



INNOVATIVE LIBRARY SERVICES,
METHODS AND SOLUTIONS FOR
DIFFERENT CUSTOMER GROUPS

STRATEGIC GUIDELINES

2019

Liepāja Centrālā
zinātniskā bibliotēka



**JELGAVAS
PILSĒTAS
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Guidelines were prepared while implementing 2014-2020 Interreg V-A Latvian and Lithuanian collaboration across border programme project "Development of innovative library solutions for different generations in the border region" No. LLI-110, self-service in the library for different generations funded by the European Union. The total project funding (including the contributions by implementing partners) ERDF is 497 473,48 EUR.

This information has been prepared using European Union funding programme. Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library, Jelgava City Library and Liepāja Central Scientific Library are responsible for the content. Under no circumstances can it be considered that it represents the opinion of European Union.

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I. ABSTRACT

Public library – is a community space, culture, knowledge, and more prominently now technologies centre. Distribution of books remains an important function of the library, however, the main missions of the public libraries are wider – to educate, inform the public, and provide the opportunities to all for a meaningful leisure time. Modern libraries ensure access to physical and virtual, local and international information sources and new knowledge.

The new concept of the library also changes the role of the librarian. The librarian is no longer just a person to issue books and other publications, (s)he is an advisor, a teacher, a guide, helping the customers find their way in the abundance of services and providing them with modern equipment. Also, the librarian, by maintaining direct relationship with customers, observes their needs and creates new customer-focused services.

In this publication the development of innovative library solutions for different generations is discussed, using the data from the completed 2014–2020 Interreg V-A Latvian and Lithuanian collaboration across border programme project “Development of innovative library solutions for different generations in the border region”. The project is being implemented by Jelgava City Library – the lead partner – together with Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library and Liepāja central scientific library. The aim of this publication is to share the good practice and innovative methods introduced, that can be implemented by other public libraries.

The general objective of the Interreg programme, is to contribute toward sustainable social and economic regional development improvement and, in this way, increase its competitive advantages, and development for the region to become more appealing for living, working and visiting. The project “Development of innovative library solutions for different generations in the border region” is being implemented according to the fourth Interreg programme priority – Better quality of life, through improving the efficiency of public services and administration.

The intention of the project “Development of innovative library solutions for different generations in the border region” is to improve the efficiency of the public libraries and the methods of providing customer-focused services, while responding to all generational specifics of residents or visitors within the collaboration region. The project is positively influencing participating regions in socioeconomic development, by helping them become more competitive and more appealing for living, working and visiting.

The innovative public library services include technology based self-service solutions, which are being implemented in Liepāja and Jelgava public libraries; independent language learning service in Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library; collaboration between generations measures promotion through “Learning from each other” and “Families interact and learn” methods, which are being implemented by all libraries participating in the project.

During implementation of new solutions, library visitors of all generations are introduced with new and smart technologies, encouraging their use for educational purposes, to overcome linguistic and technological barriers. Great deal of attention is dedicated for creation of conditions for visitors of different ages to acquire the necessary technological, language skills, to encourage interaction and collaboration between generations, as well as learning from each other. Close international collaboration between libraries allows the exchange of knowledge, experience and consolidation of resources for implementing those innovations. In this way a modern, communicative and collaborative library is being created, that can fulfil the needs of all visitors regardless of their generation. Methods presented in these guidelines are universal and can be beneficial for other libraries and public institutions, that desire to increase their efficiency.

Useful links:

- Interreg programme web-site: www.latlit.eu
- Facebook page for the programme: www.facebook.com/LatviaLithuaniaProgramme/

Project news on the participant libraries' web-sites:

- Jelgava City Library: <http://selfservicelibraries.mozello.lv/>
- Šiauliai City Municipality Public library: <https://www.biblioteka.smsvb.lt/interreg/>
- Liepāja Central Scientific Library: <http://www.liepajasczb.lv/lv/lasitajiem/interreg>

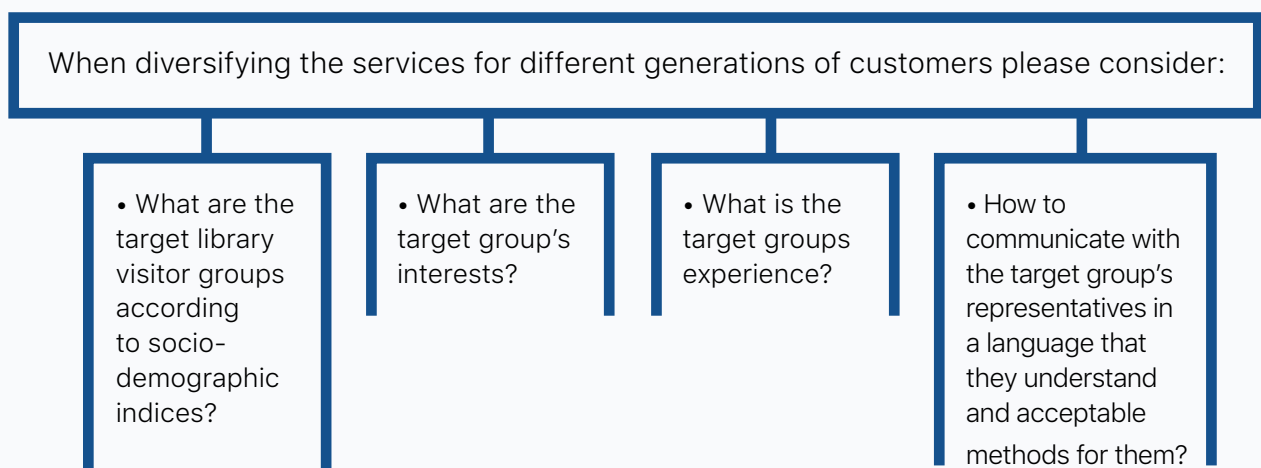
II. External experience with introduction of innovative services in public libraries and “customer-focused” method analysis

Public libraries – organisations focused on community’s welfare, thus their mission – is wide: to educate, entertain and inform the public. To achieve this mission to a high standard, the libraries need to evolve along with the communities, reacting to demographic changes, social and economic climate. To achieve this, libraries need to continuously improve existing and introduce innovative services, oriented toward all customer groups’ specific needs.

Public libraries serve a wide range of customers – the visitors differ in their age, academic, economic, cultural and social status. Library customers are local residents, tourists and other visitors, each of them seeking different services. The success of the library lays in high visitor numbers and good evaluation of its service – which depends on its ability to polarise services and the methods of their implementation toward each customer’s advantage.

Introducing innovative services in public libraries – essential to know your customers

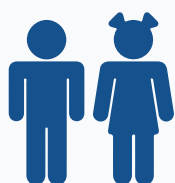
To assure the success of implementing innovative services in the library, firstly the library needs to clarify its target visitor groups and to create the plan of service diversification according to what services each group requires. Whilst doing this, it is important to consider different generations’ (meaning, different age customers’) interests, experience and the desired methods of communication between service provider and the customer.



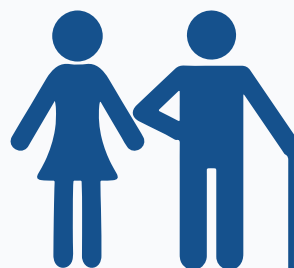
Presently public libraries are being computerised and are constantly renewing and developing their technological base, integrating ICT into their daily and new services. While offering new solutions to their customers, it is important to consider each target group's knowledge and experience using ICT. Because technologies are becoming an inseparable part of public life and their use in the future will only increase, none of the library's customer groups can be rejected, especially the older individuals.

Based on the experience of Lithuanian-Latvian border region libraries in Jelgava, Liepāja and Šiauliai, middle-aged and elderly individuals comprise more than one third of library visitor flow (from 38% to 47%). A great share of this visitor group possesses poor computer literacy or none at all, thus technologies are feared and distrusted by the elderly; the immediate librarian's assistance educating and explaining the technologies to them is of particular importance.

The second share of the library's customers are children (from 39% to 46%). Children are in love with the technologies and quickly grasp how to use them. Even though they have no problem with understanding how to use the existing technologies in the library, children come to the library for entertainment, not to read books or seek other information for self-improvement. As the creator of the informed society, the library's function is to engage children in reading and self-educating. To achieve this goal, the libraries need to ensure interactive, virtual and physical and sound media environment, focused on various knowledge and skill development, ensuring good alternatives for children and their families.



39 % to 46 % of library
visitors are kids.



Working age and elderly people
account for **38 % to 47 %**
of library visitors.

The analysis of border countries' customers highlights the needs of different generations as well as the problems, which are encountered by all libraries. The main challenge of the public libraries at present is, how to adapt the services offered to different generations of customers which demand methods and services that correspond to their individual needs. Being in possession of limited human and financial resources, the libraries have to find ways to diversify their services and to serve their customers effectively to the highest standard.

Customer-focused service provision method in the library

The purpose of the *customer-focused* service method is to clearly know the customer's needs and to meet them in a quality manner. The service provider at the library – the librarian – has many missions in his(her) work and the range of his(her) work, with new services arising, is only increasing. Personalised services, aimed at different customers' needs, demands a lot of time, thus effective solutions, optimising service provision, are self-service solutions. Let's give the customer not a fish, but a fishing rod, and let's teach them to fish, so that they can themselves receive simple services at the time convenient for them, without waiting until a librarian is available.

Self-service solutions at the library allow to issue and return books more quickly and efficiently. This means, that fewer customers will need to be served at the desk and library staff will have more time, which otherwise would be wasted completing repetitive tasks. In this way the librarians can provide service of a higher standard – answer questions, provide first-hand support and assistance there, where it is needed the most.

When planning self-services, it is essential to consider a few factors, in relation to customers:

- How to convince the elderly customers to use ICT based self-service solutions?
- How to enthuse the young people to use the new solutions?
- If technological solutions demand the knowledge of a foreign language how to make them accessible to those who do not have the command of the language?

Librarians spend a lot of time translating information for their customers, especially when it is related to ICT. However, it would be more efficient to focus the resources not on translation and writing of instructions, but on creation and provision of new services to customers to expand their computer literacy and the knowledge of foreign languages. This way the accessibility of services would be increased for different customers of different generations, while eliminating the need to involve library staff.

The libraries can also exploit the universal visitor factor more by focusing their services toward their customers by including them. Because libraries are visited by different generations of visitors, all in possession of different knowledge, experience, skills, the library is the perfect environment for inter-generational collaboration development – the visitors can help one another while using library services, exchange their knowledge and experience.

Young people appreciate the new technologies; however, they forget to read books or to study life sciences. Research has shown that "the lost generation" (50 to 70-year-

olds) have very good knowledge of life sciences and can share it with the younger generations. On the other hand, the young people can help their elders cope with the latest innovations, newest social networks and virtual marketing issues.

To encourage this process, libraries can introduce mentoring programmes, volunteer networks, activities for whole families, which are supervised and coordinated by library staff. This contributes toward the customer-focused service provision, actively incorporating the customers themselves.

It is not necessary to reinvent the bicycle – it is beneficial to learn from good practice

Public library network – is one of the widest public service networks in the world. All of the libraries seek methods, on how to fulfil their functions successfully and efficiently, ensuring their sustainability and continuity. Local, national and international collaboration provides libraries with opportunities of inspiration and good practice insights from their partners.

An efficient method for libraries to learn from one another – is to organise seminars for sharing their experiences, during which the libraries would recount, what new services and solutions they have introduced, discuss lessons learned. It is important to know the context and direction of development in your own country's libraries, as well as to seek good examples abroad. It is cheaper and more effective to adapt already existing and tested models rather than create completely new ones.

Conclusion

Improvement of library service efficiency while changing technologies and implementing more customer-focused public library service method will help the librarians change. When aspiring to attract and retain various generations as customers of the libraries, diversification of strategies and services provided is essential. Introducing innovative services based on modern technologies and encouraging collaboration between generations as well as integrating good practices from other libraries, the accessibility of library services can be improved according to individual needs of different customers through implementing different activities involving the public in relation to library service and more active use of it.

III. New / Innovative library services and planning of their implementation

A great number of customers that require personalised service, encourage libraries to seek self-service solutions, which allow the optimisation of customer service processes and ease the load of the library staff – technological solutions eliminate a share of repetitive tasks, which have to be performed by librarians, this way saving resources (time and finances), while staff can dedicate more of their time for improvement of existing and creation of new services.

During the project “innovative library solutions for different generations in boarder region” 4 new solutions are or were introduced, in relation with self-service solutions, which had positive impact on the improvement of library services:

- (1) In Liepāja and Jelgava self-service systems were installed,
- (2) in Šiauliai language learning system was created and implemented,
- (3) in all of the partner libraries “Learn from each other” method was introduced and implemented, supported by young volunteers – “knowledge ambassadors”,
- (4) also the method “families interact and learn”,

involving multiple generations of a family, which engage in shared activities and teach each other at the libraries. All of the participants in the project were new to the creation of a collaborative network as a solution, the purpose of which was analysis of collective challenges and research of future development solutions, sharing of knowledge and best practice.

III.I Self-service systems in Jelgava and Liepāja public libraries

Device: self-service system at the library.

Target groups: library visitors of all age groups.

The advantages of introducing the new system:

- Optimisation of customer service process.
- Elimination of repetitive tasks, the librarians can dedicate more time to other activities.
- Customers can receive the desired service at a convenient time, they do not need to wait until they will be served by library staff.
- Long term – library service provision costs reduced.

Self-service systems are becoming a conventional practice in various fields of mass services – we use them in the shopping centres, healthcare institutions, banks and other organisations, which serve a large flow of customers. Self-service allows the customer to receive the service quicker without having to wait for the customer service staff, the organisation saves financial, time and human resources.

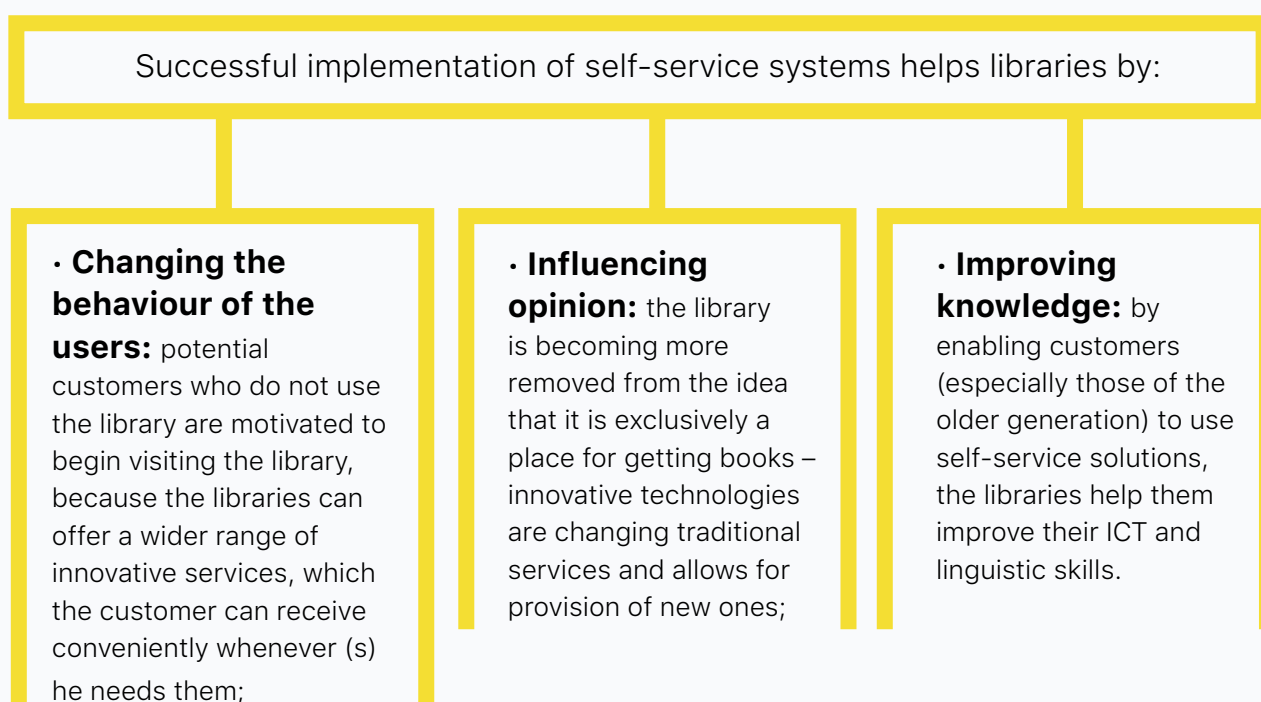
Self-service systems in the libraries in various countries are not new – international experience shows, that self-service solutions successfully fit into library activities and significantly improve efficiency. Upon installation of self-service systems, libraries abroad have increased the number of customers by at least 20%.

In the digital age, the representatives of the younger generation (up to the age of 45) demand more advanced and innovative physical and virtual self-service devices. The young people comprise a significant share of libraries' customers – for example in Liepāja and Jelgava public libraries the visitors representing the younger generation equate to half of all visitors, thus it is important to consider their needs and usage habits.

One more challenge – how to serve a large number of library visitors with existing resources. The number of visitors across Liepāja, Jelgava and Šiauliai public libraries varies from 100 to 200 thousand visitors per year, or from 300 to 600 visitors per day. In more recent years this number has continuously increased. This creates the collective challenge of libraries – how to ensure effective and quality service for increasing number of users with existing resources.

In consideration of these circumstances, Liepāja and Jelgava libraries are investing into self-check system, which provides library visitors to opportunity to independently search, reserve and receive books. Jelgava City Library has introduced a book drop service which allows readers to return books 24/7 without the need to adjust to the library's working hours.

Upon introduction of the self-service system, the librarians no longer need to waste time exclusively for issuing and receiving books, instead the librarians can dedicate the saved time for new / innovative services development and provision, which are demanded for by their customers. Accordingly, this allows the introduction of customer-focused, not book focused (issuing books) method, as librarian's work. Librarians can work more on issues of development, for example, research other countries' library development tendencies, analyse customer needs and provide more targeted services according to their individual needs.



When implementing self-service systems at the library, it is important to consider, that technologically based decisions will be welcomed by different customer groups differently. If those younger than 45-years-old prefer to do as much as possible themselves in virtual space, then those above 45-years-old prefer services face to face, because in most occasions their technological and foreign language skills are weaker or insufficient, for them to be able to take advantage of ICT. Thus, implementation of self-service needs to include not just technological solutions, but also the preparedness of the library staff to present the novelties in the most appealing manner and to teach the visitors on how to use them.

It is important to plan library staff training, customer consultations and to reflect upon, how to help the customers in improving their ICT and foreign language skills, which are needed for the use of the systems based in technologies. In this way the libraries can prepare a smart user, who is able to use the digitised services independently.

Service implementation plan and results

Self-service in the library covers different technical and software solutions, which allow the users to use part of library services independently without the interference of the librarian.

When implementing a self-service system, the main missions of the library are:

1. To prepare the technical specifications and to advertise the public procurement for the implementation of the self-service system;
2. To choose a provider, who will present and install the self-service system;
3. To install the self-service systems in the reading rooms (the main branches, children's reading rooms);
4. To train the staff on how to use the system.

Self-services system comprises certain features, which allow the automatization process for borrowing of library resources and allows the user to complete certain tasks in their virtual library account. Self-service system can include such components as:



Independent
return of
books



Self-service
through
dedicated
terminal



Protection
of library
resources

Introduction of **independent book return** service in the library is simple – it only requires physical storage for the books, which is accessible to the readers at all times, even when the library is closed. It is particularly convenient for the customer, because (s)he can return publications at a time convenient for them, they do not need to fit around the opening times of the library or to wait in the queue, until they will be served by the librarian. It is beneficial for the library staff because they do not need to waste time taking in the books, and they can use this time for other services.



A book drop service at Jelgava City Library

Self-service terminal – is a device, which allows the user to create and manage their library account and to complete the borrowing and return process through it, as well as receive other services. Self-service provides virtual access to the library resources, allows not only to order publications but also to extend borrowing time. Safe payment systems can be integrated into self-service terminal which allow the customers to pay their penalties and to receive receipts. Through the self-service terminal the library can advertise new services, resources, future events, recommend books – this way added value is created for the user.



A self-service terminal "selfCheck 500" at Jelgava City Library

Security gates are required in the library with the purposes of protection of the most important property – the books. Upon implementation of self-service systems, the library staff participate less and less in the process of issuing and returning books, thus it is less controlled. Security gates prevent accidental, as well as intentional theft of publications. When installing security system, special markers-stickers are fastened to publications, which are detected by the security gates. If someone attempts to pass the security gates with a publication that was not registered as issued in the system, the gates alarm the staff.



Security gates at Jelgava City Library

As an additional security feature, some libraries (for example Jelgava City Library) install closed circuit television cameras. Their advantage is that the infractions can be registered and used as evidence, if a conflict arises, or when resolving the circumstances of different situations.

Jelgava City Library has been using the self-service system since May 2019 and it has significantly improved the efficiency of the library. Particularly popular amongst the readers is the book drop service – the customers find it convenient, that they can leave the books at the storage facility next to the library even if the library is closed.

The most important lesson, to be shared with other libraries implementing self-service – is to do their homework before introducing the system to the users: to think through, how existing and potential users will discover the novelties and how will they be motivated and empowered to use those systems.

When presenting new services to existing and potential customers, Jelgava City Library spread the information through various channels: prepared press releases for local press, announced the news on social networks, organised an event for the local community celebrating the renewal of the library, spread the news through local leaders, regular visitors, this way creating “word of mouth” advertising.



Presentation of the self-service system at Jelgava City Library

The involvement of library staff is essential for the success of implementing new systems at the library – active communication with the visitors, presenting the self-service solutions and showing, how to use them. Great deal of attention should be dedicated for the elderly, whose ICT skills are poor – in Jelgava the librarians consult and teach the elders individually. Upon seeing, that the use of self-service systems is simple, the seniors no longer feel fear or obstacle in using the technologies and begin using a share of the services independently long term. In the meantime, younger people, who feel no fear or resistance toward technological solutions are satisfied that using ICT they can save their time.

Conclusion

By implementing self-service solutions, the libraries have gone hand in hand with technological advancement, transforming the service sector. Integration of technologies in quotidian services improves work efficiency and provides library staff with more time to create and provide services focused not on the book, but on the customer. In the meantime the customers received more targeted services, those who are in a hurry and just want to borrow or return a book, can do so without waiting for a librarian to serve them, while other customers have an opportunity to receive higher quality service from library staff (for example, more detailed consultations or training). Upon spreading the news about innovative solutions widely and upon presenting them in an appealing manner, library visitors of all generations can be encouraged to use self-service – this way saving time for both the customers and the staff, as well as other resources, while contemporary solutions help draw potential customers to the libraries.

III.II Independent language learning system in Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library

Device: independent language learning system at the library.

Target group: all age groups: working age individuals, seniors, children, also the unemployed, disabled individuals, library staff, teachers etc.

The benefits of implementing the new service:

- The knowledge of foreign languages allows the visitors to use a wider range of digitised library and other organisations' services independently;
- Independent learning programmes are used for library staff competence improvement;
- The local residents' employment opportunities are improved, the competitiveness of the region is increased while rising the educational standard of local residents;
- Quality of life is improved – knowledge of languages encourages communication and collaboration, increases confidence, self-expression and occupational opportunities.

When implementing the Interreg V-A Latvian and Lithuanian collaboration across border programme project, Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library created a Foreign language learning centre, where a modern independent language learning system was installed allowing the customers to study seven foreign languages. At the Foreign language learning centre, 15 computerised working spaces were installed. Along with the 15 desktop computers upon acquiring another 15 laptop computers, two learners at each table can work simultaneously. Thus 30 visitors can study languages at any given time.



Foreign language learning centre in Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library

Two new computers were purchased for the instructor – a member of library staff. These investments provide universal benefit, because the computers acquired can be used not just for language learning, but also for other educational activities. Library staff create a schedule, for constructive activities to take place at the library.

Software used for learning – “EuroTalk Interactive” allows independent study of **English, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Latvian languages.** This software was chosen due to its versatility and adaptability for all generations of visitors – each user can choose the level of the language being learned, depending on their competences and needs. Most languages can be learned in 6 different levels, except for Russian – 5 levels, Latvian – four levels.

“EuroTalk” is an interactive learning tool, where the whole learning process is game-like. Within the software interactive video, audio and graphic elements work simultaneously on both sides of the learner’s brain and help them memorise their learning quicker. Learners see an image, a graphic representation of the word and hear pronunciation. The knowledge is verified through easy and difficult games. There is recording equipment with the software, which allows recording of spoken words, phrases, and listening of them as well as comparing one’s own pronunciation with that of the speaker in the software who is a native speaker of that language.

Six levels of language learning are prepared according to European standards (from A1 to C2)

- **„Talk Now“** is the first level in every language, words are taught in 9 main subjects, i.e. first words, numbers, food, countries, in the shop, human body etc.

- **„Talk More“** and **„Talk The Talk“** are phrases in various subjects are taught, particularly useful when traveling. The learners not only hear phrases in their mother tongue and foreign language but also repeat them, record their own voice, complete various tasks.

- **„Talk Business“** is a level created specifically for professional field and is beneficial on business trips.

- **„World Talk“** level teaches the learner to understand various instructions in language being learned, and then complete the tasks given. At this level the user does not have access to their native language anymore. The tasks are playful, there are many images, there is a possibility to take part in a quiz, record your own voice in a dialogue with the instructor.

- **„Movie Talk“** is dedicated to those who speak the language fluently, here the user is given an opportunity to check their knowledge watching a movie and completing various tasks.

At all levels the user is motivated by a point system, an opportunity to compete against other learners and to receive certificates with bronze, silver or gold medals represented on them. Interactive learning method does not require learning by heart, new words and linguistic instructions are well memorised through gameplay, and the competitive element increases motivation as well as provides positive response of learner. Within the learning software, unlike in formal learning process, there is no grammar or rules. The software is focused on spoken language skills development. If the learner wants to learn the grammar rules, (s)he can use the library's Foreign language learning centre books.

Service implementation plan and the results

Foreign language learning centre at the library creates the conditions for the visitors to independently improve or learn spoken foreign language from scratch through game-like process supported by technologies.

While implementing the foreign language learning programme the library needs to prepare and complete these main tasks:

1. Prepare technical specifications and organise public procurement;
2. Choose suppliers of the service who will deliver equipment and independent learning systems;
3. Prepare a space for independent language learning;
4. Install language learning software;
5. Train library staff.

The Foreign language learning centre at Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library is operational since April 2018. The service has received particularly great amount of attention from library's visitors and has helped in attracting new ones. The success of the initiative was decided through well thought out service implementation strategy, concentrated on preparation of library staff and advertising of the service for various targeted audiences through most appealing and creative methods for them.

The new Foreign language learning service was presented to the public at the first Interreg V-A Latvian and Lithuanian collaboration across borders event **"The Library goes out to the City"**. Interactive and playful activities were organised at the Šiauliai city arena, which presented to those gathered in an unusual way the new services available at the library including the language learning service. Particularly popular was the balloon darts game. In each balloon there was a word hidden written in one of the foreign languages that can be studied at the library. Children upon exploding the balloons with well-aimed throws discovered words like *hello*, *thank you*, *library* and *book*, in Latvian, English, German, Russian, French, Spanish and Italian languages.

The participants not only had to guess what language they are written in, but also try and translate the word into Lithuanian. Those who managed to complete the tasks were awarded sweet prizes and literary recommendations, had a fun opportunity to decorate themselves with colourful face drawings.



Independent language learning service use was developed by implementing formal education system – Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library **organised training sessions for foreign language teachers and lecturers**. Over 150 teachers of foreign languages from Šiauliai and surrounding areas were invited for training. After training sessions at the library, the educators introduced their students with foreign language learning opportunities, adapted some of the learning and testing methods from the programme at their schools. Upon finding out about the innovative language learning methods in the library, the students shared their knowledge with their families. This way organic distribution of news was created, which presented the service to great circle of potential customers.

In its spaces Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library has already created a Comic Book Centre, where creative youths of the area like to gather. The competences acquired and the infrastructure created at the Comic Book Centre were used when establishing the Foreign language learning service as well as when sharing experience with partners. Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library experts, who specialised in language learning through comic books, have **organised 2 training sessions and workshops about language learning through creating comics** in Latvian partner libraries, where foreign language teachers from Liepāja and Jelgava schools were invited.

Experiences were shared and practically tested, how with the help of comics the library cannot only attract more visitors, but also help them learn foreign languages. The librarians were creating short comic strip narratives, using various language learning methods. The comics not only were useful when discussing and seeking new learning methods and solutions, but also when communicating in different languages. The universal language of symbols and body-language, used in creation of comics, gave the opportunity for people not to only understand each other but to also learn new phrases and concepts in foreign languages.

Before opening the Foreign language learning centre, Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library organised **two training sessions for the library staff**. 30 librarians were taught on how to use the new equipment at the centre, who then were able to share their knowledge with library visitors. During training, software was introduced, how to use it, software possibilities presented, the potential of using the software within the library and benefit for the customers discussed. During practical sessions, the staff were taught on how to create access account, access the software, complete levels and to check skills. Also, a lot of time was dedicated for consolidation of those skills. This way ensuring the improvement of library services, creating innovative opportunities for visitors to improve their already possessed competences, and to expand their knowledge.

40 training sessions for families were organised since the opening of the Foreign language learning centre. It is fun to learn languages together as a family. It is a meaningful leisure time, an opportunity to discuss and share impressions, or to compete – who will achieve better results when completing learning tasks. Training sessions have already been attended by almost 100 families. The success of the initiative can be best presented by participants' feedback.

"A really wonderful project, helping bring the family together, providing an opportunity to be together. And a very good programme for learning languages, especially the game-play".

"Really liked it. A lot of interesting methods, it is fun to learn, and to remember. Leaves you wanting to learn more. A really good learning tool".

"It's a wonderful project which helps acquire new knowledge. It was also fun time spent together with the family. We are really grateful to our teacher – the learning materials were really well presented".

Independent learning service is used by a wide range of customers – working age individuals, seniors, children, also the unemployed, disabled individuals, library staff, teachers etc. The seniors are particularly active, as they can dedicate more time for their education. For many, their children or grandchildren live abroad; also many people are learning languages for travel or work purposes; some are studying to remember a language that they studied in the past, others purely to flex their memory muscles or to recover from medical conditions which have affected their intellectual abilities.

The most popular language amongst the visitors is English, followed by German and Spanish languages.

The establishment of Foreign language learning centre and the service it provides in learning foreign languages has proved invaluable to the community. This is visible by reviewing the growing number of visitors at the Foreign language learning centre (formerly Foreign language reading room).

Changes in number of visitors and new customers at the Foreign language learning centre in 2017 -2019.

The number of visitors at the Foreign language learning centre	In 2017	In 2018	In 2019 (up to the month of July)
Total	1221	2511	1299
Adults	830	1689	699
Children	391	822	600

The make-up of visitors at the Foreign language learning centre	In 2017 m.	In 2018	In 2019 (up to the month of July)
Seniors	5	51	34
Employed	10	34	8
Unemployed	4	10	26
Children	9	16	13

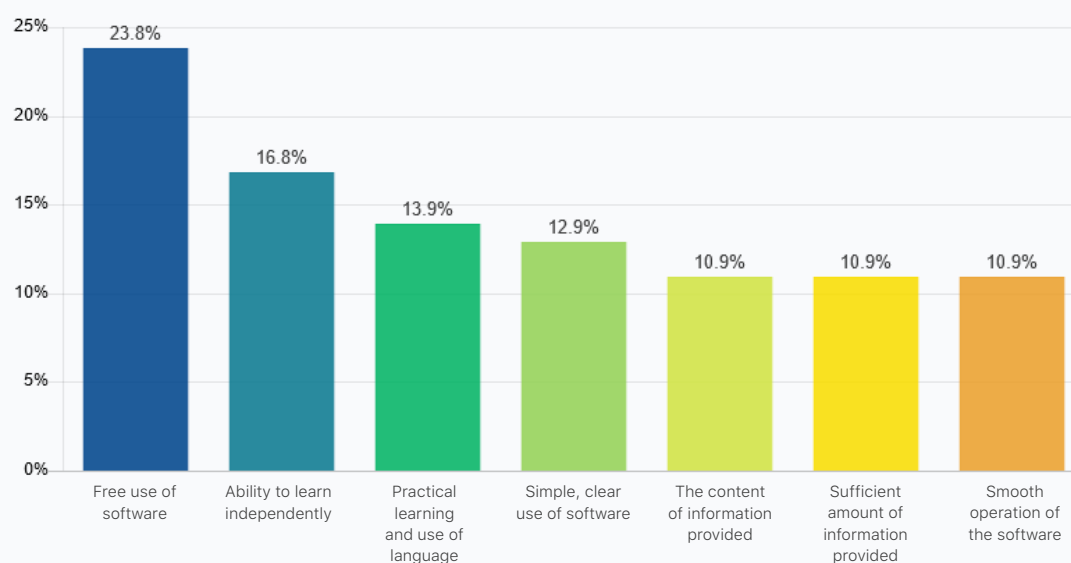
The number of visitors and new customers at Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library "Saulė" branch in 2017-2019:

The number of visitors at "Saulė" branch	In 2017	In 2018	In 2019 (up to the month of July)
Total	16950	24800	13215
Adults	8213	12186	5025
Children	8737	12614	8190

The make-up of new customers at "Saulė" branch	In 2017	In 2018	In 2019 (up to the month of July)
Seniors	84	152	83
Employed	333	370	249
Unemployed	51	56	20
Children	532	563	460

In an attempt to discover how the library customers value the new service Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library conducted a visitor survey, in which 110 respondents took part. One of the aims of the survey was to discover, which aspects of the service were the most relevant and favoured. It was discovered, that the visitors most of all value the fact that they can study a foreign language at the library for free; the opportunity of being able to study a language independently, establishing practical language skills, simple and clear use of the software were also important.

Please evaluate the Foreign language learning programme. What is the most important to you, what do you like best? From scale 1 to 7 mark the most relevant (1) to the least relevant statement (7).



Additionally, the users think that visiting the Foreign language learning centre is beneficial because they can spend their leisure time constructively, they are motivated by the opportunity to meet co-minded people and to communicate with the pleasant staff of the library. Almost all respondents (99%) have evaluated this service positively and have recommended it to their family and friends.

Conclusion

The success of the Foreign language learning centre was based on a few key factors, which should be noted by all libraries desiring to create a similar service. Firstly, the independent foreign language learning service is on great demand – language is the gate to another culture and allows for better understanding of another race or culture. People who study foreign languages possess a greater opportunity in the employment market. Being able to understand the English language helps the library customers use personal computers, mobile devices and other modern technologies better. When planning to provide a quality service it is important to reflect on infrastructure, test it with users – surveys and research have shown, that the learning programme and methods implemented during the project, met with the needs and expectations of all generations of customers at the library; studying at the library is convenient for them, because they are consulted by trained librarians, and they have language learning books at their disposal for more in-depth study. The effort and time invested by the librarians while organising events and training sessions for different audiences has paid off well in organic spread of information about the new service. The news and recommendations have spread through word of mouth. Seminars that were organised to share their experiences with partners from abroad allowed the successful practices to spread on international scale, opened discussions and sharing of ideas.

III.III Family space in the library and the “Families interact and learn” method

Activity: Establishment of family space in the library and implementation of “Families interact and learn” method.

Target groups: families, especially young families.

The benefits of introducing new service:

1. The range of family leisure activities is expanded;
2. The appeal and functionality of library spaces is increased;
3. The engagement of families is increased;
4. New knowledge and experience are acquired through interactive games/training;
5. Interactive learning programmes allow for improvement of different personalities, but also for interaction and shared learning for various generations of families.

Children learn together with their parents, brothers, sisters, grandparents, who came to the library. During the learning sessions children acquire scientific, technological, engineering and mathematical skills, while the senior members of families improve their technological skills.

Presently the younger generation does not seek books at the libraries, but rushes to the computers, they want access to the internet, more advanced physical and virtual self-service devices. Children are the second largest visitor group at the library, comprising 39-46% of all visitors. Most often children visit the library for fun, not for reading books or for seeking other information for self-improvement. In this context the general challenge for all libraries, as the centres of knowledge and improvement, is to find ways to captivate children's interest in reading and personal skill development. Libraries need to provide an interesting and latest technology filled space, where every single person can find activities that will fulfil their needs.

Families with children often choose the library as the space where they can spend their time in an entertaining and constructive manner. For this reason, it is important to create an environment and activities that motivate parents, children and grandparents to gather at the library. A successfully operating Family space was created by Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library during the Interreg project. To make the physical environment more meaningful, the library along with its partners – Liepāja and Jelgava public libraries – implemented the “Families interact and learn” method that they have created. It is an innovative method designed specifically for libraries, which provides the family members with an opportunity to spend time together and also acquire new knowledge and skills.

For effective realisation of this method a special physical environment is created (Family space) which motivates family members to learn whilst playing together using interactive learning tools. In the education process the senior generations are motivated to share their knowledge about life sciences, while the younger generations help introduce them to modern technologies. Family as a whole also receives the benefits of interacting more with each other.

To establish the Family space and to implement the shared learning method, physical tools are required and can incorporate ICT and other solutions – board games, books and other devices, virtual and interactive environment – digital books, interactive games and other sound media environment, including films and animation. Also, tools encouraging shared activities and exchange of experience – various games, events, competitions, family days. “Families interact and learn” is a method which through appealing spaces and infrastructure allows library to captivate a greater number of visitors and to contribute toward the creation of educated, cultured and active society through education of families.

“It is a solution, that allows all generations to reach success” – rejoices one of the mothers, participant of the Family day at the library.



Family Day at Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library

Service implementation plan and results

Family space – an interactive and physical environment, dedicated for families to learn together. This space is used for introduction of the new method “Families interact and learn”. Here they can learn and improve various skills – creativity, logical, strategical and model thinking, communication skills, improve relationships with other members of the family etc.

When implementing this method, it is important to complete these tasks:

1. To ascertain suitable physical environment – board games, books and other tools, prepare virtual and interactive environment – digital books, interactive games, install sound media equipment, including films and animations;

2. Prepare and organise various engagement programmes (language and other training sessions and events for families of differing generations);
3. Prepare and organise competitions for families of differing generations, while maintaining the focus on improvement of knowledge in life sciences, mathematics and languages.

When implementing the 2014-2020 Interreg V-A Latvian and Lithuanian collaboration across border programme project, Jelgava, Šiauliai and Liepāja public libraries acquired various ICT tools, educational games and renewed their spaces so that the interactive and creative activities could take place within them. With infrastructure prepared the families can learn and improve their skills together. These created spaces are adapted for audiences of all ages – from pre-schoolers, secondary school students to senior members of the family. “Families interact and learn method” is an integral part of collaboration and public involvement in library activities, along with “Learning from each other” method and “Knowledge ambassadors” network, please see below.

When creating spaces suitable for families, libraries should plan and perform these tasks:

1. Prepare technical specifications and complete public procurement;
2. Choose equipment supplier;
3. Choose appropriate equipment once the customer needs have been established;
4. Train the staff on how to use the equipment.

Family space in Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library opened in April 2018 and it became a very popular destination for family leisure activities.



A colourful part of Family space in Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library

In family space all big and small can play and learn, because here they can find a wide selection of activities supported by technologies and educational games.

Interactive tables Manico Fun and SMART – an interactive table is like a tablet, just much larger and capable of providing more. Children can simultaneously touch, tap, drag objects, draw, play or complete their homework, school projects etc. The table is sufficiently mobile, so that it can be moved where desired, but also it is sufficiently stable and robust, to endure a large number of children. Interactive tables excellently fulfil the needs of the youngest visitors at the library – allows them to complete intellectual tasks, play educational games, which also serve not just as entertainment but also education. Children who take part in the activities can communicate amongst themselves or play with their parents, brothers, sisters.



“The possibilities of the interactive table – are wide: it cannot only be used for drawing, but also playing, and while playing with it one can learn languages, mathematics, life sciences” – says a Family space visitor, mother of two children.

Interactive floors are mostly used by the pre-school and primary school aged children. The unique projection allows the children to enjoy the games on the floor. It is a mobile device, which can be easily moved, and this is a great advantage compared to a usual board. Through the use of interactive drawing tools, the children learn precision and accuracy. Lessons are beautiful, playful, simple and understandable. To be able to fully take advantage of the interactive floor it is possible to download free and paid software and games from the "App Store".



There is no shortage of colour in the Family space – the children can focus on creative activities – draw playful images upon **glowing glass easels, sand** and **magic light tables**, interactive tables. This artistic therapy helps develop creativity, relaxes and reduces stress. The most exciting part is that this involving activity can be enjoyed again and again – the drawing can be easily erased and drawn anew.

On the market there is a wide selection of independent natural sciences, mathematics and computer literacy learning software. **Educational game tables** (air hockey, table football, 12in1 game table) along with educational games ("Kingdomino", "Katan",

"Robinson Crusoe", "Carcassonne", "Tik Tak Bumm", "Scrabble", "Activity", "Learn to write", "Monopoly: smart banking", "Pavilion 10 in 1" etc.), a **3D film system, Xbox console** were installed in the Family space. **Robotics** activities also take place there. The plethora of tools creates the opportunity for families and children to try new things, the educational process does not become boring, remains active and dynamic.

Those who wish to improve their skills in sciences, mathematics and languages, can choose an **interactive game**, which is intended as an independent learning tool. This game is connected to virtual (online) environment, allowing participation in competitions amongst the library visitors even on international scale. For implementation of the game, an interesting and appealing interactive **multimedia stand** with touch screen, web camera and software in multiple languages (Latvian, English and Russian) which incorporates at least four interactive games, teaching the users of the stand life sciences, was installed for the visitors. Possible game choices:



- **Galileo Galilei** – the main purpose of the game is to answer the question "how do objects fall?"
- **Isaac Newton** – the main purpose of the game is to visually present the 3 Newton laws.
- **Archimedes** – the main purpose of the game is to present Archimedes principle
- **Maria Curie** – the main purpose of the game is to tell and present what X-ray devices are and how do they operate.

Upon completion of the game the player is given an opportunity to have their picture taken along with the impressive characters. The visitor can receive their photograph via e-mail.

One of the tools that can be used either by a group or by an individual for realising various creative business ideas, products or technological solutions is a **3D printer**. The device is used for visualisation of already created products or technological solutions. It helps in practically developing engineering skills and model thinking. Senior generation can exchange their practical engineering skills with the younger generation and vice versa: the younger generations can transform this experience into model thinking, creating jointly designed new products or technological solution prototypes. 3D printer is an important tool when preparing future engineers who can come to the library and take advantage of the opportunity to create prototypes of already designed products or technological solutions. 3D printer helps in creating tangible prototypes of new engineers' inventions, which can be further improved as a real product.

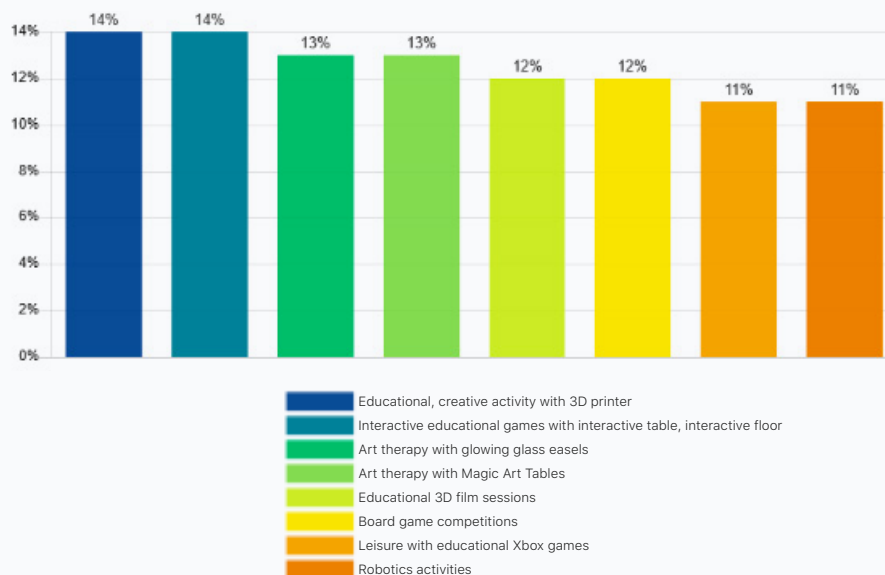
Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library, having established the independent Foreign language learning centre, used the infrastructure for the “Families interact and learn” method implementation – the library organises language learning seminars for different generation families, which are introduced to the learning programme’s possibilities, and later are capable of implementing them by learning independently or together with their family members. Another method which has proved itself in encouraging family collaboration is family competitions, during which the members have an opportunity to display their linguistic knowledge and acquire new skills.

The plethora of interactive activities allows not only for improvement of different personalities, but also for successful interaction of different generations within families. To identify the most successful Family space activities, Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library has conducted a survey.

Most popular activities within Family space

The respondents were asked which activities within Family space were their favourites or they would like best. Responses received suggest that there are no domineering activities, as all of the activities provided are valued equally.

Which family spaces do You like (would like) best, You use (would use) most frequently? Please mark in an increasing order (from 1 to 8) the most relevant (1) to the least relevant (8) activities.



The survey has shown, that all of the interactive activities offered to families are interesting – there is no significant distinction in their popularity, all of the activities offered are evaluated almost equally. The relevance of the service is confirmed by the positive feedback of the Family space visitors:

***"It is one more opportunity
to spend time with the family,
to relax"***

***"It is beneficial and interesting
leisure time for children"***

"Excellent activities for the family"

***"I would recommend it
because of the interesting,
innovative and fun activities"***

***"You can spend time together there,
not just watching films, but learning
languages, playing board games"***

***"It is a place, where you
can fulfil your potential,
learn, meet like-minded
people"***

***"I would recommend it,
because it encourages to
spent more time with family"***

***"Many activities in a single
place and for free"***

The news about the family friendly spaces which were created in Jelgava, Šiauliai and Liepāja public libraries were spread through various events at the libraries and beyond. For example, Family space and "Families interact and learn" method as an example to follow were presented in the "Leader Time 3" conference organised by Šiauliai District Municipality. This way the news about the new methods were spread through government, educational and other public organisations.

Liepāja Central Scientific Library organized a Family Games Day, inviting families to play interactive board games (OPPO, ICE COOL, I KNOW, PANDEMIC, CARCASSONNE, MYSTERIUM, MISTAKOS, CODENAMES, MALACCA, and other games from the library's funds). Similar family activities were successfully organized by Jelgava and Šiauliai public libraries as well. Family tournaments are a great way to encourage intergenerational dialogue and leverage library resources for fun educational activities. An international family games competition took place in all three libraries. During it



Family Games Day at Liepāja Central Scientific Library.

families competed against each other while completing tasks associated with science and languages. 5 best families from each library in Lithuania and Latvia were selected and travelled to the final competition at the Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library. All families who have tested the educational and leisure activities at libraries were impressed and will recommend them to their family and friends.

Conclusion

“Families interact and learn” method is implemented by installing appealing physical space at the library, where families can gather and learn, play games and communicate – especially successful way to expand the circle of people visiting the library and to provide services that are generation oriented. As many as 98% of visitors, who have experienced these spaces in Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library said that they would recommend them to others. Family as a unit receives benefits, because its members interact more amongst themselves, are encouraged to share experience, knowledge, and to improve collectively, and the library has the opportunity to exploit its physical and intellectual resources.

III.IV “Learning from each other” method

Service: innovative “Learning from each other” method

Target groups: juniors and seniors

The benefits of introducing new service:

1. Improving the efficiency of librarians’ work;
2. Wider community is directly involved in library services;

3. Generational collaboration is encouraged through shared experiences. New viewpoints encourage new ideas and new learning methods;
4. Visitors from different generations help each other use innovative library services.

Creation of innovative services in the libraries is oriented toward implementation of new technologies – on the one hand, it provides the libraries with an opportunity to stay in tune with modern world, on the other hand, it obligates the library to make sure that all of the library's visitors are able to use those technologies as their ICT skills may differ. Juniors who have been born in the age of technologies quickly grasp innovations, however, seniors find it difficult due to the lack of skills or linguistic barriers. Senior population comprises from one third to 50% of all library visitors; a large proportion of these people (especially those above the age of 50) have very poor computer literacy skills or don't have any at all. These people first seek technological knowledge from the junior members of their family. Taking advantage of this tendency to motivate and enable the senior consumers to use the innovative services in the library, Šiauliai, Liepāja and Jelgava public libraries as participants of the Interreg project created a special method "Learning from each other". During implementation of this method, it was established on how to enlist "knowledge ambassadors" – young volunteers (foreign and local) – who would teach the seniors computer literacy or consult them.

To ensure the endurance of the method and to encourage involvement, "knowledge ambassadors" take part in a wide, continually refreshing international collaboration network: if one of the volunteers leaves the network another one joins in and is trained by other participants. Young volunteers' motivation to participate in the project lays in the desire to acquire valuable work experience, and an opportunity to acquire life experience and knowledge from their seniors.

Service implementation plan and results

Libraries often collaborate with young volunteers, inviting them to organise various events. Integration of youth in the library services, by encouraging them to become "knowledge ambassadors" – is a way to expand this collaboration. "Knowledge ambassadors" training is a process, during which young volunteers are enlisted and trained, as they will later help senior library visitors use the innovative library services.

When enlisting "knowledge ambassadors" in library operations, these tasks should be completed:

1. Register in the European network for young volunteers with the aim of enlisting local and foreign young volunteers;
2. Prepare a training programme for the young volunteers to become "knowledge ambassadors";

3. Run training sessions on “knowledge ambassadors” for seniors;
4. Ensure the continuity of training, with veteran “knowledge ambassadors” training new volunteers.

A special training programme has been created for preparation of volunteers to become “knowledge ambassadors”. Library staff who coordinate “knowledge ambassadors” programme, train the volunteers on how to enable the elderly people to use the services based in technologies, which improve their daily life.

“Knowledge ambassadors” training covers 5 main areas:



Internet services:

how to conduct a search online (Google, Mozilla and other tools), how to find news online (Delfi, Irytas, 15 min etc.), special searches online (YouTube and similar);



Communication

online: how to create and use an email account;



E-services: what public services are available and can be ordered online (www.epilietis.eu, www.langasiateiti.lt, www.epaslaugos.lt);



Social networks: how to create and use accounts on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, Vkontakte networks;



Document preparation: work with Microsoft Word software.

Young people understand the potential of online search, the operational principles of social networks, however, during training they need to be told about how to teach and communicate with older generation and how to train them so they can access relevant information about health services, social assurances, pension, bills, online banking, public transportation.

During the implementation of Interreg project Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library organised **young volunteer – knowledge ambassadors training**. Library staff presented the principles on how to teach older people and introduced online services which can be used at the library and which are provided by public services. Also, the volunteers tested the independent foreign language learning software “EuroTalk”. Participants were volunteers from Šiauliai public college – organisational communication 3rd year students and a library volunteer from Ukraine.



Language training for elderly at Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library

After training the volunteers, Šiauliai City Municipality Public Library organised **two trial "Learn from each other" training sessions**. First training session was focused on development of computer literacy, the second on independent language learning software "EuroTalk Interactive" use. "Knowledge ambassadors" presented to the gathered seniors:

1. How to easily study languages;
2. What is the best environment for learning;
3. How to choose the correct study level.

In total six "knowledge ambassadors" took part in training. Their aim was to introduce the seniors to the "EuroTalk Interactive" software and to train them on how to use it. Thanks to the "Learning from each other" method, "knowledge ambassadors" trained **50 individuals above the age of 50** on how to use virtual services.

A practice-oriented computer literacy training was particularly popular among seniors at Liepāja Central Scientific Library. During it the library's "knowledge ambassadors" introduced the "newcomers to digital technologies" the basic principles of computer literacy.



Computer literacy training for elderly at Liepāja Central Scientific Library

“Learning from each other” method is particularly valued by seniors – they see it as an opportunity to breach the technological barrier and to begin using a wider range of online services with the help of young volunteers.

“I have learned useful things – I personally was able to register on sveikata.lt system, used it to book my doctors’ appointments. Previously I have only heard about it. And, of course, I have improved my communication skills” – told one of the seniors who took part in training.

Conclusion

“Learning from each other” – is a method which encourages productive collaboration between different generations that visit the library. More promising and active youths are involved in library services through the international “knowledge ambassadors” network. Library services accessibility is improved for the technologically disadvantaged senior community. This way the initiative not only contributes toward the increased use of libraries, but also in the improvement of quality of life amongst general population and particularly the elders. All of the libraries have the potential for implementing this method, because it does not require great additional financial resources and encourages efficient use of existing library resources: access to technologies, qualified human resources and a wide library partnership network with other libraries, educational and other public organisations.

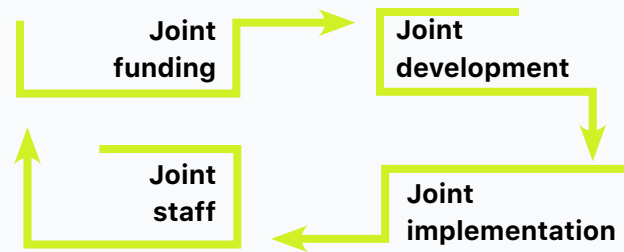
IV. Collaboration between libraries – the path to effective innovation

Almost every city and district in different countries has a public library – it is a wide network, within which libraries, on the one hand, fulfil the general mission and meet the same challenges, on the other hand each adapts to the needs of its community. Because of this, public libraries acquire unique knowledge and experiences, which they can share amongst themselves. This is particularly relevant when implementing innovation and creating new services oriented toward all of the visitors' needs regardless of their age, because of learning from another libraries' experience is more efficient and cheaper than for each library to experiment individually.

Practices implemented in the "Development of innovative library solutions for different generations in the border region" were supported by collaboration of Lithuanian and Latvian border area libraries. Self-service libraries reported on in the project are efficient, because their experience, resources and knowledge were connected in a single network. Partners were simultaneously implementing two new methods "Learning from each other" and "Families interact and learn". Part of the project – for example, independent language learning centre in Šiauliai city library or self-service systems in Liepāja and Jelgava libraries – differs, however all of the solutions have a shared aim and were implemented using the same principles. Joint practice and various shared challenge / problem solutions allowed analysis of best solutions and acquisition of invaluable experience.

Collaboration between project partners is based in constant communication, which takes place thanks to communication technologies or direct meetings and during events. A Facebook group "Learning from each other" was created for every day communication where project implementation group communicated, exchanged experiences and discussed new challenges during the implementation of new methods; sharing of documentary and other materials was achieved through Google drive system.

Collaboration diagram of Interreg project participating libraries



Joint development	The project was prepared by the representatives of all partners. The project clearly covers all of the project partners' ideas, expectations, demands and priorities. All partners contributed to project preparation equally. Project partners met in a few meetings to discuss and acquire shared understanding about the aim of the project, joint territorial challenges and results. All of the ideas discussed were incorporated in the project.
Joint implementation	All of the project partners implement and coordinate project activities. Distribution of tasks and responsibilities is according to each partner's experience and competences. All partners coordinate all of the practices and their implementation on daily basis through management committee, which consists of representatives of all partners.
Joint staff	Project management is formed so that staff functions do not double up, but all partner teams work together.
Joint funding	Project and its budget are planned so that all partners' budgets form a single joint project budget.

To distribute and share the knowledge and experiences acquired about the innovative library methods widely, a seminar was organised. During it other librarians and teachers from Latvian and Lithuanian regions gained experience related to self-service solutions in the libraries from project partners.

Before developing and implementing innovative solutions, the international project team went on three experience exchange trips – in Telšiai the librarians analysed independent language learning tools; another two trips were to libraries in the developed countries, which are not in the programme territory. One of these trips was to Finland – this country's libraries are moving forward, introducing and developing

many customer-focused innovative services, aimed at various target groups and meeting their individual needs (social, educational, digital public services, support for businesses etc.). Third trip was to France; French public library Mediatheque introduced new technologies – created modern sound / interactive environment for personal development of library visitors.

Collaboration while implementing innovative services and solutions provides the libraries with an opportunity to jointly develop and implement projects, share competences, experience, human and financial resources. It is a great method of strengthening relationships between libraries and improving performance. Interreg project proves, that with the help of technologies, an efficient and productive collaboration between libraries even on international scale is possible. Upon defining clear targets and having balanced out tasks and resources, as well as continually communicating, it is possible to create customer-focused library service methods, that can be used by libraries that implemented the project as well as other libraries and public organisations.

V. CONCLUSION

Project “Development of innovative library solutions for different generations in the border region” – is one of the good examples on how to improve the efficiency of public libraries and customer-focused services with consideration toward different generational needs. Through comprised forces Jelgava, Liepāja and Šiauliai city public libraries implemented new technologies and innovative methods, which increased the efficiency of library operation, quality of customer service, staff satisfaction; helped attract new customers and offer to the existing customers a wider range of services.

The basis of the project’s success – a productive collaboration of libraries and their customer-focused method, the purpose of which is to identify its customer groups, understand their needs and diversify services, so that those needs are met. For example, while seniors are learning foreign languages or improving their ICT skills with the help of the young “knowledge ambassadors”, parents with children can play an interactive battle of the minds or create comics – in such a modern, customer-focused library everyone can find an activity interesting and beneficial to them. Self-service solutions provide the librarians with more time and freedom to personally communicate with the customers and join into a wide range of library services as well as plan and implement new services instead of wasting time on repetitive book related tasks. New methods “Learning from each other” and “Families interact and learn” allow existing and potential library visitors to directly incorporate novelty library services – they can enjoy the opportunity to enjoy each other’s company and at the same time acquire new skills; library staff are freed up from having to consult and teach every single customer and they can plan their work more productively.

International collaboration, exchange of good practice, knowledge and other resources helps libraries achieve positive results quicker, more efficiently and to draw new ideas from their partners.

Solutions implemented by Latvian and Lithuanian public libraries helped create an infrastructure and service system, which helps serve a rising number of library customers representing different generations with a quality service; it has also helped them contribute in the greater regional development plans – stable and sustainable socioeconomic development, helping them become more competitive and more appealing for living, working and visiting. This model can be implemented by other libraries and public service organisations.

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INNOVATIVE LIBRARY SERVICES,
METHODS AND SOLUTIONS FOR DIFFERENT
CUSTOMER GROUPS
Strategic guidelines
2019