

Librarians as Partners in Citizen Science: Drivers and Barriers

Collaboration and participation perspectives for open research in the Baltics:
researchers, citizens, and librarians as partners

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Svea Kaseorg

University of Tartu Library, Estonia

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Introduction

University libraries:

- foster Open Science within their organizations
- act as educators
- provide space, information, training opportunities for the society

Yet,

- little to no collaborative projects
- no well established link between Open Science and civic engagement



Research questions

- What are the current drivers that could enable academic libraries to take part in citizen science projects?
- What are the current barriers that have not enabled academic libraries to take part in citizen science projects?
- How to further develop collaboration between academic libraries and civic engagement?



Methodology

Three online roundtables with

- librarians (23)
- researchers (19)
- students (20)

- Thematic analysis of interviews



Photo from Unsplash



Main themes

- Personal experience with citizen science
- The drivers of civic engagement in academic libraries
- The barriers of civic engagement in academic libraries

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Library's role

- Librarians - could be both
- Scientists - potential as initiators
- Students - had no certain opinion



Main drivers

- Data management skills
- Digital literacy skills
- Large network
- Library as a physical meeting place
- Internal repositories
- Established and trusted communication channels



Photo by Gabriela Urm

“So I believe that libraries are and always were /.../ like a bridge between researchers, between students, between university administration's, like a bridge. So I believe that academic libraries could also aid in extending communication to the public.”

Main barriers

- Lack of knowledge about CS
- Lack of knowledge about libraries' services and potential
- Not enough visibility of CS projects
- Lack of workforce
- Not a priority for universities
- Lack of experience and specific skills
- Lack of ideas

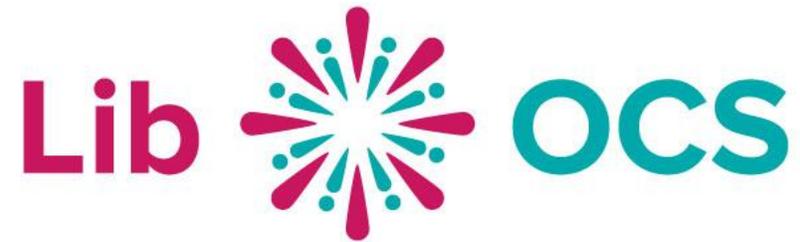
„The barrier is the engagement of the universities itself. Because we still are a part of universities. So our works are priorities, I mean, dictated by the priorities of the university.“



Guidelines

- Train the staff of research libraries on data collection, management, and curation
- Establish new positions in research libraries focused on citizen engagement
- Appoint a liaison person at the research library who is responsible for uniting citizen scientists with the university faculty
- Stress the need for stronger support from the universities
- Establish a central platform which unites information about how to participate, which skills are needed and which projects are looking for volunteers





Thank you!

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