

USERS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE BENEFITS OF INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES IN LITHUANIA

Final research report 2013



LIETUVOS
NACIONALINĖ
MARTYNO MAŽVYDO
BIBLIOTEKA

UDK 316.654:027.5 (474.5)

Va312

This report is based on research funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The findings and conclusions contained within are those of the Independent Research Company TNS and do not necessarily reflect positions or policies of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Authors:

Susannah Quick

Gillian Prior

Ben Toombs

Luke Taylor

Rosanna Currenti

Editors:

Giedrė Čistovienė

dr. Ineta Krauls

Designer

Vanda Padimanskaitė

Language editor

Tomas Auškalnis

Layout

Kostas Stankevičius

Published by: Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, Gedimino Ave. 51, LT-01504 Vilnius, phone (+370 5) 249 7023, fax (+370 5) 249 6129, e-mail biblio@lnb.lt, website www.lnb.lt

Printed by: Petro ofsetas JSC Limited, Savanorių Ave. 174D, LT-03153 Vilnius.

CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	4
1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY	5
1.1. Context for the research.....	5
1.2. Research methodology	6
2. THE PUBLIC LIBRARY LANDSCAPE AND INTERNET PROVISION.....	8
3. LIBRARY AND PAC USAGE.....	9
3.1. Access to libraries and PACs.....	9
3.2. Reasons for using PACs.....	12
4. IMPRESSIONS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES.....	15
4.1. Importance of library services.....	15
4.2. Effectiveness and funding of public libraries.....	15
4.3. Perceptions of public libraries.....	16
5. INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING	18
6. USE OF PACS FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS	20
7. E-GOVERNMENT AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP	22
RESULTS	23

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Objectives and research approach

TNS, an independent research company with a global presence, was commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to conduct research across 17 EU countries to identify perceptions and types of use of public libraries. The purpose of the research was to understand the impact that public libraries in the EU have on users' lives.

The research included:

- a workshop among the study stakeholders to discuss the priorities for the research;
- desk research to collate key data concerning libraries;
- a survey of a representative sample of the population aged 15 and over in each of the 17 countries;
- a survey among library users and public access computer (PAC) users aged 15 and over in each of the 17 countries, conducted in libraries; and
- qualitative research among library users and library staff.

This report provides a brief overview of the results for Lithuania and compares the results to the EU total.

Library and PAC usage

- Computer access is offered by 96% of public libraries in Lithuania.
- An estimated 0.6 million adults in Lithuania, around a quarter of adults in the country (24%), had used a public library in the last 12 months, similar to the average of 23% of all adults across Europe.
- An estimated 0.2 million adults in Lithuania, 9% of adults, had used PACs in the last 12 months, significantly higher than the average of 4% of adults across the EU.
- PAC users in Lithuania were more likely than the EU average to be women, to be aged 15–24, to live in a rural area, and to still be studying.
- Across the EU, and even more so in Lithuania, the primary motivation for PAC users is free nature of the service. The lack of other options for

accessing computers or the Internet were also important. PAC users in Lithuania, compared with users across the EU, were more likely to have mentioned getting help from library staff, working with friends or other people, and having access to better computer software or hardware as reasons for using computers in public libraries.

- Overall, it is estimated that 0.1 million PAC users in Lithuania had nowhere else to access the Internet, or to access the Internet free of charge.
- The value placed on the PAC service was slightly higher among users in Lithuania than the EU average. Overall, 99% of PAC users in Lithuania said that the library's computer and Internet connection services were valuable, compared with 92% of all EU PAC users. Two fifths of PAC users in Lithuania (39%) said that the service was extremely valuable, which is broadly in line with the EU average of 36%.
- Satisfaction with computers and the Internet at public libraries was high among users: 93% of users in Lithuania were satisfied.

Perceptions and impacts of public libraries

- 'Free access to computers' and 'free access to the Internet' were both rated as important library services by just over half of library users in Lithuania, compared with around seven out of ten library users across Europe.
- Three fifths (61%) of the general public in Lithuania (including both library users and non-users) felt libraries were either very effective, effective or fairly effective at meeting the needs of their local community. This was in line with the average across the EU of 64%.
- Around two fifths (43%) of the public in Lithuania felt that public libraries merited more financial support than at present, which was higher than the EU average (40%).
- Overall 98% of PAC users in Lithuania said that their PAC use had delivered at least one impact for them, higher than the average across the EU (83%) and representing approximately 0.2 million people in Lithuania.
- Library users in Lithuania were more likely than the EU average to strongly agree that public libraries 'Have highly skilled librarians' (69%

Lithuania compared with 43% EU), ‘Offer a politically neutral environment’ (73% Lithuania compared with 50% EU), and ‘Are friendly and welcoming’ (75% Lithuania, 58% EU).

Informal and non-formal learning

- In Lithuania three quarters (75%) of library users had taken part in an educational activity in a library in the last 12 months, far higher than the EU average of 25%.

Employment and use of PACs for business

- Around a half (49%) of PAC users in Lithuania had used library computers in the last 12 months to support some employment-related activity, higher than the EU average of 30%. This represents an estimated 0.1 million PAC users in Lithuania who had used PAC for employment-related activity.
- An estimated 12,000 PAC users in Lithuania had used a PAC to apply for a job in the last 12 months, and an estimated 4,000 adults had been successful in securing employment by this means.

E-government and active citizenship

- The library survey found that around one in four PAC users in Lithuania (24%) had used PACs to interact with public authorities in the last 12 months, the same as the EU average (24%). PAC users in Lithuania had been much more likely than users across the EU to have used PACs to send/fill in their tax declaration (9% versus 2% respectively), and less likely to have used PACs to obtain information from public authorities’ web-sites (12% versus 17% respectively).
- Overall, 42% of PAC users in Lithuania had used PAC for civic engagement activities in the past 3 months, higher than the average for users across the EU (26%). The three most common community engagement activities, mentioned by around one in five users in Lithuania, were reading and posting opinions on civic or political issues via websites (22% Lithuania compared with 14% EU), seeking information on consumer/legal rights (20% Lithuania compared with 11% EU) and seeking information on local/national/EU government activity or politics (18% compared with 10% EU).

1. BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

1.1 Context for the research

Public libraries across the European Union (EU) have long played an important role in communities by providing free access to information, guidance from trained librarians, and public meeting space. As meaningful participation in society increasingly requires access to digital information and resources, many public libraries in the EU have expanded their offerings to include access to information and communications technologies (ICTs) such as computers and the Internet.

There is a growing body of evidence about the ways public access to ICTs contributes to economic, health, education, and social development¹. For instance, the Global Impact Study

on Public Access to ICTs, which covers five developing countries, found that those using Public Access Computers reported positive impact related to communication (79%), education (78%), access to government information (40%) and health (37%). More than 80% of public services in the EU are now fully available online,² but in 2011, just 41% of the EU population used government services electronically.³ Today, some Europeans have their first experiences with computers or the Internet at a public library, and for some individuals this may remain the only place where they can access ICTs (or access them without paying unaffordable fees)⁴.

education; employment and income; governance; and health. Implemented by the University of Washington’s Technology & Social Change Group (TASCHA), the Study is part of a broader research project supported by Canada’s International Development Research Centre (IDRC) and a grant to IDRC from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

² Eurostat, 2010

³ Eurostat, 2011

⁴ Sciadas, G.; Lyons, H.; Rothschild, C. in Sey, A. *Public access to ICTs: Sculpting the profile of users*. Seattle: Technology & Social Change Group, University of Washington Information School, 2012.

¹ See The Global Impact Study of Public Access to Information & Communication Technology about the scale, character, and impacts of public access to information and communication technologies. Looking at libraries, telecentres, and cybercafes, the study investigates impact in a number of areas, including communication and leisure; culture and language;

Under 'Europe 2020: A European Strategy for Smart, Sustainable and Inclusive Growth', the EU has set ambitious objectives in many of the development areas to which access-to-information efforts contribute – specifically employment, innovation, education, and social inclusion. EU Member States are expected to meet targets in these areas by 2020. There is anecdotal evidence that ICT access through public libraries can support the implementation of the specific growth, education, and cohesion policies related to the EU 2020 Strategy, such as digital skills and inclusion milestones described under the Digital Agenda for Europe (one of seven flagship initiatives of the Strategy) or informal and non-formal learning, which is mentioned in three of the seven flagship initiatives. In other policy areas, such as supporting a skilled workforce and connecting people to employment opportunities, public libraries' roles may be less obvious and additional data are needed to demonstrate the contributions of public libraries and help them secure EU support for their activities.

This research, which includes EU-wide and country-specific reports, was commissioned by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to illuminate the role of public libraries in supporting social and economic policies under the EU 2020 Strategy.

The Global Libraries programme of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is currently underway in five EU countries: Bulgaria, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, and Romania. It is currently supporting the 'Libraries for Innovation' project in Lithuania, an initiative of the National Library of Lithuania and the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania.

In Lithuania, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation has supported the 'Libraries for Innovation' project, which was implemented according to an agreement between the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania, Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania and the

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. 'Libraries for Innovation' continues and complements the objectives of the Library renovation and modernization programme of 2003–2013, confirmed in 2002 by the Republic of Lithuania. These objectives are related to the implementation of the goal 'to eliminate discrepancies of urban and rural informational communication infrastructure and provide equal opportunities to all residents to use information technologies for social and community purposes'.

1.2 Research methodology

The main purpose of the research was to understand the impact that public libraries in the EU have on users' lives.

The research was conducted in the following seventeen countries: Belgium, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany, Denmark, Greece, Spain, Finland, France, Italy, Lithuania, Latvia, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Romania and the United Kingdom.

The research involved several phases. First, desk research was carried out to collate existing information showing the public library landscape in the survey countries, using sources such as IFLA, national and local library statistics, local library associations, national statistical offices, Eurostat, Eurobarometer, etc. Survey work was carried out in October/November 2012.

- A representative sample of 1,106 members of the public aged 15+ in Lithuania (17,816 across the 17 countries) were interviewed regarding their usage of libraries, computers in libraries and their attitudes towards libraries.
- Interviews were carried out in libraries. In Lithuania, 700 interviews were conducted with people who had not used Public Access Computers (PACs) in libraries (12,537 across the 17 countries) and 700 with those who had (11,716 across the 17 countries). The interviews in Lithuania were conducted in 53 libraries, which were selected and contacted with help from a representative of the National Library of Lithuania. Respondents were interviewed face-to-face.

- Qualitative fieldwork was conducted, consisting in each country of five 60-minute depth interviews with library managers and four 90-minute group discussions with PAC users. At least 3 libraries were represented in each country, in both urban and semi-rural locations.

Survey results were weighted to ensure that the final results were representative of the population within each country. Weighting was also applied to rebalance the weight of each country within the pan-European totals, in proportion to the population size.

This report provides a brief overview of the results for Lithuania and compares the results to the EU total. EU results are based on findings from the 17 countries included in this study. Individual reports for each country surveyed have been produced as well as an overall report.⁵

Throughout this report where we refer to:

- A 'library': This means a public library, which anyone can go to, and does not include school, college, or university libraries
- PAC user/usage: This refers to usage of a public

access computer to access the internet within a public library, and is based on those who responded affirmatively to the following question: *'have you used a public access computer in a public library to access the internet in the last 12 months?' Please do not include using your personal computer or smart phone in the library'.*

Throughout this report comparisons are made between the findings in Lithuania and the average across the EU. The EU average is calculated on the basis of responses from the 17 countries in the survey. It should be noted that figures for Lithuania are *included* in the EU average, which has the effect of lessening the statistical power of comparisons between the Lithuania and EU figures.

While most of the data is presented in terms of percentages, on a number of occasions throughout this report data have been grossed up to represent the population of Lithuania and are presented in terms of estimated numbers.

⁵ Quick, S.; Prior, G.; Toombs, B.; Taylor, L.; Currenti, R. Cross-European survey to measure users' perceptions of the benefits of ICT in public libraries [interactive]. USA: Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, 2013. [accessed 9th September 2013]. Access via internet: <https://digital.lib.washington.edu/researchworks/bitstream/handle/1773/22718/Final%20Report%20-%20Cross-European%20Library%20Impact.pdf?sequence=1>

2. THE PUBLIC LIBRARY LANDSCAPE AND INTERNET PROVISION

Lithuanian network of public libraries consists of 6 public libraries and their branches. These branches can be broken down as:

- 142 city branches
- 1,085 branches in rural areas
- 14 specialized branches for children⁶.

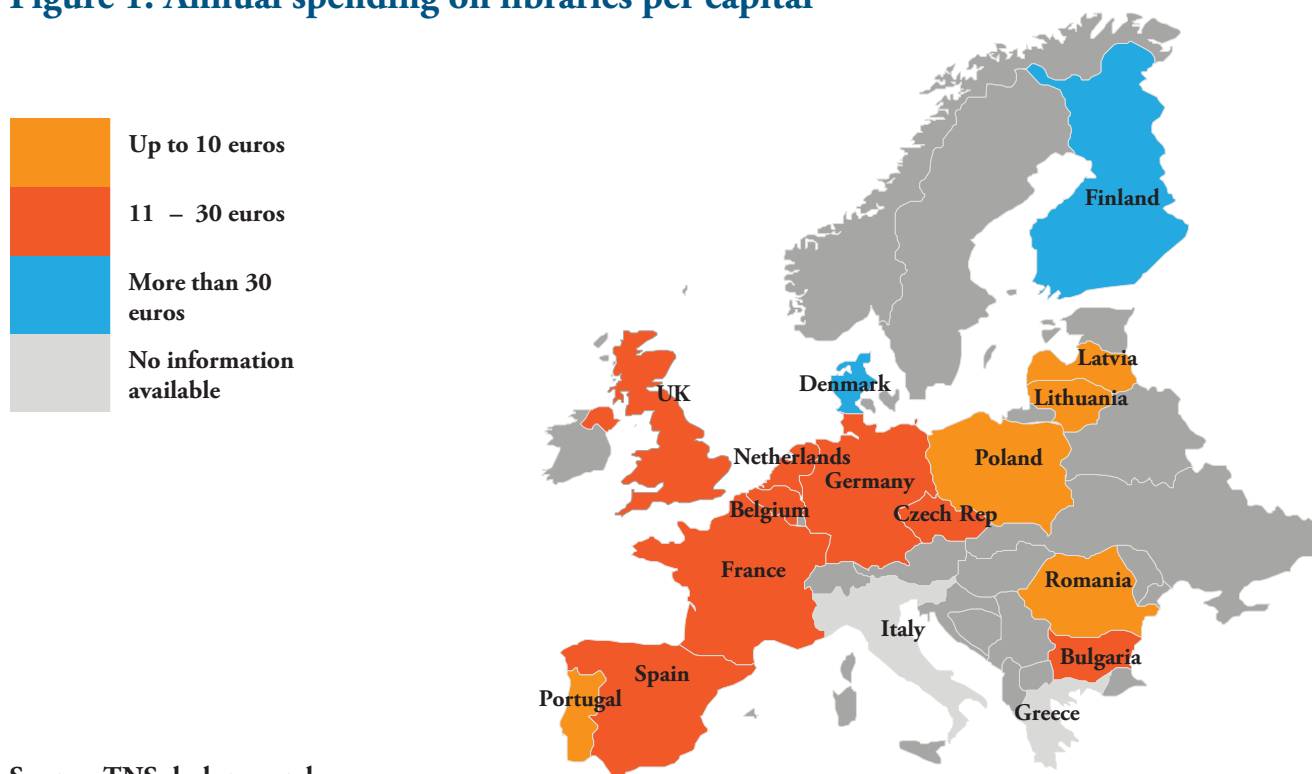
In terms of funding, in 2011 the majority of the public libraries' total budget (89%) came from the state and from municipalities, with the remainder sourced from additional paid library services, the support of physical and legal persons and other funds of projects and programs. Just over half the budget (57%) was dedicated to employees' salaries. In 2011 li-

braries employed 3,200 staff, including 2,545 professional librarians.

Public spending on libraries per person in Lithuania is 8.5 Euros (29.2 LTL) much lower than in most other European countries, as shown on the following map:

One of the political policy objectives in Lithuania is to eliminate inequalities between city and province communication information infrastructures and to provide equal opportunities for all residents to access information technologies for social and public purposes. Many government social actions and subsidies given to local authorities have enhanced ac-

Figure 1: Annual spending on libraries per capital



Source: TNS desk research

⁶ *Lietuvos bibliotekų statistika [Lithuanian Libraries' Statistics:]* [interactive]. Vilnius: Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, 2012. [accessed on 2nd October 2012]. Access via internet: <http://www.lnb.lt/bibliotekininkui/lietuvos-biblioteku-statistika>

cess to computers and the Internet. Both have been free of charge in public libraries in Lithuania since the beginning of 2006.

Computer access is offered by 94% of libraries in Lithuania. The proportion of public libraries with Internet access is also 94%.

Eurostat data (2011) for Internet access at

home shows that Lithuania has a relatively low level in Europe, with 62% of households having access to the Internet, compared with an EU average of 73%. It may therefore be expected that demand for and usage of PAC services would be higher in Lithuania than in other countries.

3. LIBRARY AND PAC USAGE

3.1 Access to libraries and PACs

The general public survey found that library usage in Lithuania was similar to the EU average.

- An estimated 0.6 million adults in Lithuania, around a quarter of adults in the country (24%) had used a public library in the last 12 months, compared with just under a quarter (23%) of all adults across Europe.
- An estimated 0.5 million adults, almost a fifth (19%) of adults in Lithuania, had used a library at least once a month, slightly higher than the EU average of 14%.

The prevalence of library use in the last 12 months, by different groups in Lithuania and across the EU, is shown in Figure 2. In Lithuania:

- Women (30%) were more likely than men (18%) to have visited a library, in line with the findings across the EU.
- Library usage was highest among those aged 15–24 (53%), much greater than the EU average of 38%. Across all the other age bands around a fifth of people in Lithuania had visited a library, with usage slightly higher than the EU average among those aged 65+ (18% compared with 14%) and lower among those aged 25–39 (19% compared with 25%).
- Library use was much higher among those who were still studying – almost three fifths of this group (57%) had used a public library in the last 12 months, above the EU average (48%).
- Library use was higher in small/mid-sized towns (28%) and rural areas (26%), both above

the EU average. Just over one in five (22%) of those living in a large town/city had used a library, below the EU average (27%).

The profile of library users in Lithuania, compared with across the EU, was:

- 37% of library users in Lithuania were men and 63% women. Compared with the 17 country EU average (42% men, 58% women), library users in Lithuania were somewhat more likely to be women;
- Users in Lithuania were more likely to be found in the youngest (15–24) and oldest (65+) age groups – 37% were aged 15–24, 16% aged 25–39, 16% aged 40–54, 12% aged 55–64 and 18% aged 65+; compared with the EU average of 25% aged 15–24, 26% aged 25–39, 25% aged 40–54, 12% aged 55–64 and 12% aged 65+.

Nearly two fifths (37%) of those who had visited a library in Lithuania in the last 12 months had used a PAC, considerably higher than the EU average of 14%. **When those who had not used a PAC were asked why this was, although the majority (63%) said that they had no need to because they had a computer/Internet at home, a significant minority of 16% said that they did not know how to use computers or the Internet, implying that there is potential for libraries to further increase their customer base for PAC.**

In total, the survey found that 9% of adults in Lithuania had used PACs in the last 12 months, significantly higher than the average of 4% of adults across the EU countries. This is estimated

to be around 0.2 million adults in Lithuania.

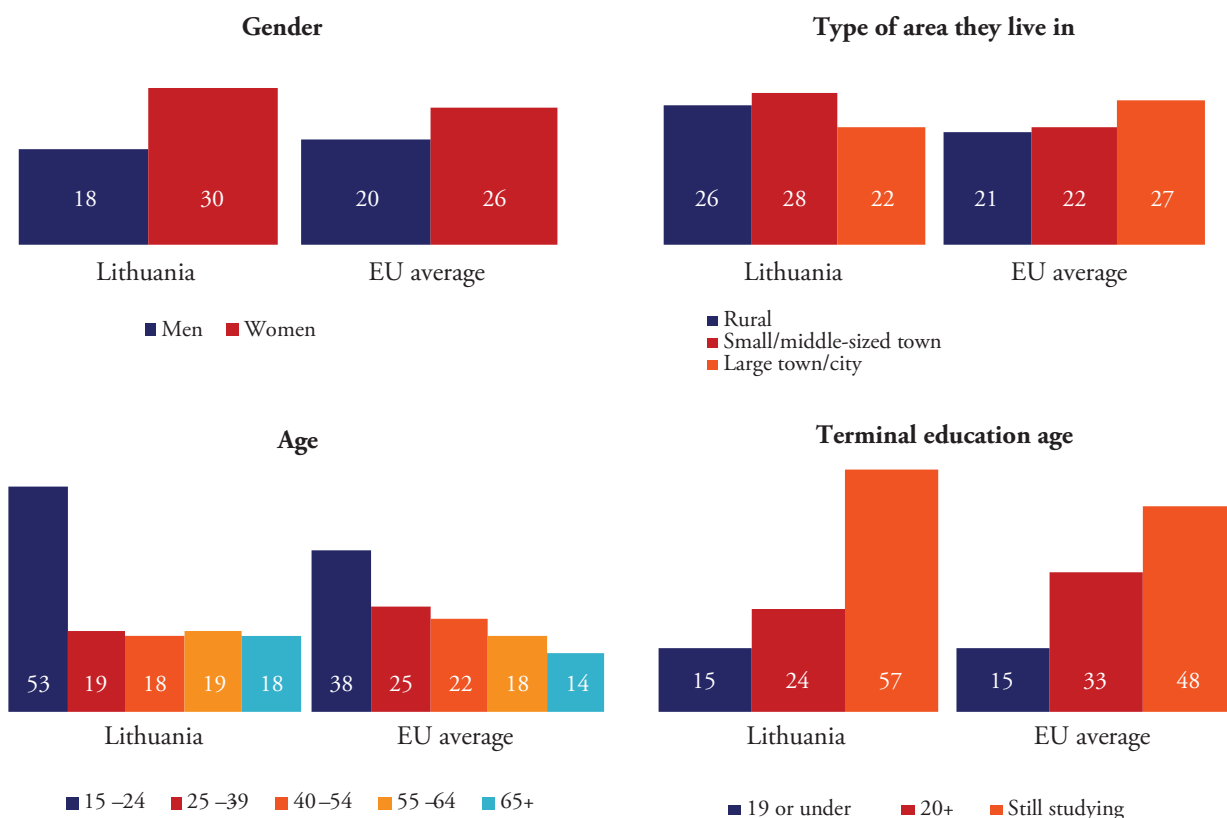
PAC users in Lithuania were more likely than the EU average to be women, to be aged 15–24, to live in a rural area, and to still be studying, as shown in Figure 3.

A third (33%) of PAC users in Lithuania made use of PACs at least once a week, compared with 23% across the EU, with 38% doing so once to three times a month (compared with 29% across the EU). Around a quarter users in Lithuania (27%) had used PACs once every three months or less often, compared with the EU average of 47%.

In the qualitative research, library managers explained that during the first year of the ‘Li-

braries for Innovation’ project the community showed a great interest in ICT use in libraries, so there was less need to find other means to attract users. The project was advertised through different events, on TV, and advertisements outside and inside the library itself. Since then, libraries had continued to announce information on training and support they provided on their websites, in local newspapers and in community centres. In addition, they worked in partnership with centres for people with special needs, including disadvantaged and disabled people, to inform them about special training groups organized for them.

Figure 2: Used a public library in the last 12 months



Source: Omnibus survey – Q1. Have you visited a public library in the last 12 months?

Base: Lithuania – All adults (1106), Men (542), Women (564), 15–24 (189), 25–39 (228), 40–54 (234), 55–64 (175), 65+ (280), Large town/city (439), Small town (356), Rural area (296), Finished education 19 or under (508), 20 or over (392), Still studying (158). EU - All adults (17816), Men (8521), Women (9295), 15–24 (2636), 25–39 (4152), 40–54 (4592), 55–64 (2937), 65+ (3496), Large town/city (5352), Small town (6653), Rural area (5633), Finished education 19 or under (9943), 20 or over (5500), Still studying (1801).

'You do not have to persuade people, they come themselves. But we announce that on our website, in local newspapers, on banner stands; present it in our community centre. And we quickly gather a group of 12 people.' (Senior Library Manager, Semi-rural).⁷

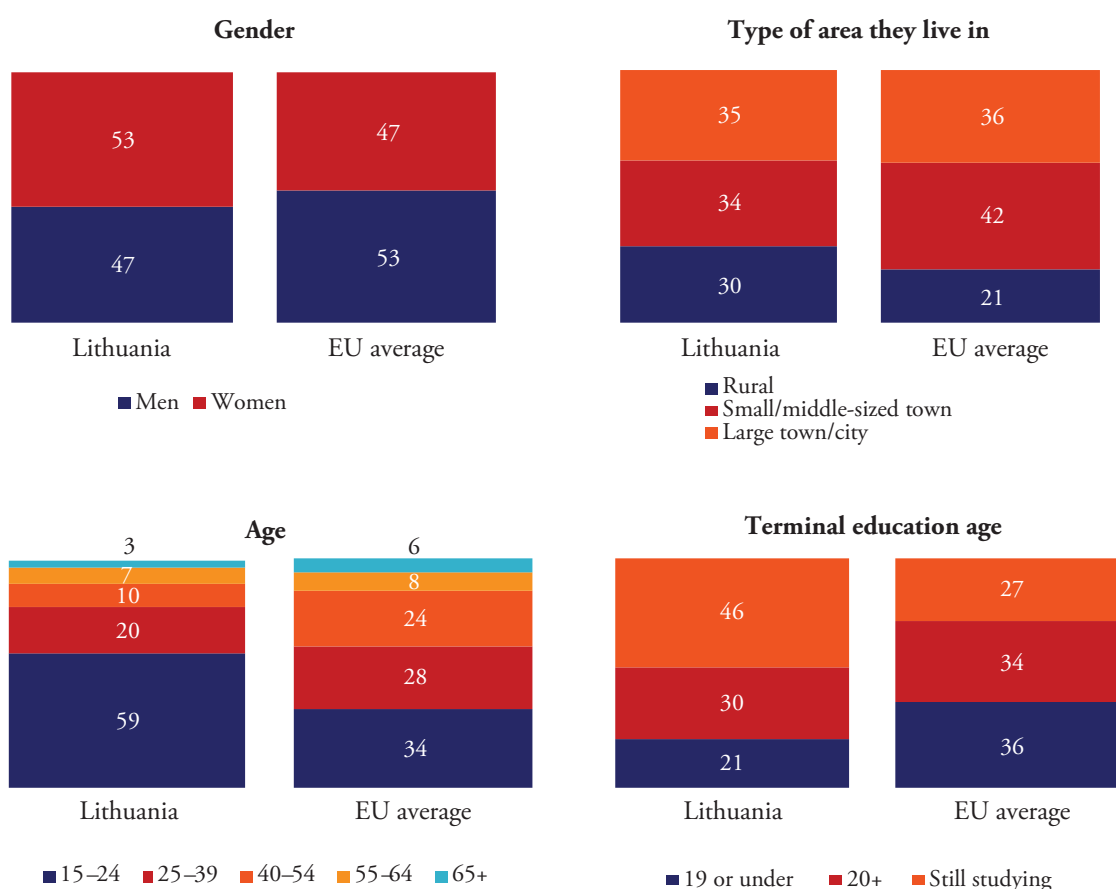
It was perceived as easy to attract people to training courses, particularly with the help of word of mouth from those who had already participated in a course

'You should know that the ones, who want, find it out. They learn it from each other. They call and say: 'My neighbour said that you provide teaching services, could I come?'' (Library Manager, Urban).

Older people on lower incomes, unemployed people and job-seekers were identified as the most active users of ICT services and training provided by the libraries, and therefore specific measures to attract these groups were not considered necessary. Nevertheless, specific support tailored to the needs of these groups was thought to attract these users, such as helping unemployed people write a CV and introducing older users to email and online chat services.

However, libraries reported that attracting disabled users had been more problematic, with 3 out of the 5 libraries reporting problems with access for disabled users as stairs provided the only access to the library.

Figure 3: Used a PAC in the last 12 months



Source: Library survey – C4. Have you used a public access computer in a public library to access the Internet in the last 12 months?
Base: All PAC users – Lithuania (700), EU (11716).

⁷ Here and further in the report all quotes were unedited.

'We do not have any disabled people coming here. You saw the stairs yourself, they are completely not accessible for them.' (Library Manager, Urban).

One library provided support for disabled users by visiting them at home if they could not access the library themselves.

To attract ethnic minorities, managers of two libraries had organized training for groups of older non-native speakers in their native languages (Russian and Polish). The Roma, if they lived in the territory of the library, were described as especially active ICT users.

'Oh, the Roma are very active. You cannot draw them away from the computer' (Senior Library Manager, Semi-rural).

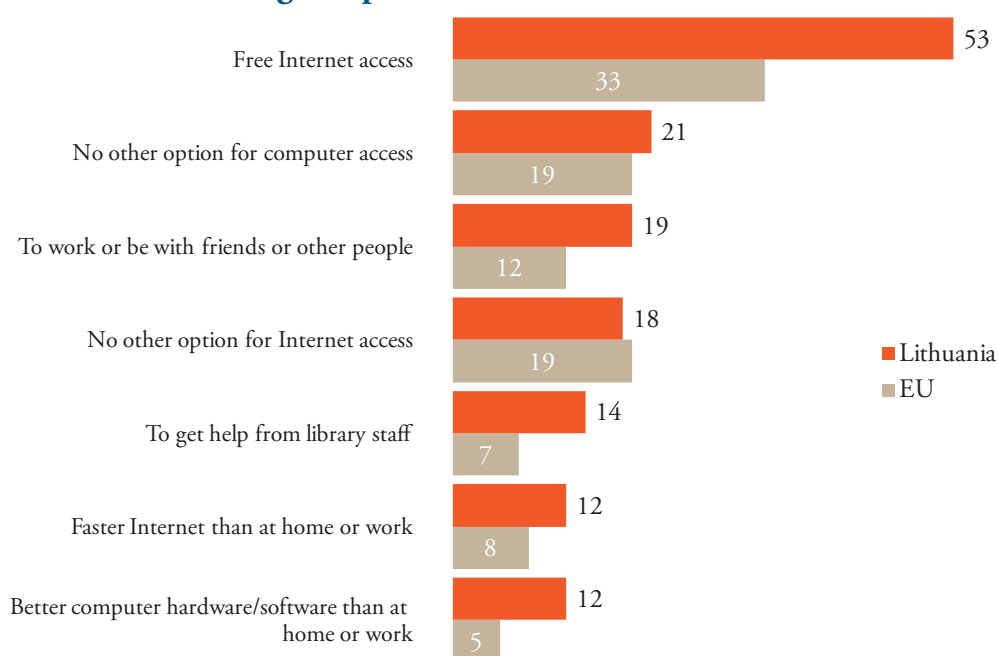
Users were asked their main reasons for using ICT services in the library. They included the emotionally safe environment in which they could receive one-to-one support from library staff tailored to their individual needs

and abilities; free use of the Internet and free access to training; the opportunity to combine work on ICT with the use of other formats available in the library such as books; and a better-quality and range of ICT facilities than users had access to in their homes.

3.2 Reasons for using PACs

PAC users interviewed in the in-library survey were asked what their main reasons had been for using computers, the Internet and software in public libraries within the last 12 months. It is clear that across the EU, and even more so in Lithuania, the primary motivation for PAC users is free nature of the service. The lack of other options for accessing either computers or the Internet were also common reasons given both in Lithuania and across the EU. However, PAC users in Lithuania were much more likely than those in other countries to have mentioned working or being with friends or other people (19% in Lithuania compared with 12% across the EU), getting help from library staff (14% in Lith-

Figure 4: Main reasons for using computers in libraries



Source: Library survey – C8 What are the main reasons you have chosen to use computers, Internet and software at public libraries in the last 12 months?

Base: All PAC users – Lithuania (700); EU (11716)

uania compared with 7% across the EU), and having access to better computer software or hardware (12% compared with 5%) as reasons for using computers in public libraries. Users in Lithuania were also more likely to mention having faster Internet access than at home or work (12% compared with 8%) as a benefit of using computers in public libraries.

PAC users were also asked two more direct questions as to what other options they had, firstly regarding where else they could access the Internet from, and secondly, where else they could access the Internet *for free*. **In Lithuania, 10% of PAC users said that they had no other options for accessing the Internet (compared with 11% across the EU), and a further 33% that there was no other source of free Internet for them (compared with 14% across the EU). Overall, it is estimated that 0.1 million PAC users in Lithuania (43% of PAC users) had nowhere else to access the Internet, or to access the Internet free of charge.**

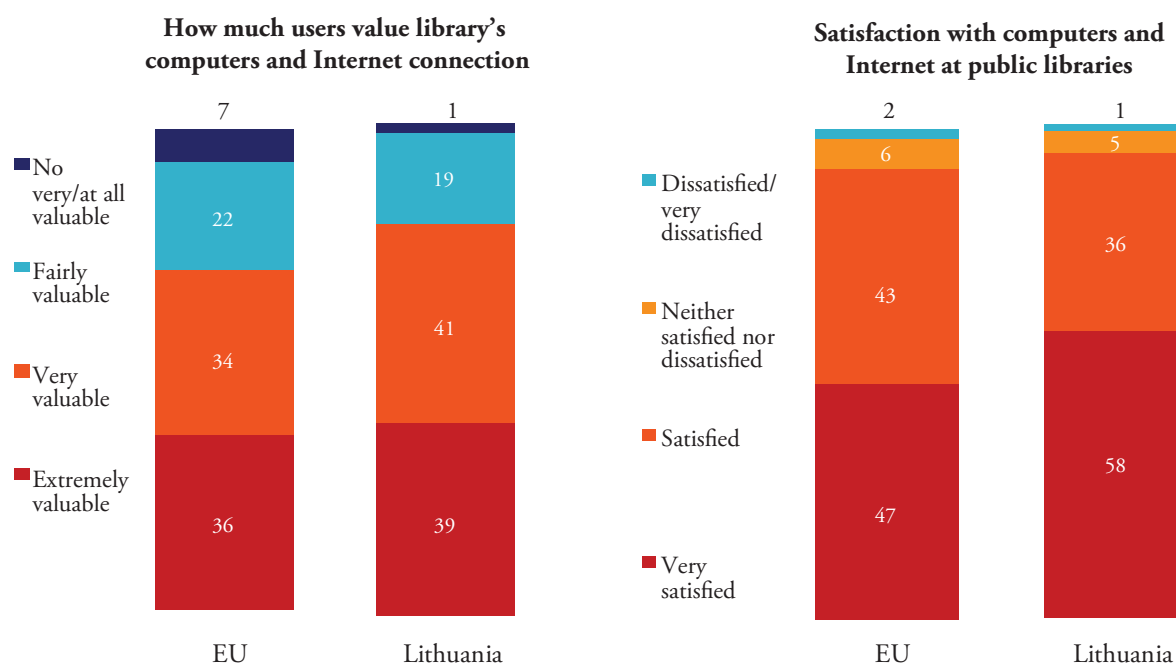
Those who indicated that they had no oth-

er options for accessing the Internet tended to come from ‘digitally excluded’ (and often ‘socially excluded’) groups, which clearly highlights the role of PACs in the future of the EU’s 2020 Growth Strategy. Specifically, the following groups were particularly likely to indicate that they did not have any other options:

- Older people – 46% of PAC users aged 65+ had no alternative Internet access, compared with 7% of those aged 15–24 and 6% of those aged 25–39.
- Those with a disability, 28% of whom had no alternative Internet access.

The value placed on the PAC service was slightly higher among users in Lithuania compared with the EU average, as shown in Figure 5. Overall, 99% of PAC users in Lithuania said that the library’s computer and Internet connection services were valuable, compared with 92% of all EU PAC users. Two fifths of PAC users in Lithuania (39%) said the service was extremely valuable, which is broadly in line with the EU figure of 36% across the EU.

Figure 5: Value placed on PACs by users and satisfaction with PACs



Source: Library survey – C30 How much do you value the library’s computers and Internet connection? & C31 How satisfied or dissatisfied are you with your access to computers and the Internet at public libraries?

Base: All PAC users – Lithuania (700); EU (11716)

The library's computers and Internet connection were valued particularly highly in Lithuania by users with a disability (61% rated the services as extremely valuable).

Satisfaction with computers and the Internet at public libraries was high among users, as shown in Figure 5: 93% of users in Lithuania were satisfied, similar to the EU average of 91%. Users in Lithuania were more likely to say that they were very satisfied with computers and Internet at the library than users across the 17 EU countries as a whole; 58% said that they were very satisfied, compared with just under a half (47%) across the EU.

In Lithuania, just over half of all PAC users (54%) said that when they go to a library to use a computer they find a free computer straight away, significantly below the EU average of 72%. A further quarter (26%) said that they have to wait for no more than 10 minutes, compared with the EU average of 16%. Around one in seven (15%) said that they had to wait at least 10 minutes (compared with the EU average of 7%), and a small minority (5%) that they needed to book ahead of time in order for a computer to be available (compared with EU average of 3%).

In the qualitative sample, the number of computers available to users varied according to the size of the library and number of visitors it had, but tended to be around 4–8 PCs in each library. Every library also had copiers and scanners, a few pairs of headsets, web cameras and 3 of the 5 libraries in the sample had computers that were accessible by disabled people. All computers also had Microsoft Office, Skype and Internet connection.

Library managers assessed the condition of the hardware and software positively, in terms of both its reliability and ability to fulfil users' needs. However, they expressed fears that in the future, the equipment would become old and wear out, particularly when the 'Libraries for Innovation' project finished. Managers,

however, did report occasional problems with Internet connection, but these were infrequent and quickly fixed.

Users tended to view library ICT hardware and software less positively than managers, describing the standard as 'minimal' and meeting their basic, rather than more advanced needs. Internet speed was reported to be particularly poor in some instances, requiring a wait of around 3 minutes to open a photo and delays to watch a video clip.

'General speed is poor. You have to wait for 5 minutes for YouTube. Then you watch for a while and wait again and the only thing you see is that rotating ball'. (Library user, Male, 40–64 years).

Users who learnt how to use ICT outside the library were irritated by the Lithuanian version of software as they were used to working with the English version of Microsoft Office.

'Everything is OK with the equipment. Only Windows in Lithuanian irritates me. I learnt to use an English version and when I want to get somewhere, press something to do something I want, I have to think well before I do it.' (Library user, Male, 25–39 years).

Users had also noticed smaller equipment such as headsets and cameras were getting damaged or gradually going missing rather than being repaired or replaced.

'It happens that headsets do not work, some flash players also do not work. It is a 5 minute job to repair it but nobody does that.' (Library user, Male, 25–39 years).

It was also noted that the security levels on computers meant that users could not download everything they wanted.

However, there were also users who felt that

library ICT was able to perform all the functions they would expect of a library service, and did not expect it to be used for more advanced applications such as watching films.

'Software is the way we need it. There are no special applications. Library is not a home computer where you can play games or do some similar things. One must limit himself/herself to the most important things.'
(Library user, Female, 65 and over).

Recent first-time and older users were most likely to perceive library ICT as of sufficient standard to meet their needs.

'Everything is fine. Computers, the printers are really normal. There are headsets, cameras. I have no complaints. Internet does not hang either.' (Recent first time library user, Female, 25–39 years).

There was a low level of awareness of WiFi in the library, and users in the sample had only used the Internet on library computers.

4. IMPRESSIONS OF PUBLIC LIBRARIES

4.1 Importance of library services

Library users (both PAC users and non-PAC users) were asked to rate each of a list of services that could be offered by libraries, on a 5-point scale from 'extremely important' to 'not at all important'. Figure 6 shows the percentage in Lithuania, and across the EU, rating each service as 4 or 5 on the scale.

In general, users in Lithuania were less likely than users across the EU to rate services as 4 or 5 on the scale. The core service of 'books to read/borrow' was considered the most important, rated as important by 84% of users in Lithuania (and 95% across the EU), followed by 'study materials and text books for adults' (58%) and 'newspapers and magazines' (54%).

'Free access to the Internet' and 'free access to computers' were both rated as important by just over half of library users in Lithuania, compared with the equivalent figure of around seven out of ten users across Europe.

Most other services were much less likely to be considered important by users in Lithuania than across the 17 EU countries as a whole.

In the qualitative research, users were very positive about the library environment, describing it as cosy, comfortable, and quiet, allowing users to

concentrate. Library staff were described as helpful, nice, patient and respectful, and the library was to users a place where they could have social interaction with other users and staff.

'Sometimes I come to communicate. There is no one at home to talk to.' (Recent first time user, Male, 65 and over).

4.2 Effectiveness and funding of public libraries

Three fifths (61%) of the general public in Lithuania (including both library users and non-users) felt that libraries were either very effective, effective or fairly effective at meeting the needs of their local community. This was broadly in line with the average across the 17 EU survey countries of 64%.

Library users and PAC users in Lithuania were almost unanimous in their opinion that libraries were effective in meeting the needs of their local community – 95% of all library users felt they were effective, rising to 97% among PAC users.

Around two fifths (43%) of the public in Lithuania felt that public libraries merited more financial support than at present, broadly similar to the average of all 17 EU coun-

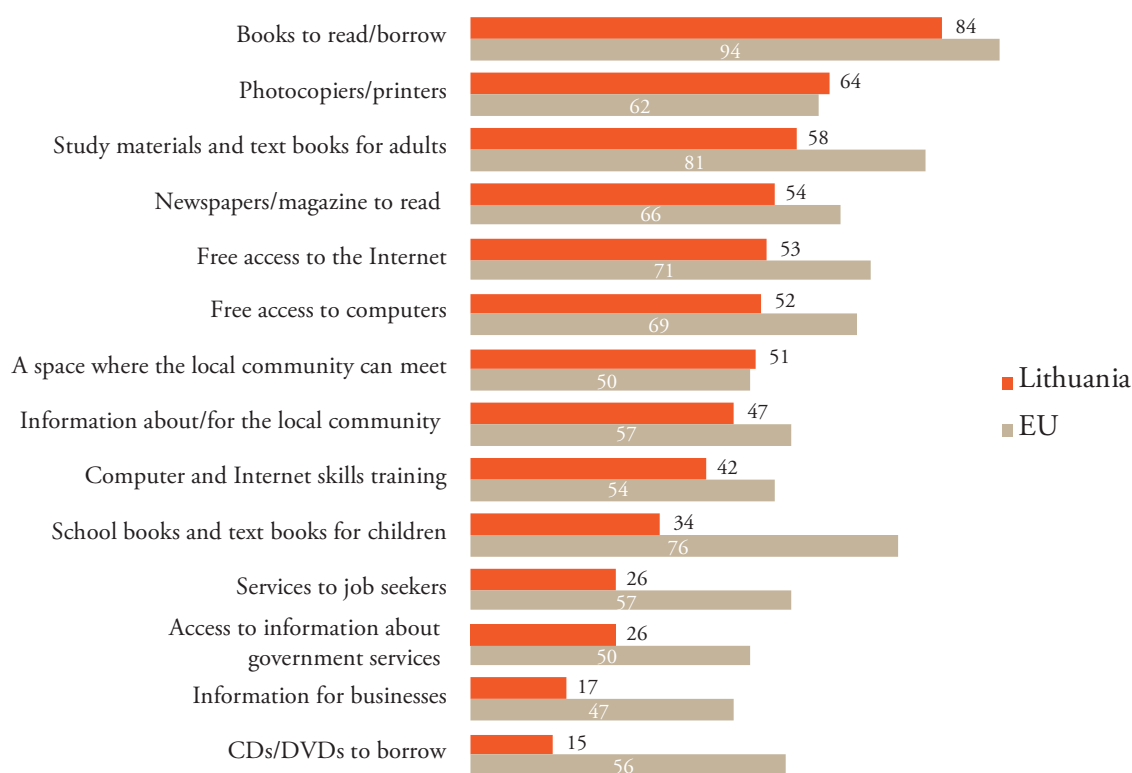
tries (40%). A quarter (24%) felt that funding should continue as at present, below the EU average of 34%. Around three in ten (29%) were unable to express an opinion, compared with the EU average of 21%. Only 3% of the public in Lithuania felt that public libraries deserve less financial support.

Not surprisingly, library users and PAC users were much more likely than non-users to say that libraries deserve more financial support – 76% of all library users, and 73% of PAC users, were in favour of more financial support for libraries.

4.3 Perceptions of public libraries

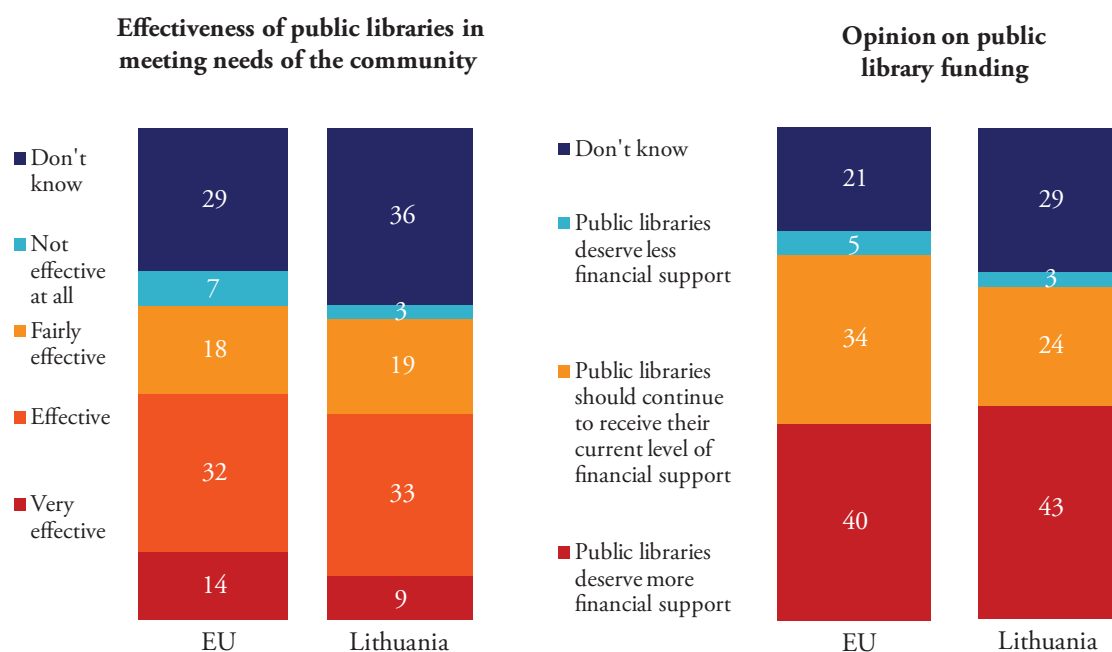
All library users were asked their opinions of public libraries, through a series of agree/disagree statements. Figure 8 shows the proportions in Lithuania and EU who strongly agreed with each of these statements. Library users in Lithuania were more likely than users across the EU to strongly agree with all of these statements, with the biggest differences from the EU average on the perceptions that libraries ‘Have highly skilled librarians’ (69% Lithuania compared with 43% EU), ‘Offer a politically-neutral environment’ (73% Lithuania compared with 50% EU), and ‘Are friendly and welcoming’ (75% Lithuania compared with 58% EU).

Figure 6: Importance of services provided by public libraries



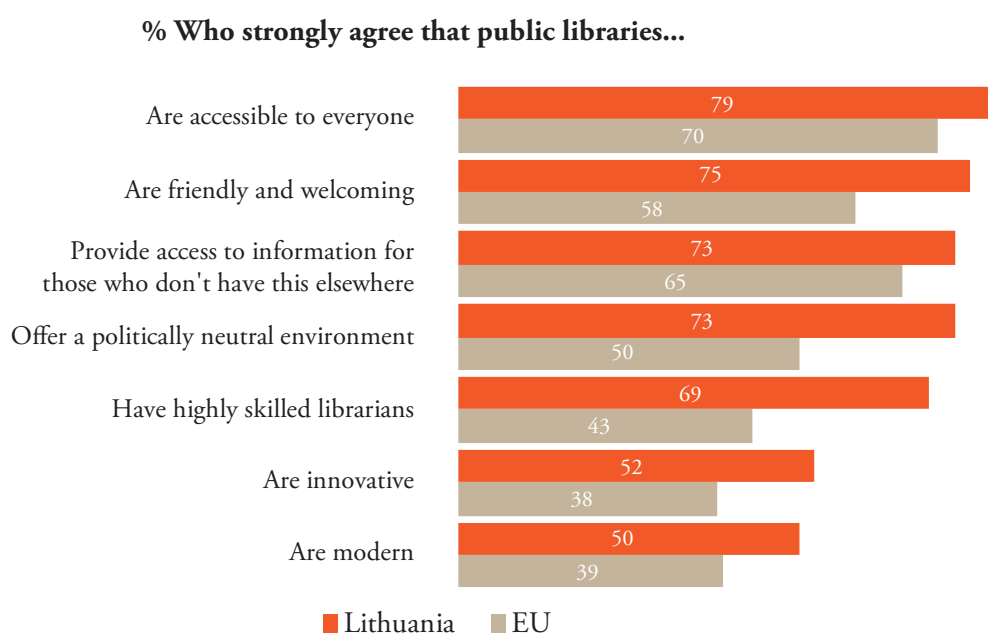
Source: Library survey – C15 How important is this service that can be provided by public libraries.
Base: All library users – Lithuania (1400); EU (24253)

Figure 7: Effectiveness of public libraries in meeting community needs and opinion on public library funding



Source: Omnibus survey – Q6 How effective do you think your local public library is at meeting the needs of your community? & Q7 Which of the following statements represents most closely your opinion regarding the current funding for public libraries?
Base: All adults – Lithuania (1106); EU (17816)

Figure 8: Perceptions of public libraries



Source: Library survey – C29 How far do you agree or disagree with the following statements.
Base: All library users – Lithuania (1400); EU (24253)

5. INFORMAL AND NON-FORMAL LEARNING

Public libraries are key players in the delivery of the non-formal/informal component of the European Commission's lifelong learning policy, particularly with regard to *inclusive* delivery. The role of libraries in providing education to users was explored through asking all library users whether or not they had taken part in any educational activities in a public library within the last 12 months.

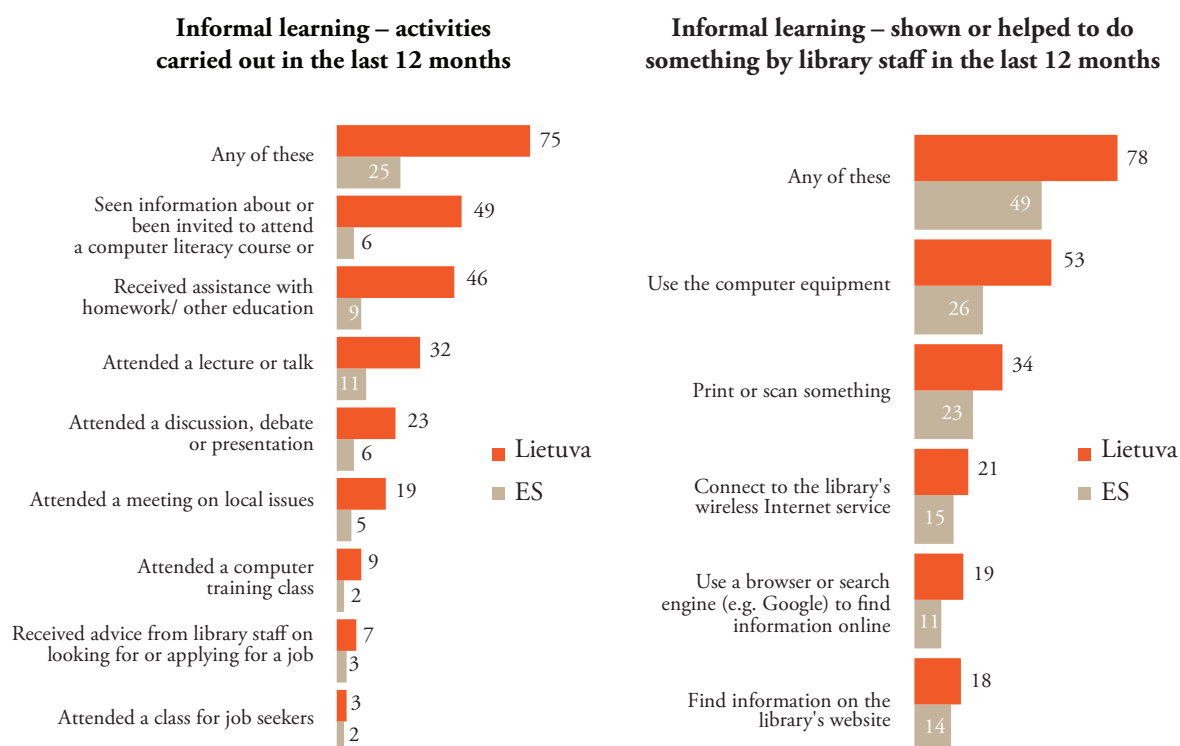
Overall, in Lithuania three quarters of users (75%) had taken part in one of the educational activities in libraries asked about in the last 12 months, an exceptionally high proportion compared with the EU average of 25%. This reflects the younger age profile library users in Lithuania relative to the EU average.

Reflecting the focus that libraries in Lithuania place on training and events, engagement

levels in all educational activities in libraries were higher in Lithuania than for the 17 EU countries as a whole (Figure 9), including, among others:

- **Seeing information about or being invited to attend a computer literacy course (49% vs. EU average of 6%).**
- **Seeing information about or being invited to attend a computer literacy course (49% vs. EU average of 6%)**
- **Receiving assistance with homework/other education (46% vs. EU average of 9%)**
- **Attending a lecture or talk (32% vs. EU average of 11%)**
- **Attending a discussion, debate or presentation (23% vs. EU average of 6%)**
- **Attending a meeting on local issues (19% vs. EU average of 5%)**

Figure 9: Informal learning activities carried out or been shown to users in the last 12 months



Source: Library survey – C16 In the last 12 months, have you done any of the following things in a public library & C17 In the last 12 months, have you been shown how or helped to do any of the following things by staff at a public library...
Base: C16 All library users – Lithuania (1400); EU (24253). C17– All PAC users – Lithuania (700); EU (11716).

Nine percent of library users in Lithuania reported that they had attended a computer training class in the last 12 months compared to the EU average of 2%. This means that about 56,000 adults in Lithuania had attended a computer training class in a library in the last 12 months.

As Figure 9 shows, **public library staff play an important role in assisting library users in informal learning. This is particularly the case in Lithuania, where more than three quarters (78%) of library users had been shown or helped to do something by a member of library staff within the last 12 months, significantly higher than the EU average of 49%.**

The most common ways in which library staff assisted library users in Lithuania were with using the computer equipment and printing or scanning something. Around one in five users in Lithuania had been helped with staying safe online, connecting to the library's wireless Internet service, using a browser or search engine to find information online and finding information on the library's website.

In the qualitative research, users were very positive about the support they had received from the staff. Examples of informal support received included help with online registration at a clinic, information searches on the Internet, e-mails, Skype, filling out forms online, and booking tickets.

More structured training was held in groups as well as on an individual basis, and covered areas such as basic computer literacy, electronic communication such as e-mail and Skype, Internet banking, and word processing. For children, a course on safe use of the Internet was provided.

Users perceived library staff to be sufficiently qualified to give support and training in the basic ICT skills such as using the Internet for online banking, understanding the basic aspects of how a computer works, and basic use of MS

Office, e-mail and Skype. However, they did not think that staff would be able to help them with more specialized queries in areas such as graphic design applications. However, none of the users had ever needed help with more advanced tasks and there was a view that library staff could not be expected to have advanced knowledge as this was the role of educational institutions instead.

In addition to informal support, some users had attended training courses run by the library on subjects including basic computer skills and MS Office functions, creating e-mail accounts and using Skype, and online banking. Users felt that the training had been beneficial, helping to build their confidence in ICT usage. The warmth, patience and good will of the staff providing the training allowed trainees to feel safe using ICT and helped to preserve their dignity and self-confidence when entering a new area of learning that they were unfamiliar with.

'You would not have the courage to go somewhere else as you would always feel discomfort that you are a big git. And here nobody will ever laugh at you, will not be surprised that you don't know something. The mission of the library itself is very bright – to help people, respect them.'
(Library user, Female, 40–64 years).

Although library users had not used all the training provided by their library, their awareness of such courses was high. The exception to this was recent first-time users who were less aware of the subject of training courses and support provided.

Users explained that the knowledge that there was someone nearby who could help them reduced the stress and fear of a situation which they would otherwise experience in a situation where they did not know something.

'You gain confidence. And if something goes wrong, there will always be someone to help you. If you do not understand something at home, you will remain without an answer and will not know what to do.' (Recent first time library user, Female, 25–39 years).

Informal support from library staff also saved users time that they would otherwise have spent trying to reach a solution to a problem they encountered on their own.

'You ask once and will know forever. And you don't have to spend your time trying to

find the answer on your own, fidget about it.' (Library user, male, 16–24 years).

Support from library staff was considered to be particularly useful because it came from strangers rather than those who users knew well.

'It is really good when someone you do not know teaches you. When it is your close person, you are more nervous, become angry. And when a stranger teaches you, you feel much calmer somehow. You listen more attentively, understand faster.' (Library user, Female, 25–39 years).

6. USE OF PACS FOR EMPLOYMENT AND BUSINESS

Public libraries have a role to play not only in providing a community gateway to higher level skills but also to employment, and therefore the role of the public library in helping Europeans access employment opportunities was a key theme within the research.

Around half (49%) of PAC users in Lithuania had used library computers in the last 12 months to support some employment-related activity, higher than the EU average of 30%. This represents an estimated 0.1 million PAC users in Lithuania who had used PAC for employment related activity.

Overall, 5% of PAC users in Lithuania had used a PAC to apply for a job (either in Lithuania or in another EU country) in the last 12 months – this represents approximately 12,000 adults in Lithuania. Of those respondents who applied for a job through PAC, 32% said that they were successful. This means that in all **2% of PAC users in Lithuania – or an estimated 4,000 adults – had applied for and got a job via a PAC in the last 12 months.**

Public library staff have an important role to play in supporting employment-related PAC ac-

tivities, as is shown in Figure 10; three in ten PAC users in Lithuania (31%) indicated that they had been shown or helped to do some employment-related PAC activity (much higher than the EU average of 11%). The most common way in which library staff assisted library users in Lithuania was in helping them to improve the skills needed in their current job (19% compared with an EU average of 4%).

PAC users were asked whether they had used PACs for a range of business-related activities in the last 3 months. Around one in seven (15%) had used a PAC for finding information related to a business they worked in, which is below the EU average of 20%. Around one in nine PAC users had used a PAC for participating in professional networks (11% compared with the EU average of 6%) and a similar proportion for finding ways or places to sell their own products or goods (11% compared with the EU average of 4%).

The qualitative research found that libraries provided employment support for both unemployed and employed users. An example of support for employed people included a wom-

an whose job had changed to require her to use computers, so she came to the library to acquire the skills she needed for her role.

“There was a 56-year old woman from the post office in the courses. The requirements at the post office changed and she had to learn how to work on the computer.” (Senior Library Manager, Semi-rural).

For the unemployed, training courses were provided on various topics of occupation, and informal support was provided to help people write a CV, which had been met with considerable success.

“There were quite a few people who found a job with our help. Just recently two 30 and 40

year old women got a job. They visited us for a long time and even got certificates. We also sent out their CVs together. Now both are happy, radiant with joy.” (Library Manager, Urban).

Another user felt that the skills he had learnt in the library might mean that he would be able to offer more as an employee in the future.

“Knowledge has always been good. Eventually, I will be able to help my neighbour, my friend. Besides, my abilities are increasing. I will be able to offer more at work. And I may be offered more too.” (Library user, Male, 40–64 years).

Figure 10: Employment-related PAC activities carried out in last 12 months

**Employment-related activities –
Used computers in last 12 months to...**

	%	Lithuania	EU
Any listed below	49	30	
Find information about searching and/or applying for jobs	18	14	
Search for jobs	11	13	
Write a CV or covering letter	13	12	
Improve skills needed in your current job	26	11	
Apply for jobs in this country	5	10	
Search for information about an employer	10	8	
Find a recruitment company	5	5	
Use spread sheet/data	4	3	
Search for jobs in other EU countries	5	2	
Apply for jobs in other EU countries	1	1	

**Employment-related activities–
Been shown/helped to...
by library staff in the last 12 months**

	%	Lithuania	EU
Any listed below	31	11	
Improve skills needed in your current job	19	4	
How to write a CV	7	5	
How to develop skills needed to obtain a job	6	2	
How to look for a job online (such as finding a recruitment company, searching for information about an employer)	8	3	
How to apply for a job online	3	2	
How to look for and apply for jobs in other EU countries	1	1	

Source: Library survey – C18 In the last 12 months, have you used the computers available in public libraries to... & C20 In the last 12 months, have you been shown how/helped to do any of the following things by the staff at a public library...
Base: All PAC users – Lithuania (700); EU (11716).

7. E-GOVERNMENT AND ACTIVE CITIZENSHIP

As part of the ‘Connecting Europe’ agenda, public libraries represent a network of public digital access points which can assist in the effective delivery of access to e-government. Computer users were asked about their interaction with public authorities by using PACs, including obtaining information from public authorities’ websites, downloading official forms, sending filled in forms, providing feedback/sharing opinions or perspectives with public authorities, and any other way they had interacted with public authorities online.

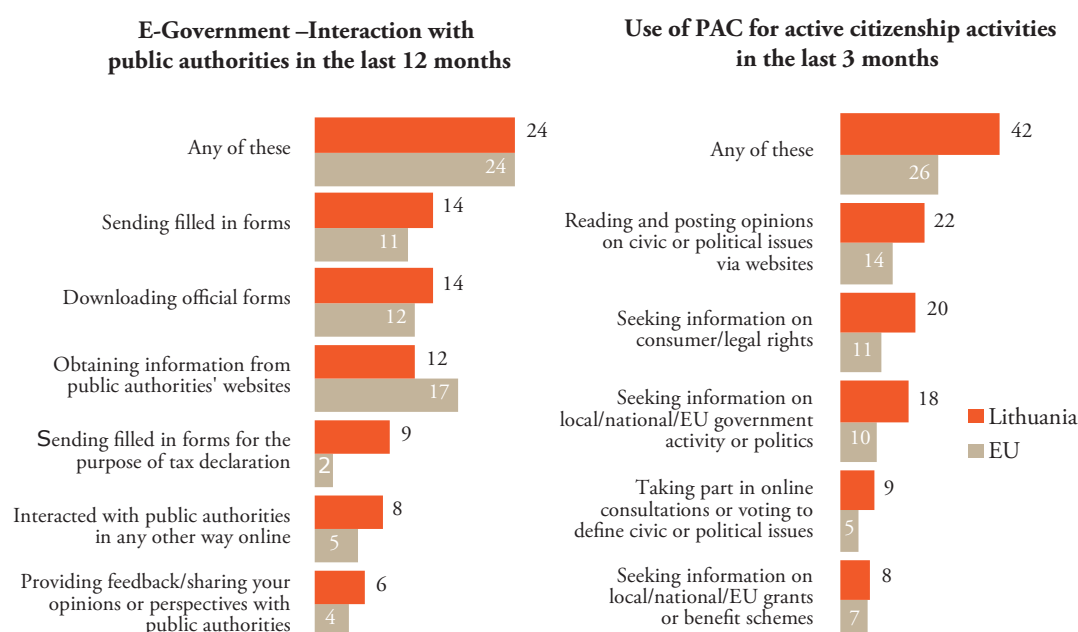
According to Eurostat data, e-government usage by individuals in Lithuania is below the EU average – 30% of adults in Lithuania had used the Internet in the last 12 months to interact with public authorities, compared with 41% across the EU. Citizens in Lithuania were

slightly less likely than the EU average to use the Internet to obtain information from public authorities’ web sites (27% compared with 35%).

The library survey found that around one in four PAC users in Lithuania (24%) had used PACs to interact with public authorities in the last 12 months, the same as the EU average (24%), but below the Eurostat finding for all adults in Lithuania. PAC users in Lithuania were much more likely than users across the 17 EU countries as a whole to have used PACs to send/fill in their tax declaration (9% versus 2% respectively) and less likely to have used PACs to obtain information from public authorities’ websites (12% versus 17% respectively).

Computer users were also asked about their use of PACs for activities related to civic engagement and active citizenship (Figure 11).

Figure 11: E-government – Interaction with public authorities in the last 12 months



Source: Library survey – C23 Did you interact with public authorities over the Internet using a computer at a public library for private purposes in the last 12 months for the following activities & C10 For which of the following activities have you used the Internet on computers in public libraries in the last 3 months...

Base: All PAC users – Lithuania (700); EU (11716)

This covered areas such as civic participation (reading/posting opinions, taking part in online consultations, petitions etc.) and seeking information on consumer or legal rights, and on government activity or politics, or grants/benefit schemes. Overall, 42% of PAC users in Lithuania had used PAC for engagement activities in the past 3 months, much higher than the average for users across the EU (26%). The three most common community engagement activities, mentioned by around one in five users in Lithuania, were reading and posting opinions on civic or political issues via websites (22% Lithuania compared with 14% EU), seeking information on consumer/legal rights (20% Lithuania compared with 11% EU) and seeking information on local/national/EU government activity or politics (18% compared with 10% EU).

In the qualitative research, library managers reported providing courses specifically on the area of e-government but had received no requests from users for help with civic participation.

RESULTS

A key aim of this research was to evaluate the impact of increased digital engagement through PAC use for users. This was assessed by asking PAC users how helpful using computers at public libraries had been for them in the last 12 months, across a wide range of areas including saving time and money, and increasing access to information and resources.

Overall 98% of PAC users in Lithuania said that their PAC use had been helpful to them in at least one of the areas asked about, higher than the average across the EU (83%) and representing approximately 225,000 people in Lithuania.

Figure 12 shows the proportions who said PAC use had been helpful in each area, within Lithuania and across the EU.

PAC users in Lithuania were more likely than users across the EU to have found PAC

use helpful for all the areas asked about apart from 'Improving access to information and services provided by central and local government' (25% Lithuania compared with 30% EU). They were most likely to mention that PAC use was helpful in pursuing interests and hobbies (87% Lithuania compared with EU average of 48%), maintaining communication with family and friends (84% versus 43%), 'pursuing other leisure activities' (83% versus 42%) and 'improving overall well-being' (77% versus 39%), as well as the general area of saving time (75% versus 61%). **Just under three quarters of PAC users in Lithuania (73%) mentioned that PAC was helpful in saving money, much higher than the average for the 17 EU countries as a whole (50%). This represents an estimated 165,000 PAC users in Lithuania.**

Overall it is estimated that in Lithuania, PAC usage in the last 12 months helped:

- 145,000 people to improve their education
- 105,000 people to improve their employment or business prospects
- 75,000 people to improve their access to resources necessary to find work
- 60,000 people to increase their income
- 55,000 people to improve their access to government information services.

In the qualitative research, users emphasized increased self-confidence, and pride through having developed their skills in ICT in the library. Previous fear of technology had disappeared and they were now relaxed about using a computer. Users also reported enjoyment in learning.

'I am now relaxed at the computer. It doesn't scare me any longer, it's simply a tool.'
(Library user, Female, 25–39 years).

'I am happy that the pace has increased. You feel sure, there's no fear. And a great delight in learning how to use a new devices.'
(Library user, Male, 40–64 years).

Moreover, having made the first steps in learning ICT skills, users reported increased motivation to improve their skills further.

'I now feel that new needs, questions arise. You want to go further. It means you are developing.' (Library user, Male, 40–64 years)

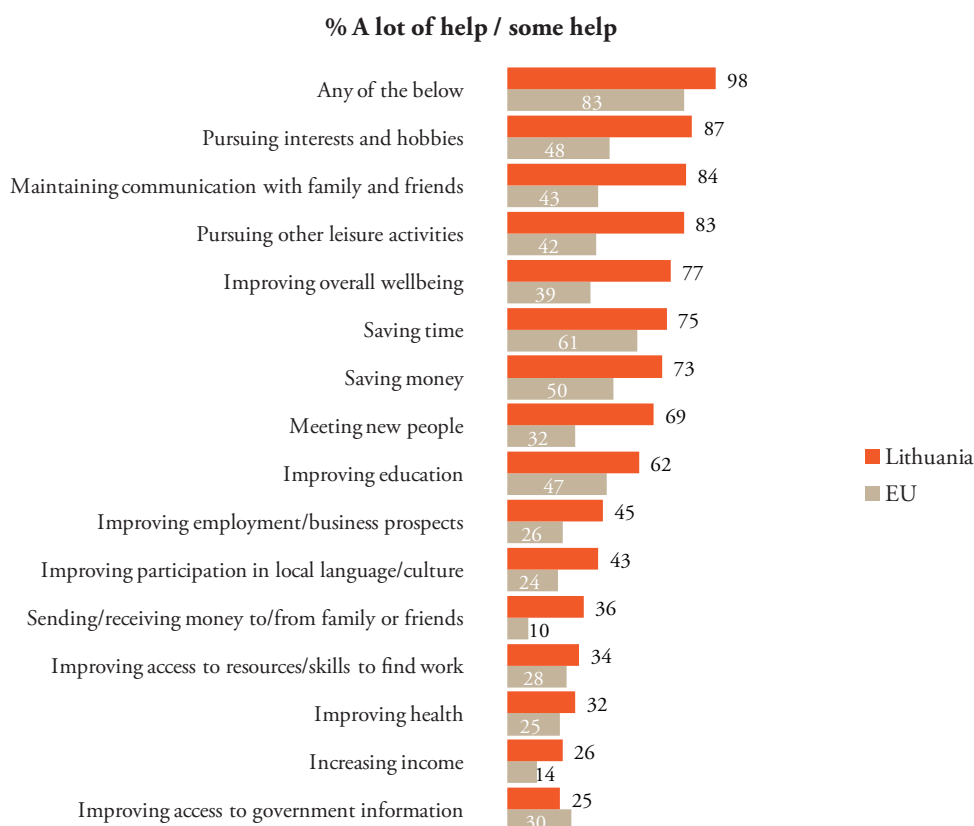
The skills learned had enabled users to communicate and stay in touch with friends and relatives abroad more easily. In addition, users felt more able to access information that they needed to organize personal affairs.

'I feel that I am in control of information. I can find anything on the Internet, arrange very many matters. I can find out about my rights.' (Library user, Female, 16–24 years).

Learning to do more online meant users had been able to save time and money as they carried out tasks such as purchasing goods and filing tax returns through a quicker online process. Older users appreciated being able to keep up with younger generations by learning how to use the *internet* in the way that their grandchildren did.

'I had always envied my grandchildren that they get everything with the help of the computer. I also want to turn on a concert, watch a film. I am trying to be equal with them and keep up.' (Recent first time library user, Female, 65 and over).

Figure 12: Impact of PAC for users



Source: Library survey – C28 In the last 12 months, has using computers at public libraries been helpful to you in the following areas?

