



NEXT GENERATION LIBRARIES: Bottom-Up, People-First and Purpose-Driven

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While European policy recognizes libraries as pillars of democracy and key gateways to culture and knowledge, a gap between ambition and practice prevents many from living up to this promise. As communities' needs change, innovation depends on putting people first through co-creation. Yet, evidence from our large-scale survey shows that this meaningful engagement remains the exception, not the norm, with users directly involved in only about a quarter of high-priority innovations. This limited use reflects deep structural barriers, from uneven funding to a lack of dedicated skills. This policy brief details what it will take to overcome these challenges and unlock the full potential of libraries as truly bottom-up, people-first, and purpose-driven institutions.

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