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EIFL Public Library Innovation Programme: Evaluation of the take-up of PLIP innovation by other libraries. What sparks innovation in the public library sector?



FINAL REPORT

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Executive Summary

The EIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) **Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP)** aims to accelerate innovation through demonstration projects leading to development of sustainable innovative technology-based services where libraries position themselves at the centre of community life in different low resource environments. In its **first phase (2009 - 2013)**, the programme concentrated on the **development of innovative library services that meet community needs, and testing of replicability** of these services in different contexts. From **2013 - 2017 (the second phase of EIFL-PLIP)**, the main goal of the programme has been to **disseminate the results of services started in the first phase, and results of 10 new services for children and youth that were started in 2014. The aim of disseminating results is to inspire and encourage other libraries to take-up successful innovations.** This study into how and why public libraries innovate, and what works best in encouraging take-up of innovation by public libraries in developing countries, informs our dissemination strategy and tactics.

The research was led by external evaluator Ana María García Femenía, PhD, who developed the study design, all research instruments, analysed survey data¹ (information about target groups is included in Chapter 2: Evaluation Purpose, Approach and Methodology), and wrote conclusions and recommendations. Qualitative Research Specialist Renata Sadunisvilli, Master of Sociology, conducted interviews with five library leaders from selected countries and analysed the answers. Ugne Lipeikaite, EIFL-PLIP Impact Manager, coordinated data collection from target groups and contributed to reports with her knowledge about the EIFL-PLIP. EIFL-PLIP programme staff members were actively involved at all stages of the evaluation, and have extensively discussed the findings and conclusions. Finally, Jean Fairbairn, EIFL-PLIP Communications Coordinator, edited the report.

A total of **120 people²** were surveyed in 2014 over a period of six months. Survey participants were mainly directors of libraries or the persons in charge

¹ Note: Except for the EIFL-PLIP pop-up survey, which was postponed due to late launch of the new EIFL website.

² Note: Target groups surveyed were: 1) EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees; 2) Libraries identified by EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees as possibly having taken-up innovative services; 3) Libraries that applied for, but did not receive, an EIFL-PLIP replication

of new library services. In addition, four library leaders (directors of library systems or networks, leaders of library associations) were interviewed to provide additional qualitative insights on findings.

Survey results show that respondents from **all target groups** consider **“willingness to make the library more relevant to the community”** to be an **essential factor motivating libraries** to develop innovative services. This factor is very closely followed by librarians’ **“personal satisfaction of being useful to the community”**. The third important motivating factor is **“additional funding and library infrastructure advancement”**. Interviews with library leaders show very similar results: for them the primary motivator for developing innovative services is the need for constant change to ensure that their libraries remain modern (up to date) and relevant. Library leaders also recognize the importance of innovative services to library infrastructure advancement and to attract additional funding.

As we can see, the main factors that motivate libraries to innovate are related to the **community**. In this context it is important to note another finding: libraries that are inspired by EIFL-PLIP supported services seem also to **take on the EIFL-PLIP approach in emphasizing the impact of their services on the community**.

Survey respondents were asked to rank **stakeholders** that contribute to / encourage take-up of innovation in order of importance. Responses indicate that the main stakeholders are **library authorities, NGO’s, local governments and local public institutions** (e.g. hospitals, schools). Library leaders have a slightly different perspective, and strongly state that library authorities are the main stakeholders enabling innovation, while other stakeholders are seen as less important.

Activities through which librarians get inspired to innovate are **peer-to-peer activities**: visiting other libraries, attending national library conferences / events, training and capacity building workshops, and joint projects. **Library leaders** add an interesting perspective by separating two concepts: “inspire to innovate” and “disseminate innovation”. In their opinion, **international conferences are the best way to “inspire”, as they want to hear examples from other, including well developed, countries. They see national conferences as**

grant in 2012; 4) Libraries that participated in the Macedonia advocacy conference in February 2013; 5) Visitors to the EIFL-PLIP website.

a way to “disseminate” innovation that can be replicated by participating libraries.

Regarding in particular national library conferences / events, the two main factors that are most likely to inspire public libraries to innovate are (i) hearing about the **relevance of the initiative** and the possibility that it can be **easily adapted** in their library; (ii) the possibility of maintaining **personal contact** with colleagues (other librarians they have met at the conference) after the conference. Library leaders agree that examples presented should be from a library working in a similar environment or facing similar problems. They also add that irrespective of the dissemination method (conference or case study), the examples of innovation **should be quite detailed** to enable other libraries to replicate it. Library leaders also mentioned that the content of national library conferences does not always encourage innovation.

Websites, be it the EIFL-PLIP website or individual library websites, showcasing successful innovations in public libraries are key sources for librarians to find out about innovative services. Social media (mainly Facebook and Twitter) and national library events / conferences where librarians meet and share their experiences are also important sources of information about innovation. Library leaders highlight the same channels, but add that these channels should be combined: dissemination of information through electronic channels should be complemented with face-to-face events like workshops.

Lack of funding and resources is considered the major barrier by libraries that are trying to develop innovative services. The second major barrier is lack of staff to implement the service. Lack of understanding and support from library management and authorities is mentioned as the third biggest barrier. Library leaders highlight the same barriers to innovation.

EIFL-PLIP supported services are highly sustainable 97% of libraries surveyed are continuing to offer services initiated with EIFL-PLIP support, after the end of EIFL-PLIP grant period. At the same time, respondents indicated that the most difficult aspects in developing innovative services are fundraising and advocating for sustainability.

Noteworthy suggestions that emerged from this study are for example, that **libraries want to deepen their knowledge about EIFL-PLIP and get more information about innovative services supported by the programme.** This confirms that our suggestion to translate EIFL-PLIP material into national

languages would be useful. It was also suggested that national conferences should be organized more often, attended by more librarians, be focused on specific objectives rather than general exchange of information or reporting on activities, involve international speakers sharing their experiences, and result in improved information exchange among libraries in the country. **Networking activities** should be incorporated in all conferences.

In addition to disseminating information about successful innovations, results of the surveys suggest that organizing activities involving innovative libraries and those libraries that are willing to innovate would increase the effectiveness of the programme in inspiring take-up of innovation. **Peer learning activities** like "exchange programmes for librarians and libraries", "library visits", etc. could be organized between libraries that **have serve similar communities**. Different types of training for librarians are also suggested. For advocacy purposes the programme should strengthen its already significant efforts by incorporating **decision makers and external stakeholders in advocacy capacity building activities**.

1. Programme Background

EIFL (Electronic information for libraries) is a non-profit organization with a global network spanning 60 countries and thousands of libraries. EIFL brings access to knowledge to library users in developing and transition countries by building capacity, supporting advocacy and helping to introduce new services for the user, as well as affordable access to e-resources.

The EIFL **Public Library Innovation Programme (EIFL-PLIP)** was launched to explore and demonstrate how ICT-enabled public libraries can address community needs and contribute to community development. Since 2010 EIFL-PLIP has provided small grants to 49 public and community libraries in 23 countries in Africa, Asia, Europe and Latin America. The grants enabled the libraries to introduce innovative services that contribute to community health, agriculture, economic development, education, and to reach out to disadvantaged and vulnerable people.

The overall objective of EIFL-PLIP is to accelerate innovation through demonstration projects leading to development of sustainable innovative computer and internet services where libraries position themselves at the centre of community life in different low resource environments. New public library

services improve socio-economic well-being of individuals and communities by meeting the needs of users. Transfer of knowledge, experience and best practice is used to maximize the investment by encouraging replication elsewhere. The **specific EIFL-PLIP objectives** are therefore:

1. To provide public library users with new services that are important to the community.
2. To test the replicability of new services.
3. To encourage take-up of successful innovation by other public libraries through wide dissemination of the results of the projects.

From 2009 – 2013, during its first phase, EIFL-PLIP concentrated on the first two objectives. EIFL-PLIP activities in this phase built a solid base of innovative library experiences for sharing with the wider library community. During the second (current) phase, **from 2013-2017**, the main focus of EIFL-PLIP is on the third objective. Therefore, EIFL-PLIP decided to conduct an evaluation to **understand why and how innovative services developed through EIFL-PLIP's work were taken up by other libraries**. The evaluation was also expected to provide advice and guidance to the programme team on what works best in encouraging take-up of innovation by public libraries in developing countries.

The activities EIFL-PLIP undertook during its first phase (2009-2013) included:

- Writing up and sharing EIFL-PLIP sub-grantee **case studies** to capture the processes of service implementation and results.
- **A grant call inviting applicants to replicate PLIP services**, to test whether EIFL-PLIP services could be localized and adapted in other geographic, social and economic settings. Applicants were encouraged to read the case studies.
- Several papers and presentations about PLIP services at **international and regional conferences**, for example, IFLA³, SCECSAL⁴, Africa Library Summit, Beyond Access regional conferences.
- EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees presented their services at **national and regional conferences and meetings**.
- **Africa Awareness Raising Groups (AARGs)** – multi-stakeholder groups formed in Kenya, Uganda and Ghana to raise stakeholder (mainly government) awareness about the potential of public libraries and the value and importance of innovative public library services to development. Groups included library leaders and librarians. The groups **organized meetings with**

³ International Federation of Library Associations.

⁴ Standing Conference of Eastern, Central and Southern Africa Library and Information Associations.

government officials, stakeholder events, advocacy training and experience exchange events for librarians.

- **Macedonia advocacy conference (2013)** to discuss the state of public libraries and public library innovation in Macedonia. In addition to contributing financially to the meeting, EIFL-PLIP prepared case studies based on EIFL-PLIP projects and services. **The case studies were presented in a booklet, in Macedonian, and circulated at the meeting. Representatives of previous EIFL-PLIP projects from Macedonia, Bosnia & Herzegovina and Serbia also spoke at the meeting, sharing their experiences of innovation, and the impact of their innovative services.**

In the current phase, (2013-2017), the programme is strengthening its focus on promoting take-up, by continuing or introducing the following activities:

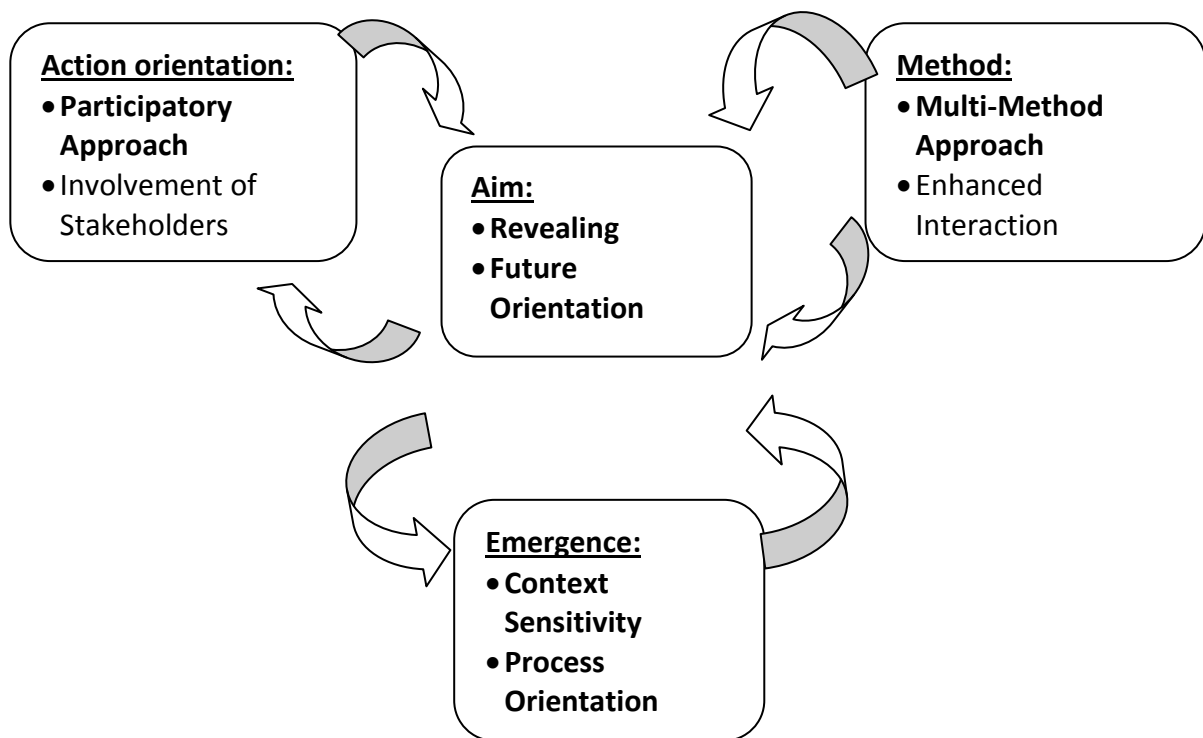
- Write up and disseminate **new case studies** of the sub-grantees from the new global call for children and youth.
- **Translate case studies** of the most successful EIFL-PLIP projects into local languages (to be decided) and **disseminate** them through professional library communication channels.
- Present EIFL-PLIP projects at **international and regional library conferences**. Support participation of EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees in these events to present their services.
- Support library innovators to participate in **national library conferences and meetings**, and encourage them to publish in **professional journals** and blogs.
- **Train and convene innovators** and the wider public library community to foster take-up of ideas and innovative services in focus countries (Ghana, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and several other non-Africa countries).
- Continue advocacy in Ghana, Uganda and Kenya, building on the work of the AARGs (2013-2014) and further supporting promising relationships started with government bodies. Explore start-up of Advocacy and Awareness Raising activities in other (non-African) countries where we see opportunities for influencing governments.

2. Evaluation Purpose, Approach and Methodology

2.1. Evaluation Purpose and Scope

The purpose of the evaluation was mainly **formative**⁵ with some components of **developmental evaluation**⁶. The programme intends to use the findings of this evaluation to inform new decisions to be taken during the second (current) phase of the programme that will extend to 2017. The evaluation has some components of developmental evaluation (DE) since DE supports innovation development to guide adaptation to emergent and dynamic realities in complex environments⁷. The main clients and users of the evaluation will be the donor (Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation) and the implementing organization (EIFL).

In this diagram that reflects the main principles of DE⁸ we have underlined (in black) the components that are present in this evaluation.



The evaluation was led by the external evaluation consultant Ana García Femenía, PhD. Other contributors include qualitative research specialist Renata Sadunishvilli and the EIFL-PLIP Impact Manager Ugne Lipeikaite, as well as EIFL-PLIP, who were also involved and kept informed during all stages of the evaluation. As this evaluation is both formative and

⁵ Note: Formative evaluation is generally any evaluation that takes place before or during a project's implementation with the aim of improving the project's design and performance.

⁶ Note: Developmental evaluation is outcomes-oriented in its focus and is particularly useful in situations where the outcomes are emergent and changing.

⁷ PATTON, M. *Developmental Evaluation*, 2010.

⁸ Atjonen, Päivi, University of Finland, 11th EES Biennial Conference, Dublin 2014.

developmental, its focus was included past activities undertaken during the first stage (2009-2013) and the new take-up activities currently being implemented and planned for future.

2. 2. Evaluative Questions and Approach

The evaluation started in January 2014 with a scoping participatory meeting of EIFL-PLIP staff in Rome where information needs were clarified.

The EIFL-PLIP theory of change assumes that wide dissemination of the results of EIFL-PLIP projects leads to take-up of innovation by other libraries not funded by EIFL-PLIP. In addition, the team was interested in exploring how that happens and finding the answers to three related questions:

1. How do EIFL-PLIP's dissemination activities result in take-up, and how (in what ways and through what processes) services are taken up by libraries that are inspired by an EIFL-PLIP project?
2. What activities, besides dissemination of information, lead to take-up of EIFL-PLIP services by other libraries?
3. What ideas are there for activities other than those undertaken or planned to be undertaken in future by EIFL-PLIP that could encourage and foster innovation in the public library sector?

Five target groups were selected to be surveyed:

1. EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees.
2. Libraries developing innovative services without the support from EIFL-PLIP (these libraries were identified by EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees as having possibly taken-up innovative services).
3. Libraries that applied for, but did not receive, an EIFL-PLIP replication grant in 2012.
4. Libraries that participated in the Macedonia advocacy conference in February 2013.
5. Visitors to the EIFL-PLIP website.

The evaluation has tried to understand **the contribution of EIFL-PLIP to the take-up of innovation** by libraries not included in the programme. As we will see later, under 2.4 Challenges and Limitations, by evaluating to what extent innovative services developed through EIFL-PLIP's work were taken up by

other libraries, we ended up **learning about what inspires libraries to innovate.**

2.3. Data Collection Methods and Analysis

Data collection methods were **both qualitative and quantitative**: five online surveys - using Google Forms tool and EIFL-PLIP website - and four interviews with library leaders that allowed triangulating the main findings. Surveys were initially designed in English, and (depending on language needs of the respondents) later translated into Macedonian, Lithuanian, Spanish and Bulgarian. The following Table summarizes the reach of the **Surveys**:

Group Surveyed	Date of Survey	Number of Respondents	Geographical Scope
1. EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees	May-June 2014	31 libraries	Africa (14) ⁹ , Europe (10), Asia (4) and Latin America (3)
2. Libraries developing innovative services without support from EIFL-PLIP	June-July 2014	40 libraries	Africa (22), Europe (17) and Asia (1)
3. Libraries that applied for the EIFL-PLIP replication grant in 2012, but were not selected	June-July 2014	24 libraries	Europe (10), Africa (8), Asia (4) and Latin & Central America (1)
4. Libraries that participated in the Macedonia conference	October 2014	25 respondents from 15 libraries	Macedonia
5. Web pop up survey	<i>This survey was postponed due to late launch of the new EIFL website.</i>		

A total of **120 people were surveyed** for this evaluation in 2014 over a period of six months. Due to the focus of the evaluation, participants in the surveys were mainly (on an average of 65% of cases in Group 1, 2 and 3) the directors of the libraries or the persons in charge of new services (the coordinators of EIFL-PLIP supported projects for Group 1). In the case of the participants at the Macedonian Conference (Group 4), respondents were mainly (in 60% of cases) the directors of the library or library staff.

⁹ Note: The high number of African respondents may result from the fact that the programme had one special grant call for African countries. As a result, we have a higher number of sub-grantees from African countries.

In addition to surveys, we performed four interviews with library leaders in countries where EIFL-PLIP has supported several library projects (like Serbia) and / or engaged in other activities (for example, awareness raising at the national level; capacity building in Uganda and Kenya, or the advocacy meeting and conference in Macedonia). The following Table provides information about the **Interviews**:

Name	Position	Country	Date interviewed
Richard Masaranga Atuti	Director of Kenya National Library Services	Kenya	December 2014
Gertrude Kayaga Mulindwa	Director of the Uganda National Library	Uganda	December 2014
Branko Cvetkovski Biljana Kociska	Director of Skopje City Library The head of the Library 'Brakja Miladinovci'	Macedonia	December 2014
Jasmina Ninkov	Director of Belgrade City Library and President of the Serbian Library Association	Serbia	December 2014

For each target group (that is, for those surveyed and interviewed) a specific report was prepared. These include significant evidence from results - quantitative data about all responses (pie charts with percentages, quotes obtained through open questions, etc.) as well as qualitative data obtained through interviews. Those reports are an essential part of this evaluation and provide more details to inform EIFL and other key stakeholders like the Global Libraries Programme.

2. 4. Challenges and Limitations

The evaluation was implemented in two stages, with the second stage building on data and knowledge obtained in the first stage. The main challenge for the evaluation was to clearly identify and agree the concept of 'take-up'. This challenge was already apparent at the kick-off meeting in Rome. For some staff members 'take-up' equalled 'replication' of services. Building on this initially through this study we were trying to establish and measure the specific attribution of take-up cases to the programme.

However, as the evaluation progressed and respondents gave their opinion in the surveys (particularly Group 2), it was evident that establishing the direct

cause-effect relationship between EIFL-PLIP services and actions taken by other libraries was going to be difficult, mainly because respondents did not often attribute their inspiration for take-up of innovation services to the EIFL-PLIP programme. In addition, many respondents are non-native English speakers, and 'take-up' might be a new concept for them, difficult to interpret. This could also explain the low rate of responses to some of the questions related to take-up. To further examine a question of relationship to EIFL-PLIP, we would need to engage in more qualitative methods, like interviews or face-to-face meetings.

Having said that, survey results show that the existence of EIFL-PLIP can play a role when libraries, that have not received EIFL-PLIP support, launch new services. One of the findings of this evaluation was, that EIFL-PLIP's effectiveness in promoting innovation should not be measured in terms of numbers (ie how many libraries replicated EIFL-PLIP services), but in terms of the role the EIFL-PLIP programme has in inspiring and motivating take-up by the libraries that did not receive EIFL-PLIP grants.

The evaluation faced some other challenges in conducting surveys. For example, as groups 2, 3 and 4 were not familiar with EIFL-PLIP staff and therefore were not necessarily sufficiently motivated to respond to the online survey. To overcome these challenges, local survey coordinators were hired to help to collect data from Group 2 and Group 4. The role of local survey coordinators was to ensure that libraries responded to the questionnaire, to answer queries about the survey, to translate questionnaires and help with technical issues if needed.

4. Findings

4.1. What inspired libraries to innovate?

Survey results show that respondents from all target groups consider the principal motivating factor for take-up to be "**willingness to make the library more relevant to the community**"; the second motivating factor for EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees (Group 1) and libraries that applied for replication grant but were not selected (Group 3) is "**personal satisfaction of being useful to the community**"; In the case of libraries that are developing innovative services without support from EIFL-PLIP (Group 2), the second motivating factor is "**an opportunity for library infrastructure advancement**", and that is

also the third motivating factor for EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees (Group 1). For libraries that applied for the replication grant but were not selected (Group 3), the third motivating factor is "**Additional Funding for the library**".

To summarize these responses, **the main factors inspiring innovation** are the following:



If we analyse the actors behind those factors, responses suggest that the **community** is the most important actor inspiring take-up of innovation; respondents emphasize that being useful to the community is important to them when deciding to innovate. **Librarians'** satisfaction comes as the second most important actor motivating take-up. Interestingly, personal satisfaction is not valued in terms of improvement for librarians (better earnings or job security), but it is valued in terms of the benefits innovation may imply for the community. Finally, the **library** itself is considered to be the third motivating actor, since take-up of innovative services would directly benefit the library, for example by attracting additional funding or improving its infrastructure.

For library leaders, the **primary motivator for developing innovative services is the need for constant change to ensure that their libraries remain modern (up to date) and relevant**. Respondents pointed out, that in order to survive in today's world, the library needs to change by adapting new technologies, which allow serving the current audience as well as preparing for the future. They are also motivated by the notion that **innovative services strengthen their libraries**: increase visibility, contribute to policy implementation and positively change the image of the library in the community. Implementing innovative services **mobilizes staff**, who become willing to work more and see the changes happening. At the same time, staff become more prepared for the next innovation.

4. 2. What stakeholders are key to encouraging innovation?

The issue of stakeholders was tackled with EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees (Group 1) and libraries that are developing innovative services without the support from EIFL-PLIP (Group 2), as well as discussed during the interviews with library leaders¹⁰. In the first two cases, survey responses show that community related stakeholders are key to encouraging innovation: **NGO's, local governments, local public institutions (e.g. hospital, school)**. This supports a conclusion from the previous question, that the community is an important player in encouraging take-up. **Library authorities** are identified as an important stakeholder too (the top-rated for libraries that are developing innovative services without the support from EIFL-PLIP and the third one for EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees).

If we look at nuances between different respondent groups, libraries that are developing innovative services without support from EIFL-PLIP (Group 2) tend to give more importance to library authorities as a key stakeholder to encourage innovation. This may be explained by the fact that getting funding and support for the innovative services strongly depends on the library authority's decisions. Amongst the community related stakeholders the main one in both target groups are NGOs. The ministry/government agency responsible for public libraries appears as the fourth important stakeholder encouraging innovation.

LIBRARY AUTHORITIES

COMMUNITY RELATED STAKEHOLDERS: NGO's, Local Governments & Local institutions

For library leaders, library authorities (for Uganda and Kenya) or library associations (for Macedonia and Serbia) are the most important stakeholders encouraging take-up of innovative services. Library leaders regard other stakeholders that received high ratings from survey respondents as friendly but not always encouraging innovation. This difference could possibly be explained by the different positions of interview respondents:

¹⁰ Note: The complete list of stakeholders included in the question was the following: Library authority, Ministry / government agency responsible for public libraries, Other ministry / government agency, Local public institutions (e.g. hospital, school), Local government, NGO's, Local media (e.g. radio, TV, publications, etc.), Private businesses (e.g. IT/computer companies; supermarket, communications companies – any other business/firm), Other libraries, Library associations.

library leaders take part negotiations regarding library funding and might have more knowledge about library authorities and associations than regular librarians.

The stakeholders that are not important or less important in terms of encouraging innovations are "other ministry/government agency", "private businesses (e.g. IT/computer companies; supermarket, communications companies - any other business/firm)", "local media (e.g. radio, TV, publications, etc)". These responses reflect a weak relationship between libraries and ICT business as well as with local media. From respondents' perceptions, two stakeholders directly related to the library sector - "other libraries" and "library associations" - are regarded as not particularly important in encouraging innovation.

4.3. What activities encourage libraries to innovate?

The question of which main activities encourage libraries to innovate was tackled with EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees (Group 1; libraries that are developing innovative services without support from EIFL-PLIP (Group 2), and discussed during the interviews with library leaders¹¹. Survey results show that **peer-to-peer activities are seen to be the most important** (the options with highest rating of responses are: "Through visiting other libraries", "Through national conferences", "Through training and capacity building workshops" and "Through joint projects and activities with other libraries"). Interestingly in responding to this question, both groups presented exactly the same ranking in their responses for the first five activities, which shows a high degree of unanimity among librarians.

Library leaders showed their clear preference for international rather than national conferences. They explain that to get inspired they need to hear experiences from other countries. At the same time they agree that participation by international colleagues, speakers or experts at national conferences could be a viable alternative to attending international conferences, financial constraints meant that only one or two people per country can travel to international conferences.

¹¹ Note: The complete list of activities included in the question was the following: Through international conferences; through national conferences or library events; through joint projects and activities with other libraries; through training and capacity building workshops; encouraged by professional leaders; through professional library publications (e.g. journals, newsletters, blogs); through visiting other libraries.

An EIFL-PLIP supported activity that received special attention in the evaluation was the Regional Macedonia Conference that took place in February 2013¹². An important finding from the survey conference participants is that the **factors identified by respondents most likely to inspire public libraries to innovate** are: the **possibility to make personal contact** with colleagues and to maintain it after the conference; the innovative services presented are **relevant to them**; the innovative services presented **can be easily adapted in their libraries**.



Discussion about national conferences with library leaders suggests that they perceive national conferences to be a means for disseminating case studies of innovative services implemented elsewhere, but they do not necessarily find national conferences inspiring. They suggest inclusion in national conferences a day or a day and a half to present experiences from other countries, and to discuss how these experiences could be implemented locally.

4. 4. What barriers prevent libraries from innovating?

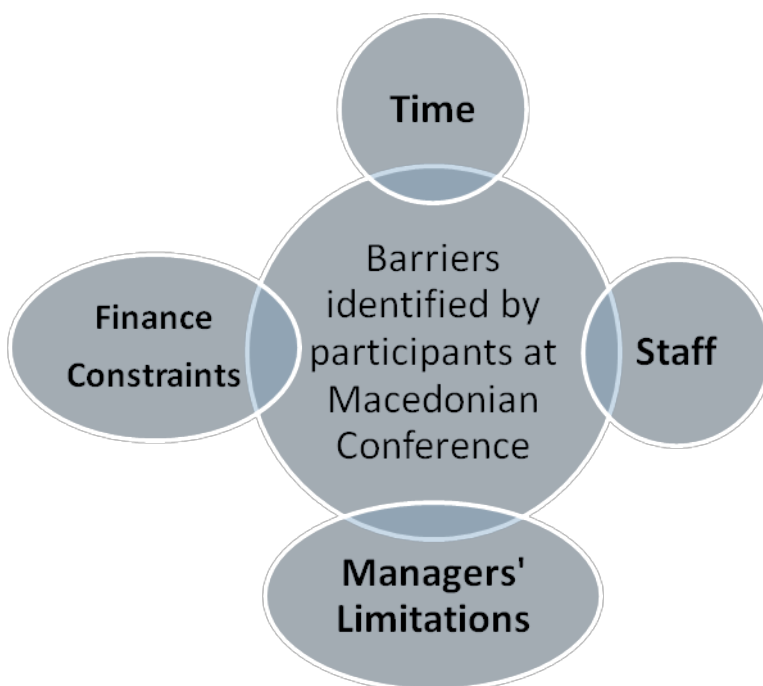
Survey results show that lack of funding and resources are considered the major barrier libraries face when trying to innovate. The second main challenge identified by respondents is **lack of personnel and/or trained staff to develop innovative services**.

¹² Note: The conference was entitled 'Public libraries empower innovations in the community', and it was hosted by Radovis public library 'Braca Miladinovci'. The conference aimed to stimulate dialogue and networking between national and local policy-makers and the library community, and to share knowledge about innovative library services that use information and communication technology (ICT) to meet community needs. Presentations and discussions focused the ways in which innovative public library services contribute to social and economic development, and improve lives.

Lack of Funding

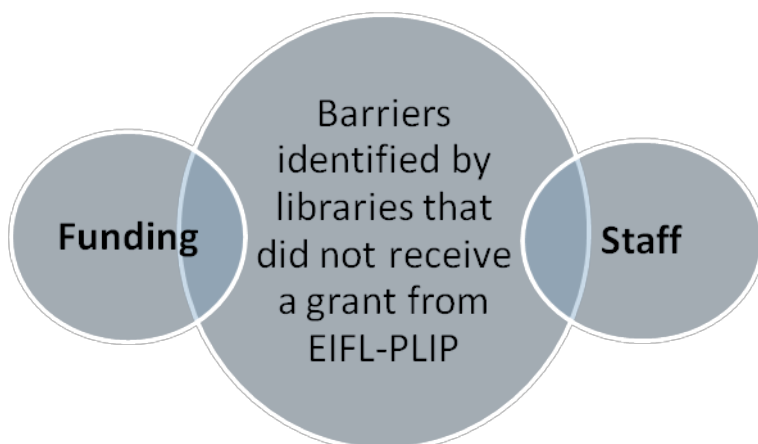
Lack of personnel and/or trained staff

However this issue was treated in a different way in different questionnaires (as a closed list of options or as an open question). Consequently it is interesting to look at the differences in the answers:



Participants at the Macedonian Conference (Group 4) who were unable to develop a new service or adapt an existing service report the following barriers: lack of time and staff, financial constraints and some limitations imposed by their managers. These reasons seem to be considered as the "general barriers" to any attempt to develop an innovative service. Responses differ

when the intention to innovate has already materialized into a specific project, as we will see in the coming example.



Libraries that applied for a replication grant and were not selected (Group 3) report lack of funding and staff as the main barriers preventing them from implementing the innovative services. This becomes more concrete in the case of libraries that

have tried to get funding for their innovative projects but were not able to do so.

In case of libraries developing innovative services without support from EIFL-PLIP (Group 2), lack of funding and resources is also considered the major challenge, followed by lack of personnel. Surprisingly lack of time is considered a challenge that is easier to overcome, followed by lack of new ideas. These results suggest that once the innovative service has been put in place libraries, find ways of organizing themselves internally and assign necessary personnel.

Libraries developing innovative services without support from EIFL-PLIP (Group 2) were also asked about the different phases of service implementation. Responses indicate that they considered obtaining funding for implementation most difficult, followed by advocating for sustainability. Working in partnership and measuring results were the two options considered less difficult.

Interviews with library leaders highlight quite similar challenges. In leaders' opinion, the two main barriers for innovation are **lack of funding and lack of qualified staff**. Lack of funding is understood as lack of or out-dated infrastructure, not enough funding to hire qualified employees, and lack of funding to pay fees to participate in international conferences. Lack of qualified staff in some countries means lack of staff with suitable qualifications, while in others it is simply lack of staff. Library management may also be a problem. **Old/ traditional ways of management were defined as one of the obstacles to implementing innovations in libraries**. Library leaders also see **low library reputation and low involvement** of library representatives in local policy matters, including decisions on funding distribution among local institutions, as a problem / barrier to innovation.

4. 5. How do libraries find out about innovative services?

The evaluation tackled the issue of dissemination of information about innovative services as it is such important part of the programme. EIFL-PLIP sub-grantees (Group 1) were asked in which ways and how frequently they disseminated or shared information about their EIFL-PLIP supported services. The main channels used to disseminate information were "**the library web site**", "**other library social media**", "**print materials**" and "**national or regional library conferences**" respectively. The three channels that are less used were "National professional media (journals, forums,

blogs), "International library conferences" and "Email/professional mailing lists".

Libraries developing innovative services without support from EIFL-PLIP (Group 2) were asked about the ways in which they receive information/ideas about innovative services. The four main channels mentioned were "**Through national library events** (forum, seminar, etc.)", "**Through national or regional library conferences**", "**Through other library websites, or library sector websites**" and "**Through social media**" (Facebook, twitter, etc.). The four channels that are less used were "international library conferences"; "printed materials, like brochures / pamphlets / booklets / fliers; "national professional media (journals, forums, blogs); and "mass media".

Participants at the Macedonian Conference were asked if and how they found out further information about the examples presented after the conference. Around 50% of participants searched for information by directly approaching the libraries that had presented their projects. The majority of respondents also reported getting information about the projects directly from the EIFL-PLIP website or the libraries' websites.

WHERE DO LIBRARIANS FIND OUT ABOUT INNOVATIVE SERVICES?



Library leaders gave their preferences to quite similar channels: 1) **EIFL-PLIP social media**; 2) **information dissemination via professional mailing-lists**; 3) **information published on the EIFL-PLIP website**. However they added that the most effective communication strategy would be to disseminate experiences not only through electronic channels but also present and discuss them at national events or workshops.

In general, we can conclude that websites are an important source of information about (e.g. the EIFL-PLIP website and websites of the libraries

that develop innovative services). Other social media also play an important role in disseminating innovation. National events where librarians meet present and share their innovative experiences also show up as prominent ways for disseminating information about innovation.

5. Conclusions and recommendations

5.1. Which factors encourage take-up of innovation among public libraries in developing countries?

Analyzing findings from the four surveys about the activities that best encourage innovation, the stakeholders that inspire innovation and the most important motivation for librarians to innovate, we arrive at the following key ideas:

- **The librarian is a key actor to work with while encouraging innovation.** She/he feels satisfied by providing innovative services useful for the community. Furthermore librarians are important "**channels**" for **transmitting innovation** within library community and inspiring each other to innovate. EIFL-PLIP support to librarians through the different activities is perceived in a very positive way.
- **Being useful to the community is an essential factor that drives librarians to innovate.** Community needs have to be analyzed first. EIFL-PLIP's approach in measuring and communicating innovative services' impact is important for libraries since they can "measure" and show their success. Librarians feel inspired by innovative projects that are **successful** and **relevant** to them – that they can apply/adapt to their own context. Working with **other stakeholders** from the community (authorities and other members) is important to get their support.
- **Librarians see the development of innovative services as a chance to improve library funding or infrastructure.** Therefore, the opportunity to improve funding and infrastructure can be an important motivator for innovation to happen. At the same time, inadequate funding and poor infrastructure, together with lack of staff, are barriers to innovation in libraries.

- **Promoting peer to peer activities among librarians is essential.** They learn from each other and get mutual support when initiating an innovative service. They like to **network at library events** and be in touch afterwards. Librarians like to know innovative services "*in situ*", therefore library visits, training events, attending national conferences where they meet and exchange experiences, or collaboration in joint projects, works very well to inspire innovation.
- **Disseminating EIFL-PLIP innovative services through the website and social media is a prominent source of inspiration for libraries.** Librarians find out about interesting cases in the EIFL-PLIP website as well as in other libraries' websites. Social Media is a quick and updated way to be informed about EIFL-PLIP supported services advances.

5.2. What is the contribution of EIFL-PLIP to take-up of innovation by other libraries?

Analyzing findings about the link of innovative services in libraries and EIFL-PLIP programme, we come to the conclusion that **EIFL-PLIP serves libraries as a source of inspiration and information on innovative services**, because:

- **The large majority of libraries, which initiated innovative services similar to the ones supported by EIFL-PLIP, were already familiar with EIFL-PLIP and its projects.** These libraries never received EIFL-PLIP funding for innovation, but we know, nevertheless, that we reached almost 90 per cent of them through our communications, mainly **the website and social media**. **This proves the effectiveness of our communication strategy and relevance of channels for dissemination of information about EIFL-PLIP supported services and their impact.** National library conferences and other events is another way of reaching librarians with innovative ideas, and that has also been a channel used and actively supported by EIFL-PLIP.
- **Librarians express their willingness to deepen their knowledge about the services supported by EIFL-PLIP.** Librarians request programme staff and grantees to present their experiences in regional or national library conferences, disseminate EIFL-PLIP

information nationally in local languages through national professional media (journals, blogs) and internationally through international professional mailing lists.

- **One third of libraries directly attribute their inspiration to EIFL-PLIP.** Additionally, another third of libraries that do not directly attribute their inspiration to EIFL-PLIP have a number of links to EIFL-PLIP (e.g. nearly all of them knew about the programme, many of them visited or consulted EIFL-PLIP grantees, some of them participated in EIFL-PLIP calls for proposals, etc.). This allows us to think that in about 60-70 per cent of surveyed cases the programme has contributed to libraries' inspiration to innovate.
- **Libraries seem to adopt the EIFL-PLIP approach of collecting and communicating the impact.** Libraries that took part in the survey were very explicit about the impact of their services. They enthusiastically describe their success, referring both to the positive results (quantitative) for users: for example, jobs found by women or increased subsidies for farmers, and the effects of these services in improving relationships with their communities and local government authorities (in some cases with positive implications for their budgets).
- **Some libraries got inspired by EIFL-PLIP when taking part in the programme's calls for proposals.** Over half of the libraries that took part in the survey of declined applicants to the 2011 call for proposals (to replicate EIFL-PLIP supported services), implemented the services they applied for. In most cases they received funding from other sources, and 40% said the service was implemented without additional funding. However most of those that implemented services without additional funding reduced the scale of the services.