

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT OF INFORMATION SERVICES FOR THE ACADEMIC ENVIRONMENT

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Introduction. The current stage is characterized by the intensification of information exchange due to the development of collaboration and cooperation in educational systems. The university libraries of the Republic of Moldova through its activities are flexible and connected to the evolution trends manifested worldwide, offering information services and products intended for users at the level of international standards, contributing to the improvement of the quality of higher education.

The university libraries being an important segment in the education system carry out ambitious projects in which they develop functional partnerships [1]. The key factor in the success of the entire development of libraries now is the creation and innovation made in the network. Stimulating the creative spirit and developing professional skills in university libraries is achieved by participating in projects through which new information technologies are implemented.

The partnership realized in the project “Modernization of academic library services in Moldova” during the period 2016-2019 was financially supported by the Norwegian Cooperation Programme in Higher Education with Eurasia, coordinated by the University of Bergen Library and the Scientific Library of ASEM. The main purpose of this project was to modernize the information services of 18 university libraries in our country by developing institutional capacity, developing professional competences, studying and implementing innovations in the service of users, increasing information consumption for the benefit of university education and research processes [2].

The experts who evaluated the project mentioned that “...*the project has the potential of lifting the entire library sector in the country. The way the seminars are structured is very convincing and the seminars*

seem to be important in order for the partners to be able to participate in international research. The Royal Norwegian Embassy in Bucharest is positive to the proposed project, and believes that it will be a valuable and useful project for Moldova”.

The University of Bergen together with the Transylvania University of Brasov has become main strategic partners of the library network in the Republic of Moldova and our lawyers in relations with various information institutions in Europe. The support that our partners have provided in all aspects of library development, guarantees our libraries the chance to become truly European.

The directions of activity within the partnership. Within the project activities were carried out in four directions of activity, which helped us to find effective ways to meet the information requirements of the academic and scientific community in Moldova.

The first direction ensured the training of the librarians by organizing the workshops, the theme being established based on the survey conducted with the university librarians in 2015 (Landoy 2016):

- *Professional workshop nr.1* “International trends in academic library leadership” supported by Andrew McDonald, IFLA Governing Board Member, Emeritus Professor University of East London, Chief Executive Officer Libraries and International Information, London, United Kingdom (April 15, 2016).

- *Professional workshop nr.2* “Advocacy. Marketing: promoting the image of the university libraries”. The workshop program included 3 modules: *Marketing for Libraries*, trainer Angela REPANOVICI, PhD. Prof. Transylvania University of Brasov, Romania; *Media campaign to promote libraries*, trainer Nelly ȚURCAN, PhD. Prof., Moldova State University; *Policy, advocacy for libraries*, trainer Manolis KOUKOURAKIS, PhD., Director of Library & Information Center, University of Crete, Greece. (13-14 June 2016).

- *Professional workshop nr.3* “Open Access and Institutional Repositories“, supported by Angela REPANOVICI and Irene EIKEFJORD, University of Bergen Library. Within the workshop were discussed the planning of activities for the International Open Access Week 2016. In this context, in the institutional programs were included participation in the Marathon of archiving publications in the institutional repositories and the Open Resources Day (September 19-20, 2016).

- *Professional workshop nr.4* “Information Literacy”, supported by Angela REPANOVICI and Ane LANDØY, University of Bergen Library,

Norway, Serap KURBANOGLU, prof., dr., Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey (February 7-8, 2017).

- *Professional workshop nr.5* “Bibliometrics/Scientometrics” was organized at the University of Bergen. The workshop program included the experiences presented by Dr. Susanne MIKKI “Bibliometrics at UiB. A library perspective”; Prof., dr. Angela REPANOVICI “Scientometrics on track”; Ingrid CUTLER, Advisor, Section for digital systems and services of the Bergen University Library “Open Access and Institutional Repositories”; Karin C. RYDVIING, Section head Digital Systems and Services of the Bergen University Library “Library’s involvement with research support”. (May 11, 2017).

- *Professional workshop nr.6* “Accelerate Research Discovery with Web of Science”, facilitated by the Clarivate Analytics. Facilitators: Marko ZOVKO, Account Manager, South and Eastern Europe, Scientific & Academic Research and Adriana FILIP, Solutions Consultant (January 12, 2018).

- *Professional workshop nr.7* “Attracting the academic community: Assessing and replying to the user needs”. The issues regarding the increase of the visibility and image of the library in the academic community and the methods of evaluating the needs of the library users were discussed. The training action was supported by Angela REPANOVICI and Ane LANDØY (January 29, 2018).

- *Professional workshop nr.8* “Managing research data”, trainers - Ane LANDØY, Angela REPANOVICI and Igor COJOCARU, PhD, Director of the Information Society Development Institute (IDSI). Issues related to research data management, data reuse, activity of research centers and warehouses were discussed (April 24, 2018).

- *Professional workshop nr.9* “Marketing and Advocacy II: best practices”. Within the workshop have been disseminated the best practices implemented in the university libraries that promote our results in the academic area. Experts evaluated the online products for information and education of users, developed by all 18 university libraries in the Republic of Moldova (October 8, 2018).

The second direction of the project - the summer schools, which were three in number and all took place in Romania.

The first Summer School “Open Access and Open Sources for Librarians” took place between July 3-10, 2016 at the University of Brasov, Romania, Faculty of Product Design and Environment. In the Summer School participated 29 representatives from 20 institutions

from the Republic of Moldova and Romania. Among the trainers of this school were: Angela REPANOVICI; Nelly TURCAN; Dinu COVACIU, dr. University of Transylvania, Brasov, Romania; Mioara VONCILĂ, Director, Library of the University of Galați, Romania; Nicolae CONSTANTINESCU, Kosson Community, Romania.

The second Summer School “Information Literacy” took place on June 25-30, 2017 in Tulcea, Romania, with the participation of 27 librarians from Moldova. Among the trainers of this school were: Angela REPANOVICI, Ane LANDOY, Nelly ȚURCAN, Serap KURBANOGLU, prof., PhD, Hacettepe University, Ankara, Turkey, Robert CORAVU, PhD, University of Bucharest, Romania, Sanda ERDELEZ, prof. PhD, University of Missouri, USA.

The third summer school “The references librarian in the digital age” took place on June 24-29, 2018, in Mamaia, Romania, where 31 librarians from Moldova participated. Among the trainers of this school were: Angela REPANOVICI; Manolis KOUKOURAKIS; Ane LANDOY; Ismail SERAGELDIN, PhD, director of the Library of Alexandria and director of the Executive Council of the World Digital Library, Alexandria, Egypt; Jesus LAU, PhD, Veracruzana University, Mexico; Anna CHULYAN, PhD, director of the Library of the State University of Languages and Social Sciences Brusov, Yerevan, Armenia.

During the three editions, the Summer School within the Project was the place where librarians learned useful things, which, summed up in the words “new experiences”, could be applied in the partner institutions and in the projects they will continue to initiate.

The third direction of the project was the strategic planning in the university libraries. In order to facilitate the elaboration of the strategies, the Public Association Pro Community Center was engaged, which carried out the functional analysis and the institutional capacity assessment of the libraries in the project. The training included 4 workshops where strategic products for our libraries were developed.

With the help of the Pro Community Center, a quantitative sociological research was also carried out, which determined the tendencies of developing the university libraries in the long term. The findings of the sociological study were reflected in the strategic directions and in the foundation of the strategies of development of the university libraries of the Republic of Moldova (Mîndru 2017). Almost all the partner libraries of the project have approved the strategies in the universities’ Senate.

The fourth direction was the organization of the access to the scientific databases by subscribing the libraries participating in the project to important resources for academic research. During this period was ensured access to international databases: Cambridge Journals Online; Taylor & Francis Online Journal Library; Web of Science; SAGE Research Methods.

Study visit to the University of Bergen, Norway took place from 9 to 12 May 2017 and was attended by 35 representatives of 18 universities from Moldova (rectors, vice-rectors and directors of libraries). We had various meetings, library visits, a seminar and a round table. There was also a soul meeting with the rector of the University of Bergen Dag Rune OLSEN, professor of biomedical physics. The discussion was focused on the topic „Research Challenges in Norway and Republic of Moldova: How can the library support research?”. Bård HEKLAND, Adviser, Department of Higher Education of the Norwegian Centre for International Cooperation in Education (SIU) also participated at the discussion. On behalf of the delegation from the Republic of Moldova spoke prof., dr. hab. Larisa ŞAVGA, Rector of Trade Co-operative University of Moldova (UCCM); prof., dr. hab. Larisa BUGAIAN, Vice Rector on Financial Problems and International Relations, Technical University of Moldova; Olga TAGADIUC, dr. hab., associate professor, Director of the Doctoral School, State University of Medicine and Pharmacy “Nicolae Testemitanu”. From the library community had speeches the coordinators of the project Ane LANDØY and dr. Silvia GHINCULOV.

During the visit we noted the importance of new technologies and structural changes, which are currently taking place in university libraries in Norway. These works include the interior design of the library, the efficient organization of the reading and storage spaces, increased attention to the comfort of the users, etc.

From the first year of the implementation of the project we have “acquired” another loyal partner in the person of Mr. Igor COJOCARU, PhD, director of the Institute of Information Society Development. All our training actions have been transmitted online by IDSI. The video recordings are archived on the project website and on the IDSI TV channel on Youtube. The internal communication and dissemination of information was made on the project site, which contains all the necessary information about the carried out activities.

Throughout the project period, 9 workshops, 3 summer schools, a study visit to the University of Bergen, 5 meetings of the Club “Norway

– The Land of Fjords”, participation in 11 international conferences at which the results of the project were disseminated, were published over 100 articles (including in ISI journals), were conducted 4 sociological studies, were carried out 18 strategies of development of university libraries, 18 programs of library promotion, 18 online tutorials for users and others etc.

The National Marathon of archiving of publications in Institutional Repositories and Database Day were organized during the International Open Access Week. We also had a contest regarding the Project logo, which ensured the unitary visual identity of the partnership and was used on all project materials, on different communication channels by all the 21 institutions participating in the project. The winners of the contests organized within the project received certificates of participation in the Summer School.

Conclusions. Libraries in the Republic of Moldova face many challenges, but also many opportunities. One of our indisputable achievements is that we have taken important steps towards integrating our information resources into the international circuit. We have publications registered in collective catalogs, magazines registered in international databases, we use common platforms and we feel comfortable in the virtual space of electronic education.

The society currently needs a university education system that prepares young people to participate as an active and productive labor force in a dynamic labor market and as responsible citizens in an open, democratic society. In this context, the activity of a university library is focused on the accomplishment of the most important mission - the informational and documentary assurance of the study and research processes.

Within our project we have accomplished important and useful things that will help us to find effective ways to meet the information requirements of the academic and scientific community in Moldova. Our relationships with partners in Norway, Romania and other countries have been strengthened in our projects, they have shown that we have the same values, the same visions, brought us closer to cultures and traditions and created special spiritual connections between people.

The results of these collaborations will be a strategic framework for the sustainable development of the national policies regarding access to information throughout the Higher Education System of the Republic of Moldova.

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