OVERVIEW OF LITHUANIAN LIBRARY STATISTICS 2021

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In 2021, the country's libraries were still affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Libraries have gradually opened up more spaces and expanded their services as quarantine has been relaxed, but the reorganisation of the library network in the reporting year has had the effect of reducing accessibility for the population. This is also reflected in the decline in statistical indicators for almost all parameters reported in the statistical reports.

In 2021, there were 2,214 libraries in Lithuania: Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania, the Lithuanian Library for the Blind, 5 regional libraries, 60 municipal public libraries with 1,140 branches, 16 museums, 1 library of another cultural institution, the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences, libraries of 2 technical institutions, 6 medical institutions, 6 medical libraries, 1 agricultural library, 4 research institutes, 7 public authorities, 16 universities, 19 colleges, 58 vocational schools, and libraries of 877 educational institutions. By 2021, almost 98% of the country's libraries were computerised.

Last year, 2,214 libraries submitted performance statistics to the LIBIS Statistics Module, 90 fewer than in 2020. The number of reporting libraries fell by 4% per year, making 2021 the year with the largest contraction of the country's library network in the last five years (Fig. 1).
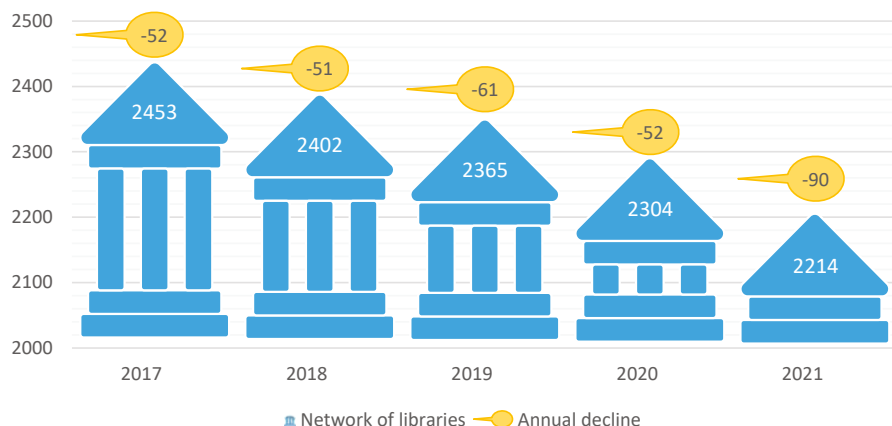
LIBRARY NETWORK

It should be noted that the total number of libraries, including branches, service points and mobile libraries, decreased from 2,654 in 2021 to 2,636 per year (-0.68%). The difference between the loss of central libraries (-4%) and the loss of shared service points is explained by the fact that by 2021, in the context of the reorganisation of educational institutions in municipalities, some general education institutions have become branches or service points for larger schools, becoming structural units instead of central libraries (administrative units), e.g. the library of Plungė Bishop Motiejus Valančius Primary School became the library of the Bishop Motiejus Valančius section of Plungė Academician Adolfas Jucius Pro-Gymnasium, and the library of the Vaiguva Vladas Šimkus Primary School in Kelmė District became the Vaiguva Vladas Šimkus section of the Šatrijos Ragana Gymnasium in Užventis Šatrijos Ragana Gymnasium in Kelmė District, i.e. they were recategorised as branch libraries of municipal gymnasiums serving primary schools. Some of these new units have discontinued their former
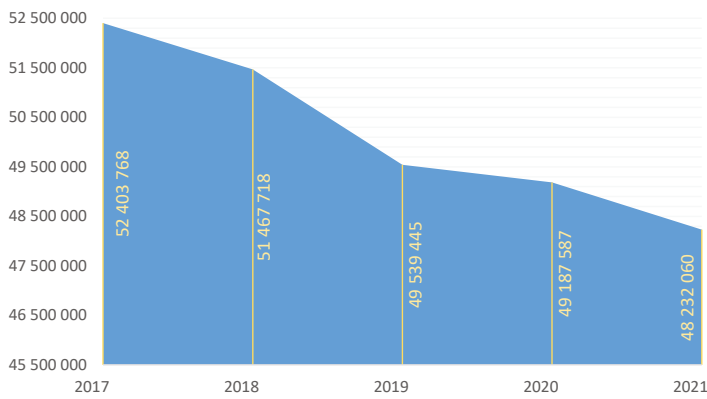

Fig. 1. Changes in the national library network in 2017-2021

Fig. 2. Changes in the size of the document collection (physical items) in the country's libraries in 2017-2021
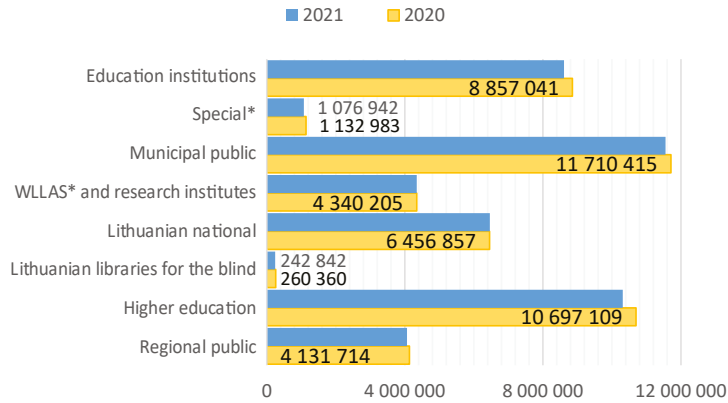

Fig. 3. Change in the national library document collection (physical items) in 2020-2021

*Libraries of technical, medical, agricultural, government institutions; **The Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences.
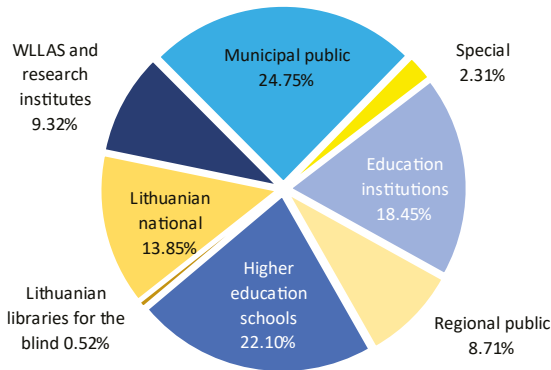

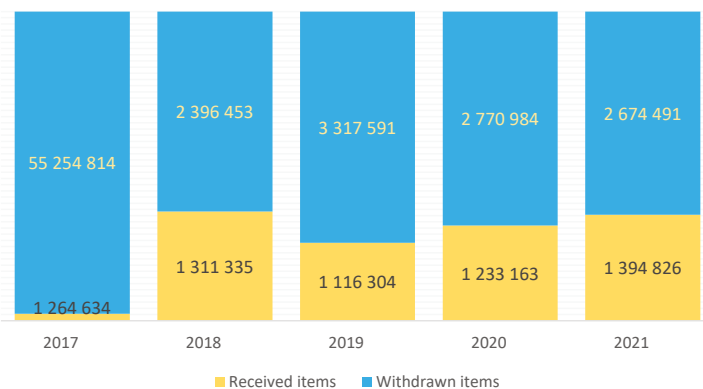*Fig. 4. Distribution of the document collection (%) in national libraries in 2021*

Fig. 5. Acquisition and withdrawal dynamics in national libraries in 2017-2021

accounts in the LIBIS Statistics Module in 2021 and do not report separately, and their performance indicators were reported together with central library data. 69 reorganised/liquidated libraries under the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport did not submit activity reports in 2021. Last year, libraries in educational institutions accounted for 39.61% of the country's library network (41.10% in 2020).

It should be noted that in the reporting year, the library network was also shrinking due to the closure of branches of municipal public libraries. In 2021, a total of 21 rural branches were liquidated in the municipalities of Kelmė, Lazdijai, Plungė, Prienai, Raseiniai, Šakiai, Švenčionys, Ukmergė, Varėna and Vilkaviškis.

DOCUMENT COLLECTION

In the reporting year, the total document collection of Lithuanian libraries amounted to 48,232,060 physical items, a decrease of 1.94% since 2020 and 7.96% compared to 2017 (Fig. 2).

The volume of documents in the repositories of different types of libraries has declined at various rates over the years. The Lithuanian Library for the Blind's holdings shrank by 6.73%, special libraries by 4.95% and higher education libraries by 3.62%. This process has also affected library networks that have undergone reorganisation during the year under review. For example, the total collection of documents in educational libraries has shrunk by 2.79% compared to 2020, while the collection of documents in municipal public libraries has shrunk by 1.37%. Only the National Library, the Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences and the network of research institutes did not see a decrease in the number of documents (Fig. 3).

Traditionally, the largest collection of documents is held in the repositories of municipal public libraries, which accounted for almost 25% of the country's library collection in 2021. The second highest (22%) belongs to higher education institutions, followed by 18% in libraries of educational institutions (Fig. 4).

In 2021, 1,394,826 physical items were added to the country's library collections. In the year under review, new items accounted for 2.89% of the document stock, while the write-off of 2,668,183 physical items reduced the stock by 5.44%. The closure of libraries has undoubtedly had a significant impact on the decline of the total collection. Although the number of new documents has increased by 13.11% and the number of withdrawals has decreased by 3.48%

compared to 2020 figures, libraries in the country have still been eliminating more documents than they receive over the last five years (Fig. 5).

It should be noted that after the restructuring of the country's library network, the average number of documents per central library was 21,785 physical items, an increase of 2% from the previous year, which was the highest amount per library since 2017 (Fig. 6). But at the same time, there has been a decline in the number of documents per 1,000 inhabitants in libraries: in 2017, the average was 18,401 physical items and 17,252 in 2021 (17,604 physical items in 2020), a drop of 2% every year and more than 6% over the last 5 years. (Fig. 7).

On the other hand, with the number of registered users decreasing, the average number of documents per library user in 2021 increased from 47.36 physical items in 2020 to 49.86 physical items in the reporting year. The most significant increase of 25.55% in the number of documents per user per year was seen in the special libraries. And the highest number of library collections (in 2020) per user was in the National Library.

It should be noted that not all types of libraries saw an increase in 2021. In the Lithuanian Library for the Blind, an increase in the number of registered users by almost 21% since 2020 has reduced the average number of documents per user, resulting in a 22.57% decrease in 2021 (see Table 1).
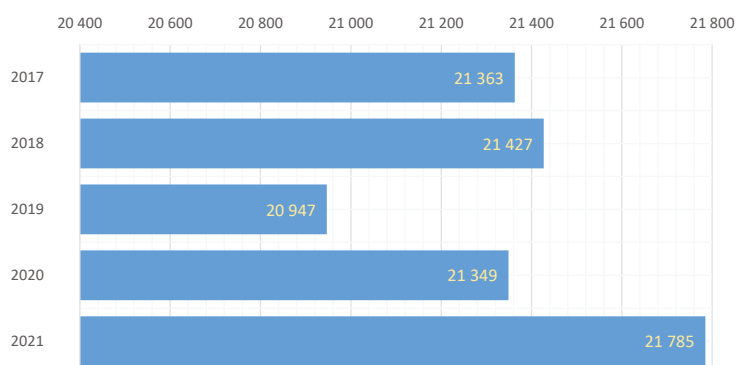

Fig. 6. Average number of documents (physical items) per library in the country in 2017-2021
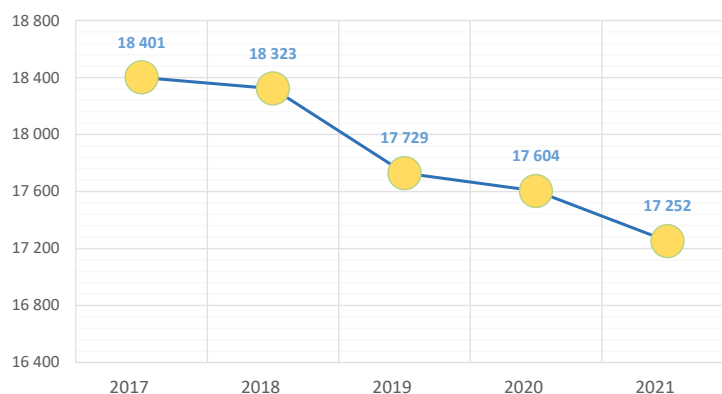
Fig. 7. Change in the number of documents (physical items) per 1,000 inhabitants in the country's libraries in 2017-2021

Table 1. Change in documents (physical items) per registered user in libraries of different networks in 2020-2021

Libraries	2020	2021
County public libraries	82.13	102.81
HE institutions	70.95	68.78
Lithuanian Blind	80.21	62.11
Lithuanian National	472.93	475.95
LAMVB and research institutes	472.43	445.24
Municipal public	23.99	27.25
Special	163.61	205.41
Educational institutions	32.06	29.62

REGISTERED USERS

In 2021, 967,334 registered users accessed the country's library services. This is not the first year that the rate has fallen. Since 2017, Lithuanian libraries have been losing an average of 47,000 registered users every year. It is noteworthy that only the National and Research Libraries did not experience a decline in user rates (see Table 2).

Table 2. Registered users in national libraries in 2017-2021

Libraries	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Difference
County public libraries	68,706	65,493	63,226	50,309	39,524	−42.47%
HE institutions	191,024	176,751	150,344	150,779	149,901	−21.53%
Lithuanian Blind	4,486	4,787	4,974	3,246	3,910	−12.84%
Lithuanian National	13,176	14,597	17,170	13,653	13,575	3.03%
LAMVB and research institutes	8,481	7,824	8,474	9,187	9,763	15.12%
Municipal public	551,422	541,508	540,285	488,056	423,793	−23.15%
Special	17,733	10,754	10,089	6,925	5,243	−70.43%
Educational institutions	316,822	309,704	308,581	288,262	290,656	−8.26%
Total:	1,205,716	1,162,957	1,132,901	1,038,504	967,334	−19.77%
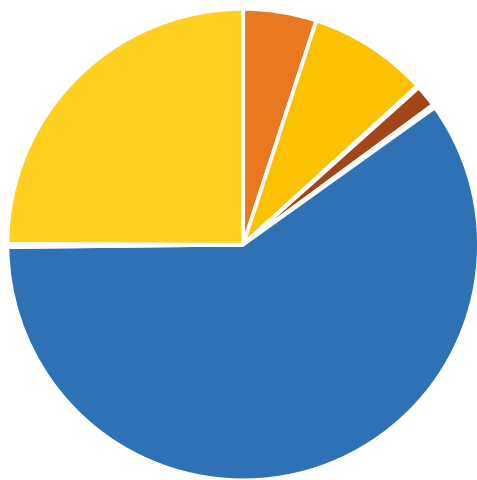
Regional public
Higher education
Lithuanian libraries for the blind
Lithuanian national
WLLAS and research institutes
Municipal public
Specialized
Education institutions

Fig. 8. Distribution of visits/visitor flow in national libraries in 2021
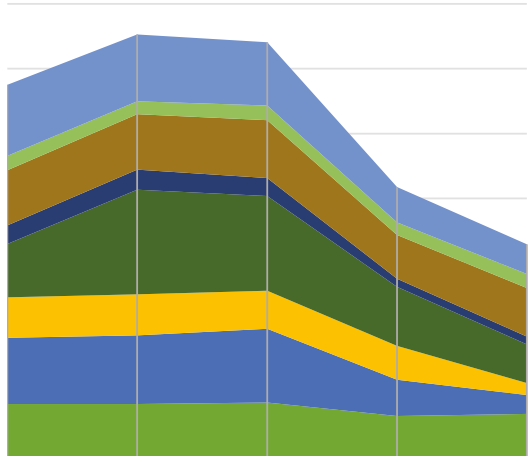
Education institutions
Specialized
Municipal public
WLLAS and research institutes
Lithuanian national
Lithuanian libraries for the blind
Higher education

Fig. 9. Changes in the average number of visits per registered user in libraries of different networks 2017-2021

Given that the number of libraries has also declined significantly in the year under review, the difference is well illustrated by the number of registered users per library in the country: in 2020 it was 451 and in 2021 it was 437 users. The largest differences in registered user rates are found in the bulk of the library network - special libraries, county and municipal public libraries, educational institutions, colleges, and universities.

Over the last five years, the country's total population has fallen by just over 1.83%, which is another reason for the decline in registered users in libraries.

VISITS/VISITORS

The downward sloping curve of registered users has also led to a decline in library visits/visitors. In 2021, the country's libraries welcomed 10,821,978 visitors, or 14.48% fewer than the year before. The average number of visits per capita was 3.9 in the reporting year (4.5 in 2020), which has almost halved in five years (see Table 3), while the average number of registered users was 11.2 (12.2 in 2020).

Table 3. Average number of visits to libraries per capita

2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
7.8	7.7	7.6	4.5	3.9

Municipal libraries accounted for the largest share of visits/visitors in 2021, accounting for almost 60% of all visitors to libraries in the country. The second most visited library network in the reporting year was the higher education library network, which received almost 25% of all library visitors (Fig. 8).

As in the past, changes in the above indicators varied from one network to another, but the overall downward trend in registered user visits to libraries was observed in all types of libraries. The drop in the visit rate is pronounced from 2019 onwards, during the quarantine periods of 2020 and 2021 (Fig. 9). Special libraries had the lowest average number of visits per registered user over the five-year period, but the network lost more than 70% of its registered users over the same period, while the number of visits fell by 71%. The number of visits to libraries in higher education institutions and educational establishments was also considerably lower. Almost the entire period of the first and second quarantines in Lithuania saw the closure of education/training institutions and the launch of distance learning, which is one of the main reasons for the drop in this indicator. As mentioned above, the number of registered users in HE institution libraries has fallen by almost 22% since 2017, but the number of visits has fallen by more than 77%; in educational

institutions, the number of registered users has fallen by almost 62%, while the number of registered users has fallen by only 8% over the last five years.

When analysing the decline in the rate of visits to libraries, the increase in the number of virtual visits to library websites is noteworthy, with an increase of 24.48% from 2020. In 2021, the number of virtual visits exceeded the number of physical visits to the country's libraries by 36%.

DOCUMENT BORROWING

Alongside the declining library performance already discussed, the circulation of documents has also declined. In 2021, 14,065,370 physical documents were borrowed from the country's libraries, but this amount decreased by 15.43% per year. In the reporting year, the average number of physical documents borrowed from the country's libraries per inhabitant was 5.03 (5.95 in 2020); the average number of physical documents borrowed per registered user was 14.5 (16.02 in 2020). The largest annual drop in the number of documents borrowed was recorded in county public libraries, where the borrowing rate in 2021 decreased by 44.89% compared to 2020. (Fig. 10).

Looking at the last five years, the number of documents borrowed from libraries has fallen at a record pace in special libraries, with a 75% drop since 2017. The decline in the number of physical documents issued by libraries has more than one cause: in addition to the annual losses in the network, which are leading to a decline in the availability of certain services to the population and a drop in the registered user rate, the ways in which users find and access information are also changing. For example, in 2021, the number of physical documents borrowed from higher education libraries was almost 27% lower than a year ago, but the number of downloads of electronic documents through library e-services was almost 6% higher. Notably, this indicator has increased by almost 63% since 2017, while physical borrowing has decreased by more than 73% over the same period. In 2021, the number of virtual visits to higher education library websites increased by more than 51% compared to 2020.

In the reporting year, users downloaded 21,772,737 documents and 20,801,325 items of recorded content using the electronic services provided by the country's libraries. The number of downloads increased by 2.32% and the number of recorded content downloads decreased by 5.75% over the year, but the number of downloaded content items of all types was more than 3 times the number of physical documents borrowed from libraries (Fig. 11).

The average number of content items downloa-
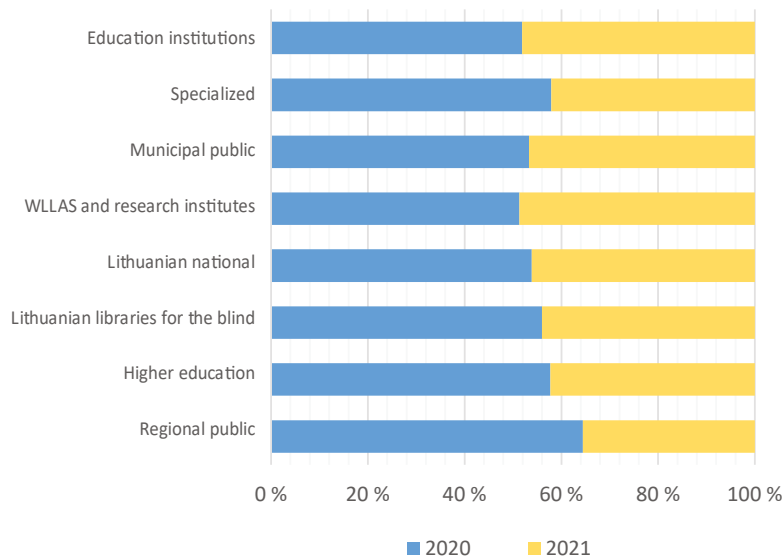
Fig. 10. Document circulation (physical items) in national libraries in 2020-2021
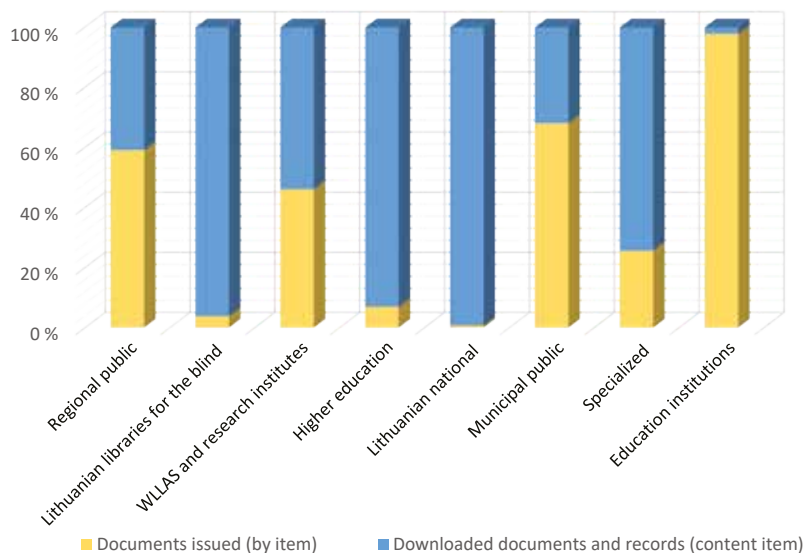
Fig. 11. Ratio of documents borrowed from libraries (physical items) to downloads by users (content items) in 2021

ded per person in the country in 2021 was 15.2 (15.5 in 2020), while the average number of content items per registered user in libraries was 44 (41.7 in 2020).

According to the data provided by libraries, the time spent on training users how to use services and computer equipment has decreased by 23.54% in 2021 compared to 2020. In the reporting year, the average per capita training time in libraries was 2.3 minutes (3 in 2020) and 6.64 minutes for a registered user (8.08 minutes in 2020).

LIBRARY STAFF

The 2021 library statistics reveal changes in this area. Last year, Lithuanian libraries had a staff of 6,144 (6,260 in 2020), with a payroll of 5,703.2

FTE[1] (5,813.97 FTE in 2020). The number of staff fell by 1.85% and the number of posts by 1.91% over the year. The downward trend in staff numbers is pronounced among two groups: technical staff decreased by 1.63% and professional librarians by 2.29% (-114 persons), but the number of skilled workers increased by 0.76%.

In the reporting year, professional librarians accounted for 79% of all staff (79.5% in 2020), with an average of 0.91 VEE per librarian, the same as the previous year. It should be noted that of the 4,862 librarians, 1,162, or almost 24%, worked part-time.

The vast majority—70.65%— of professional librarians had an HE degree, almost 46% of whom had a degree in librarianship and information science (46.79% in 2020). It should be noted that this category of staff accounted for 25.72% of the total number of employees in the country's libraries in the reporting year (25.45% in 2020). The number of staff with a degree in library or information science also increased during the year under review: in 2021, there were 29% (20% in 2020). Of those who upgraded their qualifications, 2.94% were professional librarians and 15.38% were qualified specialists. Last year, the number of community volunteers working in the country's libraries was 60, or 40% less than in 2020.

In 2021, there was 1.58 professional librarian VEE per 1,000 inhabitants (1.62 in 2020), and a 6.58% decrease in registered users per year, resulting in 4.57 librarian VEE per 1,000 registered users (4.35 in 2020).

As mentioned above, the number of staff posts in libraries decreased by 110.77 FTE from 2020. Changes in libraries in different networks have adjusted librarian workloads differently. For example, in 2021, a 15.37% decrease in the number of posts for librarians in the National Library of Lithuania increased the number of users by 17.49% and documents borrowed per librarian's FTE by 1.23% (see Table 4).

Table 4. Changes in registered users and document borrowing per librarian VEE in 2020-2021

Libraries	Number of registered users per librarian VEE		Documents borrowed (physical items) per librarian VEE	
	2020	2021	2020	2021
County public libraries	126	98	3,273	1,779
HE institutions	343	357	3,023	2,313
Lithuanian Blind	90	98	3,095	2,187
Lithuanian National	55	65	1,935	1,959
WLLAS and research institutes	87	93	675	639
Municipal public	218	191	4,670	4,139
Special	174	134	2,375	1,748
Educational institutions	314	324	2,760	2,618

FUNDS AND COSTS

In 2021, the funds allocated to the country's libraries amounted to €102,258,144, a decrease of 2.35% compared to 2020 figures. It should be noted that this is the first time in the last five years that a decrease in funding has been recorded. The National Libraries Report reflects a marked change in funding for programmes and projects, with a 45.49% drop in funding over the year, and a drop of almost 21% in donations to libraries from individuals and legal entities. These two main sources of revenue have clearly had a downward impact on the totality of the funds received, as the funds allocated by library founders increased by 5.2% over the year, with 18.23% more funds allocated to the acquisition of documents compared to the previous year, while funds allocated to the periodical subscriptions decreased by 13.14% over the same period.

Expenditure declared by libraries also decreased in the reporting year. This represents a year-on-year change of 1.74%, or €1,870,940 less than in 2020. Salaries grew by 5.64% and accounted for 72% of total annual expenditure. Although the amount spent on document acquisition during the year was the same as the previous year, the largest share of the 76.45% increase was for electronic documents, while books, periodical subscriptions and other non-electronic documents showed a decrease of almost 18%. It should be noted that libraries' average per capita expenditure on the acquisition of documents was €2.98 in 2021 (€2.97 in 2020).

More detailed library statistics for 2021 can be found on the website of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania at www.lnb.lt (Science > Research and research results > Scientific publications > Library statistics > Library statistics).

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[1]   Full-time equivalent.

KEY STATISTICAL INDICATORS FOR LITHUANIAN LIBRARIES IN 2021

	Queue No.	Number of libraries	item collection (physical items)	number of users	borrowed items (physical items)	number of visitors	professional staff	Number of libraries with computers Total	of which with internet access
MINISTRY OF CULTURE (No. 2 + 3 + 4 + 5 + 7 + 8)	**1**	**1,224**	**22,826,395**	**481,760**	**10,401,491**	**7,078,217**	**3,049**	**1,222**	**1,222**
Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania	2	1	6,461,041	13,575	409,834	161,739	217	1	1
Lithuanian Library for the Blind	3	1	242,842	3910	87,495	14,586	46	1	1
County public libraries	4	5	4,063,630	39,524	720,566	535,360	391	5	5
Municipal public libraries (No. 5a + 5b + 5c + 5d)	**5**	**1,200**	**11,550,358**	**423,793**	**9,172,025**	**6,358,775**	**2,376**	**1,200**	**1,200**
Public (central) libraries (public libraries)	5a	60	3,576,746	193,858	2,669,951	2,024,771	997	60	60
Public libraries city branches	5b	122	2,080,555	82,091	2,503,162	1,722,767	327	122	122
Children's branches of Public libraries	5c	9	137,832	8,999	204,723	121,431	30	9	9
Public libraries rural branches	5d	1,009	5,755,225	138,845	3,794,189	2,489,806	1022	1,009	1,009
of which Public libraries branches connected to school libraries	6	45	427,779	7,102	233,620	193,015	57	45	45
Museum libraries	7	16	499,667	728	4,065	4,218	18	14	14
Libraries of other cultural institutions	8	1	8,857	230	7,506	3,539	1	1	1
Libraries of educational institutions (No. 9a + 9b)	**9**	**4**	**4,346,837**	**9,763**	**67,127**	**22,944**	**105**	**4**	**4**
Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences	9a	1	3,720,746	9,530	57,684	21,802	96	1	1
Libraries of research institutes	9b	3	626,091	233	9,443	1,142	9	3	3
Special libraries (No. 11 + 12 + 13 + 14)	**10**	**16**	**1,076,942**	**5,243**	**68,601**	**22,713**	**41**	**16**	**16**
Government libraries. Of these:	**11**	**7**	**115,765**	**1,928**	**18,747**	**7,793**	**6**	**7**	**7**
government libraries	11a	1	6,123	134	746	0	1	1	1
libraries under the Ministry of National Defence	11b	6	109,642	1,794	18,001	7,793	5	6	6
Technical library network (total)	**12**	**2**	**52,306**	**480**	**430**	**1,020**	**2**	**2**	**2**
technical libraries	12a	2	52,306	480	430	1,020	2	2	2
Medical library network (total). Of these:	**13**	**6**	**612,999**	**2,621**	**48,967**	**13,601**	**31**	**6**	**6**
Lithuanian Medical Library	13a	1	560,519	1,511	9,410	4,663	25	1	1
healthcare libraries	13b	5	52,480	1,110	39,557	8,938	6	5	5
Agricultural library network (total)	**14**	**1**	**295,872**	**214**	**457**	**299**	**2**	**1**	**1**
Total in 2021 (No. 1 + 10)	**15**	**1,240**	**23,903,337**	**487,003**	**10,470,092**	**7,100,930**	**3,090**	**1,238**	**1,238**
MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND SPORT (No. 9 + 17 + 20 + 21)	**16**	**974**	**24,328,723**	**480,331**	**3,595,278**	**3,721,048**	**1,772**	**922**	**922**
HE institution libraries (No. 18 + 19)	**17**	**35**	**10,309,926**	**149,901**	**970,895**	**875,008**	**441**	**33**	**33**
university libraries (No. 18a + 19a)	17a	16	9,408,651	114,800	674,863	663,640	367	15	15
college libraries (No. 18b + 19b)	17b	19	901,275	35,101	296,032	211,368	74	18	18
Libraries of public HE institutions. Of these:	**18**	**23**	**10,050,626**	**139,520**	**936,,708**	**841,800**	**419**	**23**	**23**
university libraries	18a	11	9,238,143	110,873	647,031	635,222	355	11	11
college libraries	18b	12	812,483	28,647	289,677	206,578	64	12	12
Libraries of non-state HE institutions. Of these:	**19**	**12**	**259,300**	**10,381**	**34,187**	**33,208**	**22**	**10**	**10**
HE school libraries	19a	5	170,508	3,927	27,832	28,418	12	4	4
college libraries	19b	7	88,792	6,454	6,355	4,790	10	6	6
Vocational school libraries	**20**	**58**	**1,062,040**	**30,011**	**207,057**	**165,887**	**81**	**55**	**55**
Libraries of educational establishments (No. 22 + 26 + 27 + 28 + 29)	**21**	**877**	**8,609,920**	**290,656**	**2,350,199**	**2,657,209**	**1,145**	**830**	**830**
General education school libraries (total) (No. 22a + 22b + 22c + 22d)	**22**	**811**	**8,192,233**	**279,708**	**2,270,552**	**2,586,149**	**1103**	**783**	**783**
Pro-Gymnasium libraries (No. 23a + 24a)	22a	161	1,659,113	86,783	584,081	713,608	227	158	158
Gymnasium libraries (No. 23b + 24a + 25a)	22b	370	4,525,081	136,133	1,205,174	1,332,880	560	369	369
Lower secondary school libraries (No. 23c + 24b)	22c	206	1,748,174	42,075	361,925	416,355	240	192	192
Primary school libraries (No. 23d)	22d	74	259,865	14,717	119,372	123,306	76	64	64
Municipal general education school libraries (total) (No. 23a + 23b + 23c + 23d)	**23**	**776**	**7,690,149**	**265,708**	**2,102,740**	**2,490,962**	**1,055**	**750**	**750**
Pro-Gymnasium libraries	23a	161	1,659,113	86,783	584,081	713,608	227	158	158
Gymnasium libraries	23b	340	4,039,036	122,480	1,039,001	1,238,753	515	339	339
Lower secondary school libraries	23c	201	1,732,135	41,728	360,286	415,295	237	189	189
Primary school libraries	23d	74	259,865	14,717	119,372	123,306	76	64	64
State general education school libraries (total) (No. 24a + 24b + 24c)	**24**	**26**	**44,4051**	**7,823**	**134,878**	**55,697**	**35**	**24**	**24**
Gymnasium libraries	24a	21	428,012	7,476	133,239	54,637	32	21	21
Lower secondary school libraries	24b	5	16,039	347	1,639	1,060	3	3	3
Non-state general education school libraries (total) (No. 25a)	**25**	**9**	**58,033**	**6,177**	**32,934**	**39,490**	**13**	**9**	**9**
Gymnasium libraries	25a	9	58,033	6,177	32,934	39,490	13	9	9
Libraries of non-formal education (music, art, art) schools	**26**	**57**	**386,731**	**10,533**	**75,124**	**69,731**	**38**	**40**	**40**
Libraries of teacher education centres	**27**	**5**	**19,790**	**299**	**4,113**	**917**	**2**	**5**	**5**
Libraries of educational support services	**28**	**3**	**6,080**	**62**	**182**	**278**	**2**	**2**	**2**
Libraries in children's homes	**29**	**1**	**5,086**	**54**	**228**	**134**	**0**	**0**	**0**
National total in 2021 (No. 15 + 16)	**30**	**2,214**	**48,232,060**	**967,334**	**14,065,370**	**10,821,978**	**4,862**	**2,160**	**2,160**

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