be taken into account:

Although directors unanimously agreed that the project was "very good, (*"we are happy that it helped to improve library's image, attract more visitors to libraries"; "Against the backdrop of this mess in Lithuanian and in the world, the Geits project was very timely, it provided an umbrella and amortises certain threats – at least for the duration of the project"*), **they also said that not everything was well thought through**. That is, organizers of the project did not take into account the fact that libraries will have to pay for the Internet connection from their own funds, and cover other costs (paper, toner, antivirus software etc.) related to computers and additional equipment (printers, scanners etc.). That, according to heads of libraries, **has burdened libraries financially and problems arising from this burden are becoming/ in the near future will become difficult or virtually impossible to solve due to the difficult economic situation of Lithuania** (*"We have to beg with each payment, we just recently paid for the Internet for July – the project had to anticipate these costs"; "We have to buy from outsourcing companies both paper and toner and we need money for that, no one gives anything for free, and right now money is difficult to get"; "We do not pay yet, but we will have to soon and I do not know how we'll manage then"*).

Heads of libraries fear the end of the project as **there are no guarantees of further funding and "the suspense is killing"**. Directors also voiced an opinion that, with the end of the project, libraries will find themselves in a financial pit. If with the end of the project funding ceases and libraries are unable to find new sources of financing, over time the equipment will become outdated and fail to meet current, *up-to-date* requirements, which as a result will lead to/ strengthen negative image of public library as an educational institution which is utterly useless and outdated.

11. **Conclusions and findings** (formulated based on the information from the survey of 2009 and comparative data provided in the report on the survey of 2008)

Qualitative impact assessment of the project "Libraries for Innovation" performed among librarians, heads of libraries, and experts recorded changes that took place over the past year, and revealed certain trends (before placing key notes it is important to stress that even though reduced state funding for libraries had negative impact on activities of libraries (for example, staff motivation, quality of traditional services), this is a factor that does not depend on libraries' will, therefore findings and conclusions focus only on significant aspects):

- **Understanding** among general population of benefits a library provides is **gradually expanding and growing stronger** (thanks to the project "Libraries for Innovation"), however it is **still** assessed as being **insufficient**
- Newly introduced, or better developed, of **high quality, contemporary services** (intensive spread of public Internet access, other information technologies, e.g. scanners, copy machines, printers etc.) **provided in a public library together with traditional services** (books, print media) not only contribute to the growing number of visitors, but also:
 - **Gradually build computer literacy of users;**
 - **Increase quality of provided services** (for example, LIBIS programme ensures faster visitor service; considerably higher quality of public Internet access);
 - **Offer equivalents of traditional services on the Internet** – due to reduced funding in the time of economic downturn library visitors are "moved" to Internet environment (for example, can read periodicals on the Internet);
 - **Help to form/ strengthen the image of a contemporary and innovative library** (more in the view of librarians and heads of libraries);
 - **Contribute to reduction of social exclusion in society** – members of specific, difficult to reach social groups have the chance to expand their circle of acquaintances, use previously hardly available/ unavailable e-services. This opportunity allows them to feel fully integrated members of society.
- On the one hand, it is a pleasure that **librarians and heads of libraries observe and point out** the aforementioned **positive aspects**, on the other hand, these aspects are still **poorly communicated on the outside**:
 - There are **only traditional events** held, which do not reach potential visitors;
 - **Weak contacts with the national media**, which could communicate the importance and benefits of library at national level (not only at local level as is the case);
 - **Contacts with politicians** are **rather one-sided** (to the benefit of politicians and not advocacy of libraries);
 - **The potential of libraries' websites is not fully explored.**

It is possible to claim that the **weak link of external communication** is the **absence of versatile strategy to publicise libraries**.

- **Innovation of libraries is followed by growing competences of librarians:**
 - For the moment the **level of knowledge of IT/Internet use of librarians is average** (though stronger due to training and methodical materials); the main obstacle for efficient work is **efficient solution of everyday unexpected practical problems** (for example, log on to watch live online broadcast, attaching a file to an e-mail letter). Currently librarians in these situations depend on people of their environment (peers, family members), whereas function of IT specialists is understood as solution of major problems/

eliminations of failures. *"If smaller problems are not the responsibility of IT specialist, then who is responsible for emergency assistance to librarian in this system?"*

- **Specifics of rural areas:** in most cases responsibilities of a librarian in rural area are very wide since a single person is responsible for everything. Besides, competences of residents of rural areas are weaker. This situation means that **efforts of a librarian in rural area and their motivation to provide better quality services must be even higher as compared to librarians in cities; and provision of required assistance** (for example, IT specialist's consultation) **should be considerably more expedient.**
- **Traditional role of librarian is expanded with the function of consultant** which requires not only specific knowledge of IT and Internet, but also pedagogical knowledge. It also needs to be taken into account that **not everyone can successfully communicate their knowledge to others** because of personal character traits (in particular, to groups with special needs). With their current competences **librarians** are more prepared to provide consultations to **elderly people or users with weaker competences** since in most cases younger people have better knowledge and skills.
- **Ignorance of the English language prevents librarians from exploring all possibilities of Internet resources made available through public Internet Access, which in turn prevents better satisfaction of visitor needs and hinders higher quality of service.**
- It is also important to point out that **librarians understand public benefit of modern library but weakly feel personal one**, and see no prospects (more duties and responsibilities are not associated with qualification building and, consequently, better remuneration), **therefore their motivation to perform their job well, using all competences, is compulsory** rather than conscious. **Thus library's innovation is hindered by staff without motivation.**