

HORIZON-CL2-2021**HORIZON-CL2-2021-HERITAGE-01-02****LibrarIN [101061516]: Value Co-creation and Social Innovation
for a new Generation of European Libraries****D3.6 Social entrepreneurship, public-private networks &
social innovation v3.0**

Project Reference No	LibrarIN -101061516
Deliverable	D3.6 Social entrepreneurship, public-private networks & social innovation v3.0
Work package	WP3: Thematic and empirical work in selected co-creation areas
Type	R - Document, report
Dissemination Level	PU - Public (fully open)
Date	31/10/2025
Status	Final V1.0
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Document description	This report starts by identifying a shift in libraries' activities, from the curation of books, to the building of communities. This allows us to hypothesize that public libraries can be thought of as social innovators. Also, we propose a new definition of a social innovation - freed from the usual moral acceptance of the term. To us, a social innovation is one that is produced by a network of partners (input network), mainly from the civil society and the public sector, and which produces novel interaction networks among the beneficiaries (output network). On the basis of these two criteria (i.e. input and output networks), we explore a series of 10 cases of social innovations involving public libraries across Europe. All of them illustrate the relevance of our definition and of the hypothesis of social innovative libraries. Further, in the latest part of the report, a cross-cases analysis highlights a change in the form of knowledge that can be acquired in libraries: while books usually convey codified knowledge, social innovations foster the exchange of tacit knowledge. Finally, altogether, the 10 cases permit to refine the characterization of a social innovation: some create new interaction modules (i.e. new categories of interactive units), while others create new architectures of interactions.

Disclaimer

The LibrarIN project is funded by the European Union under grant agreement ID 101061516. The information and views set out in this publication are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.



Document Revision History

Version	Date	Modifications Introduced	
		Modification Reason	Modified by
Vo.1	18/09/2025	First version of the report	ULILLE
Vo.2	16/10/2025	Second version distributed for internal review	ULILLE
Vo.3	24/10/2025	Reviewed document	UAH
Vo.4	31/10/2025	Final draft including comments from reviewers	ULILLE
V1.0	31/10/2025	Final version for submission to EC	ATC

Executive Summary

This report starts by reviewing the existing academic and non-academic literature about public libraries' involvement into public-private networks aiming to foster social innovations and social entrepreneurship. In particular, we find that public libraries' core missions have changed through time, from the curation of books to the building of communities. Not all libraries can be called community builders, but overall there seems to be a general tendency in which traditional operations of preservation and circulation of collections are progressively replaced by new operations aiming at connect-ing people and at generating social interactions.

The old and the new missions are actually more related than one may think at first, because they are both part of the knowledge creation process. For its part, the curatorial library plays a supportive role in this process by providing the agents with an access to codified knowledge. In comparison, a community builder is a more central player, because it fosters the exchange of potentially informal knowledge. In this sense, it can be the initiator of a knowledge creation cycle.

The term social innovation is often equated to “fair” or “just” innovations, which give it a moral and therefore contingent dimension, unsuitable for empirical investigation, especially across countries, because at this scale of analysis heterogeneity of values can make case selections difficult. We thus propose a more neutral definition: going back to the etymology of the noun “social”, we propose that a social innovation is one that is made by a network of partners (i.e. an input network), and which aim at producing new networks of interactions among the beneficiaries (i.e. an output network).

Equipped with this definition, we identify and investigate 10 cases of social innovations involving public libraries across Europe. The libraries involved are of all sizes, from those of rural villages, to the national libraries.

All 10 cases confirm the hypothesis of social innovative libraries. Also, they illustrate the fact that public libraries can convey forms of tacit knowledge in the form of "know who" and "know how". Public libraries' role in the knowledge creation process is therefore changing, as they now stand as the initiator of this process.

Apart from confirming our prior hypotheses, these cases highlight the various forms of social innovations. With regards to the output network, social innovations can indeed be about creating novel forms of interactions (architectural dimension), as well as about creating novel interaction units (modular dimension), like creating new organizations or getting new categories of people involved. Interestingly, in some cases the initial social innovation nurtured other subsequent innovations.

In sum, the investigations carried out in Task 3.2 demonstrate the growing importance of public libraries for countries' knowledge creation, and therefore for nations' innovative performance. From this perspective, the declining figures of citizen's attendance to libraries should be a matter of worry.

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List of Terms and Abbreviations

Abbreviation	Definition
KISS	Knowledge Intensive Social Services
MPLS	Medellín Public Library System
NGO(s)	Non-Governmental Organization(s)
NSIS	National Social Innovation Systems
PSINSIs	Public Service Innovation Networks for Social Innovations
R&D	Research and Development
U.S.	United States
UCL	Urban Libraries Council
UK	United Kingdom
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope

Public libraries are ubiquitous organizations: the European Union alone counts as much as 65,000 of them (Quick et al., 2013, p. 13). Yet, behind this apparent success, they are facing many challenges. Among these, Smith (2019) identifies a general distrust for Government agencies, the decline in people's "attention span" (p. 244) due to the pervasive use of smartphones, the "decline in reading" (p. 244) and severe budget cuts. Further, the available data regarding the use of libraries reveal dramatic figures. For instance, Weaver and Appleton (2020) report that "between 2010 and 2016, the number of UK public libraries decreased by 14%, the number of library visits by 15% and the number of active borrowers by 23.5%" (p. xxi).

In this context, many question the usefulness of public libraries. Palfrey (2015) illustrates this point, by recalling typical conversations in which his interlocutors declare that "we don't really need li-braries so much now that we have Google" (p. 22). But, what are we talking about when we evoke libraries? To some authors, these organizations are mere codex curators (see for instance Gaines, 1985b) while for others, libraries are builders of conversational networks within the society (Lankes et al., 2007). This duality can be touched on by the reading of a recent report ordered by the French Government to assess the means, the needs and the realizations of public libraries throughout the country (Orsenna and Corbin 2018). On one hand, the authors adopt a lyric stance, stating that "libraries are these porous places where multiple networks of actors and projects weave, where tears are healing, where we recover strengths to address the future, where territories are livening and re-livening" (p. 9-10). But, later on, they adopt a technical approach, more in line with the curatorial perspective, stating that a library "owns a collection and [...] sets an annual acquisition budget", that it has a "qualified personnel"

and that it occupies at least 25m² (p. 35). Both types of libraries certainly coexist, and those in difficulty might be primarily the curatorial ones.

In a sense, this report contributes to the debate regarding the usefulness of public libraries. The line of argument stemming from our literature review is that libraries are more needed than ever, because some actually stand as prime social innovators. By doing so, we revisit the definition of a social innovation as an innovation that creates or modifies interaction patterns within the society. We advocate that these new patterns can produce serendipitous discoveries, and that they can foster social cohesion, at an age in which some authors identify a tendency towards social disintegration (Oldenburg and Brisset, 1982; Pariser, 2011; Sunstein, 2017).

1.2 Approach for Work Package and Relation to other Work Packages and Deliverables

In accordance with the multi-agents framework developed in the work-package 2, we focus our attention on the competences used by libraries in their social innovation activities. In this respect, we distinguish between two competence sets of libraries: the technical ones, in terms of book curation, and the relational ones, when they act as community builders. We also find that users' preferences are increasingly driving/ initiating libraries' innovation activities and that their competencies are increasingly mobilized, as they become co-creators of libraries' services.

Aside from specifying the competence sets, the value added of this work package to the overall framework is to enlarge the focal of the main multi-agent framework by bringing in the concept of network. Indeed, we define social innovations as innovations involving networks of partners in their making (input network) and producing interaction networks (output network).

1.3 Methodology and Structure of the Deliverable

The report mobilizes several search strategies.

First, regarding the literature review, we opt for a traditional search for references (i.e. not an automated one) so as to stimulate serendipitous discoveries. More specifically, key books and papers were identified on Google Scholar and Web of Science based on their citation counts. We then navigated through the literature via a snowball search into the reference lists of these documents. Also, we linked our readings with our area of expertise: economics and management of innovation in services and through services. This literature review allows us to formulate an hypothesis - the one of public libraries as prime social innovators - and to refine the definition of a social innovation.

Secondly, we test our hypothesis and new definition by exploring 10 cases of social innovations performed by public libraries across Europe. Here, we selected a sample of libraries of various sizes, from those of small villages, to the national ones. The objective is to verify the pervasiveness of the social innovative behavior among libraries.

Thirdly, we generalize our findings by cross analyzing the case studies in light of the literature on innovation and knowledge management.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Public libraries: from books curators to community builders

The traditional view about a library's activities stresses on its curatorial mission. A first example is provided by the Cambridge Dictionary, which states that a library is "a building, room, or organization that has a collection of books, documents, music or sometimes things such as tools or artworks, for people to borrow, usually without payment".¹ In another entry, it defines a public library as "a building where people can read or borrow books without having to pay".² These definitions emphasize on the collections: a library's role is to take care of these and to ensure their free circulation within the society. Note that the fact that every citizen can access to books without payment does not entail that the library's role is to serve everyone. For instance, Gaines (1985a) – director of the Cleveland Public Library at the time – is a tenant of an elitist view. To him, "the guts of the library are in the integrity of its collections, the care with which it assembles and buys materials over a long period of time, materials that often the average member of the public is unaware of or indifferent to. The point of all our work is that when essential information is needed, it is there, and that is in the care of a curatorial staff" (p. 53). As such, in the curatorial perspective, a public library might serve an elite minority, but not the whole community in which it is located. But a more universal view is also possible. For instance, Richter and Haley (1984) emphasize on the term "public reading". This expression, widely adopted in the French speaking world between the two World Wars, evokes an educational mission of libraries: to promote the activity of reading within the general public. In this perspective, libraries' acquisitions should respond to the tastes and needs of the commoners so as to stimulate their interest.

¹ <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/library> (last access; Oct. 7th 2023).

² <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/public-library> (last access: Oct. 7th 2023).

The universalist curatorial perspective is consistent with the 1949 and 1972 versions of the UNESCO's Public Library Manifesto, which underlines libraries' roles of conservation, diffusion and as a "living force for popular education" (UNESCO, 1949; UNESCO, 1972). In 1994, the same manifesto adopted a more inclusive stance by highlighting the need to provide accessible resources and specific services to "linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison" (UNESCO, 1994). Interestingly, serving prisons and hospitals require the library to being active in bringing its collections to the population, instead than being a static access point to bookshelves. To this respect, the core missions of the library now exceed the work of a curator - hence the need for a renewed definition. The 2022 version of the manifesto even declares that "libraries are creators of community, proactively reaching out to new audiences and using effective listening to support the design of services that meet local needs and contribute to improving quality of life" (UNESCO, 2022). In this last definition, collections are only implicit and the library appears as a central social service for its community.

The shift towards community building has emerged in early 2000s. For instance, Muddiman et al. (2000) question the equality of access to public libraries in the UK, in particular due to recurrent shifts in policy orientations of public libraries with, in background, a tension between serving the "vocal 'traditional' library users and trying to establish services for 'new' communities" (p. 15). Besides, the authors highlight that some marginalized groups, in particular those without a stable address, had no access to library services. Among their recommendations to librarians, they insist on the necessity to engage into "real and continuing consultation with socially excluded communities, groups and individuals" (p. 61). To put it another way, the authors recommend to adopt co-creation methods - that is collaboration, listening and discussions with end-users, here marginalized groups, in the design phase of new library services (Vargo et al. 2008). De Moor and van den Assen (2013) summarize this new logic as follows: "libraries should move from 'service design for patrons' to 'service design by communities'" (p. 1).

Many co-creation examples are provided by UCL (2005) in the case of the Chicago Public Library and of its branches. For instance, Rose Powers, one of the branches directors, is said to routinely search to identify and contact local communities leaders, so as to gain a better understanding of their needs. This search strategy brings her to participate to community projects - sometimes even not directly related to librarianship, like helping to revive a chamber of commerce - which ultimately drag community attention to the library. This helps to expand the number and the variety of stakeholders, so as to elaborate new library initiatives, like new outreach programs or the sharing of teaching staffs. By doing so, the library can (re)create social cohesion.

Community building is therefore related to co-creation, which supposes an exchange of information. Lankes et al. (2007) develop this idea further by stating that the main role of libraries is to "facilitate conversation" (p. 18). Indeed, one can consider that books or any other types of artifacts provided by libraries are the results of conversations and, "while one cannot converse with a book, that book certainly can be a starting point for many conversations within the reader and within a larger community" (p. 18). Further, noting that "knowledge is created through conversation" (p. 17), one can summarize the core mission of libraries by saying that they "improve society through facilitating knowledge creation in their communities" (Lankes 2011, p. 31). As such, these authors ground librarianship into conversation and knowledge creation theories.

The end-objective of community-building is knowledge creation. Going back to the initiatives reported by UCL (2005) in Chicago, it is clear that they involve a sustained dialogue with the community. The individuals involved certainly gained access to new knowledge, either from discussions with librarians or from the discussions with other stakeholders. This conception of a knowledge creating library is influential in the academic literature, as many authors adopted it. For instance, Heseltine (2020) declares that "libraries [...] are in the business of knowledge, learning, creativity, and imagination" (p.

5). In the same vein, for Bieraugel and Neill (2017), "libraries should look beyond the role of storing and serving up existing knowledge and examine the academic library as a place of discovery and development" (p. 36).

The relationship between conversation and knowledge creation has been theorized by Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995 and 2019) in the form of a spiral in four phases: socialization, externalization, combination and internalization. In the socialization phase, a person acquires tacit knowledge or know-how from working, observing and/or through discussions with someone else. This tacit knowledge is then made more explicit by the individual during the externalization - this time, through discussion with a small team of close co-workers. During combination, the explicit knowledge is combined with other bits of explicit knowledge, typically steaming from more distant working groups. It is in this third phase that knowledge produces new working prototypes, and thus potential innovations. Then comes a fourth phase of internalization, where the individual acquires a new know-how from the three previous phases. This new tacit knowledge can then fuel another cycle of knowledge creation and innovation.

The spiral of knowledge highlights an important point regarding libraries: by nature, books record explicit or codified knowledge, while the process of knowledge creation is initiated by a transfer of tacit knowledge, which often occurs through discussion. In this view, the curatorial library can only play the role of supportive agent in the knowledge creation process, while the community building library becomes an essential participant, because it facilitates - or even permits - the initial transfer of tacit knowledge. Interestingly, it appears that books and other artifacts traditionally provided by libraries are now subordinated to the connecting activities, which gained in importance.

In a sense, the library promoted by Gaines (1985a) was a provider of codified knowledge for the few users who were engaged into the combining phase of the knowledge creation process, while the one promoted by Lankes et al. (2007) and by Lankes (2011) is a facilitator in the socialization phase of that process. The community building library also democratizes knowledge creation by permitting everyone to participate to the, potentially society-wide, discussion.

2.2 Innovation trajectories in public libraries

The changing definition is the reflection of profound organizational changes experienced by libraries.

The very first public libraries, in the second half of the 19th Century, were mostly book-centered and were not meant to be user-friendly. For instance, in the United States, Pungitore (1995) indicates that in the 1850s, "the stacks of shelving containing the books were closed to the public; users had to know exactly what they wanted so that they could ask the library employees to retrieve specific items" (p. 5), and the collections excluded fictions and novels. In the same vein, the first public libraries in France were "forbidding the lending of books" (Richter and Haley, 1984, p. 51). It is later, during the Great Depression, that American public libraries became "a People's University" (Pungitore, 1995, p. 50), as they enlarged their collections to popular novels, and were massively used by unemployed people for education and leisure.

Pateman (2020) proposes a history of the evolution of Public Libraries in the United Kingdom in three phases - which differ in terms of libraries' objectives, how they use their floor space, and in terms of performance indicators (Table 2.1). The three phases are: the "traditional library" (1850-1970), the "community-led library" (1970-2000) and the "needs-based library" (from 2000 to nowadays). To the author, the process is necessarily sequential: one library has to start as a traditional one, and it has to

become community-led before being needs-based. The sequential view is debatable, but in any case, different types of libraries can coexist in the same country.

Table 2.1: The stages of evolution of public libraries, adapted from Pateman (2020)

	Traditional library (1850-1970)	Community-led library (1970-2000)	Needs-based library (2000-present)
Objective	- Control of the working class. - Serving the elite and the middle class.	- Reaching new audiences (i.e. outreach programs) - Supporting the marginalized	- Building a community - Community-led partnerships
Floor space	Dedicated to collections.	- 2/3 collections - 1/3 services	- 1/3 collections - 1/3 services - 1/3 partnerships
Performance	Breadth and depth of collections, regardless of the community needs.	Breadth and depth of services.	Breadth and depth of community development activities.

The evolution process described in Table 2.1 is consistent with the already mentioned progressive servitization of libraries' activities: the floor space is less and less dedicated to collections. Another major trend is the use of a co-creation logic: in the "community-led" model, the library generates initiatives to reach out new - and usually impoverished - users, while in the needs-based model, the users are the initiators of projects and they are standing as equal partners with the library. This dual

change towards servitization and co-creation, and its implications in terms of innovation activities, can be conceptualized with the help of the definition of a service.

For Gadrey (1992), "a service activity is an operation, aiming to transform a medium C, owned or used by a consumer (client, or user) B, performed by a provider A mandated by B, and often in relation with him, but without resulting into the production of a good susceptible to circulate independently from the medium C" (p. 17). Such operation mobilizes a set of capabilities from the provider (Gallouj and Weinstein, 1997) and often also from the client himself (Djellal and Gallouj, 2008). In this respect, Gadrey (1999) distinguishes between "technical" and "human" (i.e. relational) capabilities (p. 15) and two modes of activation of the service: a client may want to be served, or to serve himself. Crossing the types of capabilities with these types of requests allows Gadrey to identify three service logic (Figure 2.1). There is, at first, the "logic of provision" in which the client rents the use of a material artifact maintained by the provider. This applies well to the activities of the curatorial library. In this case, interactivity is low and the provider uses mainly technical capabilities. In the "human representation" logic, the provider uses a set of human and technical capabilities in a low interactivity context. An example is the display of a live performance for the benefit of the user. Thirdly, Gadrey (1999) identifies a logic of "intervention", where the provider mainly mobilizes a set of human capabilities in a high interactivity context. This case suits well to the community-builder library, which interacts with its readers and, more generally, with the community in which it is located in order to generate discussions and knowledge.

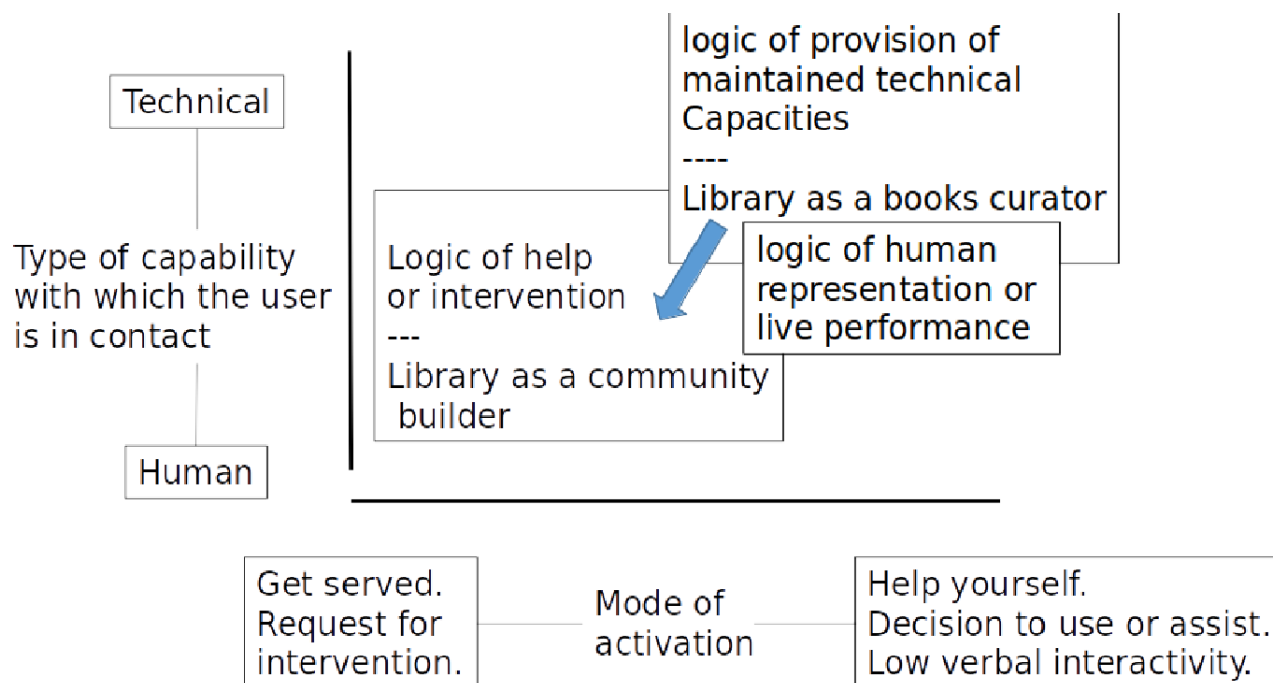


Figure 2.1: The different service logic and the libraries, adapted from Gadrey (1999, p. 15).

The two service logics applicable to libraries (i.e. provision and intervention) suggest two directions, or trajectories, of innovation (Nelson and Winter, 1982): one improving a library's technological capabilities to preserve and circulate its collections, and another, more relational and methodological, that increases the scale and depth of the discussion and knowledge exchange within the society. Table 2.2 summarizes these two innovation trajectories in terms of capabilities, types of operations and nature of the service medium in Gadrey's sense (see above). We present them in detail in the following sub-sections.

Table 2.2: The two innovation trajectories in public libraries

	Book curator	Community builder
Capabilities of the librarian	Technical	Relational
Operations	- Conservation - Provision	- Conversation - Connection
Nature of the service medium	Books (material)	- Individuals - Knowledge
Innovation trajectory	Science and technology based	Methodological and relational

2.2.1 The science and technology trajectory

This innovation trajectory improves, in a technical sense, libraries' capabilities to fulfill their missions of conservation and circulation of collections. The traditional view about service organizations is that, when it comes to technological innovations, they are "supplier dominated" (Pavitt 1984): the technology is not developed in-house, but provided by a supplier, with a strong orientation towards process innovation and the lowering of operation costs.

The literature abounds of examples related to the digitization of library services, which often carry a supplier-dominated view. For instance, Cervone (2008) uses a questionnaire to test the influence of professional advise networks on librarians' receptivity to innovation. This topic itself suggests that innovation is emanating from other organizations and then adopted by libraries - which therefore stand as supplier dominated. In this study, the surveyed population is selected from the members of the Consortium of Academic Librarians in Illinois, and the receptivity to innovation is measured by a

set of 9 attitudinal variables ranging from individual risk tacking to views related to organizational flexibility. These indicators are not related to technology adoption per se, but the authors specifically invoke the digitization of resources to motivate their investigations. To this respect, they mention that "Traditionally, the university library has held the role of caretaker of scholarly information on behalf of the academic community. However, as electronic modes of information delivery have begun to overtake traditional print-based formats, the scholarly information environment has been changing rapidly" (p. 72). The curatorial perspective is transparent here. Another supplier-dominated view can be found in Khan et al. (2022), who build and administrate a questionnaire among academic libraries in Nanjing, China, so as to "assess the library personnel's willingness to adopt internet of things services" (p. 1977).

The supplier-dominated attitude might be explained by the fact that most libraries are now focusing on a relational trajectory - therefore delegating technological improvements to suppliers. Indeed, at an earlier period, curatorial libraries were able to produce in-house technological innovations - therefore behaving as "science-based" organizations (Pavitt 1984). In this respect, Malinconico (1997) reports many instances in which libraries developed technological solutions in the fields of computing and telecommunication. As such, the author recalls that, in the 1930s, the New Jersey Public Library developed its own machine "to mechanise the processing of circulation cards" (p. 48), and that a former director of the National Library of Medicine in the U.S. was instrumental in the birth of a punched card machine. In the field of telecommunication, he highlights that Guy Sylvestre, "the National Librarian of Canada [...] appointed a task group on computer communications protocols for bibliographic data interchange" (p. 52). This effort can certainly be considered as a work of technological R&D performed by libraries.

2.2.2 The methodological and relational trajectory

This innovation trajectory is dominant among community-building libraries. It aims at finding new ways to deepen and to enlarge the scope of the discussion within the society. Here, discussion refers to ideas generation and to their sharing. More specifically, Nicholson (2019) identifies 5 types of innovation in libraries that satisfy this general objective: "participation innovations", "making and creating innovations", "learning innovations", "outreach innovations", and "partnership innovations".

(i) Participation innovations are initiatives that help libraries to get involved into the current cultural trends regarding media use and production, like promoting open data or the gamification users' experience. For example, Nicholson (2019 p. 334) reports the launch of the "Minecraft Gaming Day" in the North Melbourne Library, in which users had to build a virtual library in the Minecraft video game.

(ii) The learning innovations (Nicholson, 2019) encompass libraries' initiatives to promote lifelong learning. In this context, Nicholson (2015) mentions "a large reading and writing club programme" run by the Copenhagen Main Library (p. 27), and the project of a "guided reading club" potentially ran in partnership with "the psychiatric department of a local hospital" (p. 27).

(iii) The outreach innovations aim to expand the user base. Examples are the opening of "pop-up libraries" (Nicholson, 2019, p. 341) or the delivery of library services through bikes. Some initiatives require partnerships. For instance, the Grand Rapid Public Library is proactively searching for partners to organize any type of events that can, even indirectly, promote "the cause of literacy, books, information or the library as a community institution" (Warner, 2013).

(iv) The "partnership innovations" (Nicholson, 2019) are meant to expand the range of services provided by the library through partnerships with other, often governmental, organizations. In this perspective, the library becomes a "community center" (UCL, 2005 p. 3). An example is the setting up of a fair grouping many social services for the homeless in the Salt Lake City Public Library (Torres 2015).

(v) The "making and creating" innovations aim at changing "the role of public library, from being a content provider that encourages consumption, to a content producer that fosters creation" (Nicholson, 2019 p. 336). This type of innovations is more documented than the others in the literature. Innovations belonging to this category range from dedicating floor space to fablabs, to a complete re-thinking of the design of library's spaces. On this respect, Bieraugel and Neill (2017) propose to test how different spaces of a university library correlate with specific learning behaviors among their users. They proceed by distributing questionnaires in the library, asking a series of questions to which users have to respond using a Likert scale. The questions are then grouped into 7 learning behaviors: "explore", "exploit", "observe", "question", "experiment", "network", and "reflect" (p. 42). Mean results obtained by the authors for the various space types in the surveyed library are reproduced in Table 2.3. This Table reveals that Makerspace is the most effective location for most learning behaviors, except for exploitation - in which computer lab has the highest score of all locations - and the reflection, where the atrium scores best.

Table 2.3: Ability of libraries spaces to support learning behaviors, extract from Bieraugel and Neill (2017, p. 42)

Mean Values								
Means	Communal Tables	Quiet Study	Computer Lab	Fishbowls	Atrium	Greenspace	Makerspace	Student Union
Explore	4.84	4.73	5.12	5.58	5.01	4.97	6.31	4.17
Exploit	5.00	5.55	5.94	5.52	4.80	4.06	5.45	4.91
Observe	4.51	3.83	4.22	5.30	5.08	5.92	6.20	5.16
Question	5.00	4.29	4.90	5.68	5.45	5.17	6.38	4.23
Experiment	3.92	2.98	4.29	4.98	3.85	3.89	6.47	3.38
Network	5.02	4.10	4.01	5.37	4.22	5.52	6.34	5.91
Reflect	3.83	5.62	5.96	5.25	6.26	6.05	5.33	4.03

Bieraugel and Neill (2017) explore only one university library in the United States. Hence, replication studies are needed, both in this country and abroad and for a variety of library types. Besides, one may ask about the direction of causality: are spaces promoting behaviors, or attracting people who already possess these attitudes? Also, are the high scores of the makerspace due to this type of rooms in general or to some specificities of the one under study?

Despite its limitations, this study raises up the question of the influence of the design of physical spaces on users' behaviors. Marino and Lapintie (2015) also tackle this issue by dressing up a typology of users of three public libraries located in the Center of the city of Helsinki - therefore in quite similar locations. The main difference resides in the organization of the floor spaces: a first library, referred to as "library 10" (p. 121) is mainly made up of "large group tables but not confined spaces, except for one meeting room of around 12 persons" (p. 121). The second one, called "Meeting Point" is made of meeting rooms with movable walls, and equipped with workstations. Finally, there is the university library, in which some equipment are reserved for students and researchers. The authors proceed through observations and interviews. By doing so, they produce a list of 5 users profiles, distributed in a non-uniform manner between the three libraries, which suggests that space and furniture arrangements are more or less appealing depending on the user type. Users' categories are the followings:

- “The scholar”, is typically a researcher seeking a “peaceful environment and easy access to information resources”.
- “The artist” is a young and educated person “employed in the fields of art and culture”, often a freelancer, he is looking for a free office space.
- “The walker” is a worker who stop by the library at the middle of a commuting journey to sit and do some office work (consulting e-mails etc.).
- “The starter” is a young teleworker, often an entrepreneur. According to the authors, “the library can act as an incubator for them”.
- “The fugitive” is someone who escape from his office “to get work done”.

Marino and Lapintie (2015)'s work highlights the many creative uses of public libraries, especially as incubators for start-ups. Interestingly, the interviews reveal that the way people are using the floor spaces differ markedly from what their designers envisioned. For instance, some spaces of the university library were designed to appeal to researchers, while in fact they mostly attract teleworkers. Regarding researchers, they seem to work in more or less random locations within the library.

In our view, the delimitation between these five types of innovations is porous. For instance, UCL (2005) reports a case in which a branch of the Chicago Public Library partners with “the local hospitals to use the library to educate people and provide health screening” (p. 25). Such an initiative is, at the same time, a partnership, a learning and an outreach innovation. For this reason, we prefer to use the encompassing label of “methodological and relational innovation”. Most of these initiatives can be labelled as social innovations, which thus stand as the main innovation trajectory of community building libraries.

2.3 Social innovation: definition and parallel with libraries' activities

There are many definitions of social innovations (Dacin et al., 2010), which Cloutier (2003) classifies in three categories. There is, first, those "centered on the individuals" (p. 3). Under this lens, social innovations aim at "creating new social structures" (p. 3) through cooperation and co-creation. For the author, the novelty to qualify a social innovation as such shall not be absolute. Rather, there is novelty when there is a "discontinuity" (p. 8) with past practices used in a specific setting to address a certain problem - novelty is thus, above all, contextual.

Secondly, Cloutier (2003) distinguishes "the social innovations oriented towards a milieu" (p. 13). Most of these social innovations adopt a territorial perspective and they modify "social relations" (p. 13). From the point of view of consumer theory, Gershuny (1982) states that a social innovation consists in "changes in the modes of provision for households needs" (p. 496). The starting point of Gershuny is the assumption that households have various needs which are met through their demand and use of goods and services. In the author's view, new goods or services that respond to needs previously met by other means are social innovations. They relate to the "milieu" category because they necessarily change the interaction patterns within the society: using a car instead than a taxi, or asking a librarian instead than a town hall for some public services, all change the way people interact, and therefore the social structure. As such, these new goods and services can be labeled as social innovations.

Thirdly, Cloutier (2003) identifies contributions stressing that "new ways to organize work" are "social innovations within companies" (p. 21). Note that these new working methods do not necessarily aim at improving workers' lives.

Our take from this typology is that social innovations are innovations that modify interaction patterns among individuals, be they located within a company, a neighborhood or a larger area - like a country, in the case of a culture change. Interaction can be the method used to innovate - for instance through the use of a co-creation logic (Vargo and Lusch, 2004 and Vargo et al., 2008) - and it is also the result of the innovation. We note that pursuing inclusion or aiming at improving people's well-being is absent from the analysis here.

Interestingly, the more recent definitions focus on the existence of an inclusive or "good" objective as a decisive criterion for social innovations.³ By doing so, they move away from the interactive perspective, at the risk of facing a problem of circularity by defining "social innovations" as innovations which are "social". An illustration of the circularity issue can be found in Mulgan (2012), who defines social innovations as "innovations that are social in both their ends and their means" (p. 35). Further, for Moulaert and Ailenei (2005) such innovations involve "the (re)introduction of social justice into production and allocation systems" (p. 2037), with no discussion about the meaning of "social" in this specific context.

Hayek (1993) deplores the many uses of this word. To him, the misuse of a word devoids it from its meaning and, when employed as an adjective, it also confuses the speakers about the meaning of the noun being qualified - which is especially true about the word social. Hayek proposes to stick to the etymology of the word: it comes from the Latin "societas, derived from socius, the personally known companion" (p. 155). In this sense, the interactive dimension identified by Cloutier (2003) seems the fairest: a social innovation should create or modify interaction patterns, permitting unknown

³As an illustration of this state of affairs, we can refer to Dacin et al. (2010), who list no less than 37 definitions of social entrepreneurship. The vast majority of those refer to social innovation and define it in a circular manner by employing the word "social".

individuals to get to know each other. Interactions can happen in the making of the innovation, or as a result of it. An inclusive dimension is still possible, but should not be decisive to classify an innovation as social.

From this discussion, we can think of the community-building library as a social innovation in itself, since its stated objective is to foster conversation, and in particular to involve those with a weak acquaintance network. Apart from its conversational mission, the library becomes socially innovative when it introduces a discontinuity – i.e. a drastic change – in the interaction pattern within a given milieu. As such, most of the innovations that belong to the methodological and relational trajectory can be qualified as social.

In the following two sections, we distinguish the interaction/network as an input/process involved into the making of a library innovation or as a result of it.

2.4 Social innovations and libraries: network as a process

As noted, social innovation research has departed from the study of interactive solutions. In parallel, it developed a tendency to emphasize on the figure of the social entrepreneur, that Mulgan et al. (2007) characterize as "heroic, energetic and impatient individuals" (p. 13). Desmarchelier et al. (2020a) oppose to this individualistic view the fact that social innovations can also be the product of large networks of actors. In particular, they highlight the connecting role of a new type of actor, the "knowledge intensive social services" (KISS). These are "the equivalent to knowledge intensive business services in nonprofit activities" with some notable differences, namely they "pursue an explicit social mission" and they "act as connectors", linking their clients with other actors of the social economy (Desmarchelier, 2023 p. 52).

The large innovation networks that emerge from KISS activities have been labelled as "public service innovation networks for social innovations" (PSINSIs) by Desmarchelier et al. (2020) and even as national social innovation systems (NSIS) in Desmarchelier et al. (2022). Such networks differ from more traditional and technological innovation networks by the centrality of public and private services. But a paradox emerges here: while the community-building libraries should stand among the key actors in these networks, they are absent from the data provided by Desmarchelier et al. (2020a and 2022). This might be due to several factors. Firstly, the authors do not depart significantly from the circular definition of a social innovation from Mulgan (2012). Therefore, the projects covered in the authors' data-sets are not necessarily aiming at changing the social structure. In fact, the networks reported by Desmarchelier et al. do record interactions among organizations but not among individuals. Secondly, community-building libraries are certainly more present at the local level, while NSIS are of national scope.

Yet, the idea of PSINSIs is appealing, because it suggests that social innovations could be stimulated by the presence and interactions of a specific set of institutions. In this context, can we identify public libraries and projects initiated by them in such networks? Are community-building libraries acting as KISS actors - that is, do they help social entrepreneurs by connecting them to other actors?

2.5 Social innovations and libraries: network as a result

The community-building library aims at generating "conversation networks" and, through them, to take an active role in the knowledge creation process (Lankes et al., 2007). Such a connection between knowledge and social interactions is investigated by Carley (1986). In particular, she declares that "the development of the social world involves tacit consensus among the individuals in the society over perceived regularities; in this way, social knowledge as shared cognitive structure is also a by-product of human interaction. Social knowledge affects future interaction/communication [...]. As individuals'

knowledge bases co-evolve, their propensity to interact changes, social knowledge evolves, and social structures change" (p. 382). What is being suggested here is a virtuous circle: social interactions nurture social knowledge, which in return create improved conditions for future social interactions and so on. This view echoes Nonaka and Takeuchi (1995)'s spiral of knowledge, in particular in that the spiral highlights a co-evolution between an epistemological dimension (i.e. the interaction between tacit and explicit knowledge) and an ontological dimension, since the various stages of the knowledge spiral involve an increasing number of individuals (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2019). We note that, in Nonaka and Takeuchi's theory, knowledge creation is initiated by a meeting of individuals (network as a process). If the end-product of this process is a social innovation (network as a product), then further novelties in terms of interactions are possible, which could trigger the spiral of knowledge once again. This remark highlights the intimate relationship between social innovations and knowledge creation, as well as the intertwining of the networks involved into the innovation process and those resulting from this process.

The idea that interaction is a prerequisite for knowledge creation is shared by authors from other disciplines. As such, from a political science perspective, Pariser (2011) underlines that shared/social knowledge is a necessary condition for nurturing the debate of ideas in a well-functioning democracy, in particular because such debate requires "citizens to see things from one another's point of view". From this assumption, Pariser (2011) and Sunstein (2017) shed a pessimistic outlook at recent evolutions of the Internet, notably the ubiquity of recommender systems, in that they would lock-up internet users into "information bubbles" and therefore diminish the base of shared knowledge within the society. Indeed, recommender systems provide individuals with tailor-made experiences, that Sunstein labels as "the daily me", in lieu of the public - or shared - opinion (Tarde 1901) - which could thus disappear. In a sense, recommender systems are the opposite of social innovation, as they reduce opportunities for interaction.

In this context, an essential role of the community-building libraries could be to counter-balance the disintegrating force of the online recommender systems. Their ability to create acquaintances and shared knowledge, even with the less connected ones - for instance the newly arrived migrants - is evident in Wessendorf (2022). The author conceptualizes public libraries as "physical arrival infrastructures" (p. 182), because - in addition to providing a variety of public services, resources and information - they stand as places where "serendipitous encounters can happen" (p. 180). As an illustration, she recalls, about a public library in East London in which, "Pre COVID-19, twice a week a group of about 15 women used to gather their weekly crochet group on a large table by the front window, most of them with a migrant background. During the many times I attended the group, women regularly came into the library to ask members of the group about crochet, which sometimes led to conversations about how to find resources. One of those resources is English classes that take place several times a week at the back of the library" (p. 182).

The risk of social disintegration was already foreseen by Oldenburg and Brissett (1982), but in the context of the development of the suburbs, which reduced people's life to a diptych home-office in which social interactions are governed by specific/well-defined roles and status. To the authors, individuals rather need alternative places, labeled as "third places", where they can exercise "pure sociability" (p. 270), that is where they can participate in informal discussions with other people from a variety of backgrounds, and without the boundaries conferred by social status. The benefits of getting involved in a third place are numerous: it exposes individuals to "diversity and novelty" (p. 273), the author puts forth that confronting one's ideas to the judgment of others is beneficial for mental health, and that it gives access to "collective wisdom" (p. 281).

To summarize, third places create informal and temporary discussion networks. Despite their instantaneousness, such networks provide individuals with significant benefits. Public libraries can be described as third places (see for instance, Orsenna and Corbin, 2018) and, as such, if we are interested

in the networks they produce, we should certainly pay attention to the passing experiences that they permit instead of searching for institutionalized/stable networks. This suggests that networks as a process are certainly more permanent than the networks as a product. To put it another way, the networks produced by social innovations are certainly most often invisible due to their spontaneousness. The crochet group described in Wessendorf (2022) can illustrate this point: it consists into a permanent (process) network of around 15 women, which produces many temporary (product) networks through serendipitous encounters with passers-by.

2.6 Conclusions of the literature review

Social innovations may involve a network of actors in their process. But it seems that their most distinctive feature is that their outcome is a flow of new social interactions. By doing so, social innovations fuel the cohesion of the society. In this perspective, a typical social innovation is the third place, as it routinely produces a renewed sociability. As such, the shift of libraries' core missions from the curation of material artifacts to the building of communities makes these organizations prime social innovators. We could even say that social innovations are now libraries' natural innovation trajectory.

To some authors, social ties are getting increasingly distended in western societies, due - among other factors - to suburban developments (Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982), and to the pervasiveness of online recommender systems (Pariser, 2011; Sunstein, 2017). Hence, third places, and therefore also public libraries, are of considerable importance to ensure societal resilience. Further, this paper suggests that social cohesion could nurture the knowledge creation process. In this perspective, social disintegration might even reduce the performance of the national innovation systems. This, undoubtedly, speaks up for public libraries. Thus, we argue that their usefulness exceeds the need to nurture a literate society.

This new role advocates for a change in the metrics used to assess libraries' performance. In particular, we should consider how and to what extent public libraries contribute to social cohesion and innovativeness in their surrounding environment, rather than just focusing on numbers of borrowed books. Also, the fact that several types of libraries coexist calls for the establishment of typologies of libraries, so as to monitor their demographics and performances more finely. This should constitute an interesting avenue for a multi-disciplinary research agenda.

The main objective of this literature review is to establish a series of criteria to select relevant social innovation cases in a public library context. From all that has been said, the selected cases shall involve:

- Innovations that generate discussion networks among individuals. These networks may be largely invisible at first sight, and their study will require further investigations, like the conduct of interviews.
- In this sense, researchers should be attentive to the “outcome network”: how many actors have been reached out? Is the network ephemeral or self-sustained? What is the long term effect of such a network on the actors involved?
- The public libraries can be the initiator or a supportive agent. Further, the input network might involve a variety of public and private actors.

3 Methodology

The literature review has documented the fact that the mission of public libraries has changed: once codex curators, they now are standing as community builders. This new activity directly counters the forces at play towards social disintegration – in particular the pervasive individualism fueled by online recommender systems. In this context, Task 3.2 aims at documenting the specific role of public libraries in creating social and economic networks through social innovations. If so, public libraries could be viewed as actors of the national (social) innovation systems.

We define social innovations as innovations produced by a network of actors (input networks) and which create networks among individuals (outcome networks). Public libraries can be the initiator or a supportive agent of social innovation projects. In that sense, we are interested in innovations and innovation networks that create (possibly self-sustained) communities instead of innovations that serve users in isolation (see Figure 3.1). Note that networks of users and of providers can be intertwined.

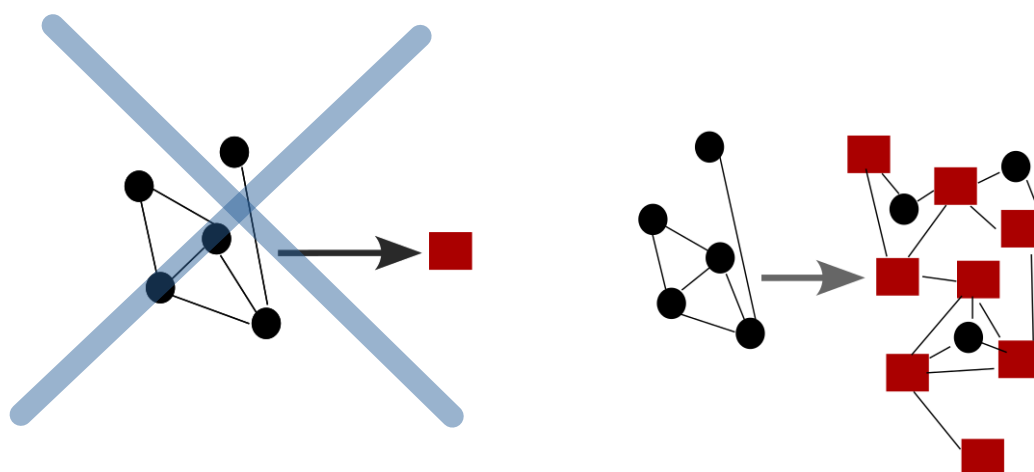


Figure 3.1: Social innovations do not propose a good or a service to a single individual (left). Rather, they aim at generating interactions among users (right)

Given the exploratory nature of the subject, the preferred methodology is to conduct semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, who can be initiators and providers of the innovation and/or the users. In particular, the interviews should aim to uncover the characteristics of both the input and the output networks, focusing on the set of questions detailed in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Questions to be answered regarding the input and the output networks.

Input network	Output/outcome network
• What are the organizations involved? • How to classify these organizations? (manufacturing firm, market service, public service, third sector agent, citizen) • Is it a long lasting partnership? • Is the library involved with some of these actors in other social innovation projects? • What is the specific role of the library? Is it the initiator of the project?	• How many people have been reached out? (an order of magnitude is enough) • Is the user base growing, constant or in decline? • Are the users interacting? Do they engage in other manifestations/activities, for instance have some users set up regular meetings, discussion groups or associations? • What are the consequences of the social innovation project on its users (social inclusion, competences, personal and economic lives)?

To be considered as relevant, the cases should respect two criteria: (i) they should cover an innovation that involve a public library – i.e. the library can be either the initiator or a supportive agent, and (ii) the innovations should be produced by a network of partners (input network) and/or ambition to generate

networks of users (output network). In total, 10 cases across Europe (and Colombia) have been identified and investigated. The distribution of cases across countries is provided in Table 3.2.

Table 3.2: Summary of the cases per partner

Partner	Expected Nb. of cases	Actual Nb. of cases	Investigated Library	Name of the case study	Country
LIBER	1	1	– MuntPunt Library and Community Centre, Brussels	– Leesclubbing, the Netherlands and Belgium	Belgium
UAH	2	2	– Biblioteca de Acogida in the Public Library of Purchena – Medellín Public Library	– Host Library – Makerspaces, a space for citizen collaboration	Spain Colombia
RUC	1	1	– The Human Library	– The Human Library	Denmark
ULille	2	2	– North Departmental Library and its partner rural libraries	– Library at Home – The Repair Café	France

Partner	Expected Nb. of cases	Actual Nb. of cases	Investigated Library	Name of the case study	Country
			– Vélizy municipal Library		
VTT	1.5	2	– Vantaa City Library – Helsinki Central Library Oodi	– Likustartti at Vantaa City Library – Children's Section at Oodi	Finland
AIT	2	2	– Vienna Libraries – The C3 Living Library	– Storytelling cafes at the Vienna Libraries – Living Books at the C3 Library	Austria

The list presented in Table 3.2 involves makerspaces, fablabs, and living labs. Arguably, these cases could fit into the deliverables for Task 3.3 on living labs. This reflects the proximity of these forms of innovation with our connectionist definition of a social innovation. Nonetheless, the two workpackages investigate different fablabs and they mobilize a different set of theoretical tools and concepts, as here we are primarily investigating the creation of social networks.

The sections that follow present each case in detail, especially paying attention to the input and output networks of the social innovations being covered.

4 Case Study A: Leesclubbing, a young and innovative approach to social reading networks in municipal libraries

Author: Barbara van der Vaart (LIBER)



Photo credits: Probiblio (2025). <https://www.probiblio.nl/agenda/leesclubbing-13feb/>

4.1 The case in a nutshell

In 2021, MuntPunt Library and Community Centre in Brussels launched the 'Leesclubbing' initiative, which inspired various libraries in Flanders to follow suit. Probiblio, the provincial support institution

for public libraries in the Netherlands, adopted (bought) the concept and introduced it to libraries across North and South Holland.

Targeted at people in their 20s and 30s, the initiative aims to promote reading while strengthening social connections through reading clubs. The concept is simple: one person gathers a small group, and the library takes care of the rest. It provides the books along with a card game of discussion prompts to guide the conversations, all packaged attractively in specially designed Leesclubbing bags for all participants. The contents of the bags vary per library and are often completed with extras: a bookmark and a (local) treat, such as cookies or chocolates, to enjoy during the book club meeting.

Leesclubbing initially offered five themed book packages: 'Things Could Be Worse' (thrillers and dark stories), 'The Book Binge' (books that read like binge-worthy Netflix series), 'Matters That Matter' (books tackling current social issues), 'The Greatest Book You've Never Read' (classics), and 'The Chosen Few' (literary "top picks"). As the project has now been running for over three years, the book categories have evolved over time and may vary from library to library.

The lending process was set up as follows: from the selected category, a book package is ordered containing 5 or 6 identical books to be distributed to the participants of the group. The costs for this vary per library, but is mostly around €10 to €15. Only the person collecting the package at the library needs to be a library member. Once the books are distributed, a meeting date is set for about six or eight weeks later, giving everyone time to read the book. Afterwards, the Leesclubbing books are returned to the library.

Semi-structured interviews have been conducted with the following persons:

- The programme advisor of *ProBiblio*, The Netherlands. Probiblio is a so-called provincial support institution. They are tasked with helping libraries in the provinces of North and South Holland to achieve their goals.
- The educational officer and the reading coach of *Brugge Municipal Library*, Belgium
- A project officer and a senior librarian at *De Krook municipal library*, Gent, Belgium
- The programme manager at *Zuid-Hollandse Delta municipal library*, Hellevoetsluis, the Netherlands.
- The collection specialist of *De Boekenberg municipal library* in Spijkenisse, The Netherlands (exploratory interview in December 2023, to assess if the Leesclubbing project is suitable for a case study. This initial conversation is not part of this case study).

4.2 Probiblio: introducing the pilot in four Dutch libraries

4.2.1 Introduction

Leesclubbing was introduced in the Netherlands by **Probiblio**, as a fresh take on traditional reading circles. Probiblio is a so-called provincial support agency (POI), that aims to help libraries achieve their goals, which are determined on an annual basis together with the provinces of North and South Holland.

While Probiblio has a long tradition of facilitating traditional reading clubs, they usually appeal to elder (60+) age categories. With many years of experience in the library sector, ProBiblio's programming advisor has been educated as a librarian and has a long and broad experience in the library sector. In her work she focuses on promoting contemporary, trendy initiatives that resonate with younger audiences. With Leesclubbing, she aims to modernize the reading group format to better engage people in their twenties and thirties, as well as to modernize the image of the library itself.

Inspired by *Muntpunt* in Brussels, she introduced Leesclubbing in the Netherlands. This format provides a more flexible, informal approach to reading clubs, making literary discussions more accessible and engaging, especially to a younger audience. ProBiblio took on the role of coordinator for the Leesclubbing project across two provinces and acquired the Muntpunt format (concept, design, book themes) and launched the initiative in three pilot libraries in North and South Holland.

4.2.2 Innovative Approach and Structure

Leesclubbing differentiates itself from traditional book clubs by offering ready-made book bags containing six copies of a selected title, often complemented by fun extras such as chocolate or wine. This format removes the barriers of organization and book selection, making it easier for people to participate. Instead of rigid, scheduled meetings, participants decide when and where to meet, with locations ranging from the library to cafés to parks, ensuring a casual and welcoming atmosphere.

A pilot phase in four libraries (of which one dropped out) helped refine the concept, and a broader rollout has been planned for in 2025, allowing more libraries to integrate the program through a toolkit with promotional materials, guides, and theme ideas.

4.2.3 Strengthening Social Networks and Community Building

ProBiblio's programme advisor recognizes Leesclubbing as a valuable tool for developing and strengthening social connections. In the communication toolkit and inspiration guide for Leesclubbing that was launched by ProBiblio in October 2024, libraries are encouraged to use the following core message to promote it: *Leesclubbing is for all of you, the readers! Everyone can create his or her own ideal reading club: read and discuss cozy and heated together with friends, club members, or just-new future friends.*

While Leesclubbing is open to everyone, the concept is particularly tailored to younger generations (Gen Z and Millennials, ages 19 to 39) who may not typically participate in library programs. It creates a possibility for deeper focus and literary development and, at the same time, has the potential to strengthen **social cohesion** by encouraging these deeper, meaningful conversations about books in a relaxed setting, creating a possibility for new friendships to develop and it may even help to overcome loneliness. Unlike traditional reading groups that require commitment over an extended period, Leesclubbing provides **one-off engagement opportunities**, reducing the pressure on participants and allowing for organic, diverse interactions.

The initiative positions libraries as facilitators of community-building rather than mere book lenders. Libraries provide books, guidance, and spaces but allow participants to take the lead in organizing meetings. Strategic partnerships with local businesses, such as chocolate shops, add an element of fun while supporting local economies.

Posters and leaflets have been used to promote Leesclubbing, while some libraries also invite authors to highlight featured books. Additionally, social media and influencer marketing, particularly on platforms like Instagram and BookTok, play a role in attracting younger audiences and expanding participation.

4.2.4 Challenges and Constraints

Leesclubbing faces several challenges. Budget limitations make it difficult to consistently provide the latest book titles and additional extras. Additionally, library staff often struggle with capacity, as new initiatives require dedicated time and resources. Furthermore, because the concept is still relatively new, widespread awareness of the initiative and adoption of the project in libraries remain a work in progress.

4.2.5 Future Expansion and Innovation

Looking ahead, Leesclubbing aims to deepen its impact by tailoring its approach to specific target groups, such as teachers, college students, and diverse communities. While women have overall been overrepresented in reading clubs, Leesclubbing could try to expand to include more men and people from the lhbtq+ community. Expanding the range of themes, including such as manga and controversial topics, is also being explored to attract a broader audience. Influencer collaborations may play a significant role in growing awareness, particularly among digital-native generations.

The evaluation of the pilot in the four libraries resulted in Probiblio's launch of the **Leesclubbing toolkit** in October 2024 as well as a new design. The toolkit contains a new communication strategy and fresh ideas for libraries to strengthening promotion and making the concept more attractive, especially to Millennials and Gen Z. It introduces a "How to" sheet for the groups, which contains tips on how to make the book club a success and how to discuss the books in a fun and engaging way. It also identifies high school teachers are an important secondary target group. They can influence their students with their enthusiasm about reading. Setting up a special teacher-reading club edition can be a fun, relaxed way of working together to promote reading.

Now that the initial pilot is finished, the Leesclubbing concept will be promoted in Probiblio's network of libraries with the introduction of the toolkit and a promotional event in the Rotterdam library on 11 February 2025.



Probiblio. (2024). *Communicatietoolkit en inspiratiegids* (cover page).

4.2.6 Long-Term Goals and Collaboration

Leesclubbing ultimately seeks to create a more dynamic, playful reading culture that resonates with younger readers while stimulating new literary communities. Strengthening collaborations with national and provincial library support organizations, and aligning with major events like Children's Book Week, will help embed Leesclubbing into mainstream library programming. The introduction of the toolkit will help libraries in promotion and in creating a more attractive format, ensuring its sustainability and growth. The programme advisor hopes that people will be inspired to use the Leesclubbing format for creative and inspiring events, will continue to inspire people to create atttcreative events. that become more "free" and creative over time.

4.2.7 Input and Output Network

Input Network

Organizations Involved:

- o **ProBiblio** (provincial support organization for libraries)
- o **Muntpunt** (Belgian cultural and library organization, originator of the Leesclubbing concept)
- o **Pilot Libraries** (BZHD, Rotterdam, De Boekenberg, Waterland)
- o **Local Businesses** (such as chocolate shops, cafés and bookstores)
- o **Provincial Support Organizations (POIs)** (e.g., Rijnbrink for Gelderland and Overijssel)
- o **National and international partners** (e.g., Flemish libraries, BookTok influencers, secondary school teachers)

Classification of Organizations:

- o **Public Service:** Libraries, POIs, Muntpunt
- o **Third Sector Agent:** Local businesses partnering for promotion (e.g., cafés, chocolate shops)
- o **Citizen-Led Initiatives:** Informal reading groups forming around Leesclubbing

Long-Lasting Partnership?

- o **Yes**, with **libraries** and **POIs**, as they regularly collaborate on reading initiatives.
- o Potentially long-term, with **local businesses** if Leesclubbing becomes more established.

Other Social Innovation Projects?

ProBiblio and POIs collaborate on various initiatives, such as reading promotion, youth engagement, and AI-related projects.

Library's Role:

- o ProBiblio introduced and adapted Leesclubbing from Muntpunt to suit Dutch libraries.
- o The library serves as a facilitator, providing materials, partnerships, and promotion.

- o Libraries are not strict organizers; they provide support while letting groups self-organize.

Output Network

Reach:

- o **Still in the early stages**—the pilot ran in three libraries, and broader rollout is scheduled for in 2025planned.
- o Library users who participate receive book bags, but **exact user numbers are unclear**.

User Base Growth:

- o **Not yet fully developed**—Leesclubbing is still in its **expansion phase**.
- o **Various Marketing efforts** (e.g., influencer campaigns) are planned to increase awareness and ideas for this are described in the Toolkit.

User Interaction & Community Building:

- o **Less structured than traditional reading clubs**, allowing flexibility in participation.
- o Some users **engage in other library activities** after experiencing Leesclubbing.
- o The format is still **too new** to determine if permanent reading groups or associations have formed.

Consequences of the Project:

- o **Social Inclusion:** Focus to engage younger audiences who are typically underrepresented in library programs.
- o **Competences & Knowledge:** Encourages literary discussion.

- o **Personal Benefits:** Provides a relaxed space for discussion, connection, and community engagement.

4.2.8 Conclusion

Leesclubbing strives to offer a fresh, engaging, and innovative approach to reading, blending literature, social interaction, and flexible participation in an appealing format. While still in the early phases, it has the potential to strengthen social networks and promote inclusion through informal, self-organized reading groups.

The library plays a facilitating role in Leesclubbing, supporting users rather than leading discussions. Its success depends on further marketing, community-building, and long-term partnerships. By modernizing the reading group format and making it more appealing to younger generations, it not only aims to increase library engagement among younger audiences but also to strengthen social networks, **reinforcing the library's evolving image and role as a modern and vibrant cultural and social hub.**

4.3 Leesclubbing and Reading Clubs as Social Networks in Library Zuid-Hollandse Delta (BZHD)

4.3.1 Introduction

The **programme manager at Library Zuid-Hollandse Delta (BZHD)**, has been coordinating reading clubs since 2010. With a background in tourism, recreation, and events management, she combines her expertise in community engagement with her passion for books and reading. Through her work, she has helped develop and refine both traditional reading clubs and the more flexible Leesclubbing initiative, aimed at making reading more accessible to different audiences.

4.3.2 The Structure and Social Impact of Reading Clubs

BZHD's reading clubs consist of structured groups of 8–10 people who meet every six weeks in libraries or private spaces to discuss books. The library plays a facilitating role by providing books, reading guides, and discussion materials, while the groups remain largely self-directed. These clubs focus on diverse literary themes, including Dutch-translated literature, history books, and classical music.

Beyond literary discussion, reading clubs serve as social networks. They provide a space for members to connect, share thoughts, and build friendships. These groups often develop into close-knit communities, often among older citizens. The programme manager noticed on various occasions that they are offering emotional support during difficult times such as illness or personal loss. The library has a continued involvement, including offering spaces, materials, and feedback mechanisms, to ensure that these clubs remain dynamic and responsive to members' needs.

4.3.3 Leesclubbing: A More Flexible Approach

To offer a more **independent** reading experience, BZHD introduced **Leesclubbing**, allowing people to borrow the pre-packaged set of five books with a reading guide and discuss them with a self-selected group, without direct library involvement. This approach offers greater flexibility compared to the already existing reading clubs in the library, making it particularly suitable for readers with irregular schedules or different discussion preferences.

However, Leesclubbing at BZHD has struggled to gain traction. Limited promotion and the lack of a strong connection to the library as a meeting place have contributed to its lower popularity among BZHD's regular audience, which are in majority of older age categories. The programme manager suggests that this is due to the Leesclubbing model being better suited for younger generations, who engage less with traditional library structures but value independent, peer-led experiences.

Looking ahead, BZHD plans to restructure Leesclubbing, integrating it more closely with traditional reading clubs after the library's planned 2025 merger with De Boekenberg in Spijkenisse. By blending the flexibility of the Leesclubbing concept with both libraries' supportive frameworks, they hope to attract new and younger audiences for the project.

4.3.4 The Role of Reading Clubs in Social Networks

Reading clubs function as more than literary discussion groups; the programme manager considers them important social structures that benefit both members and libraries: For patrons, the regular meetings create a sense of belonging and routine, offering a space for intellectual and emotional engagement. The clubs become a social safety net, creating and promoting trust and supporting long-term friendships. For libraries, the clubs help strengthen the library's role as a community hub by strengthening relationships with members and providing insight into their interests. They also serve as a springboard for new initiatives, such as author events and reading promotions.

4.3.5 The Reading Clubs and Social Networks During COVID-19

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the library played a crucial role in maintaining social connections within reading clubs, despite restrictions on in-person meetings. Recognizing the importance of continuity and engagement, the library kept in close contact with members, primarily via email communication, and provided various alternative solutions to keep discussions going.

To support the clubs, the library offered virtual meeting options, such as Microsoft Teams, but ultimately, members chose their own ways to stay connected. Some groups preferred email-based discussions, circulating thoughts and reviews through group emails, while others held socially distanced outdoor meetings in gardens during the summer. Some participants even maintained regular weekly phone calls, ensuring that their reading routines—and social bonds—remained intact.

Despite the challenges, the reading clubs all continued their scheduled reading cycles, with the library ensuring that books were available for pickup through designated counters. According to the programme manager, this sense of continuity and routine provided members with a stable social network during uncertain times. As restrictions eased, a cautious return to in-person meetings took place, with a final gathering at the end of the season in May before another closure after the summer.

Despite the pandemic's disruptions, no significant member dropouts occurred, demonstrating the strong bonds and commitment within these reading communities.

4.3.6 Insights on Social Networks created by the reading clubs of BZHD

Close Communities

Reading clubs have been playing a crucial role in creating and nurturing long-term relationships, offering personal connections besides the sharing of literary interests. Through regular meetings and shared interests, members build trust and social cohesion, forming networks that extend beyond book discussions. These connections often lead to lasting friendships, reinforcing the library's role as a community-building space.

Combating Loneliness

For older members, reading clubs serve as a means against social isolation. By providing a structured yet engaging environment, these groups offer a sense of belonging and companionship. Regular gatherings allow members to connect, share experiences, and support one another.

Balancing Structure with Flexibility

While traditional reading clubs benefit from the structure and support provided by the library, more flexible models—such as Leesclubbing—could attract younger and more diverse audiences. These adaptable formats allow participants to meet on their own terms, catering to those with busy schedules or different engagement preferences. By balancing guided structure with self-initiated discussion groups, libraries can reach a broader demographic.

Libraries as Social Hubs

Libraries serve as central gathering places, offering a low-barrier space for social and cultural exchange. Through the reading clubs, they encourage inclusivity, providing opportunities for people of all backgrounds to come together, discuss literature, and form meaningful connections. This highlights the library's evolving role, not just as a place for books, but as a vibrant hub for community interaction and continuous learning.

4.3.7 Input and Output network

Input Network

Organizations Involved:

The **Bibliotheek Zuid-Hollandse Delta (BZHD)** is the primary organization facilitating Leesclubbing. The library used to collaborate with **Senia**, a national non-profit organization that provides reading guides, but BZHD has since taken more control over its reading clubs by producing its own reading guides.

Longevity of Partnership:

- o The partnership with Senia has lasted over a decade, but BZHD has gradually taken over book selection and reading materials for better control.
- o Leesclubbing itself is not yet numerous in its groups at BZHD, which according to the program manager is due to a lack of promotion and the older population of the patrons. The traditional reading clubs have been operating successfully however since 2010.

Library Involvement in Other Social Innovation Projects:

- o BZHD actively engages in other reading initiatives, such as organizing author events, cultural programs, and combating illiteracy.
- o The library is involved in broader community-building activities, integrating reading clubs into its social outreach efforts.

Role of the Library:

- o The library initiated and structured traditional reading clubs.
- o For Leesclubbing, BZHD is more of a facilitator rather than an active organizer. The program is available, but it lacks the same visibility and structured support as traditional reading clubs.

Output Network

Reach of the Initiative:

- o Leesclubbing at BZHD has reached only few participants as of yet.
- o Traditional reading clubs consistently engage 12-14 groups of 8-10 people, ensuring consistent participation.

User Base Trends:

- o Leesclubbing remains stagnant, primarily due to limited promotion and the predominance of an older demographic among library patrons.
- o Traditional reading clubs maintain a stable user base, with some groups existing for over 14 years.

User Interaction and Engagement:

- o Traditional reading clubs nurture strong, long-term social networks, with members forming close-knit communities. Some groups even engage in other social activities such as attending theatre performances together.
- o During COVID-19, reading clubs adapted with email discussions and socially distanced meetings, demonstrating self-sufficiency and resilience.
- o Leesclubbing does not yet facilitate strong interaction, as participants collect a book bag but do not necessarily engage in regular discussions over time.
- o With BZHD's upcoming merger with Boekenberg Library in Spijkenisse in 2025, the goal is to revitalize Leesclubbing by promotion activities and attracting a younger audience.

Social Consequences of the Initiative:

- o **Social Inclusion:** Traditional reading clubs provide a structured, reliable space for social interaction, which according to the programme manager may help to reduce isolation, especially among older members. Members of Leesclubbing and the other reading clubs engage in meaningful discussions.
- o **Emotional Support:** Reading clubs create emotional safety nets. Members support each other through life events, illnesses, and personal losses.

4.3.8 Conclusion

While traditional reading clubs thrive at BZHD, Leesclubbing struggles due to lack of promotion and engagement. The structured nature of reading clubs provides social stability, while Leesclubbing, as a flexible, informal model, may require targeted marketing and adjustments to attract a younger audience.

Reading clubs and Leesclubbing at BZHD illustrate how libraries can serve as **more than just book-lending institutions**—they are dynamic social spaces that create and strengthen connection, engagement, and community resilience. BZHD’s experience highlights how libraries serve as facilitators of social innovation and help develop strong, community-driven social networks. By balancing structured programming with flexible alternatives, BZHD strives to ensure that a diverse range of readers continue to benefit from literary and social experiences.

4.4 Blending in the Local Flavour: Leesclubbing in Ghent

4.4.1 Introduction

Leesclubbing in Ghent was developed as part of the **Gent Leest** initiative, which is a broader local initiative aiming to bring people together through literature. Coordinated by the project officer and senior librarian of the De Krook municipal library, this project builds on the city's literary heritage and existing community networks. The project officer has been working in the library for 8 years and has an educational background in history and culture management. The senior librarian has 40 years of experience in de Krook library, studied library sciences and has a doctorate in literature.

Inspired by the Muntpunt Brussels model, Leesclubbing was launched in 2021 to offer small, self-organised groups a ready-made package of books and discussion materials. Initially targeted at the *Stadslezers*—active members of the Gent Leest community—it was later expanded to anyone with a

library card, making it more inclusive. Contrary to the initial Muntpunt initiative, it is not specifically aimed at young adults, but at the broader reading community in general.

4.4.2 The Social Networking Value of Leesclubbing

Community Building through Flexible Reading Groups

In Ghent, Leesclubbing is free of charge. It provides a **low-barrier, informal setting** for literary discussions, distinguishing itself from traditional book clubs. While the groups receive the discussion questions, conversations often extend beyond books, facilitating natural social interactions. The format allows participants to choose their meeting locations, whether at home, cafés, or even while travelling, enhancing flexibility and accessibility. The library is not involved in the formation of the groups, however, it happens that people post a message on the library's Facebook page to invite others to join their group. The initiative's local character, featuring Ghent authors and illustrators, further strengthens community ties and gives the program a unique identity.

Strengthening Social Cohesion

Beyond its literary benefits, Leesclubbing supports social inclusion. The project officer and the librarian agree that mission of Leesclubbing is *to connect people*, via their love for reading. It offers older participants, particularly retirees, a way to combat loneliness by engaging in meaningful discussions. The project also bridges generational gaps, as it attracts a diverse range of participants. Although younger people (twenties and thirties) are less represented, the initiative encourages intergenerational conversations, enriching discussions with varied perspectives.

The Library as a Networking Hub for Leesclubbing

The library facilitates Leesclubbing by offering books and guidance as well as promotional activities. Strategic partnerships with literary organisations, such as the Poetry Centre and the Royal Academy of Dutch Language and Literature, help integrate Leesclubbing into the city's broader literary culture. Additionally, participant feedback through reports and direct suggestions, such as requests for English-language books or new themes, helps to improve and enrich the program.

4.4.3 Challenges

Despite its strengths, Leesclubbing in Ghent faces several challenges. Budget constraints limit the addition of new books to Leesclubbing, affecting the actuality and attractiveness. However, for the initiative to continue, new book titles will need to be added to the collection to ensure its continuity. In addition to this, some participants find the concept a bit unclear. Furthermore, initial promotion efforts were weaker in Ghent compared to cities like Brussels and Leuven, reducing public awareness and participation.

4.4.4 Feedback and new developments

People provide feedback by writing small reports, which are published on the website. Additionally, people provide feedback via email or at the library reception desk, which is mostly positive and sometimes provides inspiration for the acquisition of new books.

The library has recently intensified promotional efforts, including visual displays and stands to increase visibility. For this purpose, a well-known local artist designed the promotional materials to connect it to the identity of Ghent. Additionally, the introduction of new books and themes is planned. Expanding partnerships with bookstores and new cultural organisations may also improve outreach. A long-term evaluation in 2026 will determine whether further investment is justified, based on lending figures and participation rates.



*f.l.t.r.: Illustration "Young adults", photo tote bags and illustration "Better late than never"
Illustrations by Gerda DenDooven. Photo credits: De Krook library, Ghent.*

4.4.5 Input and Output network

Input Network

Organizations involved:

- o Bibliotheek De Krook (Ghent)
- o Cultuurconnect (Organisation supporting digital innovation in cultural organisations)
- o Poëziecentrum (Poetry Centre)
- o Koninklijke Academie voor Nederlandse Taal- en Letterkunde (KANTL)
- o Standaard Bookshop and other bookshops
- o Local authors and the local artist Gerda Dendooven
- o Local shops to include local treats
- o Viernulvier Café and Concert Podium

Classification of organizations:

- o **Public service:** Bibliotheek De Krook
- o **Third sector agent:** Culture Connect, Poëziecentrum, KANTL
- o **Market service:** Standaard Bookshop and other bookshops, Viernulvier café

Long-lasting partnership?

Yes, collaboration has been ongoing since 2020, with previous literary initiatives starting in 2017. The project has expanded and continues to involve new partners.

Other social innovation projects involving the library?

- o The library is engaged in **Gent Leest**, a broader initiative for literary engagement, of which Leesclubbing is a part.
- o The library is also part of the **Gents kunstenoverleg** (Gent Arts Consultation) and participates in various literary initiatives.
- o Cooperation with literary partners, sharing events in the literary calendar

Role of the library:

- o The library is the **initiator and driving force** behind the project in Gent.
- o It provides **books, organization, and promotional support** while allowing citizens to self-organize book clubs.
- o Inspired by **Muntpunt's** model, they adapted it to their local community to make the Leesclubbing more attractive and appealing.

Output Network

How many people have been reached?

Exact numbers are not provided, but there are 17 book club packages (containing different themes), and the initiative is described as successful and expanding.

Is the user base growing, constant, or in decline?

- o The initiative continues, but participation is fragmented. Some users return for new book packages, while others participate once.
- o Expansion efforts are made, e.g., increased promotion and additional book packages.

Are the users interacting beyond reading?

- o Some users form regular groups and share their experiences with Leesclubbing on social media.
- o Meetings happen in cafés, at home, or even on vacation.
- o The library receives feedback and requests for new books.

Social impact on users:

- o **Community building:** Encourages people to meet and discuss books.
- o **Social inclusion:** It is open to all citizens, including those with different reading habits (e.g., audiobooks).
- o **Cultural engagement:** Promotes literary discussion, introduces people to new authors.
- o **Skill development:** Enhances reading comprehension and critical thinking.

4.4.6 Conclusion

Leesclubbing in Ghent successfully merges literature and social networking, adding to the reading culture of the community. The initiative's local identity, flexibility, and emphasis on informal social connections make it a valuable model for community engagement. It has been successfully running, with 17 tote bags containing different themes, and is considered as a valuable addition to the standard reading club format.

4.5 Leesclubbing as a Social Event: Bruges Library

4.5.1 Introduction

The **Leesclubbing** initiative in Bruges has developed from the original book-lending model into a lively recurring community gathering initiative. Coordinated by the education officer (who is also a youth author) and a reading coach, the program aims to promote reading, social interaction, and community engagement. Besides their work for Leesclubbing, the education officer focuses in her work on youth reading initiatives, while the reading coach works to combat declining reading skills and develop a stronger reading culture in Bruges both inside and outside the library.

4.5.2 A Shift to Leesclubbing Events: how Leesclubbing works in Bruges

Originally, Leesclubbing followed a structured format inspired by Muntpunt, where participants borrowed reading club bags containing books and discussion questions. However, low lending rates, outdated materials, and lost books led to a shift towards larger meetings with multiple groups together in January 2023. This transition to café-based gatherings has increased engagement and created a more dynamic and interactive experience.

Unlike traditional book clubs, participants do not know each other beforehand. Instead, they sign up for a specific book and meet in small groups to discuss it in a relaxed café setting. Each session follows a structured yet flexible format:

- Participants choose one of three books in advance.
- Groups of around five people discuss the book using pre-prepared questions from a central jar.
- A librarian is present for support but does not lead the discussion.
- Each session lasts 1.5 hours, though participants are free to stay and continue their discussions informally.

Sessions are scheduled after major holidays, to ensure regular engagement. While some sessions, such as last September's edition, were fully booked, others, like the spring session, had to be cancelled due to low registrations. To cover costs and ensure sustainability of the program, the program has shifted from free participation to a €5 fee (including drinks), with a reduced €1 fee for those eligible for financial support.

4.5.3 The Social Networking Impact of Leesclubbing in Bruges

The Library as a Social Hub

Leesclubbing reinforces the library's role as a community meeting place. Leesclubbing provides a chance for the library to be space for meeting each other. It aligns with the "squarely against loneliness" campaign of the Municipality of Bruges. Leesclubbing provides a low-barrier way for people to meet new individuals, engage with literature, and participate in meaningful discussions. The selection of books is varied and broad, to appeal to a variety of people.

Unlike daytime reading groups, this initiative also accommodates people with busy schedules, offering evening sessions in an informal setting.

Diversity and Target Groups

Most participants are between 30 and 60 years old, with women making up 75% of attendees. While younger readers participate less frequently, likely due to separate youth-focused reading groups, the initiative presents an opportunity for intergenerational engagement. Future integration with existing library initiatives may further broaden participation and attract a more diverse audience.

Social Dynamics and Networking

The transition to live meetings was inspired by people who did not yet have the network to form a Leesclubbing group and proposed meeting others in a café. The library embraced this idea and created the new format. Unlike the original concept of Leesclubbing, participants in these groups do not know each other beforehand. The informal café setting is an asset to creating a cosy and friendly atmosphere.

The meetings have primarily remained a one-off social engagement for most participants. The casual, non-committal format makes it very approachable, but it does not always lead to lasting connections. However, some participants reconnect at other library events, and in this way the program helps strengthen broader social networks.

4.5.4 Challenges and Adjustments

The selection of books is an important factor in the success of Leesclubbing: popular titles improve participation rates. In addition to this, group dynamics vary per group; some participants may feel a

bit intimidated by experienced readers, so taking reading levels into account in the formation of the groups is important to encourage everyone to join in.

Furthermore, participation changes with the seasons: Sessions in summer and December tend to have fewer attendees, which shows the importance of strategic scheduling.

In the beginning of the project, books tended to get lost. Now that the tote bags have been replaced by live events, this is not the case anymore.

The programme is currently being evaluated and may be combined with the promotional tote bags in future.

4.5.5 Future Growth and Improvements

To assess and refine the program, the library plans an evaluation after one year in January 2025, to determine potential expansions or adjustments. To increase engagement and accessibility, potential partnerships with bookshops and organizations combating loneliness may be explored. Additionally, the initiative could benefit from more frequent sessions and volunteer involvement to reduce staff workload.

4.5.6 Input and Output Network

Input Network

Organizations involved:

- o **Bibliotheek Brugge**
- o **De Krook library Ghent** (initial cooperation)
- o **Muntpunt** (original creator of the concept, no longer actively involved)

- o **Cultuurcafé** (third-sector agent, partner for hosting the live meetings)

Is it a long-lasting partnership?

- o **With Muntpunt:** No, Brugge initially bought the concept from Muntpunt but moved away from the concept with tote bags, merely just keeping the attractive name.
- o **With Cultuurcafé:** Yes, since January 2023, with the possibility of continued collaboration.

Is the library involved with some of these actors in other social innovation projects?

Yes, the library collaborates with Cultuurcafé on multiple projects.

What is the specific role of the library?

- o The library organizes and promotes **Leesclubbing**, created the promotional design, facilitates book selection, and provides discussion guides.
- o It **initiated the shift** from book-lending bags to live discussion meetings in cafés to encourage participation. The meetings aim to create an accessible and welcoming literary social space.

Output Network

How many people have been reached?

- o **Approximately 30 participants** have taken part in live meetings.
- o The previous book-lending bag system had more users, but the numbers were not well-tracked.

Is the user base growing, constant, or in decline?

- o **Growth is slow but steady**, influenced by book selection and promotional efforts.
- o The transition from book-lending to live events aims to improve engagement and proved to be successful in attaining this.

Are users interacting beyond reading?

- o Some attendees form connections and return for future sessions.
- o However, long-term social bonds among participants remain limited.
- o The program attracts individuals looking for social interaction and shared literary experiences.

Consequences of the social innovation project on users:

- o **Social inclusion:** Provides a welcoming space for people looking for connections.
- o **Competences:** Encourages discussion skills and deepens literary engagement
- o **Personal impact:** Some users who found traditional book clubs intimidating have discovered a more informal and flexible alternative.
- o **Economic impact:** The library has introduced a small participation fee (5€ with a discount for those with a low-income pass), making it sustainable.

4.5.7 Conclusion

Leesclubbing in Bruges successfully blends literature and social engagement, paving the way for both literary and personal connection. The informal café setting, the structured discussions, the variety of books and the accessible format create an appealing alternative to traditional book clubs. While challenges remain—particularly in broadening participation and ensuring sustainability—the initiative proves that libraries are not just places to borrow books, but also spaces to engage in meaningful conversations.

4.6 Conclusion

Leesclubbing represents an innovative approach to reading engagement, blending literature with social interaction in a flexible, informal format. Across different cities, the initiative strengthens a new role for libraries—not only as a literary resource but also as a facilitator of social networking and cultural engagement. While traditional reading clubs provide structured stability, Leesclubbing offers a more dynamic, self-organized alternative. Both formats contribute to inclusion and community-building.

Despite its potential, the initiative faces challenges such as budget constraints and conceptual unclarity, which affect engagement and sustainability. Increasing promotional activities in creative ways and through partnerships could help improve visibility and engagement.

The experiences in Ghent and Bruges illustrate how local adaptations influence success: Ghent’s model builds on the local community identity, while Bruges incorporates structured discussions in a café setting, making it a lively and accessible social alternative to conventional book clubs. In contrast, BZHD struggles with promotion and engagement, highlighting the need for targeted marketing and adjustments to attract the younger audiences the concept in the Netherlands aims at.

Ultimately, Leesclubbing demonstrates how libraries can serve as vibrant cultural hubs that strengthen social networks. By balancing the structured concept with flexible, informal ideas, the libraries can engage diverse audiences and evolve as spaces for both literary and personal connection. Its long-term success will benefit from the creative approaches that are currently undertaken in the Netherlands and Belgium to promote Leesclubbing and adapt it to the needs of its local audiences. Additionally, strategic promotion, deeper community engagement, and sustainable partnerships will further strengthen Leesclubbing’s role as a valuable literary and social networking initiative.

Annex: Interview Questions Leesclubbing in Libraries

Persoonlijke Achtergrond

1. Kunt u kort uw functie en achtergrond beschrijven?
2. Wat is uw opleiding, en hoe draagt deze bij aan uw rol binnen de bibliotheek?

Algemene Informatie over de Bibliotheek en Leesclubbing

3. Wat is de naam van de bibliotheek of organisatie?
4. Sinds wanneer organiseert de bibliotheek Leesclubbing?
5. Wat was de motivatie achter het starten van Leesclubbing?

Breder Netwerk en Partnerorganisaties

6. Welke organisaties zijn bij Leesclubbing betrokken? Hoe kunnen deze organisaties worden geclassificeerd? (productiebedrijf, marktgerichte dienstverlener, publieke dienstverlener, derde sector agent, burger)
7. Is het een langdurig partnerschap?
8. Werkt de bibliotheek met sommige van deze actoren ook samen aan andere sociale innovatieprojecten?
9. Wat is de specifieke rol van de bibliotheek in het project?

Missie en Achtergrond van Leesclubbing

10. Hoe past Leesclubbing volgens u in de missie van openbare bibliotheken?
11. Hoe is Leesclubbing naar ProBiblio en de bibliotheken gekomen? Hoe kwam het eerste contact tot stand?
12. Bestaan er vergelijkbare leesclubs in andere bibliotheken, of is dit project uniek?

13. Op welke manieren onderscheidt Leesclubbing zich qua aanpak, doelgroep, of samenwerking van andere leesclubs?

Doelgroep

14. Op welke leeftijdsgroepen richt Leesclubbing zich?
15. Heeft Leesclubbing specifieke doelgroepen op basis van interesse (bijv. romans, non-fictie, poëzie)?
16. Zijn er eisen waaraan deelnemers moeten voldoen om deel te nemen (bijv. lidmaatschap van de bibliotheek)?

Organisatie en Praktische Informatie

17. Hoe vaak komen leesclubs bijeen en hoe wordt de planning bepaald?
18. Hoeveel deelnemers kunnen er maximaal deelnemen per leesclub?
19. Hoe worden de boeken geselecteerd? Hebben deelnemers inspraak in de boekkeuze?
20. Wat zijn de kosten van deelname per groep of per persoon?
21. Welke rol spelen bibliotheekmedewerkers in de leesclubs (bijv. als moderator of organisator)?

Interactie en Activiteiten

22. Hoe verlopen de leesclubbijeenkomsten? Zijn er vaste onderdelen, zoals discussies of presentaties?
23. Hoe zorgt de bibliotheek voor een positieve en veilige sfeer tijdens de bijeenkomsten?

Deelnemerservaring en Betrokkenheid

24. Hoe wordt de feedback van deelnemers verzameld?
25. Hoe tevreden zijn deelnemers doorgaans? Zijn er bekende verbeterpunten?
26. Hoe trekt de bibliotheek nieuwe deelnemers aan voor Leesclubbing?

Impact en Resultaten

- 27. Welke impact ziet de bibliotheek als gevolg van de leesclubs, bijvoorbeeld op betrokkenheid en leesvaardigheid?
- 28. Heeft de bibliotheek statistieken over het aantal deelnemers en hun betrokkenheid?
- 29. Zijn er trends zichtbaar in de populariteit van bepaalde boeken of genres binnen Leesclubbing?

Organisatie van Leesclubbing

- 30. Hoe worden leesclubs gevormd (bijv. gepland netwerk of spontaan)? Wat is de rol van bibliotheken hierin?
- 31. Welke veranderingen hebben zich voorgedaan in de levenscyclus van Leesclubbing?
- 32. Zijn er zichtbare verschillen in de evolutie van leesclubs tussen bibliotheken?
- 33. Wat is volgens u de waarde van het netwerk? Zijn er voorbeelden van blijvende waarde die bijdragen aan de missie?
- 34. Hoeveel mensen zijn er bereikt? (een schatting is voldoende) Groeit de gebruikersgroep, blijft deze constant, of neemt deze af?

Drijfveren en Barrières

- 36. Welke drijfveren speelden een rol bij de opzet van Leesclubbing (bijv. sociale relaties, normen, technologie)?
- 37. Heeft u ook barrières ervaren, zoals financiële beperkingen of risico's?

Institutionele Factoren

- 38. Zijn er juridische of beleidsmatige kaders waarmee rekening moet worden gehouden?
- 39. In hoeverre spelen lokale niveaus, regelgeving of interne regels een rol bij de uitvoering van leesclubs?

Effecten van Leesclubbing

40. Heeft u voorbeelden van positieve veranderingen die door Leesclubbing zijn ontstaan?
- a) Welke voordelen merkt u op voor de deelnemers? (sociale inclusie, vaardigheden, persoonlijke en economische levens)
 - b) en voor de bibliotheek?

Toekomst

41. Heeft de bibliotheek plannen om Leesclubbing uit te breiden of te verbeteren?
42. Zijn er nieuwe ideeën of partners waarmee u in de toekomst zou willen samenwerken?
43. Zijn er specifieke uitdagingen waar de bibliotheek momenteel tegenaan loopt met betrekking tot Leesclubbing?
44. Wat zou u anders aanpakken als u Leesclubbing opnieuw zou opzetten?
45. Zijn er nog andere aspecten die u zou willen delen over Leesclubbing en de bijdrage aan de bibliotheekgemeenschap?
46. Zijn er andere bibliotheken of organisaties waarvan u denkt dat het nuttig zou zijn om hen te interviewen?

5 Case Study B: Host Library

Authors: Fabio Moscoso Durán , Manolo Sola (UAH)



Image source: Purchena public library⁴

5.1 Introduction

The Biblioteca de Acogida project, First Prize Social Library 2017," convened by the Social Library Foundation of Barcelona, being the first Andalusian library to achieve it. It also obtained the CCB Seal of the Library Cooperation Council of the Institute of the Ministry of Culture of Spain developed by the Public Library of Purchena has become a space of peace and a meeting point for young immigrants. Local youth at risk of social exclusion

The Purchena Public Library launched this project in 2015 in collaboration with other public entities and associations in the town. At first, young migrants and later those welcomed in the juvenile centers

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https://www.facebook.com/bibliotecadepurchena/photos/a.284167877377/10156668611207378/?paipv=0&eav=AfbmuOdIN3XVglUdRORI3L_sbmxcQz3f5Uq7CqBDACGTn4FelbzipQHME57MajC7ICIY&_rdr

had to go either to the public school or to the secondary school of this town. Young people were supposed to receive formal education in juvenile centers. However, outside the formal educational environments of the school, institute and juvenile centers, the contact of children and young people with the locality and people of the municipality was null.

Spontaneously, children and young people began to go to the library, accompanied by monitors, to look for information, connect to the internet and rarely to borrow books. Direct observation generated a perception that the Purchena Public Library could be a great meeting point in the town for these generations and interact with local young people who participate in book clubs. In this way, the "Reception Library" project was born, which has developed since its inception the objectives of fighting xenophobia, racism and social exclusion while making visible the social and cultural work of public libraries.

The case study of the Reception Library project of the Purchena Library (Almeria, Spain), is composed of 5 sections as follows: The first explains the dimensions and scope of the project from its beginnings to the present. The second section focuses on the analysis of the network typology and the characterizations of the input network and the output network. The third section explains the challenges and barriers of the Host Library project. The fourth part of the case study describes the institutional factors of the project such as the legal framework and policies of the public library system in Spain. The fifth section focuses on the evaluation of the impact and performance of the project using the methodology based on the RISE model. The sixth section highlights the unexpected results of the project, to fill the seventh section where the discussions and conclusions of the case study are presented.

5.2 Reception Library: A social innovation project from the public library

In recent years, the number of migrants arriving in Spain has almost tripled. Of the 20,000 people who have arrived, more than 1,500 are children. *Save the Children* (2024) explains that, if the upward trend in the volume of arrivals continues, the arrival of unaccompanied children is likely to increase in the summer months. Beyond language and cultural issues, one of the singularities around the care of young people of foreign origin is, precisely, the need to promote a process of social integration with better guarantees. 88.4% of young people of foreign origin assisted in 2019 migrated alone as minors. In general terms, young people are the ones with the fewest family references in Spain, in proportion, 84.0% of these young women are boys compared to 16.6% who are girls. Finally, girls have more direct family (Emancipation Observatory, 2024).

In this context, the Reception Library was conceived as a project of the Public Library of Purchena⁵, (located in this small town in the interior of the province of Almería, Spain), which, developed in collaboration with several centers for minors and other agents and volunteers, welcomes young people at serious risk of exclusion and underage immigrants from different countries. promoting a series of learning, training, meeting and coexistence activities between these young people and those of the locality.

The Purchena Public Library, in its desire to become a meeting place for these young people with the young people of the town, has been promoting the "Reception Library" project since September 2015

⁵ Purchena (Almería) is a municipality in the interior of the province of Almería, in the northern area called del mármol because of the large number of edges of this material. It is a municipality of great historical importance, the administrative center of the region, which in the seventies and eighties of the last century witnessed a sharp decrease in population, falling below two thousand inhabitants. This municipality of the Almanzora Valley has also been shaken in recent years by the marble crisis which, however, and to a large extent, has been able to be faced thanks to the creation in its municipal area of three centers for minors which, in addition to their necessary social work, have offered a job opportunity to a large number of neighbors.

in collaboration with several cultural and social associations from two youth care centers that welcome young people at serious risk of exclusion and immigrants.

These children and young people in the centers attend, in some cases, the public school and the secondary school in this town and, in others, they receive formal education in the centers for minors themselves. Outside the school and institute and juvenile centers, their contact with the children and young people of the town is almost non-existent. Such contact is limited to school hours in the first case and none in the second.

Spontaneously, children and young people began to go to the library, accompanied by monitors, first to look for information and connect to the internet and in a few cases to borrow books. Direct observation by the Purchena Library Directorate identified that the Purchena Public Library could be a catalytic meeting point for local children and young people who regularly attended the library, among other things, to participate in reading clubs and other cultural activities promoted by the library.

This project is pioneering because it has turned a public library into a meeting place for social innovation where young children from different backgrounds, origins and in situations of exclusion are welcomed around a clearly defined social innovation process that promotes the social inclusion of these young migrants, so the differential value is clear. The project has clear recipients: young people at clear risk of social exclusion who are welcomed in two of the centers, as we have previously mentioned, and who, due to their origin and profile, are being welcomed in one center or the other (Sola, 2019, pp 34).

The project receives young immigrants welcomed from the "Los Cármenes" Center. These young people, most of them minors, arrive in Spain in boats, the so-called "pateras", which disembark on the coasts of Almeria and Granada which, for the most part, lack training and knowledge of the Spanish language. A second group of young people come from all over Andalusia and, sometimes, from other

communities, who are at serious risk of exclusion and are sheltered in the "La Casa" Reception Centre. These children and young people, members of broken families, have no corrective measures or pending cases.

Given the profile of the young people and identified the main problem: little or no contact with the community, the library, children's centers and the city council, the main objectives of the project were formulated:

1. Fight against xenophobia, racism and social exclusion.
2. To make visible the social and cultural work of public libraries.
3. To turn the library into a meeting place for young people from different backgrounds and realities.
4. Promote democratic culture.
5. Encourage reading.

Table 5.1: Biblioteca de Acogida, project budget

2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
2.000 €	2.000 €	2.000 €	2.000 €	2.000 €	N/A	N/A	2.000 €	2.000 €

Source: Purchena public library

The Biblioteca de Acogida project has had very limited resources (on average 2,000 euros per year) but has managed to develop a very active network and to benefit from other European Union projects that have allowed it to achieve important results in terms of social innovation.

Project Hypothesis

HC: How does the implementation of a process of cultural and educational reception in the public library affect the social inclusion of young migrants?

HP1: Will an inclusive cultural and educational environment reduce xenophobia, racism and social exclusion?

HP2: Would the development of a social innovation project increase the visibility and democratic culture in the public libraries of Purchena?

HP3: Would the educational and integrated reception of young migrants positively promote reading and language training levels?

Strategic lines of action

The strategic lines of action defined by the Reception Library project were defined as follows:

1. Young people as direct beneficiaries of the project.
2. Interaction with society.
3. The Purchena Library will promote reading and cultural and social activities aimed at alleviating the disconnection of certain young people with society.

To start the Reception Library project, since September 2015, the following actions were established and developed:

- **Spanish classes** for young people in the juvenile centers divided into different groups by age and level. These classes are taught by local volunteers of different ages.
- **Classes in other languages** (English, German and French) aimed at young people from the centers together with other young people from the town. The classes are taught by young European volunteers from the European Union's Erasmus+ programme.

- **Youth Reading Clubs** where young people from the centers participate along with other young people from the town. These reading clubs are coordinated and energized by the best and only librarian in Purchena.
- **Cultural workshops** organized by the Youth Information Center and the City Council of Purchena, together with educators from the centers.
- **Biblioteca Humana**, in the summer of 2017, in collaboration with a Work Camp of the Andalusian Youth Institute, the first Human Library of Andalusia was organized in Purchena.

Table 5.2: Activities of the Reception Library project

1	Workshops in the library.
2	Purchena Library: Literacy with young people from the juvenile center.
3	Purchena Library: Reading and literacy club with young people from the juvenile center.
4	Human Library
5	Youth book clubs.
6	Erasmus+ volunteers and young people at the children's centre: French classes.

Source: (Sola, 2018).

Table 5.2 reveals the activities that take place throughout the year, from September to June since 2015. From 2015 to 2023 we have counted 309 unique participants. An average of 34 participants who, in turn, have participated in one or more of the activities. Because it is a migrant population and depending on the year and the curve of arrivals differs from year to year, there are continuous ups and

downs in the beneficiary population of the project, but no decline is observed to date. An important achievement of the project stems from the participation of young people in other activities: young migrants are getting involved in other activities thanks to the interaction with young residents that takes place in the library. For example, some users participate in local youth associations, reading clubs, sports clubs.

And what about the future?

The Reception Library project has been developing since 2015 to the present day. However, achieving a greater investment in human and bibliographic resources would be of great help for the future of this project. In fact, a large additional investment would not be necessary, but a little more budget would result in a greater scope of it. (Sola, 2019). For the moment, the fate of "Biblioteca de Acogida" is assured. The project is consolidated and there is a commitment from all the agents to maintain it over time to become a reference project.

Methodology for Network Analysis and Innovation Management

This study is based on semi-structured interviews with the following people:

- Ms. A, Director of the municipal library of a city with a population of about 1,553.
- Mrs. B, IES of the municipality

To measure the impacts of the Network, the Innovation and Business Sustainability Route (RISE) was taken as a basis, making adjustments to the model for the development of the case study. In general terms, the RISE model is an analysis route for innovation and organizational sustainability developed to show in companies the level at which they are in the social and organizational dimensions: innovation, leadership and strategic direction, organizational culture, recognition, collaborative processes (Networks), and technology. These six (6) factors were considered to be the most relevant

in the management of an organization, as corroborated in several studies with the models that supported the creation and development of RISE. (Pérez-Uribe, Ramírez-Salazar, & Moscoso, 2018).

5.3 Type of innovation/type of innovation process

The Reception Library project is a public library project with a social focus that has been benefiting immigrant minors and those at risk of exclusion. From the conception of the project, it can be identified that it is a social innovation project of public policy. According to Rubalcaba (2016), social innovation can be defined as the process of developing and implementing new solutions (products, services, models, processes, etc.) that meet social needs more efficiently than existing solutions and that generate new social relationships or collaborations. The Municipality of Purchena, like most Spanish localities, faces the challenge of immigration of minors who come from different countries and who often do not speak the language (Spanish) or who migrate without their families, which is why they face important challenges in terms of social integration.

In this area, Spain's public policy against youth immigration has focused on strengthening the processes of social integration, education, employment, and border control. Spain is a country that has experienced a notable influx of young immigrants in recent decades, especially from Latin America, Africa and Eastern Europe, policies have evolved to address both the challenges and opportunities presented by this reality. In this sense, Sorensen, E. & Torfing, J. (2011), define political innovation as "the process by which political and social actors develop and apply new ideas, procedures and organizational devices that substantially modify policies, organization and practices in the political system and in public management".

At first, both children and young people began to go to the library, accompanied by monitors, in search of information, connect to the internet and in a few cases to borrow books. That first observation made it possible to identify that the public library of Purchena could be a magnificent meeting point between

these young people and the children and young people of the town to promote cultural and educational activities, create spaces for language learning. With the spontaneous help of associations and other public entities, an open innovation process was launched around the project, understanding open innovation as an approach that promotes collaboration between organizations and external agents to foster innovation.

Table 5.3: Typology of actors in the Public Innovation Network Host Librar

Actors	Type of Entity
Purchena City Council through the Public Library, the Social Services Area and the Youth Information Center.	Public Entity
Centers for Minors in the town: Valle del Almanzora, La Casa and Virgen del Carmen	Public Entity
Illipula and Iif Youth Associations.	Third Sector
Gremio Luna Cultural Association	Third Sector
CEIP San Ginés	Public Entity
IES Entresieras.	Public Entity
Volunteers	Citizen volunteering.

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Type of innovation network

As in the beginning, the spontaneous mobility of young migrants to the Purchena Library gave rise to the conception of the project, and the subsequent collaboration of the entities such as the Centers for Minors of the locality: Valle del Almanzora, La Casa and Virgen del Carmen, Illipula and Iif Youth Associations, Gremio Luna Cultural Association, the CEIP San Ginés and IES Entresieras, the innovation network arose spontaneously. According to Desmarchelier et al (2020), spontaneous or emerging public service innovation networks for social innovation arise in a self-organized way due to the convergence of the activities of agents facing a given problem, in a given context (a district, a city, a region, etc.). Again, while in theory spontaneous emergence can involve any agent, spontaneous (self-organised) networks more often involve citizens (rather than the government). (pp. 19).

Characterization of the Entrance Network

According to Figure 5.1, the interviews with the different actors define that the Reception Library project at its inception arose as a spontaneous initiative between the library and the City Council of Purchena, which was joined by other organizations in the municipality such as public education centers, youth centers and cultural associations - which, due to the nature of the project and the target population, generated quick and easy synergies between the actors.

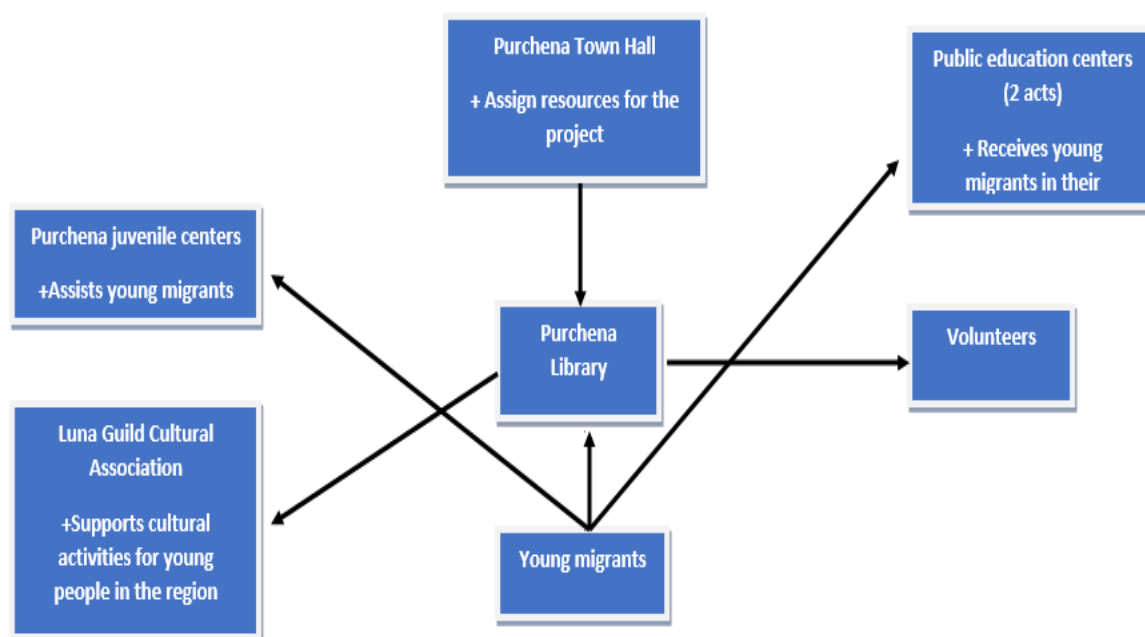


Figure 5.1: Public innovation entrance network host library

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Description of the actors and roles:

➤ *Purchena Town Hall*

The town of Purchena and a Spanish municipality in the province of Almeria, in the autonomous community of Andalusia, located in the Almanzora Valley region with a total population of 1,553 inhabitants as of 2023 and participation of the migrant population of 10.11%. However, the process of social innovation undertaken by the City Council hand in hand with the Public Library of the Municipality has facilitated the process of social and educational insertion of young migrants in the region, The project receives full support from the public administration of the town. (This added to the great dissemination and media impact of the Social Library Foundation award, this added to the receipt of up to three more awards in the last year -one of them international-, has managed to make

the City Council even improve its economic contribution and predisposition to offer more activities both to library users and to young people who come from the centers.

➤ ***CPM "La Casa"***

The Center for the Protection of Minors with a Specific Program for Behavioral Problems "La Casa", which opened at the end of 2007, in the town of Purchena (Almería). Its purpose is to provide comprehensive assistance to minors who are under the guardianship or guardianship of the Public Entity, over 12 years of age, with a diagnosis of serious behavioral problems and who present recurrent dissocial behaviors, transgressing social norms and the rights of third parties.

➤ ***CPM RESIDENCE "Los Cármenes de Purchena"***

"Los Cármenes de Purchena" is a resource at the service of the Junta de Andalucía (Ministry of Social Inclusion, Youth, Families and Equality) made up of two Centers. One, managed with a Guidance and Labor Insertion Program, in collaboration with the European Social Fund based on its European Strategy 2020, aimed at caring for minors between 16 and 18 years of age, who are under the immediate care, guardianship or guardianship of the regional administration. The main objective of this Programme will be to facilitate the transition from adolescence to the independence of adult life, through specific actions that develop their personal autonomy and promote their social and labour integration, providing them with the necessary attention so that they can develop in an autonomous and normalised way once they have reached the age of majority.

➤ ***Illipula Youth Association***

An important meeting point for young people in Purchena is its Youth Information Library-Centre (CIJ), which is part of the Eurodesk Network. This network of dissemination centres for European youth initiatives – present in 34 countries and with 51 offices in Spain – has the participation of youth correspondents: volunteers who offer information and guidance "in a contrasted and reliable way",

Alejandra remarks. In addition, "the fact that members of Illipula collaborate with the CIJ and Eurodesk makes it easier for us to contact European entities for our Erasmus+ projects, dissemination. The center has been welcoming children from sub-Saharan Africa in recent years. "It is a priority for Purchena that these children feel welcomed, both because of their situation and because they generate a lot of employment" (Del Peral, 2024).

➤ ***Ifitos Youth Association***

The youth association Ifitos develops a project for young people in the municipality of Purchena youth exchange to promote social cohesion, inclusion and European feeling through working groups and dynamics of games and other activities.

➤ ***Gremio Luna Cultural Association***

It is an association that promotes cultural activities in the municipality of Purchena hand in hand with the city council and thanks to regional volunteering.

➤ ***CEIP San Ginés and IES Entresierras.***

The CEIP SAN GINÉS is a school in the municipality of Purchena at the level of Infant and Primary education and IES Entresierras is a Baccalaureate school in the same municipality.

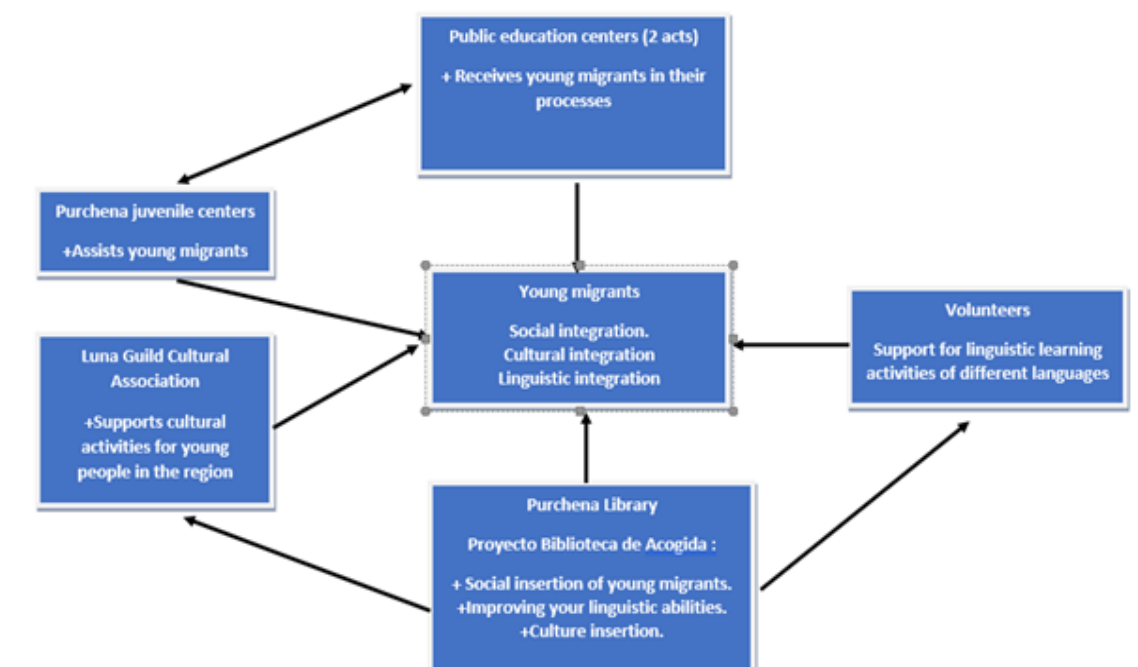


Figure 5.2: Public innovation exit network host library

Source: Authors' elaboration.

As a result of the interview process, it is estimated that an approximate number of young people who have participated in the project have been: Between 2015 and 2023, 309 unique young migrants have continued to be welcomed by the project, with an average of 34 participants who, in turn, have participated in one or more of the project's activities. The interviews have revealed that the development of the project has improved the innovation processes of the Network and actors as a whole. Purchena's library functions as the systems integrator is a key entity or actor that has the central responsibility for bringing together different components or systems so that they work in a coherent manner. For this reason, the network has a System Integrator who is integrated and leads the activities of the network.

Collaborative processes are those projects in which several entities or people come together through trust agreements, to achieve the same objective (Ramírez-Salazar, 2016; Cheikhrouhou, Pouly & Madinabeitia, 2013). Castells, M. (1996) explains that a network is a set of nodes or points connected to each other through links that allow the interaction or exchange of resources, information or energy. An innovation network refers to an interconnected system of organizations, individuals, or entities that collaborate and share knowledge, resources, and capabilities with the goal of generating innovations. Powell, et al. (2005). To measure the impact of the Network of the Reception Library project, the following variables were taken:

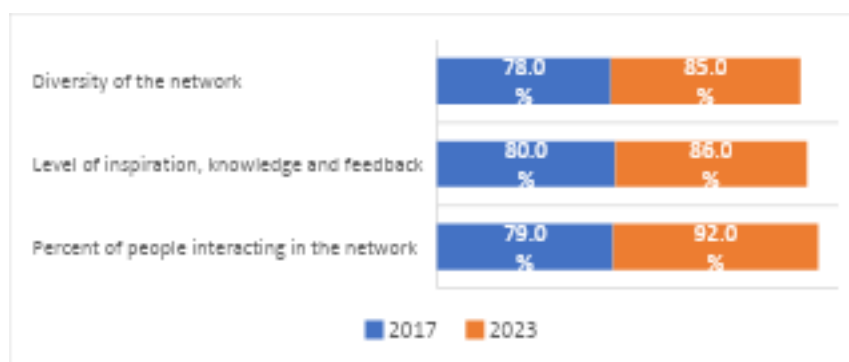


Figure 5.3: Network size and diversity

Source: Authors' elaboration.

According to Newman, M. E. J. (2006), Innovation networks are often organized in communities where members of a group collaborate more closely with each other than with other groups. To measure the size and diversity of the network, the following descriptors were considered: diversity of network actors, level of inspiration, knowledge and feedback of the network, number of people interacting in the network. According to Figure 5.3, the diversity of actors in the network increased from 78% to 85% between 2017 and 2023. From it, Network participants increased their level of inspiration, knowledge and feedback from the network around the project, as well as the number of people interacting on the network went from 79% to 92% in the same period.

Another metric to consider is network quality and engagement. The quality of an innovation network refers to the effectiveness and efficiency with which the network facilitates the creation, transfer and application of knowledge and innovations. Boschma, (2005). To measure the quality and commitment of the network, the following descriptors were considered: Level of network interactions, Depth of interactions, and Level of trust and mutual support. The network of the Host Library project has a high level of trust between the participating public and civil actors and third sector organisations.

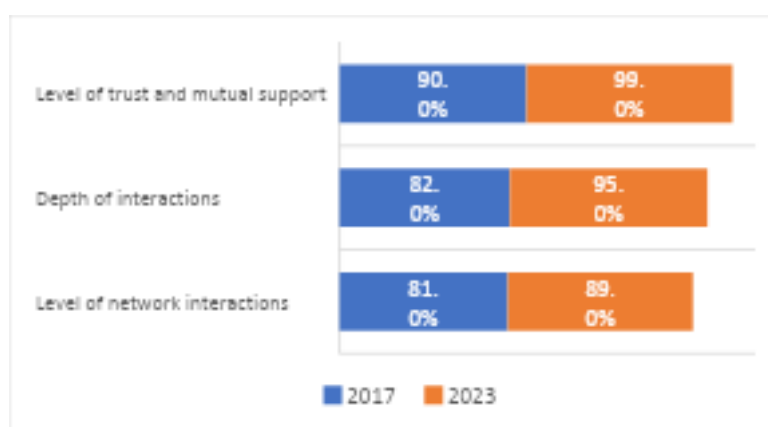


Figure 5.4: Network quality and commitment

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The results of an innovation network refer to the tangible and intangible products generated as a result of interactions and collaborations within the network. Chesbrough, et al. (2006). According to Dyer, et al (1998), the value of the network is associated with the net benefit that network members obtain from their participation in the network. To measure the results and value of the network, the following descriptors were considered: Level of innovative ideas within the network, Level of contribution within the network, Level of improvement of users,

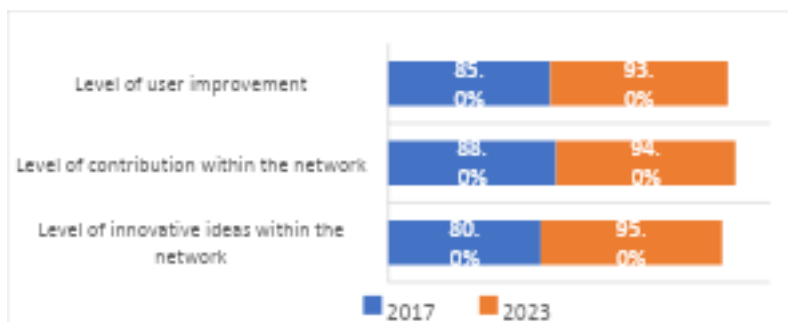


Figure 5.5: Network outcomes and value

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The levels of contribution of the members of the Network in relation to the project have always been significant (93% in 2023). Similarly, users (young migrants) observe positive results regarding the project (93%), as well as in the level and quality of innovative ideas within the network and that positively impact the project (95% in 2023).

Nooteboom, B. (2000), explains that gaps in an innovation network are the gaps or deficiencies that limit the effectiveness of the network in generating and disseminating innovations. Opportunities in an innovation network are the possibilities for improvement and growth that can arise by addressing existing gaps or by leveraging untapped resources and capabilities. Chesbrough, et al. (2014). These gaps and opportunities can be measured in various ways: Level of expansion of the Network, Level of capacity for the generation of resources, Level of interconnection with stakeholders, Level of improvement of skills and behaviors.

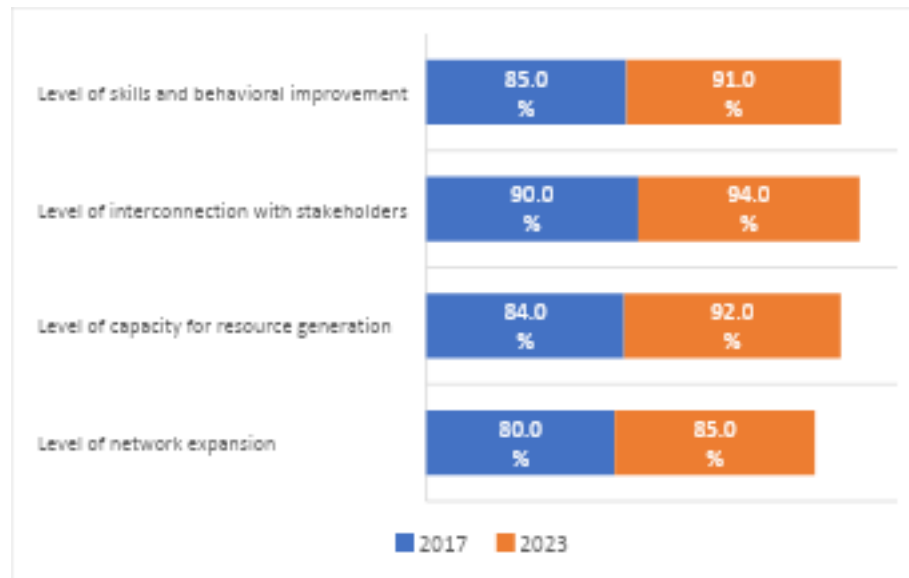


Figure 5.6: Network gaps and opportunities

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The project's network has achieved significant expansion. There are currently seven public actors, from the third sector and volunteers. However, the capacity to generate resources in monetary terms is not yet significant, the publicity and reception of projects has allowed institutional commitments to the project to remain in force and increase in relative terms. The level of interconnection with stakeholders is becoming more important and a growth of 94% is observed in 2023. Finally, the skills and behaviors within Red have improved significantly thanks to the leadership of the project manager.

5.4 Challenges and barriers in the Host Library project

Social innovation has become a powerful tool to address social problems in communities. Undoubtedly, social innovation presents a dynamic approach to problem-solving, which extends beyond traditional public policy initiatives and business solutions. In this section, we will delve into the multifaceted challenges faced by the Purchena Municipality's Host Library project,

- **Resource constraints:** The Municipality of Purchena is relatively small as well as its income and budget. For this reason, the project's resource constraints are obvious and natural and due to the size of the territory. In fact, obtaining adequate and external financing is a recurring challenge in social innovation. Often, social innovations do not generate immediate or substantial financial returns, making it difficult to attract traditional investors. Reliance on grants, grants, or public funding can limit long-term sustainability (Nicholls, A., et al, 2008).
- **Organizational Capacities:** The Purchena library is a small entity at the local level with a limited number of people working in its environment. However, volunteering has made it possible to carry out a large number of activities despite personal limitations. In this area, organizations that drive social innovation often lack the organizational capabilities necessary to sustain and scale their initiatives. This includes skills in management, strategy, and partnerships, as well as the ability to adapt to changing contexts (Bessant, et al, 2007).
- **Measuring impact:** quantifying the impact of social innovation projects can be a complicated task to perform. Staff shortages prevent the creation of a system for measuring the social impact of the project in its different aspects. Many of the evaluations can be perceptual or qualitative. In this line, the intangible nature of impact measurement can make it difficult for innovators to attract funding and resources for the project.
- **Sustainability and scalability:** a major challenge of the Biblioteca de Acogida project is to ensure its long-term sustainability. Sustainability implies not only the continuity of the project,

but also its ability to adapt to changes in the environment and maintain its relevance. Osterwalder, et al, (2010). The strategy of the Purchena Library is to search for external resources from European funds and to collaborate with the various entities that are part of the network or external in order to continue with the magnificent project.

- **Access to technology and infrastructure:** In an increasingly digital world, access to technology and social media is absolutely necessary. Publicizing the project at European and global level would undoubtedly improve aspects such as volunteering, capacity and search for financial resources, as well as the achievement of new actors that allow expanding, dynamizing and reflecting the results of the Host Library project.

5.5 Institutional factors of the project

Libraries in Spain are influenced by various institutional factors, including the legal framework, cultural policies, public funding, administrative organization and community participation. These factors determine how libraries are managed, funded, and operated, as well as the services they offer.

a. Legal Framework

The legal framework is fundamental for the operation and regulation of libraries in Spain. This framework is made up of laws, decrees, and regulations that establish the legal basis for the creation, organization, and management of libraries.

Law 16/1985, of 25 June, on Spanish Historical Heritage: This law is one of the fundamental regulations affecting libraries in Spain. It establishes the obligation to protect, conserve and disseminate the bibliographic heritage, including books, manuscripts, and documents of historical value. Law 10/2007, of 22 June, on reading, books and libraries: This specific law establishes the rights and obligations regarding reading, access to information and the organization of libraries. It promotes the development of libraries as centers of access to culture and knowledge. Royal Decree 582/1989, of 19

May, approving the Regulations of the Public Library Service: Regulates the operation of public libraries and establishes the criteria for the creation of library services in the Autonomous Communities.

b. Cultural Policies

Cultural policies in Spain, both nationally and regionally, play a crucial role in the support and development of libraries. These policies are implemented by the Ministry of Culture and Sport, as well as by the regional governments, and usually include:

- **Promotion of Reading:** Programs and campaigns to promote reading among the population, especially among young people. Initiatives such as the "Plan for the Promotion of Reading" have a direct impact on the activities and services offered by libraries.
- **Digitization and Access to Information:** Policies that support the digitization of bibliographic holdings and online access to collections, as part of the effort to modernize libraries and make knowledge more accessible.
- **Social Inclusion: Programs** that encourage the use of libraries as inclusive spaces that offer access to information and culture for all citizens, regardless of their socioeconomic status.

c. Public financing

Libraries in Spain rely heavily on public funding. This funding can come from various levels of government: Central Government: Through the Ministry of Culture and Sport, national projects, the acquisition of bibliographic collections and the digitization of collections are financed.

- **Autonomous Communities:** The Autonomous Communities have competences in culture and, therefore, finance libraries at the regional level, including the creation of new libraries and the improvement of existing ones.

- **City Councils:** At the local level, municipal libraries are funded and managed by local councils. Variability in available resources can influence the quality and quantity of services offered.

d. Administrative Organization

The administrative organization of libraries in Spain is complex and depends on the competences of the different administrations:

- **National Libraries:** The National Library of Spain (BNE) is the main library institution in the country and is managed directly by the Ministry of Culture and Sport.
- **Regional and Municipal Libraries:** The autonomous communities and city councils manage their own networks of public libraries, with variations in their organization and resources depending on the region.
- **University Library Networks:** Spanish universities manage their own libraries, which are essential for research and higher education. These libraries are part of wider networks, such as REBIUN (Network of Spanish University Libraries), which coordinates resources and services between universities.

e. Community Engagement

Libraries in Spain are also community spaces, and community participation is key to their success. This includes: **Volunteer Programs:** Many libraries have volunteers who assist in organizing activities and events. **Participation in Management:** Some libraries have mechanisms for user participation in decision-making, such as library councils, which include community representatives.

5.6 Project impacts/performance

To measure the impact and performance of the project, as in the measurement of the project's Network, the RISE Innovation and Business Sustainability Route model was used. To quantify the impacts and performance of the project, derived and adapted from the RISE model, the following

factors were adapted: Quality of service, innovation performance, leadership and strategic direction, Effectiveness and organizational culture, and Technological opportunities.

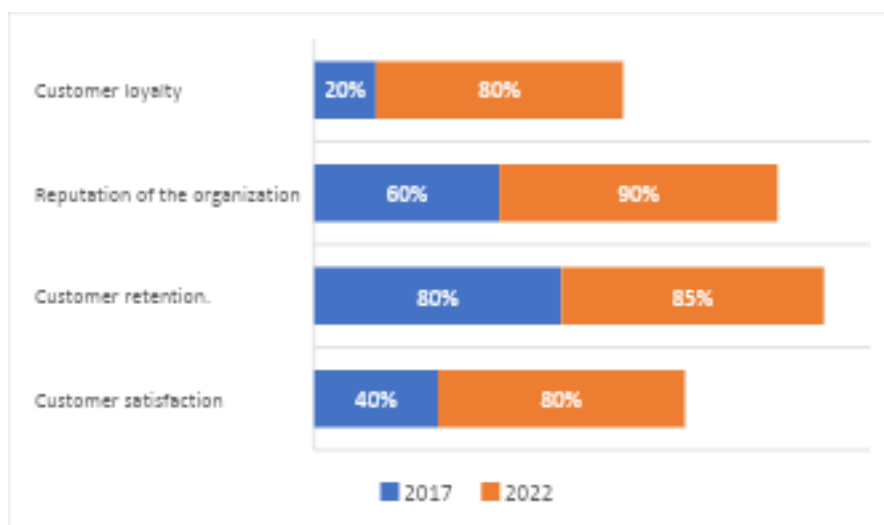


Figure 5.7: Service quality

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The quality of service in social innovation projects is understood as the capacity generated by the projects to meet the needs and expectations of their actors in an effective, efficient, and sustainable manner. The quality of service in this context is crucial, given that social innovation projects often address complex problems that directly affect the well-being of people and communities. Parasuraman, et al. (1988). Among the descriptors used to measure the quality of service, customer satisfaction increased from 40 to 80% among the beneficiaries of the project between 2017 and 2023. Undoubtedly, obtaining three awards (one international) has significantly improved the reputation of the organization at national and European level. The loyalty of young users has been continuously

growing due to the good use of the project by them. Overall, customer loyalty has improved and exceeded the expectations of project management and different stakeholders.

Social innovation performance can be defined as the ability of a social innovation project or initiative to generate positive and sustainable impacts on society, relative to the resources invested. (Murray et al 2010). This concept encompasses not only direct results, such as improving the quality of life of the beneficiaries, but also descriptors of How to Innovate, Social Innovation within the Project, Impact of Innovation and Value Creation.

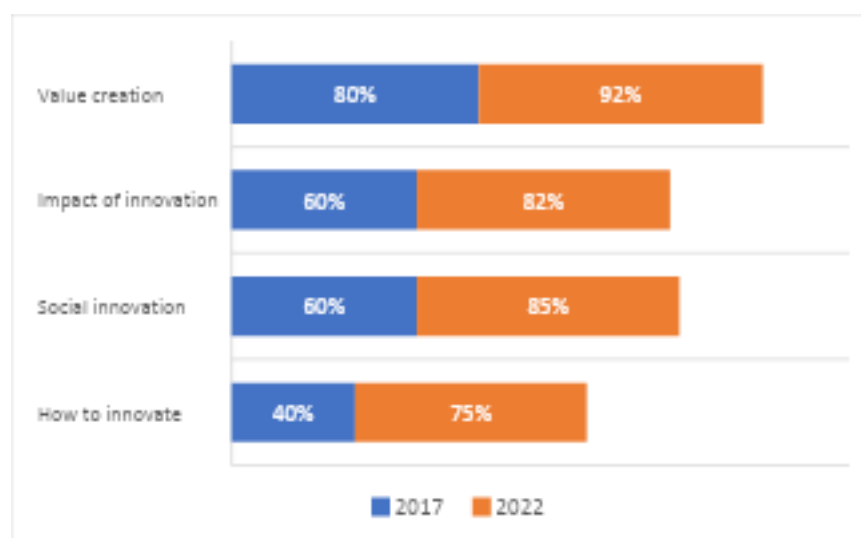


Figure 5.8: Innovation performance

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The Development of the Host Library Project has allowed the library, interest groups and users to improve their ability to innovate by including new innovation challenges. In the same way, the project is a very important example of social innovation in the territory, allowing young migrants to be better integrated and improve the perception of the community around migration processes. The creation of

value has significantly improved around the process since the project has become an example of how from public libraries, social actions can be generated to fight xenophobia, social integration and social exclusion.

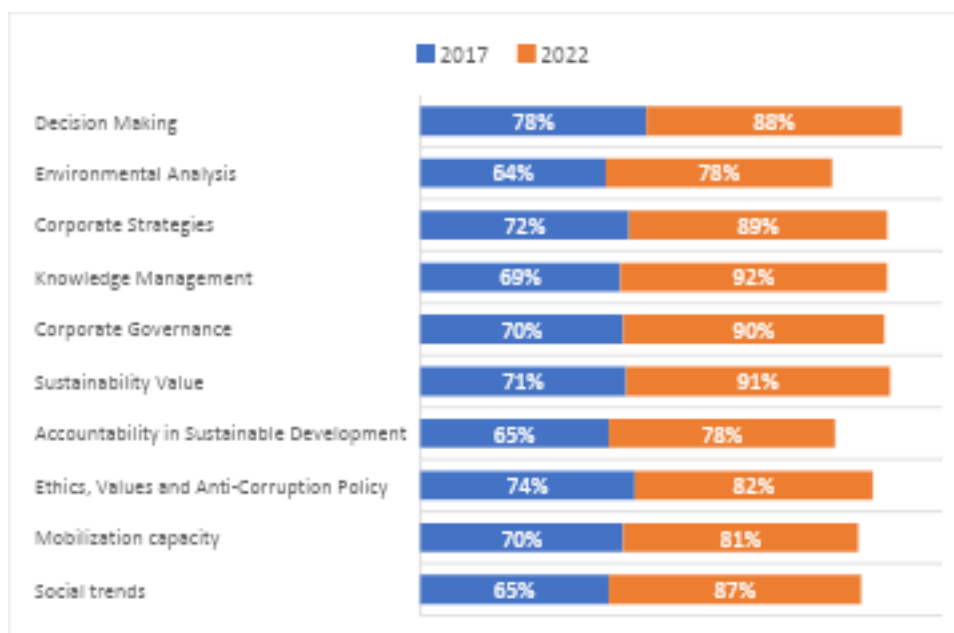


Figure 5.9: Leadership and strategic direction

Source: Authors' elaboration.

According to Ansoff (1997), strategic management is the potential for the future achievement of an organization's objectives. Pérez-Urbe (2018) understands addressing as the flight log of any type of organization on which all collaborators must work. In this sense, from the management of the Purchena Library, it was possible to design, implement and promote the Welcome Library project, being a remarkable effort of leadership and organizational strategy. The development of the project has made it possible to ostensibly improve many aspects of the strategic management strategy of

both the library and the project, as well as in descriptors such as the value of sustainability and corporate governance (See Figure 5.10).

Efficiency refers to the ability of an organization or system to achieve the desired results using the fewest possible resources. Coulter, M. (2012). On the other hand, organizational culture refers to the set of values, beliefs, norms, and behaviors that are part of an organization and interact among its members. Organizational culture influences every aspect of organizational life, from decision-making to how employees relate to each other and to customers. Schein, (2010).

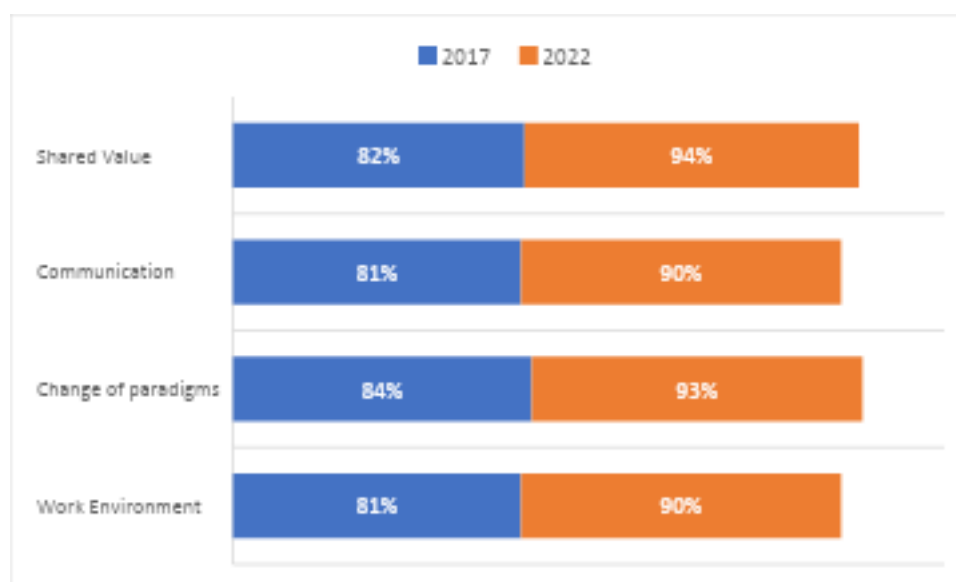


Figure 5.10: Efficiency and organizational culture

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Among the descriptors analyzed, the work environment, paradigm shift, communication and shared value were taken. The work environment and interactions with Network members and volunteers is excellent and improves over time as the results of the project have been observed. In the same way, managing to integrate volunteers from several countries of the European Union has changed the

paradigm of young citizen participation around social innovation projects. In the same way, internal communication in the library and with the actors that are part of the Network, has allowed the Andalusia, Spain Library project.

5.7 Unexpected project results

The Welcoming Library project has been the beneficiary of several national and international awards. In 2018 she was the winner of the Seal of the Library Cooperation Council in Spain CCB 2018. This award consists of carrying out an annual recognition that aims to highlight the value of the most outstanding library projects during the year that are related to the general objectives of this II Strategic Plan of the CCB.

A second prize was awarded in the 4th edition of the "Public Library and Social Commitment" Award for its project "Welcoming Library", by the Social Library Foundation, a non-profit institution that makes visible the social dimension of the public library has seen new and different initiatives underway in Spain.

5.8 Discussion and conclusions

The Reception Library project was conceived from the beginning as a meeting place for young people of different origins, realities and for the promotion of democratic culture. In recent years, like other countries in southern Europe, it has become a recipient of migrants who mostly do not speak the Spanish language and are welcomed by youth centers or schools that do not have the tools for social and cultural integration that allow these young people to easily integrate. On the other hand, the lack of knowledge on the part of the community and the lack of social interaction with migrants has been generating phenomena such as xenophobia and racism.

First evidence of the possibility of developing the project was the interest of the young people in visiting the Purchena Library independently. This allowed the public actors (library and City Council, school) and the third sector (Reception Centers for Minors) to identify and shape a strategic line of the project, proposing a series of objectives related to the social and educational problems identified in young migrants: lack of social interaction with the environment and low language skills.

The central hypothesis proposed is linked to How does the implementation of a process of cultural and educational reception in the public library affect the social inclusion of young migrants? Undoubtedly, the implementation of the Reception Library project by the Purchena Public Library has ostensibly improved the processes of social inclusion of young migrants, this explained by the participation in a large number of other projects led by the library, social interactions with the community and an improvement in their linguistic skills which has allowed better communication with the inhabitants of the town of Purchena.

A second hypothesis linked to the fact that, if an inclusive cultural and educational environment will reduce xenophobia and racism, I reveal as a result that the community in general greatly improved both the vision and the role of these young migrants in the locality. On the other hand, the knowledge of the inhabitants of the town of Purchena of the migration stories suffered by these young people has managed to positively penetrate the levels of acceptance of the community in the project.

The third hypothesis raised with "Would the development of a social innovation project increase the visibility and democratic culture in the public libraries of Purchena?", has amply demonstrated that the achievement of three awards around the project has made it possible to make it visible in the media and research centers that have been interested in the development and result of the project.

A fourth hypothesis formulated on whether the educational and integrated reception of young migrants would positively promote the levels of reading and language training, has been positive. A large part of young migrants has learned Spanish thanks to language training processes led by

volunteers. In addition, young Spaniards are benefiting from English, German and French courses within the framework of Erasmus+ projects that are currently being developed in the library.

Lessons learned:

1. When young people are at the center of the project in all its sections, it has made it possible to directly link all the actors and interest groups around the project, making the project their own, being a tool to fight against xenophobia, racism and exclusion and promote democratic culture.
2. It is necessary for migrants to interact with the local social environment: When young people have interacted with the community, their level of involvement has been enhanced by continuous and deep contact with other organizations, associations and private citizens with young people in juvenile centers.
3. Public libraries as a center of social innovation: It is clear that the role of libraries has changed ostensibly, they are no longer reading centers, but on the contrary, they have become laboratories of social, cultural and educational experimentation.

Among the relevant events of the project have been the obtaining of several awards by non-profit entities in Spain. These awards have allowed and increased the visibility of the project both nationally and internationally. This social marketing has increased the interest of young European interns in the project, so the project always has an active and international volunteer who always enriches the project. Since the beginning of the project (2015), a total of 309 unique participants have benefited with an average of 34 participants per year who have participated in one or more of the activities.

Since its inception, the Reception Library project has generated a spontaneous network of social innovation of public policy with the aim of improving the problems related to the migration of young people who have been arriving in the town during the last decade. The network, made up mainly of public entities, third sector entities and volunteers, interact dynamically to favor the target group: young migrants. However, the project has brought with it parallel projects that have benefited young

people in the town of Purchena, which has favored the integration processes of migrants with the locals.

The innovation processes developed with these parallel projects arise from open innovation processes between the actors and interest groups that are part of the network. The funding for the project comes from the Purchena City Council, although each member of the network benefits from its own individual funding. To analyze the Network, the Innovation and Business Sustainability Route (RISE) was used, which made it possible to quantitatively identify several aspects relevant to the evolution and results of the network.

The size of the network has been increasing both in terms of members and the number of participants, as well as the internal feedback processes. In relation to network quality and commitment, they have shown that the levels of internal trust have been consolidated, as well as the number of interactions between the actors of the network. From the same, the quantity and quality of innovative ideas derived from the network have increased over the last few years. Among the most important challenges are obtaining financial resources to increase the size and impact of the project. On the other hand, the public library of Purchena is a public entity that limits in certain ways the capacities of the public library.

The measurement of the impact of the project has never been a priority of the project in terms of quantitative indicators, so a lot of information in terms of management indicators or metrics does not exist or is not developed over time. The sustainability of the Reception Library project is assured so far, but long-term financing will always be a challenge to combat. Finally, the technological factors around the project would always be susceptible to improvement, but they are also related to the limitations of the project's human capital.

Within the performance impacts evaluated, the quality of service has improved since the beginning of the project. Descriptors such as the reputation of the organization, customer satisfaction (in this case

young migrants) have increased significantly. In terms of innovation performance, it has revealed that value creation and social innovation are descriptors that have evolved successfully during the project. Another indicator that has improved both within the project and in the management of the Purchena Library in practice has been leadership and strategic direction.

Decision-making, organizational strategies, and corporate governance have allowed both the library and project management to implement better organizational strategies and policies. Efficiency and organizational culture have also improved, as well as other indicators. In fact, the work environment and interactions with Network members and volunteers is excellent and improves over time as the results of the project have been observed. In the same way, internal communication in the library and with the actors that are part of the Network, increasing the management capacity around the project.

Among the unexpected results can be mentioned the obtaining of several national awards, as well as the generation of parallel projects managed by the library that have permeated, not only young migrants but also young Spaniards who are actively interacting with this migrant population.

In general terms, the Biblioteca de Acogida project is aligned with the Spanish public policy of directly influencing national public libraries. Like any Spanish library, the Purchena library, the financing of the project comes from public resources, which means that the Purchena City Council finances and manages the library, but being a small town, the resources are limited. The Purchena library, being a community space and community participation, has managed to consolidate a project that invites and summons all local actors, generating an important positive social impact. In conclusion, the Reception Library project is a perfect example of social innovation that has positively permeated the social environment in which it has been developed.

The project has made it possible to improve the population's perception of young migrants, reducing the perception of xenophobia, racism and social exclusion that migrants face. The project has also managed to make visible the social and cultural work of the public library of Purchena of the member

actors of the Network, making evident the results of the project and its success in terms of social inclusion.

Over the years, the public library of Purchena has become a meeting place for young people from different backgrounds and realities, who meet, socialize, educate themselves and improve their educational and linguistic processes. The project has promoted democratic culture not only in the town of Purchena but in Andalusia and throughout Spain, being an example of a social and cultural integration project for the community, leading to the increase in reading among young migrants and inhabitants of the territory.

6 Case Study C: Makerspaces, a space for citizen collaboration

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Image source: <https://bibliotecasmedellin.gov.co/>⁶

6.1 Introduction

The Medellín Public Library System (MPLS) has been internationally recognized for its social impact and its management model and for the generation of social innovation projects. The system has received several awards and recognitions from entities such as UNESCO and IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations), standing out as an example of how libraries can become engines of social and cultural development. This system reflects Medellín, Colombia's commitment to culture,

⁶ <https://bibliotecasmedellin.gov.co/bibliolabs/makerspaces/>

education and inclusion, consolidating itself as a model to follow for other cities in Colombia and the world.

With the Bibliolabs strategy, of open source and collaborative territories, three spaces were enabled and equipped in the Library Parks of San Javier, San Cristóbal and Doce de Octubre, with computer tools and machines to design and develop products through 3D printing and other digital manufacturing tools that would facilitate the materialization of entrepreneurial projects. artistic creation, education and open innovation. This is how the MAKERSPACES project was born, which are in practice, physical spaces of open collaboration where people have access to resources, knowledge, professional and amateur connections, tools and materials that are shared to work on their projects in order to create objects and/or artifacts through digital and manual fabrication.

The case study of the MAKERSPACES project is composed of 6 sections as follows: The first section focuses on the project account, raising a series of hypotheses around the possible results of the project. The second section explains the different dimensions of the project related to the analysis of the type of innovation and the innovation process of the project. The second dimension of analysis will locate and analyze the type of Network generated by the project, description of its actors and interactions between the different stakeholders. The third dimension of analysis will describe the main drivers and barriers that have been identified and/or developed in the course of the development of the project. The fourth dimension will describe the institutional factors that strategically affect the project. In the fifth section, the results of the RISE Model will be analyzed, with which the performance impacts of the MAKERSPACE project from 2019 to date were measured and quantified. Finally, the sixth section will reveal the unexpected results of the project in which the most relevant and significant results that have emerged from the interaction of the different allied stakeholders in the network and the main users managing the results are emphasized.

6.2 Makerspaces: a space for open innovation thanks to the use of technologies from the fourth industrial revolution

For some decades, public libraries have been undergoing a process of reconversion, ceasing to be only exclusive spaces for reading and training, becoming new articulating axes of meetings that contribute to the generation of information through documents and data on the sociocultural processes of the territories where they are located. The Public Library System of Medellín relates to different social and cultural actors who lead projects in their territories, where "(...) there are various sources of information about what the communities are and, in turn, there is a lot of local knowledge that must be safeguarded as one of the most valuable treasures of the inhabitants" (Alcaldía de Medellín, 2016, p.33).

The Public Library System of Medellín (MPLS), with its different projects, has been consolidating itself as a gesture of social innovation to reduce the levels of violence, crime and poverty in the city. (Espinal, 2013), The action of the MPLS on issues of innovation in public libraries has served as an instrument of social, educational and cultural intervention that has transformed the social fabric of communities especially exposed to the economic and social crisis of the nineties, when drug trafficking, in a boom era, represented a risk to the social development of the city. In this context, the MPLS has become a catalyst for social innovation projects in Medellín and its metropolitan area, allowing the community not only to access knowledge in an easy and creative way, but also to be a catalyst for social, cultural and economic interactions, promoting the processes of community identity and territorial development.

Description of the Bibliolabs strategy and the Makerspace project.

The Makerspaces of the Public Library System of Medellín (MPLS) are physical spaces dedicated to the development of innovative activities and strategies. These are located in the Fernando Botero Library

Park – San Cristóbal, Gabriel García Márquez Library Park – Doce de Octubre and the José Luis Arroyave Presbyter Library Park – San Javier. These places are equipped with machines and tools that facilitate the processes of manufacturing and collaborative construction. However, this MPLS strategy fulfills a city purpose through different methodologies:

- The MPLS has a wide impact on a large part of the territory of the Special District of Science, Technology and Innovation of Medellín. Through various Information Units located in townships and neighborhoods, as well as in allied entities such as schools, universities and cultural entities, spaces are provided to carry out Makerspace activities, guaranteeing access to technologies to people, even if they are not near the spaces mentioned above.
- As a strategy of the MPLS and, therefore, of the Secretariat of Citizen Culture, the Makerspaces participate in city events such as the Youth Reading Parade and the Book and Culture Festival. Through discussions and workshops, the methodological information of the processes is democratized. In addition, they participate in various events organized by the MPLS, such as the marketing strategy "Medellín, a story told from the libraries", contributing to the construction of decorative elements, ephemeral infrastructures and support in the assembly of the strategies that are carried out in each of the Information Units.
- Internal advice is provided to the MPLS team on manufacturing, methodologies for creation and other processes related to collective and collaborative construction. In addition, support is offered to institutions that wish to establish creation spaces similar to the Makerspace, through advice on machines and processes."

The entire construction exercise, in addition to proposing the processes with the aforementioned technologies, also includes methodological processes in which people are proponents of the exercise and this is leveraged in creation methodologies such as *designthinkin*, human *center design* that are consolidated in the Bibliolabs methodology. In this way, through workshops, personalized advice and

use of tools, knowledge in programming, electronics, robotics, design, modeling and 3D printing, laser and CNC cutting, manufacturing and prototyping with different materials is promoted; consultation and management of information on digital platforms. Through the projects developed, creativity, learning and collaboration capacities among people are enhanced, visions and opportunities are expanded in search of improving social, economic and educational conditions and thus contributing to the cultural development of communities.

Scope

- Children, young people and adults have access to alternative learning spaces to formal education where they develop STEAM skills and learn about education opportunities offered through different city programs.
- People make use and appropriation of digital technologies to share knowledge and generate solutions that contribute to self-care, accessibility, recreation and coexistence in their territories.
- The artists of Medellín who benefit from the MAKERSPACES have spaces, tools and advice to enhance their artistic and cultural projects.
- Entrepreneurs in the territories have access to tools, methodologies and activities to prototype products and generate innovations in their businesses.
- People and communities enhance their collaborative and creative capacities in the design, manufacture of products and use of technologies of the fourth revolution, applied to their interests and needs.
- Public libraries are integrated into the strategies of the Municipality of Medellín that promote technological appropriation, sustainability, care for the environment, and conscious consumption.

Maker Solutions:

These are activities that propose to the community to participate in the design of a project through a challenge to solve an identified problem. Creative development methods, collaborative design and use of digital platforms are used to ideate, conceptualize and manufacture a product, according to the following categories:

- Forming Makers: activity that focuses on bringing people closer to construction technologies and methodologies, mostly focused on people who have not had a relationship with the tools that are already mentioned in the document.
- Maker Sessions: activity dedicated to strengthening people's knowledge about these spaces and technologies, most of the time working with people who already use and have knowledge of these processes.
- Makerspaces consultancies: personalized spaces to develop projects and provide people with specific knowledge according to the needs they present
- Bibliolabs talks: digital dissemination strategy in which the Maker environment is presented and how the MPLS Makerspaces are visualized
- Internal actions: Methodological and construction support to the MPLS Information Units, understanding that the Makerspaces are part of the same Library System
- Having this clarity, the categories that are mentioned in the document have been worked on within these processes that he mentioned and must be kept in mind so that they are not interpreted as if they were different services from the processes that the spaces have.

Table 6.1: Evolution of the budget allocated to the Makerspace project

2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
661 €	125.105 €	36.435 €	36.333 €	39.435 €	43.929 €

Source: Makerspace Project team project, 2024. Estimated budgets in euros.

Initially, the Makerspaces project had few budgetary resources for its operation, but from the second year onwards, the budget increased considerably (more than 10,000%) due to the process of purchasing high-tech machinery for the development of the project. Between 2020 and 2023, the average annual budget was 39,033.03 euros. These financial resources have allowed a great impact at the level of technological and social innovation both in the stakeholders that are part of the network and in the community of Medellin.

Project Hypothesis

HC: "The use of tools and new technologies improves the levels of creation of social and business innovation projects in the city"

HP1: Access to technological tools drives the development and creation of technological ventures

HP2: The increase in the offer of training workshops in innovation and creation will increase the level of users in the system's libraries.

Methodology for Network Analysis and Innovation Management

This study is based on semi-structured interviews with the following people:

- Projection Coordinator (Support and accompaniment to review and structuring)
- Makerspaces Technologist (Support to the consolidation of documentary information)
- Makerspaces Technologist (Support to the consolidation of documentary information)
- Evaluation, Monitoring and Learning Administrative Support Technologist (Support in the statistical consolidation)
- Digital Culture Articulator (Support to the consolidation of documentary information)

1. To measure the impacts of the Network, the Innovation and Business Sustainability Route (RISE) was taken as a basis, making adjustments to the model for the development of the case study. In general terms, the RISE model is an analysis route for innovation and organizational sustainability developed to show in companies the level at which they are in the social and organizational dimensions: innovation, leadership and strategic direction, organizational culture, recognition, collaborative processes (Networks), and technology. These six (6) factors were considered to be the most relevant in the management of an organization, as corroborated in several studies with the models that supported the creation and development of RISE. (Pérez-Uribe, Ramírez-Salazar, & Moscoso, 2018).

6.3 Type of innovation/type of innovation process

According to the OECD (2017), innovation in public policies refers to the development and implementation of new ideas, methods, processes, or solutions that seek to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and equity of public policies, which involve certain characteristics: creativity and new solutions, focus on results, use of evidence and data, citizen participation, and collaboration in technology and digitalization. In this way, the Makerspace project, part of the Bibliolabs strategy, territories in open source and collaborative, promoted since 2014, enabled three Maker spaces with software and machines to design and develop products through 3D printing and other digital manufacturing tools. These spaces have served to promote projects that contribute to citizenship, education, entrepreneurship and culture. The Makerspace project can be considered as a policy innovation since it arises an instrumentalization of public policy for the Institutionalization of the System of Public Libraries and Information Units, Knowledge Management and other provisions are set in the Municipality of Medellín" This policy aims to "contribute to connecting urban and rural territories and Medellín with the world, through the libraries and documentary centers of the city.

Libraries contribute to the development of citizenship, through the • free access for all citizens, every day of the week, in a process aimed at the development of content on a territorial scale according to the sphere of influence of each facility". (Agreement 23 OF 2015).

Type of innovation network

The Makerspace project is developed through a Network model A network of planned innovation. This type of network is an organizational structure that brings together various actors, such as government institutions, companies, universities, NGOs, and other agents, to collaborate strategically in the development and implementation of innovations. Unlike spontaneous or informal innovation networks, planned innovation networks are designed for a specific purpose and are guided by clear objectives, structured governance, and coordination mechanisms. (Provan, K. G., & Kenis, P., 2008).

Table 6.2: Typology of actor of the innovation network makerspace project

Makerspace Partners		
Ally	Actions	Entity Type
San Cristóbal Educational Institution	Workshops in the Makerspace maker sessions	Public Educational Institution
ESUMER University Institution	Educational robotics workshops with LEGO	Private Educational Institution
Juan J. Escobar Educational Institution	Basic Arduino-based electronics workshops	Public Educational Institution

Good start Bethlehem	Workshops on the use and manipulation of 3D printers Advice on the creation of objects	Public Educational Institution
Good Start Lusitania	Workshops on the use and manipulation of 3D printers Advice on the creation of objects	Public Educational Institution
ITM Metropolitan Technological Institute / Faculty of Industrial Design	Robot Racing CompetitionInventor Camp	Private University Institution
Heritage House	Cycle of workshops on Artificial Intelligence applied to equity actions	Public Institution
Benjamín Herrera Educational Institution	Arduino-based basic electronics3D modeling Arduino-based programming	Public Educational Institution
Mirador San Cristóbal Grape	Arduino-based electronics Arduino-based programming	Medellín Public Project
Educational Institution Council of Medellín	Participation of the Makerspace in the I.E. Book Fair Workshops in the	Public Educational Institution

	Makerspace with technical means related to 4IR technologies	
Eduardo Santos Educational Institution	Educational robotics workshops within the framework of the activity They Call Me Calle, transversal to the different channels of the San Javier Library Park.Arduino workshops (irrigation system) in the Makerspace.	Public Educational Institution
Pedro J Gómez Educational Institution	Educational robotics workshops within the framework of the activity They Call Me Calle, transversal to the different channels of the San Javier Library Park.	Public Educational Institution
Juan XXIII Educational Institution	Educational robotics workshops within the framework of the activity They Call Me Calle, transversal to the different channels of the San Javier Library Park.	Public Educational Institution
My Dream World Children's Center	Educational robotics workshops within the framework of the activity They Call Me Calle, transversal to	My Dream World Children's Center

	the different channels of the San Javier Library Park.	
Peace Time Foundation	Robotics electronics workshops with early childhood and children with rights violations	Foundation
Secretariat of Social Inclusion and Family.	Survey of territorial corpographies Food and nutritional security workshops - Directing users of the workshop "Forming Makers and performance in technological areas related to good eating habits"	Public Entity
Network of Music Schools of Medellín	"Production of MIDI devices and didactic tools for disability Production of musical instruments and accessible couplings"	Network of Schools
Culturizarte Foundation	Training in modeling and 3D printing of the sculptural route of Belencito Corazón (In planning)	Foundation

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Description of the actors and roles:

The Makerspace Network is developed with the following characteristics of a planned network: a. Strategic Coordination: The network operates under conscious and deliberate planning that guides collaboration towards common goals. From the Medellín Public Library System, all projects are coordinated, including the Makerspace, following the guidelines of the 2022-2026 Strategic Plan. Stakeholder Diversity: Includes multiple sectors that bring different knowledge, resources, and perspectives, which enriches the innovation process. The MAKERSPACE project has three (3) physical venues: Makerspaces of the José Luis Arroyave Presbítero Library Park - San Javier, Makerspaces of the Fernando Botero Library Park - San Cristóbal, MAKERSPACES of the Gabriel García Márquez Library Park - Doce de Octubre that make up a network composed of educational institutions, Universities, Community Action Boards, Foundations, and public institutions such as the Secretariat of Social Inclusion and Family of Medellín and the System of Public Libraries of Medellín (MPLS). Governance and Management: Networks have governance and management mechanisms that regulate cooperation and decision-making. The management system is derived from the Medellín Public Library System's own management system that manages the Makerspace project throughout the city.

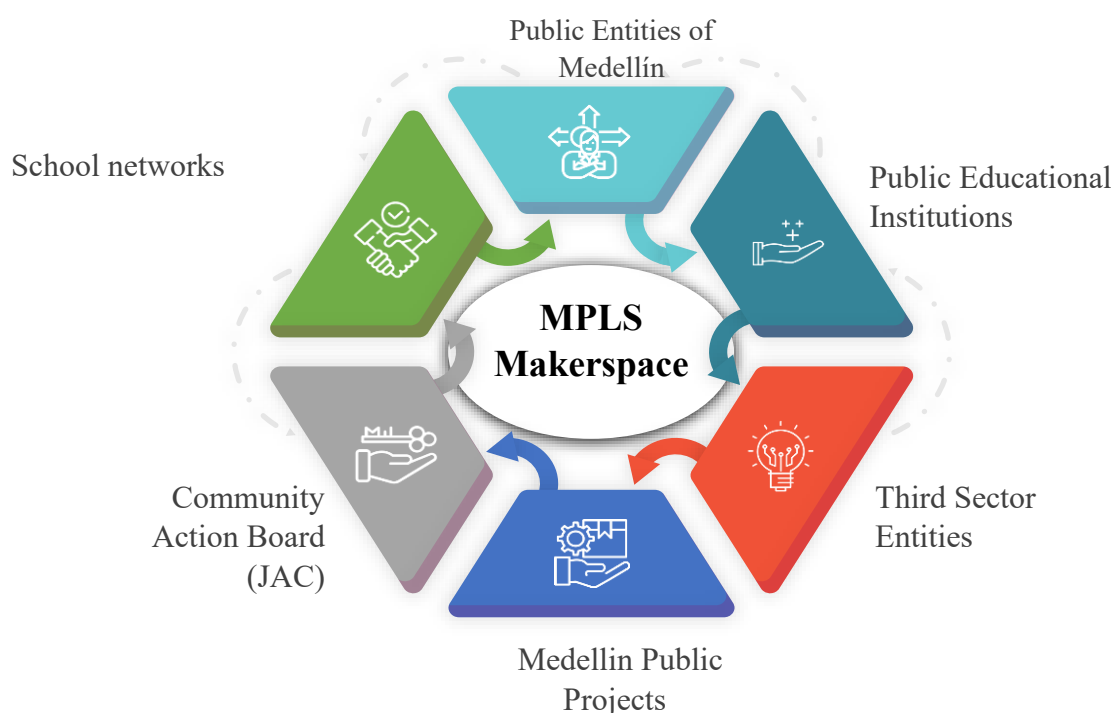


Figure 6.1: Innovation network of the makerspace project

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The project as such has a management and follows the guidelines of the MPLS Strategic Plan with objectives and generates a series of proposed indicators. Clear Objectives: Network participants have a shared vision and work towards specific innovation goals. The project has a clear structure with specific goals in terms of innovation and activities and results derived from the project. Knowledge Exchange: They facilitate the flow of information, ideas and resources among members, promoting co-creation and knowledge transfer. Because it is a network made up of different actors, including educational institutions, foundations and the users themselves, processes of co-creation and continuous transfer of knowledge between the actors are frequently generated. Evaluation and Adaptation: They incorporate continuous evaluation systems to adjust strategies and improve the

effectiveness of the network. The Makerspace project has a system for evaluating and generating indicators that are public and available to the community on the MPLS website.

The MAKERSPACE Innovation Network functions as a "Top-down" innovation network that is characterized by initiatives and changes driven from the highest levels of the organization, such as senior management or central institutions, to the lower levels. This type of network is contrasted with "bottom-up" innovation, where ideas and changes emerge from the lower levels of the organization and rise to the upper levels. (Fullan, M. 2001). In practical terms, the development of the projects including the MAKERSPACE emerges from a public policy strategy that has permeated the MPLS and the strategy of the libraries that in an integrated way have developed several innovative projects that come from initiatives by the MPLS Directorate and the Secretariat of Citizen Culture.

Characterization of the Entrance Network

According to Figure 6.2, derived from the interviews with the different actors of the network, it can be evidenced that the Network has three main actors: the Mayor's Office of Medellín, the Secretariat of Citizen Culture and the Public Library System of Medellín, which aims through public policy to integrate all public libraries in the country to guarantee access to information and culture. In this sense, the guidelines are institutional and are transmitted in a clear and timely manner among the different actors, facilitating the implementation of the project and achieving the expected results.

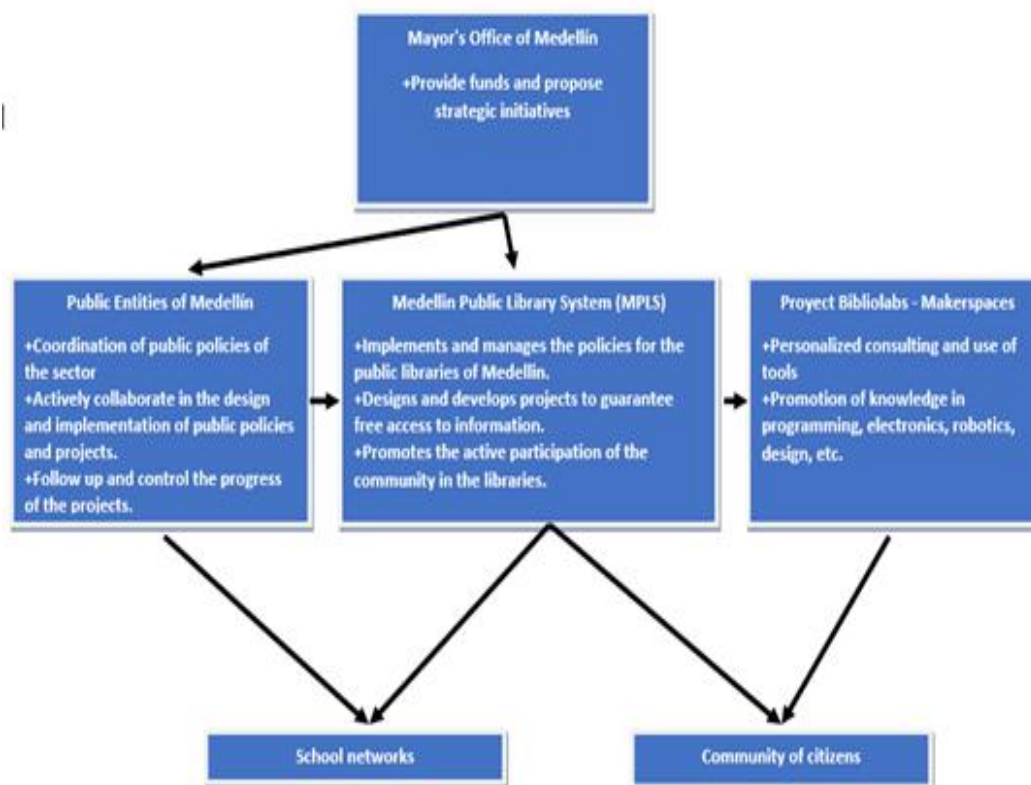


Figure 6.2: Characterization of the Makerspace project input network

Source: Authors' elaboration

Characterization of the Output Network

As a planned network derived from the MPLS, the Makerspaces project has developed a planned, constant and structured contact that has allowed the network to be in full growth and evolution, constantly generating new initiatives and ideas around the project and generating value for the citizens of the city of Medellín. Contact with citizens is continuous, efficient and allows important synergies to be generated by the different interest groups that actively participate in the Network.

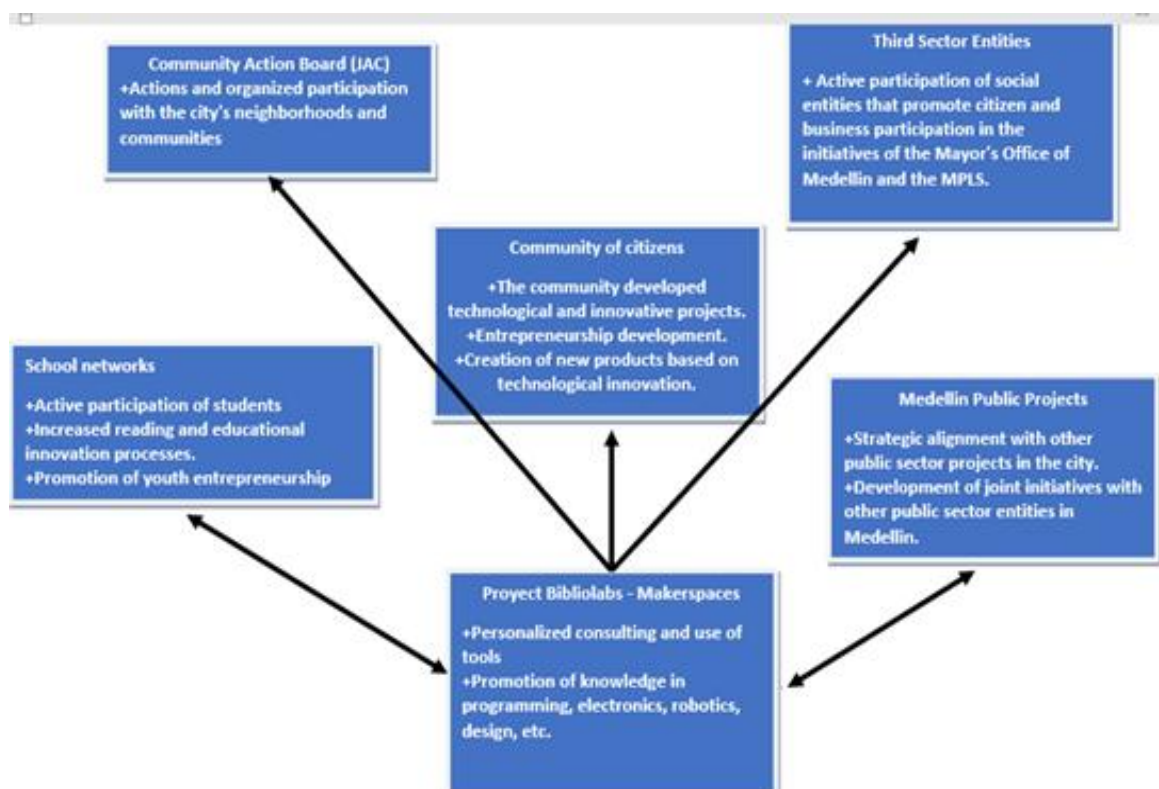


Figure 6.3: Characterization of the Makerspace project output network

Source: Authors' elaboration

Analysis of collaborative processes and networks

Collaborative processes are work methodologies in which multiple people, teams or entities work together in a coordinated and cooperative way to achieve a common goal. These processes are based on the interaction and exchange of knowledge, skills and resources between participants, in order to optimize results and foster innovation. (Schwaber, K., & Sutherland, J., 2020). Castells, M. (1996) explains that a network is a set of nodes or points connected to each other through links that allow the interaction or exchange of resources, information or energy. An innovation network refers to an

interconnected system of organizations, individuals, or entities that collaborate and share knowledge, resources, and capabilities with the goal of generating innovations. According to Powell, et al. (2005). To measure the impact of the MAKERSPACE Network, the following variables were taken:

➤ ***Size and diversity of the RED***

According to Chesbrough, H. W. (2020). The size of Innovation Networks can vary considerably depending on the sector, region, and specific focus of the network. Some characteristics that influence the size are: Global Scale, National or Local Scale and the diversity of Members. In the case of the RED innovation of the MAKESPACE project, its size has increased by 6% since the birth of the project, as well as its level of inspiration and internal feedback from the Network. The metric that has grown most significantly is the number of people interacting within the network.

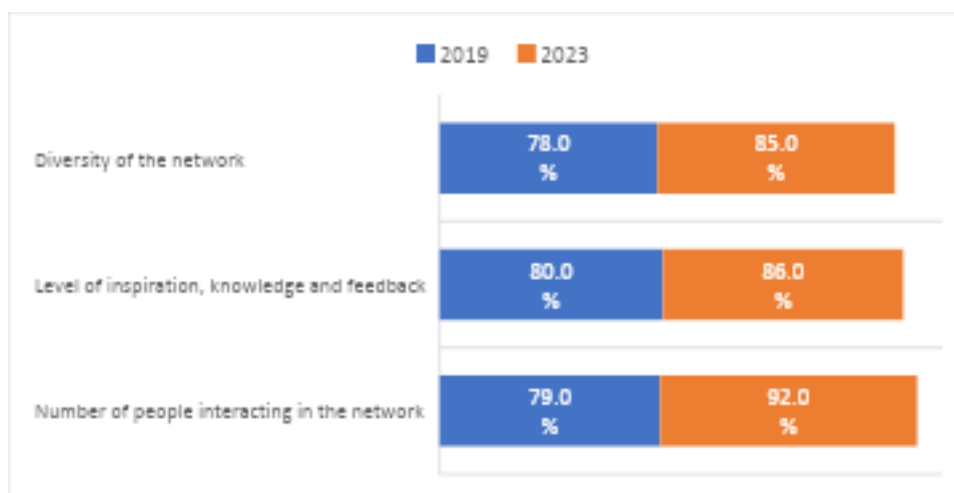


Figure 6.4: Network size and diversity

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Regarding the diversity of the Network, Diversity in the Innovation Network, Laursen, K., & Salter, A. (2022), explain that the diversity of an innovation network can be observed at several levels: Sectoral,

Geographical, Multidisciplinary and Cultural: Cultural diversity within networks promotes open innovation, encouraging diverse perspectives and approaches. The MAKERSPACE Network is defined as a very multisectoral network, where members of the public sector, third sector, foundations and educational institutions of the city of Medellín, Colombia interact, which logically are concentrated in a localized geographical space (Medellín and metropolitan area), where actors from different areas participate, making it multidisciplinary.

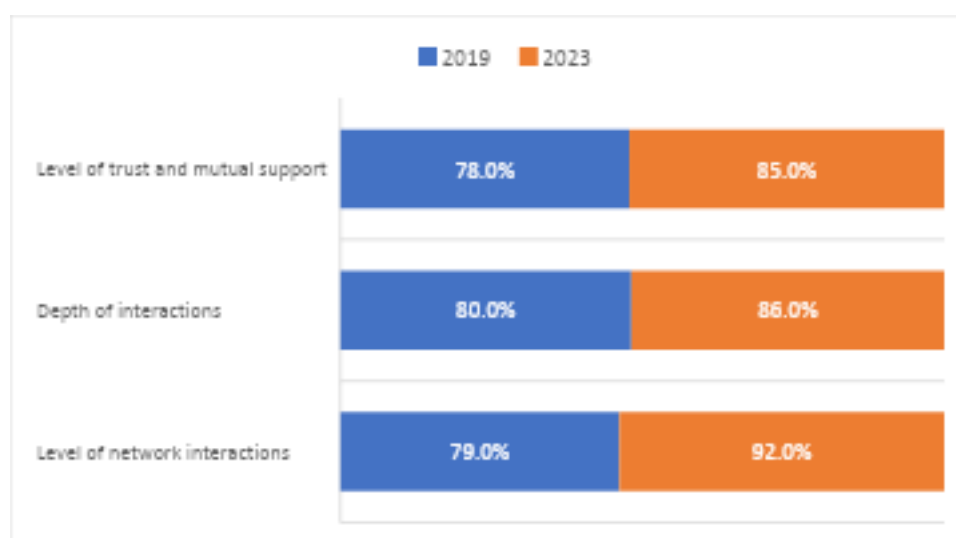


Figure 6.5: Network quality and commitment

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Quality and commitment within an innovation network are determining factors for the success and sustainability of collaboration among its members. Quality refers to the network's ability to generate innovative results, while commitment reflects the level of active participation and dedication of its members. Both elements are essential to maximize the impact of the network on the innovation derived from a project. (Provan, K. G., & Kenis, P., 2020). The level of improvement of users increased

by 7% between 2019 and 2023, but the most revealing indicator of the success of the project has been the level of innovative ideas within the network (13%). The MAKERSPACE project has been generating a great impact on the design and creation of technological projects that has a very important impact on the entrepreneurial fabric of the city.

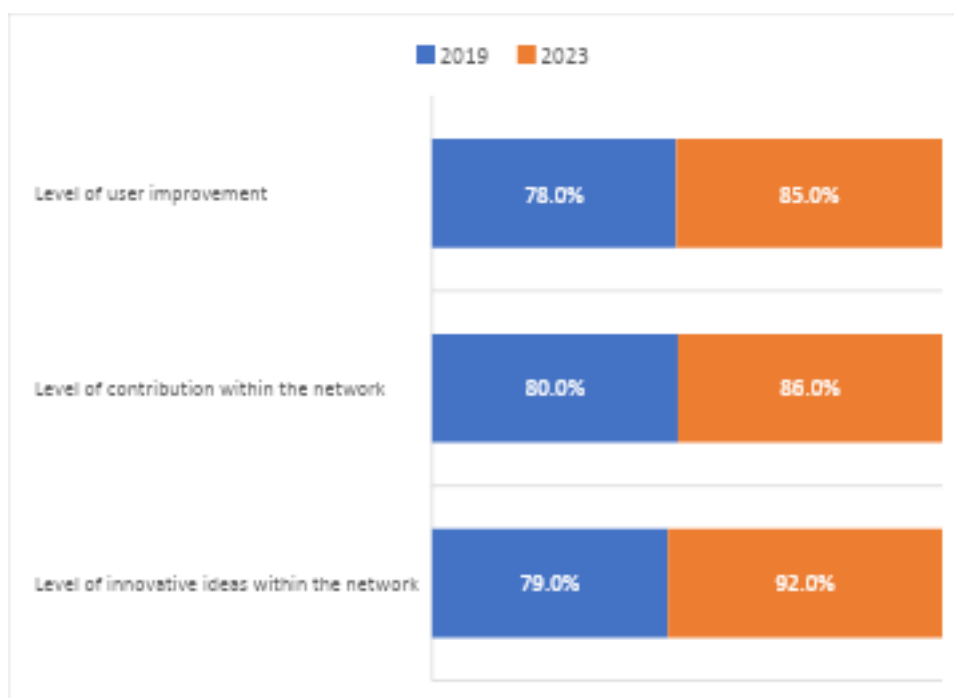


Figure 6.6: Network outcomes and value

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Network gaps and opportunities

Gaps and opportunities within an innovation network are crucial elements that determine the ability to generate value and advance its objectives. Gaps represent the challenges or limitations that networks face, while opportunities refer to areas where networks can improve their performance or

expand their impact. (Pisano, G. P., & Verganti, R., 2020). The MAKERSPACE Network has been improving the indicators of opportunity gaps, the level of improvement of skills and behaviors within the network increased from 78 to 85% between 2019 and 2023, as well as the level of interconnection of stakeholders. The MAKERSPACE Network continues to grow with the days, proving that the project generates positive social impacts in the community, generating new opportunities for local entrepreneurship and in the ability to generate innovative ideas and projects.

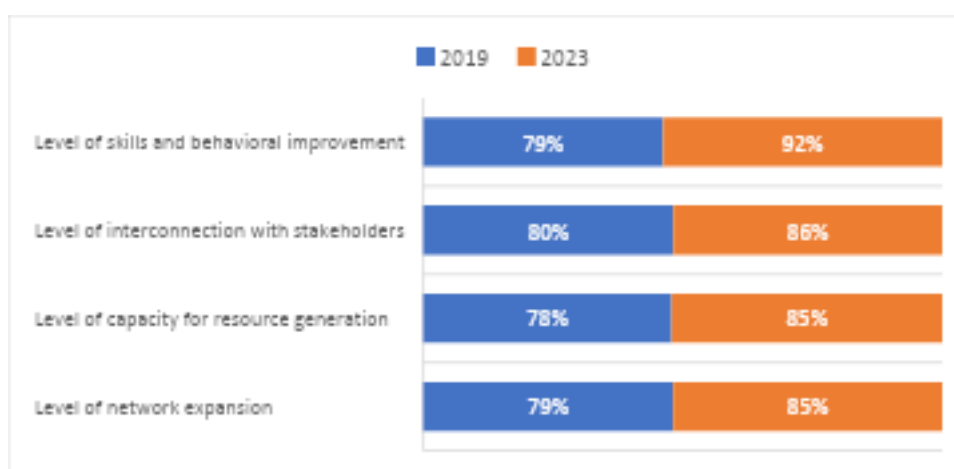


Figure 6.7: Network gaps and opportunities

Source: Authors' elaboration.

6.4 Challenges and barriers in the MAKERSPACE project

Social innovation is a powerful tool to address social problems in communities. Undoubtedly, social innovation presents a dynamic approach to problem-solving, which extends beyond traditional public policy initiatives and business solutions. In this section, we will delve into the multifaceted challenges faced by the MAKERSPACE project, led by the Medellín Public Library System. Like any project, the Medellín Public Library System faced some challenges and barriers, as follows:

- **Resource constraints:** Reliance on grants, grants, or public funding can limit long-term sustainability (Nicholls, A., et al, 2008). In this case, MPLS is managed with public resources, which always present restrictions, so the continuous search for resources that allow expanding the coverage of the project will always be a challenge for the MPLS and the development of the project in the future.
- **Organizational Capabilities:** The organizational capabilities of organizations that create, manage, and lead innovative projects become the assets, processes, skills, and structures that allow a company or institution to develop and maintain an environment that fosters innovation. (Teece, D. J., 2020). The MAKERSPACE project is led by the MPLS, which in recent years has been demonstrating a high organizational capacity that allows not only the development of the project, but has also launched another series of innovative initiatives of great social and cultural impact in the region.
- **Measuring impact:** Quantifying the impact of social innovation projects can be a complicated task to perform. The MAKERSPACE project benefits from a wide range of statistics that allows it to measure results year after year, being an example of a project with a wide range of
- **Sustainability and scalability:** According to Chesbrough, H., & Bogers, M. (2022), the sustainability and scalability of innovation projects are crucial factors for organizations to achieve lasting impacts and scale up their innovative solutions at scale. Sustainability refers to the ability of a project to sustain itself over time without depleting economic, environmental, or social resources. The MAKERSPACE project, which is expected to continue to expand its coverage and impact over time and with sustainability and stability, will have a major impact on the city of Medellín in the future.
- **Access to technology and infrastructure:** The MPLS benefits from a technological system that is at the forefront of libraries worldwide. Therefore, the MAKERSPACE project benefits greatly

from the technological systems and infrastructure for its development and continuity in the future.

6.5 Institutional factors of the project

The legal framework of public libraries in Colombia is composed of a set of laws, decrees and resolutions that regulate their operation, organization, financing and services. This legal framework establishes the responsibilities of the State, defines the rights of citizens and provides guidelines for the management of public libraries in the country. The main aspects of the legal framework are presented below:

1. Political Constitution of Colombia (1991)

The 1991 Constitution establishes the right to education and culture as fundamental, and the obligation of the State to promote access to culture for all citizens. Public libraries are considered key institutions for the fulfillment of these rights.

Article 67: It establishes that education is a right of the person and a public service that has a social function, with free access to primary and secondary education in State institutions.

Article 70: Recognizes culture as the basis of nationality and states that the State has the duty to promote access to culture for all citizens.

2. Law 1379 of 2010 (Public Libraries Law)

This is the main law that regulates public libraries in Colombia. Its purpose is to establish the conditions and standards for the creation, maintenance and development of public libraries throughout the national territory.

Creation of the National Network of Public Libraries (RNBP): This law formalizes the existence of the RNBP, which seeks to integrate all public libraries in the country to guarantee access to information and culture.

Objectives: It establishes objectives such as promoting reading, the democratization of information, and access to updated and relevant information services for the community.

Financing Policies: Defines that the financing of public libraries will come from national, departmental, municipal and international cooperation resources. Access and Services Standards: Guarantees free access to the public library and its services for all citizens, without discrimination.

3. Decree 460 of 2011

This decree regulates Law 1379 of 2010 and establishes the organizational structure and functions of the National Network of Public Libraries. Functions of the National Library of Colombia: The National Library is designated as the entity responsible for coordinating the RNBP and promoting training and development programs for librarians. Standards and Technical Standards: Minimum standards are set for the infrastructure, staffing, and services that public libraries must provide.

4. National Reading and Writing Plan (PNLE)

The PNLE, although not a law per se, is a public policy that aims to promote reading and writing in Colombia, and public libraries play a fundamental role in its implementation. The Plan is supported by various resolutions and agreements of the Ministry of Culture and the Ministry of Education.

Promotion of Reading: Public libraries are key spaces for the implementation of programs to promote reading aimed at all ages.

5. Law 152 of 1994 (Organic Law of the Development Plan)

It establishes that public libraries must be included in national, departmental and municipal development plans, guaranteeing their integration into the objectives of social and cultural development.

6. Copyright Rules

Law 23 of 1982 and Law 44 of 1993 regulate copyright in Colombia and establish exceptions for public libraries, allowing certain uses of works for educational purposes and access to information.

7. Resolutions and Agreements of the Ministry of Culture

The Ministry of Culture issues specific resolutions and agreements to update and strengthen the operation of public libraries, directing resources and efforts towards the modernization of services, training of personnel and development of collections.

8. Agreement 023 of 2015 of the Council of Medellín

Agreement 023 of 2015 of the Council of Medellín is a regulation that establishes the structure and operation of the Public Library System of Medellín. This agreement aims to consolidate a network of libraries that promotes reading, access to information, education and culture for the inhabitants of the city. The most relevant aspects of the agreement are detailed below:

Objectives of Agreement 023 of 2015

- **Strengthen the Public Library System of Medellín:** The aim is to consolidate a network of libraries that integrates the resources and services of the different public libraries in the city to offer equitable access to information and culture.
- **Encourage Reading and Writing:** Promote reading and writing habits among the population of Medellín, with special emphasis on social inclusion and community participation.

- **Guarantee Access to Information:** Ensure that all people have free and open access to information, education, and recreation resources in a safe and welcoming environment.

Main Components of the Agreement

- **Structure of the Medellín Public Library System:**
- The Library System is made up of 10 Library Parks, 1 Music Documentation Center, 2 specialized libraries Casa de la Literatura - San German and Casa de la Literatura Infantil in agreement with Comfenalco, 11 local libraries and 3 branches of the Pilot Public Library, a good start documentation center and all this conglomerate is called Information Units.
- The Medellín Pilot Public Library for Latin America is included as the leading entity of the system. Functions of the Public Library System:
- To offer library and cultural services to the entire community.
- Integrate efforts and resources from different public and private entities to improve the quality of services.
- To promote access to information and communication technologies in library spaces.

Funding and Resources:

- The system will be financed through resources from the municipal budget, contributions from the private sector, international cooperation and other financing mechanisms.
- The need to allocate adequate resources for the maintenance, updating of collections and training of library staff is established.
- **Citizen and Community Participation:**
- It promotes community participation in library management, encouraging the formation of groups of friends of the library and other mechanisms for citizen participation.

Social Inclusion and Diversity:

The importance of public libraries being inclusive spaces, serving people of all ages, ethnicities, abilities, and socioeconomic conditions, is underlined.

Evaluation and Monitoring:

The need to carry out continuous monitoring and evaluation of the operation of the system is established to guarantee the quality of the services offered.

Impact of Agreement 023 of 2015

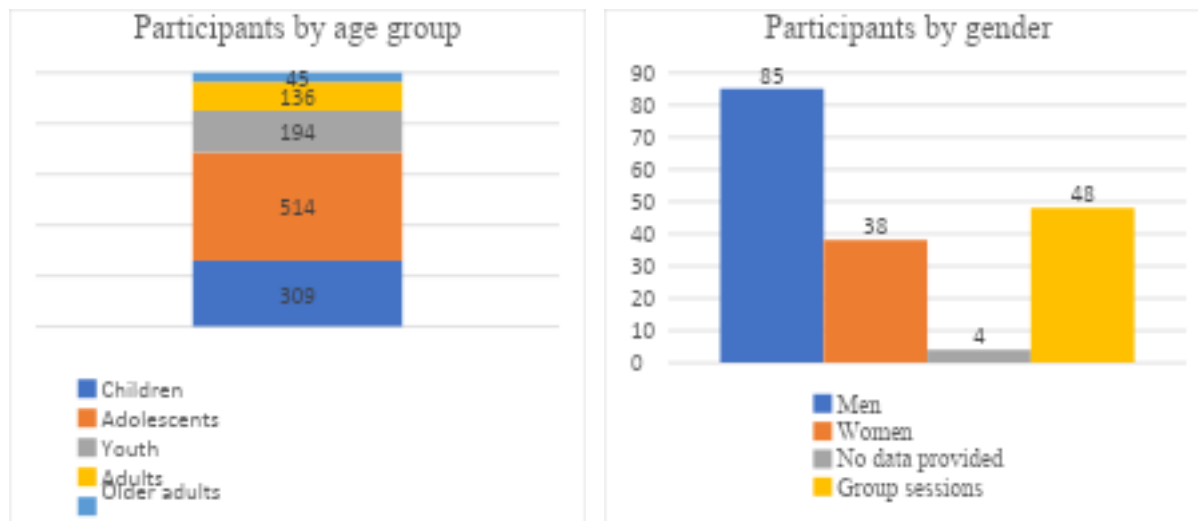
Agreement 023 of 2015 has been fundamental for the consolidation of the Medellín Public Library System as a benchmark in the promotion of reading, education and social inclusion in Colombia and Latin America. Thanks to this regulation, Medellín's libraries have been able to integrate more effectively, optimizing resources and expanding their impact on the community. In addition, it has made it possible to strengthen reading, digital culture and citizen participation programs, aligned with the city's social development objectives.

This is how the **Medellín Public Library System was born**, which is an integrated network of libraries, parks, libraries, and information units that seeks to promote reading, access to information, education, and culture for the inhabitants of Medellín and its surroundings. This system is considered one of the most important and complete in Colombia and Latin America, thanks to its focus on social inclusion, innovation and connectivity. Among the services of the MPLS are the Promotion of Reading and Writing; Access to Information and Technology; Cultural and Educational Activities; Digital Library of Medellín; and Inclusion and Training Programs. Among the most significant impacts of the MPLS and its derivative projects such as the MAKERSPACE, are: Social Inclusion: Public libraries and library parks are strategically located in vulnerable areas, offering equitable access to culture and information, contributing to the reduction of inequality. Innovation and Technology: The system has implemented technological solutions such as free internet access, digital libraries, and virtual learning platforms,

supporting education and digital literacy. Citizen Participation: The system promotes community participation through groups of friends of the library, volunteering, and spaces for citizen dialogue. Urban and Cultural Transformation: Library parks, in particular, have been part of Medellín's urban transformation, becoming architectural and cultural icons that symbolize the city's resilience and rebirth.

6.6 Project impacts/performance

In this section, the performance impacts of the project are developed. Since the beginning of the project, a series of challenges and impacts derived from it were established in the city of Medellín.



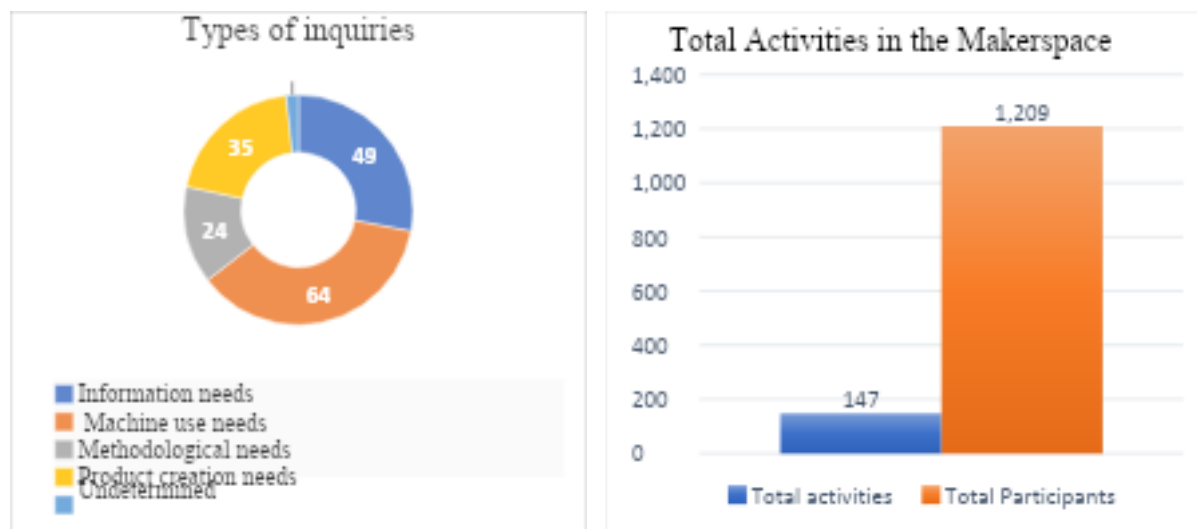


Figure 6.8: Performance indicators of the Makerspace project

Source: Makerspace, 2024.

Since 2019, a total of 1,209 people have participated in the MAKERSPACE project with a total of 147 activities. Children and adolescents are the age groups that most attend and develop activities in the MAKERSPACE. The use of machines, the need for information in terms of innovation projects and the need to create products are the most frequent needs among users who have been using the MAKERSPACE since its inception. To measure the impact and performance of the project, as in the measurement of the project's Network, the RISE Innovation and Business Sustainability Route model was used. To quantify the impacts and performance of the project, derived and adapted from the RISE model, the following factors were adapted: Quality of service, innovation performance, leadership and strategic direction, Effectiveness and organizational culture, and Technological opportunities

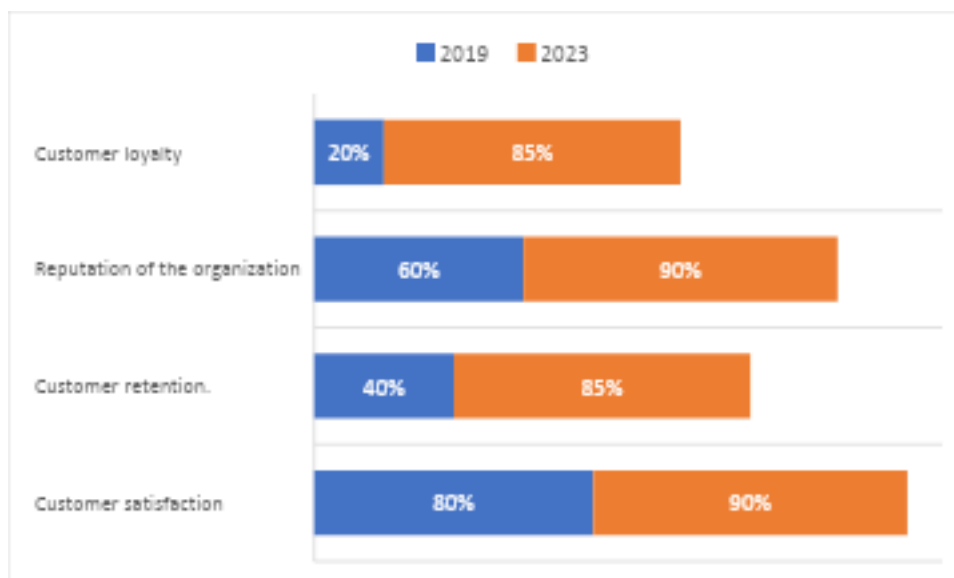


Figure 6.9: Service quality

Source: Authors' elaboration.

The quality of service in innovation projects is an essential factor that influences customer satisfaction, the reputation of the organization, and the overall success of the project. Service quality refers to an organization's ability to meet or exceed the expectations of its customers through the consistent delivery of high-quality products or services. (Edvardsson, B., & Tronvoll, B., 2021). The MAKERSPACE project has significantly increased the level of user loyalty, and the reputation of the organization supported by the development of the project. The level of user satisfaction is 90%, being an indicator of the advantages of the project.

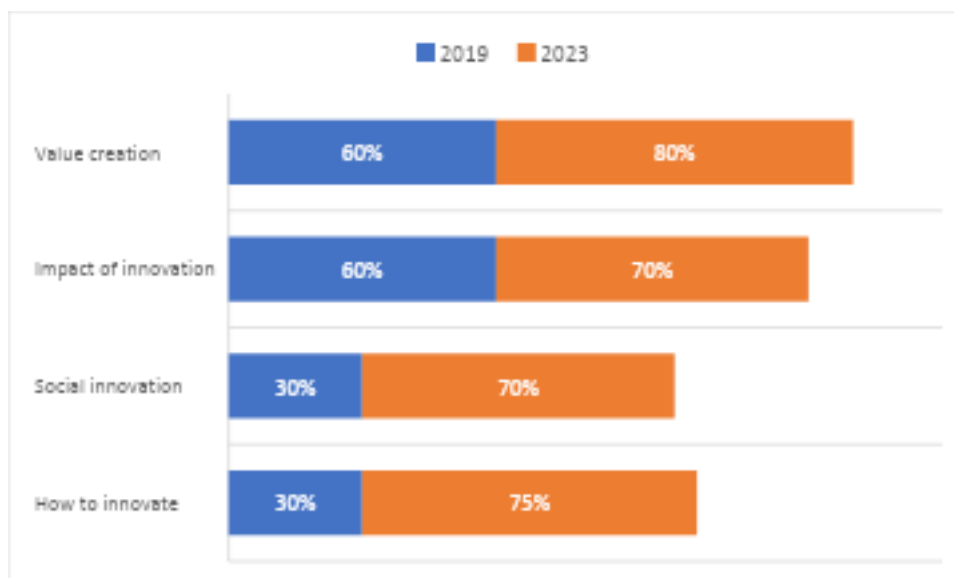


Figure 6.10: Innovation performance

Source: Authors' elaboration.

Innovation performance can be understood as the ability of organizations to transform ideas and resources into innovative results that generate value. This performance can be measured through various indicators that assess both the economic and non-financial impact of innovative initiatives (Tidd, J., & Bessant, J., 2023). The value creation generated by the MAKERSPACE project has been very important for both the MPLS and the beneficiaries of the project, but the most significant increase of the project is derived from the impacts of social innovation, being the MAKERSPACE project, a new generator of social entrepreneurship, innovative projects and generation of new learning thanks to the use of new technologies. which has undoubtedly awakened the innovative spirit of the users of the public libraries of Medellín who develop the project.

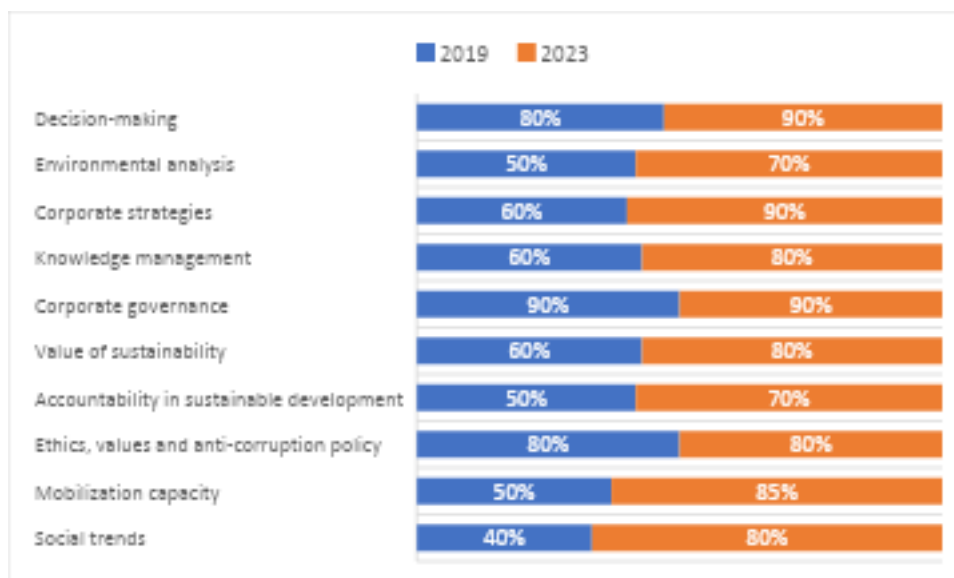


Figure 6.11: Leadership and strategic direction

Source: Authors' elaboration.

An organizational strategy is a comprehensive plan that guides a company to achieve its long-term goals. It includes decisions about how to compete, how to grow, and how to create value. Pérez-Urbe (2018) understands addressing as the flight log of any type of organization on which all collaborators must work (See Figure 6.11). The leadership and organizational strategy around the MAKESPACE project has managed to consolidate several organizational aspects. The project has improved its environmental and environmental analysis indicators, as well as the sustainability value (20% between 2019 and 2023), but the most significant indicator of the project has been the mobilization capacity, which increased by 35% in the same period.

Organizational efficiency refers to a company's ability to optimize its resources, reduce costs, and maximize productivity and overall performance. Coulter, M. (2012). Chatman and O'Reilly (2022), a strong culture aligned with strategic objectives can drive innovation and efficiency, improving

employee and customer satisfaction. Organizational culture influences every aspect of organizational life, from decision-making to how employees relate to each other and to customers. Schein, (2010).

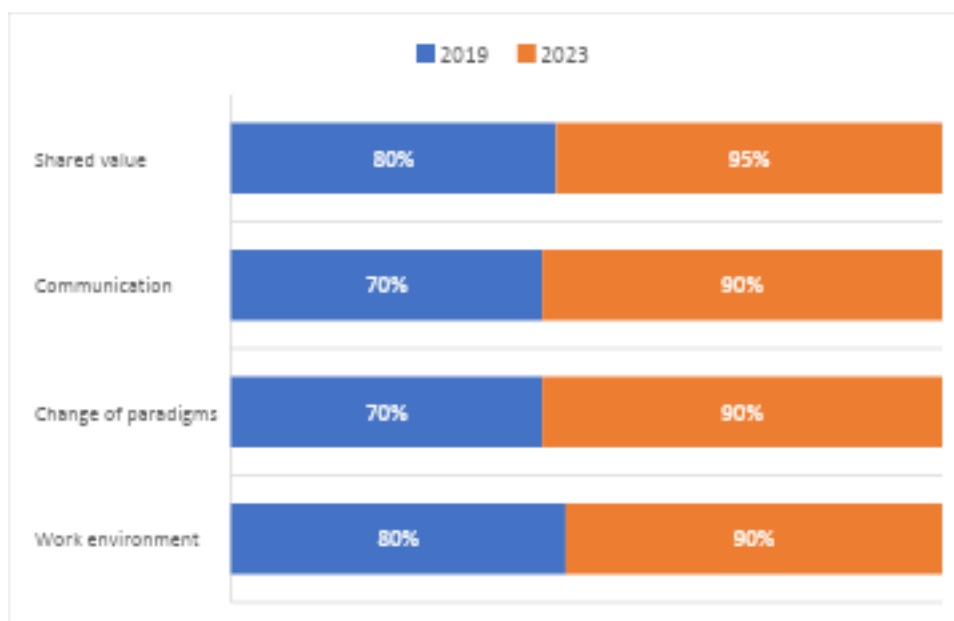


Figure 6.12: Efficiency and organizational culture

Source: Authors' elaboration.

In relation to efficiency and organizational culture, the MAKERSPACE project has managed to improve the shared value with its stakeholders and users. In the same way, thanks to the good management of social networks, the project has managed to transcend by increasing the number of concerns and active participation of users and allies in the project. Finally, the MAKERSPACE project has managed to bring communities that had little access to technology and innovation, machinery, technologies, knowledge and information that has allowed them to generate innovative business ideas and social enterprises in the city of Medellín, Colombia.

6.7 Unexpected project results

The *maker* movement in Colombia began in early 2010, with regional initiatives in Colombian cities such as Bogotá, Medellín, Manizales, and many others. The "Makerspaces" of the Public Library System of Medellín with its 3 of the communes⁷ 13 San Javier, Comuna 6 12 de Octubre and in the township of San Cristóbal, rural area of this municipality. Communes have been facing unique challenges, such as security issues, uncontrolled urbanization, and social inequality. For example, Comuna 13 has gone through a significant process of urban and social transformation, becoming a symbol of resilience and change (Cano & Mejía, 2022). The development of the MAKERSPACE project has generated new social, cultural and business dynamics in areas of the city of Medellín that face problems of security and social and economic development. The project has generated access to technology-based social projects for the "Do It Yourself" principle, where the need to be creative, innovate and promote interests related to science, engineering, technology, arts and mathematics (STEAM) arises. As a result of these new synergies with the community, several highly innovative projects have been generated that will be described below:

MIDI controller (Musical instrument)

It involves the creation of a MIDI controller in Makerspaces, using accessible technology and digital fabrication tools. Being essential for electronic music production, it is designed and assembled with electronic components that allow direct interaction with music software. This project highlights how Makerspaces can be conducive environments for experimentation and the creation of personalized devices, offering musicians and audio creators the possibility to build their own equipment at a low

⁷ The communes are urban subdivisions of the city that seek to organize the territory in a functional way, allowing a better administration and attention to the needs of the inhabitants. Each commune has its own identity and social, economic, and cultural particularities (Mayor's Office of Medellín, 2023).

cost. In addition, it demonstrates the potential of DIY technology and the innovative spirit that characterizes MAKERSPACES, facilitating access to technological solutions that would traditionally be out of reach for independent creators.

Free Books Library:

It is a mobile library created with collectives from commune 13, using recyclable and reusable materials through the digital fabrication tools offered by the MAKERSPACES for the development of practical solutions that allow promoting actions related to the promotion of reading. This project highlights community work around citizen trust, where users can lend books or donate them freely.

Head control attachment:

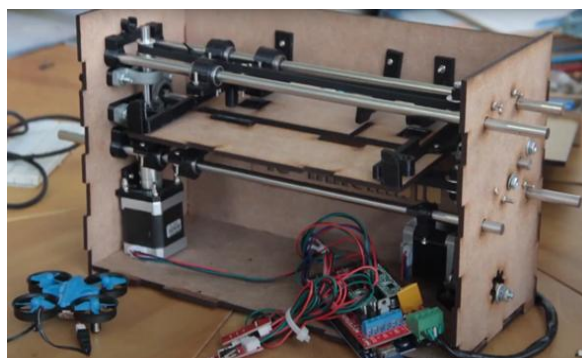


Source: Makerspaces, 2024.

It is a device to help support the head of people with cerebral palsy, which improves muscle control and autonomy of people with this type of disability. It consists of a metal arm that is attached to a

coupling that is arranged on the back of the person's chair or wheelchair, and a head support made of 3D printing with PLA and TPU materials. The project arises from the articulation between the MAKERSPACES of the Public Library System of Medellín and the Disability Unit of the Mayor's Office of Medellín, for the specific attention of Santiago Alcaraz, user of the Ser Capaz en Casa project of the Secretariat of Social Inclusion, Family and Human Rights who has this disability.

Braille printer:



Source: Makerspaces, 2024.

This device was built taking as a reference a free project developed in a French Hackathon, where engineers from different disciplines made this Machine and published it on the web, so that the different groups, laboratories or people could replicate it; The Braille printer facilitates access to information and reading for visually impaired people and was developed by the technological experimentation team with laser cutting machines and low-cost electronic supplies that were available in the technological experimentation laboratories.

Braille translator keyboard



Source: Makerspaces, 2024.

It is a pedagogical tool developed by the technological experimentation team, which allows the practice and learning of the Braille system through key combinations, sounds and images are generated on a screen with the support of a program developed in Scratch to generate different experiences with the alphabet allowing the translation of printed texts in Braille.

Fingerprint reader Network of Music Schools of Medellín:



Source: Makerspaces, 2024.

It is the creation of a technological solution that seeks to implement assistance systems, with which correlations can be made with respect to the training processes around music, measuring the number of users benefited and generating an analysis capable of measuring what are the tastes and interests of the participants taking into account the participation in the activities.

Creation of didactic material for people with various disabilities of the Network of Music Schools of Medellín:



Source: Makerspaces, 2024.

Within the methodologies applied in the MAKERSPACES, ideation plays an important role in the creation of elements that help inclusion in the training processes, in joint work with the Network of Music Schools of Medellín and using the digital fabrication technologies that the MAKERSPACES have, didactic learning boards are created that contain multiple languages of interpretation, achieving direct support for inclusion in cognitive topics. hearing and visual disorders, as well as encompassing some multiple disabilities and some conditions such as autism.

Solar Street Light Branding and Sustainability Seedbed ITM Metropolitan Technological Institute



Source: Makerspaces, 2024.

Project carried out in the Makerspaces in coordination with the Branding and Sustainability Seedbed of the ITM Metropolitan Technological Institute, where students and graduates develop this solution as an energy sustainability strategy in terms of lighting for populations far from the national territory where basic services do not reach efficiently.

6.8 Discussion and conclusions

The MAKERSPACE project is derived from the Bibliolabas strategy developed by the MPLS that were designed as spaces for innovation and technological and creative experimentation of the Public Library System of Medellín. These labs were designed to foster hands-on learning, creativity, and digital inclusion through activities that integrate science, technology, art, and culture. Bibliolabs is a commitment with a technological focus of the Public Library System of Medellín, however it is not the only one that proposes innovation processes since the management and quality model and the processes that are carried out in the different Information Units generate that the MPLS project is a library benchmark at the Latin American level, therefore, Bibliolabs is the strategy that seeks to impact technological transformation and digital appropriation in communities and would be characterized as learning and knowledge management actions of the MPLS. Makerspaces promote the culture of "do it yourself" (DIY) and "do it with others" (DIO), facilitating hands-on education in areas such as science, technology, engineering, art, mathematics, and user-centered design methodologies and collaborative construction through Design Thinking (STEAM). After decades of violence, criminality and poverty in the city generated by drug trafficking, the MPLS has managed to consolidate a series of social innovation projects that aim to reduce the impact of crime on young people, promote economic development through new ventures and promote science, technology and education thanks to the implementation of a project that would allow access to technologies and information to MPLS users.

The central hypothesis proposed is defined as affecting: "The use of tools and new technologies improves the levels of creation of social innovation projects". The data compiled show that the implementation of the MAKESPACES has increased the number of technological projects in the different communes where the project has been developed, as well as the entrepreneurial activity around the project. A second secondary hypothesis relates to how Access to technological tools drives

the development and creation of technological ventures. Access to technological tools that are considerably expensive for entrepreneurs or small businesses has allowed new ventures to emerge around these projects in addition to technological projects. In addition, the networking and design of the MARKESPACE Innovation Network facilitate the business processes around the project. The second secondary hypothesis relates the increase in the supply of training workshops in innovation and creation to increase the level of users to the libraries of the system. As revealed by the figures of both users and activities, it has increased since the launch of the project, having a positive impact on the number of consultations and new visits to the MPLS libraries.

Lessons learned:

1. Communities need access to new technologies that allow them to develop their ideas, commit to projects and implement them. Improving communication channels is to highlight the value of success stories could attract a greater number of users and entrepreneurs around MAKERSPACES.
2. Increasing the coverage of MAKERSPACES to other libraries would promote the development of more and better projects, increasing innovation networks in the city and stimulating entrepreneurship through the use of easily accessible technological tools.
3. Improving the links with companies and investors that facilitate the development and immersion of these technological projects in the markets would have a significant impact in terms of social and economic development for the inhabitants of the communes where the MAKERSPACES are currently being developed.

From its beginnings, the MAKERSPACES project was generated within a strategic innovation process, led by the MPLS, creating a planned innovation network made up of actors from the public and private sectors and third sector organizations that have been interacting dynamically for the creation and development of new prototypes and innovation projects, as well as leading training processes on

technological issues through workshops and training that take place in the city of Medellín. Many students talk about the benefits of MAKERSPACES. In fact, Becerra-Castillo et al., (2023) highlights that the different applications that can be provided to the MAKERSPACE within the public library can be grouped into three main areas: participatory community, technology, and learning.

Innovation and technology have always been present in MPLS strategies. The Strategic Routes 2022 – 2026, of the MPLS, promotes the appropriation of and access to technology in order to improve experiences and the quality of access to technology with the aim of reducing the technological gaps in the city of Medellín. In practice, the MAKERSPACE *per se* project is a tool that allows access to technology to users in communes where economic resources are limited and even more so access to state-of-the-art equipment.

To analyze the Network, the Innovation and Business Sustainability Route (RISE) was used, which made it possible to quantitatively identify several aspects relevant to the evolution and results of the network. Being a planned Network, the number of actors has been increasing both in members and in the number of participants, as well as the internal feedback processes. In relation to network quality and commitment, they have shown that the levels of internal trust have been consolidated, as well as the number of interactions between the actors of the network. Of the same, the quantity and quality of innovative projects derived from the network have increased since 2019. Among the most important challenges are the increase in the budget to increase the coverage of the project to other communes and localities in the city of Medellín.

The measurement of the impact of the project, never in terms of quantitative indicators, is evidenced by a battery of outcome indicators that are public on the MPLS website. However, for the measurement of other indicators present in this study, the respective impact analyses were carried out through the RISE model to the MAKERSPACES project. The sustainability of the project is assured

since it is financed through public resources received by the MPLS and that are established within its organizational strategic plan.

Within the performance impacts evaluated, the quality of service has improved since the beginning of the project. Descriptors such as the reputation of the organization, customer satisfaction in the different age groups analyzed have improved significantly. In terms of innovation performance, it has revealed that value creation and social innovation are descriptors that have evolved significantly since the start of the project in 2019. Another indicator that has improved both within the project is the capacity for social and environmental analysis, which allows the identification of the social, cultural and economic characteristics of the project's users.

Among the unexpected results, a large number of projects, prototypes, and undertakings can be described that directly impact communities, generating employment, better economic conditions and at the same time contribute to the reduction of violence and crime in the city.

"The BiblioLabs are an innovative initiative that seeks to transform libraries into active centers of knowledge and collective creation, adapting to the needs of the community and promoting equitable access to technological tools" I believe that, in general, the SBPM management model has various methodologies that carry out this purpose of mobilizing libraries as active centers of knowledge, social creation and innovation are immersed in actions of LEO, Social Management and Library Services, what BiblioLabs introduces is the mediation of technology from this perspective. It would be good to specify this so that it does not remain as if it is only through it that innovation is promoted in the Library System.

In general terms, the MAKERSPACES project arises as an innovative commitment of the MPLS that tries to directly impact communities impacted by crime and poverty through a project that allows prototyping, developing and putting on the market technological projects that previously would be almost impossible to implement due to the lack of technological equipment of public and local access

free of charge. The MPLS, being a community and citizen participation space, has managed to share and learn knowledge, request and offer help and advice; creating learning communities; make creative uses of technologies and contribute to solutions to problems identified in the territories. Similarly, the project has managed to invite children, adolescents, young people and adults to participate according to the programming and offers services that are oriented to topics of interest to entrepreneurs, artists, creators, teachers, students, gardeners and the community in general.



7 Case Study D: The Human Library

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7.1 Definition of key concepts

The theoretical framework for the case study consists of the following main pillars; social innovation as a specific approach to changes in the public sector, public value as a parameter regarding the aim of public libraries and innovation networks as enablers of social change. In the following each concept is defined.

Social innovation: We lean on the definition of social innovation from the EU consortium TEPSIE (The theoretical, empirical and policy foundations for building social innovation in Europe). The definition stems from 2015 and have informed EU policy on social innovation: '*Social innovations are new approaches to meeting social needs. They are social in their means and in their ends. They engage and mobilize beneficiaries and help to transform social relations by improving beneficiaries' access to power and resources*' (TEPSIE 2015)

Public value: We apply Benington's (2011) definition of public value as dual: what the public values AND what adds value to the public sphere (Benington 2011: 42). In this manner there is a focus not just on individual interests (what people value) but also on the wider public interests (also in a long-term perspective).

Innovation network: We understand innovation network as both formal and informal relations among a group of actors and organizations, which enable knowledge sharing and exchange of resources and information.

Social change: we apply the three degrees of social change from Barinaga (2012) to distinguish between system maintenance (initiatives that merely soothe negative consequences for individuals or groups without changing the system leading to those), system expansion (initiatives which mends

the system, without questioning the system itself) and system transformation (initiatives that question the social system itself as it is perceived the root cause of problems).

7.2 Introduction

As part of the EU project, LibrarIN: Value Co-creation and Social Innovation for a new Generation of European Libraries, empirical case studies under the following work tasks are to be conducted: 1) digitalization, 2) social innovation, and 3) libraries as living labs.

This report presents a case study from Denmark, which falls under the social innovation work task (3.2). The case is The Human Library, a non-profit organization focusing on hosting conversations that challenge stigma and stereotypes between human “books” (i.e., persons with a story to tell) and “readers” (i.e., people taking part in a conversation with these human books). The Human Library was established in Denmark in 2000, but is now an international organization working in more than 85 countries.

Together with 10 other case studies across Europe, the findings exposed in this report will be subject to cross-case analysis – disseminated as a single deliverable (D3.8).

7.2.1 Purpose and Scope

Based on the overall purpose of the Grant, the case studies of task 3.2 take place in the intersection of social entrepreneurship, public-private networks and social innovation - diving into the dynamic of such collaborations and how they inform public service innovation. Hence, case selection criteria are related to public-private library collaboration in the field of public library service innovation.

Accordingly, the Human Library is selected as a case of social innovation networks, primarily due to: 1) the social entrepreneurial characteristics, 2) the involvement with many and diverse actors from

across sectors, 3) the successful 'out'-scaling/internationalization and 4) the application of the library metaphor and way of organizing.

All cases apply the same case protocol as guide line for the research. Since the research is positioned within a qualitative paradigm, there is room to adapt the protocol to the contextual factors of the specific case under scrutiny.

7.2.2 Methodology and data overview

The case studies are conducted as qualitative research since the objective is to obtain deep insight on the phenomenon, libraries as social innovation networks, guided by 'how' and 'why' questions. In short, a case study aims to explore and better understand a contemporary phenomenon within its real-world context (Yin, 2014). The three main methods applied in the case of The Human Library are in-depth interviews, participant observation and document studies.

A research team of two researchers has been responsible for conducting four interviews, with six informants. The interviews lasted approximately an hour, some online and some in person, and were verbatim transcribed. A semi-structured question guide was applied, leaving room to go in the direction of the conversation and the themes raised in the context of the specific interview. To experience the service of the Human Library, the research team did participant observation at two readings in the Reading Garden, Copenhagen and at two online readings. Participant observation seemed crucial in the context of the Human Library as the dynamic of the personal encounter is hard to grasp solely as second-hand accounts. So, to go beyond mere description of the 'value offer' the researchers immersed themselves into the case as readers of human books.

Lastly, to explore the organizational discourses on actors, social value and co-creation, and to add to the contextual understanding of the informants' insights, central documents have been analyzed.

The data set, interviews, observations and documents, was subsequently analyzed using a thematic analytical strategy. For an overview of data see table 7.1.

Table 7.1: Data overview

Type of data	Case organization: The Human Library
In-depth interviews/ informants	2 Founder/CEO and employee (group interview) 2 Public librarian managers (DK and UK) 2 External partners (group interview, UK)
Participant observation	2 Physical readings in the Reading Garden 2 Online readings from the online book shelf
Documents	1. Human Library - <i>Unjudge someone</i>. Intro slides, Human Library Organization 2. Human Library Impact Study (2020). Impact study of the Human Library events at Zurich InsuranceGroup conducted in the fall and winter of 2020 by Analyse & Tal, DK. 3. Readers Review. Sampling document for the online event format, Human Library Organization 4. 15 Pillars of Prejudice – expanded, Human Library Organization 5. Website of the Human Library 6. 'Castle's new course first in the U.S. to use Human Library'. University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 16.04.2024 (https://comm.unl.edu/castles-new-course-first-in-us-use-human-library)

7.3 Case description

The Human Library is a non-profit organization, established in Denmark in 2000. In its essence, the Human Library facilitates open and honest conversations between people, who might not otherwise have a platform to meet. As such the Human Library is presented as a place to learn about diversity.

The overall objective of the organization is to counter stigmatization and prejudice of marginalized people and hence empower both people subject to stigma and help people to unjudge someone. The underlying logic is that increased understanding and respect through personal encounters, is outset for societies to become more inclusive. At the website, the organization is described as follows:

'The Human Library® is a global innovative and hands-on learning platform. We are embedded in high school to higher learning, medical training to civic engagement to better our understanding of diversity in order to help create more inclusive and cohesive communities across cultural, religious, social and ethnic differences', (website, 08.09.24).

The Human Library applies the vocabulary of libraries, by naming people human books and readers respectively, and by using concepts such a librarians and loans. Accordingly, you can borrow human books which are living persons bringing their personal story and experience into the conversation (HLO Presentation). As a reader, you can ask all the questions you normally find taboo or hard to raise. Before borrowing a book, participants are presented with the rules for readers by a librarian, who is also responsible for keeping time.

The books of the Human Library are categorized within the '15 Pillars of Prejudice', which is the filing system of the organization. The 15 pillars are: addiction, disability, ethnicity & nationality, family & relationships, gender & sex, health, ideology, lifestyle, mental health, neurodiversity, religion &

beliefs, sexuality, social status and lastly, victim & survivor (15 Pillars of Prejudice doc). The pillars encapsulate more than 250 topics which in different ways relate to a specific pillar. Today the Human Library have human books in more than 85 countries worldwide, and hosts events and conversations both in situ and online in libraries, museums, festivals, universities and private sector companies.

Established as an association, there is a yearly general assembly and members pay a small amount to contribute – some pay double as there are members with no capacity to pay, as it is perceived key that as many as possible are part of the democratic process of voting for the assembly. The members are all the volunteers: books, librarians and all the people who help realize the readings. Four out of five in the board are volunteers, and the chair is Ronni Abergel, founder and director of the Human Library. Besides, the organization rely on a great number of volunteers, who are not members, as they primarily contribute to the work outside Denmark.

Despite being membership-based, the key financial income is partnership-based, as the organization does not receive any funding from Danish municipalities or governmental institutions. So, even though the Headquarters is located in Copenhagen and main activities are held in Denmark, the secretariat experiences the organization to be more recognized and appreciated outside their home country. Also, most financial support stems from large international businesses. The income is used to run the whole set-up around the volunteers, including direct incurred costs such as travel, hospitality and event materials.

The dialogical aspects of the encounter between books and readers are key. The book is not expected to give a lecture or a presentation, but instead the questions from the readers are to spur the conversation (HLO impact study). As the founder stresses: *'If you do not ask, you don't get any answers. This is not reading aloud'*. The book is not obliged to answer, and the reader can withdraw at any time or for any reason if the conversation becomes too challenging, or emotionally close to a

reader's own experience.

Also, the volunteerism of being a book is understood as crucial. For the Human Library it is important that readers know the books are there to answer questions because they want to, and not because they are getting paid. So, the conversation is centered around a genuine wish for the book to open a door into their personal experiences and the experiences of the group they represent.

The methodology of the Human Library has evolved ever since the beginning in 2000 – with a continuously focus on creating a safe space for both books and readers, but especially the books are taken care of. All books are volunteers and represent different aspects within the pillars of prejudice and hence are bringing a very personal story to the front. Before beginning as a book, the volunteers are first individually screened. The main objective is to detect if the human books have processed their personal experience to a degree where they are ready to share their stories - so they do not become re-traumatized in the encounter with the readers. If the screening goes well, they enter a training program.

To ensure safety and methodological quality, the human Library has developed online training portals for both books and librarians. So, despite contextualization relative to cultural and social context, the overall framework stays the same. This is a central point in the application of the library terminology. As the founder of the Human Library underscores, the library is from the outset that one place where everybody has the same rights and are welcome regardless who they are. As such the library is perceived as an equalitarian institution – across nations and cultural differences.

Therefore, the librarian wording is important to the organization. To exemplify, the Human library's code of conduct for readers in the 'Reading Garden', an open space in Copenhagen where human books

are available every Sunday in the summer period, reflects how the organization uses formalized known language to underscore the readers obligation to respect the book.

Figure 7.1: Rules for readers

Rules for readers

Like all other libraries we have rules for our readers. They are in place to ensure a good experience for everyone involved and must be accepted before any loans.

- All readers must register with the librarian and accept the rules in order to borrow a book.
- All loans are personal and may not be transferred to others, however you are allowed to share a book.
- All books must be returned in the same condition as it was given.
- Treat the book with the same care and respect you want to be treated with.
- Your book is a reference to a lived experience and they expect you to ask about the things that you want to know.
- Remember to bring the book back before the loan expires.
- You are only allowed to borrow one book at a time, but you can read as many as you want.
- It is not allowed to film or record audio from the reading.
- Please ask your book before taking pictures.
- No smoking, alcohol or food is allowed in the reading garden.

As mentioned, the Human Library is about diversity training, but it is also about giving marginalized

people a voice. All books have experienced not to be understood or accepted – with all included negative consequences. So, the reason to join as a book is primarily to ensure that readers prospectively meet similar persons with respect, empathy and understanding. And as such go from feeling like outcasts, to being understood to becoming accepted. Hence the Human Library seeks to reach beyond the concrete encounter of the book and the reader, by creating circles in the water.

The value vignette below reflects what the Human Library sets out to change. VALUE VIGNETTE: Why the Human Library?

'We received an inquiry from a man with a different ethnic background, who works in a global company with headquarters in Denmark. The person says that his colleagues have been to a session in the Human Library, with us, and there they have been shown a printed pamphlet. And on that printed pamphlet there is a picture of him. This he cannot understand, because he has never been

an active book in the Human Library, or been to an event where we could have taken his picture. So how come we have used his picture?

And we answer: if we happened to use your picture improperly, we would like to say sorry right away. But we don't think so. But let's send you the picture, and then you can tell us where you are. So, we send the picture to him, and he says he can see there is a man who looks a bit like him. It turns out to be one of our books, which is a refugee from Afghanistan. But it's not him. At all. And he says it is clear to him that it is not him. But it's just not clear to his Danish colleagues. That one 'Ahmed' is not just another 'Mohammed'. It is very symptomatic of where we are.

(Founder)

In the next section, the case of the Human Library will be unfolded through the empirical findings of the data set.

7.4 Empirical findings

The empirical findings are presented under the following three themes: 1) The Human Library as social innovation, 2) The Human Library as a network (input), and 3) The Human Library as network enabler (output). Moreover, as data is rich with stories of encounters, experiences and relational aspects concerning the interplay between different actors and organizations these will inform the analysis as 'Value vignettes' (as applied in the case description). Value vignettes are in this context short stories, only transcription edited, to exemplify what is at stake and how informants perceive the value of their own role and of the Human Library as a safe space for dialogue.

7.4.1 The Human Library as social innovation

The Human Library is characterized by the key dimensions of social innovation; a new approach to

social needs, social in means and ends, transforming social relations and improving beneficiaries' access to power and resources. These dimensions are now to be displayed.

In times of democratic deficit and polarization The Human library offers a new approach to counter prejudice and stigmatizing. It seems to be a strength that the outset is a personal encounter – it is a peer-to-peer learning platform with a known framing of a library, which enable a low degree of facilitation and steering. Also, the concept is highly recognizable across nationalities and cultures which in itself creates a platform for inter-cultural dialogue and meetings.

The human library started as an experimental event at The Roskilde Festival in Denmark, and the experimental approach is still part of the organization's functioning. As the founder explains: *'at Roskilde Festival all our books were 'sold out', so we agreed that this should not be the end. Afterwards, we therefore tried the concept at a library in Oslo in collaboration with Nordic Council of Ministers, followed up by events at festivals in Hungary and Portugal...'*. The organization has since then continued to optimize, refine and develop the concept exploring new formats e.g., podcasts, TV-documentary and eventually developing the software that enabled their online book shelf.

Also, the development has led to new contexts for use, as the Human Library are partnering with different educational actors to make the books available to students from different programs. To exemplify, Yale University's school of nursing has introduced the digital book shelf as part of some mandatory learning exercises, University of Nebraska-Lincoln has integrated the online service into a course curriculum, and in Denmark the University College Copenhagen offers in-person trainings and online library cards to forthcoming social workers.

The *ideal* of systems change inherent in social innovation is here evident – if the approach to exposed and marginalized citizens is changed because public sector front-end employees meet them on more

equal terms this might over time challenge the societal discourse and approach to marginalized. And to add some numbers from the Danish context: approximately 150 students from University College Copenhagen have been part of Human Library readings each semester, that is, 300 a year and more than 1500 the last 5 years.

Moreover, the on-going development of the concept has from the beginning been an open process, where partners, users and volunteers partake – both nationally and internationally. The number of pillars has increased over time and the different platforms for lending books is a result of dialogue and discussion with collaborators who requested more flexible formats. A public manager reflects: *'I have been close to the organization from the early stages, pushed and co-developed focusing on how we can expand the room for conversation..it is also relational, I met Ronni and we realized that we think along the same lines and you know, it is great to collaborate with a good partner'.*

Also, there is an openness for partners to contextualize the concept as long as central objectives and the logic is maintained. A collaborator from UK recalls: *'...after speaking to the Human Library and understanding the complexities of how they deliver their types of activity, we've taken the ethos of what they're trying to do and altered it in a way that it's more deliverable for us'.* An example is a wish to arrange intergenerational dialogue and develop formats for families. But also playing with the physical surroundings to ensure they support the values of the Human Library. A public manager tells: *'We decided to do it in our open space where there's no walls or doors because it reduces the number of physical and emotional barriers in order to take part in something'.*

In sum, the development process of the human Library is in itself empowering, and there seem to be no urge to end with a static product or service offer.

Continuing with the aspect of transforming social relations, the Human library is inherently relational

oriented. From the network of private sector companies there are accounts of how working with the Human Library is part of creating a more inclusive work place – and how the group reading has spurred a new dialogue and understanding among employees who might also struggles with minority issues, e.g., dyslexia, homosexuality etc.

As the Human Library facilitates safe intimate rooms the role of librarians is key in the physical readings. The topics are sensitive, both to the book but also potentially to the readers: *'the librarians walk around to keep an eye on the reactions. Sometimes we see a reader or a book having a reaction, and we need to make sure what kind of reaction – to decide if we should do an intervention or let it be, if it is just a very beautiful humanizing moment where e.g., the book feels recognized or where a reader resonates'* (employee).

Doing participant observation at the reading garden, one of the researchers experienced such a sensitivity and attention when a reading touched her. She became tearful at the reading, and the book immediately took responsibility for the situation asking if she needed a break or wanted to leave – afterwards the book gave her a comforting hug. The experience underscores how the reading situation aims for equality, mutual respect and compassion.

This is also reflected in the understanding of the Human Library as training conversation skills. Both for readers, books and librarians – as no one reading is the same, it can be seen as a continuous training of the ability to engage in dialogue. A public manager tells how they almost only experience positive feedback from readers, especially due to them being emotionally affected. On the one hand the feedback relates to readers stating 'wow, this I want to share with my friends' and on the other hand to readers who end up reading the 'whole' bookshelf. The qualitative accounts are backed up by a British public manager: *This is really about the quality... we want people to have that really engaging experience, it's not about numbers. So, actually keeping it very small and closed helps people*

feel really engaged – and one of the things I find really interesting, is how people travel quite far to attend it...’.

The relational dimension is also key in the impact study (2022), and the following quote underscores how impact might not be causal and concrete, but rather is related to a sense of: *‘Increased sensitivity toward the importance of peoples’ personal backgrounds appeared to be a very central theme among the participants when reflecting on the impact the event had on them. The majority of participants felt the event ‘moved’ them in some way, though they could not always explicate exactly how’.*

The last aspect of social innovation ‘improving beneficiaries’ access to power and resources’ is reflected in both the role of the readers and the role of the books. As an employee stresses the books experience how their stigma is becoming a resource – it is something to share, something to be listened to and something that might help others in the same situation being met with more empathy and understanding than yourself. Also, the books get the opportunity to engage in dialogue with people in positions, which might have the power to spur cultural and societal change – from CEOs to upcoming social workers. As such the empowerment reaches beyond the individual book and becomes a potential game changer for the group of citizens the book represents.

To the readers the Human Library offers access to knowledge, but also emotions, relative to topics and people that to some are perceived taboo and difficult. Hence, the empowerment lies in an increased understanding and break down of prejudices at both a personal and professional level. The impact study exposes this dual gain:

‘Most participants knew the event had something to do with inclusion and diversity training, but all were very surprised by the direct nature of the format, sitting face to face with a human being representing a member of an often-misunderstood group. Almost everyone viewed the event as very beneficial in terms

of strengthening one's own sensitivity toward handling human diversity, both in the work environment and in their private lives'.

As such it seems as if the dialogical approach of the Human Library opens up the lives of the readers too. A public manager adds: *'So more often than not, people are like, I didn't know that about a feminist. I now understand. It was amazing. Or I've got friends who are gay and I've never known how to talk to them. And now I've got a much better understanding. Or I had a prejudice against trans men. And now that I've spoken to one, I feel that I'm in a better place to go about my day-to-day life and understand society more.'*

At an organizational level, it is a key concern to give marginalized a voice – despite in which sort of society the Human Library takes place. Thus, the cultural adaptation is not something to be forced, but rather something that evolves in line with degree of maturity, and in respect for the given culture. For each new national scaling there is a discussion of what kind of 'conversation room' is available. So, even though the framework and the methodology stay the same, the tempo and the kind of topics to start with differ. The founder reflects: *'We started in Tunisia knowing not to begin with homosexuals and jews the first day. We need to start with something people find accessible and then we can expand the repertoire gradually, as they get used to the framework'.*

VALUE VIGNETTE: Reaching beyond the specific encounter

We observed that a number of participants noted that they had thought about experiences from the events when confronted with political discussions relating to larger social contexts, both globally and in local settings. One participant had attained a greater appreciation for 'the other side' in one of the ongoing political debates in their native country. Several participants added new perspectives on what it means to be inclusive in the follow-up interviews.

Particularly they had become more aware of what it means to be inclusive, which entails not simply accepting where people come from, but letting them share their thoughts and seek to make people feel comfortable. Several participants had very impactful experiences with books who represented groups they had never encountered or never thought they would encounter, especially those with less externally observable features such as mental conditions. This greatly expanded what they considered to be significant diversity categories.

(HLO Impact Study, 2022)

7.4.2 The Human Library as a network (input)

The Human Library depends on collaboration with a wide network of diverse actors. A network of volunteers: book, librarians and others who support realizing the events. A network of organizations hosting the events: public libraries, universities and companies. And a network of users/readers, that is, citizens, students and employees.

After 24 years most recruitment and branding are based on word of mouth and by people reaching out or contacting the organization, e.g., through the website. The founder reflects on the role of this network of actors in developing the service offer: *'It is the board, the general assembly, the members and the local users, who feed us by sharing their needs. And then we jointly figure out what to do and how. So, it is a very lively network of people we support. But it is clear, development on the broad lines - we deal with centrally'*.

Some collaboration is formalized in partnership agreements, other partnerships are more informal and ad hoc and some are centered around single events. To some public sector collaborators, the

informal way seems appropriate because they believe their main role is as co-curator and as offering an open platform for events of the Human Library. Another reason why it is not necessarily important to have a strategic partnership agreement is to keep and nurture the experimental approach. In a public sector context formalization would imply description of goals and application of measurement tools, which as a public manager explains counter the more playful approach with a continuous dialogue about *'what did you (HLO) learn and what did we learn'*.

A consequence of such informal collaboration is the risk of becoming too dependent on persons and relations. To exemplify, in a Danish context the Human Library began readings at the Copenhagen Main Library in 2012 and continued on a regular basis for three years. But then some job replacement happened and the public 'ambassador' for the Human Library left. It might also be that collaborators get a new job, and once settled they reach out to start collaboration from a new organizational platform. In the concrete case, instead of pushing for a new partnership, the focus of the Human Library changed to other municipal libraries and as such the activities spread to different parts of town.

Another aspect of the lively network is reflected in a recent example from Denmark. Three public libraries have decided to start a co-creation project, where they in common develop and roll-out the digital component of the Human Library. One of the public libraries will be project lead. Somehow the project demonstrates the blurred boundaries between the Human Library and public libraries – having a main objective at the center, but with development processes not solely initiated by the Human Library organization.

The network around the Human Library also plays a central role in starting new collaborations. A public manager in Denmark tells, how it was employees who argued that the Human Library could support developing their local library. As such it was a bottom-up process leading to the introduction

of Human Library events. From UK a public manager presents a top-down story; a creative director proposed the Human Library as partner, since it would tap into the future strategy of the library. Either bottom-up or top-down, both stories are depicted by individuals who have heard of, or know something/somebody in advance, which make them push for introducing the Human Library in their work context.

To the Human Library this confirms relevance of the concept - besides the simple fact, that people tend to come back: *'we are pulling a long tail of publishing partners, whom, after all, achieve a longer and longer history with us. Because they stay with us for more and more years...'* the founder stresses.

The openness and relational aspect of the Human Library, also touches upon some challenging themes. A public manager from UK highlights GDPR-issues, which influence the process of recruiting books. Recruiting as an obstacle is backed up by another manager, who also perceive it troublesome. In general, some of the managers underscore that it takes time and resources to run the Human Library, which is why they organize the event as part of other broader arrangements – at e.g., festivals and thematic days.

7.5 The Human Library as network enabler (output)

Besides the network of the Human Library, the organization is also central in creating and enabling new networks to arise. It can be argued that the user/reader base in itself can be understood as a network of recipients who have experienced a certain personal encounter, which have sparked new understandings of marginalized and perhaps even spurred new actions too. This is reflected in the Readers Reviews, where the numbers shows that 74 out of 79 respondents agree or completely agree with the statement, that *'Today's readings have given me new knowledge and/or awareness that I can*

use professionally further on' and 61 out of 79 respondents agree or completely agree with the statement: *'Today's readings have inspired me to take new actions in my daily work'*.

The study underscores that learning from the readings reaches beyond the sole event. This aspect is key to public managers, which is why success is not only measured quantitatively. A manager says:

'Maybe there will be 30-40 loans at an event - it's not like people are pouring in. But it's become such an iconic thing to us and it's something people see going on. We send out an event catalog, to do a bit of advertising, so for everyone who comes in and takes part, there are maybe 1000 who have read about it or seen it. And where it afterwards lies in the back of their mind...'

In general, there seems to be a constant flow of collaborators and platforms for the Human Library Events. As mentioned, some keep coming back, others are new to the concept, and some either stop applying the framework or pause it. But still, the development from a single experiment at a Danish festival in 2000 to an organization operating in more than 85 countries in 2024 tells a story of a framework that resonates across cultures and national borders. As the founder says, the key is keeping a sensitivity to the cultural context and room for adaptation.

'We are present in different ways. In some countries we have our own infrastructure and we typically have partnerships with locals. We call them publishing partners. We offer methodology. We offer education and training. We offer the framework and then they host the event, in a cooperation agreement with us. Let's just call it a license. We do the same with public libraries, universities etc. We train all their books and their librarians. Giving them the tools. And then they go home and do it'.

Today, the outreach of the organization is also a legitimizing factor – a UK manager tells how the Human Library as a large well-known international organization was part of the motivation to try it

out in own context.

The framework of the Human Library also turns the perception of who are empowered and who are the empowering part upside down. An UK manager tells how strong it is to see people, who are categorized as living on the fringes of society, mainly because of their label, entering the room taking responsibility for the situation. Statistics from the Readers Review document showcase how the readers rate their experience as overall very positive, and moreover that *'the readers feel comfortable asking the questions they want. 70.9% (56) of the respondents feel "Extremely comfortable" or "Very comfortable"'*.

Hence, the books by their engagement and motivation to counter stigmatization becomes resourceful. In sense of network enabling, the Human Library has managed to create a room for relationship building among books. The value of being a book is potentially two-fold; one the on hand to be seen and heard, and on the other hand, to actually feel less stigmatized and marginalized due to new friendships and belonging to the collective of books. Moreover, a collaborator tells how being a book in the Human Library has encouraged some to actually write a physical book:

'We've had people who have actually through sharing the stories have now decided that they want to write a book. They feel like this story is really powerful, so they want to write it down and want to share. So, I think for those who are volunteering, you know, it's like also about their health and well-being being valued - valuing them as individuals by valuing their stories'.

At an organizational level, the informants account how introducing the Human Library also challenges, and potentially changes the inherent logic of the public library. From Denmark a manager stresses that integrating The Human Library moved some of the existing 'fence posts' of professional identities. The issue concerned where such a framework as the Human Library could be

positioned – and accordingly, who would be responsible. Ten years ago, the employees were divided into e.g., children’s librarian, non-fiction etc. Today, the range of ‘professional’ themes have developed, but the way topics are arranged in a library context still makes the question and need of a responsible employee as holder of the event important.

The internal learning aspect of working with the Human Library is also emphasized by a UK manager. The combination of doing something that from the outset is not perceived an easy task and seeing it happen, herein what it does to both readers and books, give professional confidence – being able to create that safe space within the library. A collaborator sums up: *‘lots of different benefits for doing it (Human Library events), lots of different outcomes’*. This experience, that the Human Library innovates the public library itself, is also reflected in the value vignette below.

VALUE VIGNETTE: Human Library as innovator of the public library

We have these well-being surveys for employees, and then you look at them as management, and react if there is something... And there were some little red alarm bells around something with someone who had experienced discrimination. So, what do we do? We decided to have a session with the Human Library for our staff. We spent three hours and you could borrow seven books. We sat in such group discussions, and I think it is one of the most meaningful things, and something that have moved us the most, in a short time. So, the conversations between the staff were like, okay, this makes complete sense, and it wasn't too far from what we also want to offer the citizens. So, it was both at an interpersonal level, but also it opened the eyes to how we are available. In other words, the whole accessibility focus on disabled people, both mentally and physically, we got input to. And we also got to know each other better.

(Public manager)

7.6 Discussion

The discussion is centered around two aspects, which are key in understanding the Human Library as a case of social innovation. These are: Timing and Metaphor.

7.6.1 Timing

Outscaling of the Human Library has different explanations, but data reveal an aspect that seems interesting. From the beginning the organization tapped into (and was also triggered by) a societal agenda on inclusion and diversity. An agenda which was only in the raising in Denmark, but was more outspoken internationally. So, 'ripe time' can be understood as a reinforcing mechanism in development of the Human library. Diving into this, a central point is, how the organization keeps up to date with what is somehow 'fashionable' or barely 'critical' in the societal discourse. No doubt, the Human Library offers a service which is easy translatable into CSR and Diversity strategies.

Hence, being able to address the corporate world and becoming part of education has supported innovation and development leading to major leaps in the service performance of the Human Library. A note in this regard is how times are now changing in especially an US context. The founder mentions how the upcoming US election and the potential situation of Donald Trump as president of the United States has led to carefulness and uncertainty. So, due to this caution a number of global companies have now withdrawn as partners, stating that they are now not concerned with diversity, equity and inclusion – they will instead focus on well-being and belonging

Lastly, during the life time of the organization the mentioned 'double-learning' of the framework reflects the spirit of current times: to maintain a critical view on own organizational practices and being open to change. A public manager tells how collaborating with the books also has impact on the way they see themselves. To exemplify, some books with physical or mental disability, have

challenged the accessibility of the library.

VALUE VIGNETTE: Diversity training – at both an organizational and an individual level.

It's essentially a very quick way of doing some equality and diversity training. It's like how to learn how to be a decent person that's kind, that respects other people in 20 minutes. So, I think when big corporations use it as a tool, it's a very quick way of doing that. And they use their equality and diversity budget to pay for it because it's more interesting than someone doing a PowerPoint. So, it's such a good concept for like finding out about someone who's gay, you don't have a gay friend, you actually want to ask all those awkward questions that you've had in your head for a long time. And that's like the beauty of it really... (UK partner)

7.6.2 The power of metaphor

'The way they've designed it, it's just really fun. And it's this idea of choosing a book and taking it. So, it is literally like the human is a book. I feel like that's probably why it gets lots of attention, because it's not just a, come and join this storytelling. It's not a chat and natter. It's not a meetup. No. It's just a clever label, I think. Yeah. That works' (Collaborator).

The application of library vocabulary as a metaphor for the work of the Human Library has been and is very powerful in regards to opening doors into very different organizations. It is an institution and a wording that is known across the globe, even though it might look slightly different in different countries. As such it has opened doors for the organizations while also opening up for encounters between people that would normally not have a platform to meet.

Data does not reveal if any partners or collaborators have challenged the lingo in itself – which might

be due to the Human Library being very conscious about potential negative reactions and hence they have a sensitive open approach when entering new settings. Without downplaying the main objective of 'unjudge somebody'. The founder explains:

'Everyone knows, regardless of which language in the world, the glossary e.g., You're like an open book. Don't judge a book by its cover. We dress in borrowed clothes and sneak in under darkness with some difficult conversations. For example, in a society like Tunisia. In the United Arab Emirates. In Russia. Where we would otherwise be kicked out of all state buildings because we don't want to censor homosexuals. We are a human rights platform which, under the cover of the library analogy, plays a legit mind trick on people. And make them talk about grief. About mental health and obesity. About prejudice and taboo and everything. And they experience that they learn something. That they gain insight, understanding and empathy by being confronted with their own bias.'

The public managers also reflect upon the vocabulary, making it clear how the use of metaphor makes it easy to both present the Human Library as a partner and to citizens. The framework is intuitively understood. Also, libraries are perceived a neutral place where nobody has a specific agenda with how to use the room and how to read the books. As such the Human Library underscores the *raison d'être* of libraries by highlighting this dimension.

Nevertheless, a public manager also remarks that the library as institution might be known to everybody, but might not feel accessible to all. The point is that the library to some is alienating and hence the Human Library event adopts this by using the same lingo – as the word library could trigger stereotypical views in itself.

VALUE VIGNETTE: 'Unjudge somebody' as the core value of The Human Library

We bring in all those new partners and a completely different audience, which creates a new life at the (public) library. But still in the spirit of disseminating knowledge and providing access to knowledge from the neutral starting point, that it is free and that you can do with that knowledge what you want. No one tells you what to borrow, what to read, or what to do with what you learn. We are completely neutral. We neither fight for nor promote diversity. We are exclusively a place where you can *potentially* 'unjudge someone'. We recognize that we all judge, so we won't even

accuse you of being prejudiced. Of course, you are, so are the rest of us. It is a survival instinct. But we have to take responsibility for it too, and revisit some of those judgments. And say, okay, I think I know a lot about being transgender. I've heard all sorts of things. Now I can actually borrow someone to talk to and try to understand her life. And maybe qualify my opinions.

(Founder)

7.7 Conclusion

The empirical findings of the case will, as mentioned, enter into, a cross-case analysis consisting of case reports from approximately ten European countries. As such the study at hand is part of a larger sample, which will delve into how libraries are transforming and which social innovation dimensions are at stake. To sum up the case analysis, the Human Library can be positioned in this perspective due to overall objective of creating both social and public value by giving marginalized a voice in society and breaking down barriers of prejudice among citizens.

In this manner public value is to be understood both in the sense of what the public values (at least as a western ideal); inclusion, equality and diversity, and in the sense of what adds value to the public

sphere; that is the long-term impact of broadened understanding and empathy (public employee to citizen, employee to employee and person to person).

In a social change perspective, the Human Library seems to trigger change in regards to system expansion while holding potential to cause system transformation. The former due to the way the organization's activities pushes the practices of their collaborators forward, e.g., diversity culture in private sector companies, accessibility at libraries and new forms of education at educational institutions. The transformative potential lies in the broader mobilizing movement of the organization itself coupled with changes at micro-level, how people engage with each other, leading to changes at a macro-level, how society is organized.

A public manager gets the last word regarding the outcome of Human Library readings: *'...but the most important thing is that you experience to have moved a little, it could be a millimeter, it could be 27 meters...'*

7.7.1 Short note from the authors

It is important to stress, that the analysis is a here and now picture of the perceptions, experiences and understandings of the informants, supplemented by documentary material and observations.

There are many more interesting initiatives, activities and dialogues going on that we have not embraced or only touched upon – as they did not fall under the focus of the study. We would like to thank all interviewees for their time and honest approach to our conversations. It has been a pleasure to dive into data and hopefully the report will do justice to the lived experienced. If not, the responsibility is ours alone.

8 Case Study E: Library at Home in Northern France

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Image source: Bouvignies public library⁸

⁸ <https://mairie-bouvignies.fr/information-municipale/bibliotheque-a-la-maison/bibliotheque-a-la-maison/>

8.1 Introduction

This report is part of the Task 3.2 of the LibrarIN project. The objective of this task is to document and to conceptualize how public libraries contribute to social innovations across Europe. In this context, we investigate an initiative called the “Bibliothèque à la maison” (i.e. Library at home) undertaken by the Departmental Library of the North Department in France.

The present study follows up on a literature review (Desmarchelier et al., 2023, and Desmarchelier et al. 2024) that has identified a number of key trends in libraries’ activities. In particular, libraries have traditionally been specialized in books curation: they mobilize technical capabilities to assemble, circulate, develop and maintain a collection of material artifacts; all these with a low interactivity with users, who typically serve themselves on bookshelves. But in recent years, libraries’ activities have shifted towards community building: they mobilize capabilities of listening, observation and empathy to respond to a wide array of demands emanating from both users and non-users located in the neighbourhood.

Reflecting on the concept of social innovation, we depart from the moral dimension that is usually associated with it, especially because of its subjectivity. Instead, we propose being true to the etymology of the term social, by defining social innovations as innovations that modify interaction patterns among individuals and/ or groups of individuals. Interactions can happen in the making of the innovation, we talk about “input network” – or as an output of the innovation – here we talk about “output network”.

The literature on knowledge management establishes that informal exchanges of know-how and information is the very source of knowledge creation (Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2019). From this point of view, public libraries as book curators were a supportive agent of the knowledge creation process, while the community builder is an active player of this process.

This literature review thus proposes to focus on the identification of input and/ or output networks generated by innovations involving public libraries or undertaken by them.

8.2 Purpose and scope

Task 3.2 contributes to changing the definition of social innovations. Current definitions found in the academic literature are often circular and subjective. Indeed, a social innovation is often defined as “social both in its ends and its means” (Mulgan et al., 2007), while the adjective “social” often takes a moral – thus a subjective - connotation (Hayek, 1988). Instead, we propose the following definition, which is more neutral in term of moral load:

“A social innovation should create or modify interaction patterns, permitting unknown individuals to get to know each other. Interactions can happen in the making of the innovation, or as a result of it. An inclusive dimension remains possible, but should not be decisive in classifying an innovation as social”(Desmarchelier et al., 2024, p. 12).

This definition also improves the concept operationality, as it suggests to identify input and output networks. Such networks can be analysed in a more or less quantitative way (e.g. size, growth, longevity). Besides, linking social innovations and networks reveals that these types of innovations can

trigger knowledge creation processes. As a consequence, they should be considered by the innovation systems literature. By extension, public libraries could be added in the quadruple helix innovation model (Carayannis and Campbell, 2009).

All the case studies undertaken in Task 3.2. Will contribute to test and refine the input/output networks definition of social innovations, and will illustrate the instrumental role of public libraries as social innovators.

The present study is based on semi-structured interviews with the following people:

- Mrs A, Director of the municipal library of a town with a population of around 2,500.
- Mrs B, project manager at the Departmental Library.
- Mrs C, director of the municipal library of a town with a population of around 5,500.
- Mr and Mrs D, directors of the municipal library of a village with fewer than 900 inhabitants.

8.3 The case in a nutshell

Concerned about the growing isolation of the elderly during the lock-downs decided as part of the fight against the Covid-19 pandemic, the Conseil général du Nord (the local parliament, later named CGN), the Conférence des financeurs de la prévention de perte d'autonomie (a council of funding bodies, later named CFPPA) and the médiathèque départementale du Nord (later named Departmental Library), decided to set up a system for carrying cultural products to the isolated elderlies in partnership with the rural libraries in France's North Department. The project exhibits two noteworthy features compared with a conventional delivery system: firstly, a specific collection has been set up, and

secondly, the project aims to reach isolated people, who are by definition difficult to identify and to convince. This latter characteristic prompted the Departmental Library to suggest municipal libraries to team-up with institutional partners so as to identify isolated individuals and to carry out the portage.

We conducted semi-directive interviews with 3 directors of municipal libraries participating in the project and with a project manager from the Departmental Library. These interviews revealed a number of difficulties:

- The Departmental Library is facing a drop in staff numbers, which is hampering the continued development of the collection dedicated to the project.
- Identifying isolated individuals is not an easy task, as it cannot be based solely on making contact with institutional partners. Each isolated person requires the librarian to mobilize specific interpersonal skills, in particular he/she has to identify people who can play a role of intermediation. The librarian also needs to put in place appropriate solutions to carry the cultural media, since not all isolated persons are willing to let the librarian go directly to their homes.

Despite these difficulties, the project reaches around 920 people. Indeed, the Departmental Library estimates that around 10 isolated persons are being served per library, and there are 92 libraries participating to the project as of 2024.

The project stands as an ad hoc/non-standardized innovation, with a tailor-made service for each isolated user. This innovation has a social character in that its implementation mobilizes a network of players and produces interactions between individuals, notably between librarians, isolated people, and those who play an intermediary role.

8.4 Presentation of the social innovation project and of its context

8.4.1 Genesis of the project

This project is coordinated by the Departmental Library of the North Department in France. In the French public reading system, departmental libraries, formerly called central lending libraries, are tasked with reducing inequalities in the access to reading by supporting small towns municipal libraries - i.e. in towns with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants (Richter and Haley, 1984). In particular, the departmental libraries manages collections, which they circulate among the rural libraries in their network. They also offer a wide range of assistance, from selecting an architect to renovate a library building, contacting authors and artists to organize cultural events, to training the staff of small towns libraries. A departmental library is not intended to serve the public. It is also placed under the authority of the local Conseil Général - i.e. the local parliament, later named CGN.

In the North Department, the Departmental Library oversees a network of 340 municipal libraries. It counts 61 employees in 2024, a figure that has been falling in recent years, due to staff transfers and uncompensated retirements.

In 2021, the CGN is concerned about the growing isolation of seniors in the context of the Covid-19 pandemic. In response to this situation, together with the Conférence des Financeurs de la Prévention de la Perte d'Autonomie (a council of funding bodies, later named CFPPA), it contacted the Departmental Library to devise a scheme aimed at people aged 60 and over.

This is the context to the "Bibliothèque à la Maison" ("Library at Home") program. The objective is to enable rural municipal libraries to set up - or develop - a home delivery service for the isolated elderly.

At the same time, specific workshops are organized for elected representatives so as to raise their awareness on ageing issues. The workshops are in partnership with demographers and medical doctors.

There are two original aspects to this delivery system:

- In just a few months, the Departmental Library put together a new collection, and launched an advertising campaign (e.g. posters displayed in pharmacies and announcements are made in local newspapers).
- This service is aimed at isolated individuals, i.e. those who are not already library users. This means that each participating library needs to put in place a strategy for identifying and approaching the people in question. On this point, the CGN suggests that librarians draw on the support of public, associative and private players to identify these people. In this way, it proposes the creation of a network of players, at the initiative of the rural municipal library.

8.4.2 Creating and managing a new collection

From 2021, the Departmental Library had to put together a specific collection for the project. This collection has the particularity of not belonging to the Departmental Library. Indeed, according to Ms. B., “it’s really a separate collection, because, as it was financed by the autonomy department and the conference of funders, these books do not belong to us. The Departmental Library is a repository. They belong to the CFPPA, they do not join our own funds. In fact, we don’t mix them with our collections. It is indeed a distinct collection. So colleagues said that it had been a lot of work for them in addition to everything that was in the usual management at the departmental library.”

The creation of a new documentary collection involves anticipating who the users will be and their expectations, which is not easy, given that the target audience – that is to say isolated people – is by definition unknown to librarians. Thus, Ms. B. evokes a discrepancy between the choices made and the resources borrowed by users:

“We imagined who the audience over 60 might be who are losing mobility. And as a result, there is a real difficulty in knowing what the needs were. We took the gamble: we decided to take works in large print and books to listen to. But we also wanted there to be comics, poetry, we wanted there to be documentaries, there to be children's albums, telling myself that it could be grandparents too, who could want read to children. But it turns out that in the majority of partners who continue to come, they mainly take novels in large print. So, it must a priori still be the majority of the desires of the audiences who are affected, but with a variety as with everything.”

Ms. B therefore identifies a certain mismatch between the initial composition of the collection and the expectations of the target audience. This inadequacy was also noted by Mrs. A. She leads a very active reading committee in her municipal library, and indicates that the beneficiaries of the Library at Home program in her town prefer books coming from the committee's "favorites" rather than from the specific collection created by the Departmental Library.

Table 8.1 presents the evolution of the budget allocated to the program. This budget peaks in 2021, when the collection is put together. We note that no additional resources were invested in 2023 and our interview with Ms. B reveals that this situation will recur in 2024. According to her, this non-investment is not the result of a lack of success of the Library at Home program, but the result of internal problems in the functioning of the Departmental Library. Indeed, it seems that managing this new collection requires additional work for agents, while their numbers are decreasing. Thus,

according to Ms. B., “the program could very well start again next year. If they [i.e. the CGN] open a few positions for us, things will start again.”

Table 8.1: Evolution of the budget allocated to the Library at Home project (source: interview with Ms. B. and internal documents from the Departmental Library).

	Collection purchase budget	Total budget (collections included)
2021	121,000 EUR	236,000 EUR
2022	61,000 EUR	70,900 EUR
2023	No budget	No budget

The few numerical results that we were able to consult show that, despite the drying up of resources, the system is having a certain success. Indeed, an internal document dated February 2022 lists 82 participating libraries in 2021, compared to 92 libraries at the start of 2024 (source: interview with Ms. B.). In addition, 2,716 loans were made in 2022, for an average of 10 people concerned per library (sources: internal documents).

8.4.3 The problem of identifying isolated people

Any library wishing to join the project must sign a letter of commitment to the Departmental Library. A model letter proposed by the latter specifies the strategy to be implemented to identify and serve isolated people. Concretely, a participating library undertakes to fulfil the following points:

- Identify isolated elderly people by relying on institutional actors in the region.

- Carry out the delivery service, possibly with the help of other actors offering services to the elderly - for example the Town Hall service for delivering meals at home.
- Use the dedicated collection created by the Departmental Library.

The library is therefore committed to setting up a dual network with institutional partners: one to identify the target audience, the other to carry out the porting. But in fact, institutional actors seem to be little mobilized. First, because librarians do not always contact them. Second, because the lack of responsiveness of the institutional actors in the territory. Hence, Ms. A admits that she does not do much communication about the porting program, mainly due to a lack of human resources. For her part, Mrs. C indicates having approached the municipal social action center (CCAS) of the city of Tourcoing, “which was contacted with an offer from the library, but without response”. She also mentions having made a presentation with a cart of books in the Orée du Bois autonomy residence, where an elder beneficiary of the program is currently located. She admits, however, that “you have to put in time and energy, but we have other projects and we have our subscribers.” Note that a volunteer made herself known in January 2024 in Mrs C library, and that she will be assigned to home delivery.

In the facts, it seems that a significant number of beneficiaries are former library users who have become disabled, either temporarily following hospitalization or more permanently. If so, the Library at Home program prevents isolation from taking hold, but does not necessarily reach already isolated individuals.

In this respect, Mrs. C Details the profile of her Library at Home beneficiaries:

- An “artist” in autonomy residence, who listens to audio books on repeat during her painting sessions.

- A person who requests documentaries, particularly in local dialect, so as to discuss the subject with friends. ·
- A sick person, who “is no longer able to hold books”. She asks for albums to read with her 9-year-old granddaughter.

These people are former users of the library. Likewise, Mrs. A identifies vulnerable people among the ageing users and volunteers. For example, she says, “the wife of a gentleman who worked with us as a volunteer asked for audio-books because she was tired. She couldn’t read anymore, but she still needed to listen to stories.”

Mr. and Mrs. D, directors of the library of a village of less than 900 inhabitants, talk about the difficulties initially encountered in identifying isolated people: “We even went so far as to rent an electric bike because our idea was to go all the way in the state of mind, that is to say that it is the library which comes to the service of the inhabitants. So for us, it was an image that suited us very well. I remember with my little bike and everything, I was so proud and everything. We took photos from the handlebars. [...] Unfortunately, we had been warned. You have to let time take its course, you have to allow the project to mature. It [the program] took very little. We had to call on our contacts.”

For the time being, the two librarians have managed to identify three isolated elderly people, to whom they are delivering books. This identification was made using the readers as connector agents. Indeed, according to them “it is already a first difficulty which is in fact that these people [i.e. the isolated elders], by definition, do not already come, cannot come. It has to be done through an intermediary person. And once we try, we'll show a little bit of what we have to bring to them. In fact, you have to scratch a little to get in. On the other hand, as soon as we get in, it works. It's even becoming the state of mind of municipal libraries, that is to say a place of life [...] obviously you have to stay inside for a

while, it's part of the system [...] To get our ticket, we must necessarily have an intermediary. Indeed, we did not want to take the initiative of going to a direct meeting without there being a person from the immediate environment, a neighbour. Very often, it is not necessarily the family, because these are people who are isolated, whose family is not close.”

To summarize, the Library at Home program manages to prevent people from falling into isolation. With more difficulty, the program also reaches isolated elderlies. But identifying these people and approaching them requires mobilizing a network of informal relationships that is very different from the institutional partnerships initially foreseen by the Departmental Library.

8.5 Characterization of the innovation network

8.5.1 An ad hoc social innovation

Can this books delivery project be considered as an innovation? In a first step, we can refer to Schumpeter's typology of innovations (1934), where he identifies five types of innovations: (i) the selling of new goods or services, (ii) the implementation of a new method of production, (iii) the discovery of a new market, (iv) the discovery of a new source of supply, and (v) a new way to organize an industry. Isolated elderlies are, by definition, not active library users. Since Library at Home ambitions to bring library services to these individuals, we can say that it is a market-discovery innovation.

Further, in terms of innovation process, the project can be considered as an ad hoc innovation, defined by Gallouj and Weinstein (1997) as “the interactive (social) construct of a solution to a particular problem posed by a given client” (p. 549). Such an innovation consists of a significant “unprogrammed” (p. 549) change in the skills mobilized by the service provider and in the techniques mobilized as part of the service. Indeed, in terms of skills, it was initially planned to contact institutional actors in order

to identify isolated elderly people. In other words, the librarian is called upon to use formal communication channels and lists of known public and para-public actors.

Our interviews suggest that this strategy proved unsuitable. The librarian must instead mobilize relational skills, such as listening and paying attention to weak signals – like the information reported by intermediary people, such as current users. Mr and Mrs D, for example, relate the following anecdote: “Suddenly, we receive a call to make donations. No worries, you can come. He comes. And we realize that it was our neighbour's son: he said, what, are you in the library? While discussing, he says ‘well, you do this kind of service’ [i.e. Home delivery]. This made it possible to bring and then spread the message a little bit”.

Sometimes, approaching an isolated elderly person requires mobilizing old filial relationships. Thus, Mrs. D. notes: “and again, I am from the village over several generations, so that is what is on the plate, in the relationship because they still have difficulty with foreigners in fact in the small village. Someone from the village next door is a stranger, that’s how it is. Even people who have lived there for 30 years are strangers because they are not from several generations. So, I’m so-and-so’s daughter, and that works to get home sometimes.”

Furthermore, the technical modalities of delivery are idiosyncratic, specific to each isolated user: Mrs. C thus reports the case of a person who refuses to let the librarian into her home – the exchange of books therefore takes place at her door. For another elderly, the meeting takes place in her car in a parking lot. Conversely, Mr and Mrs D indicate that carrying with elderly people results in sharing a coffee and discussions. Ms. B agrees when she says that “often, it is still the librarian who comes, so they know each other and get news. It’s not a book deposit, it’s still also a meeting.”

It should be noted that through the different technical modalities, it is also the final characteristics of the service which are specific to each user. Each new user requires attention, adaptations, and therefore specific skills from the librarian. This makes standardization and replication of the service difficult.

As for the social character of this innovation, it seems twofold to us, because it is based on a network of partners (input network) and it creates interactions (output network). These two points are detailed in the following sections.

8.5.2 Characterisation of the input network

The picture of the input network that emerges from our interviews is summarized in Figure 8.1. The Library at Home program has been initiated by three institutional actors: the CFPPA, the CGN and the Departmental Library. To date, 92 municipal libraries are involved. Each is expected to reach out other institutional actors: CCAS, retirement homes, or even associations.

We have seen that these institutional contacts are difficult to implement and that they do not bring the expected results. The fact remains that a library network and the departmental library ensure the deployment of the program.

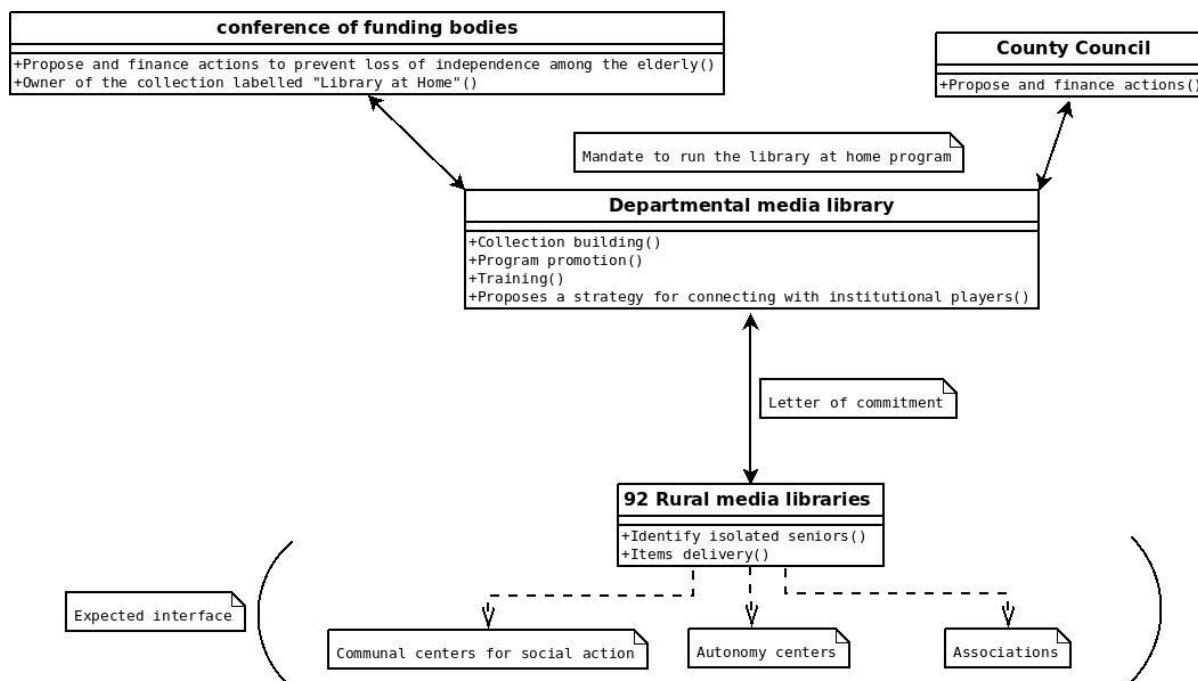


Figure 8.1: Input network of the Library at Home project

8.5.3 Characterization of the output network

Figure 8.2 shows the output network. First, our interviews revealed that the Library at Home program made it possible to maintain regular contact between the municipal libraries and users who become disabled due to health concerns linked to old age. It appeared, particularly in the case of Mrs. A's library, that the selection of the reading committee could satisfy these users more than the collection developed by the Departmental Library. In doing so, an indirect discussion happens between this committee and the beneficiaries of the Library at Home program.

It also appeared that identifying and meeting isolated people requires discussing with intermediary people, who are not necessarily library users. Also, an internal document at the Departmental Library estimates that, on average, 10 isolated elderly people per library are served by the project.

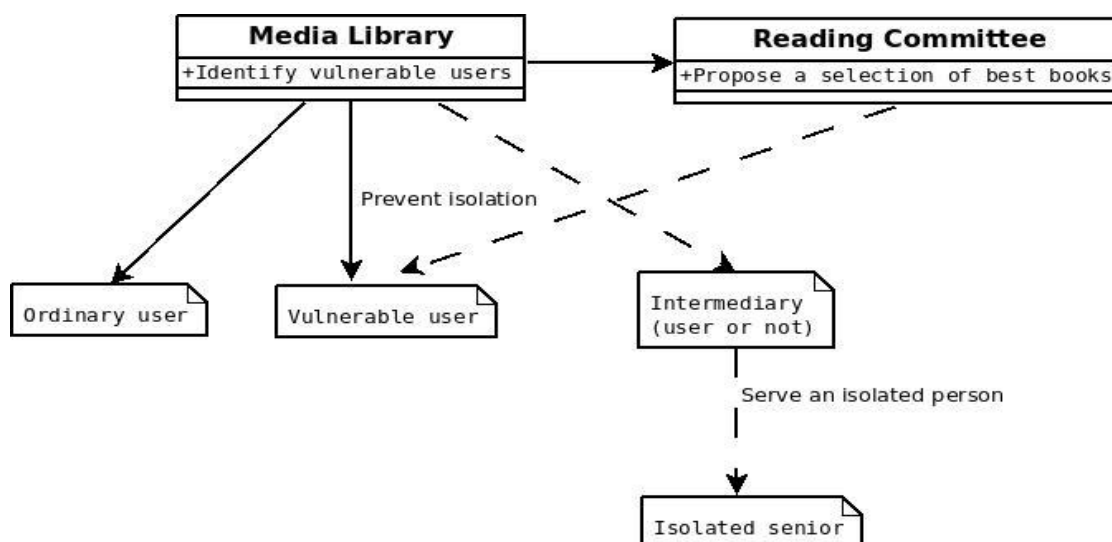


Figure 8.2: Output network of the Library at home project

8.6 Discussion

The implementation of the Library at Home project is encountering difficulties: firstly internal to the Departmental Library, which is facing a drop in its numbers, but also because the identification of isolated people is not easy, as it cannot be based solely on contacting institutional partners. The target audience being by definition difficult to identify and to approach, each isolated person requires that the librarian mobilizes specific relational skills and put in place appropriate delivery mechanisms. An employee of the Departmental Library declares “we are really dealing with a public who must already admit that they are losing their autonomy and that it [i.e. the home delivery service] could help. [...] the issue is much bigger than access to the book”. The boundary between library work and social work is therefore tenuous, and municipal libraries find themselves faced with a lack of human resources to cope with this mission change.

The Library at Home project is not a failure, however, because it helps strengthen the resilience of the community of library readers by maintaining a link with those who find themselves prevented. For example, an indirect discussion takes place between these vulnerable readers and the selection of the readers' committee of Mrs. A's library. Furthermore, the interviews with Mrs. C and Mr. and Mrs. D show that some truly isolated people actually benefit from the project.

From a theoretical standpoint, the innovation reported in this case study is of an ad hoc type, because it mobilizes technical arrangements and skills that are specific to each user. Thus, the service delivered is each time specific and difficult to standardize. Further, Dacin et al. (2010) suggest that it is not necessary to think of social entrepreneurs as a new category of entrepreneurs. By extension, it is possible that social innovations are also not specific innovations. Indeed, we can argue, like Gershuny (1982), that any innovation modifies relationships between people. It is also probable that certain social innovations are more or less radical, combinatorial, ad hoc or formalization (Gallouj and Weinstein, 1997). As such, the social innovation we are facing here is assimilable to an ad hoc innovation.

At the end, we note that the social innovation reported here was not proposed by an individual entrepreneur, but by public administrations. Furthermore, the input network that emerges from our interviews (see Figure 1) is very different from a technological innovation network, since it only includes public administrations, municipal libraries and actors of the social economy. We are therefore rather faced with an example of a public service innovation network for social innovation PSINSI (Desmarchelier et al., 2020) than with a traditional innovation network.

9 Case Study F: The Repair Café @ Vélizy

Authors: Benoît Desmarchelier, Faïz Gallouj, Isabelle Liotard (ULille)



Image source: Le Parisien, Jan. 21st 2018.

9.1 Introduction

This report is part of the Task 3.2 of the LibrarIN project. The objective of this task is to document and to conceptualize how public libraries contribute to social innovations across Europe. In this context, we investigate an initiative called the “Bibliothèque à la maison” (i.e. Library at home) undertaken by the Departmental Library of the North Department in France.

The present study follows up on a literature review (Desmarchelier et al., 2023, and Desmarchelier et al. 2024) that has identified a number of key trends in libraries’ activities. In particular, libraries have traditionally been specialized in books curation: they mobilize technical capabilities to assemble, circulate, develop and maintain a collection of material artifacts; all these with a low interactivity with users, who typically serve themselves on bookshelves. But in recent years, libraries’ activities have shifted towards community building: they mobilize capabilities of listening, observation and empathy to respond to a wide array of demands emanating from both users and non-users located in the neighbourhood.

Reflecting on the concept of social innovation, we depart from the moral dimension that is usually associated with it, especially because of its subjectivity. Instead, we propose being true to the etymology of the term social, by defining social innovations as innovations that modify interaction patterns among individuals and/ or groups of individuals. Interactions can happen in the making of the innovation, we talk about “input network” – or as an output of the innovation – here we talk about “output network”.

The literature on knowledge management establishes that informal exchanges of know-how and information is the very source of knowledge creation (Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2019). From this point of view, public libraries as book curators were a supportive agent of the knowledge creation process, while the community builder is an active player of this process.

This literature review thus proposes to focus on the identification of input and/ or output networks generated by innovations involving public libraries or undertaken by them.

9.2 Purpose and scope

Task 3.2 contributes to changing the definition of social innovations. Current definitions found in the academic literature are often circular and subjective. Indeed, a social innovation is often defined as “social both in its ends and its means” (Mulgan et al., 2007), while the adjective “social” often takes a moral – thus a subjective - connotation (Hayek, 1988). Instead, we propose the following definition, which is more neutral in term of moral load:

“A social innovation should create or modify interaction patterns, permitting unknown individuals to get to know each other. Interactions can happen in the making of the innovation, or as a result of it. An inclusive dimension remains possible, but should not be decisive in classifying an innovation as social”(Desmarchelier et al., 2024, p. 12).

This definition also improves the concept operationality, as it suggests to identify input and output networks. Such networks can be analysed in a more or less quantitative way (e.g. size, growth, longevity). Besides, linking social innovations and networks reveals that these types of innovations can trigger knowledge creation processes. As a consequence, they should be considered by the innovation

systems literature. By extension, public libraries could be added in the quadruple helix innovation model (Carayannis and Campbell, 2009).

All the case studies undertaken in Task 3.2. Will contribute to test and refine the input/output networks definition of social innovations, and will illustrate the instrumental role of public libraries as social innovators.

In the case of the Repair Café of the Vélizy municipal library, semi-structured interviews have been conducted with the following persons:

- The current director of the library (referred to as Mrs. A thereafter).
- A librarian who assisted the former director in setting-up the repair café, and who currently runs it (referred to as Mr. B).
- The former library director, who created the repair café (referred to as Mrs. C).

9.3 The case in a nutshell

In 2016, the director of the municipal library of the city of Vélizy, France, decides to set up a repair café within the library. This decision is inspired by her training in the management of third places, and by discussions with library users, who are also active members of Sunlab – the fablab of the city of Viroflay, itself member of Hatlab, a larger association of fablabs. Once per month, this repair café is the occasion for citizens and library users to repair small electric appliances, to share and learn repairing skills and knowledge, as well as to know each others by sharing a coffee and a piece of cake. It is a replicative innovation : for a day, a fablab is transposed into the library. This requires spatial

adjustments, as well as the acquisition and maintenance of tools and a stock of consumables (e.g. tin). This innovation relies on a network of repairers and a network of fablabs. Also, it generates a variety of networks : ephemeral ones – i.e. the discussions taking place among users and repairers, but also more permanent ones, since the success of the repair café motivated the organizers to set up a fablab within the city – the Izylab in 2019. Currently, this offshoot provides most of the repairers to the repair café. Interestingly, the output network became permanent and then part of the input network.

9.4 Presentation of the social innovation project and of its context

Around 2016, a webmaster of the Velizy municipal library was animating a regular discussion group with library users about digital technologies. In parallel, the director of the library benefited from a training on the management of third places. At that time, she made the observation of a disconnection between the capabilities of some library users, and their retired status. Mrs C recalls: the city of “Vélizy, it is the automobile industry, Thales Space, Bouygues, big companies, white-collar workers, engineers with an entire retired population. 25% of the population are retired, with engineers who are a little bored. And I said to myself that there are still things to be done with these people who have full brains, who sometimes also have difficulty in relation to their image. Socially, they are retired, they are old, they are not in the game anymore (...) we could clearly see that there was unease and we often began to start a dialogue”.

Referring to Mrs. C, Mrs A highlights that “she was very much into third places and fablabs [...] and thus she already had a small network. [...] This is really the key of any repair café: succeed to build a network of people on whom you can count on”.

In particular, the western part of the Paris region is hosting an association of fabllabs, named Hatlab. This Hatlab was hosting a number of fabllabs, among which the Sunlab, in the city of Viroflay. Some users of the Velizy library were active members of the Sunlab, and discussing about it with Mrs C. Together, they decided to transpose the idea of the fablab into the municipal library of Velizy. According to Mr. B, “it all started with 2-3 people who knew a bit of computing [...] and on top of that, other users came in, they were more into DIY [...] into electronics”.

Hence, one day per month – ten months a year – library users can bring in small electronic apparels to the library, that a team of volunteers will try to repair for free. The beneficiaries are mainly in their 50s, and they “hold on to an object that they absolutely want to repair” (Mr. B). The success of the repair café pushed the library to set up a booking system, in which users need to indicate in advance what type of apparel they want to repair. Indeed, “there are coffee machines which are very difficult to dismantle, and this will take the entire morning; for vacuum cleaners, it takes a lot of time” (Mr. B).

The success of the repair Café has attracted the attention of people from the Sunlab, “who were not from Vélizy but had the idea to establish in Vélizy. We allowed them to meet thanks to the Repair Café, and they found a team to create a fablab in Vélizy [...] and the town hall wanted to open a fablab” (Mr. B).

Thus, the repair café served as a platform to create the fablab of the city: Izylab, launched in 2019, and also a member of the Hatlab association. Currently, the repair café is still running once per month, and Izylab provides most of the volunteer repairers.

9.5 Characterization of the innovation network

9.5.1 A replicative innovation

Fablabs and repair cafés are not novelties. However, operating such a workshop into a library is not a common thing. It, indeed, requires to modify the way the space is organized, librarians need to welcome new types of visitors – who are not necessarily readers – and they have to acquire, store and maintain a collection of tools and consumable materials. Indeed, Mr. B states that the role of the library is to “welcome people who come to have something repaired, we connect with the repairers and we prepare the room [...] We provide the room [...] we have also acquired some tools to avoid the repairers to bring their owns. They tell us a bit of what they need, things that are used often, like to do soldering”.

Using the well-known Schumpeterian typology of innovations, we can argue that the Repair Café represents a new type of service in the context of the library, as well as a new method of production, as the library is teaming-up with fablabs and is partly reorganising the occupation of floor spaces.

Further, Baumol (1993) proposes to add two other types of innovations to the Schumpeterian list: the destructive innovations – i.e. rent seeking methods, and the innovations in terms of “technology transfer” (p. 28), that is, in terms of replications of some technologies, but in a different context. Here, the repair café consists in replicating the idea of the fablab, but in the context of a municipal library.

Overall, these traditional categories are a poor fit for the innovation here, since the objective of the library is not to produce a new service, but to get retired people involved and to generate discussion networks among them. The objective is to create a network, and it has been done through a network of partners. In this sense, we are in front of a social innovation.

9.5.2 Characterisation of the input and the output networks

It is noteworthy that the ideation process involved a network of actors: the Vélizy municipal library through its director and other librarians, but also readers who were members of the Sunlab, itself part of the Hatlab, an association of fablabs in the region. All these actors and their relationships form in some way the input network of the Repair Café.

The output network is made of ephemeral discussions happening between users and the volunteer repairers during the Repair Café events in the library, but it also consists into a more permanent and expanding network of Izylab members. Interestingly, the Easylab is part of a larger network of fablabs that initially provided volunteers to the Repair Café. Further, the Izylab now provides 95% of the volunteers into the Repair Café according to Mr B. Thus, the input and the output networks are intertwined.

“people come out of their isolation. I have the example of a gentleman who was part of other associations and all that but who is quite solitary. And in fact he came there because he is retired, he has some DIY skills. There he is, tinkering and all that and it allowed him to meet all the people at the fablab. Now he's really involved in it and he comes to talk. [...] Finally, he is a member of the fablab”. (Mrs. A).

The input and the output networks are intertwined, so that it is more accurate to draw the repair café network as a whole, like in the Figure 9.1: the Repair Café has nurtured the creation of the Izylab, which is thus part of the café's output network, but in return, the Izylab provides many volunteer repairers to the Repair Café, making it part of the input network. Besides, the Izylab is integrated into the fablab ecosystem of Paris suburbs by being part of the Hatlab consortium.

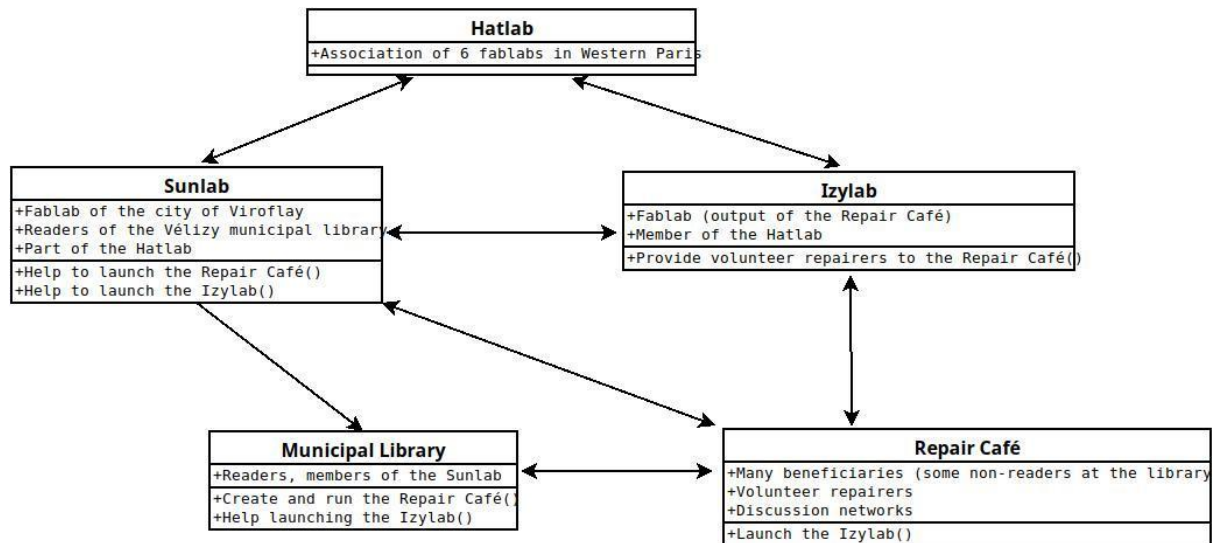


Figure 9.1: The Repair Café network

9.6 Discussion

Several comments can be made with regards to the networks produced by the social innovation and the behaviour of the library.

9.6.1 Networks dynamic

The Repair Café is a success in several aspects: (i) it lasts since 2016, (ii) it has created an offspring organisation – the Izylab, and (iii) it is embedded into a larger network of fablabs. This success exemplifies the artificial distinction between input and output networks. Indeed, the Café relies on a network of fablabs, but it also expands it through the Izylab; and this latter organization became an input for the Café.

The fact that the café is embedded into a larger network poses the question of the delimitation of this network. Indeed, if Izylab has an increasing population of users, are they part of the Repair Café larger network? Taking a more aggregated view, the Hatlab lists a number of partners from the associative world (e.g. ATD Quart Monde, or the Blaise Pascal Foundation) and from the public sector - some with a national reach (e.g. The National Agency for Territorial Cohesion). Each of these actors supports many innovative initiatives throughout the country and contributes in mapping a national social innovation system (Desmarchelier et al., 2023b). We can thus consider that, through its Repair Café, the Vélizy municipal library contributes to the expansion of this larger innovation system.

Using existing typologies from Schumpeter (1934) and Baumol (1993), we labelled the Repair Café as a service innovation, a process innovation, and a replicative innovation. In sum, it is difficult to characterize it in one word. We suspect that this difficulty comes from the fact that the Repair Café is above all a network innovation. In this perspective, we could say that a social innovation is one that modifies the society, seen as a network of more or less permanent relational linkages between agents – be they individual people, or organizations (profit seeking or not).

9.6.2 Library and users behaviour

The interviews revealed a shift in the behaviour of both the librarians and the users. These shifts correspond to the passage of a “logic of provision” (Gadrey, 1999) in which users serve themselves and do not interact, to a logic of “intervention”, where users ask for a specific help in their own projects. The service provider – here the librarian – is not requested primarily for his technical skills in books provision and collection maintenance, but for its empathy, listening and capability to liaise users.

Firstly, with regards to users, they are not anymore going to the library solely to access collections, but also to take an active role into repairing activities and to socialize. For instance, Mr B declares that “before, it was a bit like consumption: we take the books, we leave. But now, these are spaces to stay, to live, so that there are moments of conviviality”. Also, “It’s a moment of sharing, because everyone talks and takes a cake. Even the person whose device has already been repaired will stay to chat with the others. Just because it’s fixed does not mean they’re going to leave. No, they will stay”.

In the case of the librarian, the idea of the Repair Café started with the attention given by Mrs C to weak signals among users of the library: a feeling of contradiction between users’ intellectual and technical capabilities and the fact that where becoming inactive as retires. Further, the role of the library in this initiative is not to provide books, but to create encounters among people. It also appears that Mrs C liaised users’ interested to set up a fablab to obtain a place from the city hall.

10 Case Study G: Likustartti at Vantaa City Library

Authors: Tiina Tuominen, Kirsi Hyytinen, Paul Windrum (VTT)



Figure: stock image

10.1 Summary of the case

Lukustartti (i.e. “Kick-off for literacy”) is a year-long service delivery and development project which aims to foster collaboration between Vantaa City Library and Maternity and Child Health Clinics at the Wellbeing Services County of Vantaa-Kerava to address early literacy needs in multilingual families with babies. During 2024, the project enables organizing story hours for multilingual families in several

different locations across Vantaa City, training health and library professionals about early literacy in multilingual families and establishing the ground for future collaboration between the two organisations.

Method: The case study draws on six interviews and documentation about Lukustartti project and the two participating organisations. The interviews were carried out with library managers, library personnel, and a manager from the Maternity and child health clinics. Thematic empirical analysis was carried out to address the key questions in T3.2.

Characterisation of the innovation: Before Lukustartti, different organisations had already offered services that provide opportunities for networking and story hours for multilingual families. However, Lukustartti offered deeper insights into family literacy and the benefits and practice of reading aloud for infants, as well as into the importance of reading in the family's own mother tongue to support language development.

From the perspective of the participating organisations, the innovation entails combining the two organisations' resources and skills in a novel way to address a common concern. Whereas Vantaa City Library has a long history of collaborating with schools and kindergartens, collaboration with Maternity and child health clinics is a novel opening. For the library, this represents new type of outreach activity with a possibility to reach new user segments, as nearly all families with babies visit Maternity and child health clinics regularly. For Maternity and child health clinics, the innovation entails possibilities to strengthen and extend the organisation's competencies in multilingual early literacy.

Characterisation of the input and output networks: Lukustartti was driven by Vantaa City Library, which also acquired funding for the project activities. The collaboration between the two organisations evolved during the project: first, the intention was to organise story hours within Maternity and child health clinics. However, after experimenting with the spaces and with how to best reach the multilingual families, the partners decided to hold majority of the story hours in open meeting spaces for families. These spaces were hosted by either Vantaa City or a NGO called Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. At the time of the study, the Lukustartti project is still on-going, but both parties consider the collaboration useful and intend to continue it in the future.

The output networks primarily consist of the multilingual baby families visiting story hours, as well as the employee holding the story hours. According to the interviews, the service targeted and resulted in three types of direct consequences for families, in addition to improving literacy-related skills. First, it strengthened the relations between children and parents. Second, it facilitated interactions between families and helped them to become more integrated to the local communities. Third, it helped the families to get to know the Finnish society, thus improving their societal relations. It is not known whether the families continued interacting with one another outside the story hours. However, since the story hours were held in open meeting spaces, it is possible and likely that these conversations helped the families to know one another and sparked novel interactions between those visiting the meeting spaces regularly.

Conclusion: While the Lukustartti project is still on-going, the current findings give reason to assume that the project is successful in terms of supporting the local multilingual families that joined the project activities. The project activities generated both direct benefits via warm and insightful interactions among the participants of the output network, and indirect benefits via improved skills and via opening up possibilities for further cross-sectoral collaboration within the input network stakeholders.

The findings also include some relevant notions about the enablers and barriers of such collaboration. It seems that the common intentions and values of the two participating organizations were pivotal in facilitating the collaboration. However, differences in the two organizations' everyday practices complicated the collaboration. These differences included different ways of interacting with families and organizing spaces. These findings suggest that the introduction of such new interaction methods might require more time to integrate the methods seamlessly to the on-going resources and competences of the participating organizations, and to ensure the engagement of all staff members to the activity.

Furthermore, the informant had varying opinions about the problems and benefits of project-based services. The obvious downside was that it is challenging to continue these activities after the project has ended and the project worker moved to other tasks. On the other hand, Vantaa City Library had a history of organizing several parallel and subsequent projects for addressing the needs of multilingual citizens. Project-based funding was the only way to acquire resources for organizing such services. The informants estimated that these projects enabled experimentation and searching for the right way to address the specific concerns of the local communities. In this way, the projects cumulated expertise to the library and helped it to respond to opportunities and changing needs of the citizens rapidly and efficiently.

10.2 Introduction

This report is part of the Task 3.2 of the LibrarIN project. The objective of this task is to document and conceptualize how public libraries contribute to social innovations across Europe. In this context, we investigate an initiative called "Lukustartti" (i.e. Kick-off for literacy) undertaken by VTT in Finland.

The present study follows up on a literature review (Desmarchelier et al., 2023, and Desmarchelier et al. 2024) that has identified a number of key trends in libraries' activities. In particular, libraries have traditionally been specialized in books curation: they mobilize technical capabilities to assemble, circulate, develop and maintain a collection of material artifacts; all these with a low interactivity with users, who typically serve themselves on bookshelves. But in recent years, libraries' activities have shifted towards community building: they mobilize capabilities of listening, observation and empathy to respond to a wide array of demands emanating from both users and non-users located in the neighbourhood.

Reflecting on the concept of social innovation, we depart from the moral dimension that is usually associated with it, especially because of its subjectivity. Instead, we propose being true to the etymology of the term social, by defining social innovations as innovations that modify interaction patterns among individuals and/ or groups of individuals. Interactions can happen in the making of the innovation, we talk about "input network" – or as an output of the innovation – here we talk about "output network".

The literature on knowledge management establishes that informal exchanges of know-how and information is the very source of knowledge creation (Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2019). From this point of view, public libraries as book curators were a supportive agent of the knowledge creation process, while the community builder is an active player of this process.

This literature review thus proposes to focus on the identification of input and/ or output networks generated by innovations involving public libraries or undertaken by them.

The study of Lukustartti is based on the following empirical data:

Type of data	Informants
In-depth interviews	3 managers at Vantaa City Library M₁, M₂, M₃ 2 employees of Vantaa City Library E₁, E₂, E₃ (E₃ interviewed twice) 1 external partner C₁ (manager at the Child Health Clinic at the Wellbeing Services County of Vantaa-Kerava)
Documents	1. Information leaflets of the service 2. Project plan for Lukustartti 3. Strategy documentation of the library 4. Internal documentation about collaborative work in the library 5. Library law document 6. Library website 7. Vantaa City webpages

10.3 The case in a nutshell

The Vantaa City Library represents a large municipal library located in the capital region of Finland. Vantaa includes a population of more than 250 000 residents, half of them being under 40 years old. The population is expected to grow in the next decades, owing to migration of young people to Vantaa. Multiculturalism and multilingualism are characteristics to Vantaa, as 25% of the population has a

mother language other than Finnish or Swedish (Vantaa City webpages). Due to the multilingual characteristics of the local communities, the Vantaa City Library had long aimed to address the specific needs of multilingual families to support literacy and social inclusion of these families. They have aimed to address this topic both in their ordinary service offering, but also via applying for project funding for services targeting specific collaboration relations and needs. **Lukustartti is one of these externally funded services that runs through the year 2024 and is conducted in collaboration between Vantaa City Library and Wellbeing Services County of Vantaa-Kerava.** Prior to Lukustartti, several projects have been conducted to enhance collaboration between libraries, schools and kindergartens in strengthening literacy. In addition, other projects have provided funding for outreach activities where library staff has entered the city-organised open meeting spaces for families to organize events and interact with multilingual families. The Maternity and Child Health clinics were considered as ideal partner for libraries' outreach activities both due to the broad coverage of these services among Finnish families, and due to the similarities in the objectives of the two organisations.

During Fall 2024, the project is still on-going. Some activities for families began in Spring 2024, while activities aiming to strengthen the cross-organisational collaboration will take place during Fall 2024. Therefore, this report includes only first insights on the impacts of the project. However, the findings suggest that Lukustartti helped the multilingual families in many ways. It helped them to become more integrated into the Finnish society and local communities through capacity building (improved literacy and knowledge about the society, libraries and family reading) and through direct interactions in the Lukustartti events. It also opened up spaces for collaboration between the involved organisations, even though the actual forms of future collaboration remain open at the time of the study.

10.4 Presentation of the social innovation project and its context

Lukustartti project's general aim is to both **enhance the collaboration** between Vantaa City Library and Maternity and Child Health Clinics **in supporting early literacy and reading aloud** within families, specifically targeting multilingual families. While the library had long-term collaboration relations with schools and kindergartens, the collaboration with Maternity and Child Health Clinics was **a novel opening**, enabled by the Lukustartti project. The Maternity and Child Health Clinics occupy a specific role in the Finnish society with a history of over 100 years. These clinics provide free services for families expecting a baby up until the child is born and enters school at the age of six or seven. The pregnant mother and families with small children receive free, regular medical and health checks, vaccinations and advice related to both physical and mental health of the family. When needed, the employees direct the users to other health and social services. In this way, these clinics have been a major social innovation of their time that has decreased infant and maternal mortality in the Finnish society, while improving the health and wellbeing of families with small kids. (e.g. Valtioneuvosto, 2022)

While the maternity and child health clinics have previously been organized by municipalities, after the health and social services reform in Finland in 2023 these services have been offered by wellbeing services counties. Partly due to these changes, the library saw the need to enforce collaboration between libraries and maternity and child health clinics. Therefore, funding was sought and received from Regional State Administrative Agency in 2023. The funding application stated the following goals for the project:

“The Lukustartti project inspires families with multicultural children to read to their children, use library services, and become active library customers. The main goals of the project are to

teach families to read aloud, clarify the importance of early interaction between parents and infants, and to disseminate information about public library services. The maternity and child health clinics act as the library's partners in the project. During the project, the library's services will be communicated in some way to the users in every clinic. 1-3 clinics suitable for their premises and visitor base will be selected as the actual pilot clinics where the library organizes events that encourage reading and interaction.” (project plan)

The project offered story hours for multilingual families with babies under the age of 1,5 years. In addition, the project intended to boost the literacy-related support and guidance that the families receive from nurses working in maternity and child health clinics. The project aimed to offer the **following benefits for the multilingual families:**

- **Improved knowledge about early literacy development and reading aloud to children.** This knowledge included both understanding the importance of interacting with the child, how to practically use books with children, and how literacy develops. Via this knowledge, the service aimed to strengthen the relations between parents and children, as well as improve their competences, which would then enable better integration within the society. Among other issues, this included understanding the role of reading books in the families' own mother tongue instead of leaning solely on Finnish and English materials.
- **Improved knowledge about library services in Finland.** The informants noted that not all families know about the Finnish library services, nor about the possibilities to loan and order books in their own mother languages. The intention was to direct the users of maternity and child health clinics to libraries that would then provide the families with novel opportunities to develop skills and competences and engage in interactive events and services.
- **Bringing in books and materials to Maternity and child health clinics.** The project enabled the users of these clinics to directly access library materials in their own mother language. In

addition, it was planned that the families would receive other useful materials that remind them of the importance of reading aloud, such as bib with a poem.

The project also aimed to bring the following benefits to the **participating organisations**:

- Regarding Maternity and Child Health clinics, the aim was to **strengthen the employees' skills** in supporting early literacy in multilingual families. This included training on early literacy matters during Fall 2024 as well as information about library services.
- To Vantaa City Library the aim was to **reach novel users and strengthen literacy-related capabilities and resources** via collaboration with the clinics. The aim was to appoint a permanent contact person in each branch library that would ensure interaction with nearest maternity and child health clinics.

10.5 Characterization of the input network

The main driver of the service was Vantaa City Library, which also applied and received funding for organising the service. Collaboration with Child and Maternity Health Clinics was organised so that these clinics would provide spaces for **story hours called "Baby's word plays"**. In addition, the library would provide **material and training for the health clinic staff** about library services and literacy, so that health clinic staff could best support early literacy and provide information on library services for the families. While the project lasted for a year only, the intention was to establish the **grounds for longer-term collaboration** and develop the capabilities of both organisations in supporting literacy skills in multicultural families.

A project worker was employed to the library to implement the project. This employee had education and previous expertise in early childhood education and projects enhancing literacy in this context. In

addition, she had worked both in kindergartens and in libraries, due to which she had ideal expertise for the project. The employee played a crucial role in organising one weekly story hour in each of the three selected pilot locations, collaborating and negotiating with Maternity and Child health clinics, and in preparing educational materials and trainings for the employees of the clinics. She was supported by a network manager of the library, and **a cross-organisational project team** that held monthly meetings to support and advice the project.

The original intention was to organise story hours within three maternity and child health clinics exactly because almost all families living in Finland visit the clinics regularly. Therefore, the staff thought that the clinics could be an ideal place to reach multilingual families. However, the project members soon noted the **difficulties in finding feasible spaces** for these story hours in the clinics. This was partly due to the lack of spaces that would allow group events, but also because the citizens had different practices of interacting and visiting health clinics and libraries. Whereas citizens could visit libraries to spend free time in their premises, they were used to visiting health clinics only for the specific one-to-one appointments with a health professional.

Due to the above-mentioned challenges, two out of three weekly story hours were organised **outside the premises of health clinics**, and the role of the employees of the nearest clinics was to direct their users to the story hour events. After testing the story hours also in **library premises**, the final three pilot locations for the story hours included one health clinic and two **open meeting spaces** for families. The open meeting spaces proved to be good venues to attract multilingual families, since they were open for all families to enter at any time during a day and hosted different types of other activities and services for the families. One of them was organised by the City of Vantaa, located next to a health clinic, and another was organised by a well-known non-governmental organisation named Mannerheim League for Child Welfare. This way, the original **collaboration** between two public

organisation **extended to cover also a NGO**. In addition, during Fall 2024, the plan was to hold some of the weekly events in a new open meeting space to reach new families.

10.6 Characterization of the output network

The output networks primarily consist of the multilingual baby families visiting story hours, as well as the employee holding the story hours. During Spring 2024, the story hours reached slightly less visitors that was originally planned, potentially partially due to the challenges identified above, but also because several other services for multilingual families competed for their attention. A typical number of families visiting each event varied from 2 to 6. This means that the **service reached weekly around 12-36 citizens (babies and parents)**. Some of the families visited the events regularly while others could join the events once or irregularly.

However, the smaller number of visitors enabled **more intensive interactions** between families and between the families and the employee. This enabled directing each event towards **the here-and-now needs** of the participants, which the employee considered useful instead of following a predefined agenda and thematic content. According to the interviews, the service targeted and resulted in three types of direct consequences for families, in addition to **improving literacy-related skills**. First, it aimed to **strengthen the relations between children and parents**. As the project was still on-going, it was difficult to find out how these intentions were realised. Based on the interview of the employee organising the events, we could note that very close collaboration and advice for families likely supported these relations.

Second, it helped the families to **become more integrated to the community**. The employee noted a lot of discussions among families held in Finnish: they used words that everyone involved in the conversation knew. It is not known whether the families continued these interactions outside the story

hours. However, since the story hours were held in open meeting spaces, it is **possible** and likely that these conversations helped the families to know one another and **sparked novel interactions** between those visiting the meeting spaces regularly.

Third, the story hours helped the families to **get to know the Finnish society**, thus improving their societal relations. Besides conversations related to library services, the families took the opportunity to ask any other questions from the employee, ranging from the meaning of Finnish words to opportunities to go skiing.

In addition to these output networks, the service has also **strengthened the relations between Vantaa City Library and the Wellbeing Services County**. However, many of these implications are difficult to estimate at the time of reporting the study, since project is still on-going until the end of 2024. The interaction and training events for the health professionals are planned to be organised during Fall 2024. The intention is to enable smoother collaboration and information exchange between the two organisation after they get to know each other and the potential services that might benefit clients with specific needs and desires.

10.7 Discussion and unexpected findings

These findings give reason to conclude that Lukustartti project was **successful** in terms of supporting the local multilingual **families that joined the project activities**: these activities generated both direct benefits via warm and insightful interactions among the participants, and indirect benefits via improved skills and via **opening up possibilities for further cross-sectoral collaboration** within the input network stakeholders.

The findings also include some relevant notions about the enablers and barriers for such collaboration. It seems that the **common intentions and values** of the two participants, Vantaa City Library and the Maternity and child health clinics, **were pivotal** in facilitating the collaboration. Some informants also noted about being surprised about how many common goals and concerns these two organisations actually shared. Using their complementary resources, they could have an in-depth effect on their target citizen groups and thus contribute to societal inclusion and coherence.

However, the findings also indicate that **differences in the two organisation's everyday practices complicated the collaboration**. The most important aspect was their different ways of interacting with the citizens. To the extent that the citizens had internalised these differences, it was challenging to educate them to behave in a different way, such as visiting health clinics for free-time activities to gain collective experiences. It should also be mentioned that besides the collaboration models that were realised during Lukustartti project, the two organisations had considered several alternative ways of benefiting from the collaboration. These included, for example, searching for possibilities that the health clinic staff would organise story hours on their own by integrating these events to their on-going service activities. This proved to be challenging due to the nature of on-going activities (e.g. no group activities targeting multilingual families only) and the spaces and resources in these clinics. These findings suggest that the introduction of such new interaction methods might require more time to integrate them seamlessly to the on-going resources and competences of the participating organisations, and to ensure the engagement of all staff members to the activity.

Furthermore, the informant had varying opinions about the **problems and benefits of project-based services**. The obvious downside was that it is challenging to continue these activities after the project has ended and the project worker moved to other tasks. The informants estimated that a lot of the information will be lost when the novel practice will not be institutionalised. On the other hand, Vantaa

City Library had a history of organising several parallel and subsequent projects for addressing the needs of multilingual citizens. The informants estimated that these projects enabled experimentation and searching for the right way to address the specific concerns of the local communities. In this way, the projects cumulated expertise to the library and helped it to respond to opportunities and changing needs of the citizens rapidly and efficiently. Besides these benefits, it should be noted that organising these services without external funding would not have been possible. A key issue, then, is to ensure the continuation of collaboration and leveraging the learnings and expertise gained in the project.

It should also be noted that the short duration of a project might cause difficulties for the citizens who might have become committed to project activities and gain value from interactions in the project events. In the case of Lukustartti, the project-based nature might not cause challenges for the citizens, as it only targeted families with babies and thus families would inevitably search for other services after the infant had turned 18 months. However, the informants noted that there are **several other similar services** held by different societal actors, **competing for the attention** of the multilingual families. Therefore, it seems that there is still space for enhancing the collaboration between actors with similar goals to create efficient and effective social innovations.

11 Case Study H: Children's Section at Oodi

Authors: Tiina Tuominen, Kirsi Hyytinen, Paul Windrum (VTT)



Figure source: Helsinki Central Library Oodi

11.1 Summary of the case: Children's section at Oodi

The Children's section at Helsinki Central Library Oodi represents a novel type of concept, consisting of careful spatial design and various types of activities that encourages families to spend time in a new way in the premises of a public library. The basic idea is to make a library an enticing place for families to visit and socialise, while also supporting the transition of libraries from a book depository towards a common living room. The section for families was already introduced to Oodi's original concept

initiated in the beginning of 2010s and launched at the opening of the library in 2018, and carefully revised based on user feedback in 2022-2023, with minor adjustment conducted along the way based on everyday observations and interactions between users and personnel. At the time of the study, it was a popular space for families to visit, encouraging them to interact both in organised activities and via spending time in the common areas with other families.

Method: This study is based on interviews with three managers and three employees of Oodi, as well as one external partner. In addition, observations were conducted in Children's section and in an event targeting families with babies. Information gained from the library websites, user surveys conducted by Oodi personnel, news, and other relevant documentation supported the analysis.

Characterization of the innovation: The children's section and concept at Oodi Helsinki Central Library is a combination of spatial solutions, functionalities and events that aim to entice families from different backgrounds to spend time at Oodi in order to foster social inclusion and interaction within and between families. A key indicator of success of the area is that it is a popular area which invites families to visit and stay at the library. Due to the multidimensionality of the concept of Children's section, as well as the blurred boundaries between this concept and the rest of the offering at Oodi, it is difficult to characterise it as an innovation. Any single aspect or dimension of the concept has already been tried out elsewhere, but the uniqueness of the concept derives from careful combination and elaboration of the elements—including spatial design, events, and materials—that generate value for the users and make the Children's section popular.

Characterizing the input and output networks: The input networks involved the library as the central actor, but collaboration between different stakeholders was crucial and visible part of the development process. The development of Children's section has included several phases so far. The

original design of the concept was created along the planning, construction and opening of Oodi in 2018. In this initial stage, co-creative methods were broadly used to engage 3000 different stakeholders, including citizens, in designing the library. A work group that included library staff across Helsinki coordinated the development of concepts for children and families, interacting with the architect that was responsible for the spatial design. After establishing and implementing the initial concept for the Childrens' section, it was improved along the way as the library staff gained experiences on user needs and behaviours in the space. A third step was a development effort that started with inquiries about users' ideas and feedback in 2022 and 2023. Based on the insights gained, the library staff reorganised the space to spread the activities evenly across the space, and considered means to improve/increase events organised in these spaces.

The output network includes families—both parents and children—and the staff of Oodi, Playground Loru and other partners who provide services for families. Playground Loru played in important role in organising activities and events for families in the section during daytime, while the library staff curated the collections and premises, responded to users' everyday inquiries, and organised activities and events in evenings and weekends. According to the interviews and user survey materials, the users have been content with the Children's section. Several thousand visitors visit Oodi every day, and Children's area is popular. The families gained three key benefits from Children's section. First, it provided an opportunity to create meaningful social relations. The section was a popular meeting space where families interacted with one another, strengthening the existing friendships, and meeting new people. Some networks between users were regular, whereas others included individual encounters between families visiting the space and events. Second, the informants repeatedly raised the value of a large, open and safe public space at the city centre: families could spend an entire day at library without paying for anything. This was enabled by careful design of the space, including sanitary spaces, pram parks, and rules allowing own lunches and ordinary noises from children's play. Third, the

events, books and other materials at the Children's area supported the visiting families in topical issues, such as nursing, and supported language development and early literacy skills of children.

Conclusion: The Children's section is an insightful case of a social innovation, where both the input and output networks involve intensive interactions between many types of actors. It exemplifies how a library can act as a platform for various types of activities and functions. This is shown in the input network where library hosts activities of different partners, such as Playground Loru, to broaden the possibilities for value creation within library. The platform role is also shown in the output network, as the library space facilitates the creation of different types of connections between citizens via both organised events and free use of library spaces.

The case also shows how various means of interacting with and engaging users in the concept development can be used to improve library services. In addition to formal co-creation methods, it should be noted that everyday interactions with users were crucial sources of insights. This observation highlights the need to engage frontline library staff in the development activities. Oodi has a flat organisational structure that stresses the autonomy and proactivity of individuals and teams, making it possible to react quickly to emerging problems and opportunities.

Disclaimer

The LibrarIN project is funded by the European Union under grant agreement ID 101061516. The information and views set out in this publication are those of the author(s) only and do not necessarily reflect those of the European Union or the European Research Executive Agency (REA). Neither the European Union nor the granting authority can be held responsible for them.

11.2 Introduction

This report is part of the Task 3.2 of the LibrarIN project. The objective of this task is to document and conceptualize how public libraries contribute to social innovations across Europe. In this context, we investigate a concept of Children's area at Oodi Helsinki Central Library, studied by VTT in Finland.

The present study follows up on a literature review (Desmarchelier et al., 2023, and Desmarchelier et al. 2024) that has identified a number of key trends in libraries' activities. In particular, libraries have traditionally been specialized in books curation: they mobilize technical capabilities to assemble, circulate, develop and maintain a collection of material artifacts; all these with a low interactivity with users, who typically serve themselves on bookshelves. But in recent years, libraries' activities have shifted towards community building: they mobilize capabilities of listening, observation and empathy to respond to a wide array of demands emanating from both users and non-users located in the neighbourhood.

Reflecting on the concept of social innovation, we depart from the moral dimension that is usually associated with it, especially because of its subjectivity. Instead, we propose being true to the etymology of the term social, by defining social innovations as innovations that modify interaction patterns among individuals and/ or groups of individuals. Interactions can happen in the making of the innovation, we talk about "input network" – or as an output of the innovation – here we talk about "output network".

The literature on knowledge management establishes that informal exchanges of know-how and information is the very source of knowledge creation (Nonaka, 1994; Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2019).

From this point of view, public libraries as book curators were a supportive agent of the knowledge creation process, while the community builder is an active player of this process.

This literature review thus proposes to focus on the identification of input and/ or output networks generated by innovations involving public libraries or undertaken by them.

The study of Lukustartti is based on the following empirical data:

Type of data	Informants
In-depth interviews	• 3 managers at Oodi M1, M2, M3 • 3 employees at Oodi E1, E2, E3 • 1 external partner C1 (an employee at Playground Loru)
Documents	1. Library website 2. Results and summaries of user surveys conducted in 2022 and 2023
Observation	1. An observation round of the entire library and its different areas with M2 2. An observation round at the Children's section with E1 and E2 3. An observation of a story hour and baby massage event at the Children's area

11.3 The case in a nutshell

The Children's section at Helsinki Central Library Oodi represents a novel type of concept, consisting of careful spatial design and various types of activities that encourages families to spend time in a new way in the premises of a public library. The basic idea is to make a library an enticing place for families to visit and socialise, while also supporting the transition of libraries from a book depository towards a common living room. The section for families was already introduced to Oodi's original concept initiated in the beginning of 2010s and launched at the opening of the library in 2018, and carefully revised based on user feedback in 2022-2023, with minor adjustment conducted along the way based on everyday observations and interactions between users and personnel. At the time of the study, it was a popular space for families to visit, encouraging them to interact both in organised activities and via spending time in the common areas with other families.

11.4 Presentation of the social innovation project and its context

The children's section and concept at Oodi Helsinki Central Library is a combination of spatial solutions, functionalities and events that aim to entice families from different backgrounds to spend time at Oodi in order to foster social inclusion and interaction within and between families.

The concept was originally initiated when the goals and concept and facilities for Helsinki Central Library were planned at the beginning of 2010's. The idea of designing a space for families was a part of the general concept of Oodi, which aimed to develop the library as an interactional space for citizens. For example, Oodi characterises itself in its webpages as follows:

"Helsinki Central Library Oodi is a living meeting place at Kansalaistori square, right at the heart of Helsinki. It is one of 38 branches of Helsinki City Library and part of the Helmet library network. Oodi complements the cultural and media hub formed by Helsinki Music Centre, Finlandia Hall,

Sanoma House and the Museum of Contemporary Art Kiasma. Oodi is a non-commercial, urban public space that is open to all, right opposite the Parliament Building.” (Oodi webpages, 30.9.2024).

The Children’s section aims to transform the idea of a library as a quiet reading space to offer a free, non-commercial space for families to visit, meet other people and spend an entire day. Apart from offering a welcoming space, a key issue in the spatial design was to inspire interactions between families and facilitate enticing and educative but relatively calm activities for children. The section aims to be an alternative to an individual living room where families may feel themselves isolated and lonely. According to the informants’ observations, the section is a popular meeting place, but it also encourages new connections between children and their parents. This way, the section promotes equality and social coherence.

Key characteristics of the Children’s section are:

- **An architecturally appealing space with many functionalities for families:** These include a story room with pumpkin-shaped walls; a separate event space with mattresses, pillows and an interactive, smart fairytale wall with various functionalities that attract children; two large, carpeted areas for families with babies and infants to socialise; bookshelves and other materials, and spaces with tablet tables for drawing and gaming.
- **Events for children at different age:** The library staff organises workshops for schools and kindergartens, in addition to which different partners organise program for babies and small children, such as baby massage, story hours, different plays, musical events, etc. Playground Loru, which operates within Oodi facilities, is a key partner in organising everyday events in Children’s section.

- **Facilities to assist families in library visits:** Oodi has been carefully planned to make the visits of families smoother. Among other things, these solutions include a pram park, the opportunity to eat lunches and snacks in most spaces within the library, microwaves and toilet facilities for families with babies, and a child-friendly restaurant.

As an innovation, Children's section introduces new interactional functionalities to public libraries, while also strengthening the original ethos of libraries as open and inclusive spaces. It exemplifies how public libraries may encourage social interactions and integration by offering a free space, open for everyone, and by encouraging interactions between citizens.

11.5 Characterization of the input network

The development of Children's section has included several different phases. The original design of the concept was created along the planning, construction and opening of Oodi in 2018. In the creation of the original concepts for the library, co-creative methods were broadly used to engage 3000 different stakeholders, including citizens, in designing the library, for example, by describing their dream libraries (see details: Miettinen, 2018; Included in Hyysalo, 2022). A separate work group, consisting of library staff across Helsinki, coordinated the development of concepts for children and families, interacting with the architect that was responsible for the spatial design. The architectural design was central element in the development of Oodi at that time.

After establishing and implementing the initial concept for the childrens' section, it was improved along the way as the library staff gained experiences on user needs and behaviours in the space. The informants noted that the number of users visiting Oodi is massive, including approximately 5000-8000 visitors every day. Therefore, the library staff gained broad insights into different user needs in

their daily interactions with users and observations of their behaviours along the first years. While small adjustments to the space were possible based on these observations, the library staff realised a need to organise a more systematic development effort to solve some pressing issues with the concept. First, although the intention was to encourage interaction, the staff noted that 1) the space was not used optimally, as majority of activities were concentrated to a large, carpeted area while other spaces were left empty; and 2) child visitors caused some disturbances, such as running across reading sections, sliding down wooden constructions, and climbing in areas that were not safe. The staff noted a need to reorganise the space and create more functionalities to the space to direct families' behaviour for everyone's benefit.

Therefore, a third step in the development of the children's section was a development effort that started with inquiries about users' ideas and feedback in 2022 and 2023. Users were approached in social media channels (that reached around 130 responses) and via approx. 130 additional informal face-to-face interviews with the families visiting the section. Based on the insights gained, the library staff reorganised the space to spread the activities evenly across the space, and considered means to improve/increase events organised in these spaces. In Fall 2024, the intention is to interview users again to verify whether these improvements have been useful.

In all these phases, **the library staff has been the key actor** in the development of the Children's section and its concept. Oodi has a team of 13 employees who focus on children's services and literacy, exchanging their ideas and experiences when developing the concept further. **Users—parents, children, and teachers—**have informed these activities via providing information on their needs and dreams, as well as feedback on their experiences. **Architects and other designers** have designed and redesigned the space to serve the needs of the users.

Furthermore, the informant characterises **Oodi as a platform** which enables content-creation by partners and users. The **role of partners is pivotal** for the library, as the library staff does not have resources for organising all the events in the library. The study indicates that library staff focuses on designing, revising and advising its stakeholders about the distinct concept of, and code of conduct within the library, supports users in their everyday inquiries, maintains library collections and spaces; and conducts specified events and activities. **Leikkipuisto Loru** has been a key actor in planning and organising events in Children's section and across the library and its surrounding public spaces during daytime. Loru, like other playgrounds at Helsinki City, is a part of the Childhood and Education section of the city organisation. It implement the missions of the city while also collaborating with the library staff when planning and organising the events.

The interviews and observations indicate that **the division of work is fruitful** as Loru will reach plenty of users in library premises and Oodi will leverage the use of its spaces by collaborating with external partners. However, the informants also noted that due to time pressures, in-depth co-creative discussions between employees of Oodi and Loru are not easily organised, and there could be **even more possibilities to create value** for the users by fully utilising the opportunities to combine the expertise and resources of the two organisations. Furthermore, the library spaces and architectural solutions set some limitations for activities that can be designed for families. For example, there is lack of space that would allow keeping or drying up children's handicrafts, and the durability of Oodi's surface materials need to be carefully considered when bringing in new equipment and materials. Due to these opportunities and barriers, the activities of Loru at Oodi will maintain their distinct character when compared to the activities of other playgrounds at Helsinki City.

11.6 Characterization of the output network

The so-called output network includes **families (both parents and children)** and **the staff of Oodi, Loru and other partners** who provide services for families. According to the interviews and user survey materials, the users have been content with the Children's section. As mentioned, several thousand visitors visit Oodi every day, and also Children's area is popular. The number of families spending time in the area varied between 20-40 in those instances when we observed the activities for this study. The informants estimated that events may include anything from five to 150 families. The event we observed included around 15 families with small babies in the event space, while a similar number of families with bigger babies joined improvised story event in the carpeted meeting area.

Key benefits for users include:

- **Meaningful social relations.** The informants observed daily how the families, both parents and children, interacted with one another, strengthening the existing friendships, and meeting new people. This was obvious also in the observation rounds: discussions between parents spending time in the space and/or joining events seemed to be common. The informants noted that some self-organised groups, such as the families with babies born in the same month, met regularly at Oodi. Some employees also reported that some families living in the same neighbourhood had met at Oodi and established such friendly relationships that they could help one another when needed. However, based on the current data, it is difficult to evaluate how common the development of such long-lasting relationships is.
- **Free space to spend time.** The informants repeatedly raised the value of a large, open and safe public space at the city centre. This was also mentioned as one of the best characteristics of the section in user surveys. The informants noted that the need for such spaces has been highlighted in user surveys and considered that the library provides an alternative to shopping centres without the need to spend money on anything.

- **Gaining new information and competencies.** The events held at the Children's area supported the visiting families in nursing, interactions with babies, and other topical issues. The books and other materials available in the space aimed to encourage the families to read books and thus strengthen language development and literacy skills of children.

11.7 Discussion and unexpected findings

The Children's section is an insightful case of a social innovation, where both the input and output networks involve intensive interactions between many types of actors. As mentioned above, a key indicator of success of the area is that it **invites families to visit and stay at the library**. Due to the multidimensionality of the concept of Children's section, as well as the blurred boundaries between this concept and the rest of the offering at Oodi, it is difficult to characterise it as an innovation. Any single aspect or dimension of the concept has already been tried out elsewhere, but the uniqueness of the concept derives from **careful combination and elaboration of the elements**—including spatial design, events, and materials—that **generate value** for the users and make the Children's section popular. Considering **library as a platform** for various types of activities and functions underlies the concept. It is also presumable that the various means of interacting with and engaging users in the concept development were pivotal for success.

It should also be noted that even though organised development projects and co-creation methods have been important for the innovation, **everyday interactions** with users have also been crucial sources of insights. This observation highlights the need to **engage frontline library staff** in the development activities. Oodi has a flat organisational structure that stresses the autonomy and proactivity of individuals and teams, making it possible to react quickly to emerging problems and opportunities.

The case also illustrates key issues facilitating **cross-sectoral collaboration**. These issues are similar to the issues identified in the other case conducted by VTT, i.e., Lukustartti at Vantaa City Library. First, it is pivotal to have **common objectives** that are shared among the partners, in this case, Playground Loru and Oodi. Second, the **compatibility of practices and resources** shape collaboration. In this case, the partners had found a feasible way of collaborating, as Oodi curated the space and collections, and organised activities mostly during evenings and weekends—and workshops for schools in other facilities during daytime—whereas Loru organised activities within Children’s section during daytime. Like the other VTT case, this also demonstrates **the challenge in fully utilising the possibilities for collaboration** when both parties focus on their daily activities and have limited time to detach from those activities for co-creation. However, having separate activities organised by the different partners highlights the idea of a library as **a platform** that enables various actors to organise actions contributing to the library’s key aims and values.

12 Case Study I: Storytelling cafés at the Vienna Libraries

Author: Doris Schartinger (AIT)



12.1 Introduction: the case in a nutshell

In storytelling cafes people narrate their own life stories in a group without being evaluated, without discussions or obligation to reason what they have told. Storytelling cafes are a theory-based and thought through method with quality criteria under scrutiny; they want to contribute to mental and social health of a society. They are organised around everyday locations of people so that they are familiar and known to be trusted. (Dressel et al. 2023) Storytelling cafes have been developed since the 1980ies, hence are not a recent concept. They have been implemented in various organisational settings (fugitive shelters, women centers, retired homes, museums, neighbourhood centers etc), *as a service storytelling cafes are thus not new to the world*. However, they were new to the Vienna libraries and have particular *organisational innovation aspects* there.

In the service delivery process, two organisers are involved – one representative of the library and one external expert. The particular expert and moderator of the storytelling cafes was a deliberate choice. He is the motor and figure head of overlapping initiatives and networks in the area (*input networks*). Affiliated to several organisations, networks and part of projects, people are attracted who would not come to the library on their own but come through him. The initiating person in the Vienna libraries was personally motivated and knew storytelling cafes from a VET training and another location. As employee of the Vienna libraries being responsible for the library section on non-fiction, natural and technical science books, she was also professionally motivated to increase service offerings for an adult audience to the library.

The number of attendees has been steadily growing over the time of implementation of the storytelling cafes. The group is principally open, the format is designed for 15 people. Growth is hence a success as well as a risk - there is a natural limit because the format does not tolerate too extensive a group size when stories are emotional and intimate. As the format enjoys growing popularity, 20 people or even more attend. Out of these, there crystallised a core of people who attend regularly

(*output network*).

12.2 Methods applied

12.2.1 Data used

The case study is based on website data, official documents and archival data, a number of interviews and meetings with main actors in the library and in the innovation ecosystem, and participant observations of events.

12.2.2 Data on events

On their website, the Vienna libraries inform about their planned events. They provide information on the title of the event, a rough category, the date and place (e.g. library branch), and a short description that contains the cooperation partner. For this study we downloaded the events for the time period 24.5.2024 to 28.6.2024. Although this may account as an average month, at the same time there is rarely an average month because events are often tied to seasonal or other themes. For the period mentioned, there were several events related to pride month. A month earlier there was a reading festival (Lesofantenfest).

12.2.3 Face-to-face oral data

For the present study we collected data face-to face and in oral form from different sources. In interviews and meetings data on more strategic issues were collected, while onsite visits of events (participant observation) provided us with information on who visits the library events and their reasons and types of benefits behind.

12.2.4 Archival data

Furthermore, there are official documents on libraries, including library strategies on different levels (e.g., single library but also public library network), library statutes, newspaper articles, publications by libraries themselves, and blogs on social media.

12.2.5 Data analysis

We analysed data with respect to the above research questions. Our results relate then first, to the objectives of public libraries and their services. Of particular interest were the type and processes of innovation, the innovation networks and their impacts. We used an inductive coding scheme (Glaser and Strauss 1967; Strauss and Corbin 1998; Gioia et al. 2013).

Typical input network of the Library at Home project

Table 12.1: Face-to-face oral data

Date	Format	Length
15/02/23	Participant observation	60 min
11/01/24	Q&A; discussion	45 min
12/01/24	Q&A; discussion/ conversation	90 min
20/02/24	Participant observation	90 min
27/02/24	Participant observation	90 min
04/03/24	Presentation, meeting, exchange	60 min

22/04/24	Participant observation	120 min
13/05/24	Interview with user	10 min
23/05/24	Participant observation	60 min
02/07/24	Interview	100 min
04/07/24	Interview	90 min
10/07/24	Interview	60 min
22/08/2024	Telephone interview	15 min
28/08/2024	Interview	70 min
20/09/2024	Interview	70 min

12.3 The context

Biographical storytelling. Since the early 1980s, biographical storytelling exists under various names in Germany, Austria, Switzerland and South Tyrol. Events labelled as "storytelling café", "life story circle" or "biography group" are characterised by differences, but have in common that people narrate their own life stories in a group without being evaluated, without discussions or obligation to reason what they have told. Storytelling cafes are not simply tales or gossip, but a theory-based and thought through method with quality criteria under scrutiny that wants to contribute to mental and social health of a society. They are organised around everyday locations of people so that they are familiar and known to be trusted. (Dressel et al. 2023)

Scientific debate around libraries and their roles. A notable external development around libraries is the debate around services beyond the core of book lending from the 1990ies, but with a rise of articles from around 2005, as providers of “third places” (Montgomery and Miller 2011; White and Martel 2022), meeting places (Audunson 2005; Audunson et al. 2019), or library 2.0 extending their realms to interactivity and user participation (Aabø et al. 2010; Holmberg et al. 2009).

Libraries and community engagement. Furthermore, the organisation and implementation of library programmes beyond the core services, as in e.g. storytelling cafes, language cafes, entails that the physical library space is opened up and used as meeting places, for cross-cultural communication, for debates, readings, community space where users meet for joint activities like knitting. (Born et al. 2018) Conversational circles and related programmes intend to contribute to social cohesion. As such, they increasingly fulfill a role as “soft location factor” in a city. (Born et al. 2018) For the organisation of conversational circles, it becomes necessary for libraries to coalesce with other actors in the local ecosystem and form alliances in order to be able to offer novel additional services. The main reasons for this are insourcing of competences on part of the libraries and better target group coverage.

Vienna as a living space. Vienna has 1.982.097 inhabitants as of 01/01/23, with 51,1 per cent female and 48,9 per cent male population. Average age is 41 years, the age cohort over 65 accounts for 324.256 people in the city. Life expectancy at birth is 82,6 years for women and 77,7 years for men.⁹In Vienna, local means diverse. With 45,9 per cent of the population having a migration background, 36,7 per cent a birth place outside Austria, the Vienna figures are about double compared to the rest of Austria. (Österreichischer Integrationsfonds (ÖIF) – Fonds zur Integration von Flüchtlingen und Migrant/innen 2020) The Vienna Libraries try to reflect different needs of the Viennese population in their services and in their staff. This is shown on the one hand in staff acquisitions out of language courses at the Vienna Libraries (e.g. German at five, see Meeting notes 01/24). It is also reflected in various service

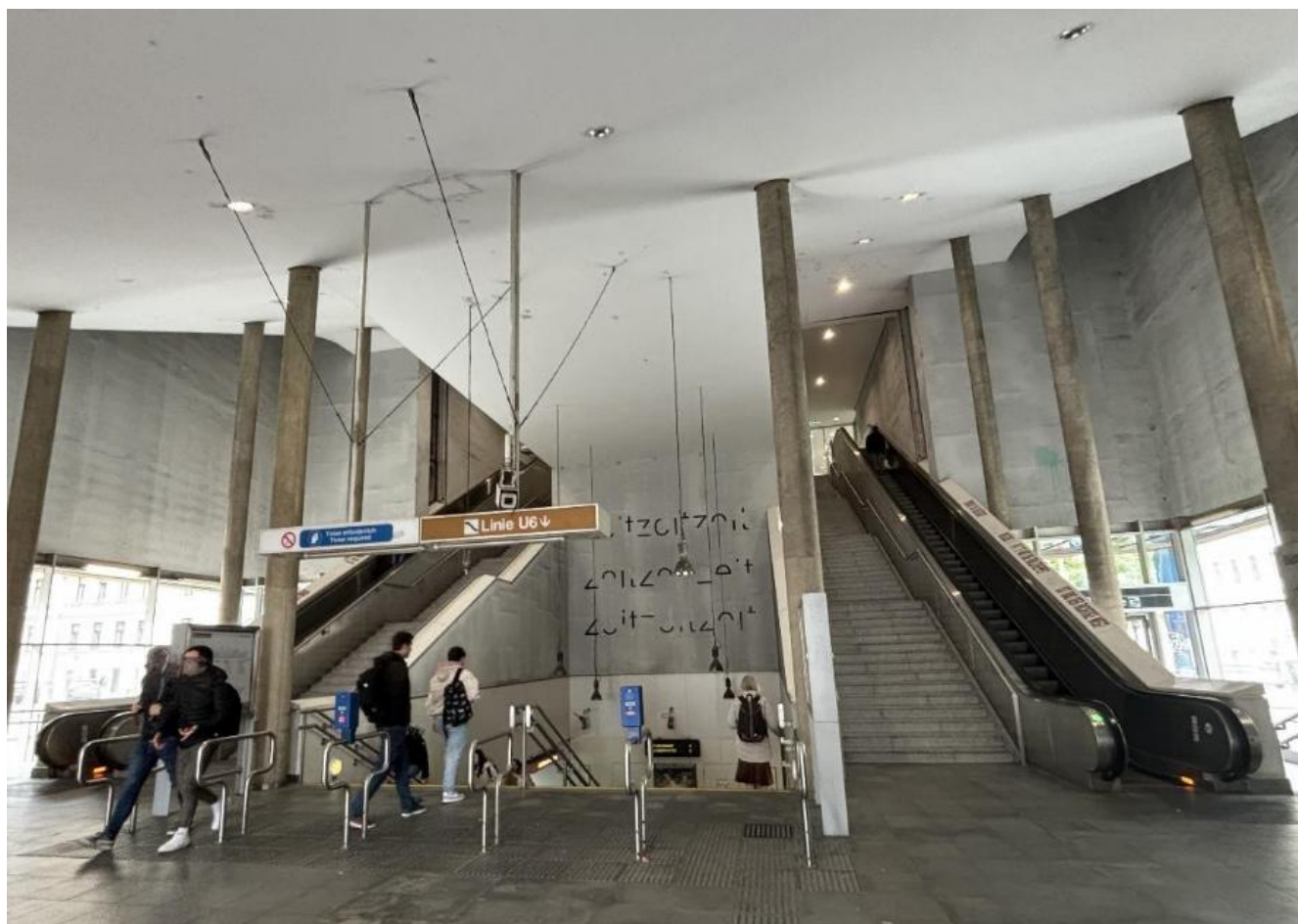
⁹ <https://www.wien.gv.at/statistik/pdf/wieninzahlen-2023.pdf>, last accessed 07/08/24.

offerings at different times for different groups of people.

Vienna Libraries are a metropolitan area library network. The Vienna libraries network consists of a main library and 37 branch libraries across the different Viennese districts. The branch libraries are of different size and specialisation, and organised as geographic sub-networks (North-East, South-West etc). Organisationally, the Vienna libraries are part of the Vienna municipal administration, and also funded by the Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport. Each branch library has a special focus, including but not limited to fantasy, horror, science fiction (incl. trash and low-fantasy), trash and B-movies, music from Austria (branch library in 2nd district); women/feminism/gender (branch library in 3rd district); and, soccer, youth, human rights, TV series, world knowledge and conscience (branch library in 4th district).

Physical space and architecture. The main location of the Vienna Libraries is a landmark building. It was designed by Ernst Mayr, officially opened in 2003 and won the “Landmark Libraries Award” in Leuven/Belgium in 2004 (Mayr 2005). The goal was to use the library as a placemaker in locating it between very diverse districts (7th, 15th) in a congested main street. However, it also signals accessibility in every aspect by being situated above an underground station and providing immediate access to Vienna public transport and Austrian rail via the nearby rail station. A large shopping centre and Vienna’s main shopping street are in walking distance. The building can be accessed via elevator directly from the underground station or large stairways as well as moving stairways from street level into the building. Still, compared to other large city libraries, physical space in the main building is scarce. For its number of inhabitants, threefold its size would be appropriate for a city like Vienna.





12.4 The five key dimensions

Biographical storytelling can serve different purposes – the memories can be placed in a historical context and be documented as historical source (oral history), or they serve to increase social stability in societies characterised by diversity by fostering listening, understanding, and empathy beyond one's own "bubble". (Dressel et al. 2023; Dressel and Kuhn 2024)

12.4.1 Type of innovation/type of innovation process

The situation before. The Vienna libraries introduced biographical storytelling cafes as part of their

programme in the year 2021. Before this, various offers of storytelling cafes have existed in Austria (Germany, Switzerland), mostly not in libraries. One example is the “*documentation of biographical records*” in the Vienna Museum. (Dressel and Kuhn 2024) However, it seems that there were sporadic initiatives by libraries to offer biographical storytelling, possibly not on a regular basis. One example is the village of Nitscha (Styria) with a seemingly one-off event on the topic of “Associations in our village – once and today” back in May 2019.¹⁰ Furthermore, the term “storytelling café” is also contested and used in dissimilar ways: e.g. a village in Upper Austria offered a story telling café in a library but interpret it differently: Here, one elderly local character tells his stories in front of a (younger) audience.¹¹ Another example is storytelling cafes in a library in Wiener Neustadt (Lower Austria), with a particular focus on dementia and Alzheimer disease.¹²

Overall, it is difficult to establish where and to what extent storytelling cafes were part of library programmes. But (in Austria) it does not seem to have been widespread and on a regular basis before the Vienna libraries integrated this regularly in their event programme.

The development of the storytelling café concept

At the Institute of Economics and Social History at the University of Vienna, from the 1980s onwards around Michael Mitterauer, there was a comprehensive effort to pursue history not only for the archives or in the archives and not only for science itself, but to look at history in and with society. In essence, it was participatory historical research, because history was dealt with together with people.

¹⁰ <https://www.nachhaltigkeit.steiermark.at/cms/beitrag/12735728/22241068/>, last accessed 08/08/2024.

¹¹ <https://www.kronstorf.bvoe.at/veranstaltung/erzaehlcafe-2> Leopold Sacher - ein Kronstorfer Urgestein erzählt, last accessed 08/08/2024

¹² <https://www.alzheimer-selbsthilfe.at/wp-content/uploads/2022/08/Newsletter-AA-August-2022.pdf>,
<https://www.fhwn.ac.at/hochschule/infrastruktur/bibliothek/dembib#projektbeschreibung>, last accessed 27/09/2024.

At that time, storytelling cafés were still called "discussion circles" and served as an instrument in this movement. The original goal was to find new sources for historical research - what cannot be found in archives, e.g., what everyday life looked like, housing conditions, working conditions, rural areas, proletarian, urban areas, etc. In the course of the storytelling cafes that took place, it became increasingly clear that this is not only a new source research, but that these processes have their own dynamics, because people tell stories and others listen. Even though there are also international developments such as "All History" or "Public History", Vienna is perceived as pioneering in the combination of biographical storytelling and social biography work on the border of health and social work with the specific format of the storytelling cafés. This then also spread to Berlin, and later also in Switzerland. "We now call it storytelling café in English-speaking contexts as well, but it does not really seem to have spread there."

Furthermore, storytelling cafes have so far been accommodated in various institutions, but rarely in libraries. The context of the library can therefore be regarded as quite new for storytelling cafes. So far, they have taken place in Vienna/Austria mainly in neighbourhood centres, museums, retirement homes, music schools, refugee hostels, etc.

Source: Interview 28/08/24

The service. Storytelling cafes as a new service have been implemented in the main library of the Vienna libraries since 2021. The format has been developed elsewhere over the last decades and in this case is based on the elements of first) biographical storytelling (in German) in a group on a voluntary basis. The aim is not finding the truth, making a decision, or revealing dates and facts, but rather telling one's own experiences shaped by one's own context. (Dressel and Kuhn 2024) Second) listening by the whole group, without interrupting, evaluating or commenting. The aim is actively seeing and understanding the individual narrators, relating (temporary companionship), establishing

trust and acceptance of “difference”. (Dressel and Kuhn 2024) Third) Jointly, narration and listening in the setting of a storytelling café establish a low-threshold meeting and exchange place, different from therapy or self help groups, but still contributing to mental health and social stability. (Dressel et al. 2023)

The storytelling café concept

Storytelling cafés are a dialogic format. There is no discussion, and people do not have to agree on a single truth. The stories told are not commented or evaluated, they remain as they are. And of course, storytelling is always voluntary. People talk about their own personal experiences on a very specific topic. It is important that these are topics in which no person feels excluded, anthropological topics that are quasi inclusive or integrating. The topic of “festivals in the annual cycle” includes different religions, regardless of what the festivals are called, but it includes also people who are not religious but celebrate birthdays. Interesting topics are those that all people have experienced, but in different ways. These different experiences are then left standing, i.e. accepted, not commented on, but heard.

At the core of the concept of storytelling cafes is thus biography work, but a society-related biography work and a historical or social science understanding of biography, not a depth psychological one. The concept thus crosses scientific disciplines. The central questions are, what have I experienced in my gender role or as an original member of a certain milieu, city, country, education, geography, etc. In this way, one represents one's own manifold characteristics of reality, together with what has actually been experienced, the story. “Reality is never singular, but always plural, which is often forgotten - and dynamic. And that is what comes out when people tell their stories.” Storytelling cafes are not a therapy format, nor are they a counselling format, because it is not about solving problems or concerns. But that does not mean that storytelling cafés cannot sometimes have therapeutic (side) effects or, without being explicated, imply next steps. The organisation and moderation of storytelling cafes requires skills and experience, for example when

the narratives slip into areas that exclude other participants (e.g. too elitist). Then intervention is needed by the moderator, who is also allowed to tell his or her own stories, in order to open up the topics to everyone again. Low-threshold is an essential pillar in the storytelling café technique. The moderation technique of storytelling cafes should also be easily accessible, so that the acquisition of competences in this regard is not reserved for a small circle.

The Swiss network of storytelling cafes, which has developed since 2015 with the financing of Migros Culture Percentage, was also decisive for the spread of storytelling cafes in the DACH region. Migros is a large cooperative in Switzerland with the requirement to invest one percent of its turnover in social and cultural projects. Johanna Kohn from the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Northwestern Switzerland and the Migros Culture Percentage have thus built up the Swiss Storytelling Café network together with the Migros Culture Percentage.

Source: Interview 28/08/24; <https://engagement.migros.ch/de/kulturprozent>, last accessed 12/09/2024.

The service delivery process. Visitors of the storytelling café sit in a circle, coffee is available (see Figure 1). The storytelling café takes place on a Monday once a month, between 16.00 and 18.00. One moderator and one library employee are present. Originally intended for 15 people at most, it now hosts mostly around 20 or more. The atmosphere is calm and focussed. Story topics are pre announced sometime before the event takes place per email, examples are “travelling” (Interview, 10/07/24), “freedom, when do we feel free, when do we depend” (PP 04/24), but also “food and drink in childhood”, “Where did we all sit around the table, seating orders”, etc (Österreicher 2024).

Physically, the storytelling café takes place as part of the general space of the Vienna Libraries. The room is reasonably large with large windows and a view over the south part of Vienna. Although delimited by shelves and windows, accoustically it is not separated from the remaining library space,

which means that visitors in part of the study places will also hear the stories told and also may be disturbed. Information signs are placed on the same day that warn visitors that there may be more noise in the afternoon (Figure 12.1). (Interviews 10/07/24 and 28/08/24)

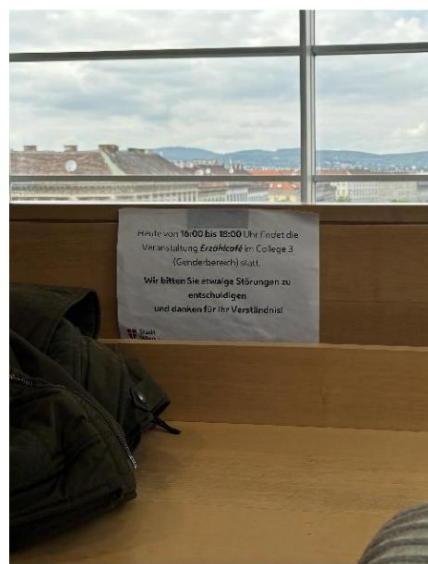


Figure 12.1: Storytelling café and sign to warn other visitors of noise

Source: author

The organisational set-up. The main library of the Vienna Libraries is the host of the event, library staff is always present at the event. They cooperate with an expert and long-term promotor as well as author of articles and books on storytelling cafes – the external expert and moderator. The external expert moderates every storytelling café at the Vienna libraries, he is historian and part of several organisations and networks on storytelling cafes (see below, chapter on networks).

Types of innovation. Storytelling cafes have been developed since the 1980ies, hence are not a recent concept. They have been implemented in various organisational settings (fugitive shelters, women centers, retired homes, museums, neighbourhood centers etc), *as a service storytelling cafes are thus*

*not new to the world. However, they are new to the particular organisation (i.e. the Vienna libraries). They might be rather new to the context of library organisations in general, but this has to be further established. Furthermore, Implementing storytelling cafes in the Vienna libraries has particular *organisational innovation aspects*. The library cooperates with an external expert who is himself part of several organisations and storytelling networks, thereby reaching out to new users via the storytelling café networks and making its further library services visible. In turn, the storytelling café networks tap library resources like the centrality and accessibility of the library location, and its reputation as a trusted and safe public place.*

12.4.2 Drivers and Barriers

Innovation process

Broad drivers seem to be a general openness of the Vienna libraries for experimentation and trying new things and services as well as a relative permeability between different functions, hierarchical levels, different library locations etc. Once an idea is born, apart from the library manager, the buy-in of the department on public relations seems important. In this concrete case, it needed a meeting between the three parties, library manager, public relations department and library initiator in order to agree on terms of payment for the external expert and moderator (GD). In principle, payment of external experts is a routine activity, as in children's events often actors/actresses, authors etc to read and perform for children are paid as well. (Interview 10/07/24)

"I can remember when the colleague came to me at the time and said she would like to do it, I already knew the format although I can't quite remember where from. But of course it is an elegant format, because it is very much about biographical storytelling, where there is a narrative part and that fits well in a library, of course. I think it is a format that suits us nicely." (Interview 04/07/2024)

“That had to be coordinated first, especially internally in the library. I think it was at the end of the year before, and then it started in the spring. Probably three to four months from the first idea to the first event of a storytelling café. As external expert there was little effort necessary from my side, I had to write a multi-liner at some point, to explain the format – that was all.” (Interview 28/08/2024)

In another interview, the time between first idea and implementation was estimated to be 4-6 months. (Interview 20/09/2024)

Driver: The **General strategic orientation** of the Vienna libraries is directed towards outreach to new user groups and sees libraries as places of encounter and exchange (see vision of libraries in section on institutional factors).

Driver: Personal motivation and social relations of library initiator

The library initiator has completed a VET training course (starting around 2020, planned for 6 months) where the final thesis had storytelling cafes as a topic. She knew storytelling cafes from the Wien Museum through private relations and interest. Furthermore, caring for adults and their stories is of high importance for her, because “there is no future without the presence”. (Interview 10/07/24)

Driver: Professional motivation

Being responsible for the library section on non-fiction, natural and technical science books, there is an incentive of motivating adults to come to the library. However, there is a pattern in using libraries over the life time, and as teenagers around age 14, people “disappear” as users lending books of libraries. They return as students, but in that stage they often do not lend books but use the library as a place to study while borrowing online from their universities. As adults, library users tend to lend novels and crime fiction over non-fiction.

A sizable stock of non-fiction adds to the public value of libraries. Non-fiction is characterised by

lending patterns different from novels or children's books, but the maintenance of a sizable and up-to-date stock of non-fiction books adds to the public value of libraries. Non-fiction ages fast, hence stocks have to be continuously renewed which needs resources. At the same time, it is risky to reduce stocks, because once it is below a certain point interest spirals down. Non-fiction in libraries serves particular and very important purposes at certain points in life time (e.g. new orientation, new education, initial interest for a topic). Hence, they are a means of democratising knowledge when libraries offer non-fiction books in a low-threshold way to everyone entering a library.

Overall, in implementing the format the aim was to attract an adult audience. Hence, at the beginning the aim was to offer topics around science, technology, economy, informatics, also gardening. "I even prepared a cart of relevant books, but it did not work. They came, but they still preferred novels and crimes. But that did not matter for me – they came to the library, that was important." (Interview 10/07/24)

Driver: iterative co-creation

Among adults, the particular goal was to address elderly and retired people. But this is a group that is not easy to get hold of. First, they are not attracted by labels of "elderly", "retired", "pensioners" etc. "We discussed this and we thought, okay, maybe try via the time slot. Hence we offer the storytelling café at 4 pm, once a month, always on a Monday, and it seems to attract older people. It is a convenient time for them and they easily attend." (Interview 10/07/24)

Second, they did not like the initial topics around science, technology or informatics. "Now, we have more general topics, like feelings of guilt, travels, violence. Sometimes they suggest topics themselves which we take up." Third, attendance grows. More and more people come. "We limited it to 15 people, but 20 or more come and we let it happen. We see there is a need to share and talk to each other. The need is huge and it is missing here, we have few interactive events for adults." (Interview 10/07/24)

Driver: expert and networks

The expert and moderator of the storytelling cafes was a deliberate choice. He is the motor and figure head of overlapping initiatives and networks in the area. In turn, he urged that at least one representative of the library be present at each storytelling café. “I knew him a bit from the Wien Museum, and I had followed what he does also in cooperation with Germany and Switzerland. He gives lots of presentations and works as a coach. From him I knew how storytelling cafes operate and work, and I read a lot on how it is done in Germany.” (Interview 10/07/24)

The external expert is affiliated to several organisations, networks and part of projects (see below) and therefore has a rather copious email distribution list that helped promoting storytelling cafes at the beginning. Then they became their own success. “I approached him and thought he would be the right person, because he is so well networked. People come through him who would not come to the library on their own. And that is very important, because he is also doing a project with the eighth district, *achtsamer*.¹³ In the beginning, it was an idea of mine to somehow connect the project. We could also connect storytelling cafes in other districts, e.g. the 15th with library branches.” (Interview 10/07/24)

Driver: Atmosphere of the Vienna library’s main building and meeting space. The meeting space is surrounded by large windows and a view over the south of Vienna, directly situated above the underground train that can be seen passing through periodically. Seats are comfortable, there is lots of light and a high ceiling. “We look at the hills around Vienna, Kahlenberg and Leopoldsberg, that is the most beautiful location I have ever had for a storytelling café.” (Interview 28/08/24)

Barrier: Outreach approach, mindset

Events for adults are normally one-off events, not series. It is more difficult to organise repeated

¹³ <https://achtsamer.at/>, last accessed 09/08/2024

events and organise in a way that events for adults sustain. „It seemed difficult to implement because such formats do not exist for adults here. Adults are difficult to reach out to, elderly as well – here the competition for their interest is higher, a lot of other organisations and activities compete for their attention as well.” (Interview 10/07/24)

For children, interactive formats are well established at the library, but not for adults. Children are easy to reach out to. In Vienna, there is a regulation that schools and kindergartens visit a library once a year at least. At the Vienna libraries, the event programme is largely directed towards children. Children’s networks are well established. When library employees plan a series of events for children and ask for permission, everyone expects this to work well. Every employee at the Vienna libraries completes a training on animation for children, it is accepted and deemed utterly important. “And for me, the question always was: How do we bring in the other groups, the adults?” (Interview 10/07/24)

Barrier perceived risk

“I was worried the format would not work. It is new to organise something interactive for adults as a series of events. Also because we do not really promote it, we just inform via our website. And through the storytelling café networks.” (Interview 10/07/24)

Driver: the selected topics. The topics resonate with people’s memories and reflexion. Topics so far include:

- Feasts and celebrations
- Stories of telling and listening
- Stories of (in)justice
- Stories of freedom and dependence
- Stories of happiness and good life
- Carnival Stories

- Stories about starting and ending
- Stories of giving and gifts
- Stories of love and love
- Stories about the end of life

Driver: social need for communication, isolation

„We see that many people who come are lonely. There are so many isolated people. We now see people coming who are not retired, they still work and attend nonetheless. Some come from outside Vienna, even quite far, from Graz. They search for contacts, for exchange, personal conversations, being listened to. We see there is a need, people feel alone.“ (Interview 10/07/24)

Driver and Barrier: Corona

The year of implementation, 2021, was the second year of the Covid-19 pandemic. This played a role in several ways, but cannot be seen as uniformly positive or negative. “Exactly, we did not know how it would work, because with Corona and all it had to take place with masks at first, and I was surprised that people came, they talked even with with the masks and then they kept coming. Maybe they felt the need to talk even more during this time, I don't know. I was totally surprised and these regulations, one and a half metres distance! I actually wanted to organise this event up here in an air camp. That is also very nice, but it would have been too close, and I was not allowed to do that. But that was a stroke of luck, because it turned out that people were really enthusiastic about the place where it takes place now. And the chairs were so far apart so that nobody would get sick. That is how it started, with masks and no coffee, no water.” (Interview 10/07/24)

12.4.3 Type of Innovation Network

Input networks

The external expert moderating the storytelling cafes at the Vienna libraries is part of overlapping organisations, networks and projects. He is "historian, trainer and moderator, research associate at the Institute for Nursing Science and the Documentation of Life History Records (both at the University of Vienna) and at "Sorgenetz. Association for the Promotion of Social Care Culture. Life, old age, dementia and dying". He has been coordinator, collaborator, facilitator and consultant of numerous research, educational, cultural and networking projects focussing on narrative, care and/or biography." (<https://www.sorgenetz.at/team/>, last accessed 09/08/2024)

Originally studying at the Free University Berlin, he came to study history at the Vienna University in the 1980ies, social and economic history in particular. He soon grew into the developments around Michael Mitterauer (see Box), and names others like Elisabeth Wappelshammer, Heinz Blaumeiser or Hubert Christian Ehalt as personally influential. With colleagues, he built up storytelling cafes in a retired home in the 1990ies. "Since then storytelling cafes have accompanied me my whole life. I found Vienna was pioneering in this area, later this spread to Berlin and Switzerland." (Interview 28/08/24)

There have been earlier efforts to bring storytelling cafes to libraries dating from around 15 years ago. The Austrian Library Association (one of the supra-regional associations in Austria) invited him for several vocational and educational trainings around storytelling cafes with librarians. However, this stopped after some time, because the concrete persons working together to set this up changed jobs and the contacts got lost. (Interview 28/08/24)

In the following we describe further organisations, networks and projects that the moderator is part of and that form the input networks in this case study.

Organisations.

The aim of the **Institute of Nursing Science at the Vienna University** is to address and work on forward-looking issues in the field of nursing care in research and teaching using current and developing research methods in order to contribute to scientifically sound, innovative and practicable solutions in dealing with the need for care in society. Visionary thinking and action, as well as the translation of scientific knowledge into nursing practice, should primarily help those people who need care and who are directly affected by care in their professional or family lives, as well as contribute to decisions in organisations and politics.

Source: <https://pflegewissenschaft.univie.ac.at/>, last accessed 09/08/2024

Organisation. The association "Documentation of historical records" is located at the Vienna University, Institute for Economic and Social History, in cooperation with the Vienna Museum.

The foundation of the "Documentation of Life History Records" goes back to an initiative by the social historian Michael Mitterauer in the early 1980s. Since then, the **Institute for Economic and Social History at the University of Vienna** has been collecting written life records, documenting them and making them available as historical and cultural sources. The collection includes autobiographical texts and other personal testimonies (diaries, family histories, chronicles, photo albums, etc.) from more than 4,200 people from all regions and social classes in the country. [...]

Around 85 percent of the manuscript authors were born in what is now Austria, the rest mostly in other areas that were formerly part of the Danube Monarchy and in Germany. The earliest documents date from the second half of the 18th century. The period between 1890 and 1960 is most densely covered by personal life stories. Records of people from less educated backgrounds and from rural regions have

always been a focus of the collection. [...]

Remembrance work is actively promoted on the one hand through calls for writers, and on the other hand through public storytelling cafés or discussion groups, the latter mainly in cooperation with the Vienna Museum.

Association "Documentation of historical records"

Institute of Economic and Social History

University of Vienna

Source:

https://bibliothek.univie.ac.at/sammlungen/dokumentation_lebensgeschichtlicher_aufzeichnungen.html, last accessed 09/08/2024.

Organisation. The association Sorgenetz provides information, encourages and supports a social culture of care with a special focus on old age, care, dementia and dying.

Sorgenetz supports the search for and provision of regional help and networks those affected, civically committed helpers, professionals and other social actors from the fields of practice, science, education, art and culture. Sorgenetz organises activities such as public events, lectures, publications, support and counselling for local care initiatives, associations and communities; participation of those affected and citizens; intervention research.

Source: <https://www.sorgenetz.at/ueber-sorgenetz/>, last accessed 09/08/2024

Networks. There exists a network of storytelling cafés in Switzerland.¹⁴ They document events of

¹⁴ <https://netzwerk-erzaehlnetze.ch>, last accessed 09/08/2024

storytelling cafes, not only in Switzerland, but also in Austria and Germany. They inform about trainings, provide material on organisation, operation, moderators, literature. They foster storytelling cafes as a method and produce factsheets. GD co-authored a book (Dressel et al. 2023) together with Johann Kohn, university professor in Switzerland, and Jessica Schnelle, psychologist and department lead of social affairs within the CSR branch of the Swiss Migros group. All three are figureheads of the network.

Project. Achtsamer (=more attentive, caring, in German including the figure “8”, standing for the eighth district which is Josefstadt) is funded by the Austrian Ministry for Health and a public agency.

Project: Achtsamer

Vision. We dream of a CARING 8th, of a Josefstadt that is even more of a caring community - a caring Josefstadt,

- ✓ that supports a self-determined life and participation in social and cultural life for everyone,
- ✓ that makes existing caring services and initiatives visible and publicised,
- ✓ that networks professional and neighbourhood help with each other so that new supportive activities can be created,
- ✓ which facilitates respectful, appreciative encounters between people from different generations and with different "backgrounds",
- ✓ in which people, as different as they are, show solidarity for one another,
- ✓ in which people feel that they are in good hands throughout their lives.

Process. In a two-year participatory process with the people who live or work in the district, a "caring

community" is to be created in the neighbourhood, which supports people with dementia, old and young in challenging life situations, with professional and private help. In a first step, needs, concerns, helpfulness, offers of support, experiences of care, ideas... will be collected. At the kick-off event on 22 January, around 90 participants shared their care stories and worked on the concerns in the district.

Results. The experiences from the 8th district are also shared beyond the district boundaries. This makes the 8th district a pioneer and model of care culture. The successful cooperation in the district should also contribute to the special character of Josefstadt beyond the end of the project.

Source: <https://achtsamer.at/vision/>, last accessed 09/08/2024.

Output networks

Temporary companionship. In the context of the Vienna libraries, the storytelling cafes foster encounters and interaction between adults one Monday afternoon per month. Interaction occurs on the basis of of first) meeting in a group and tell about experiences in one's own perspective on a voluntary basis. (Dressel and Kuhn 2024) Second) The whole group listens, without interruption or judgement. The aim is acceptance of the other individual as a whole, despite all potential difference. (Dressel and Kuhn 2024) Third) Jointly, narration and listening in the setting of a storytelling café establish a low-threshold meeting and exchange place, different from therapy or selfhelp groups, but still contributing to mental health and social stability. (Dressel et al. 2023) People often tend to stay longer after the end of the event and continue conversations and exchange.

Number. The group is principally open, the format is designed for 15 people. The number of attendees is steadily growing. At the same time there is a natural limit because the format does not tolerate large groups when stories are emotional and intimate.

Open group with core network. However, as the format enjoys growing popularity, 20 people or even more attend. Out of these, there crystallised a core of people who attend regularly. The numbers are different asking different interviewees, they range from 3-4, maybe even 8-10 (Interviews 10/07/24 and 28/08/24). This is different to the Vienna museum where the whole group is stable and forms a closed group. There are rules of how to organise storytelling cafes, but also some freedom. In the Vienna museum, they have one topic per term, whereas at the Vienna libraries they have a different topic every month. (Interview 10/07/24)

There are contacts between participants even beyond the storytelling cafes. Some encounters have turned into friendship or at least closer acquaintances. However, although this is taken note of by the organisers of the storytelling café, it is not seen as particular impact or achievement. And it is not considered their mandate either. "Sometimes it can be good not to have so much to do with each other in everyday life, because the distance also creates closeness." It is often easier to tell things when people do not know the audience well. (Interview 28/08/24)

Who are they. Attendees are mostly female, often of Austrian/German origin. If they come from other countries, they have a high German-speaking competence. Although also younger people attend more now, and people who are still in the labour market, the majority is elderly and retired. In general, the format in this context attracts educated people. "Only a few do not have a school-leaving certificate. Most of them have studied and are middle or upper class. My goal would be to reach others as well. I know that Turkish women are often alone at home and have problems because they are marginalised and isolated. But they do not feel attracted to libraries. Migrants do come, but they are not very diverse, only rarely someone without an educational qualification, or from the countryside. If these come, they are the absolute exception." (Interview 10/07/24)

12.4.4 Institutional Factors

There are at least two groups of institutional factors that shape public library activities, namely international library networks and national institutional settings.

12.4.4.1 International library networks

First, there are the international level debates and exchange on what services libraries are setting up internationally. These are certainly important sources of inspiration and also points of reference when arguing a novel service set-up in a library. For language cafes, there is a debate in the IFLA network that can be dated back to at least 2011 with Gundersen presenting language cafés in Norwegian public libraries at the IFLA General Conference and Assembly in Puerto Rico. But most likely, there are more discussions on interaction/conversation-based programming for adults in these networks.

12.4.4.2 National institutional setting of public libraries

Secondly, there is an institutional framework around public libraries that defines their core missions. For Austria, this institutional framework is set on different levels that define the objectives and legitimacy of public libraries. The organisations set on these levels (federal, supra-regional, carrier and library levels) often have elaborated on their core missions in the form of a “vision”. These visions are aligned, hence often overlap but may also emphasise different aspects.¹⁵

12.4.4.2.1 The federal level

The Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport is responsible for funding public libraries in Austria. Libraries are here part of the division arts and culture that operates on the

¹⁵ For a longer version of this section, see also T3.3 report.

understanding that arts and culture are “open and unprejudiced, encourage people to understand and experience the world, and to respect others.” Furthermore, the “task of Austrian policy in the field of the arts and culture is to create suitable conditions for a lively cultural scene.”¹⁶ This points to two major objectives from the federal level, the first is public libraries for educating people as humans and citizens, the second, active and passive cultural activation – libraries and their services on the one hand help preparing people for being artists themselves, but in even higher numbers to be on the receiving end of art, as readers or open minded audience in cultural events.

12.4.4.2.2 The supra-regional level

Federal funding for public libraries is organised via three supra-regional associations: the Austrian Library Association (BVÖ), the Library Service of the Austrian Trade Union Federation (ÖGB) and the Austrian Library Association (Österreichisches Bibliothekswerk, Biblio).

BVÖ has the most comprehensive funding approach and libraries may place funding requests directly there. The BVÖ funds media purchase following a quota derived from the size of the village and formulates criteria like education of library staff, opening hours and the number of media in the library. In its vision (BVÖ 2022), the BVÖ sees public libraries as

- educational centres
- cultural centres
- social-integrative centres, and
- information centres

¹⁶ <https://www.bmkoew.gv.at/en/Ministry/Federal-Ministry.html>, last accessed 15/03/24.

12.4.4.2.3 *The carrier level*

Public libraries are operated by cities and municipalities, employee organisations and by the church. In many cases there is mixed funding between these carriers.

The Vienna public library is administered by the municipality of Vienna, namely the Municipal Department 13 (MA13) for Education and Youth. The MA 13 defines the Vienna public library as “places to learn, meet and communicate. They offer all interested parties easy access to information, education and culture, as well as plenty of entertainment.”¹⁷ The organisational set-up and organisational task description suggest that libraries at this time and level are no longer limited to adult education, but as facilitators of equal opportunities, diversity and lifelong learning, plus importantly, entertainment and a low threshold meaning ease of access.¹⁸¹⁰

Outreach to new user groups seems a recurring topic, in line between different levels of public library governance, but also very much grounded in the municipal policy level for the Vienna Libraries. (Meeting notes, 01/24)

12.4.4.2.4 *The library level*

Guiding principles of the Vienna libraries

The Vienna Libraries are open to everyone.

As a central cultural and educational institution of the City of Vienna, they provide access to

¹⁷ <https://www.wien.gv.at/bildung/buechereien/index.html>, last accessed 15/03/24.

¹⁸ <https://www.wien.gv.at/bildung/buechereien/index.html>, last accessed 15/03/24;
<https://www.wien.gv.at/spezial/leistungsberichte/leistungsberichte-der-magistratsdienststellen/magistratsabteilung-13-bildung-und-jugend/>, last accessed 19/03/24.

knowledge, information and entertainment regardless of age, gender, origin, educational background and economic resources. In doing so, they emphasise simple, socially acceptable and barrier-free access. A particular concern is to introduce children and young people to the libraries.

The Vienna Libraries are competent.

They are a service-orientated and networked institution. They offer a wide range of physical and digital media as well as events. They focus on teaching information skills and promoting reading.

The Vienna Libraries are diverse.

They cater to the diversity of the population in their appearance and services. This is reflected, among other things, in the design of the stock, events and public relations work, in the selection of staff and in numerous collaborations.

The Vienna Libraries are meeting places.

They offer freely accessible spaces for working and learning, enable communication, but also a place to retreat and thus fulfil an important communal function.

The Vienna Libraries are located where they are needed.

The branches are easily accessible, evenly distributed throughout the city and well equipped. The number, location and opening hours of the libraries as well as virtual services guarantee a needs orientated supply; mobile forms supplement the locations.

The Vienna Libraries offer guidance.

With their services, they promote personal development and participation in social life. They offer information, further education and entertainment and convey an enjoyment of literature and other arts.

Source: <https://buechereien.wien.gv.at/Büchereien-Wien/Über-uns/Leitsätze>, last accessed 19/03/24.

12.4.5 Impacts and Performance

Measurement. In general, the Vienna libraries themselves do not measure the impacts of their programs to avoid data protection issues. Only the number of visits are registered, to monitor if programmes are popular or do not meet the needs of the target group. (Meeting notes, 01/24) The format has been designed for around 15 people. The library counts attendees. There is registration form the website. Some write an email to announce they are coming. Some attend without having registered. „And we let that happen. Many would not come when they see it is fully booked.“ (Interviews 10/07/24 and 28/08/24)

- *Number:* The number of attendees is growing, beyond 15 up to 20-30.
- *Geography:* Although most people come from Vienna, attendance goes geographically beyond Vienna. People attend from Graz, Krems etc. Also expatriates from other countries attend.
- *Age:* Originally designed for elderly, storytelling cafes now also attract younger generations, people who have jobs and coordinate the storytelling café with their jobs. It attracts across generations. (Interviews 10/07/24 and 28/08/24)
- *Core group with constant flow of attendance :* "I was somehow worried that only seven, eight people or so would come, hence very few and always the same. Because I know that from the Vienna Museum, they are always the same ones. It is a closed group. And for me it was very important that there is a core group, but that it also changes. And that is really what happens. And I like that very much, because they are always different people. " (Interview 10/07/24)
- *Gender:* There are more females attending than males. In the storytelling café on April 22nd, there were only female attendees except for the male moderator.

- *Educational level:* In general, from a milieu of higher education.

Measurement of impacts, qualitative or quantitative. "It always depends on the level at which the cooperation takes place. If it is at media stock level, you can of course measure it very well, because that is usually associated with some kind of focus from which usage can be measured. If it is in an event area, you can of course measure how many people come. These are also the things we do measure. Beyond that, it is actually difficult. I have to rely a bit on the perception of my colleagues on the ground that they then say: "Okay, this is a meaningful cooperation and that's good", or: "That did not actually work out well. It is cumbersome, we do not reach anyone, or it has undesirable side effects, and then we end it.(Interview 04/07/2024)

"And then we have many, many exchange formats internally. We have really big ones where the entire organisation comes together or can come together, things will be discussed there and that breaks down to the smaller levels. We have regional subdivisions. They, in turn, have formats where they exchange ideas and experiences about all kinds of topics and where collaborations and event formats are also discussed. Of course, it is discussed on the team level as well. In all this, the level of documentation is always different. The subdivision forums, of course, they always have minutes and so do the big meetings. I do not know if they always take minutes of the team meetings.(Interview 04/07/2024)

Perceived success and expected future support

"I even get support from the management now if I want to really do something with adults again. I think I'll get the support. It is only because until now, no one has come up with this idea, no such thing has existed."

12.4.6 Unexpected results

Library spatial setting and impacts. As the location of the storytelling cafes within the building of the library is open and closed at the same time, one impact is that people who are able to listen from outside, may join and sometimes attend more frequently. "It is the framing of the library that makes this possible, focussed but also permeable, closed and transparent." (Interview 28/08/24)

The type of social relations: Interactive formats like the storytelling cafes foster encounters. Libraries as place of encounter also on the strategic agenda of the Vienna libraries and the public library carrier BVÖ. Storytelling cafes are understood as formats of temporary companionship. However, in establishing a core group of people who attend the storytelling cafes regularly, we can argue that networks develop in the form of more stable relations between attendees.

Age distribution: "It surprised me most that also younger people keep coming!" (Interview 10/07/24)

Gender: Higher proportions of females, apparent in nearly all aspects of libraries, also in the storytelling cafes. More female librarians, more female book readers, more female hosts in language cafes, more female participants.

Educational level: "There are visitors from other countries, but it is still not very diverse. They are also from the educational milieu. Most of them have studied. Overall, it is more of a middle class that comes, rarely someone without an educational qualification, or from the countryside. They tell great things, but are absolute exceptions." This is a surprise considering that storytelling cafes are purposively low threshold and want to attract people from diverse milieus. Especially those who are on the edge of society would be welcome to share and open up the reservoir of shared narratives. (Dressel et al. 2023)

Low-threshold. The library context can then also be a contradiction to the desired low-threshold

nature of the format because it acts as a cultural barrier. When it comes to "reading stories", for example, in the sense of "where do I sit when I read", "where did I read as a child", this easily slips into books that people read or have read, which can also become too elitist in the context of libraries ("when I read Goethe at 14..."). Here, the moderator often has to intervene with his own stories to reopen the topic and get everyone inside. (Interview 28/08/24)

12.5 Discussion

The following impacts take up the results from and current thinking in the literature, complementing them with insights from the empirical material of this case study.

Outside one's own bubble in a public sphere: Furthermore, Johnston and Audunson 2019 argue that in dissolving social divisions along cultural and ethnic lines, between different groups in local society, [interactive formats] may serve building up a public sphere. Public spheres are generally accessible, eliminate privileges, and discover general norms and rational legitimations (Habermas 1964, p119). Fraser (1992) adds that in multi-cultural societies smaller public spheres have to coexist along the dominant public sphere. (Johnston and Audunson 2019) associate interactive narrative formats with the concept of porousness (Habermas 1987) arguing:

Social capital: Undeniably people with diverse backgrounds and personal histories meet and connect, in coming together and conversing for two hours on the library premises. This is likely to form social capital in the form of weak ties (Granovetter 1973; Johnston 2016). Furthermore, "it is also practical democratic experience when people from different backgrounds listen to each other. It could help to understand themselves and others better. The positive relationship with other people can help in times of multiple crises such as those we are experiencing today." (Dressel in Österreicher 2024)

"Storytelling cafes can help people gain trust in institutions. The basic cement of democracy is trust,

interpersonal trust among people, but also trust in the institutions of a democracy. It is an added value that trust in educational institutions is created, like libraries, museums, universities, or other institutions. For me, storytelling cafés are really events where democracy is strengthened as a democratic practice. When we talk to each other, and when we listen to each other, it is a democratic practice. And if this takes place in an institution, all the better. Because then people also experience institutions as something where they can be heard and seen. And that also applies to the library. This trust in an institution." This effect is reinforced because people often meet at storytelling cafés who would not meet in everyday life as a matter of course. This corresponds to the concept of the third place, libraries as a third place, as a meeting place. Namely, people meet who bring different stories and experiences, look at the world differently, tick differently. And of course, storytelling cafes are a wonderful place to do that." (Interview 28/08/24)

Co-creation activities

Co-create advertising. "The moderator does a lot of workshops and he spread the storytelling cafés at the beginning, informed that they take place here. And now people are starting to advertise themselves. It works. Whether it will also work with other formats, we do not know." (Interview 10/07/24)

Co-create adaptations. "Oh yes, storytelling cafes have already been adapted in the past three years. At first we wanted to link the topics to the existing stock of non-fiction books, but then we formulated the topics differently and also changed the place within the library a bit. We have already adjusted it over the three years. For example, it ends at 6 p.m., from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m., and people get stuck a little longer and continue talking, maybe an hour. So far, however, there has been no wish that we offer something extra. But I am open if someone comes and says they want to organise something in addition to the storytelling cafe, welcome." (Interview 10/07/24)

“And what also surprised me: Many wanted me to send them an e-mail beforehand as a reminder. And once I had a lot of stress and forgot about it. They were angry (laughs) that I didn't send an e-mail beforehand. Also, more and more are coming who want to be entered on the list so that they are informed. I send the reminder and the topic one week before the appointment. I know that's a bit old-fashioned, but that's how they want it. And that's what I'm doing now. That is a surprise for me.” (Interview 10/07/24)

„A barrier at the beginning was that the storytelling cafes take place in a quiet zone and therefore disturb the visitors. There were strong protests at the beginning, and then they tried to have it take place after opening hours. But this is not a time that attracts senior citizens. 4 p.m. is much better here. After a while, you get used to it, and signs are put up to warn you.”(Interview 10/07/24)

“But people also suggest topics. Or I sometimes ask them what they want to talk about. But otherwise, we try to leave it as it was at the beginning, because that's a format that has fixed rules.”

“And then we tweaked the format slightly in a ways that suits libraries particularly well. At first, people talk about concrete experiences, but do not get into a discussion about what freedom is or what justice is, for example. We tell stories about it, experiences of justice and injustice. And towards the end, we reflect together and abstract. In this way, people are not only understood as experts in their own story, but they also reflect or evaluate. This is a form of inductive reasoning, a group interpretation.” (Interview 28/08/24)

12.6 Conclusions

Input networks – and ecosystems

The story telling cafes are one example of how the Vienna libraries form an input network with local organisations to complement their own competences and resources and offer services that are outside the core of traditional library services. From event information of the Vienna libraries from May 24th

to June 28th and analysis (see presentation Schartinger/ Wasserbacher at ISIRC 2024) it is evident that about half of the events refer to the core role of libraries and are events around literacy and culture (S). 50 events pertain to language learning, inclusion and social counselling and represent a more recent understanding of library services (I). 30 events are related to creativity and entertainment (C). New services like the storytelling cafes need new partners. Although library personnel today have different job profiles and competences from previously, ecosystem partners help with complementing competences and resources. With a whole spectrum of diverse partner organisations, local associations, NGOs, libraries are able to address different social groups in local society and connect with them, they form an ecosystem.

However, libraries are the orchestrator of this local ecosystem. They have the final say of whom they ally with. Thereby they apply criteria, e.g., that the partner organisations fit with the target groups of the library and importantly, that their reputation fits with the standards and aspirations of the Vienna libraries. Furthermore, the resulting service must be open for everyone and it must be free of charge.

Output networks - users as resource

The storytelling cafes generate numerous encounters among users, some of these encounters stabilise and form (output) networks. Most notably, in these kinds of new socially oriented services that libraries offer, then perspective on users is different. Library users become a resource for other users. As users tell their stories, it is these stories that are the source and focus of attention of the other users. Without resourceful users, this format would not work. The library contributes the space and facilities necessary, a library employee welcomes the guest to the library, but users share their resources and benefit one another.

This is a different view and concept of users from the traditional workers' libraries of the Red Vienna. Here, users are viewed as deprived, they have to be empowered. The library provides the media and

resources to empower users.

At the moment, both views of users co-exist in the Vienna libraries, users as resources and users who have to be empowered. Different library services build on the different views of users.

Networks and public value

The above lines of thought particularly align with two forms of public value that are generated.

A value-neutral and democratic exchange space. Libraries are places where there is strict neutrality, a completely neutral moderation from the most diverse points of view without any restrictions. All opinions are welcome, as long as they are not forbidden by law. Everything else is allowed and even desired.

Library as a community centre and town centre. Here, the library is seen as a kind of town centre and meeting place for the local community.

13 Case Study J: Living books at the C3 library

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13.1 Executive summary

This case is about a participatory event format titled 'Living Library' at the C3 library in Vienna. The C3 living library was first introduced in 2016 and has been held annually since then (except in 2020 due to the Covid-19 crisis). The event offers young people the possibility to choose a topic from a

catalogue of 'living books', i.e. experts on the topic, and to have a half-an-hour conversation with them. The objective of the C3 living library is to provide young people the opportunity to articulate their demands, questions, and ideas and to reflect on them in dialogue at eye level, thereby gaining information and skills, as well as further developing citizenship.

In terms of methods, the case study builds on different forms of data, coming from nine different empirical observations: from meetings, on-site exchange, participant observations, and interviews. Furthermore, archival material such as annual reports, newspaper archives, and blog posts was included.

What is novel in this service in the C3 library is how they use the living book concept and first, combine the concept with their particular topics, and second, in a very complex service design procedure explicitly connect the topics to the targeted user groups of the C3 library, which are very young researchers (15+) and here particularly pupils from different societal groups in Vienna and in Austria in general.

The C3 living Library event does not take place in isolation. It is rooted in the C3 library's strong commitment to its target group of young people (aged 15 and over), is strongly linked to its thematic focus on global, sustainable development and builds on existing networks and the actors of the C3 community. In addition, the C3 living library takes full advantage of the location of the C3 library. The service itself encompasses much more than the mere one-day event. It includes co-creation activities at the event, but also shares co-design elements with other services throughout the preparation phase. At the young research workshops, the C3 library team engages in conversations with the participants to find out what current topics and future developments interest them. This information serves as input for shaping the topics and identifying living books for the next event. The service design involves many iterations and coordination with different stakeholders throughout the process.

thereby tailoring the service to the needs of the participants.

Institutionally, the C₃ library is embedded in a multifaceted organisational network, indirectly including federal agencies, universities, NPOs and the church. The C₃ library is operated by ÖFSE, Baobab and Frauen*solidarität and hosts a cooperation with two further organisations dedicated to development policy, namely the Paolo Freire Center for transdisciplinary development research and dialogical education and the Mattersburger Kreis für Entwicklungspolitik. This embedding fosters particular strategic topics and addresses a particular group youth from diverse backgrounds.

The mode of network formation in the case of C₃ living library events is a rather planned respectively orchestrated endeavour by a team of actors of the core network of the three carrier organisations supported by the scientific advisory board. Together they choose a topic of interest and consider, approach, and invite the relevant experts and participants for the C₃ living library event. The C₃ library takes on the role of a caretaker, integrating various stakeholders from surrounding networks, such as the C₃ community networks or the broader public.

The C₃ community networks comprise stakeholders and partners of the C₃ library that stem from previous collaborations, from the pool of C₃ service users, or the larger network of organisations associated to the three C₃ carrier organisations. The key segment of the broader public for the C₃ living library events are schools.

Impacts of the C₃ living library service are not measured in detail. The number of participants is counted and for some activities and events feedback forms are issued to the participants. The C₃ library staff engages in feedback discussions with participants and aims at more structured feedback discussions with the scientific advisory board.

While the Living Library concept itself is not particularly innovative, the C₃ Library has effectively

adapted it to align with its broader themes and the specific needs of its target audience, fostering network and community building. This focused approach creates public value that is highly visible to the target group, though its engagement with the broader public remains limited. Nevertheless, the C3 living library event significantly contributes to a vibrant and thriving library community.

13.2 Introduction: the case in a nutshell

This case is about a participatory event format titled 'Living Library' at the C3 library in Vienna. The C3 living library was first introduced in 2016 and has been held annually since then (except in 2020 due to the Covid-19 crisis). The event offers young people the possibility to choose a topic from a catalogue of 'living books', i.e. experts on the topic, and to have a half-an-hour conversation with them. The objective of the C3 living library is to provide young people the opportunity to articulate their demands, questions, and ideas and to reflect on them in dialogue at eye level, thereby gaining information and skills, as well as further developing citizenship.

The basic concept of living books or living library is not brand new or particularly innovative (see e.g., Schachner 2008). The concept of the living library emerged around the 2000s and has since spread throughout the library sector. Besides, everyone who read the science fiction novel *Fahrenheit 451* remembers the living books who try to pass on knowledge by memorising books that are outlawed and burned in a dystopian future. What is new in the C3 library is how they use the living book concept and first, combine the concept with their particular topics, and second, connect the topics to the targeted user groups of the C3 library, which are very young researchers (15+) and here particularly pupils from different societal groups in Vienna and in Austria in general. With its hybrid character, its thematic focus, and its strong embedding in a diverse network of funders, partners, stakeholders, and users, the C3 library forms a particular context for the established event format and makes the exploration of emerging and surrounding networks valuable. The case study provides insights on

what drives the organisation and formation of networks in an already networked environment, as well as on barriers that hinder the translation of networking efforts into public value.

The C3 living library is organised collaboratively by a small team of library employees. The implementation of the living library event is supported by media and technical specialists. All three carrier organisations provide input to the service through staff contributions, but also through activating their networks and personnel to identify new expertise and connect to new users. Around 2 to 3 school classes and around 15 living books participate in the annual event. To this day, interest in the C3 living library remains high.

13.3 Methods and data

The case study is based on the information of the C3 library website, on official documents (annual report), two interviews and an additional meeting with two C3 library employees, and the analysis of a radio contribution of a particular C3 living library event.

Table 13.1: Data overview

Date	Method of data collection	Type of data
29/09/2023	Stakeholder Meeting	Presentation of the library
08/01/2024	Visit on site and meeting	Notes and pictures
24/04/2024	Participation in book presentation	Notes and pictures
25/04/2024	Participation in book presentation	Notes and pictures
28/05/2024	Observation of C3 Award Ceremony	Notes and pictures

04/06/2024	Analysis of C3 radio contribution	Transcript of relevant passages
24/06/2024	Participation in Future SIM workshop	Notes and pictures
02/08/2024	Interview with library manager	Transcript
09/08/2024	Interview with library employee	Transcript

13.4 The context

The C3 living library event does not take place in isolation. It is rooted in the C3 library's strong commitment to its target group of young people (aged 15 and over), is strongly linked to its thematic focus on global, sustainable development and builds on existing networks and the actors of the C3 community. In addition, the C3 living library takes full advantage of the location of the C3 library.

The C3 Library in Vienna is a hybrid library, combining the characteristics of different library types in one place. It is not a conventional public library, though it is open to the general public and provides accessible resources for academic and non-academic audiences. Nor is it solely a research library, although its extensive collection of over 70,000 materials caters to the needs of scholars and researchers in global development, human rights, and sustainability. Likewise, while it shares some elements of a community library, such as its role as a forum for public engagement through workshops and events, it cannot be reduced to be a community library, rather a space where citizenship, policy, and academic discourse intersect. Overall, the C3 Library, also known as the Centre for International Development (Centrum für Internationale Entwicklung), stands out for its thematic focus on international development, global education, women and gender issues.

Its hybrid nature is also reflected in a unique organisational set-up: The C3 library is framed by and

embedded in a multifaceted organisational network that indirectly also extends to federal agencies, universities, non-profit organisations, and the church. The C₃ library is operated by three carrier organisations ÖFSE, Baobab and Frauen*solidarität and hosts a cooperation with two further organisations dedicated to development policy, namely the Paolo Freire Center for transdisciplinary development research and dialogical education and the Mattersburger Kreis für Entwicklungspolitik.

Understanding and overcoming global problems in Austria. Central to the goals and role of the C₃ library is that it is anchored in the global and in the local. There are its thematic foci and the associated knowledge repository in combination with its principles aiming at engaging with less affluent and less resourceful groups in the Austrian population, as well as new entrants into Austrian society and marginalised groups. They accomplish this on the basis of its vast networks, by being a place, providing information, offering education & learning, hosting encounters & events.

13.5 The five key dimensions

Insights from the case study are presented in five key dimensions: the type of innovation, institutional factors, drivers and barriers, types of innovation networks, impacts and performance.

13.5.1 Type of innovation/type of innovation process

Living libraries. Apart from the notion of living books from science-fiction literature (Fahrenheit 451) where people learned books by heart in order to save them, living libraries as a concept developed around the 2000s in Denmark and is later taken up by the Council of Europe's programme (Schachner 2008, p.8f). The basic idea is to create a safe space in a living library where people narrate and are the source of stories and through constructively discussing together with other people challenge stereotypes, stigma, and prejudice.

The living library in C3. The C3 follows a special format of living libraries. Living books and books are selected around topics that are of particular interest to the C3 library and its community. These interests come out of the organisational setting with three carrier organisations and two associated collaborations, and broadly include sustainability and climate change issues, international development, global education, women and gender issues. However, faithful to the living library concept, the experts around these topics are not only the authors or library experts. Instead, the library users, particularly the very young researchers (15+) from very diverse contexts and family backgrounds are the local experts on the global issues to be discussed. They bring in their perspectives on what options are feasible, what is achievable and can be integrated in their particular everyday lives.

The C3 living library in context of a broader service stream. Living libraries in the above conceptualisation connect to a broader service stream of the C3 library. What is very specific about the C3 library is that they intend to make the local and the global meet, hence local population is key to overcome global challenges. This is palpable in all their services where they address young researchers. Hence, they support pre-academic theses that address global challenges in the realm of the C3 areas but encourage the 15+ researchers to translate the topics in their particular contexts. Hereby, the C3 explicitly aims to include and empower teenage researchers that do not represent the majority of society in Austria, but come from minority backgrounds, migrant families of different origins or marginalised groups in Vienna but also in Austria more general.

Types of innovation. The living library concept as such is not new, it has been around since the 2000s. Also within the context of the C3 library, the living library has been implemented since roughly ten years now. The C3 library staff is well aware that this concept respectively the concept of co-creation has been around before: “*And originally, the term co-creation in our work context came about, to be honest, as a term via EU projects that we carry out. We didn't use the term before that.*” (Interview 1,

p.15, 2024). It is also a part of the library's identity to be a living library (Interview 1, p.18,2024). However, the living library format has been developed and adapted continuously to fit the purposes of the C3 library and is hence a form of long-term incremental innovation. What is innovative about the service is its broader thematic focus on the main themes of the C3 library, namely global sustainable development, education, women and gender issues and its targeted design addressing school students. This also renders it particularly open for co-creation activities, as there is a lot of room for manoeuvre in detailing the topics and making them more concrete for a participatory format and take up content from young people and their contexts. In principle, the C3 living library is a service innovation.

The service and service delivery. The service C3 living library is primarily a half-a-day event that takes place at the C3 library premises, using much of the library's available space (except the office rooms). The C3 living library is organised collaboratively by a team of library employees from all three carrier organisations. The event implementation is supported by media and technical specialists. 15 living books represent 15 different topics from which the participants can choose from. Then the participants engage in a half-an-hour discussion with the living books. They can ask questions and put forward their own opinion and insights on a particular topic. The objective of the C3 living library is to provide young people the opportunity to articulate their demands, questions, and ideas and to reflect on them in dialogue at eye level, thereby gaining information and skills, as well as further developing citizenship. The discussion is continued in three rounds, two guiding questions directly addressing the school students support the participants in their group discussions and help consolidating the insights. At the end of the discussion rounds there is a plenary session, where participants can summarise their insights from the discussions and share their experiences. The event language is German. The C3 living library aims at connecting to the everyday life of participants, the target group is youth (15+).

In the *service delivery process, organisational set-up of the service innovation*, co-creation and service design are difficult to separate. The service itself encompasses much more than the mere half-a-day event. It includes co-design elements that start at the event itself and includes events related to other services, such as young research workshops, where the C3 library team engages in conversations with the participants in order to find out what topics and themes they are interested in. Based on these insights the C3 library team starts collecting potential topics for the next C3 living library event. The key topics for the living library are set by the team of the C3 library, but interests are taken on board (e.g., recommendations for and from experts). *"Why we address these topics has to do with what we want to do, but also with what we find, where we have observed needs of our target group school students in the previous year"* (Interview 1, p. 15, 2024). *"Okay, and then we have this overarching topic and then we fill it with actors with sub-topics. And then we ask questions, and we work together to derive a topic for the person who will participate in the concept of the living library"* (Interview 1, p. 15, 2024). The living books for the C3 living library event are identified by engaging with the scientific board and by tapping into the already established pool of stakeholders, but also through exchange with the other carrier organisations and partners, and through discussion with new experts that are interested in becoming a living book. Not only the C3 core network is activated in the preparatory phase, also the target group is defined and communication and promotion activities targeting schools all over Austria are launched. Also the radio feature on each C3 living library event can be seen as part of service delivery, as it gains its inputs from active participation of the C3 library staff responsible for the radio in the event, and also promotes the event throughout the year. These are the truly innovative aspects of the very complex service of living books in the C3 library.



Figure 13.1: Living books discussing with students (ÖFSE 2024)¹⁹

The C3 living library 2023 'A sustainable and fair future?'

"The aim of the event is to familiarise young people with the work and commitment of people who are committed to a sustainable and just future. In personal conversations, they learn how experts get involved, what motivates them and what visions they share. A particular focus is on using joint reflection and discussion to identify various options for shaping a sustainable society through joint reflection and discussion." (ÖFSE 2024)²⁰ The radio contribution on this particular living library event reveals some insights on the form of collaboration with users and user views (C3 2024)²¹. School students got together with a selection of experts, namely Mario Taschwer (Attac Austria), Jutta Matysek (Citizens' initiative 'Save the Lobau'), Andreea Zelinka (FIAN), Valentina Duelli (Claim the space), David Untersmaier (Paulo Freire Centre), Stefanie Marek (Rebels of change), i.e. activists, experts and

¹⁹ ÖFSE (2024): ÖFSE website. Section 'Living Library at C3'.

<https://www.oefse.at/veranstaltungen/rueckblick/veranstaltung/event/show/Event/living-library-im-c3-zukunft-nachhaltig-und-gerecht/> (08/08/2024)

²⁰ ÖFSE (2024): ÖFSE website. Section 'Living Library at C3'.

<https://www.oefse.at/veranstaltungen/rueckblick/veranstaltung/event/show/Event/living-library-im-c3-zukunft-nachhaltig-und-gerecht/> (08/08/2024)

²¹ C3 (2024): C3 website. Section 'C3 Radio'. <https://www.centrum3.at/bestaende-medien/c3-radio/> (08/08/2024) ⁴ C3 (2024): C3 website. Section 'C3 Radio'. <https://www.centrum3.at/bestaende-medien/c3-radio/> (08/08/2024)

stakeholders from civil society, NGOs, and citizen's initiatives. The radio contribution features an interview with a living book, who introduces the "Claim the space" initiative (autonomous feminist networking initiative in Vienna). She presents her view on the living library format: "[...]*extremely exciting, which I would have wished for as a pupil, especially regarding the safe space and moment of trust, compared to classical lectures*" (C3 2024)⁴. Within the radio show the C3 living library is described as a special format that addresses a mini public with multipliers for the future. Another living book states: "*Fascinating, as there are few to no possibilities to talk to young people and this is a good one*" (C3 2024)²². One of the teachers of the participating school classes tells the interviewer that they have been invited from the C3 library, with whom they collaborate in context of the workshops for pre-academic theses, where she first heard about the initiative, and claims that it was an inspiring event. She adds that the smaller groups and the bilateral dialogue are helpful for students and networked thinking is supported. A student states: "*Quite interesting to see that not only young people are desperate not knowing how to deal with the big problems of today, and to learn about what we can do as individuals to fight powerlessness and contribute to change*" (C3 2024)²³. When asked about the format of the living library, she answers: "*Very, very, very good, I can only speak positively about it, it was great to actively exchange and ask questions instead of having a presentation, so we could also start to discuss, it was very interesting*" (C3 2024).²⁴ At the end of the living library event there was a plenary session where participants could present the arguments and viewpoints gained in the discussions.

13.5.2 Institutional Factors

There are at least two groups of institutional factors that shape public library activities, namely

²² C3 (2024): C3 website. Section 'C3 Radio'. <https://www.centrum3.at/bestaende-medien/c3-radio/> (08/08/2024)

²³ C3 (2024): C3 website. Section 'C3 Radio'. <https://www.centrum3.at/bestaende-medien/c3-radio/> (08/08/2024)

²⁴ C3 (2024): C3 website. Section 'C3 Radio'. <https://www.centrum3.at/bestaende-medien/c3-radio/> (08/08/2024)

national institutional settings, and international library networks.

13.5.2.1 National institutional setting of public libraries

For the C3 library the carrier level plays an important role in its self-understanding as a hybrid library (not traditionally public, not traditionally scientific). Three carrier organisations work together in providing the C3 library services. Furthermore, these organisations are closely tied to a more formal network of Austrian organisations active in the field of international development. This comprises many actors on national level, such as the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), but also ministries and non-profit organisations.

13.5.2.1.1 The library level

The C3 library is embedded in a multifaceted organisational network, indirectly including federal agencies, universities, NPOs and the church. The C3 library is operated by ÖFSE, Baobab and Frauen*solidarität and hosts a cooperation with two further organisations dedicated to development policy, namely the Paolo Freire Center for transdisciplinary development research and dialogical education and the Mattersburger Kreis für Entwicklungspolitik.

13.5.2.1.2 The carrier level

The ÖFSE trust was originally established 1967 by the former Afro-Asian Institute (AAI) Vienna²⁵, and the General Assembly of the Austrian Exchange Service (OeAD)²⁶. The two founding organisations

²⁵ Since 2016 the AAI Vienna does no longer exist in its original form and setting. The educational programme was discontinued, but the infrastructure (café, student residence, event center) is still available. The AAI Vienna was founded by the Archdiocese of Vienna (Catholic Church) with the aim of providing development aid and, in particular, cultural, social and economic support for students from Africa, Asia and Latin America. https://www.erzdioezese.wien.at/unit/aai_tuerkenstrasse/haus_mit_geschichte (16/04/2024)

²⁶ The Austrian Exchange Service is a non-profit making service organisation in the field of international educational and scientific co-operation funded by the Austrian Federal Ministry of Education, Science and Research (BMBWF) and the Austrian

decided in 1983 (OeAD) and 2001 (AAI Vienna) to transfer all their rights to the ÖFSE.²⁷ In its foundation statutes the ÖFSE (2017, 3) declares the exclusive and direct purpose of the foundation as the “[...]the operation and maintenance of a research, documentation and information centre in Vienna on a non-profit basis (§ 34 para. 1 BAO, BGBl. No. 194/1961 in the current version) with the task of dealing with the problems of international development and development cooperation.” The assets that were dedicated to the foundation consist of the library, the documentation facilities and material collections. On the ÖFSE website²⁸ the conception of the C3 Library is described as follows: “The C3 Library for Development Policy is the largest specialised academic and educational library on international development, women/gender and global learning in Austria.”

On their website²⁹ the **Baobab** association defines itself as “[...]a library and a place for education and consultation.” Since 1993 this independent non-profit organisation focusses on the provision of knowledge and education on global interdependencies, questions of social justice and sustainable development. The association is supported by six organisations¹³, one of which is ÖFSE. Baobab's core mission is to provide global learning opportunities through an extensive educational library and film centre, training courses for kindergarten teachers, teachers and multipliers, development of learning materials on development policy and global issues in schools and extracurricular education. The three main focal areas of Baobab are global learning & global citizenship education, language education & multilingualism, diversity & prejudice-conscious education (Baobab 2024). Baobab understands itself as part of the C3 library for development policy and reflects on this identity as

Organization for Development Work (OEZA) and other sponsors (third finance).
https://www.dieangewandte.at/en/studies/student_exchange/austrian_exchange_service_oead; <https://oead.at/en/>
(16/04/2024)

²⁷ https://www.oefse.at/fileadmin/content/Downloads/Ueber/Stiftungssatzung_OeFSE_2017.pdf

²⁸ ÖFSE (2024): Website, retrieved from <https://www.oefse.at/ueber-uns/> 26.03.2024

²⁹ Baobab (2024): Website. Retrieved from <https://www.baobab.at/ueber-uns/leitbild-und-ansaeetze/> 02.04.2024 ¹³ The other organisations include Südwind, Horizont3000, Carol Singers' Campaign of the Catholic Children's Movement of Austria - DKA, SOS Kinderdorf, and Jugend Eine Welt.

follows: *"We are the largest specialised educational and scientific library on global learning, international development and women/gender in Austria. Our library is open to the public and is a place of knowledge, education and encounters. Reading and work spaces are available."* (Baobab 2024).

The aim of **Frauen*solidarität** is to make the positions of global international women's movements audible and legible. The feminist development policy organisation was founded in 1982. It provides information and education on women and gender relations worldwide and is in dialogue with women's and LGBTIQ movements from the Global South. Also Frauen*solidarität presents their view on the C3 library; on their website³⁰ they state that together with ÖFSE and Baobab they *"[...]jointly run the C3 library for Development Policy, the largest specialised academic and educational library on international development, women/gender and global learning in Austria."* Frauen*solidarität publishes a journal three times a year, develops radio and social media contributions, hosts events and media workshops. In the annual report 2022 the Austrian Development Agency (ADA), the MA57 – Frauenbüro der Stadt Wien, the Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection, Brot für die Welt, the Austrian National Union of Students (ÖH) and the Austrian National Union of Students at the University of Vienna are listed as donors to the association (Frauen*solidarität 2022).

13.5.2.1.3 The municipal level

The municipal level does not play an important role for the C3 library, rather indirectly through the physical location of the library in Vienna and the financial relations of the carrier organisation Frauen*solidarität to the MA 57 Frauenbüro der Stadt Wien (Department 57 Women's office of the City of Vienna), as well as the cooperation between Baobab and the the MA10 Kindergärten (Department 10 Kindergartens of the City of Vienna). Some say that the location at the heart of the ninth district of Vienna is crucial for the living community of the C3 library. The university institute

³⁰ Frauen*solidarität (2024): Website. Section 'Library'. <https://www.frauensolidaritaet.org/bibliothek/> (02/04/2024)

for international development can be found next door and the students are regular users of the C3 library. Many of the Viennese university libraries can be found in the ninth district, which is considered a benefit: *"I would say that this central location is better than a peripheral one, even if there often is the assumption that the space must also be peripheral in order to reach the people who are there. I don't think that's the case for us; instead, we invite them here. They also come here, and thus also enter this rather academic neighbourhood. I would describe the C3 library's location as an advantage in that it is so central."* (Interview 1, p.33, 2024). It is admitted in the interviews, that the embedding in the municipal and district context is rather loose, though it would be of great relevance for the C3 library to foster the collaboration and engagement with actors from the surrounding area and on city level, such as the district authority, the Volkshochschulen Wien (adult colleges of the city of Vienna), other public libraries, or the local elementary schools (Interview 1, p.33, 2024; Interview 2, p.26, 2024).

13.5.2.1.4 The federal level

Unlike other public libraries in Austria that are more strongly linked to the Federal Ministry for Arts, Culture, the Civil Service and Sport, an important actor on a national level for the C3 library is the ADA as the main funder of most of the carrier organisations. Furthermore, the organisational landscape in Austria that is associated with the broader field of international development, is of high relevance for the C3 with its thematic focus on global sustainable development, education, women and gender issues. This includes e.g., various ministries, universities, NGOs and the church.

13.5.2.1.5 The supra-regional level

Federal funding has different elements and different channels. BVÖ has the most extensive financing approach and libraries can apply directly for funding. BVÖ finances the purchase of media according

to a quota based on the municipality's population and sets criteria for the training of library staff, opening hours and the number of media in the library. In line with the federal library development plan a new funding scheme provides project-based financial support for activities such as using new media to create individual stories for young people between the ages of three and eighteen, literary events that aim to bring citizens into the library or, conversely, to inspire citizens outside the library to read (BVÖ 2024)³¹. The C3 library is member of the Austrian federation of public libraries but does not meet the criteria for BVÖ's media purchase funding.

13.5.2.2 International library networks

The C3 library has withdrawn from international and national library networks, as educational projects rather require collaboration with NGOs and other stakeholders, such as university organisations or networks (C3 2024)³². This is why there is a special interest in international developments in the library sector and a need for formats, where these updates and inputs can be picked up. Within research projects the library perspective is taken on board but the transfer of knowledge into the library realm is rather poor (C3 2024)³³. Cooperation with other libraries is limited, as it is primarily a question of resources on both sides, but also a question of demarcability (C3 2024).³⁴

13.5.3 Drivers and Barriers

The case study provides insights on what drives the organisation and formation of networks in an already networked environment, as well as on barriers that hinder the translation of networking

³¹ BVÖ (2024): Website BVÖ, Projektförderung. <https://www.bvoe.at/angebote/foerderungen/projektfoerderung> (07/07/24)

³² C3 (2024): Personal communication at the meeting with C3 library representatives. 08/01/2024

³³ C3 (2024): Personal communication at the meeting with C3 library representatives. 08/01/2024

³⁴ C3 (2024): Personal communication at the meeting with C3 library representatives. 08/01/2024

efforts into public value.

Topics as a driver

The topic of the C3 living library events, such as “*Global sustainable development and a fair future for all*” is not only a lip service for the library, but something that is driving the offers of the C3 in that they aim to contribute to these goals (also if it is only a small contribution) (Interview 1, p.35, 2024). The broad topic provides the framework for further co-design of the C3 living library event and helps library staff to engage with a wide range of stakeholders for new and inspiring perspectives on the topic.

Target group as a driver

“*School is simply an important segment for reaching people. That's just the way it is. Not just for us, but for many*” (Interview 1, p.21, 2024). “*The event is aimed at schools (secondary level II).*” (ÖFSE 2024)³⁵. Also, the very clearly stated target group drives network formation: since the first C3 living library event, the C3 library managed to maintain a network of schools and their stakeholders, which they can draw on also for co-design and co-creation within other services, such as FutureSIM, a European Erasmus+ project.

Education policy reform as driver

The C3 living library was first introduced in 2016 and has been held annually since then (except in 2020 due to the Covid-19 crisis). A strong driver for the initiative was the “Matura neu”, an education policy reform in 2015, which made pre-scientific theses a mandatory part of the school curricula at the secondary level. “*When the VWA was introduced in 2015, not only for us, but for many institutions, some*

³⁵ ÖFSE (2024): Website. Section ‘Events, Living Library’. https://www.oefse.at/veranstaltungen/rueckblick/veranstaltung/event/show/Event/living-library-im-c3-zukunft_nachhaltig-und-gerecht/ (08/07/2024)

not right from the start, but over time, it was used as an opportunity to combine their own offerings with schools. Schools are simply an important segment for reaching people.” (Interview 1, p.21, 2024)

Other services as drivers

With the institutional change in 2015 the C3 library also introduced the young research format, a series of workshops dedicated to support young students (age 15+) in developing their research questions, applying research methods and writing their pre-academic theses. The two services – C3 young research and C3 living library - together maintain a mutually beneficial relation due to the same target group of youth (age 15+). During the year the young research service offers provide C3 library staff the possibility to exchange and interact with school students and their teachers. The information on topics of interest, challenges and barriers, role models and the like that can be gathered at this occasion informs the design of the C3 living library event. The same holds true for the C3 award and the C3 living library event but the other way around. The C3 living library initiative draws on the pool of C3 award winners by inviting them as living books to the annual event. The library manager describes the drive that other services provide to a service as integrated offer. *“We try to make integrated offers; we call them integrated offers. In other words, not individual events. [...] And for such an integrated offer, which is embedded, where you work together, where there would certainly be great opportunities to work together with local institutions[...].” (Interview 1, p.34, 2024)*

Experts from universities and institutions as drivers

Especially for experts it is important to gain insights in what young people think about their respective topic and the exchange of ideas at the C3 living library event provides this added value (Interview 1, p.19, 2024). *“What we keep seeing is that certain institutions want to get involved, either universities, for example, in the context of their science engagement [...] or other institutions as well” (Interview 1, p.20, 2024).*

Space/place as a driver

One of the interviewees stresses the library staff's knowledge of the C3 library space as an enabling factor for co-creation: *"I think anything that fits in a bit with our self-image as a meeting place, because we also know roughly how we can use the space. So, for events taking place in the foyer, we can create a really nice atmosphere for certain formats with a few modifications of the place."* (Interview 2, p.22, 2024)

Funding as driver and barrier

Funding can act as a driver for co-creation: *"On the one hand, I believe that third-party funded projects are a driver, i.e. the fact that the funding situation is changing, and you are dependent on external funding is definitely a big driver, but also the networks that are created as a result. So, I would say that the effect is that you gain more partners and enter into new constellations."* (Interview 2, p.20f, 2024)

But also as a barrier to co-creation: *"We've already had very different projects that were participatory and also considerations that we then didn't realise, in the citizen science area or something like that, which would be quite exciting, but the funding is also a bit of a question."* (Interview 2, p.21, 2024) Both interviews suggest that Nordic libraries, which are considered pioneers in the field of co-creation and innovation, have better financial conditions than Austrian libraries (Interview 1, p.41, 2024; Interview 2, p.6, 2024).

Driver and Barrier: Covid-19 crisis

The Covid-19 crisis was to a certain extent a barrier, as many of the on-site events of the C3 library had to be cancelled. This was also the case for the C3 living library event, as well as for the C3 award. The Covid-19 crisis has had a positive effect on the C3 Library's digitisation efforts: access to the digital collection was enhanced, which means that it was made possible to apply for a library card and access to the digital collection without the necessity of visiting the library in person, but also the online implementation of workshops was boosted by the circumstances. *"This has also happened in*

recent years against the background of corona because there is the event centre. This refers to the two rooms that are also rented out for external events. We were already aware that we needed something like this, but there was also increasing interest from outside in organising events not only online or on site, but also in hybrid formats. And that's also an advantage internally, when I think of the science sector, because you can now hold certain workshops or something like that without having to fly somewhere or invite people here." (Interview 2, p.24, 2024) Also the wardrobe requirements were dropped due to the Covid-19 crisis and remain suspended until today.

13.5.4 Type of Innovation Network

The mode of network formation in the case of C3 living library events is a rather planned respectively orchestrated endeavour by a team of actors of the **core network of the three carrier organisations** supported by the scientific advisory board. Together they choose a topic of interest and consider, approach, and invite the relevant experts and participants for the C3 living library event. The C3 library takes on the role of a caretaker, integrating various stakeholders from surrounding networks, such as the C3 community networks or the broader public (see Figure 13.2).

The **C3 community networks** comprise stakeholders and partners of the C3 library that stem from previous collaborations, from the pool of C3 service users, or the larger network of organisations associated to the three C3 carrier organisations. This includes the library's in-house partners,

Mattersburger Kreis and Paolo Freire Center, partners gathered through collaboration in EU projects, such as the Vienna Children's University, NGOs, such as Südwind or Horizont3000, but also welfare organisations, such as Brot für die Welt, and second level carrier organisations, such as the Austrian Development Agency, or the Ministry for Social Affairs, Health, Care and Consumer Protection. The C3 community networks also draw on the **pool of stakeholders** that is formed through the C3 service

offerings, such as the living library, the young research workshop series or the C3 award. The C3 library staff approaches interested stakeholders from this pool and invites them e.g., to act as living books for the living library event. The C3 community network has grown over the years and is enriched with each new living library event. Although it is not entirely self-sustaining and depends on the C3 library's integrative measures, it provides a stable and fruitful ground for future co-creation activities.

The **broader public** is often involved through personal contacts and topic-related observations of the C3 library staff: “[*Living books*, note from the author] *come from civil society, from research, but less so [...] we are also part of civil society and we are looking for initiatives that contribute to this umbrella topic, which are quite diverse.*” (Interview 1, p.20, 2024). Organisations and initiatives from the broader public comprise in particular citizen's initiatives, activist networks, volunteer platforms, museums, independent journalists and media, government agencies, but also universities, NGOs and welfare organisations. The key segment of the broader public for the C3 living library events are schools.

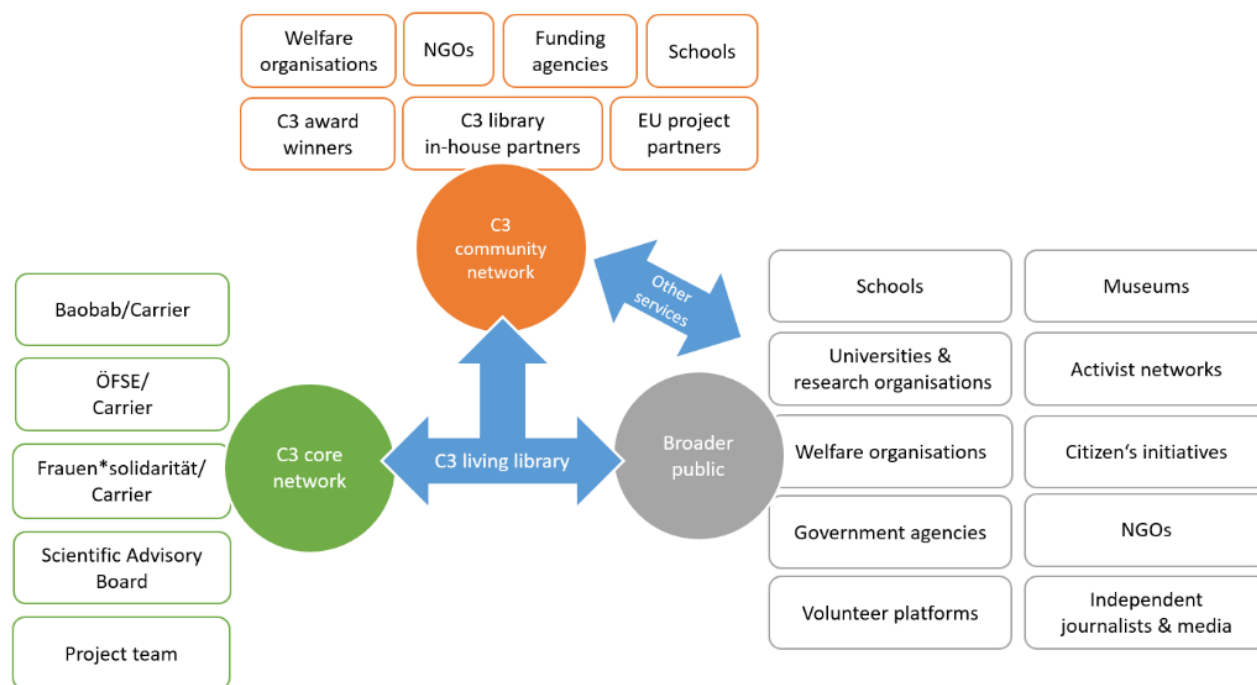


Figure 13.2: Formation of networks related to the C3 living library

There is a certain overlap of the C3 core network, the C3 community network and the broader public, but the distinction highlights the different intensities of network integration. The C3 core network depends on co-creation of key actors, whereas the engagement of the broad public happens rather selectively or at certain points in time e.g. at a C3 living library event. In contrast, the C3 community network is driven by the ongoing involvement of both new and established stakeholders in varying levels of co-creation activities. This not only connects the library with other existing networks but also contributes to a diverse and empowering stakeholder ecosystem around the C3. *“It’s also very diverse, because we have very different target groups, from educators or elementary school teachers, students, scientists, pupils. I would say that makes it a very lively library[...].”* (Interview 2, p.23, 2024).

At the C3 living library event the selected living books interact and exchange with selected participants, two to three school classes accompanied by their teachers. Around 70 people in total

participate in the event. The participants are invited through promotion of the event in school networks but also through a public call for participation on the C3 library website and the websites of the carrier organisations. The living library format provides a safe space for building trust and relationships that help enriching the C3 community.

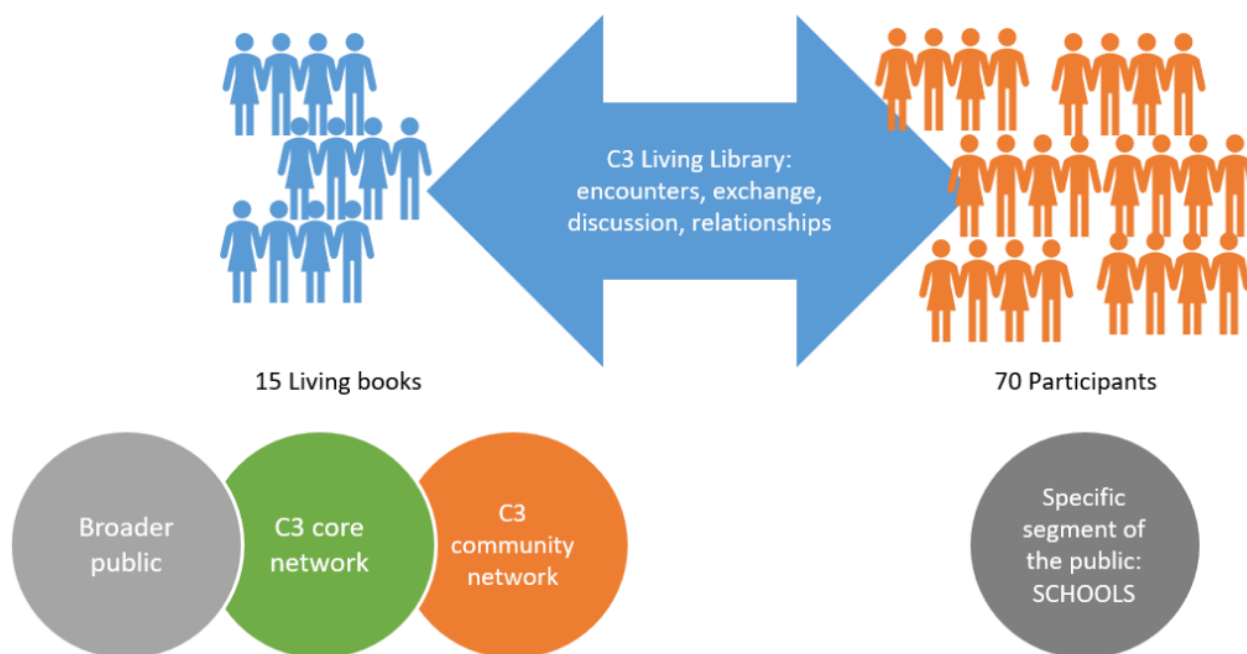


Figure 13.3: Trust building at the C3 living library event

The C3 living library has been going on since almost ten years and interest in the event has been steadily **growing over time**. Earlier events hosted one school class; later events already accommodated two to three school classes. The annual implementation of the living library leads to a continuously increasing pool of schools, respectively headmasters and teachers, that are interested in participating in this and other C3 events. Early this year, one of the initial drivers of the service innovation, the education policy reform, was revoked, which means that submitting a pre-academic

thesis at secondary level is no longer obligatory. When asked, if this development might impact the C3 living library offer, the library manager indicates that it is rather a chance than a risk for the C3 library. The adaption of the education policy drives internal reflections and considerations to modify and adapt the service to address a broader target group, reaching out to young researchers beyond secondary schools e.g., to apprentices and their training organisations, in order to extend the C3 networks (Interview 1, p.22, 2024).

13.5.5 Impacts and Performance

In general, the C3 library does not measure impacts of their services in a standardised or detailed way. The number of visitors is counted and for some activities and events feedback forms are issued to the participants. The C3 library staff engages in feedback discussions with participants and aims at more structured feedback discussions with the scientific advisory board. *“And for the Living Libraries with the books, we also try to conduct interviews with the advisory board afterwards. Or rather, it's a bit of a group discussion, a focus group at the end with the books, where you want to go a bit further.”* (Interview 1, p.35, 2024) The C3 living library event is attended by around 70 participants and 15 living books. Insights on participant's experiences at the C3 living library event can be gained from the interviews that were conducted for the C3 radio contribution (available online). Measurement of impact is generally considered difficult, especially if the targeted information is sensitive information such as gender, disabilities, socioeconomic or migration background (Interview 1, p.36f, 2024).

13.5.6 Unexpected results

It is astonishing how well the C3 library services address and engage their target group of youth (age 15+). *“In the beginning [of the C3 award and living library event, note from the author] we were all surprised at how well it worked. But now, after so many years, it's just not quite the same, the effect has*

worn off a bit.” (Interview 2, p.41, 2024)

Another unexpected experience the library employee described in the interview related to a workshop a colleague of his organised for school students with the aim of collecting and sharing information, but also visualising the information and designing posters relating to a key demand that the pupils had to come up with themselves. The colleague was extremely impressed by the creativity of the results and some of the wording on the posters was very independent and unconventional. She herself was surprised that the school students thought it was a cool activity. The interviewee commented: *“Perhaps as a subtext, then, that even simple, methodical things can sometimes achieve quite good effects.”* (Interview 2, p.41, 2024)

13.6 Discussion

Though the living library concept is not particularly innovative in nature, the C3 library is successful in tailoring the format to its broader topics and target group’s needs, thereby fostering network and community building. After almost ten years of implementation the service is still available and thriving, foremost because of the diverse and lively stakeholders and networks contributing to the co-creative activity.

In relation to the formation of networks it can be observed that the C3 living library event contributes to enriching and expanding the C3 community network by integrating new and established actors with diverse backgrounds and expertise. The provision of a safe space to engage in meaning- and trustful conversations on social challenges is a complex and effortful endeavour that is well-orchestrated by the C3 library project team. Also, the broader public is selectively engaged in the living library co creation.

A closer look at the involvement of the wider public in the C3 Living Library event reveals the

formation of a so-called mini-public (Felt & Fochler 2010). Although a broader target audience drives the service provision, only a relatively small number of individuals from the target group can actually be involved in the co-creation process at the event, limited by resources, time and space, although the number of participants is remarkable for a smaller library such as C3. The library staff are aware of the issue that they are dealing with a rather select group of people from the general public (secondary school students) and are therefore always looking to expand their target audience and include a wider range of stakeholders in their services and networks. It is also possible that a certain selection bias influences the development of the C3 community, as many people who participate in C3's co-creative services are show awareness for the topics related to C3, such as SDGs, and may therefore have a stronger interest in C3 services.

Another interesting aspect is that the driver that influenced the development of the service at the beginning - education policy reform - no longer exists, but the service remains highly relevant and the original driver is now driving the adaptation and modification of the service in a later phase, precisely because it no longer exists. The C3 library staff views the recent changes in education policy rather as a chance for change than as a risk.

13.7 Conclusions

"We try to provide impetus, but not as a companion in the organisation, rather on a small scale, as it is also a question of resources." (Interview 1, p.23, 2024) From the findings of the case study, it can be concluded that most of the added value generated by the C3 Living Library event benefits the core network of the C3 library, but also the surrounding C3 community network through keeping it dynamic and enriching it with new actors with every event. Therefore, the creation of public value through network building is focussed and highly visible to the target audience but limited in terms of engaging the wider public. In any case, the Living Library C3 event contributes to a thriving and

vibrant library community. A more detailed examination of the limiting factors and possible solution strategies remains the subject of further research.

14 Cross analysis of cases

Case studies inherently present a risk of self-selection bias, in which the researcher carefully selects cases confirming his prior hypotheses. Here, this risk is counterbalanced by the diversity of countries, and by the diversity of the libraries being investigated (from those of rural villages to those of capital cities). The fact that social innovation examples have been found in all these different settings provides a clear indication that social innovation is a common practice of public libraries across all Europe, rather than an occasional initiative of a small number of elite or vanguard organizations. As such, public libraries appear as a central actor of the social economy.

In accordance with the conclusions of the literature review, the cases provide insights about a change in the service logic of public libraries. Also, they suggest a novel and dynamic typology of social innovations. We develop these two points in the next paragraphs.

14.1 The change in the service logic of public libraries and its implications for the national innovation system

Gadrey (1999, see also Figure 2.1) defines the concept of service logic as a combination of a mode of activation by the user - either the user is being served or he/she formulates a request of intervention - and of a set of capabilities mobilized by the provider. These capabilities can be either human/ relational or technical. In a traditional library, users are typically serving themselves on bookshelves, while the librarian manages a collection of items and, occasionally, assists readers in finding a specific reference. Alongside this traditional service, the literature review identified the emergence of a new type of

library, the “community builder”, in which users are more or less explicitly formulating a request of intervention, to which the librarian responds by mobilizing a set of relational capabilities.

The table 14.1 details the main skills and the main mode of activation of the novel services presented in the case studies. It appears that all of these innovations exhibit features of a community building library. In terms of the types of human skills mobilized by the librarian, we find listening, collaboration, and debate/ discussion moderation. These new capabilities reveal that public libraries are turning into third places (Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982, Oldenburg, 1989), that is into places of sociability. As such, while the public library remains a learning place, the type of knowledge that is being acquired and exchanged in it is changing.

Knowledge can be defined as “justified true belief that is created and practiced by people, through their interactions with others and the environment, and in a specific situation or context” (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 2019, p. 60). In that sense, a belief becomes knowledge when it has successfully passed some sort of experimentation, occurring at first in a specific context. It is common to distinguish explicit and implicit forms of knowledge. Explicit knowledge is disembodied, or “global” (Jensen et al., 2007, p. 683) in that it has been translated into a generic, often written, form. It can be acquired for instance by reading books, or by attending lectures - that Jensen et al. (2007) label the “science, technology and innovation (STI) mode” of knowledge acquisition (p. 680) . Explicit knowledge typically corresponds to “know why” and “know what” (Lundvall and Johnson, 1994).

For its part, tacit knowledge is embodied and of a more localized relevance. It corresponds to “know who” and “know how”, acquired when interacting with others, that is when socializing. Jensen et al. (2007) label this acquisition process the “doing, using and interacting (DUI) mode” (p. 680). Interestingly, while one usually associates traditional libraries with the STI mode of knowledge

acquisition, all of the social innovation cases investigated in the present report belong to the DUI mode (Table 14.1).

It is not to say that libraries are not anymore a favorable place to acquire explicit knowledge, since they always manage a collection of written artifacts. But, alongside this traditional mission, they are increasingly becoming a place where to learn forms of tacit knowledge: mainly of the "know who" type, but also, in some instances, forms of "know how". In our case studies, know-how is mainly acquired when the libraries establish a makerspaces and repair cafés (Table 14.1). We are wondering if this shift, from explicit to tacit knowledge acquisition, reflects a more central role of public libraries into the national innovation systems? Also, is it the sign of a qualitative change occurring into the European innovation system as a whole?

Answering these questions would require a more holistic approach than the one permitted by case studies at the level of single libraries. By and large, there are clear indications that access to knowledge is a powerful source of economic growth. For instance, Juhász et al. (2024) indicate that the Industrial Revolution in Japan was permitted by a dramatic surge in the number of technical books translated into the Japanese language between 1870 and 1910. Hence, access to technical knowledge and the STI mode can be instrumental in the industrialization phase. Similarly, Abramovitz (1993) - among others - highlights the importance of education and, more broadly, of human capital in explaining the U.S. growth experience in the second half of the Twentieth Century. These two cases illustrate the importance of explicit knowledge for economic growth. Regarding tacit knowledge, Jensen et al. (2007) find that the most innovative firms in Denmark are those that combine both STI and DUI features. As such, it is certainly more accurate to stress on the complementarity of both types of knowledge – i.e. explicit and implicit - for economic growth. In that respect, the incursion of public libraries into the DUI mode, alongside with the fulfilling of their traditional mission of books circulation,

should produce a positive effect on the national innovation performance. More generally, the discussion about the relationship between knowledge, innovation and economic growth indicates that libraries are certainly a central actor of any national innovation system. As such, any change in their mode of knowledge delivery (i.e. STI and/ or DUI) is worth studying, as it can either be a symptom or a source of larger changes occurring in the national innovation system.

Table 14.1: Service logic, form of knowledge and the mode of innovation in the case studies

Social innovation case	Description	Capabilities	Mode of activation	Form of knowledge	Mode of innovation
Leesclubbing	reading clubs in Belgian and Dutch libraries for young readers in their 20s and 30s.	- Listening - Animating and moderating a discussion	Get served	- know what - know why - know who	DUI/STI
Host library	The Purchena public library creates a meeting and training center for young immigrants.	- Listening - Training	Get served	- know who - know what	DUI

Makerspace at Medellin	The city public library system puts in place three maker spaces	- collaboration - curation of tools and materials - training	Help yourself	- know what - know why - know how - know who	DUI / STI
Likustartti at Vantaa city library	Collaboration between the library and a maternity to provide story hours for multilingual families	- Listening - Collaboration	Get served	- Know who	DUI
Children's section at Oodi	A new section of the library dedicated to welcoming families with children and fostering interactions among them.	- Listening - Design thinking - Co-creation	Get served and help yourself	- know who	DUI
The Human	The Human	- Listening	- Help yourself	- know who	DUI

Library	Library is a non-profit organization that hosts conversations between users and human books.		- Get served		
Library at Home	A home delivery service in rural areas of northern France targeting isolated elders.	- Listening	- Get served	Know who	DUI
Repair Café at Velizy	The public library sets up a repair café and helps creating the city fab lab.	-collaboration - curation of tools and materials - training	- get served - help yourself	- know what - know why - know how - know who	DUI/STI

Story telling cafés at vienna libraries	Biographical storytelling put in place in Vienna libraries since 2021.	- listening - debate/ discussion moderation	- get served	- know who	DUI
Living books at the C3 library	A living library event operated by the library.	- Listening	- get served - help yourself	- know who	DUI

14.2 Typology and significance of social innovations

Aside from the changing role of public libraries, the case studies allow to refine the definition of a social innovation. So far, we defined it as a network innovation, in that both the ideation and the production processes rely on a network of partners, and also because social innovations typically aim at generating interactions among users. We labeled these two networks as input network and output network, respectively.

With regards to the input network, one could argue that any innovation in general is an interactive process (Kline and Rosenberg, 1986). As such, all innovations are arguably involving some sort of input network. But the peculiarity of social innovations is that partnering organizations are mainly public services, associations and citizens, instead of manufacturing firms and research institutions. Such networks have been labeled as “public service innovation networks for social innovations” (PSINSIs)

by Desmarchelier et al. (2020). It appears that in all of the cases presented in this report, the input networks are PSINSIs (Table 14.2) in that manufacturing firms and market services are, to our knowledge, absent in them.

Table 14.2: Characteristics of the input and output networks of the social innovation cases

Social innovation case	Input network	Output network		
		Modular dimension	Architectural dimension	Dynamic
Leesclubbing	Public libraries (PS), and readers (C)		Discussions between readers and with the librarian-moderator.	The initiative of the Muntpunt library (Belgium) has been replicated by the Probiblio library (Netherlands).
Host library	Public library (PS), city council (PS), youth centers (TS), associations (TS)		Interactions between young migrants and the local youth	
Makerspace at Medellin	Public library (PS), local schools (PS), associations	New makerspaces	Users' interactions	

	(TS)			
Likustartti at Vantaa city library	The library (PS), a maternity and child clinic (PS), Vantaa city (PS), Mannerheim League for Child Welfare (TS)		New conversations between multilingual families.	The project, initially intended for one year, seems to have become more permanent.
Children's section at Oodi	The library (PS) and citizens (C), through a co-construction process.	A new section/ department inside the library	Families discussions - i.e. a new form of interactions for a library	
The Human Library	The Human library organization (TS), host institutions (PS, TS), volunteers (TS, C), users (C).	- Human books - The human library organization	Novel form of interaction between citizens/users and the human books.	The organization now operates in more than 80 countries.
Library at Home	Departmental	- A new category	- New forms of	

	library (PS), governmental organizations (PS), public libraries (PS), citizen (C).	of library users (i.e. the isolated elders).	interactions between readers and the librarian. - New forms of interactions between the librarian and the isolated leaders. - New interactions between citizens and the isolated elders.	
Repair Café at Velizy	Public library and city council (PS), the HatLab and other regional fablabs (TS), volunteers (C).	- A new organization inside the library (i.e. the repair Café) - A new organization (i.e. the Izylab) - A new category of library users (i.e. non-readers).	New forms of interactions within the library (i.e. artifacts repairing).	The Repair Café, i.e. a new module, has generated a new architecture of relations as well as another new module (i.e. the Izylab).

Story telling cafés at vienna libraries	The library (PS) and speakers (C, TS).	The storytelling café	New interactions between library users and speakers from the civil society.	
Living books at the C3 library	C3 library (PS), Austrian Foundation for Development research (PS), Baobab (TS)	The living books	New types of dialogues happening inside the library.	

Regarding the output network, an analogy can be made with the conceptualization of technological innovations proposed by Henderson and Clark (1990). To them, a material product - i.e. the product of a technological innovation - is a network, made of technological components, also called modules, that are linked together in a certain way. A component is “a physically distinct portion of the product that embodies a core design concept and performs a well-defined function” (Henderson and Clark, 1990, p. 11). For instance, the main board or the LCD screen are technological modules in a laptop.

From this reticular view of material products and technologies, Henderson and Clark (1990) draw the innovation typology displayed in the Table 14.3. Incremental innovations are those that barely modify product components and their linkages, while radical innovations bring-in major changes in both. The authors then identify two new forms of technological innovations: the “modular innovations” that add

or remove a core component, while only marginally affecting the pairing of the other components, and the “architectural innovations” that leave components mostly untouched but change their liaisons. To Henderson and Clark (1990), architectural innovations are particularly destabilizing for established firms, as they firstly go unnoticed when introduced into the market. They can therefore be difficult to identify.

Table 14.3: The Henderson and Clark (1990) typology of innovations

Core components	Reinforced	Overturned
Links between components		
Unchanged	Incremental innovation	Modular innovation
Changed	Architectural innovation	Radical innovation

Henderson and Clark (1990) deliberately focus their attention on manufactured goods and technological components. However, many goods incorporate service components. These are clearly present in the examples that the authors cover in their paper. Indeed, while studying the evolution of photovoltaic equipment, they interview a “marketing executive” (p. 19), as well as many researchers and “service managers”. Arguably, many technological innovations are the product of market research (Kline and Rosenberg, 1986), hence of a service component. In fact, it has long been recognized that services and manufacturing activities are so intertwined that they cannot be studied separately (Bressand and Nicolaïdis, 1988; Daniels and Bryson, 2002). It follows that the components of the framework proposed by Henderson and Clark should include some services. But services present some specificities. In particular, their output and production process are difficult to distinguish from each

other (Miles, 1993), and therefore one cannot dissociate the service output from the actors involved. This remark pleads for enlarging the theoretical framework to service and to human components, instead of an exclusive focus on technological ones.³⁶

By extension, since many social innovations are actually service innovations (Desmarchelier et al., 2025), the typology proposed by Henderson and Clark should be applicable to social innovations. The society can be conceptualized as a network: a set of (formal and informal) relationships between natural and legal persons, or their groupings into relevant categories (i.e. the modules).

Going back to the output network characteristic of social innovations, one could distinguish social innovations that modify the (social) modules, their linkages, or both, in a more or less radical way. In terms of output networks, we can therefore consider the following four types of social innovations.

- **Incremental social innovations:** These innovations affect at the margin both the social modules and the way they interact. Changes can be important at the local/microeconomic level, while remaining barely perceptible at the macrosocial/macroeconomic level. These innovations can be the product of individuals, who play the role of social innovators. Examples can be found among the numerous entrepreneurs supported by the Ashoka foundation worldwide³⁷: they are individuals who launch initiatives such as a farmer training center, or who propose new methods to address community issues, such as racism or domestic violence within a given neighborhood. Putting aside the moral dimension, these are examples of successful innovations with a local reach. Incremental social innovations can also be the product of a larger

³⁶ Enlarging innovation theories to services and their relational nature was already the main motivation of Gallouj and Weinstein (1997) model of innovation.

³⁷ Ashoka is a nonprofit organization that promotes social entrepreneurship (<https://www.ashoka.org/en-us>, last access: Sept. 10th 2024).

social/ collective movement, with no clearly identifiable social innovator. We think for instance of the many peasant revolts that have not changed the social order during the Middle Ages in Europe.

- **Radical social innovations:** Here, both the modules and their interaction patterns are significantly changed. For instance, the French Revolution dismantled the triptych – Aristocracy, Clergy, and Third Estate – in which the French society was locked. Also, the U.S. Civil Rights movement modified profoundly the modes of interaction among people from different ethnic backgrounds and dismantled the racial categories in front of the law. These examples suggest that it can be difficult to identify a single social innovator in the case of radical social innovations. It is true that the U.S. Civil Rights movement has been triggered by Rosa Parks' refusal to leave her seat in the bus, as well as to Martin Luther King Jr.'s oratory talent, but the events took place into a larger context of "decline in the southern cotton economy and the twin migratory flows – south to north and rural to urban" (McAdam et al., 2001 p. 42). This context is certainly a part of the explanation of the movement's success. Another example of radical social innovation is the Industrial Revolution: it produced new relevant categories of agents – i.e. the capitalists and the factory workers – as well as the salaried work, i.e. a new type of relationship that profoundly modified the society as a whole. The Industrial Revolution was triggered in part by James Watt's steam engine, but certainly also by a wave of other steam powered machines (Frenken, 2006) and by favourable cultural changes, like the emergence of the gentleman businessman in England (Mokyr, 2010).

In sum, it seems that radical social innovations are more likely the product of a context, than of a specific actor, even if some actors can be associated with radical social changes.

- **Modular social innovations:** They modify the relevant categories of agents, while leaving globally unchanged human relations in the rest of the social system. The birth of management and managers (Drucker, 1987; Chandler, 1977), or the invention of venture capitalists – supposedly by Harvard Professor Georges Doriot (Gupta, 2004) – are examples of new types of agents that did not significantly change the rules of interactions between agents: salaried workers are still the norm and venture capitalists augment the list of financial intermediaries. A popular example of modular social innovation is the Grameen Bank, introduced by Nobel Prize winner Muhammad Yunus: like the venture capitalist, it is a new type of financial intermediary, of great importance for some impoverished people, but which do not put into question the vast majority of the financing contracts that are signed within the economy.³⁸
- **Architectural social innovations:** These are changing the interaction patterns among the existing categories of agents. An example is universities' positive discrimination policy: the selection criteria are modified, but applicants and recruitment committees remain. Social media are another example: they change the way individuals search for jobs, information and make friends.

It appears that the typology helps to reveal the multiple facets of social innovations' output networks: they can be about changing interaction patterns and/or about changing interaction units – i.e. the modules, or types of agents. Also, the typology should not be considered as a static framework. Indeed, it has been established in the industrial context that radical innovations usually generate myriads of incremental innovations (Abernathy and Utterback, 1978). Similarly, it can be shown that social innovations can stimulate the emergence of other social innovations. For instance, local revolts

³⁸ The case of the Grameen bank is peculiar, since ventures have opened in several countries, and because its founder has the ambition to change the capitalist system (Yunus, 2011). We will show in this paper that the demarcation between modular, incremental and radical social innovations is often not easy to draw.

– i.e. incremental social innovations – can produce revolutions – i.e. radical social innovations. As an illustration, Ball (2011) recalls that the Arab Spring – and the subsequent democratization of Tunisia – was triggered by a street revolt, fuelled by the social media Twitter. Thus, a radical social innovation has emerged from a local/incremental innovation – notably with the help of an architectural innovation, i.e. the social media.

This discussion suggests that drawing a clear demarcation line between types of social innovations is difficult, because new modules (ex. new relevant categories of actors) necessarily involve new types of relationships. In that sense, social innovations should be studied not as a static set-up, but rather as a dynamic process. Accordingly, Table 14.2 presents the modular and architectural dimensions of the output networks in all our social innovation cases, alongside with their dynamic. It appears that most of the cases covered in this report exhibit an architectural dimension in that they involve new kinds of social interactions inside the library, that is interactions that do not immediately relate to books. The most frequent new kind of interaction is discussion about social issues, but we also find interactions of the type of repairing work.

Some cases provide insights on the diversity of new modules that can be created by social innovations happening inside a public library: a new library section, a new kind of artifact (i.e. human books), a new category of users (i.e. the isolated elders, or non-readers who want to get their devices repaired) as well as new organizations (storytelling café, repair café). In dynamic terms, the Leeschlugging project and the Human Library have expanded internationally, and the repair Café in the Vélizy municipal library has helped create the city fablab. All these elements demonstrate that public libraries and their social innovations can generate a virtuous dynamic of new interactions and actors inside the economic and social system.

15 General conclusion

15.1 Results significance for the academic research

This report documents a shift in the core mission of public libraries, from the curation of material artifacts - traditionally books, but also other types of cultural items - to the building of communities, in particular by encouraging the dialogue among readers and, more largely, with their surrounding social environment. We hypothesized that this new activity makes public libraries natural social innovators.

Social innovations are often equated with “fair”, “good” or “just” innovations. Therefore, they often rely on a moral dimension, which makes them contingent. To overcome this issue, we proposed a renewed definition, more in line with the etymology of the word “social”. To us, a social innovation is one that is made by an input network of partners - mainly from the civil society, the associative world and public service organizations. Such a network has been labeled as Public Service Innovation Network for Social Innovation by Desmarcheleir et al. (2020). Also, social innovations produce novel interaction networks among users. These output networks can involve both new “modules” - i.e. new categories of interacting units, such as new organizations, or a new kind of beneficiaries - as well as a new architecture of relations. Both new modules and new architectures can produce a virtuous dynamic of growth of social relations.

Together, the partners involved in Task 3.2 have investigated 10 cases of social innovations carried out by public libraries across Europe. The diversity of library settings does bring support to the hypothesis that public libraries are social innovators. The main form of social innovation is the building of new discussion networks, sometimes with new types of users – for instance non readers, migrants, or isolated elderlies.

Interestingly, while traditional libraries convey codified knowledge through the circulation of books, the cases assembled in this work-package reveal that the community building library can also convey tacit knowledge in the form of know-how and know-who (Lundvall and Johnson, 1994). Given the complementarity between tacit and explicit knowledge for innovation processes in general (Nonaka, 1994; Jensen et al., 2007), one can say that community building libraries might very well stand as an important actor of national innovation systems. This remark represents a stimulating departure from the preconceived idea of libraries as conservative organizations.

15.2 Co-ideation with the stakeholders

The research conducted in this report has benefitted from many discussions with members of LibrarIN stakeholders panel. These discussions occurred through the various stakeholders panels carried out all along the LibrarIN project, from the initial step of hypothesis formulation, to the last one of results validation (in particular in Alcalá and Brussels, for this later stage). This ensures that our academic research always remains relevant for practitioners and grounded into real practices of librarianship.

As such, the community-building library that we identify in this report relates to many current practices undertaken by the libraries in which the stakeholders are working. This can be illustrated by courses about the “community librarian” offered in university curriculums, as well as by new positions of community managers. On the specific topic of network creation, many stakeholders emphasized that the success of a social innovation often relies on the ability to get involved with individuals who are already embedded into an extensive social network. As such, the library would be acting more like a bridge between otherwise disconnected networks than like a builder of completely novel networks.

This bridging activity can make libraries standing as knowledge intensive social services (Desmarchelier et al., 2020a; Desmarchelier 2023) - that is like actors of the social economy who

specialize in networking. Also, we note that bridging does not contradict our concept of architectural social innovation, which consists in nurturing brand new types of interactions - here within the library. Indeed, for instance in the case of the library at home project, the librarian identifies isolated elderly people through the social relations of their users (bridging). Yet, the kind of interactions he/she develops afterwards with the isolated individual is more complex and multi-facets than the usual interactions taking place between librarians and their daily visitors (novel type of relation). Thus, this social innovation remains an architectural innovation – i.e. one consisting in creating new types of interactions – while it relies on the existing network of their current users.

Further, the stakeholders have complemented our cases of social innovations with many more examples, like a knitting club in a public library, the organization of cooking sessions and the writing of a cooking book with immigrant women in the German National Library, or sessions of “bibliotherapy” in the Malmö university library in Sweden. All of these instances confirm and illustrate the fact that users get access to tacit knowledge in the form of “know-how” and “know-who”.

One may argue that building communities and providing access to tacit knowledge is not the core mission of public libraries (Gaines, 1985a, 1985b). But, discussions with stakeholders revealed that, in fact, public libraries are certainly one of the best actors to ignite their community because they are often perceived as trustable institutions.

15.3 Policy and managerial implications

It is often stated that public libraries are active promoters of democratic values (Pungitore, 1995). The present study does bring support to this affirmation, because it illustrates the fact that community-building libraries act as third places (Oldenburg and Brisset, 1982). Here, Desmarchelier et al. (2025b) demonstrate that such places might represent a prerequisite condition for the maintenance of a

society of debate and public opinion. Indeed, third places are sources of serendipitous knowledge, in the sense that when attending to them, one gets access to others' point of view and to divergent opinions and ideas. More generally, these are places where the "common wisdom" (Oldenburg and Brissett, 1982) or the "public opinion" (Tarde, 1901) can take shape.

In parallel, current online technologies (recommendation systems and other artificial intelligences) rather tend to lock individuals into information bubbles, therefore reinforcing their prior beliefs and hampering the pursuit of public debates. In this sense, current online tools seem to promote traditions over public opinion (Desmarchelier et al., 2025b). As such, all kinds of third places - including community-building libraries - are becoming an essential firewall to maintain social cohesion and public debate.

In sum, community-building libraries are making two hints with the same stone: they stimulate economic growth and foster social cohesion, both through the provision of a wide range of information sources and through their activities connecting people via their social innovations. As such, European policy makers should treat the current disaffection for public libraries (Weaver and Appleton, 2020) as a potential threat both to European competitiveness and political stability.

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