The EBLIDA Newsletter is normally published monthly and deals with European library & information issues, programmes, news and events of interest to the library and the cultural community.

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1. Editorial by Ton van Vlimmeren, EBLIDA President

All over Europe, libraries are re-opening after the lockdown. And so, what next?

In forthcoming weeks, all library managers and mid-managers will be heavily occupied with assessing the adequacy of library plans in complying with access policies, social distancing guidelines, sanitation rules and personnel security, not to mention work distribution between those working from home and at the library / at work. If libraries were busy during the lockdown in re-inventing themselves through the resilience factor, normality – or better, new normality – will be just as extraordinary. I am sure that these days will be remembered as high-stake times in the history of the library!

In one way or another, however, we will be entering the post-Covid 19 age. And what’s next?

Most likely scenarios will be that ministers, mayors, rectors, and other cultural and educational administrators may ask about future library plans. They may also start with suggestions pointing to restructuring, core investments or, in the worst scenario, pruning library branches. Times are difficult for all and we must share the burden.

As in any post-crisis scenario, librarians must be ready to embark upon all possible plans, bearing in mind that, in many cases, they will not be able to choose the scenario that best fits them.
In this Newsletter we would like to present three EBLIDA reports.

The first, “A European library agenda for the post-Covid 19 age” expects reactions on the new library normals from our members, just as the Irish Library Association has done in this Newsletter issue:

1. Exponential social distancing: a well-connected two-meter library;
2. Technologies are mutating and shaping libraries in new ways;
3. Uncharted economic territory: review the library budget composition;
4. Library governance at central and local levels;
5. Do not forget the climate change opportunity and threat.

Together with the report, we are also offering to the readers of the EBLIDA Newsletter a series of reports, guidelines and comments generated by some EBLIDA members (Ireland, Slovenia, Denmark, Netherlands) and NAPLE, an international non-governmental association pursuing the interests of the national library authorities in Europe.

The second EBLIDA Paper is about the “European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2021-2027”. ESIF may be an extraordinary opportunity for libraries since they may provide a solution for strained library budgets in 2021, and beyond. The ESIF Paper is particularly timely, since partnership agreements between the European Commission and Member States are being signed in the second half of 2020, in spite of delays due to the persistence of the Covid-19 crisis and belated discussions of the European Commission final budget.

The European libraries have to broaden the scope of their activities and the 2030 Agenda is a possible framework for an extended concept of the library. It is the reason why the ESIF Paper is preliminary to the “Sustainable Development Goals and Libraries: First European Report”, to be published in late Spring. It is a coherent strategy, whose overall aim is to support - conceptually, financially and politically - European libraries in their passage to the post-Covid 19 age.

It is not the end of the story. EBLIDA will be offering consultancy services to its members in order to gain a better understanding of ESI Funds and how they can fit with library priorities linked with the European 2030 Agenda on sustainable development. We continue building the EBLIDA SDG European House by offering the EBLIDA community tools (the EBLIDA Matrix), services (reporting and policy scenarios) and training (consultancy solutions).

2. A European library agenda for the post-Covid 19 age

How did European libraries manage to go through the Covid-19 crisis? How are they coping with re-opening? And what are their plans for the future?

The Report “A European library agenda for the post-Covid 19 age” will help answer these questions. In April 2020 EBLIDA launched a survey aimed to detect measures, practices and possible services that were initiated during the crisis and could be pursued in some way in the post-Covid 19 age.

The Report covers new or extended library activities in 17 European countries and is based on the
EBLIDA identifies five new normals for a European Library Agenda in the post-Covid-19 age:

1. **Exponential social distancing: a well-connected two-meter library**

   During the Covid-19 crisis, home delivery services were often activated with book packages to be picked up at the door. New services strictly related to the Covid emergence included:

   - centralised access to health information
   - Covid-19 support service - ‘Community Call’ delivered via phone, text, email and through platforms;
   - social media used to offer story time, through Facebook groups and YouTube profiles, or also for library exchange and (re)-use of digital products;
   - advanced services concerned elderly people in lockdown, who were reached by telephone calls and stories to be told, or also were delivered food, when necessary,
   - the provision of face masks for healthcare workers through 3D printers.

2. **Technologies are mutating and shaping libraries in new ways**

   Libraries promoted access to online resources via their websites pointing to platforms of e-books, and e-media. It can be said that access to the library digital offer more than doubled in many cases. In some countries, the offer increased by 1,000%-1,500% in relation to statistics taken in non-Covid 19 times. This boost should be measured not only in quantity, but also in the quality of a varied offer of digital resources including self-training, video on demand, music, press, e-books.

   What will happen when the ban on accessing libraries is lifted? Will this digital trend consolidate?

   A critical factor is the quality of the relationship between publishers and libraries and how prices for digital publications will level off in spite of increasing demand in libraries. Another key determinant has been distance-learning, which has generated positive externalities in libraries during the Covid-19 crisis. *It is not taken for granted, however, that school children will continue using distance learning in school intensively and that universities will drop taught classes in the post-Covid 19 age.*

   From a strictly cultural perspective, it remains to be seen whether libraries can promote local music, performing arts and live performance – a cultural sector which is in danger even in the post-Covid age – and to what extent they can help capture and retain the attention of the public. In a broader sense, and much closer to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda on sustainable development, a society pivoting around social distancing may end up creating negative requirements leading to social exclusion. An additional critical factor is whether libraries will be able to control data concerning movements of people, resources and equipment for policy-making purposes and data-sharing.

3. **Uncharted economic territory: review the library budget composition**

   As a result of the pandemic, the global economy is projected to contract sharply in 2020. *If librarians do not start taking action, administrators and politicians will play a key role in the post-
The response may be found in the diversification of funding for libraries and the promotion of current library activities within a different framework: the European 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The best financial instrument to fund SDG projects in libraries are the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2021-2027.

4. Library governance at central and local levels

During the Covid-19 crisis, institutional settings were reinforced through the implementation of web portals or centralised facilities with information distributed at national or regional level. Conversely, exchange of information and best practices in informal gatherings suffered from the cancellation or postponement of national library conferences. Library governance also sprouted from an uncoordinated and spontaneous movement of professionals willing to offer solutions to unfulfilled needs and to cooperate with external agencies. In this context, library associations took the lead.

These new forms of governance and the extension of the library missions may prove to be useful if European libraries identify themselves as structural components of a cohesion policy and wish to access EU Structural and Investment Funds.

5. Do not forget the climate change opportunity and threat

On 9th March 2020, the European Commission published a Taxonomy Regulation, which stipulates that a series of environmental objectives should be considered when evaluating how sustainable an economic activity is. If this Taxonomy works for finance, it should also work for libraries.

The Report “A European library agenda for the post-Covid 19 age” is now being submitted to a broad consultation with EBLIDA Members, with Questions for self-reflection and examples of Recommendations (see Paragraph 7). When finalised, the Recommendations will be proposed as the agenda for European libraries in the post-Covid age.

2.1 Comments to the Report “A European library agenda for the post-Covid 19 age” from the Irish Library Association

Despite the need for social distancing, in Ireland the educational, community and voluntary sector bonds are strengthening, Irish libraries have strong connections within their communities. This factor will be of great importance as we move to the ‘new normal’ to re-energise our services.
2020, an Taoiseach, Leo Varadkar, set out a roadmap to chart the reopening of our country. The roadmap sets out the 8th June as a possible date for the reopening of libraries with restricted numbers and public health measures implemented. Further detailing will be provided and indeed this date is determined by public health considerations.

1. **Exponential social distancing: a well-connected two-meter library;**

The content of this report, providing well informed research on practice and processes will help to inform future service delivery and advocacy. Libraries in the past have experienced many changes in their operating environment, none as far reaching and immediate as this challenge. In a short space of time, Irish libraries have shown themselves to be solution driven and resilient, creating content and targeting new and existing audiences. An approach of working in a library physical space with social distancing will be complemented with the production of new content and new options for the delivery of services.

2. **Technologies are mutating and shaping libraries in new ways;**

Two of the key things that libraries, and library users, have learnt from this experience are firstly that e-books are a vital part of library services. This requires libraries to work even harder to secure fairer and more user friendly licenses for users, as well as better value given the current large price differential relative to print. Secondly, many services and tools that might have been regarded as non-core or even luxuries are now recognised as core e.g. online classes, web meeting tools and digital libraries. Access to such resources via libraries will be essential for citizens to stay informed and engaged. In the post Covid -19 operating environment, opportunities exist for Irish libraries to deliver further on digitisation programmes at national and local level becoming producers of content harnessing the learning experience within Ireland and from further afield.

3. **Uncharted economic territory: review the library budget composition;**

Various sectors among Irish libraries would be in a position to apply for European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) to support research/development and technological projects, manage and integrate the process into their operating environment. During the Covid-19 emergency, all Irish library sectors have positioned themselves to diversify their service, positioning the sector to play an essential role in the restoration of the social, cultural and economic fabric of our country.

4. **Library governance at central and local levels;**

There are high levels of governance in all sectors of Irish libraries operating within the structures of central government departments and local authorities. Rather than saying Covid-19 has ‘reinforced library governance at central level’, the observation in Ireland is that all agencies are working collaboratively but independent in their own right. The collective response of all agencies including libraries has reinforced the Covid -19 response and strengthened partnerships between central government and local government.

5. **Do not forget the climate change opportunity and threat.**

Libraries can, and must, be champions of sustainable development policies. There are already many examples of this from the micro to the macro level and libraries must redouble our efforts to counter the risks identified post COVID 19.

At micro level, libraries across all sectors in Ireland promote good environmental practices and sustainable living through workshops, events, seminars etc. For example Kildare libraries are centrally involved in the local authority’s annual biodiversity week.
Irish library building projects include ambitious conditions to enhance the sustainability of the buildings. In addition to new builds, there has been much work to ensure that current buildings progress with regards to sustainability. UCC Library has been internationally recognised for its leadership in promoting sustainability [https://libguides.ucc.ie/librariansustainability/howwedoing](https://libguides.ucc.ie/librariansustainability/howwedoing).

At a macro level, libraries play a key role in promoting awareness of SDGs and the issues they address. Furthermore, access to information is a target under SDG 16: Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels.

Target 16.10: states “Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.” This is a key role for libraries and library associations and will never be more important than after COVID-19 due to the expected pressure to fast track the return to economic activity to previous levels. However, we have seen how quickly lockdowns have promoted environmental health and libraries should facilitate a conversation around striking a balance between retaining some of this progress and returning to economic activity. In Ireland the Ask About Ireland (askaboutireland.ie) service includes collections of digitised environmental resources and collections like this could be used to inform support, and document this process.

### 2. Report from Slovenia

On 15 May, the Government of the Republic of Slovenia declared the end of COVID-19 epidemic as the first country in Europe to take this step. Since the risk of spreading COVID-19 persists, the general and specific measures will continue to apply based on expert opinion until 31 May 2020.

Slovenia declared an epidemic on 12 March and all responsible authorities called on public institutions to follow current and key information and recommendations for health protection of the National Institute of Public Health. All public institutions, including libraries, were closed, but the majority of libraries still provided their services remotely (some also offered home delivery). The majority of staff were working from home and only a few were coming to work in libraries for the most urgent tasks (IT, post, etc.). Some just waited for work at home (receiving 80% payment). Staff promoted the available online services and resources through library websites and social media and provided regular updates and information for users.

The National and University Library, the Slovenian Public Libraries Association, the Institute of Information Sciences and the publishing house Beletrina carried out a campaign called “Read on Click” to promote e-reading during self-isolation. The campaign highlighted Digitalna knjižnica Slovenije (Digital Library of Slovenia), which offers free 24/7 access to a more than 850,000 digital items in the fields of science, art and culture, and the Biblos Portal, which holds a collection of 4000 e-books in the Slovenian language available to library members. Both portals have recorded increased usage.

The Government of the Republic of Slovenia recommended the re-opening of libraries on 29 April. The majority of libraries opened for users on 4 May. Since then libraries have made plans for
Gradual reopening, as safety is still the priority. Many limitations and restrictions are in force, including the limited number of users in the library, only pre-ordered materials can be borrowed (click and collect service with a restriction on a number of units/a single user), users can return library materials, reading rooms stay closed, (preferably contactless) settling of debts, home delivery is still possible for vulnerable groups (in various ways). The measures of wearing masks and social distancing in public enclosed spaces continue to be in force.


The Section on Special Libraries conducted a survey about the consequences of the Coronavirus Pandemic. There were 38 responses. The results show that 92 % of respondents have changed the operation of their library services. 82 % of librarians surveyed still provided library services; however, they carried out contactless loan and return of materials and focused on providing information and resources online. Work from home has significantly increased, including mainly personal bibliography processing and additional digitization of materials. 25 % of respondents reported that they developed new services for users during the pandemic. However, special libraries were not the primary information point about the pandemic in their parent organizations (95 % of libraries).

Regarding the budget, 25% of librarians reported that the pandemic has affected their budget, more than 50 % of respondents do not know yet, while 25 % believe that the pandemic will not affect their library budget.

45 % of librarians answered that they have developed their own protocols for users and rules for handling material, almost a half received instructions from the parent organization, and about 60 % received instructions from the national institutions.

As of 18 May, about half of children in Slovenia will return to schools and kindergartens and school libraries will follow special instructions of the National Institute of Public Health and the instructions issued by individual schools.

The Slovenian public libraries are opening their branches according to their possibilities and the Slovenian Public Libraries Association is providing support with all the necessary information.

SLA has already been informed that the funds for 2020 expected to be received from the Ministry of Culture will probably only cover the overheads. But we are still waiting to receive the final decision. All the events for 2020 have already been cancelled. We will still try to publish the professional journal Knjižnica (Library).

2.3. Report from Denmark:
First set of guidelines for a smooth reopening of Danish libraries

Wednesday May 13 the Danish Ministry of Culture released the first set of guidelines for soft reopening of the Danish libraries. May 21 those guidelines was modified and this blog post is a translation of the guidelines meant to inspire others who are facing reopening in times to come.

In short the status of the Danish public libraries to this date is the following:
They are open to the public
You can loan and return materials
Books etc. don’t have to go into quarantine after they are returned
You can stay at the libraries following the overall guidelines for social distance
Library staff can help citizens if following the overall guidelines for social distance
Smaller programs and events are possible if following the overall guidelines for social distance
Library computers and printers are not available at this time

The text below is an unofficial official translation of the guidelines – EBLIDA would like to thank Mr Christian Lauersen for having authorised the publication of his translation.

The Guidelines are divided into:

1. general actions prerequisite for reopening,
2. general actions concerning employees and citizens and
3. specific guidelines as it goes for libraries.

Prerequisites for progressive reopening the following are general actions that should be taken before and after reopening

- The gradual and controlled reopening should be handled so that the health authorities’ recommendations and guidance can be followed for the individual and for the institution as a whole.
- Therefore, everyone should first and foremost observe the basic elements in the prevention of infection spread, which are in the order of priority: a) Isolation of people with symptoms e.g. in their own home or hospital, b) Hygiene with focus on cough labels, hand hygiene and contact points, c) Contact reduction with focus on distance, frequency, duration and barriers.
- Prior to reopening, each institution should ensure that the framework to comply with all health authorities’ guidelines regarding distance requirements for the individual, hygiene, etc. is in place that the guidelines are visible by postings or posters, and that there is water and soap or sanitizer (70-85% alcohol) available to both staff and the public.
- Each institution’s management should continuously monitor the gradual reopening.
- In addition necessary supporting functions, not least cleaning, shall be present.
- Library management are encouraged to involve employees in planning the concrete actions. As part of cooperation on safety and health at the workplace, employers must involve employees in the planning of concrete measures with significance. If there is a working environment organization at the institution, this involve.

General guidelines for the organization of work and the protection of employees and users / visitors

- For employees who are at risk of serious illness with COVID-19, it is recommended that the management, in dialogue with the individual employee, make a concrete and individual assessment based on the guidelines of the National Board of Health and make sure the employee don’t come into work.
- It is recommended that volunteers who are at risk of serious illness with COVID-19 do not do volunteer work at the institution so far.
- Each institution should, as far as possible, review its work processes to reduce the time with close contact between staff and the public, and as far as possible, special steps should be taken to completely avoid close contacts.
- Special steps should be taken as far as possible to avoid close contacts between employees and the public, e.g. in situations with payments. You can, for example, encourage the purchase of tickets online, etc. and introduce additional security measures in close contacts (e.g. setting up separation at payment points or citizen offices, etc.).
- All employees should be informed of and adhere to the National Board of Health’s recommendations on good hygiene and appropriate behavior, including regular and
The institution should ensure thorough cleaning of common contact points, at least once a day and more frequently by many visitors, including with special focus on handles, handrails, light switches, table surfaces, taps, cash registers, credit card terminals and lending and delivery machines, etc.:

- Each institution should, as far as possible, form an overview of various contact points, including door handles and pushbuttons, and clearly indicate to the users that these are contact points.
- Contact-free solutions should be considered where possible.
- Toilets (both public and employee toilets) should be thoroughly cleaned, all surfaces should be washed and contact points disinfected. Water and liquid soap should be available.
- There should be no shared towels but only disposable towels.
- Trash should be emptied daily, and always before they are completely filled.
- Cleaning of the individual workstation should be ensured when one employee leaves the workstation and another employee must take over.
- The health authorities’ recommendations on distance and rules for the maximum number of people in an area should always be observed in both public and employee areas.
- In order to ensure that distance is kept, institutions should, where appropriate, use behavioural regulating devices and practical measures such as space divisions and distance tapes or other distance markings.
- The institutions must comply with the current assembly ban (maximum of 30 – 50 people). However, it should be noted that the total audience present at an institution held openly in accordance with these guidelines is not in itself considered an assembly.
- Institutions should not carry out activities that encourage the coordination of many people, such as lectures, performances, tours and events.
- However, smaller programs and event that can be implemented in accordance with both the assembly ban and the health authorities’ distance recommendations can be implemented.

Dealing with illness and symptoms:

- Employees should not attend work if they have mild symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. Cleaning of a sick employee’s workstation should be done immediately after identifying the illness. After a course of illness, employees must first return to work 48 hours after symptoms have ceased.
- Information material should be set up in or near the premises that people who have symptoms of COVID-19 should isolate themselves at home, and about good hygiene and appropriate behaviour in the public space.

Specific guidelines for libraries:

- Libraries are open to the public
- Citizens can loan and return materials
- Books etc. don’t have to go into quarantine after they are returned
- You can stay at the libraries following the overall guidelines for social distance
- Library staff can help citizens if following the overall guidelines for social distance
- There should be sanitizer (70-85 percent) available in the lending areas. Visitors should be encouraged by signage for their use upon arrival, each time they are switched between the library’s branches and in connection with the operation of the lending and deposit terminal.
- Reading rooms and sitting areas should comply with health authorities’ requirements for distance and must comply with notice requirements for how many people that can be in a specific area. However, there is only a requirement of 2 square meters per person in reading rooms and the like.
- Reading / study spaces should be cleaned between each visitor (however, after a specific assessment of needs), or it should be possible for the visitors to do their own cleaning.
• The libraries should offer disposable gloves for self-service machines, for example at the stations where books are loaned and delivered.
• Library staff should continuously monitor compliance with the guidelines.
• The libraries should not have unstaffed opening hours.
• Submitted materials should be handled safely by staff. Personnel should carry out frequent hand disinfection or hand washing.
• It is believed that no special precautions regarding library materials that users return or that borrowers study briefly to consider home loans and then repay.


2.4 Interview with Ton van Vlimmeren
Director, Utrecht Public Library and President, EBLIDA

On Monday, 11 May, the Utrecht Public Library finally opened their new premises. A former post office in an elegant 100-year-old building, its re-structuring clearly displays a new concept of a modern and dynamic multimedia centre. Diverse activities - lectures, debates, exhibitions, presentations, workshops and courses - are concentrated under one roof, without forgetting external activities which the Utrecht Library carries out with its users - of particular importance in the Post-Covid 19 age.

EBLIDA: Our readers know you as the President of EBLIDA, but you are first and foremost the Director of the Utrecht Public Library, which opened its new premises one week ago. The Utrecht library is, as far as we know, the first “new” library opening in a post-Covid 19 age. How do you feel about that?

Ton van Vlimmeren: The response of our users to the creation of this library has been very positive and heart-warming. Let me say, however, that I have mixed feelings. On the one hand, we are very happy for this achievement, we have been working towards this target for at least 6 years, and the idea of a new library was put forward no less than 22 years ago. I have been lucky...
On the other hand, I regret that we are using the library system for book circulation only; users register and reserve books online. The idea of the library as a metropolitan living room, a meeting place where citizens gather and book reading is not the only purpose, is not yet implemented. We had to take out chairs, computers are unused, our movie theatre and theatre is closed. We had planned to open this new central library with more than 150 activities planned in the first two opening weeks. None of them could be executed. The good news is that we are opening step by step; not everything is opening at once, but several small openings will be happen gradually over time.

EBLIDA: Can you expand upon the original plans of the new Utrecht library and whether these plans have changed in the new Covid-19 driven environment? Do you think the library will come back to its original design or will evolve into novel, and different, directions?

There is a great deal of continuity between the “old” and the “new” library. Conceptually we are continuing with our philosophy of being open to all, and in all possible ways. The context now, however, is totally different.

We are no longer pushing shelves and chairs aside because our programs were too popular, as we used to do in the old library. We now have a beautiful historical building with a fascinating main hall. We are in the centre of Utrecht, and at the heart of the citizens of Utrecht. We have dedicated rooms for plenty of activities; on the ground floor, an elegant café is the place and I trust it will become a trendy place in the city town. In addition, I would mention children rooms for storytelling with adjacent the atelier where children, inspired by story-tellers, can create their own stories in painting or 3D. We have a small cinema, which we intend to use for discussions and small meetings, and a big theatre with 190 seats for more popular public debates.

EBLIDA: Do you feel that this library is part of an international movement which is changing the world of libraries? Or is it the library of Utrecht?

In the Netherlands, more and more libraries are re-locating to already existing buildings, which are restored and adapted to new needs. The trend is no longer to create stand-alone facilities but to include fresh new constructions in the centre of cities. I am referring to important experiences in the new libraries of Groningen, Arnhem, Amsterdam and Rotterdam, without forgetting Tilburg. Another trend is to work with external partners and volunteer organisations. When libraries liaise
At international level, the obvious references are the Oodi Library in Helsinki, or Dokk1 in Aarhus. The idea behind these internationally recognised flagship libraries is that they are meeting points for the communities they refer to. Oodi has a good café and amazing facilities which you would not have thought of in regular libraries. In Aarhus, food and drinks are allowed and people deal with libraries as if they were in a public plaza. In sum, the trend is towards liaison with external partners and people being welcome at any time in any library room.

**EBLIDA: What will you take over in the future from the Covid-19 experience?**

I trust our expectations will be fulfilled and that we can soon have talk shows, broadcasting and all success stories we had planned before the Covid-19 crisis. Having said that, the things we learn during this crisis, for example, the amount of activities now done through streaming, the release of videos also carrying instructions for plenty of things to do, ways of being more and more interactive, all this will remain, in my opinion. It is a big leap forward in creating the digital library.

Another key issue is homeworking and videoconferencing. As a library manager, I feel that library work improves in such modality without unnecessary travel. Also, on an international level It is a much more economical and more practical way of working, also meeting Sustainable Development Goals.

**EBLIDA: Is there anything special you would like to say to the readers of the EBLIDA Newsletter?**

We are all dwarves standing on the shoulders of giants, and the giants are those who preceded us. I learnt a lot, and am still learning, also from the EBLIDA community. EBLIDA meetings have always been a good opportunity to learn from each other and present best practices. Thanks to EBLIDA, our understanding of libraries and the society surrounding them is constantly progressing.

### 2.5 Public Libraries in Europe and COVID-19: Findings from NAPLE Forum

*from Stuart Hamilton*

**NAPLE Forum** was founded in October 2002. It is an international non-governmental association pursuing the interests of national library authorities and local governments and municipal authorities in Europe. Membership with NAPLE is open to all national public library authorities or
The nearest equivalent to such a policy making institution with national responsibilities for public library services, or, within a federate system, assuming the appropriate level of such responsibilities. Its main aim is to promote principles and strategies for public library policies.

Last April, the NAPLE Forum issued a Report on Public Libraries in Europe and COVID-19, which provided the state of the art of public libraries from the following countries: Belgium (Flanders); Croatia; Czech Republic; Denmark; Estonia; Finland; France; Germany; Greece; Ireland; Lithuania; Norway; Netherlands; Poland; Portugal; Scotland; Slovenia; Spain; Sweden; Switzerland.

Some libraries are offering reduced or alternative services for the lending of physical library materials until full services resume, though generally the focus is on online services and digital content. Staff in many public libraries around Europe are working remotely during closures. In countries where library staff need to work from their office or library, it is noted that provisions are in place (e.g. anti-bacterial gel is provided, staff work in shifts to allow for physical distancing). There are several reports of staff being redeployed to assist with healthcare efforts, one report of staff being stood down and one report of staff being put on unpaid, open-ended leave during the lockdown.

Alternative services for the lending of physical library materials have been offered in a number of countries and include: ‘drive-through’ library services, ‘take away’ service, ‘book bags’, and home delivery by various means. In most countries, return boxes are closed and people are asked to keep borrowed books at home. Most libraries have automatically prolonged loans and stopped sending out reminders of fines. With physical lending limited or suspended, the focus has shifted more to online services and digital content, with a wide range of available online services and content across all countries.

In some cases, online services have been extended or vendors have eased restrictions to the access of digital material. Many library services report the development and publication of new online content, such as online story-times, in response to the COVID-19 lockdown. Many library services have requested official advice regarding the risk of virus transmission via library materials.

Where official advice has not been received, common sense procedures have been implemented. In some countries, a system is already in place for the quarantining of returned physical materials, and in others, the plan is to implement this as part of a phased reintroduction of services. Presently, however, most countries’ public libraries are not accepting returns. Where returns have been accepted, staff have been disinfecting returned books, wearing gloves, and taking other precautions. Along with the increased focus on e-services, many countries’ public library services are active on social media and involved in making important information available online. This includes communication through social media, mailing lists and the posting of information on websites.

Several countries have created national hashtags around the theme of staying at home or accessing culture online, or are operating virtual helpdesks through Twitter. There is generally an awareness of the risk of fake news about COVID-19, and several library services note that they are sharing information from official sources only.


A case study with detailed information regarding libraries’ online offerings is provided for the Netherlands and included as an Appendix. The information contained in this report is based on responses from NAPLE members submitted to a shared spreadsheet between March 20th and April 24th 2020. As such it should be seen as a snapshot of this period.

This Paper is preliminary to the “Sustainable Development Goals and Libraries: First European Report”.

The EBLIDA Executive Committee requested the EBLIDA Secretariat to draft a Paper focused on the European Structural and Investment Funds (ESIF) 2021-2027.

The magnitude of the Covid-19 crisis and its possible impact on library activities may prompt a response which cannot be funded through ordinary funding; ESIF 2021-2027 could prop up strained library budgets in the post-Covid 19 age.

The preparation of a European library agenda in the post-Covid 19 age will require additional funding in order to carry out library ordinary activities and to consolidate the trends experimented with during the crisis. ESI Funds may be an appropriate financial instrument to stimulate ground-breaking developments in libraries and open to novel directions which cannot be covered by ordinary library budgets. The ESIF 2021-2027 Report focuses on two funds which are likely to be relevant for libraries: the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and the European Social Fund Plus (ESF+).

The ESIF Paper is particularly timely, since partnership agreements between the European Commission and Member States are being signed in the second half of 2020, in spite of delays due to the persistence of the Covid-19 crisis and belated discussions of the European Commission final budget. The EBLIDA ESIF Paper focuses on the main ESIF objectives - a smarter Europe, a greener, carbon free Europe, a more connected Europe, a more social Europe, and a Europe closer to citizens – and delves into the specific objectives of ERDF and ESF+. It also describes the way ESIF works, its normative framework and implementation process. At the end of the Paper a series of Synoptic Tables link ESIF specific objectives to library best practices detected in Sustainable Development Goals implemented in library projects.

As an accompanying measure, EBLIDA will offer consultancy services to its members in order to gain a better understanding of ESI Funds and how they can fit with library priorities, in particular if linked with the European 2030 Agenda on sustainable development. EBLIDA is offering support to libraries and library associations throughout their difficult journey in the post-Covid 19 age.

The full Paper is available here.

projects in European libraries not only as stories to be told to administrators and policy-makers for advocacy purposes, but also as a fully-fledged concept apt to frame library work into the broader and far-reaching scope of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

A new agenda is desperately needed for two reasons: on the one hand, because the traditional library sphere (free of charge services based on books and other media) has been challenged in the last two decades by private information service providers and, on the other hand, because many of the traditional assumptions in the world of libraries are being re-questioned or reshuffled in the post-Covid 19 age.

High-tech giants, like Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple are breaking the monopoly libraries have enjoyed for years in providing free access to information. In the current “attention economy”, where a wealth of information creates a poverty of attention, many private information providers distribute free and universal access to content based on advertising revenues. Filling gaps in reading literacy and access to information are missions that are still valid in a library context. New political and social factors, however, are driving library development. Social change, social inclusion and democratic participation are notions that correspond to complex societies characterized by cultural diversity and social integration. Currently, new metaphors – libraries as “conversations” and “movements” (David Lankes) - are describing the new roles of libraries in a way that is more appropriate to their current needs.

A new political framework is therefore needed – and this framework can be clearly identified in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, approved in 2015, and in its European equivalent, the European 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. UN SDGs are important because for the first time, the United Nations depart from the traditional rich-poor dichotomy, where “donor” states support developing countries. Within the UN SDG framework, all countries have equal level and dignity, no matter their level of development and their ability to attain SDGs.

There are at least two advantages in linking library action to the Sustainability Agenda developed by the United Nations and, in Europe, by the EU 2030 Agenda.

**The first is political.** Libraries’ cultural and educational objectives are not developed in an abstract manner, but are closely linked to the aspirations of the communities they intend to serve. In an SDG broader political architecture, the concept of the “social” library can thrive and develop in the specific policies assigned to each goal.

**The second advantage is economic.** Sustainable development is now the drive for new investments both in the private and public sector. A society which is sustainable and where nobody is left behind is much more prosperous in the long term. Future investments on libraries should be oriented towards activities with migrants, minorities, socially excluded citizens or those with special needs, in collaboration with organisations working in the third sector. A new battery of indicators is therefore needed, where libraries can demonstrate their positive influence on society as a whole.


It deals with library projects, policies and indicators. It is not pure research, however. With its link with the European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027, it is a concrete opportunity for libraries all over Europe to embark upon the new prototypes of library vehicles which are ready to
5. EBLIDA Webinar Series

EBLIDA is hosting a series of webinars focused on Sustainable Development Goals and Libraries, more particularly, why and how should Libraries implement SDGs.

The 1st Webinar of the Series:

EBLIDA-IFLA Webinar: “SDGs: EBLIDA and IFLA Approaches”

15 June 2020 from 11:00 to 12:15 (CET)
To Register: [http://www.anymeeting.com/PIID=EE59DA89844631](http://www.anymeeting.com/PIID=EE59DA89844631)

About the 1st Webinar:

**Background**

The 2030 Agenda for sustainable development has had a successful implementation in European libraries. Never in the past has a UN or EU programme encompassing such complex social, economic and environmental issues so spontaneously and enthusiastically been received in libraries.

European libraries are setting up SDG-oriented policies, programmes and projects. But what is the official policy pursued by the two library organisations mainly involved in the SDG development at international level: EBLIDA and IFLA?

The aim of this Webinar is to build upon the plural debate surrounding sustainable development and libraries in order to find valid strategies designed to reinforce library involvement and make the most out of the political and financial opportunities offered to libraries at European level. This is particularly needed now that libraries have fully entered the post-Covid 19 phase.

EBLIDA has opened a Sustainable Development House with services, training and tools offered to the library community in Europe.
Its services include the delivery of the following reports:

- "Sustainable Development Goals and Libraries First European Report",
- "The European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027: Funding opportunities for Libraries" and
- "A European library agenda for the post-Covid 19 age."

EBLIDA is also offering consultancy work on "The European Structural and Investment Funds 2021-2027";

Check also the EBLIDA Matrix, with EU and Library Policies, ESIF opportunities and Eurostat Indicators.

Speakers:

Barbara Lison, IFLA President-elect (To serve as President 2021-2023)

Ms Barbara Lison is President-Elect IFLA and Director of the Bremen Public Library in Bremen, Germany. In 1999, she was also appointed the CEO of the Public Enterprise Bremen Public Library.

Barbara has served as the President of Bibliothek Information Deutschland, the national umbrella organization of German library and information associations, and as President of the German Library Association, DBV. She has held many leadership positions in the European Bureau for Libraries, Archives and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA), including Vice-President.

Barbara has been very active in library policy and development. She has also been engaged in the activities of German national and European professional library organisations as well as IFLA. Currently, she is a member of the OCLC Board of Trustees. Barbara has been working for the Bertelsmann Foundation and the Goethe-Institut as an expert on library affairs.

Ton van Vlimmeren, EBLIDA President

Ton van Vlimmeren has been President, EBLIDA since 2018. He has been Director of the Public Library of Utrecht in the Netherlands since 2010 and also from 1995 till 2005.

He also acted as director for the city of Utrecht in different roles like Real Estate and Urban Planning, Districts and Civic Centers and Public Services. He was vice-president of the Dutch Library Association and member of the governmental steering committee for library innovation in the Netherlands.

He contributed in the International Libraries Network of the Bertelsmann Foundation, was a strategic advisor for the Global Libraries Program of the Bill and Melinda
2020 program. He is one of the founders of Public Libraries 2030 in Brussels.

The 2nd Webinar of the Series:
EBLIDA-Liber Webinar: "Citizen Science Supporting Sustainable Development Goals: The possible role of libraries"
23 June 2020 from 10:00 to 12:00 (CET)
Registration

About the 2nd Webinar:
Organising parties: LIBER's Citizen Science Working Group & EBLIDA

Description:
This session examines the role libraries could play in the future. It aims for participants to get applicable takeaways by addressing:

- Strategy
- Services
- Single Point of Contact
- SDG's – ideas how to
- Evaluation

An important outcome is to create awareness about Citizen Science, UN SDG's and how university and public libraries can advocate at local and national level.

Arranged and facilitated by the LIBER Work Group on Citizen Science and EBLIDA experts, this session builds on the work and recommendations of e.g. SciStarter, the DEFF-project in Denmark, and the LIBER Open Science Roadmap in order for participants to achieve results in a collaborative setting. Participants will resort to tools made available by the EBLIDA Matrix to pursue autonomous Citizen Science projects, which are SDG-oriented (in particular, Goals 2, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15).

Speakers:
- Tiberius Ignat, Director, Scientific Knowledge Services
- Thomas Kaarsted, University Library of Southern Denmark, Denmark
- Anne Kathrine Overgaard, University of Southern Denmark, Denmark
- Giuseppe Vitiello, Director Eblida


About the Newsletter

Responsible for the Newsletter: Giuseppe Vitiello
[contact him by email: g.vitiello at kb.nl]

Editors: Unless otherwise specified, all articles are written by the EBLIDA Secretariat.
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