



Planning for Impact, Assessing for Sustainability

Sandra Fried

sandra.fried@gatesfoundation.org

Program Officer

Global Libraries initiative

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Maciej Kochanowicz

maciej.kochanowicz@frsi.org.pl

Impact Planning and Assessment Specialist

Information Society Development Foundation

The Library Program, Poland

Marcel Chiranov, PMP

mchiranov@irex.ro

Impact Assessment Specialist

International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX)

Global Libraries, Romania

www.biblionet.ro

Meeting:

21.6 Statistics and Evaluation

WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS: 75TH IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE AND COUNCIL

23-27 August 2009, Milan, Italy

<http://www.ifla.org/annual-conference/ifla75/index.htm>

Abstract:

Global Libraries (GL) is an initiative of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, dedicated to improving lives by increasing public access to computers and the Internet in public libraries. This paper explains how GL plans for and assesses the impact of its programs on libraries and communities. This assessment approach may be of interest to policy makers, library service managers and library and information researchers.

GL encourages libraries to design programs and services that address local and national priorities. Impact assessment processes assist libraries in collecting, analyzing and reporting evidence to show:

- 1. Whether activities are conducted effectively to enable learning and improve processes;*
- 2. How library services make a difference to users and communities; and*
- 3. What impact evidence to use in advocacy for continued support and funding.*

GL's process and philosophy are described and case studies from grantee programs in two countries are provided.

The Polish American Freedom Foundation (PAFF) adopted innovative methods developed for them by the Information Society Development Foundation to determine baseline library usage in rural public libraries in Poland. Rather than counting borrowers, they conducted random sampling in target areas. This allowed them to count users who do not borrow books, and to gauge scale of repeat usage and user demographics. In so doing, the team found that libraries have a substantially higher reach than book lending data alone suggested.

The International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX) assessed community information needs and determined that education, health, and employment are the issues about which Romanians want more information. Libraries in Romania will design services based on a careful understanding of those needs.

Planning for Impact, Assessing for Sustainability

Table of Contents

Section 1: Global Libraries' Impact Planning and Assessment Process.....	3
1 Context: The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the GL initiative.....	3
2 What is Impact Planning and Assessment?.....	3
3 What is unique about the Global Libraries' approach to IPA?.....	4
4 Integrating IPA into all aspects of library program work.....	4
5 Linking the IPA process to advocacy	5
6 Players and roles	5
7 Identifying, collecting and reporting data.....	6
8 Important considerations for IPA implementation	8
9 Key areas for future development	9
10 Working together to make the case for libraries	9
Section 2: Implementing the IPA Process, Case Studies from GL Grantees in Poland and Romania	10
Case Study 1: Tracing library visits in Poland	10
1 The research problem.....	10
2 Methodology and implementation	10
3 What do visitors do in libraries?	11
4 What about people who do not visit libraries?.....	12
5 Implications for the Library Development Program in Poland	13
Case Study 2: Assessing community information needs in Romania.....	14
1 Pilot program description	14
2 Testing IPA tools and processes	15
3 Impact evidence and information for future action	15
4 Lessons learned from the user surveys.....	17
5 Lessons learned from the librarian surveys	19
6 Conclusions applicable to broad program roll-out.....	19
Acknowledgments	20

Section 1: Global Libraries' Impact Planning and Assessment Process

1 *Context: The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the GL initiative*

Guided by the belief that every life has equal value, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation works to help all people lead healthy, productive lives. In developing countries, the foundation focuses on improving people's health and giving them the chance to lift themselves out of hunger and extreme poverty. In the United States, the foundation seeks to ensure that all people — especially those with the fewest resources — have access to the opportunities they need to succeed in school and life.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation:

- Takes on some of the world's most challenging problems
- Tries to ensure that grantees' successes can be scaled or replicated to achieve greater impact
- Values sustainability (changes that endure over time)
- Believes in evidence-based decision-making for learning and improving

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's Global Libraries initiative applies these principles in working to open the world of knowledge, information, and communication to people across the developing world. This initiative helps public libraries provide free access to computers connected to the Internet and training on how to make full use of these tools. GL is built on the success of a similar program that connected 99 percent of U.S. public libraries to the Internet.

GL works with library systems in selected countries that are committed to providing access to information technology for all citizens and are able to allocate the resources to make this happen. Partner countries demonstrate need for the foundation's support, and have strong library systems, solid infrastructure (such as electricity and broadband Internet capabilities), and the leadership, ability, and resources to maintain nationwide services in their public libraries.

The GL approach to assessing performance and impact is driven by the following core principles:

- Be planned & incorporated into all project phases
- Be rigorous *and* practical
- Be a shared enterprise
- Be timely

This approach has been built over several years, based on the experience and practice of public library grantees across the world. We are delighted to present it in this format as a measurement and learning strategy that, we hope, can help other public library systems create programs that are useful, used and sustainable. Indeed, while the approach was built for public library programs in developing countries, working to implement public access to computers and the Internet, we suggest that a similar process could be applied to social development programs in varied fields of work and geographical settings.

2 *What is Impact Planning and Assessment?*

The GL Impact Planning and Assessment (IPA) process addresses discerning local needs, designing services to meet these needs, measuring progress and using evidence for advocacy and sustainability of public library services. This ensures that programs have the best fit with their local environments, target audience needs and local stakeholder/government priorities. By matching local funders' needs and priorities – and

being able to promote library accomplishment of these goals – library programs can attain long-term, sustainable funding.

IPA assists library program implementers decide, locally:

- What impacts they would like to achieve through their library programs
- What information they need about the current situation (baseline data) and how to collect it
- How and when to monitor progress
- How to use information from implementation monitoring to deal with obstacles and overcome challenges
- How and when to collect information about any changes that have occurred or any ways in which people are better off as a result of the new library services
- How to use that evidence for advocacy efforts.

3 What is unique about the Global Libraries' approach to IPA?

The main differences between the GL approach to impact work and that assessment undertaken by most public library services are that:

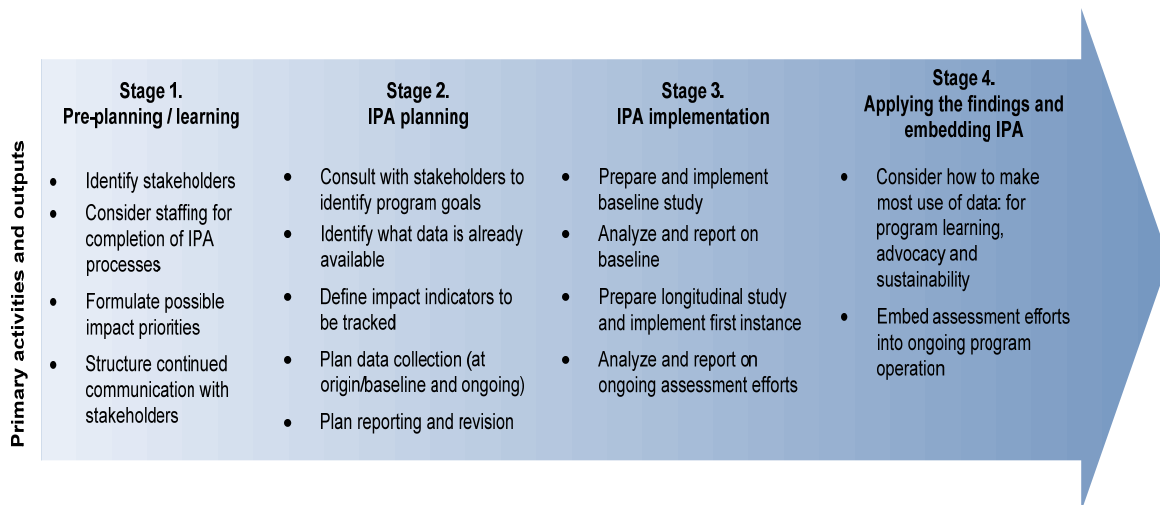
- The GL initiative is conducted on an international scale, with each national grantee joining a systematic and rigorous IPA program
- A balance is maintained between the impact assessment needs of the Global Libraries team and national autonomy in deciding the focus and priorities for IPA
- There is strong emphasis on capacity building in national public library services to enable them to achieve significant impact in their programs.

These elements lead to a sustained focus on planning for impact and sustainability, throughout the life of each national grant and beyond.

4 Integrating IPA into all aspects of library program work

GL sees the IPA process as vitally interwoven with other aspects of launching and running programs to enhance library services. These could encompass designing training curricula, procuring and installing equipment, or implementing publicity campaigns, among others. All these processes must work together to create programs that contribute to the established impact goals, and are positioned to advocate for sustained funding.

In order to assist programs to navigate through the IPA process, GL has created a road map outlining the primary IPA activities. In summary, the IPA activities progress through the following stages:



The first case study presented in this paper focuses on elements within stages 1 and 2 of this process. The second case study concentrates on aspects of the baseline study in stage 3.

5 *Linking the IPA process to advocacy*

GL views advocacy as a series of coordinated and targeted actions to engage and motivate local and national stakeholders to provide the enabling environment and resources needed for high-quality, sustainable library programs. When grantees begin planning for the library enhancements, we ask that they design programs and activities destined to contribute to changes in peoples' lives. That is, programs that encompass changes in the library itself yet reach beyond to contribute to changes in users' lives. When information on these types of broad changes is available, programs can achieve greater success with their advocacy efforts.

To determine the way in which libraries change people's lives, grantees must deeply engage stakeholders in program design in order to plan activities that contribute to meeting users' needs. Examples include the creation of job search programs where employment is a primary goal, or health programs where health outcomes are sought. In defining program goals that are locally relevant, and assessing program performance toward those goals, the impact planning and assessment process can assist librarians, library managers, strategists and policy makers to:

- Determine whether the services being provided are contributing to achieving program goals
- Gain information to guide changes in focus if necessary, in order to more effectively meet program goals
- Gather evidence for whether services contribute to making a real difference in the lives of users and/or their communities
- Use this evidence to advocate for continued development of libraries, computer use, and financial sustainability.

6 *Players and roles*

Because IPA plays an important role in designing programs, informing change and providing evidence for sustained use and funding of the services, IPA efforts should consider and encompass the following important groups:

- Core operating team:** the implementing program holds the reins in an IPA process, keeping Impact Planning and Assessment as central to the other core functions

engaged in designing and operating the program. It may be necessary to engage specific human resources to spearhead these tasks.

2. **Program users:** creating value in people's lives is central to social development programs. Program users therefore provide critical information regarding what services they need and want. They should also be approached continually to provide information on what services they are indeed using and how they are benefiting from that usage, to give programs vital material to incorporate into advocacy activities.
3. **Key stakeholders¹ and funders:** stakeholders' needs and interests must also be considered early in program design, so activities are directed at meeting social goals that are fundable at the local/national level. By expressing their interests and needs, stakeholders give important direction for the advocacy plan that the program must follow to achieve sustained support and funding.
4. **Other practitioners in the field/region:** these are essential relationships to build. A collaborative body of practitioners can share valuable expertise and best practice, and their actual data/success stories can often be incorporated into the host program advocacy work through proper message crafting.

7 Identifying, collecting and reporting data

Two types of information are collected as part of the IPA process:



The data captured in the **performance metrics** are intended to help monitor progress of individual programs (for local learning and course correction) but also for GL's purposes, to track performance of our grant portfolio as a whole. The performance metrics are few in number but are perceived as mainstream and desirable by managers, funders and policy makers. Where possible, they draw on existing international standards.²

Following are the metrics that GL uses, pertaining directly to our mission of creating useful and used public access to computers and the Internet in libraries. Other performance metrics are captured routinely by our grantees, and locally-appropriate indicators should be considered by all practitioners.

¹ GL defines "stakeholder" as a person, group, organization, or system who affects or can be affected by an organization's actions. In the libraries context this term encompasses, among many others, governments at different levels, private funders, library associations, library schools, etc.

² Based primarily on ISO 2789:2006, International Library Statistics, http://www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=39181 and ISO 11620:2008, Library Performance Indicators, www.iso.org/iso/iso_catalogue/catalogue_tc/catalogue_detail.htm?csnumber=37853

Required metrics	Recommended metrics
No. of libraries providing public access computing	Users' activities in the library / on computers
No. of workstations available in country/target region	State of training of public library staff
No. of physical visits to public libraries	No. of unique users of public access computing in public libraries
Workstation use rate	No. of virtual visits
No. of library staff trained under the GL grant	Repeat patron usage
No. of library users trained by GL program in information seeking / use of ICT	User demographics
Spending on public library services (GL and other)	

The second category of data collection is focused around **country-specific impact indicators**, as a necessary component of the totality of evidence needed to describe a country grant program's contributions to local and national goals.

We have found that library programs can aspire to contributing to changes in people's lives in one of the following 6 areas:

Areas of Impact	Examples: ...on libraries, on users
Education	Libraries offer on-line reading programs People acquire skills at library
Health	Libraries refer people to relevant on-line information and services Users have improved health choices
Culture and Leisure	Library become social center of community Events and activities lead to community re-vitalization
Economic Development	Librarians direct business people to relevant information Small businesses are more productive
Communication	Librarians teach people to use e-mail Isolation of marginalized communities decreases
E-government	Librarians teach people to access e-government services Improved citizen uptake of government services

As discussed above, program goals are designed through stakeholder consultation, so the indicators selected to measure program performance and the level of rigor with which those are studied need to match local needs in each grant. Importantly, when designing the set of metrics and collection methodology for each program/system, close attention should be paid to collecting *useful* evidence – that which can be used for outreach and advocacy purposes.

8 *Important considerations for IPA implementation*

Following are a number of important elements that direct implementation of IPA processes for GL grantees. These may be equally valuable to assessment efforts in the broader context:

- **GL does NOT require our grantees to measure whether programs have caused – in attributable³ ways – ultimate change in people’s lives.** For example, GL does not expect our library programs to prove, conclusively, that installing computers in libraries has led to an X% increase in local incomes. GL considers that this level of research rigor would require an inappropriate usage of resources in the public library context.
- **It is important for libraries to design programs and activities destined to contribute to changes in peoples’ lives.** This is achieved by deeply engaging stakeholders in program design, in order to plan activities that contribute to meeting users’ needs. What follows are activities to collect evidence describing this contribution – whether through stakeholder perceptions, surveys, case studies, relevant statistics compiled by a third-party or government entity (e.g. labor and health statistics), or other methods. Any valid method of social science research could be acceptable.

Collecting this kind of evidence can be demanding of people and time; therefore, evidence should be collected based on what will be most convincing in local outreach and advocacy efforts to demonstrate to local, regional and national governments how libraries contribute to their priorities. For example, programs could ask librarians to report stories of users who have found new/better jobs as a result of library programs. Alternatively, programs could seek a higher level of proof by asking a random sample of users whether the library has assisted them in finding new/better jobs. Both would be acceptable, and the method should be selected to meet local capacities, and advocacy and outreach needs.

- GL urges our grantees to **consider the 6 key impact areas contained in GL’s areas of impact** (shown above) as they decide on the focus areas of their program’s impact. This list addresses the primary areas where public library services (inclusive of public access to computers and the Internet) can influence people’s lives. In determining which areas to focus on, GL recommends that programs **consider the priorities of the entity/governments funding their libraries**. Gathering data in these priority areas will help librarians demonstrate the value of the library to communities and to funders.
- After choosing the focus areas of local importance, **programs should invest time and effort in creating locally relevant metrics that are appropriate to the focus area**. Programs should carefully consider what evidence they will need to show their contribution toward the desired impact, as well as how often measurement is required, in order to avoid measuring more than is necessary.
- **Impact Planning and Assessment is by definition an iterative process**. Library programs should continually gauge users’ and stakeholders’ needs and interests, refine

³ **Attribution** and **causation** are concerned with whether the intervention directly **caused** the impact. That is, they seek to prove that the change would not have taken place had the intervention not occurred. Attribution studies are very rigorous and expensive, requiring high levels of technical expertise. GL does **not** expect grantees to undertake attribution studies. Instead, GL asks grantees to gather evidence of benefits that have accrued since the program began, and with this evidence build a case for how the program has **contributed** to the changes identified and has ‘added value,’ even while there may be other influences involved.

services appropriately, collect data to show contribution toward meeting these needs, and use that evidence for advocacy purposes.

9 Key areas for future development

Recent conversations within the GL grantee community have brought to light two important areas that deserve deeper consideration:

1. IPA processes map program goals to government needs/interests, and use evidence to advocate appropriately. But what about the frequent cases in which library systems receive funding from multiple layers of government (municipal, state, national, etc.) and/or private funders, and each has divergent needs and interests? This creates a quandary for the library system, as it becomes very challenging to create unified program goals and measurement plans.

The short answer must reside in a mixed approach: one in which library systems implement a few overarching goals and metrics that respond to the high-level/national level, while maintaining independence to create supplemental services and metrics that answer to local needs. This parallels the need to have high-level/national advocacy activities and others targeted toward the local audience, as each has its place and role. But there are important challenges in addressing the human expertise, resources and process necessary to make these various levels of planning, measurement and advocacy collaborate smoothly with each other.

2. The focus of the IPA process is to create sustained library programs that are useful and used. While GL has worked with grantees on this process and has seen it succeed in the long run, we need to think deeply about intermediate metrics to gauge progress toward achieving sustainability. Increased funding from other sources is a critical component (included already in our performance metrics), but this does not assure that the funding will be sustained after the life of the grants, nor that the libraries themselves are positioned to sustain the levels of service delivery and advocacy.

10 Working together to make the case for libraries

Measurement and learning are critically important to Global Libraries and to our grantees. Measurement helps grantees make decisions about necessary program improvements and, perhaps more importantly, provides the evidence needed successful advocacy efforts. This forms the backbone of libraries' strategy for ensuring long-term program sustainability: making the case for ongoing, local financial support is built on creating an understanding in public and government supporters for what public library programs accomplish and the benefits they bring.

Section 2: Implementing the IPA Process, Case Studies from GL Grantees in Poland and Romania

Case Study 1: Tracing library visits in Poland

Author: Maciej Kochanowicz

1 *The research problem*

In preparing the Library Development Program in Poland,⁴ we looked for an overall indicator of public library performance and its reach in society. We sought an indicator that could be used both for designing our Program and later for assessing its impact. We needed a gauge that could serve as a baseline for measuring efficiency of libraries before, during and after the Program's implementation. This basic, but not the only possible indicator, is offered by the number of people using libraries.

Poland has well-grounded data about library performance, collected by the National Statistics Office and published by the National Library.⁵ These data come from surveys filled out yearly by all public libraries in Poland. But their focus is on particular aspects of library performance, especially those related to its core book lending function. When it comes to counting users, National Statistic Office data includes only the registered number of readers, the number of loans of library materials and very general categorizations of book borrowers; it does not offer any information about repeat usage patterns, user demographics or other services being used in the libraries. And, last but not least, such data collected by librarians themselves is prone to bias and cannot be considered as an external indicator of libraries' performance.

2 *Methodology and implementation*

We therefore decided to make use of a method widely applied in market research, and conduct a survey on a sample of the general population. This survey allowed us to measure not only usage but also its patterns (e.g. frequency) and forms (e.g. how many users borrow books and how many use computers). Additionally, we were able to explore such topics as user satisfaction, public image of libraries and public expectations towards them (not discussed in this case study). We could also get insights into attitudes of non-users toward libraries, such as measuring non-direct usage (analyzing the behavior of users who do not visit libraries themselves, but have other forms of contact with its activities).

We used a CATI technique (Computer-Assisted Telephonic Interview) to survey a representative sample of the rural and small town population (the target area for the Library Development Program in Poland). Respondents were aged 13 years and older. In addition to a sample of the general population, a booster sample of library users was introduced in order to attain a higher number of interviews with this group. The number of interviews in the general sample was 1,021, with 306 in the booster on library users (people who declared at least one visit to the library in the previous 12 months), which together with

⁴ The Library Development Program in Poland is implemented by the Information Society Development Foundation (FRSI). The FRSI was founded by the Polish-American Freedom Foundation. The Polish-American Freedom Foundation has partnered with the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help Poland's public libraries provide access to computers, the Internet, and training.

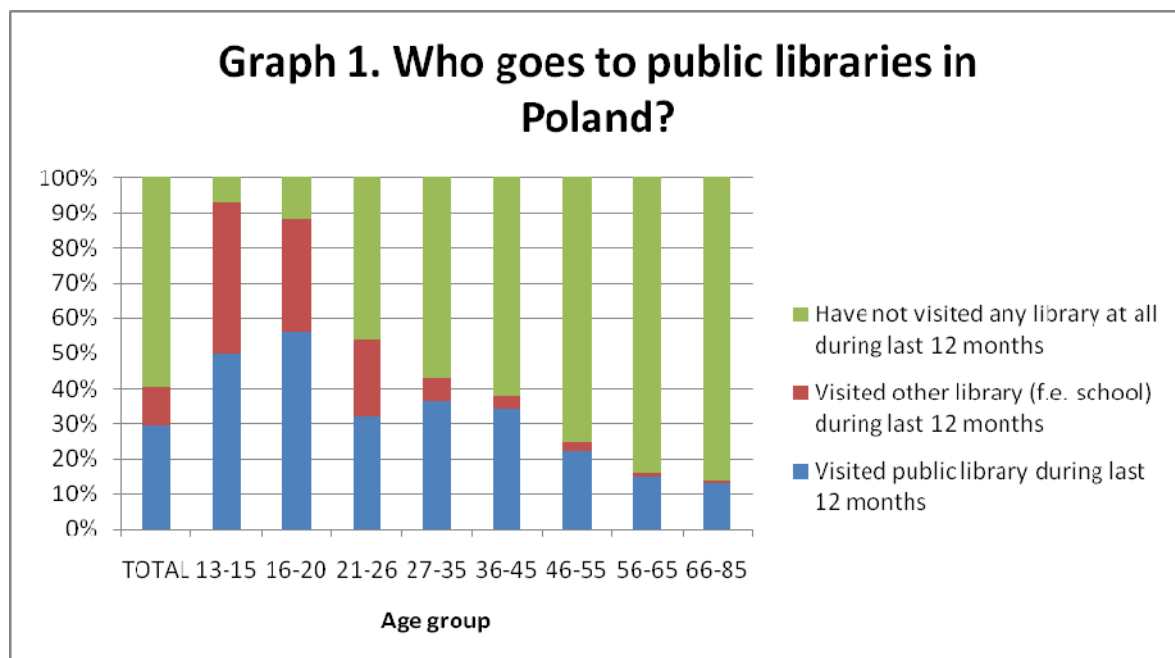
⁵ Last edition, "Public Libraries in Figures. 2007", National Library, 2008.
<http://www.bn.org.pl/index.php?id=6&bpwl>. Edition covering 2008 is forthcoming.

interviews in the general sample, produced 615 interviews with library users. Gender, age, education, province and town size category were controlled in the sampling and weighting. Field work was carried out by SMG/KRC, a Polish branch of the MillwardBrown market research agency⁶. Full results of the study are available on the website of the Library Development Program in Poland⁷.

3 What do visitors do in libraries?

Results of the study indicate that the reach of libraries is much higher than the number of registered readers would suggest. 29% of respondents in the survey declared that they had visited a public library within the last 12 months, regardless of the purpose. Data on registered readers put this number at 22%.

Libraries are most often visited by young people (53% of that group), who visit to complete school-related tasks; less often by middle-aged (34%) or older (16%) people.

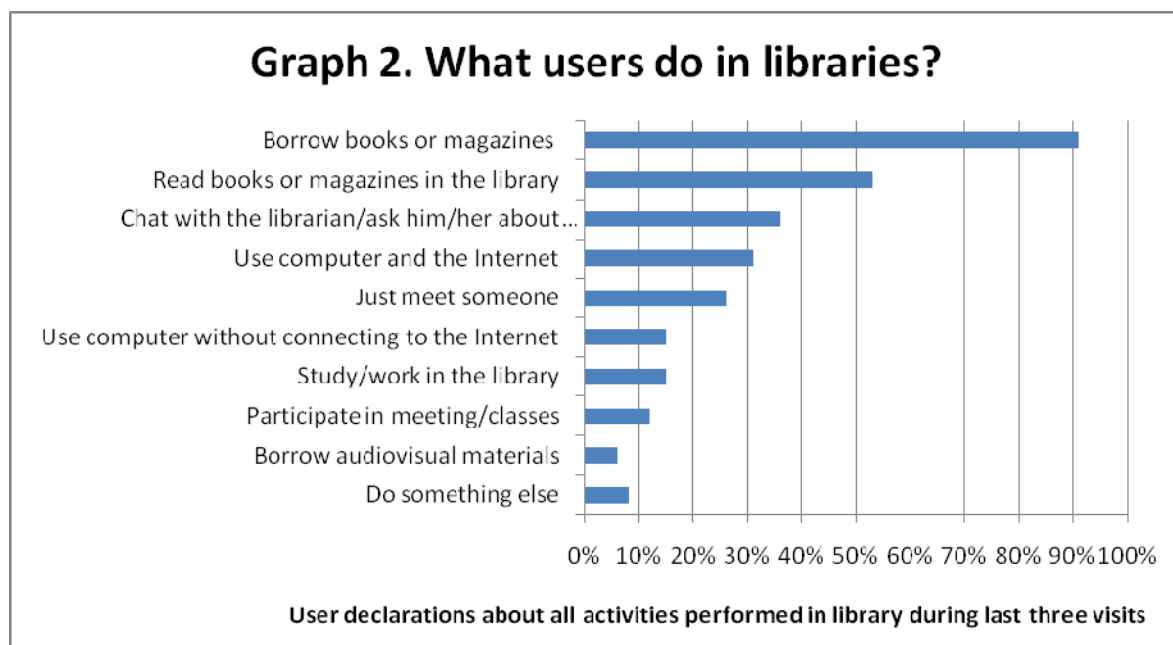


On average, library users declare 14.3 visits a year. As many as 27% of them declare 3 visits or fewer, another 25% declare 4-6 visits. Therefore more than half of the users may be considered occasional users. On the other hand, 24% of users declare 7-15 visits yearly, and 24% more than 15.

Most surprising were the results about ways people benefit from the library services. People of course visit libraries to borrow books or magazines – 91% of visitors declared this activity during the last three visits (note that respondents could indicate more than one answer to this question). Half of the respondents (53%) also use books on the spot. The following graph shows other services accessed:

⁶ <http://www.millwardbrown.com/sites/poland/>

⁷ „Biblioteki publiczne – opinie, korzystanie, potrzeby” available on , http://www.frsi.org.pl/login.php?pre_nid=67&. “English summary „Public libraries - population survey”, also available on this site.



We found two surprisingly frequent library uses which did not involve books. First is using computers in libraries. As many as 31% of library users connect there to the Internet (and nearly 60% of the young people visiting libraries), and an additional 15% use a computer without connecting to the Internet.

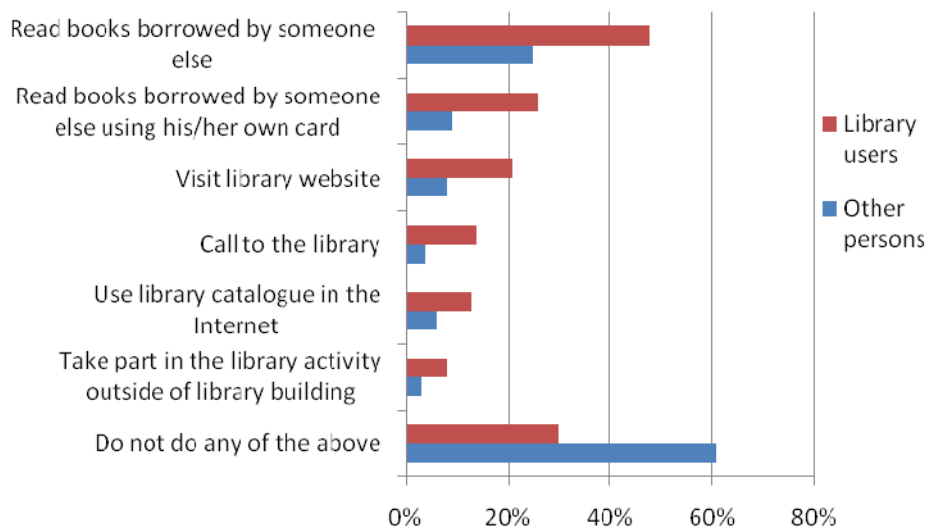
The second unexpected way of benefiting from the library is treating the visit as an opportunity to socialize or network with others. For 26% of visitors, the library is a place in which they meet with somebody, and as many as 36% go to the library just to chat with the librarian or ask him/her about something (especially the elderly – more than 50%). This shows a potential role that a library may play in social communication and integration.

These two types of activities performed in libraries indicate that libraries have a much wider social impact than the one exercised through simple book-lending. Their reach takes other forms apart from book-lending – notably accessing computers and social networking. But it is also necessary to add, that only 12% of library visitors participate in meetings organized in the library, and 6% borrow audiovisual materials. This shows that the activity of Polish public libraries in these two areas is comparatively peripheral, and could be enhanced.

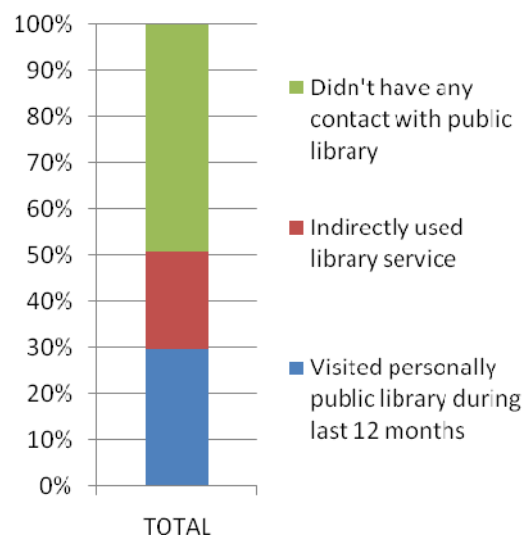
4 What about people who do not visit libraries?

We found that people who do not currently go to the library last made a visit on average 10.9 years ago. However, 30% of those who presently do not visit libraries (21% of all respondents) have indirect contact with them: 25% declare that they read books borrowed by someone else, 9% read books borrowed by someone else using their own card, 8% declare that they visit the library's website, and 4% call their library. These results show that the outreach and social impact of libraries extends beyond the group of people who visit the buildings in person.

Graph 3. Indirect ways of using library services



Graph 4. Direct and indirect library users



5 Implications for the Library Development Program in Poland

The results of this study helped us to define the main objectives of the Polish Library Development Program. We decided that the Program should have a strong focus on strengthening the role of the library as a place of social activity and social networking, based on the already existing potential of libraries in this field. At the same time we realized that it is crucial to develop various forms of organized activities in libraries (meetings, hobby groups, friends' circles, etc.) as these activities are not developed sufficiently in Polish libraries. We also realized that our Program should not only bring new users to the libraries, but also help to increase the frequency of visits by 'occasional users' and facilitate bringing to libraries those people who now use them indirectly. Thanks to this study – as well as other research activities carried out in the planning phase of the Library Development Program – we decided to aim at redefining the social role of Polish public libraries, basing this not only on their book-related activities, but also on their considerably high (and not widely recognized) social reach.

We plan to repeat this study during the evaluation of the Library Development Program – one year and two years after key activities of our Program have been implemented. Such deferred measurement will allow us to grasp changes that are not immediately visible. The current measurement will serve as a reference point, a baseline, against which to compare future study results.

We will conduct future surveys both in communes participating in the Program and those not participating, in order to obtain a control group. Such coverage will also allow us to have an overall measurement of the performance of the whole Polish library system in forthcoming years – especially in fields not directly related to book-lending. Therefore it will be possible to draw a trend-line and test the hypothesis that the reach of libraries is declining, as data capturing book-lending trends currently suggests.

Case Study 2: Assessing community information needs in Romania

Author: Marcel Chiranov, PMP

1 Pilot program description

The Global Libraries program in Romania is being implemented by the International Research and Exchanges Board (IREX). The goal of this program is to establish public access to computers and Internet in public libraries in Romania. IREX has piloted implementation since November of 2007, establishing Public Access Centers (PAC) in 12 pilot public libraries. These centers offer computer and Internet services, and they also provide tailored content, training and other training to meet the local communities' interests.

During this pilot phase, IREX tested several implementation mechanisms and one of the most important was the Impact Planning and Assessment (IPA) process. Several important questions for full-program roll-out are now closer to being answered:

- What will a successful Public Access Center (PAC), in a public library, look like? What does 'satisfied users' mean?
- What topics are most important for public library users, which can be addressed through tailored services in public libraries?
- How eager (if at all!) are the librarians to offer public access to computers and the Internet as a new library service?
- How to ask librarians to cooperate in impact related data collection, in order to not to ask too much of them, and help them feel comfortable with data collection? How much is 'too much' when asking librarians to collect impact related data on PAC activity?

In order to answer these questions IREX organized a Library Capacity Analysis in a sample of 208 Romanian libraries, and Citizens Needs Assessment through interviews with 1,066 citizens. Both were done by a professional survey company.

- 99% of the interviewed communities considered that they need a PAC
- Citizens reported interest in the following topics:
 1. Healthcare for all (medical advice, finding the closest practitioner, clinics, pharmacies)
 2. Information regarding local government
 3. Information as to how to access funds or credit for small businesses
 4. Job placement
 5. Funding sources for community development
 6. Communication on-line: creating an email address, talking on Skype
 7. Developing a business plan
 8. Information regarding accessing EU funds
 9. Banking information
 10. How to write a CV, and job interview skills

Global Libraries Romania has started to design e-content packages to provide services on these topics. At present we have finished Education, Agriculture, Labor Market, and Environment. The Health e-package is under construction and others will follow. These packages provide relevant links and brief information on various web sites/organizations active in these topics.

In parallel with the Citizens Needs Assessment survey, Global Libraries Romania ran community meetings with all pilot sites to better understand their priorities and expectations. Those findings were checked against the Citizens Needs Assessment, and the overlap was almost perfect. This has been used as a triangulation method to control risk in assessing target group needs.

2 *Testing IPA tools and processes*

During 2008, Global Libraries Romania organized quarterly meetings with the 12 pilot library sites. Each contained IPA sessions which were organized based on some simple criteria:

- To use only friendly terms (plain Romanian) in order to help librarians understand data collection
- To introduce the librarians step by step into data collection and reporting, allowing gradual learning and making a tight connection between new PAC services, data collection and satisfying user needs
- To try to collect only relevant data for the PAC activity and avoid data 'over-collection'
- All sessions were planned and delivered through informal sessions/brainstorming rather than formal training. Everyone was asked to offer opinions and their feedback was always positive and constructive. The whole group felt they actively participated in the data collection design.

The first quarterly meeting was focused on what data should be collected and how, including carefully defining with the libraries what successful PAC services would look like.

The second quarterly meeting focused on questionnaires to be used in data collection. The assembled librarians commented on questionnaire strengths and weaknesses, and greatly improved the data collection tools.

During the third quarterly meeting, Global Libraries Romania heard the first successes! A citizen in a rural area, with difficulty accessing specialized medical practices, had successful kidney surgery. A lady found out about a good Urology practice in a big city, and made an appointment with the help of the librarian within the PAC. Also, we learned about the first people who asked for librarian help to fill out an on-line CV and complete a job application, and some of these later obtained new jobs. Hearing these success stories helped us define how often and with what content librarians would report back to Global Libraries Romania on the PAC services.

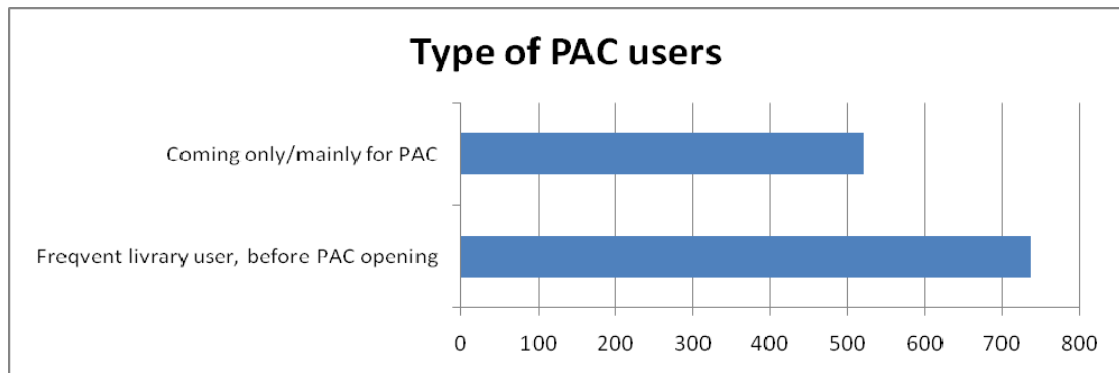
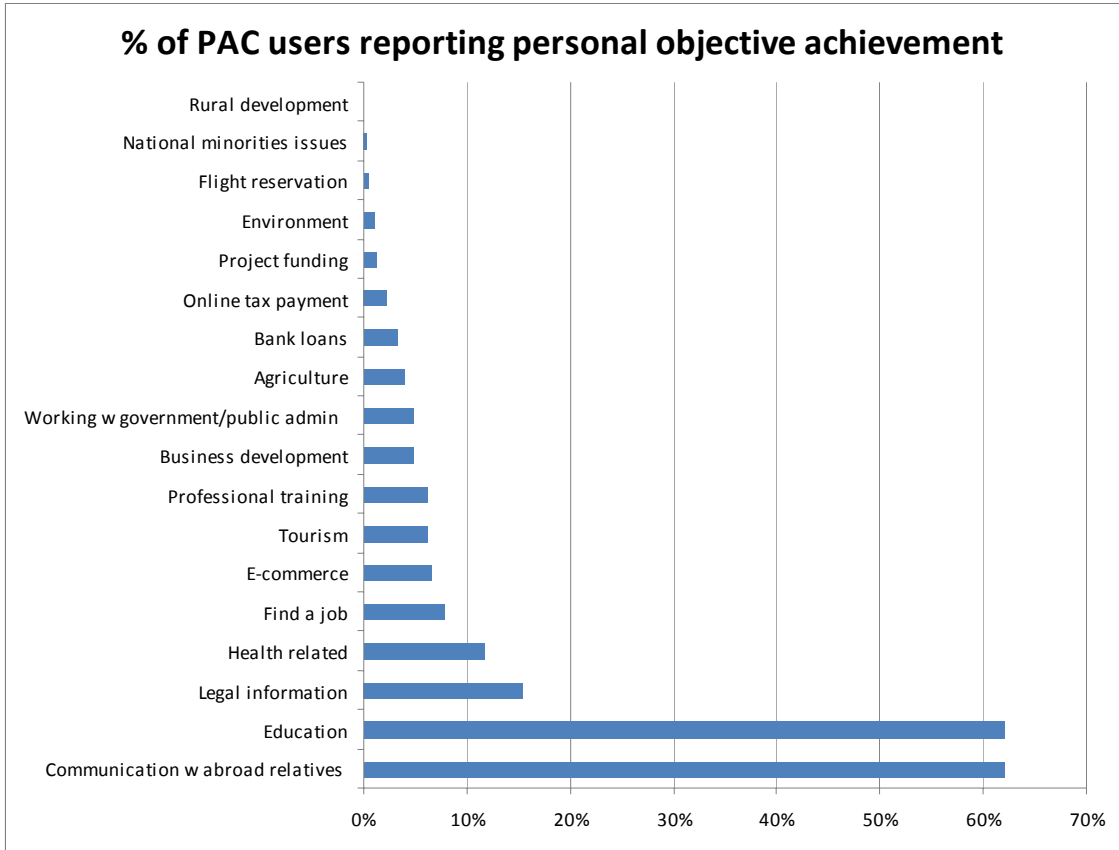
After this meeting Global Libraries Romania decided that it is useful to have a separate Librarian survey after one year of pilot project and also a further survey (handled by the librarians) to collect PAC users feedback.

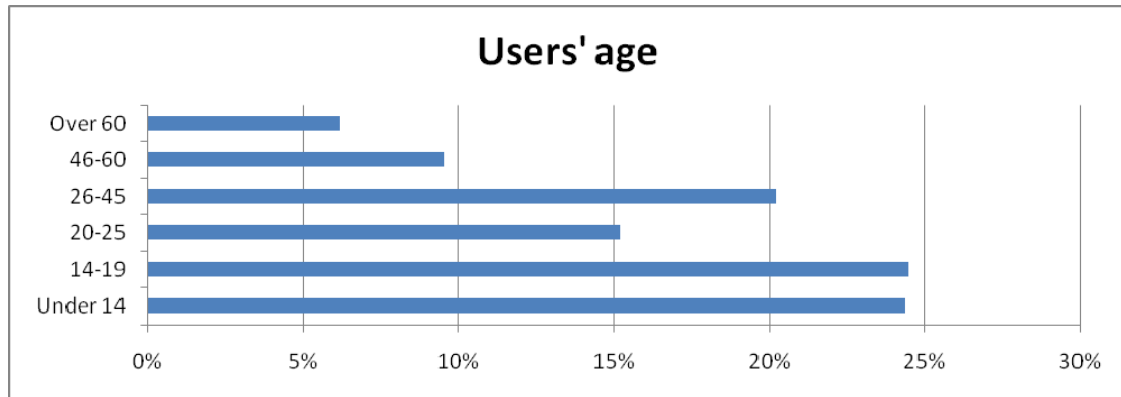
3 *Impact evidence and information for future action*

The last quarterly meeting offered the opportunity to analyze the above-mentioned surveys, and describe how the data collection and IPA work will be done in future. At this point we had a good understanding of what a satisfied PAC user can look like, what data the librarians can collect and how they will report. We also learnt about other PAC success stories: people finding good information and guidance for themselves or for their kids; a

driving licence test passed after practicing with on line tests; IT small business development using a PAC; or communicating with relatives abroad.

The user survey questioned 1,217 PAC users, who answered the following questions relating to their perceived PAC benefits:

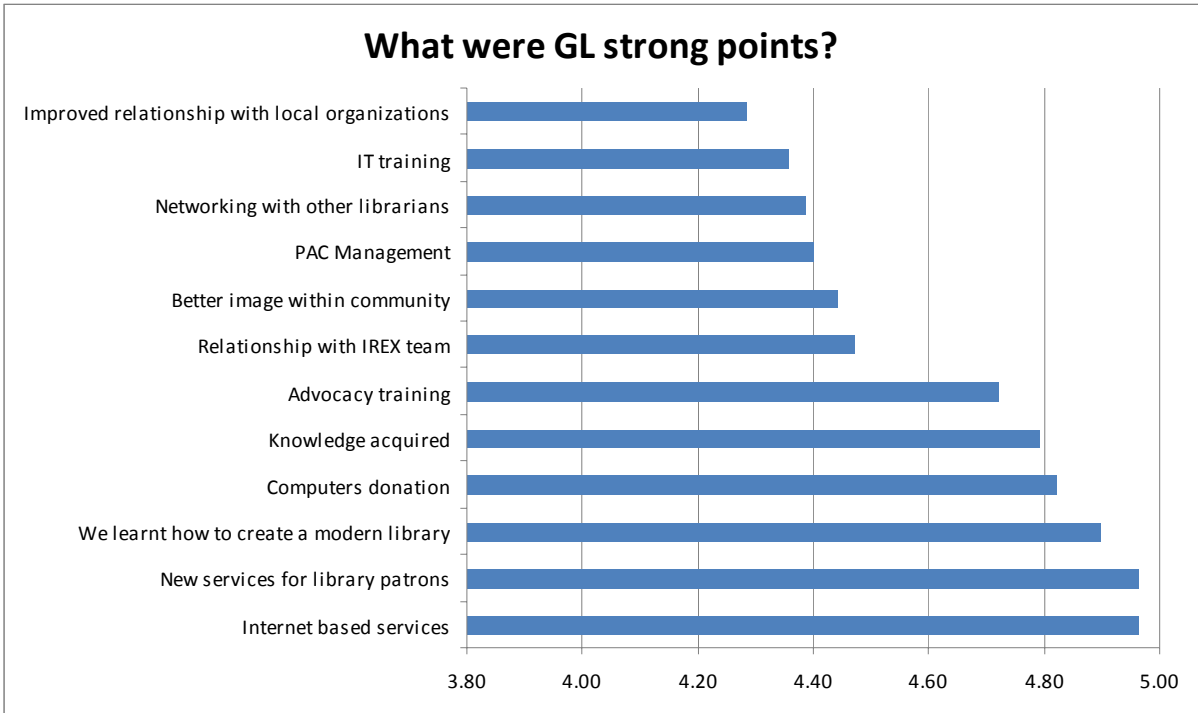




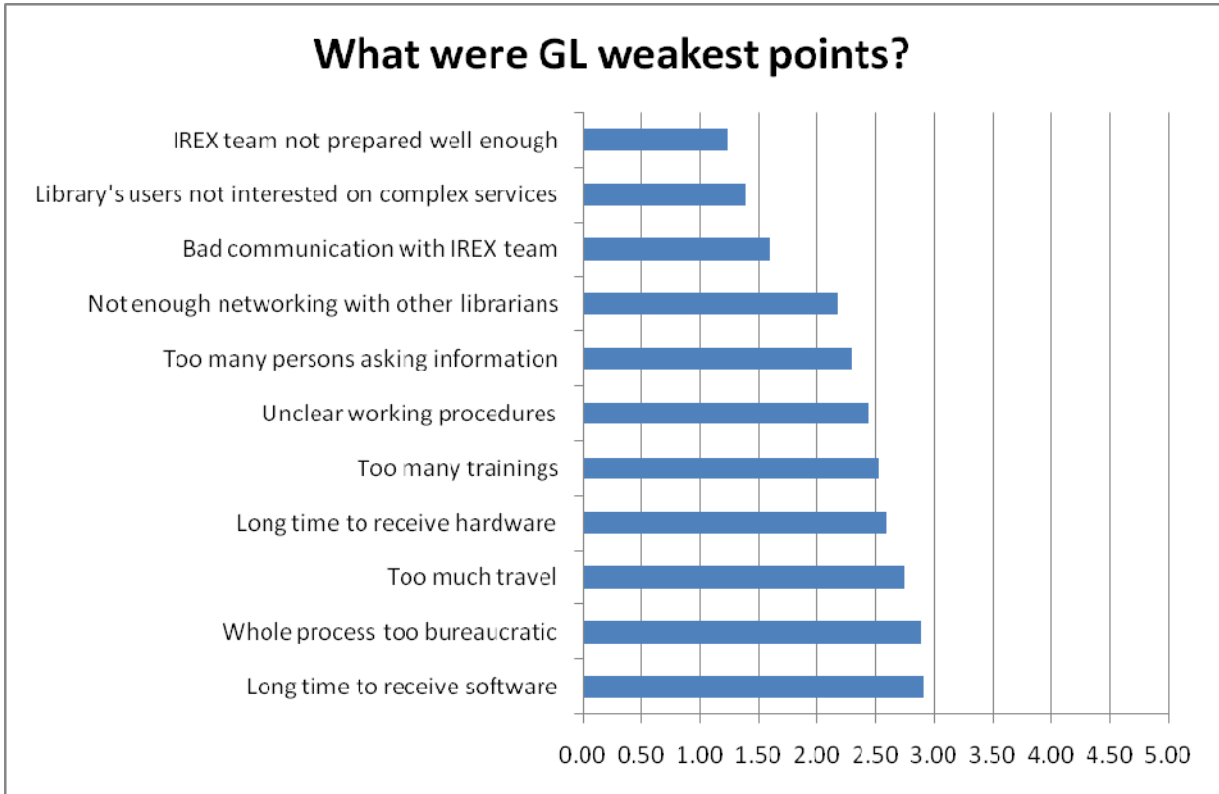
4 *Lessons learned from the user surveys*

- *There is a lot of interest in PAC*
- *There is a group of library patrons ready and eager to use more sophisticated services*
- *There is a group of library patrons able to take action based on information they receive from PAC; probably we should pay more attention to encouraging this proactive attitude*
- *Content management, or delivery services, proved to be very helpful*
- *Success stories of users solving personal problems using PAC services appeared very soon after PAC services were implemented*
- *In some places library patrons volunteered to assist librarian or other patrons with hardware/software issues; this is a great resource for program implementation.*

28 librarians working in the 12 pilot sites answered the survey after one year of pilot implementation. They were asked only two questions: "What were Global Libraries Romania strong points?", and "What were Global Libraries Romania weak points?"



Scale from 1 = false up to 5 = true



Scale from 1 = false up to 5 = true

5 Lessons learned from the librarian surveys

- *Librarians easily surpassed implementation barriers if they understood the final objectives*
- *Librarians are eager to modernize their services*
- *Most of the librarians understand that they have to create alternative services in order to keep their patrons' interest and maintain public funds for their activities*
- *Not all librarians easily leave their comfort zone to do new activities (travel, attend training, interact with new people)*
- *Some of the librarians need to see a more structured process in operation in order to consider implementing it themselves*
- *Some of the librarians seem to be very effective and efficient in data collection and reporting; if we explained the use of the information and provided them with conclusions, the process ran very smoothly.*

6 Conclusions applicable to broad program roll-out

1. IPA should be handled in cooperation with librarians, using easy to understand terms and processes that are simple to manage
2. Satisfied PAC users (success stories) can appear in as short time as six months of efficient PAC management; this provides important early advocacy opportunities
3. If IPA is developed based on librarians' and users' needs, and results are consistently shared, librarians will take ownership quite fast. Is important to always use real-life examples to describe the connection between data collection and processing and the PAC activity
4. The Romanian Librarians' Association (ANBPR) has already expressed a wish to add the IPA indicators that Global Libraries Romania is collecting into their official data collection practice
5. Early Global Libraries Romania success stories look exactly like some of those from the Martin Luther King Public Library in Washington DC: there is a strong focus on finding employment and on education/alternative education methods (observation done during study visit in March 2009).

Acknowledgments

Global Libraries wishes to thank our grantees across the world for allowing us to build this Impact Planning and Assessment process through their collective work and experience. Additionally, we would like to thank David Streatfield, Sharon Markless, Monika Segbert and David Fuegi for deep contributions to this thinking. Lastly, doubled thanks to David Streatfield and Sharon Markless for assistance with this paper.

Maciej Kochanowicz wishes to thank Barbara Budyńska and Małgorzata Jezierska from the Books and Readers Institute, analytic unit of the Polish National Library, who prepared the yearbook "Public Libraries in Figures" and who consulted on the Polish survey and questionnaire.