



Bibliotekos pažangai



MARTYNAS
MAŽVYDAS
NATIONAL
LIBRARY OF
LITHUANIA



THE PROJECT "LIBRARIES FOR INNOVATION"

SURVEY

OF LIBRARIES' EMPLOYEES AND OTHER

REPRESENTATIVES OF INTERESTED

GROUPS

2010

(Instruments 5,6,7)

CONTRACTING AUTHORITY: Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania

CONTACT PERSON OF THE CONTRACTING AUTHORITY: Ugnė Rutkauskienė

CONTRACTOR: RAIT, UAB

PROJECT MANAGER: Dr. Gintaras Šumskas, Senior Project Manager

REPORT PREPARED BY: Renata Sadunišvili, Tatjana Konovalova

THE TEAM CONDUCTING THE SURVEY: Project Manager of Qualitative Research Department: Tatjana Konovalova
Assistant in Qualitative Research Department: Lina Drungilienė

CONTACTS: RAIT, UAB, Naugarduko g. 68B, LT-03203 Vilnius, Lithuania
tel. (+370 5) 269 12 47 , fax. (+370 5) 269 12 48, e-mail: tatjana@rait.lt

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1. Survey methods

Two main qualitative research methods were used in the survey:

- ✓ in-depth interview (ID) – a direct interview with a respondent according to pre-prepared scenario. During the ID, each respondent is given more time and the collected information on his/her experience, viewpoint, attitude, and motives is especially deep and detailed. In-depth interviews are conducted in natural environment (respondent's working place).
- ✓ focus group discussion (FGD) – each FGD involves 10 respondents, who are randomly selected according to specific selection criteria. Each discussion is held following a special scenario, which is agreed upon with the customer. Each discussion lasts around 2.5 hours. During the discussions, several projection techniques are used in order to completely reveal the respondents' opinion, assessment, viewpoint, changes in viewpoint, and the aspects that determine the opinion expressed by the respondents.

1.1. Target group sample and selection

Target groups of the qualitative research were the following:

- ✓ experts related to public libraries or the project "Libraries for innovation";
- ✓ heads of the libraries;
- ✓ librarians of city and village branches working with public internet access.

The list of experts with indicated priorities was provided by the Contracting Authority. For selection of heads of libraries and librarians, the Contracting Authority presented contact lists, which were used in the selection.

When conducting group discussions with the librarians, the requirement of the Contracting Authority to survey the librarians working in 4 counties of Lithuania (Kaunas, Šiauliai, Alytus, and Tauragė) with the town/village ratio of 60/40 was observed.

- in Alytus and Tauragė counties, the librarians of the libraries in towns and town-type settlements (with population over 3000) were invited;
- in Kaunas and Šiauliai counties, the librarians of village libraries were interviewed.

With the view to obtain maximum representation of the situation of libraries in the entire country, the heads of libraries from various counties of Lithuania were invited.

Focus group discussions with the librarians and heads of libraries from various geographic locations were held in Vilnius, in the premises of RAIT, UAB.

1.2. Survey instrument

Discussion scenarios (instruments No. 5, No. 6, and No. 7) provided by the Contracting Authority were used in group discussions and interviews.

In comparison to the instruments of the surveys conducted in 2009, when preparing for the survey of this year, the discussion scenarios were corrected very little. The corrections were agreed upon with the Contracting Authority and made with the view to assess the Project impact in one year.

1.3. Technical report on conduction of the survey

The survey included:

- ✓ 8 in-depth interviews with the experts (conducted in Vilnius, in the working places of the respondents);
- ✓ 2 focus group discussions with librarians (in total, 20 librarians took part) from Alytus, Kaunas, Šiauliai, and Tauragė counties (conducted in Vilnius, at the premises of RAIT, UAB);
- ✓ 2 focus group discussions with the heads of the libraries (in total, 16 heads of the libraries took part) from various counties of Lithuania (conducted in Vilnius, at the premises of RAIT, UAB).

1.4. Key principles of information analysis

Several principles of information analysis that have to be taken into account when reading the report are provided below*:

- ✓ Comparison of **village and town**. The differentiation between village and town is presented in the report, when certain differences of assessment or situation exist. If there are none, the comparison is not given and the general assessment or situation are presented;
- ✓ Comparison of **target groups'** opinions. This comparison is presented based on the same principle as the comparison of town and village: if there are differences between the assessments of representatives of target groups, the comparison is presented. If the situation or assessment is described without distinguishing particular target groups, it means there was no essential difference between the assessment or opinion of these groups.
- ✓ Moreover, **the comparison of results** of the survey "Libraries' employees and representatives of other interested groups" conducted in **year 2009** by TNS Gallup, UAB is presented. It is noteworthy that according to the opinion of TG representatives themselves, the period of 1 year is too short for radical changes to take place/be recorded.

* New index - 2E. [Improved] librarians' knowledge and skills of safe use of internet.

2. Summary of survey results

Innovation and new contents in public libraries (indices 8B and 9A)

The changes in public libraries that occurred during this year are first of all related to the specifics of providing modern services and the expansion of these services in rural areas.

Essentially, these are the same changes that were identified last year – related to the strengthening of the information technology technical base and its maintenance (renovation/strengthening of technical base of the libraries, improvement of internet quality, improvement of librarians' competence). This year, their scope and weight are assessed as significantly improved. Despite of the fact that the contents of reputedly traditional services (stock of books) was supplemented less than in the previous years due to objective reasons (reduced funding), **the new contents and services in public libraries were well counterbalanced by new technologies, which opened up new opportunities to attract new users as well as strengthen the name and authority of a librarian in the community.**

The libraries' employees admitted that the websites of their libraries are becoming increasingly attractive and informative to civil society; they said that a little more work was put into their formatting and contents. Renewed library websites are slowly but purposefully starting to involve civil society in the life of a library.

Support to public libraries in work with PIA (indices 10A and 10B)

Technical maintenance of computer equipment in rural areas is considered inadequate, which partially obstructs the more intensive use of available IT.

Teaching aids provided to the librarians in the framework of the Project "Libraries for Innovation" are assessed positively; they are considered timely and beneficial in the long-run. The publications were used more widely and intensely than a year ago, when some libraries had just received them. They are used by both the employees and the visitors of libraries. It can be assumed that the benefit of the teaching aids was better felt and understood by the librarians (and through them – the visitors) after they acquired more knowledge in computer literacy and were improving their practical skills independently and seeking to improve their competence.

Library employees are aware of and have access to methodical support, but most often it is used in critical cases.

Social benefit of PIA to individuals and the community (indices 7B and 7C)

The use of modern services provided in libraries encourages deeper involvement in community life and being socially active. Meanwhile, the role of libraries as the social centre and the place of community gathering is getting stronger. Through contemporary means, various services and information is accessible to everyone, regardless of his/her social or economical status, at the actual and not declarative level, and involving the settlements farther away from the cities. The use of technologies is gaining a new dimension of assessment in the minds of the users themselves: the internet and related services are clearly perceived as the instruments that change the quality of life. Meanwhile, the **economical benefit** is perceived as self-evident and **natural**. Just like in year 2009, it is perceived as manifesting at two levels: **through saving time and money.**

Skills and motivation of libraries' employees to use information technology (indices 2A, 2C and 2E)

Self-evaluation of librarians has significantly improved in the latter year. They evaluate their skills realistically and admit that their skills are not adequate to service advanced users. Although due to objective reasons, the librarians of rural areas trust their skills less, they have motivation for improvement and know where they can apply to. The motivation for improvement was induced by different factors. It was partially strengthened by obvious reasons: the risk of losing the job, increasing flow of visitors as well as requirements. However, these reasons by themselves are motivating as stressors. **The factor related to the educative activity and programmes intended for improving the qualification of librarians in the Project "Libraries for Innovation" was indicated as a positive stimulus for improvement. What concerns the management of information technology, a positive change can be noticed. Self-assessment and few critical situations, when the librarians do not know what to do, indicate that a change in the mind of librarians has occurred: they feel more sure of themselves and assess their knowledge and skills as useful not only to themselves, but also to the community.** They are also able to indicate particular areas they would like to improve further. One of these areas has been the improvement of foreign language skills for several years now. In this respect,

the employees of libraries assess their current situation and competition possibilities critically and realistically: the majority of virtual contents is not in Lithuanian and this directly limits their opportunities of professional improvement.

When discussing the safe use of internet, it appeared that the librarians and heads of libraries **are aware of the existence of various threats**. According to the representatives of TG, they have **received most information on these threats during the training** organised by the **Project "Libraries for Innovation"**. **They spontaneously assessed their skills of safe internet use as good, but during focused analysis of each particular threat, they had doubts and assessed their skills as inadequate**, as in many cases they would not know where to start and what to do.

Information technology skills of public libraries' visitors (indices 3A and 3B)

Economical situation of the latter year and the rapid **expansion of PIA** have influenced more active involvement of particular target groups (e.g. seniors) in the use of free services. The librarians having acquired more specific knowledge by special means intended for them and also due to their-self confidence have more opportunities of attracting new visitors to the libraries by offering not only traditional services, but also additional consulting or just providing the visitors with a possibility to communicate and provide mutual aid. The employees of libraries and the experts understand that the current situation **provides auspicious conditions to the PIA users to deepen their knowledge and to use the means available in the libraries to greater extent**.

Specific and hard-to-reach social groups and the experience of PIA use (indices 4B, 4D and 2D)

The library remains the cultural and social self-help centre, especially in smaller communities. They contribute significantly to the integration of social groups into the society and implementation of the ideas of equal opportunities. However, the libraries are not capable of creating special means and programmes for attracting special needs groups by themselves yet, and they need additional expert support. Currently, conventional means of attraction are still used, which are easily predictable and seen as boring and not always efficient. The higher numbers of visitors in the libraries was determined more by the general economic situation and not by the actions of the libraries. By accepting and absorbing the support, the libraries are more of the users of the support than its spreaders. The readiness of the librarians to service the special needs users is essentially theoretical, but it has already reached the level, where the librarians themselves can critically assess their skills and indicate particular problems they need help solving. **Creating Lithuanian contents or initiating its creation in the libraries could be one of the most prospective directions that would allow using the support received in the framework of the project productively and involving different social groups**.

Library in the public space (indices 2B, 5A, 5B and 8C)

Last year, the social-public mission was developed the most and the educative-training and informative missions were being purposefully developed. These missions are seen as closely interrelated and **providing both social-integrative and informative benefit to society**.

The means of publicising the libraries used by librarians are rather conventional, erratic and not consistent; there is no unified strategy and communication. The librarians are using a conservative and tested system, which was "mastered" in many years, but is not always efficient today due to narrow reach of the target audience (the majority of these means reach the people who are already coming to the libraries, but new visitors are not attracted). During the discussions, the representatives of TG univocally said and very well assessed the TV commercials initiated by the Project, which in their opinion, had positive effect on both the increase in the number of visitors and the strengthening of the library image in the society and various state institutions.

Communication with representatives of local authorities is often perceived as the relation between a requesting and a giving person. After the desired result is achieved (e.g. having received required aid or support of the authorities), the librarians assess the communication skills positively. As the communication of the librarians is active only with the representatives of local media, the librarians do not give attention and efforts to attracting national media and therefore, the larger part of society does not receive the information on modernisation of libraries.

The image of the libraries is gradually improving in the eyes of the public. **Rationally**, the representatives of TG perceive it as **modern, contemporary institution that provides comprehensive information and the means to obtain it**. Whereas **emotionally it is associated with a younger, more modern, smart and more shaped up (than a year ago) personality**.

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

The system of libraries is seen as depending on the state and the question of its survival (funding) is directly associated with the general state cultural policy. At the level of municipalities, the libraries are often capable of ensuring the upkeep and competitiveness with other cultural institutions, but this activity is perceived as a certain personal incentive and not a standard of work. The support received from the project "Libraries for Innovation", especially technical and methodical support, does not contribute to more active search of funding and postpones it to later time. On the other hand, the skills and knowledge received along with the material means can help in creating competitive services, which will provide better grounds for funding in the future.

3. Innovation and new contents in public libraries

3.1. New contents and services in the libraries

- Active supply of modern services in the libraries not only creates the image of a modern library employing state-of-the-art technology, but also forms new and positive attitude of society towards obtaining and disseminating information/knowledge.-

The combination of traditional and modern services provided by public libraries is more and more often (compared to the data of the survey of the year 2008) perceived as natural and completely integral **part of the image** of contemporary library. This aspect was especially pronounced in the last year, when intensive expansion of internet access in village libraries was taking place.

Speaking of new contents and services of the libraries, all representatives of TG clearly distinguished and indicated **traditional**, "provided for a long time" (books, periodicals, cultural activity, etc.) and **modern**, "recently widely offered" **services** (PIA and other information technology – printing, scanning, copying). The participants of the survey unanimously emphasized that public internet access has **ensured further existence of many libraries and increased the flow of visitors**: "even the people who did not use to come, are now coming. And not only to use the internet."

Just like a year ago, according to the opinion of the librarians, **most valued service is lending the books and the supply of periodicals**. However, just like other participants of the survey (heads of libraries and representatives of interested groups), the librarians recognize that the information and knowledge are values by themselves, especially under the conditions of the economical downturn, and the sources of supplying/obtaining them can be various: not only a book, but also internet.

Speaking of the changes in public libraries, the representatives of TG generally indicated the changes related to the **specifics of providing modern services and the expansion of these services in rural areas**. Essentially, these are the same changes that were identified last year, but their scope and weight have significantly increased. Most often, the above mentioned changes manifested through:

- ✓ Strengthening (more in village libraries)/renewing (more in town libraries) the **technical base** of the libraries:
 - Intensive expansion of PIA in the villages, more libraries offering PIA, and creating new places in all Lithuanian libraries;
 - Supply of new, modern equipment and accessories (copying machines, scanners, printers, multimedia, interactive whiteboards, headphones, microphones, etc.);
- ✓ Ensuring even higher **internet speed** and better quality;
- ✓ Enhanced competence and knowledge of librarians due to **purposeful training**, necessary to consult the visitors on various questions of the IT use.

Although the above mentioned changes are more of a quantitative nature, significant qualitative changes have also occurred, i.e., the **quality of modern services** provided by the libraries has **improved** during the last year:

- ✓ The visitors are services more rapidly and professionally: "the equipment was renewed, we can do everything faster. The competence of librarians has also increased – they have had training and can apply their knowledge in practice every day," said the heads of libraries;
- ✓ Each library (less characteristic to village libraries) offers a wide spectrum of additional services: copying, scanning, printing, and communication (Skype): "you can find almost everything in a library now, it is easier to ask what we do not have," said the librarians;
- ✓ Internet contents and its endless possibilities are better known and accessible not only to advanced users, but also to the visitors having the basics of computer literacy;
- ✓ Modern services and presentation of their benefit (PIA and training) are available not only in the libraries, but also via the means of public communication (TV, radio, field advertising, etc.).

The essential change related to provision of traditional services is the fact that in the latter year, the funding for book collections and periodicals was further reduced, and it means that the lack of new books

and periodicals was felt even stronger in public libraries. Therefore, naturally, the position of traditional services in public libraries and importance to people was especially emphasized this year.

- Renewed library websites are starting to involve civil society in the life of a library; however, such attempts are fragmented and rather occasional -

When discussing the websites of the libraries, the predominant majority of libraries indicated that they had **some website**, which were renewed during the year (quite a small part) or are intended to be renewed. **The assessment of library websites differed** depending on whether the discussed websites were of central/city libraries or the libraries of smaller towns, and whether the **websites were renewed or not**.

Not renewed websites or the websites of smaller libraries usually **contain basic information** on the library (opening hours, address, contacts) and **the news of the library**: scheduled events, exhibitions, celebrations, etc.

According to the librarians, such information is not sufficient and not attractive, but **they do not show any initiative to improve the website themselves** and **wait for someone else to do it** (*"actually, our website is in poor condition, absolutely unattractive <...> A new one is being created, the templates are being made according to the project so that all libraries used one template <...> But actually, it is probably the only problem we have - library website. I think this is why the "Libraries for Innovation" is asking about the information website"*, said the librarians).

According to the heads of libraries, in renewed websites of libraries:

- ✓ The structure of the library website was changed, there are more headings;
- ✓ Online services were introduced (*"virtual consolidated catalogue, where the people can find the branch where the book is available and whether that book is on the shelf at the moment,"* said the heads of libraries);
- ✓ The articles of the librarians and scanned articles on the regional events are posted (*"I believe, they are very relevant and good for people abroad and far away, as they do not lose touch with the events of their home,"* said a head of a library);
- ✓ Additional online bibliographical list (*"we tag the contents of the books to their bibliographic entries, which also details the search for various questions,"* said the heads of libraries);
- ✓ Virtual exhibitions that display not only the works of famous artists, but also the works of library visitors and contest participants;
- ✓ Polls – comments about new books;
- ✓ "Ask the librarian" section, which provides the opportunity to ask questions online and receive answers, etc.

Renewed library websites are starting to involve civil society in the life of a library by providing the **opportunity to express own opinion**, to order a book or postpone the time of returning it online, to participate in competitions, and to ask questions and receive answers without leaving the home. The librarians admit that such structure of the website is more attractive to civil society; however, just a few libraries have such websites (according to the heads of libraries).

Survey participants indicated the following **changes related to the improvement of library websites that occurred during the last year**:

- ✓ More headings were introduced, larger galleries and video information can be uploaded (*"a year ago it was possible too, but now it is at a much better level,"* said the heads of libraries);
- ✓ Larger advertising banners were introduced, which is perceived as the evaluation of website attractiveness;
- ✓ The links to library websites are given in social websites (facebook.com), which allows the libraries to participate in social life more actively and be seen "beyond the limits of library".

Although the above mentioned changes were most often determined by the personal incentive of the heads of the libraries, which must be encouraged, a general trend can be noticed: the role and impact of websites on the evaluation and popularity of libraries is being better understood.

According to the heads of libraries, **the renewal of websites is dictated by the needs of visitors**, and whether these needs are taken into account **depends on the incentive of the heads of libraries**:

"young people just dictate... for example, a movie was created and we had a possibility to post it... the people appreciated it very much, as they could watch a movie about Radviliškis <...> and this year we tried... one of our readers had lost a dog and the librarians posted it in the news section and uploaded a picture of the dog, you should have seen how happy the people were to say that they had seen that dog; it is just like that, the visitors dictate their needs themselves," said the heads of libraries).

Usually, for **administrating a website** a specialist of that field is appointed (most often a "computer specialist" or programmer, less often – the staff of the library: deputy heads, heads of divisions). Such distribution occurred due to the need to administrate complex website contents (and the lack of necessary knowledge) and time consumption: administration of a larger and wider website requires more time resources, and it is positively assessed.

The role of librarians in creating the websites is limited to posting the articles about the events and the pictures. The librarians of smaller libraries that have their websites upload all material of an event themselves, meanwhile in larger websites, the information prepared by the librarian is sent to the website administrator; thus, **personal involvement is website updating is limited to rather passive preparation of information:** (*"there is an employee in a public library, who administrates the website, and if the employees of the branches have something interesting going on, they ask to post that information, don't they? I am not sure who should be doing this; should the administrator put pressure to get something..."* said a librarian).

Cooperation at the level of internet websites often occurs between the library and other state institutions: interactive links to the websites of state institutions are posted as well as other "useful links", such as the timetable of the bus station, etc. However, the possibilities of wider cooperation in the process of creating websites are limited, as the libraries have no funds for additional website programming services and the librarians have no adequate skills or knowledge to create or develop the websites.

3.2. Examples of innovation in libraries resulting from the Project

- The computer literacy training as a kept promise has strengthened the authority of the library and shaped its image as an institution capable of implementing relevant and continuous projects. -

When analysing the examples of innovations in libraries resulting from the Project, it appeared that during the last year, the main innovation was the **computer literacy training to visitors**, which has raised a lot of interest, mainly from the existing visitors of libraries. This new service was long awaited. According to the data of the survey conducted last year, it was assessed as the most important innovation of the nearest future. The representatives of TG (the participants of both surveys - of last year and this year) unanimously emphasized the invaluable benefit of this training to the people:

- ✓ not only **direct – acquiring the knowledge and forming the skills;**
- ✓ but also **collateral – involvement in the community and a possibility to feel a full member of the community.**

According to the survey participants, the **training organised in the libraries** not only involved existing library visitors more, but also helped **to attract new visitors and the ones who have forgotten about the library:** *"some people rediscovered the library."* Moreover, the training essentially changed the role of the librarian, who is more often recognized as a specialist who can provide qualified aid, and also had positive impact on the **strengthened image of the library and librarians** in general: *"the authority of librarians has greatly increased; the people used to say that we are just issuing books, and now they say we are operating the computers,"* said the librarians.

Another innovation that occurred during the last year was **wireless internet** in public libraries and the possibility to bring your laptop to the library and use the internet free of charge (*"we have got wireless internet, so the people can even remain outside and use it,"* said the librarians). In addition, the librarians from smaller towns and villages emphasized they were very glad they had received laptops, which can be taken home: *"it is very convenient, you can take it home, as sometimes you cannot complete everything during working hours,"* said the librarians.

The librarians and the heads of libraries said that during the last year, the foreigners have been dropping by to use internet more often (especially in the border zone): *"foreigners come sometimes, especially in summer; they are surprised that the internet is free of charge,"* said the librarians. **Servicing of**

foreigners/tourists is perceived as rather new practice, which was not mentioned in the survey of last year.

Just like last year, the representatives of TG mentioned the **renovation of library buildings** and **computer literacy training** regularly organised for librarians. However, these activities are not recognized as innovation and are perceived as an integral part of the Project "Libraries for Innovation". It is noteworthy that the survey participants were especially positive about the quality and consistency of the training.

4. Support to public libraries in work with PIA

4.1. Improved technical maintenance in the libraries

- *Although it is admitted that the workload is growing, technical maintenance in the libraries did not change in the last year and new IT specialists were not employed. -*

Both the librarians and the heads of libraries said that **technical maintenance did not change in the last year**. Although the number of PIA places is growing, the number of servicing employees remained the same or even decreased to financial cuts ("*there was one specialist and still is, although the workload has significantly increased,*" said the heads of libraries).

Depending on the library and the number of its branches, central libraries have from one (part-time) to two maintenance employees. However, in most libraries, the computers of the library and its branches are maintained by one specialist.

- *The lack of IT specialist's positions slows down the solving of arising problems -*

When problems with computer equipment arise, they are first solved locally (by addressing other librarians, other people that are "more knowledgeable of computer", volunteers), and if these attempts fail, a specialist of the central library is contacted.

Depending on the type of the problem, it can be solved:

- ✓ by phone – explaining what has to be done to eliminate the failure;
- ✓ by networking - if the failure can be fixed remotely;
- ✓ the specialist arrives to the library or quite often the computer is sent to the specialist ("*first, I call the IT specialist. He checks whether the problem is software related and can be fixed from his centre, from his computer. If not, I call the courier, they pack the computer and deliver it, and after it is fixed, they bring it back,*" said a librarian).

This way of solving the problems due to the lack of funding, slows down the entire process of "fixing" the computer and therefore, the library cannot use the computer from several days to several weeks or even longer. This problem is especially acute in village libraries ("*we had no internet for a month. I called Mažeikiai <...> they sent the people, who tried to fix it, but still there was no internet for the entire month,*" said a librarian).

4.2. Improved methodical support in the libraries

- *Methodical material is widely used by both the librarians (in consulting and instructing PIA users) and the visitors, who rarely, but independently "study" the books in order to improve their information technology skills -*

The librarians and heads of libraries most often mentioned two types of methodical support they had received during last year in the framework of the Project "Libraries for Innovation":

- ✓ **Teaching aids** "Learn to Use a Computer", "My Internet Guide" and the newest publication "Introduction: Web 2.0";
- ✓ **Computer literacy training** for librarians.

Both received books and organised training were assessed very positively: *"the team of specialists is very good, they work honestly,"* said the heads of libraries.

Just like last year, the above mentioned teaching aids were especially positively assessed as comprehensive, clear and accessible even to inexperienced users: *"there is a lot of information, they are simpler and understandable to people,"* said the librarians; *"they are more efficient than others, the material was prepared very competently,"* said the librarians).

According to the librarians and the heads of libraries, the libraries have received enough of these aids. Most often these **manuals are used for training the people or for individual needs of librarians and PIA users** (*"when we do not know something, we look it up", "we put them next to the computers, so the users can read and find out by themselves,"* said the librarians). Although the librarians admitted they cannot give a lot of time for the analysis of these aids as they *"do not have a spare minute"*, but in case of an unsolvable question/problem, when there is no help available, they are reading and puzzling it out themselves.

Compared to the **results of last year**, a tendency is noticed that the **teaching aids are being used more widely and intensely** than a year ago, when a part of libraries had just received them. It can be assumed that the **benefit** of the teaching aids was better felt and **understood** by the librarians (and most likely, the visitors) **after they acquired more knowledge in computer literacy** and were improving their practical skills independently and seeking to improve their competence.

When discussing the methodical support, the librarians occasionally mentioned various seminars organised by central libraries and the help of the coordinators. The coordinator not only provided the up-to-date information, but also answers the questions and gives consultations: *"I need it a lot, it is difficult for me and I have to ask, if something is not clear to me,"* (librarians, village).

5. Social and economical benefit of PIA to individuals and the community

5.1. Librarians' understanding of the benefit of public internet access to the community

-The benefit of PIA to the community is not questioned; not only is the material aspect of the benefit emphasized, but also the convenience and impact on the quality of life -

When analysing the understanding of the PIA benefit, it appeared that in comparison to the data of the survey conducted in 2009, a significant change is seen. According to the librarians, **more and more visitors understand and recognize the benefits of the internet and are using the possibilities of internet access more surely**. In the last year, not only the attitude of young people, but also the attitude of elder library visitors towards modern technologies and their benefit have taken a positive turn. This change was **determined by**:

- ✓ **Public communication** initiated by the Project "Libraries for Innovation": TV commercials, radio advertising of PIA services reached the masses and attracted more new visitors; the symbol of internet encourages the passers-by or travelling tourists to come in;
- ✓ **Training for the visitors** organised by the libraries: existing and new visitors of libraries acquired not only the basics of computer literacy/new knowledge, but also the trust that they *"can do it"*;
- ✓ **Constant work** of librarians **with the visitors**/consultation on the issues of information technology use. It determined higher self-confidence and gave courage to the visitors, as a librarian, who can help or answer a question, is always close by. Thanks to the patience of the librarians, even most sceptical visitors in terms of internet and their skills, decided to take a risk and give this service a try.

Today, just like a year ago, there are no differences between the perceived benefit of PIA to the individuals and whole community, but there is a clear tendency that **the understanding of social benefit and its importance has strengthened even more**, and its importance is constantly growing. Just like last year, the following **social benefits of PIA were indicated**:

- ✓ **Communication** and keeping in touch with the **close ones** and relatives living/staying abroad (by Skype, e-mail): *"it is usual to communicate via Skype now, it is no news; if some day it is not working, it is a tragedy, because it is so necessary; the live view is also necessary, if it disappears, they always tell about it <...> They used to play more and now they talk to their friends more, use Skype"; "those old ladies learnt to send e-mails,"* said the librarians;
- ✓ Vast **possibilities of searching for/obtaining information** (search for timetables, legal acts, advertisement sites, job offers: *"you can get information fast here; if they need something, they come and find it and do not have to browse the newspapers, as everything can be immediately found in one place,"* said the librarians; *"the possibilities of information and what can be found are expanded; one can familiarize with the information provided by Lithuania and also access other networks,"* said an expert, Ministry of Culture);
- ✓ More occupied and higher-quality **leisure** (especially in villages): social networks (Facebook, one.lt, mama.lt), search for recipes and medicines, flower growing, ordering books, etc. (*"I have two customers who often order books online. They browse something, order them, put into a basket, get a check, make a payment, and the books are delivered to their home"; "mass purchasing of flight tickets got popular last year, some people bought four at a time"; "the grandmas are solving crosswords"*).

Meanwhile, **economical benefit** retains its firm position and is recognized as one of the main stimuli, but it is referred to as a granted and natural thing. Just like in year 2009, economical benefit is perceived as manifesting at two levels:

- ✓ **through saving money** (*"there is no need to go to the city or write letters and spend on postal services"; "we live in a town, where we have a single shop. We do not have a bank or a post office, so people come and learn to pay taxes and save the trip to the bank or post office"*);
- ✓ and **through saving time** (*"actually, the time is saved on such tasks that would take the entire day, arranging some documents, going to Sodra (State Social Insurance Fund) or to a bank to pay taxes – everything is faster online"*).

In addition, there is increasingly more emphasis on a particular psychological aspect - **sense of comfort**; *"it is easier psychologically": "you do not have to stand in lines, just sit down calmly and do what you need", "anytime, even if you have no money, you do not have to fear and think you can be asked to leave, you can come at any moment and work,"* said the librarians.

5.2. Other interested groups' understanding of the benefit of public internet access

- Social integration and sociability are promoted through the use of public internet access -

This year, the **representatives of interested groups** had more (in comparison to the data of the survey of last year) information/thoughts about the benefit of PIA. The viewpoint of experts did not contravene with the opinion expressed by other representatives of TG, and just like other participants of the survey, the experts **emphasized both economical** (*"it would be the main stimulus to use the service, although, certainly, there are other factors as well,"* said an expert, Seimas) **and social benefit** of free PIA (*"the possibilities for communication and obtaining information are endless"*, said an expert, Ministry of Transport and Communications).

It is noteworthy that in comparison to the data of the survey conducted in year 2009, it can be seen that the **social aspect of PIA benefit is more obvious** and more widely recognized even by the experts who are less familiar with the work of libraries (*"I believe that social needs are better met due to all modern technology, a person is socially more involved, as in the rural areas it depends a lot on the community whether a person is lonely and forgotten, and sitting down at the computer he can feel lonely no more,"* said an expert, Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania; *"elderly people first of all leave their homes, get out of isolation; the libraries encourage senior people not to lock up at home and await the death, but spend their time usefully and communicate,"* said an expert, the President's Office).

It is also noteworthy that the experts more often speak of the **benefit of PIA** joining the social and financial benefit into one – **reducing social exclusion**. They unanimously emphasize that by providing the services of free public internet access in the public libraries, equal opportunities to use internet are provided to all residents of Lithuania, regardless of their status (especially in rural areas) (*"it reduces the separation between those who have access to information and money for a computer and those who do not, and the public library is available for everyone; many people are unemployed and have terminated internet services not because they do not need it, but because they can save money by giving up this service, go to a library and use it free of charge,"* said an expert, Lithuanian Research Library Consortium; *"it is not a toy, you have to spend several thousands on that and afterwards, pay the internet charges; not everyone can afford it today, as the unemployment rate is very high, but everyone can use it in the library free of charge,"* said an expert, Ministry of Interior).

Thus, having analysed the benefit of internet recognized by both the librarians and the experts, it can be concluded that due to modern services, **increasingly more people** are more or less **involved in the community life**, they become more active socially, and the **library becomes the social centre available to everyone**, regardless of their social or economical status (this tendency is especially pronounced in rural areas) (*"not only they use, but also they contribute: if a person is a regular visitor, who reads, writes, participates in library projects, he/she becomes more socially active, and he/she is not only a consumer, but also a participant of many projects,"* said an expert, Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania).

6. Skills and motivation of libraries' employees to use information technology

6.1. Improved librarians' knowledge and skills of using information technology

- The capability of librarians to use information technology has changed in the positive direction. Theoretical knowledge acquired during training is being actively applied in practice and encourages seeking further knowledge independently -

In general, survey participants were positive about the librarians' skills of information technology use. In their opinion, **the librarians have significantly improved their skills in one year**, *"some less, some more"*. Therefore, in comparison to the data of the survey conducted last year, **the tendency of improvement of librarians' IT skills is getting stronger**.

The survey participants named the following **main factors that influenced positive changes - formation of better librarians' IT skills and ensuring higher level of qualification** (of IT use):

- ✓ **Special training of librarians organised** by the Project "Libraries for Innovation", where the librarians were introduced to the basics of computer literacy and the main points of IT use beneficial to their consulting work were explained. Moreover, **methodical material of the Project "Libraries for Innovation"** was very useful for practical mastery of the skills. This material is assessed as very clear, useful and accessible to every user (not only a librarian, but also to an ordinary visitor), regardless of his/her level of knowledge (*"in the last year, a lot of attention was given to the competence of librarians; the focus on developing their competences determined the improvement of their skills, and the librarians assess themselves and their capabilities differently, it can be felt,"* said an expert, Seimas);
- ✓ **Practical application of theoretical knowledge** in servicing/consulting the visitors on various issues of IT use. This daily practice allows the librarians not only to solidify the knowledge and perform certain tasks faster, but also to be more self-confident. The librarians admit that sometimes they have to solve complicated or completely unfamiliar problems, and if they cannot get help, they have to get out of the situation and handle it themselves: *"the certainty comes only with practice, you use the knowledge every day and improve yourself; sometimes you cannot get help from a specialist, so you clench your fists and think: "if I don't blow it up, it will work", and it does not blow up and it does work, and it is fine; the process is ongoing, something new every day,"* said the librarians;

- ✓ **Wide coverage of PIA locations.** There are increasingly more locations of internet access, the internet is penetrating into village libraries and thus, it is only natural that **increasingly more library employees** face the fact that they **must learn to use IT tools as good as possible, improve their skills, and later on, pass on their knowledge to the visitors:** *"I knew nothing of them and we did not even have them in our village library, and when we received computers in our village, I learnt a lot in the courses and thought: "Jesus, it's so easy, and it used to be a taboo,"* said the librarians.

In comparison to the data of the survey conducted last year, the results of the survey of this year revealed several important points:

- ✓ **More and more librarians are deliberately seeking professionalism with regard to providing modern services in their work.** Although everyone admits that the librarian's salary is really not motivating for accepting more responsibilities and working "for two" (due to redundancy), the employees of libraries recognize that IT has become an integral part of their work and in order to successfully serve the visitors further and to provide them with relevant information, high-quality rendering of modern services has to be ensured: *"everything changes and gets modern and the library is no exception; therefore, we have to adapt in order not to get behind the reality of contemporary life and, most important, continue providing information to people,"* said the heads of libraries;
- ✓ **Both the librarians and the civil society accept and associate modern technology with public technology,** it is becoming a natural phenomenon. As the funding of traditional services decreases further, the service of PIA not only ensures the existence of many libraries, but also determines the dissemination/accessibility of the same information to the visitors, just in e-format (e.g. reading periodicals online, search for advertisements, etc.): *"at first we were surprised at what we were expected to do, and now it is completely natural, and many visitors know we can help and answer their questions not only about the books, but also about the internet,"* said the librarians.

Although the survey participants admit that there are no boundaries for improvement and the librarians must constantly learn and improve, the **librarians' IT skills** are perceived as significantly improved during the last year and are **assessed and "strong average"** (*"I think there is a process from good to very good; it will never be excellent, as you have to learn something new all the time,"* said the heads of libraries; *"now you speak to a librarian almost like to a specialist; that higher level is qualified enough - it is not the level of a specialist, but the level of an advanced user,"* said an expert, Ministry of Transport and Communications; *"everyone got the training, passed the computer literacy course, got ECDL, if they did not have one, or retook it or passed even higher levels"; "in fact, the qualification was improved significantly, they acquired more practical knowledge, are working faster and can orient faster, they got braver - this is also a skill,"* said the heads of libraries). **Just like last year, the heads of libraries emphasized that the librarian's skills are not equal, as some of them are more receptive and others need more time, and not everyone can master everything during the training:** *"it is good that everyone has a computer now and can apply the knowledge in practice,"* **moreover,** *"the skills depend on an individual person, on the interest and willingness to learn, because you have to improve in order to teach others";* **meanwhile, the age and the type of location of the library usually have no significant impact.**

Assessing the IT skills of town and village libraries' employees, the survey participants did not have a unanimous opinion. On one hand, they believe that the **skills of village libraries' employees are slightly weaker,** as here the visitors are usually serviced by one person and he/she just cannot afford time for personal "extracurricular" development (*"of course, the librarians have improved, but in the villages, the librarian's knowledge is sometimes poorer than that of the visitor, they lean on the support of the visitors, because it is very difficult to work alone in a village; in the centre, we get together and discuss the problem, and in a village a single librarian is powerless,"* said the librarians). **On the other hand,** when a question arises, **they do not expect expedient help and look for an answer themselves by trial-and-error, which shapes strong skills and great emotional satisfaction: "I can do it". This, in turn allows confidently performing daily duties, which significantly contributes to improving their IT skills.**

According to the librarians, each of them have learnt something new of solidified their skills during the year: *"I learnt everything: to submit declarations, to pay taxes, to find information. I feel confident using a computer and I trust I will find a way out"; "I learnt using Excel more when we were doing write-offs, it is so convenient, you enter a number and it gives a calculation, I did not have to add the figures myself, I was so happy"; "the skills have changed significantly, during the training we learnt using Word, Excel and other applications of that new software,"* said the librarians. In general, **all librarians have excellent skills in using special programmes,** used for daily work (e.g. LIBIS, registration of readers). According to the librarians, their skills in the use of various search engines are strong as well. MS Office is easily used by a very small part of the librarians, most of them are good at using Word, whereas **the skills of**

Excel use are still not adequate, although many of them are aware of the advantages of this programme.

Moreover, the librarians as well as other survey participants emphasized that **better skills helped them to service the visitors faster**, and the updated software, e.g. operation system Windows Vista, **simplified the process of learning/work** considerably and eliminated the fear of not knowing English: *"I used to feel fear, the menu was in English, and when we moved to Vista, it got easier, because not everyone was studying English at school,"* said a librarian. It is noteworthy that **not knowing English obstructs/narrows down the use of internet opportunities** (this has been a subject of discussion for several years now and no changes have taken place yet); therefore, **English course would be especially relevant today in the opinion of both the librarians and the heads of libraries.**

When comparing their skills to the skills of the visitors, the librarians indicated that the latter are rather experienced in terms of IT use, especially younger users. Meanwhile, The IT skills of senior visitors are assessed as below the librarians' skills. The librarians also emphasized that their higher self-confidence (determined by various training) does not allow doubting their capabilities; they feel calm even when they do not know an answer: *"I say that I do not know now, I will find out and answer next time"; "our students are strong, that is a fact, but to know everything is the same as to read the entire collection of books; do I have to be familiar with the entire collection of books?"*

6.2. Improved librarians' knowledge and skills of safe use of internet

- The librarians' knowledge of safe use of internet rendered to the library visitors is minimal and basic -

When discussing various **threats of the internet**, the librarians and the heads of libraries (this topic was not discussed with the experts) indicated that **all** of them are **aware of their existence**. According to the representatives of TG, they have **received most information on these threats during the training** organised by the **Project "Libraries for Innovation"**.

Group discussions revealed that the representatives of TG **spontaneously assessed their skills of safe internet use as good, but during focused analysis of each particular threat, they had doubts and assessed their skills as inadequate**, as in many cases they would not know where to start and what to do. The survey participants know best how to avoid/protect against such threats as threats to the computer (e.g. viruses) and revealing personal data and identity, which threatens the safety of the person and/or property. The **most often mentioned means of protecting** against the above mentioned threats are as follows:

- ✓ **Threats to the computer** – antivirus programmes or clean-up performed by the IT specialist, in serious cases - reinstallation. According to the survey participants, they do not fear these threats much because they know that contemporary software can protect against the viruses: *"we do not worry much about the viruses because new computers have good antivirus programmes, which automatically clean-up even an inserted CD or flash drive"; "you have to launch the antivirus programme and it cleans it up,"* said the librarians; *"the network is supervised by a specialist and everybody knows not to open an unknown letter,"* said the heads of libraries.
- ✓ **Revealing personal data and identity, which threatens the safety of the person and/or property** – the librarians insist and remind the PIA users to disconnect from the system, to logout of the programmes, and not to give their personal data to other people (*"sometimes they forget to disconnect from the system or to logout from e-mail or Skype, and someone can take use of it," "if it is e-banking, you must log out," "I, for instance, show only the demo version, and the customer has to deal with it himself, I do not go into their accounts and I always remind not to reveal their data," "we even have a line in green reminding to logout and close everything down,"* said the librarians; *"the librarians inform that they have to logout carefully, not to check unnecessary boxes, and to do that, they have to read everything carefully,"* said the heads of libraries.

Below are the means of protecting against particular threats indicated by the librarians and their comments:

- ✓ **Threats of virtual acquaintances** – the survey participants indicated the only way to avoid thus threat: not disclosing registration passwords, not using actual names or surnames for registration in various websites, not giving your telephone number to strangers (*"we remind the users from time to time and always inform the new users, but we do not know if they follow these rules."* said the librarians);

- ✓ **Offensive comments, harassment and bullying online** – according to the majority of librarians and the heads of libraries, one cannot protect against this threat and the best way to avoid it is not responding (*"I think you cannot protect yourself against this, you should just not pay attention, not respond, not read the comments; for example, we had an event in the libraries and we received some offensive comments,"* said the librarians);
- ✓ **The threat of sexual harassment and abuse of underage people** – in the opinion of the survey participants, this threat can be avoided only if the underage person shares and tells the adults about what is going on, otherwise such things cannot be detected. Moreover, the librarians said that porn and other similar websites are often freely available, and the librarian cannot stand over the shoulder and control the children, thus, it is natural that sometimes such things go unnoticed (*"I do not think we can protect them, I do not supervise what they are browsing, I cannot stand behind them," "I am not sure, I do not think I could, they themselves have to be careful and avoid such websites, unless they would tell us and then we could look into it," "porn websites are available to children, there is no protection, some websites are blocked but this blocking is based on a question "Are you 18?"..."* said the librarians);
- ✓ **Psychological addiction** – when discussing this threat, the representatives of TG most often spoke of children and indicated that in order to avoid psychological addiction, they are limiting the time spent at the computer (*"we simply limit the time and say they cannot spend so much time at the computer or just block it"; "we now have safety rules, which require that after 45 minutes at the computer one must have a break of 10-15 minutes,"* said the librarians).

The librarians said that they usually inform of the internet threats when a new visitor comes or when they face particular cases. Moreover, they sometimes remind the existing PIA users of the potential threats (*"when I teach them from the beginning, I tell them"*).

The heads of libraries emphasized that all librarians are familiar with the basics of safe internet use and according to the law, each access point should have the rules of internet use publicly posted and indicating what is allowed and what is not (*"they are certainly aware of it but their behaviour depends; sometimes people ask to pay the taxes for them and the librarian does so,"* said the heads of libraries).

The heads of libraries also occasionally mentioned that the libraries received the books of "Libraries for Innovation", where the instructions of safe internet use are given in short. Although their opinion of such material was highly positive, they also expressed an idea that video material on this topic would be best: *"so that you can show it once and everyone would get it,"* said the heads of libraries.

6.3. Improved librarians' knowledge and skills of internet resources and e-services

- The librarians' knowledge and skills of internet resources and e-services get stronger with frequent performing of particular action, whereas new actions cause certain fear and distrust in own capabilities -

When analysing the **librarians' skills to use the internet** and internet resources/e-services, it appeared that the survey participants assess these skills as strong enough. In comparison to assessment of last year, **a positive change can be noticed** (even in village libraries) and the skills have further improved during the year (*"using the internet and search engines became easy and interesting,"* said the librarians).

It is noteworthy that the representatives of TG unanimously emphasized that **not knowing English prevents them from wider use of internet resources** as today only the resources in Lithuanian are accessible to them. The librarians expressed regret that the major part of valuable information is inaccessible to them only because it is in English. Thus, the need and **willingness to learn English have been expressed by survey participants for three years in a row and no changes have taken place in this field yet.**

This year, there was a clear sense that **when speaking of e-services**, in particular, submitting the declarations of income online and e-banking, **the librarians were confident of themselves and their skills.** It is likely that it was influenced by the training organised by the Project "Libraries for Innovation", special training organised by Bank/Tax Inspectorate and their constant consulting and the daily experience of the librarians performing these functions (*"before you try it yourself, you can hardly explain it to someone else,"* said the librarians). However, the librarians unanimously emphasize that if a new subject is introduced, they would not feel so confident and they would give a lot of time for mastering it: *"now*

Sodra (State Social Insurance Fund) started introducing new things, e-government, e-signature, you do not feel very sure of yourself, because this stuff is new and you are not sure of your knowledge and skills," said the librarians.

It is noteworthy that the majority of librarians admitted they often felt uncomfortable and afraid of performing these actions (especially related to e-banking) because these are **financial transactions** and it is a great responsibility ("we know how to do it, but we feel a little uncomfortable, this is personal information, you can never know what happens"). A lot of impact on this **negative emotional attitude of the librarians** had an **actual event**, when a person stole the money of an intoxicated visitor in a library by using his personal data and opening the e-account.

- The librarians are more confident in consulting the PIA users and are able to help in various issues of IT use; however, they admit they do not feel as proficient teachers so as to teach more the users, who know more -

The librarians and the heads of libraries said that **in general, the skills and capabilities of the librarians to consult the visitors on the issues of computer and internet use have grown and strengthened during the year**. They believe it is a natural process as the librarians not only have had the training, but also have been consulting the PIA users for some time: "they must have changed as we are working on that and giving a lot of attention to that," said the heads of libraries; "I think I know quite much and I can explain what to do to those, who are not very advanced," said the librarians.

Although the **experts** found it more difficult to assess these skills of librarians and their thoughts on this topic were more of a theoretical nature, they still believe that **the skills of librarians are gradually improving every year**: "if their skills have improved, they can teach others; it is one thing when a person is working for the first year, he/she is flouncing around and is feeling uncomfortable, and when he/she is working for the second or third year, the situation is completely different," said an expert, Ministry of Transport and Communications; "I believe it has changed, because people have learnt more themselves, have more self-confidence because they know more, and besides, they have understood that it is inevitable and it is a part of their job, because there are people who need your help," said an expert, Lithuanian Research Library Consortium.

Although the survey participants emphasize that **all librarians can give consultations, they also admitted that it is too early to speak of training in its actual sense**: "I can help and show, but teaching would still be too complicated to me, I could not do it, I am not a teacher," said the librarians. Moreover, the heads of libraries believe that better or worse **skills of consulting the visitors are significantly influenced by personality traits, the time period the librarian has been consulting, and by the knowledge of the visitor** who applies for help ("they really can do it, maybe in village libraries, maybe not everywhere, but they really are capable to consult a visitor on simple questions," said the heads of libraries).

Comparing the skills of village and town libraries' employees to consult the visitors, we cannot state that the consulting skills of all village librarians are weaker than those of town librarians. However, there is a general tendency: **the teaching skills of employees of village libraries are slightly lower**; this is due to several reasons:

- ✓ The librarian is usually **alone** and has **no possibilities** to allocate time **for personal growth**;
- ✓ The majority of village libraries introduced the **PIA much later** (compared to towns), thus, they started to apply their theoretical knowledge in practice **quite recently**.

However, even if they cannot help a VIP user on a particular question, village librarians do not get confused and look for other possibilities: call the central library, contact the IT specialist, ask advanced users, etc. "if an employee cannot handle it, he/she finds a way to help the visitor; quite often the so-called volunteers help the librarians, who provide aid and explain to the librarians until the computer specialist gets there," said the heads of libraries.

7. Information technology skills of public libraries' visitors

7.1. Improved information technology knowledge and skills of PIA users/change in PIA use practice

- Working with PIA and wider application of its possibilities has had significant impact on the improvement of skills of individual target groups and the community in general as well as on application of these skills in new areas -

When assessing the information technology skills of public library visitors, the representatives of TG emphasized that the **skills of PIA users have significantly improved during the last year, "the users have improved"**.

In comparison to the results of last year survey, **this year the heads of libraries were more active in expressing their opinion on this question** (it is likely that the heads of libraries are increasingly more interested in knowing their visitors), meanwhile the **experts, just like a year ago, were more hypothetical and said that the skills of visitors should have naturally improved, as appropriate conditions were provided for improvement/formation** (*"they must have changed; if the opportunities change, you use the opportunities, the tools the users can use are changing, it has significant impact, encourages improvement; the process is continuous, a man has become more modern,* said an expert, the Seimas).

It is noteworthy that the representatives of TG **believe that the visitor is becoming more aware, i.e. he/she comes to use the internet purposefully, knowing exactly what he/she wants**. Meanwhile, his/her **decision to learn using modern technology is often dictated not only by the conditions of contemporary life, but also by the knowledge of the vastness of internet possibilities and that the needs of even the most selective users can be met here**: *"the user has matured, he/she comes already knowing what he/she wants, as he/she already knows what are the possibilities of internet and what can be found there,"* said the librarians.

Thus, speaking of the changes related to the information technology skills of the visitors, which took place in one year, **the following main tendencies can be distinguished**:

- ✓ **Not only the theoretical, but also practical knowledge is increasing, the users are performing more tasks/actions independently** (*"they have gained more knowledge, previously they did not know a lot of things and now they can do a lot by themselves," " they ask less questions; they are improving if they can use the internet and find the information themselves, whereas previously they constantly needed help,"* said the librarians);
- ✓ **Self-confidence is growing**, more and more elderly people come to the training and do at least one thing on the internet (*"they feel and act more confident, because they know more and do not think they will not manage any longer, like the seniors said, they could not even control the mouse,"* said the librarians; *"they are more free, they feel better, like at home, and previously they used to fear the internet,"* said the heads of libraries);
- ✓ **The visitors are using the possibilities of internet more intensely and comprehensively** (*"they can do a lot, they know how to upload data to a flash drive or to the computer, they download music from YouTube, they upload photos, pay their bills, submit declarations of income..."* said the librarians; *"they have changed a lot, because they can do much more than at the beginning, they tell what they need, bring a typed text, show an advertisement; we have visitors who select and order books via the LIBIS system,"* said the heads of libraries).

In general, **according to the survey participants, such positive changes were influenced by**:

- ✓ **The processes at the State/global level**:
 - **Contemporary life** itself, which **dictates the conditions and forms the needs** respectively: *"the people are more modern, because the opportunities are changing";*
 - **Economical situation in the country** – the rate of unemployment is growing, the salaries are decreasing, the quality of occupation of people is deteriorating, therefore, the

people are looking for alternative ways of leisure, which would allow spending less or saving money;

- ✓ **The changes at the level of the community or librarians and visitors:**
 - **Special training for the visitors** is organised, in order to provide the knowledge of computer literacy (*"when the computers had just appeared, we had to show and teach all the time, and after the course, they learnt a lot"; "now, after the course, they come to improve themselves, to apply theoretical knowledge; some things have to be reminded,"* said the librarians; *"there is such group of people, like seniors, who have never used the internet, so during the training they learnt to switch the computer on and off, control the mouse, send an e-mail,"* said the heads of libraries);
 - **The role and image of the librarian is improving**, *"the librarian is becoming competent", because:*
 - Aid and consulting is provided on various issues of information technology: *"if a person does not know how to use e-mail, I help him/her to create a box, and the next time he/she comes, he/she will login himself/herself,"* said the librarians;
 - High quality of service is ensured - the competence, knowledge, patience and individual approach to each visitor allows attracting and engaging the visitors (*"the first time is especially important and if a person is coming very seldom, he/she can be confused, so you have to assure him/her and help with a smile, then he/she will not be afraid to ask and will come again, and when they get answers, they ask even more questions,"* said the librarians);
 - Sharing information, rendering the knowledge to other visitors - **the visitors learn from each other, share information and knowledge** (*"they learn from each other what to do, discuss, communicate, and the progress is really perceptible,"* said an expert, Lithuanian Research Library Consortium; *"the children learn instantly, for example, a child comes regularly for several weeks, observes what others do and that's it,"* said the librarians).

Just like last year, deeper analysis of information technology skills of the visitors is complicated, as a lot depends on their personal needs and purpose of use as well as on personal traits (willingness to learn and to find out more).

8. Specific and hard-to-reach social groups and the experience of PIA use

8.1. Experience of PIA use of hard-to-reach groups

- The library remains the place that creates the space of communication and providing social support to people of different needs and social experience -

When analysing the experience of PIA use of specific and hard-to-reach social groups, the representatives of TG spontaneously indicated that the following groups of people **could be attributed** to the above mentioned groups:

- ✓ **People** that are **unemployed for a long time** and survive on social benefits only;
- ✓ **The children from families at social risk;**
- ✓ **The handicapped;**
- ✓ **Anti-social people**, *"which are alienated from people, bums or drunks".*

The respondents unanimously **distinguished senior people as a separate and hard-to-reach social group**. The respondents believe it is very hard to encourage them to use modern technology and they would need most attention and an individual approach by emphasizing the benefit of IT.

The librarians and the heads of libraries had most information on the discussed issue and they said that the **needs and expectations for information technology and its use** of hard-to-reach groups defined in the framework of the Project (the children from families at social risk, the children whose parents are abroad, village residents, the handicapped, the unemployed and senior people) **are the same** as those of **other** public library visitors: the internet is necessary for them for communication, search for information and spending free-time.

Concerning the experience of hard-to-reach social groups in using PIA, it can be stated that in comparison to the results of last year survey, the situation is positively changing: more and more of them (this is less characteristic of the handicapped) are acquiring/solidifying the knowledge of IT use and strengthening the skills of PIA use. However, just like last year, slightly **different needs** (in comparison to other visitors) of hard-to-reach social groups **remain** and are becoming **increasingly relevant to the public library as an institution**. Analysing each group, the following specific needs could be distinguished:

- ✓ **Senior people are the most sensitive group in terms of modern technology use.** They need special attention and encouragement, because they feel fear, are not confident of themselves and have negative preconceptions about their skills and technology in general: *"I am too old for this"; "I don't know how, I will not manage"; "I will damage it"; "we have to be patient, because they hardly get it, we have to come up and explain it calmly, and not once,"* said the librarians. In the opinion of survey participants, they have to be interested and motivated first by emphasizing that the service of PIA is completely free of charge and by showing its usefulness depending on the needs of particular person (whether it is communication, search for information, etc.): *"the libraries should try to take interest and show these people the maximum, maybe in terms of e-health, maybe make arrangements with some clinic and provide consultations, maybe introduce some theme events, talk about health, nutrition, diseases,"* said an expert, Ministry of Transport and Communications. Second, senior people miss communication and a librarian is the one who listens and knows the most about the particular pensioner and his/her life (especially in villages), and therefore, thus possibility should be used for attracting and involving more elderly people: *"they miss communication, maybe we do not give much attention to that, but it is a social necessity to a person, he just wants to talk, no matter about what, so at first they should listen and try to understand and then demonstrate the possibilities of internet,"* said an expert, Ministry of Culture);
- ✓ **Children** from families at social risk, according to the representatives of TG, usually **have good IT skills**, just like other children, because they acquire the basics at school. Moreover, they learn fast by observing and imitating their peers and elder visitors. According to the respondents, here we should discuss the fact that the opportunity to use internet in a library ensures the occupation and more purposeful leisure of children from families at social risk and form/strengthens the perception of oneself as a full-fledged personality: *"they do not feel different, disadvantaged,"* said the heads of libraries. Speaking of this social group, a relevant issue is the library as a place to be safe and warm (*"the children do their homework, maybe they are saving electricity at home or it is cold or the atmosphere is bad, so they spend here the whole day,"* said the librarians), and the librarian in a certain sense performs the function of a social worker, *"who is nearby every day, helps in various issues, teaches and even feeds", ("the library becomes a shelter and support for these children, they can be there, play, in general, we prevent disorderly conduct,"* said the librarians). Some experts believe the library could expand its social function even further *"by helping, directing the children to where they can find information about support and protecting their rights,"* said an expert, President's Office;
- ✓ **The handicapped** - according to the librarians and the heads of libraries, the people with a handicap **are not frequent** visitors of the libraries. This can be influenced by several aspects:
 - Some of them have personal computers at home and the librarians bring the books to their homes, so there is no need to come to the library (*"we take books to their homes, if they cannot come to us,"* said the librarians);
 - Many of them cannot reach the library, as the general infrastructure in Lithuania, including that of the library (except for central libraries), is not accessible enough/completely inaccessible to such visitors, just like a year ago: *"in general, accessibility of IT to the handicapped is a common problem; most important, not all libraries area accessible to the handicapped,"* said an expert, Ministry of Interior.

The services offered by the libraries are not **adapted** to people with **visual impairment**, because they need audio books, books in Braille or special readers, and only central libraries have those (*"the blind cannot get such books or can get them, but just a few, a limited amount, and it is a problem for them; such audio books could also be useful to elderly people, who cannot read due to sight problems,"* said an expert, President's Office). On the other hand, the employees of the libraries said that these means do not necessarily have to be in all libraries, because such

visitors are very few, and there are special Centres for the Handicapped, where their needs for such things are met.

Last year, a tendency was identified that the library serves as a centre of any kind of support to the above mentioned hard-to-reach groups, where the people can spend time, talk, tell their problems, etc. and this tendency remains and is becoming even more pronounced. Thus, the **image of the library as a community centre that reduces social exclusion was strengthened in the society and especially rural areas during the year**. However, it is noteworthy that **although the computer base was strengthened during last year, the problems revealed by a survey several years ago** (accessibility of libraries to the handicapped, audio books, equipment for the blind, etc.) **have not been productively solved yet, and this really does not "help" the employees of libraries to satisfy the IT related needs of hard-to-reach groups efficiently**.

8.2. Existence of programmes and other mechanisms to involve hard-to-reach groups

– Creating programmes and mechanisms in the libraries is proceeding slowly. Although there is no consistent programme, such programmes exist for the majority of target groups –

When assessing the programmes implemented by the libraries or the mechanisms applied for involving hard-to-reach groups, the representatives of TG **most often spoke of the library in general as a centre, which holds various events and projects intended to all visitors, without distinguishing the above mentioned groups** (*"the libraries do a lot, it is not just a building at the district centre, they visit the communities of various elderates, organise events, they not only give information, but also implement various projects, the librarians are among the most active people in the districts and they try to approach different people,"* said an expert, Association of Local Authorities in Lithuania).

However, this year, the survey participants mentioned that certain activities focused on hard-to-reach groups are being implemented, rarely though. They mentioned the activities intended for:

✓ Children:

- **organising various pursuits to ensure occupation of children** - mini summer camps, occupation hours: the social worker/centre of social services cooperating with the library, bring the children to the library, where the children spend their free-time, watch various educational videos, the librarians teach them the basics of computer literacy, play with children, communicate, enact plays: *"there parents are God only knows where, and the children stay here until I go home,"* said the librarians; moreover, the volunteers organise various courses to children, for instance, drawing classes;
- **the schools cooperating with the libraries are preparing joint projects on the issues/topics of socialisation, organise theme events, various classes:** *"we organise the events both in the libraries and schools, and we also involve the community,"* said the librarians. According to the employees of libraries, complicated economical situation has slowed down the activity, because less and less projects are funded and they can no longer organise field trips, celebrate Easter or Christmas at a common table. The librarians are still trying to pamper and show care to the children by buying treats with their own money (*"the librarians are still offering them tea, buns, they buy drawing and writing tools with their own money, because it breaks your heart to know that these children do not feel good at home,"* said the heads of libraries).

- ✓ **Senior people** quite often visit the events organised by the libraries and in general are willing to spend time in libraries (just like children), so no special efforts are necessary to attract them. However, the librarians would have to put in a lot of efforts to encourage them to "try internet". According to the librarians and heads of libraries, in most cases it is the question of librarian's patience and flexibility, whether a senior will dare to use the internet even after training and whether he/she will further try to "control the mouse". Concerning the training organised for senior people, it is noteworthy that all survey participants unanimously assessed it as very useful and relevant: *"everyone was waiting for it, registered beforehand, were very anxious and of course, were satisfied, though not many have mastered the skills and come to use the internet,*

but the majority are coming back and are trying to do something with my help," said the librarians.

- ✓ Special events are not organised for **the handicapped**, just like several years ago. However, the librarians are servicing the people with physical disabilities by delivering the books/periodicals to their homes (agree and deliver individually). Some respondents mentioned that to some libraries, where the computers adapted to visually impaired/blind people are available, a professional worker (usually from the Centre of the Blind) comes, who can instruct visually impaired people on using a computer.

To sum up, **all survey participants emphasized the lack of targeted involvement programmes for hard-to-reach social groups.** According to the respondents, **actions/programmes/mechanisms focused on individual, particular groups, which would ensure their interest in and use of information technology, should be created and developed.** For instance, the ways to interest and encourage the unemployed should be sought, the ways to attract them and demonstrate that they can learn to use internet in the public library: *"namely, the librarian, the person from the same environment has the possibility to attract; the primary function is to attract, motivate, interest and show that a person can freely come, see and get a feeling of everything, that he/she can do it,"* said an expert, Ministry of Transport and Communications.

In addition, when speaking of the special needs groups, the representatives of TG emphasized that to these people (as well as to the majority of other library visitors) **especially relevant is the Lithuanian part of internet contents, which is very small according to the survey participants.** The respondents said that **the English language is a great problem to people, especially in rural areas, so apart from the question how to attract them, proper care should be taken of what they will find online in their mother tongue, after they learn to use the PIA.**

8.3. Improved librarians' knowledge and skills of servicing special needs users

- The readiness of the librarians to service the special needs users is essentially theoretical, but it has already reached the level, where the librarians themselves can critically assess their skills and indicate particular problems they need help solving -

The assessment of librarians' knowledge and skills of servicing special needs users has not changed during the year. Just **like last year**, the majority of survey participant indicated that **librarians' skills to service special needs visitors of libraries is more theoretical** (especially in village libraries): *"in village libraries we do not even have audio books, so what can we do if there are people who want to listen to them? Let alone special equipment and their servicing, I do not think we are prepared to service handicapped people,"* said the librarians.

However, the employees of libraries were glad that in the framework of the Project "Libraries for Innovation", the training "Work with the Handicapped" was organised for some employees of libraries, where they were introduced to actual situations of working with handicapped people. This training is assessed very well by the librarians themselves because, as they said, during the training they learnt that they have *"imagined many things differently"* (*"there were blind people, a blind person and his attendant, and they demonstrated how to lead a person, how to take his/her hand; we thought it would be as usual, but it appeared it was not,"* said the librarians).

However, the librarians are sure they would also need knowledge in psychology, because sometimes the libraries are visited by mentally challenged people, and the librarians must know how to approach them, how to communicate properly (*"there is one guy who comes to our library, he likes to view the photos, so I have to communicate with him, I cannot leave him alone just like that,"* said the librarians).

9. Library in the public space

9.1. Expanded librarians' mission and areas of competence

- Due to PIA, social and public mission of the libraries is further strengthened and the "limits of perception" of the visitors are expanded -

Just like last year, the representatives of target groups distinguished the following missions of public libraries:

- ✓ **Informative** mission. It is unanimously distinguished by all groups as the main and traditional mission pursued by the libraries since old times. The library still performs the function of sharing the printed words (books, newspapers, magazines) and **collecting**, storing and sharing the **knowledge** with the readers. Due to the Project "Libraries for Innovation", the expansion of this mission was understood and accepted: transition from the printed words to the interactive space (internet, online databases, etc.).
- ✓ **Social and public** mission, which is unanimously recognized as helping to reduce social exclusion (especially in smaller libraries in rural areas);
- ✓ **Educative** mission. Organising educative events, introduction to various activities, training;
- ✓ **Cultural** mission. Organising various events, circles, exhibitions, meetings with famous people.

From these missions, **during the implementation of the Project, the social-public mission was developed the most and the educative-training and informative missions were being purposefully developed.** According to the representatives of TG, **these missions are closely interrelated and providing both social-integrative and informative benefit to society:** (*"started providing completely new services, so (the library) became some sort of community centre, where you can get various services, including access to internet and computer and so on,"* said the experts).

According to the survey participants, the **informative benefit** is based on storing and sharing with the community not only the written/printed words, but also information technology (computers, internet), and it is being **developed further.** It is believed, that **due to this benefit, both the limits of seeking knowledge and the relation to the world and knowledge of it are expanded:** (*"the possibility to learn of the innovations and to see them for themselves is a unique possibility, the unique chance to touch it, use it, push the buttons and understand what internet is, not only read in a paper about it"; "maybe some time ago the library had a mission that it is open to society, that it invites society, that it is the centre of knowledge and information. Today it can supplement its mission by the fact that it is the centre of contemporary information, which provides all opportunities to use the vast services offered by contemporary technology,"* said the experts).

It is noteworthy that the mission of the library has expanded from traditional (the place of book storage) to cultural, public, and sociality promoting mission. It is especially characteristic to rural areas or smaller towns, where the library is the only place not only for obtaining knowledge, but also for community gathering and communication and the source of culture.

At the same time, occurrence of new technology and free access to internet for everyone is increasingly more often perceived and recognized as providing not only informative, but also social benefit – reducing social exclusion between more sensitive social groups (children from poor families, pensioners, etc.) and society, strengthening the sociality and communication (the librarians and heads of libraries emphasized more intense communication via Skype with the relatives/friends/children living abroad).

9.2. Improved skills of representation and public relations

- Just like last year, the libraries are using traditional and proven ways of publicising library services, which reach a rather narrow circle of visitors. The librarians believe that such ways are sufficient to inform the civil society about offered services or projects -

THE LIBRARIES AND PUBLICISING THEIR SERVICES

Just like a year ago, the survey participants indicated that in general, **publicising** the library, its services or events **in the public space is based on traditional methods**: organising exhibitions, contests, book presentations, circles, meetings with the writers and artists. The advertisements about organised events are usually posted in the libraries, so only the people attending the library learn of it, and new visitors are not attracted.

The information about ongoing or past events is also posted in library websites. In the opinion of the librarians and heads of libraries, this way, a wider circle of potential visitors is reached and the information about the events is shared in the public space.

Although the majority of experts and heads of libraries believe that during last year, the representation and publicising skills of the librarians have strengthened, the assessment of some other target groups with respect to publicising library's services were not unanimous:

- ✓ Both the librarians and heads of libraries assess their publicising campaigns positively and do not see other possibilities or alternatives for publicising their services; not launching long-term public campaigns is usually grounded by the **absence of financial resources**, and the **lack of knowledge on the possibilities or benefit of such campaigns**. However, the majority of libraries' employees believe that the libraries' services are already widely known (*"here you can really say "ask a question and you will get an answer". You will not leave without any information, we will provide some at least... <...> So you do not really have to emphasize the benefit,* said the librarians), and currently used traditional means inform the civil society well enough about activities and services, including:
 - **Events**: meetings with artists, famous and interesting people, writers; contests of reciting or drawing, etc. interest the people and at the same time, introduce the activity of the libraries (*"at first they come to learn, and then they see how many good things we have and come again,"* said the librarians). The librarians believe that such meetings strengthen the image of the library as a cultural centre (the experts agree with this). However, it is admitted that **inconvenient opening hours of the libraries** attract **only a small part** of potential visitors (who cannot leave their jobs at such time) to such events and meetings. Although they understand that something has to be changed, a way out of the situation is not seen yet;
 - **Joint educative meetings** (with the representatives of banks, Labour Exchange, State Tax Inspectorate, various societies). Such meetings are perceived as providing direct benefit both to the visitors (consultation on relevant questions) and to the library - the visitor is attracted and introduced to the innovations and offered services in the library;
 - More active public **activity beyond the library walls** (*"the libraries participated in the town festival, we were dancing, and singing, and performing plays,"* said the heads of libraries). During such events the library presents itself in the public space and reminds of its existence to the people, who are not attending the library; this activity should be further encouraged;
 - **The articles** in the press and the website, introducing organised events and the services available in the library. This activity is assessed as fragmented and not predominant, more characteristic to central and town libraries;
 - Events of the **Libraries' Week**.
- ✓ **The assessment of experts** with regard to the librarians' skills of public representation and presenting the services was different:
 - Some experts believe that the librarians are **implementing public campaigns rather sluggishly** and inconsistently. On one hand, the librarians do not have adequate skills for public relations campaigns, the libraries are **using the same methods** they were using *"10 years ago"* -without any changes or modernisation. On the other hand, the librarians are too humble and shy and do not know how to present themselves to society (*"most of us, librarians, do not know how to show what we are doing, do not boast or say exactly what we are doing. We are doing many good things and we imagine that it just has to be this way,"* said the experts);
 - It is noteworthy that other experts recognized that the **librarians are putting in effort to publicise their libraries and are showing incentive in popularising the library** (*"they are among the most educated people in the districts and many of them are very enthusiastic. They are not just librarians, they are directors of culture,"* said

the experts). However, they **admit that it mainly depends on individual personalities, and pro-active, creative and persistent people are few** (*"there are new ideas, there are new and maybe non-traditional ways to do something, but they do not amount to a high percentage. The greater percentage is still making the same flyer: print it and hang it on the door - maybe someone will come,"* said the experts).

The experts occasionally expressed an opinion that public relations campaigns should be left to professionals, and in order to have the librarians do the job, additional training is needed.

Thus, **in general, the means of publicising the libraries used by the librarians are rather conventional, erratic and not consistent; there is no unified strategy and communication. The librarians are using a conservative and tested system, which was "mastered" in many years, but is not always efficient today due to narrow reach of the target audience** (the majority of these means reach the people who are already coming to the libraries, but new visitors are not attracted).

During the discussions, **the representatives of TG univocally said and very well assessed the TV commercials initiated by the Project, which in their opinion, had positive effect on both the increase in the number of visitors and the strengthening of the library image in the society and various state institutions.**

GENERAL SKILLS OF LIBRARY REPRESENTATION:

- Library representation skills are perceived not as having the knowledge of leadership skills, but as personal traits, possessed by few librarians -

The majority of librarians assessed their skills to represent the library positively. However, the ability to represent the library is perceived by many librarians not as a personal responsibility, but more as shifting the responsibility for the (lack of) skills to "personality traits" and character:

- ✓ **Capability to influence other people** seeking gain and **ability to be the leader**, gather the team and manage it are not the predominant qualities of librarians, meanwhile these are declaratively positively assessed by the heads of libraries: *"if the community centre is the library, I think it has a lot of impact. It is a lot, if they managed to gather the community and even the base of the community. Well, a librarian being a member of committees or some councils means a lot"; "if the chairman of the community is the librarian, it has a lot of impact,"* said the heads of libraries.

However, not all librarians are assessed as (and admit they are) capable of influencing the opinion of others. They believe it is more determined not by acquired knowledge, but by personal traits (*"the librarians are not the people who would aggressively pursue these things or were experienced in that,"* said the heads of libraries).

- ✓ The librarians and the heads of libraries quite positively assess the ability to present your institution in a persuading manner, though some experts said that not all librarians are able to present themselves in a persuading manner; some of them take their job for granted and do not know how to emphasize its importance (*"the librarians have a firm position to represent themselves, fight for themselves and their rights and the libraries' rights, for appropriate funding, for the possibility to work under normal conditions. This position is that of winning your place in society, and they are doing it quite well through various structures, and they have achieved a lot,"* said the experts).

COMMUNICATION WITH THE POLITICIANS AND LOCAL AUTHORITIES

- Communication with representatives of local authorities is often perceived as the relation between a requesting and a giving person. After the desired result is achieved the communication skills are assessed positively -

However, the representatives of TG assess the communication skills of employees of libraries and the politicians or representatives of local authorities as **higher than average**. In comparison to last year, **the relations between the representatives of libraries and authorities have not essentially changed and remain rather positive. The respondents believe that the librarians and the heads of libraries do not lack additional knowledge or skills.**

The heads of libraries admit they often communicate with local authorities **to protect the library and the public interests:** concerning the repairs of the premises, taxes, allocating support, etc. According to the heads of libraries, when communicating with the politicians, they feel rather freely and they assess their skills with regard to achieved results ("*the library was repaired, the furniture is new, I believe I achieved...*"; "*when seeking gain to the library, the skills appear*"; "*if there is a result - ok, and if not - you go there the next day and try again,*" said the heads of libraries).

Meanwhile, the librarians often associate communication with the politicians and local authorities with additional stress and additional work, when you have to present your library and to prepare the reports of implemented work. Although declaratively the librarians believe they feel rather strong in terms of knowledge during such presentations ("*I have been working my whole life here, no one knows better than me*"), actually, some librarians admit they feel stressed and inconvenient in such cases. It is noteworthy that the librarians of village libraries are often closely related to local authorities (are its members); therefore, the communication here is perceived and assessed positively: the librarian has the advisory role in local government structures and is valued by the community.

COMMUNICATION WITH THE MEDIA

- As the communication of the librarians is active only with the representatives of local media, the librarians do not give attention and efforts to attracting national media and therefore, the larger part of society does not receive the information on modernisation of libraries -

The representatives of libraries (the heads of libraries and the librarians) **perceive the communication with the media as communication with the representatives of local media.** The latter are quite actively involved in the activity of libraries: the librarians' articles and interviews are printed in local publications, announcements and reviews of events are published, the librarians invite the representatives of local media to their organised events. Quite often, the representatives of local media belong to the literature clubs that operate in the libraries, so they are well familiar with the life of the libraries.

Although the librarians and the heads of libraries assess their communication with the media positively (having in mind the cooperation with the representatives of local media), it is noteworthy that cooperation with national media is still lacking. **Assessing the circle of local media readers (which is possibly limited to the same visitors of the libraries), a large part of potential library visitors (accessible via the channels of national media) are not reached/not involved.**

Thus, communication with the representatives of local media is not a sufficient means for publicising library services.

9.3. Library's reputation, public perception and profile

- Due to modernisation, the image of libraries is gradually improving in society -

In the eyes of the target groups, **the library is perceived as a modern, contemporary institution that provides comprehensive information and the means to obtain it** ("*the people want libraries because first of all, they see much more services than before <...> I am very happy that in recent years the library was attended by various types of people, more people and people with different needs*"; "*the libraries are no longer a local need, the library is now a window to the world, a window to wider spaces,*" said the experts; "*you walk into a library and you see what institution you are in. And what did we have previously - wooden shelves and old desks. <...> everything changed radically here, my colleagues, cultural workers even are jealous, they say: "They go to you",*" said the librarians).

It is recognized that the **image of the library is improving in the eyes of society.** It can be assumed from a wider circle of visitors and the support and comments of the public. It is especially noticeable in the assessment of the experts, which were negative last year.

The modernisation of libraries started by the Project "Libraries for Innovation" contributed to thus positive perception along with many other factors:

- ✓ **Information technology.** The modernisation of libraries promoted by the Project, more modern equipment, high-quality computers and printers have significantly influenced the image of libraries in the eyes of society (*they come and say that it is nice here, the computers are nice,*" said the librarians; *"previously it was a shabby library, a librarian is sitting, it is cold, dark, she is knitting a sock <...> Now you come to a library, ok, it is not a European style interior, but it is normal, light, not everyone has such equipment at home,"* said the heads of libraries:
 - The possibility to use the computers and internet freely (due to more computers and free service) attracted the wider circle of the public, who needed such services, to the libraries;
 - Modern technologies and computers changed the image of the library not only due to new computers and faster internet, but also due to systemised and modern databases, the possibility to find the required book faster, to extend its time of returning.
- ✓ One of the conditions of providing computers to the libraries was the **renovation of the libraries and their interior** (adapting to computers). Warm and pleasant environment, comfortable tables and chairs: (*"our premises were renovated, it is warm there, so naturally, everybody comes to sit there. It is not cold and you do not need mittens like in some branches,"* said the librarians);
- ✓ **Information dissemination.** Free internet access has attracted those users to the libraries, who would otherwise probably not attend the libraries. This circle includes:
 - The children – the teenagers willingly go to the libraries to spend time there;
 - Senior people, who go to the libraries not to read books or papers, but to talk to the children or relatives living abroad;
 - The people from sensitive social layers, who cannot buy their own computers;
 - Working adults, who want to run the errands quickly (pay the taxes, submit income declarations, etc.).
- ✓ **Active communication campaign.** The commercial initiated by the Project "Libraries for Innovation" and inviting to the library, where you can use the internet free of charge, is recognized as an efficient means of introducing the library and its activity and possibilities to the public (*"that advertising campaign has had great impact, it was never so large about the libraries in the media as it is now,"* said the experts).
However, some experts occasionally assessed such communication as emphasizing the modernisation too much. In their opinion, such excessive depiction of modern library damaged the main vision of the library as the place of books and knowledge. Although the libraries must change, adapt to changing habits of society, they also must keep the balance between modern technology and traditional written text (*"the main advertising is of the library and the internet, the library and the internet. It is not very good, because the library is not only the internet <...> the library is a complex - it is the place, where you can be, there is, of course, the internet, but there are also books,"* said the experts);
- ✓ **The quality of services** is also distinguished as one of the positive factors shaping the image of the libraries. According to both the librarians and the heads of libraries, **the speed and quality of services** and satisfied expectations of the users determine whether a person will come back. It is noteworthy that the quality of services is perceived as fast performance of the required service (the speed of librarians' work) as well as, most important, **the communication, helpfulness and warmth of the librarian;**
- ✓ In most cases (especially in smaller towns or villages), the library is the **cultural centre**. The respondents believe that renewed equipment and interior attract more people to organised events than any other institution. They believe that the libraries are visited not only by the people who seek traditional services, but also the children who like to spend their free-time at the computer, senior people, who want to communicate and share the experience; the exhibitions and the meetings are attended even by the people, who rarely come to the library. Pleasant environment and the provided possibilities made the libraries the **centre of attraction**, visited by increasingly more people.

In general, the libraries are positively assessed by the librarians, the heads of libraries, the experts and the public (in the respondents' opinion). It is recognised that the renovation of libraries started by the Project "Libraries for Innovation" has influenced higher interest of civil society in the library and its services and more favourable attitude of local authorities and determined the growth of the number of visitors.

The experts occasionally expressed criticism about insufficient flexibility of libraries in attempting to attract the young people, inconvenient times of events and opening hours of the libraries (which prevents a large part of working potential visitors) and rather poor selection of new books. They believe these

drawbacks are balanced out by the information technologies in the libraries and renovation of the libraries themselves.

THE CHANGE OF THE LIBRARY'S IMAGE – EMOTIONAL ASSESSMENT

- Emotionally, the library is perceived as a younger, modern, smart and more shaped up personality -

During the survey, the respondents were asked to imagine the library as it is now and as it was a year ago and to transform it into a person and/or a car. Through these projections, the emotional image of the libraries was revealed as well as the changes of the image during the year.

The **personality** of contemporary library:

- ✓ Educated, smart, very knowledgeable, generous and kind person;
- ✓ Braver, more self-confident ("maybe he has not become a proficient specialist, but he is braver, more sure of himself, and feels that the environment is his place," said the experts);
- ✓ More shaped up, spruced up, modern and more tidy than a year ago;
- ✓ Subtle, tolerant, "smiling";
- ✓ Communicative, knowing how to communicate.

The library is more often seen as a woman (probably due to the feminine gender of the word and being accustomed to seeing women working in libraries). Moreover, the woman is more often associated to helpfulness, attentiveness, calm nature. However, some respondents associated the personality of the library with a male, probably due to computerised and modernised environment and technology, which is more attributable to men.

It is noteworthy that some librarians occasionally pictured a robot instead of a person ("it would be with various chips," said the librarians), which would give coldness, calculation and lifelessness to the library image. However, such image of "library-robot" is fragmented. It can be concluded that current communication lacks the warmth and vitality associated more with traditional services.

When imagining the **library as a car**, the representatives of TG often spoke of the car that is:

- ✓ Modernised (with more functions, more computerised);
- ✓ More contemporary and attractive;
- ✓ More economical and tidy.

Although most of the survey participants believe that the period of one year is too short for major changes to take place, but in comparison to the image defined last year, current personality of the public library seems tidier, more self-confident, more shaped up, braver and more open. It can be stated that at the emotional level, the library is becoming even more attractive, open and acceptable to the target group.

ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARIES AT THE LEVEL OF MUNICIPALITIES

- The libraries are more recognized at the national level, their interests and needs are taken into account more -

The image of the library at the level of state companies/municipalities has not changed in the last year - the libraries are assessed rather positively. **The support and obligations coming together with the Project "Libraries for Innovation" also influenced the support of local governments to the libraries** and their mission; the needs of the libraries are taken into account more. Moreover, due to the modernisation and favourable opinion of the public, greater support and respect to the libraries can be felt.

ASSESSMENT OF LIBRARIES IN CIVIL SOCIETY

- The libraries are protected and supported by civil society. They perform not only the function of rendering information, not also the

public function as a cultural centre and "window to the world" (especially in villages and smaller towns) -

The libraries are favourably assessed by the public. The old viewpoint (that people go to the libraries looking for a classical book or collecting information for research/classes) is gradually being replaced by the new image of contemporary and modern library.

As the services provided by the libraries expanded, the circle of the visitors using these services also expanded; however, the major part of the visitors are still the children of school age, senior people, the unemployed and the housewives.

In rural areas, the library is perceived as the only carrier of "light" and "knowledge", the link to the entire world: *"there were libraries in villages that did not have the computers, then after the computers were provided, the life changed completely, you learn to use information technology, and those who already know how to use it, learn it at a much higher level"; "the library is a wider thing, especially in rural areas, where previously was the House of Culture, and now – the library,"* said the experts).

The attitude of all these groups and the visitors of libraries and civil society in general towards the library is rather positive. Renovation, modernisation of libraries, appearance of information technologies, training and cultural events organised by the libraries are positively accepted: *("the library is not only the place, where people come to read a book. The role of the library has to be wider, not only reading, but a cultural centre of the community or something like that,"* said the experts). However, some librarians said that the public is sometimes complaining about the funds allocated for renovation of the libraries: *(for those who do not come to the library, it is outrageous, why put the money into a library, who needs it, isn't it enough? Squeeze yourselves into the House of Culture and be there, it is enough. They would better build a new nursing home instead of a library. The people who do not come to the library do not need it,"* said the librarians). However, such opposing attitude is rather occasional and occurs due to the difficult economical situation in the country.

In general, the libraries are valued, attended, supported and protected: *("they wanted to optimise the network, so they started getting so many visitors at the local government, that the question was simply suppressed. It is obvious that the support is huge. I believe it was not so several years ago. Thus, the community recognized that what we are doing is good and very important to the community, and they want it to continue,"* said the heads of libraries). **During the last year, this positive assessment has not changed essentially.** In the eyes of the public, the library is becoming more modern, contemporary, and "own". **The feedback** is available due to the growth of number of visitors and through personal contacts, comments in the press or direct communication with the visitors: *("if a person does not come to the library, you meet him/her in the street and ask him/her why, and he/she says: "I know everything, you are in the newspapers all the time, everything is fine with you,"* said the heads of libraries).

10. Local, regional and national funding of libraries

10.1. The funding allocated to libraries

- The problems of funding are associated with the general economical situation -

When assessing the funding of public libraries in 2010, the survey participants said that **this year was especially "sad", because received amounts were very small** *("as it was cut last year, it was the same this year,"* said an expert, President's Office). **Poor economical situation in Lithuania "corrected" the funding allocated by the State and for the second year in a row it was significantly cut. The most damage was sustained by:**

✓ **The supply of traditional services:**

- **There are no new books;** if they get any books, they are old *("this year, we have not received a single new book"; "those books are not interesting, they do not meet the needs of people; for instance, the library of Tauragė received a book in Belarusian – who is going to read it?"* said the librarians, village; *"the traditional function of libraries has sustained more damage during this period, I mean the collection of books, than those modern services,"* said an expert; *"huge gaps, which will be difficult to fill,"* said the heads of libraries);

- **Less periodicals are subscribed** (*"we can subscribe one newspaper,"* said a librarian, village); it was occasionally mentioned that this year there are enough periodicals: *"the internet helps when we cannot subscribe the press,"* said the heads of libraries;
 - **Funding of events was stopped** in many cases, the librarians are organising them from their own resources (with their own money or by preparing and winning a project): *"nothing for the events, do as you please"; "last year we had two large events, nobody gave a dime, I funded them with my own money,"* said the librarians;
 - **No money to buy paper/ink for the copying machines and printers:** *"we have a coloured copying machine and printer, but we have no money to buy the ink, so we cannot use it,"* said the librarians.
- ✓ **The quality of providing the services (both traditional and modern) in general:**
- The librarians had to go on an **unpaid leave** for a week;
 - **Redundancy**, salary cuts, despite of the fact that the workload and responsibility of the libraries' employees have increased: *"the results are painful, there is no motivation at all,"* said the heads of libraries;
 - **Shortened working hours** (six-hour working day), during the weekends the people are not serviced (*"the people suffered at my place, because prior to the New Year, there were two of us, and now I am working alone and part-time, and the people need more time, they want me to work on Saturdays and Sundays,"* said the librarians).

The **consequences** of this reduced funding can be felt by existing visitors (*"some people will really be disappointed, because the people will not expect to find the literature they need; maybe it is not so pronounced during the first year as it is now, but if a person cannot get what he/she needs for two years, he/she will go there once, twice, and then stop,"* said an expert, the President's Office). Moreover, it will be difficult to pursue the educative mission of libraries in full, and this means that the possibilities of some people (especially from the lower social layers) to deepen the knowledge and obtain necessary information will become very poor.

According to the representatives of TG, **no improvement in terms of State funding can be expected in the nearest future.** The consequences of reduced State funding, which are already clearly seen and felt today, will become even more acute in the future. According to the librarians, the only possibility to receive funds is participating and preparing various projects: *"an impulse is necessary to base on individual profound projects, because even if the State started allocating higher funding, it would be left for survival, minimal salaries, utilities,"* said an expert, Ministry of Transport and Communications); *"I prepared a project and won some money for the library, so now we have funds for various activities,"* said the librarians). Meanwhile, the directors emphasize that under the conditions of decreasing funding, they have great responsibility to fight for their libraries and seek other *sources* of funding (*"you have to win over all your friends and prove that we cannot manage without it,"* said the heads of libraries).

10.2. The funding allocated to public internet access

- The absence of the future vision of libraries and common policy for its implementation confuses the libraries' employees, who are waiting for decisions "from above" -

When discussing the **funding for public internet access**, the survey participants had a unanimous opinion and emphasized that **it remained at the same level as in 2009:** *"nothing changed,"* said the heads of libraries; *"the internet has suffered least from all those cuts,"* said an expert, the President's Office.

According to the survey participants, **the organisers of the Project are fulfilling their obligations well** by supplying all necessary equipment to the libraries, organising training for the librarians, providing various teaching aids (manuals, videos, etc.), replacing old computers by new ones, or installing internet in the libraries that previously did not even have a computer. Meanwhile, the municipalities are still allocating funds to cover the charges of internet connection: *"it is a binding agreement, you have to observe it,"* said the librarians; *"we had to arrange the estimates so that there was money left for the internet; we gave up a lot, but we have the internet,"* said the heads of libraries.

The survey participants understand clearly and emphasize that **this funding ensured** that the majority of Lithuanian public libraries could **continue their activity – they were not closed.** Moreover, the libraries remain attractive and relevant to the visitors, despite of the fact that the supply and contents of

traditional services have suffered significantly due to the policy of cutting the funding (*"less books, more computers, some sort of compensation, balance,"* said the librarians).

In comparison to the data of the survey conducted in year 2009, **the same anxiety and fear for the future of libraries after the Project is over can be noticed.** This year, thus aspect was even more pronounced and all representatives of TG were speaking of *"what will the libraries do further?"*: (*"after the Project is over, everything will be on the shoulders of the libraries and local authorities; the computers will start braking down, how will we maintain the order?"* said an expert, Ministry of Interior; *"the libraries will have to maintain these computers, it will be difficult,"* said the librarians).

Occasionally, there was an opinion expressed that the **future of the libraries has to be taken care of today** by considering further actions and ensuring that the libraries would not suffer much after the Project "Libraries for Innovation" is over. According to the experts, this should be done by:

- **The state:** *"the equipment is getting out-of-date, needs to be replaced; the centre must remain, it used to be books, and now it is the place where a person can come and communicate; the internet will change, some other model will come, but the place itself, the library must be preserved, thus, the continuity must be long-term,"* said an expert, Ministry of Transport and Communications) **or**
- **The organisers of the Project "Libraries for Innovation":** *"they see what is going on in the libraries, this information has to be used and something has to be done for the future; if they take a break of two-three years, they will have to start from the beginning with the same libraries, and this would cost huge amounts,"* said an expert, Ministry of Transport and Communications.

11. Conclusions and generalisation (formulated based on both the information of the research conducted in 2010 and the comparison to the data presented in the survey report of 2009)

To sum up the information obtained during the qualitative assessment research of the Project "Libraries for Innovation", **the following main conclusions can be drawn:**

- ✓ **The Project "Libraries for Innovation" is recognized as the largest** (there were no projects of such level and scale), **most consistent and most "well seen" in public. The information about the Project is sufficient**, there is a lot of it in the Project website www.bibliotekospazangai.lt and mass media. Meanwhile, the **newsletter of the Project** is assessed as very **useful and comprehensive**, as the main **information and recent news are presented in short**;
- ✓ In the last year, **no radical changes in the majority of Lithuanian libraries** related to surveyed indices **took place**. It is only **natural, as with regard to the aims and scale of the Project, the period of one year is too short for radical changes to take place**. However, the dynamics of the discussions revealed that a positive change was noticed in the fields of IT development and internet use, especially in village libraries;
- ✓ **Public communication** pursued in the framework of the **Project "Libraries for Innovation"**: press and field advertisements, TV and radio commercials **have significantly contributed to improving the image of the library** as a contemporary and advanced institution **and creating the PIA user, who is aware and adequately evaluates the benefit of modern services and purposefully uses the IT services in the libraries**;
- ✓ **Moreover, the awareness of the librarians has been growing in seeking professionalism in their work**. Although everyone admits that the **librarian's salary is really not motivating** for accepting more responsibilities and working "for two" (due to redundancy), the **employees of libraries recognize that IT has become an integral part of their work and in order to successfully serve the visitors further and to provide them with relevant information, high-quality rendering of modern services has to be ensured**;
- ✓ In addition, after information technology was introduced in the libraries, the competence of librarians has been constantly growing, their image has been improving, and in the eyes of ordinary people, they are "professionals". **Thus, the librarians are open to various training and in-service courses**. It is likely that it is so, because they positively assess obtaining any knowledge (the knowledge of English is still a sensitive problem);
- ✓ **More intensive penetration of modern services** (especially in rural areas) not only helps to **form/strengthen the computer literacy/IT skills** of library visitors, but also **obviously reduces social exclusion in society**, which was one of the most important aims of the Project;

However ...

- ✓ **There is no comprehensive strategy of publicising the libraries and purposeful mechanisms and programmes, focused on individual groups of users**, which would help to attract more visitors, and most important, to keep them;
- ✓ The representatives of TF believe that the **State should give more attention and funds to public libraries, as the contribution of libraries' employees to the education and socialisation of society members is not questionable; meanwhile, the librarians' salary is not adequate to the volume of performed work and assumed responsibilities**. Moreover, **there is no differentiation of salaries** (according to the experience, work performed, workload, etc) **and this could be a good stimulus to take the initiative and "accomplish more at work"**;
- ✓ **The concern about the future of libraries after the Project "Libraries for Innovation" is over is even stronger**.