**Rethinking the mission and the nature of activities**

**Report of the changes that have occurred**

**within the Martynas Mažvydas National library of Lithuania during Covid-19**

In situations such as the three-month (from March 16 to June 17) quarantine in Lithuania, libraries do not have to move away from their mission, but have to rethink how to carry it out in a changed reality. In terms of strategic management, the sacred triad that the National Library has been following for some time is, in this case, **rethinking, restructuring and reorganisation**. The National Library is an institution that promotes culture, education, science and economy, and all of these areas, which are important nationally, have been severely affected by the quarantine that was announced because of COVID-19. Thus, the biggest challenge is how the National Library, both as a whole and in its separate structural parts, will be able to adapt its activities to the overall mission of the library. It is much more difficult than installing new technologies or installing remote workplaces.

The challenges of the quarantine have led to the **transition to a new virtual reality.** We offered users a wide range of remote services, the staff held virtual meetings and readers used remote services (interactive library, subscribed databases, virtual cultural heritage portal). Visitors had the opportunity to view exhibitions that were currently transferred into a virtual space, participate in lectures broadcast live from the library TV studio, creative workshops as well as view conversations, book presentations and other recordings published on the Library’s YouTube channel. Statistics show that during quarantine, users were actively interested in the video content created by the Library and e-book borrowing increased 2.4 times. There has been a significant increase in the number of subscribers to our Library's YouTube channel: the number of subscribers increased by 64% during the year.

With the rapid spread of false news about coronavirus on the Internet, which caused confusion and panic in society, we constantly **provided only verified and reliable information** because we perceive the library not only as a repository of documents, but also as a manager of data, information and knowledge. For example, there was a lot of interest in informative and reliable lectures on coronavirus by professionals, which we provided on our YouTube channel.

As a **socially responsible institution**, we have contributed to particularly relevant public projects. The robotics school in Vilnius, together with scientists, engineers and specialists of the company “3DCreative”, created a 3D model of a protective face shield that reduces the risk of infection. Lithuanian libraries, coordinated by the National Library, also offered their help. Less than a week after the start of the idea, as many as 54 Lithuanian public libraries started printing components for the production of protective face shields with their existing 3D printers. Over 3,500 shields were produced in two weeks. Such initiatives can exist only when organisations possess creative, dynamic and adventurous staff.

In order to manage the epidemiological situation in Lithuania, the National Public Health Centre turned to the public for **help in working with people in self-isolation and/or with people who had contact with people with COVID-19.** The National Library of Lithuania also invited its staff to contribute to this initiative. The volunteers, after receiving special training, called people and interviewed them according to the questionnaire of the National Public Health Centre and entered the data into a monitoring system. Although the workload of volunteers was high, it is particularly important to realise that such important organisations were in a critical situation during the pandemic and that, as far as possible, we, as citizens, must contribute and assist as much as we can.

The National Library of Lithuania, as a national centre of library competency, has prepared **recommendations to help Lithuanian libraries** to adapt to work conditions during the quarantine and then to properly implement the stages of lifting the quarantine, In these recommendations, we established requirements for ensuring the protection of employees and library visitors as well as procedures for customer service under soften quarantine, procedures for the use of documents, public communication requirements, development of electronic content and services, implementation of distance education and budget allocation. By using them, we aim to provide useful information and recommendations to help librarians to meet the new challenges. The main target audiences for these recommendations are library managers and responsible professionals who have implemented the necessary measures in their own institutions. The libraries have implemented the recommendations considering the specifics and peculiarities of the activities carried out, as well as the epidemiological situation regarding the risk of the spread of the coronavirus in the region.

The National Library of Lithuania has been granted a reward by competent authorities for civic participation in making protective tools. Our activities during the quarantine period have been evaluated by the Lithuanian Trade Union of Service Industries, which recommended us as one of the most socially responsible institutions of the public sector.

Experience and knowledge gained by the staff of the National Library during the quarantine helped to prepare more smoothly for the second period of the quarantine that came into effect in Lithuania from October 29. By continuing and improving inclusive civic initiatives as well as various educational and entertainment activities in the virtual space, and by spreading a positive message to the public, the National Library continues to contribute to improvement of the emotional health of the society.

**A segment of the virtual events** of the National Library of Lithuania has become particularly stronger. In addition to live broadcasts and virtual exhibitions, virtual events attract great interest. We tried new forms of them, such as guided virtual tours around the National Library of Lithuania to present the exhibitions displayed in its spaces; continuous lecture cycles and training, for example, “How to arouse interest of a teenager in a book?“, “Foundations of the Worldview of Lithuanian Jews“, digital and information literacy training, cycle of art educations, etc.

Intensive cooperation with the library partners has proven to be particularly effective in the field of virtual events. Presentations and discussions of new books that have just been published, meetings with authors, readings of literature constantly take place on the social network platforms of the National Library together with Lithuanian publishers.

Cooperation with the Presidency of the Republic of Lithuania can be cited as an example of success. We are proud not only about the tenth anniversary campaign “Book Christmas“ that is under the auspices of the President of the Republic of Lithuania Dalia Grybauskaitė. During the campaign, people, organizations, and publishing houses are encouraged to donate new books to libraries and child care institutions.

An international scientific conference organized by the Lithuanian Librarians' Association, the National Library and the Ministry of Culture was broadcast live from the Presidency in early December. Top-level cultural policy makers, high-ranking officials, specialists in librarianship, information and other sciences debated live for four hours from the main country's institution on the issues that are relevant to libraries during this period.

“Christmas in the Capital“ is a new joint project of the partners. From December 7 to January 6, every evening at 8 p.m., famous people of Lithuanian society, who represent the fields of culture and arts, will read to children the most beautiful globally renowned literary masterpieces on the theme of Christmas through the largest news portal in Lithuania [www.delfi.lt](http://www.delfi.lt). The books or their excerpts have been selected and provided by the specialists of the National Library of Lithuania.

The idea of the team of the creative workshop PATS SAU of the National Library of Lithuania, that was born during the first quarantine (spring), to move the workshop from the National Library to everyone’s home and create surprise and unexpectedness, has been implemented in November, when the initiative “The Creative Challenge Box” has been presented to the visitors. This challenge is a great opportunity to spend a playful weekend with the family and to create a variety of articles. Challenge boxes contain a variety of materials. Children are invited to create various objects on different themes from these materials. New themes and new challenges are offered each week, and live broadcasts take place on Saturdays. During them, the team of the creative workshop takes the challenge along with the viewers.

**The educational programs** prepared by the specialists of the National Library, which are adapted for distance sessions, also attract great interest among teachers. This is a great and timely help for educators who make efforts to diversify the forms and content of distance learning.

During the period of the second quarantine, in addition to numerous remote services, **the National Library also serves visitors physically** - visitors are issued with books, that they take home, and the same books are accepted from the visitors through a self-service terminal. Readers are recommended to order books online or to reserve them by phone, and then come to the library after they receive confirmation that the books have been prepared.

During this difficult period, libraries in Lithuania, as well as around the world, have become a strong guarantor of emotional stability and positivity in society because, even during the quarantine, they opened up vast opportunities for education, study, entertainment and recreation for those who read and learn.

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