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Administrative data provided by Malta Libraries revealed that, in 2020, total book loans stood at 617,820, a decrease of 428,049, or 40.9 per cent, over the preceding year.

Statistics on Libraries: 2020

When compared to the preceding year, the largest reduction in book loans was registered by public libraries in the Northern Harbour district. In total, this district had a year-on-year contraction of 49.7 per cent in book loans, with the biggest drops reported in Ħal Qormi and Birkirkara (Table 3).

The South Eastern and Western districts, which in the past years used to report the largest shares of increases in book loans, registered relative smaller drops, with reductions of 40.6 per cent and 40.8 per cent respectively (Table 3).

In 2020, book acquisitions amounted to 36,706, down by 23.1 per cent when compared to the preceding year. Both book donations to and book purchases by public libraries were of a lower volume, when compared to the previous year. In contrast, the acquisition of eBooks increased by 43.4 per cent (Table 1).

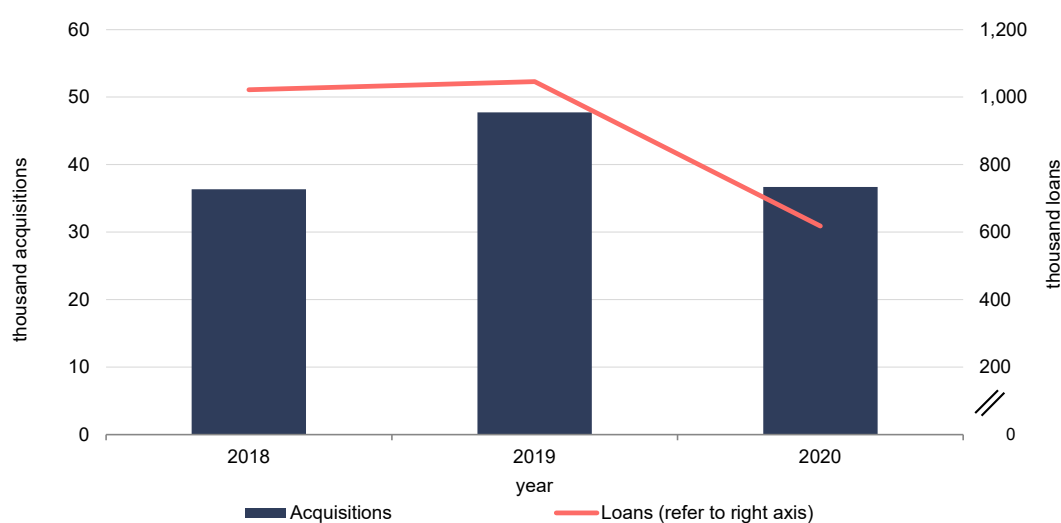
New members of public libraries, in 2020, stood at 5,641, down by 7.1 per cent when compared to the preceding year. Persons under the age of 18 represent over two-thirds of public libraries' new members. (Table 2).

The number of books and periodicals received by the National Library of Malta under legal deposit amounted to 963, down by 39.0 per cent when compared to 2019. The relative share of books and periodicals remained constant (Table 4).

The imports of printed book material and periodicals continued their downward trend in 2020 to reach €9.8 million. On the other hand, an increase of 25.2 per cent was reported in the export of book material (Table 5). The share of money spent on printed material in the total private final consumption expenditure increased by 0.16 percentage points, when compared to the preceding year (Table 6) ■



Chart 1. Book acquisitions and loans



Statistics in this News Release should be interpreted in the context of the COVID-19 situation. Due to the pandemic restrictions, libraries were closed between 30th March and 25th June 2020.

Table 1. Public libraries at a glance by year

	2018	2019	2020
Book acquisitions	36,369	47,754	36,706
<i>of which:</i>			
Book purchases	10,569	12,413	10,031
Book donations	24,120	33,702	24,325
eBooks	1,680	1,639	2,350
New library members	6,266	6,071	5,641
Book loans	1,022,346	1,045,869	617,820
<i>of which:</i>			
Central Public Library	120,195	115,719	68,672
Regional libraries	324,860	322,517	148,171
Branch libraries - Malta	433,867	465,421	282,125
Gozo Central Public Library	29,610	25,469	13,071
Branch libraries - Gozo	105,614	102,742	59,739
eBooks	8,200	14,001	46,042

Source: Malta Libraries

Chart 2. New library members

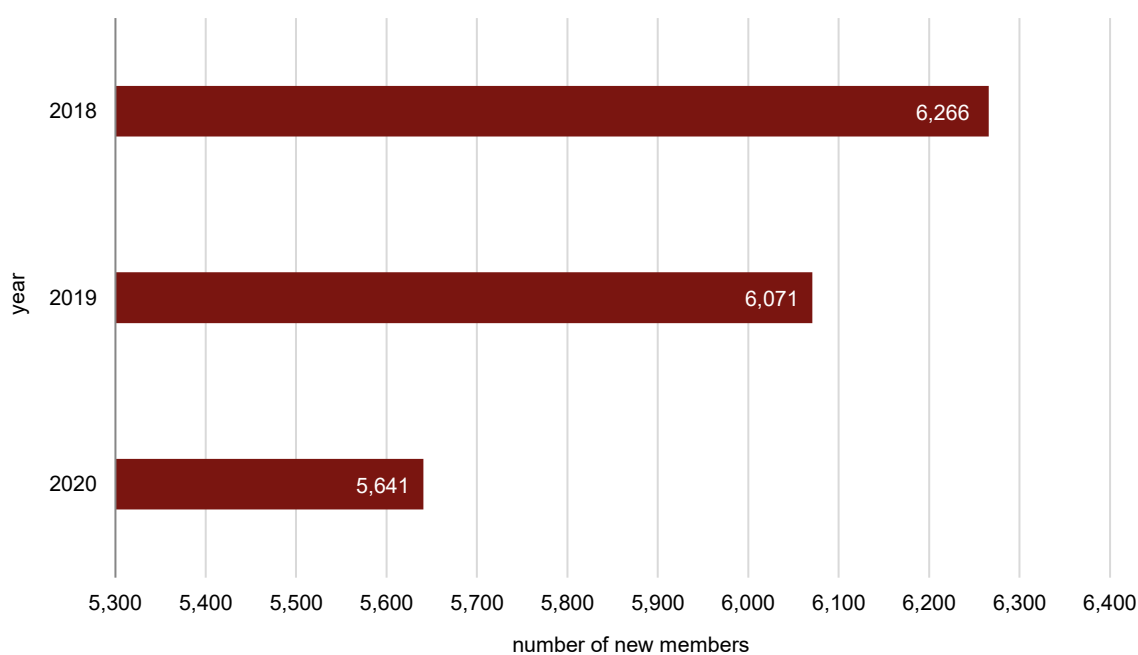


Table 2. New public library memberships by year

Type of membership	2018	2019	2020
	Number of new members		
	18 and over		
Adults ¹	1,946	1,935	1488
Adults residing in Malta without Maltese citizenship ^{1&3}	162	90	19
Adult foreign visitors ^{1 & 3}	10	4	1
Total	2,118	2,029	1,508
	Junior and Intermediate - under 18		
Junior - 12 years & under	3,880	2,502	2,070
Intermediate - 13 years to 17 years	94	1,372	1,680
Intermediate - 13 years to 17 years with additional adult lending rights ²	16	4	2
Junior - 12 years & under without Maltese citizenship ³	106	86	19
Intermediate - 13 years to 17 years without Maltese citizenship ³	4	8	1
Junior foreign visitors ³	6	1	-
Total	4,106	3,973	3,772
	Other		
Guests ⁴	5	1	135
Staff members	5	-	1
Teachers ⁵	32	68	225
Total	42	69	361
Total	6,266	6,071	5,641

¹ From 2014 all adults have additional junior lending rights

² Require a written permit from a parent or guardian

³ Require a Maltese citizen guarantee

⁴ Temporary borrower category for new members who enrol themselves online

⁵ This category was added in 2018 following the migration of 8 middle school libraries to Malta Libraries

Source: Malta Libraries

Chart 3. New public library memberships by category: 2020

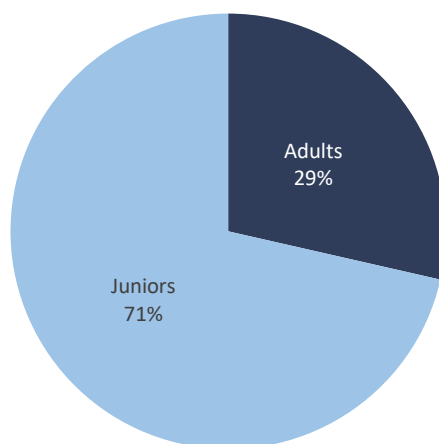


Table 3. Total book loans by year and locality of library ...

District and locality	2018	2019	2020
MALTA	1,014,146	1,031,868	571,778
Malta	878,922	903,657	498,968
Gozo and Comino	135,224	128,211	72,810
Southern Harbour	256,977	269,437	151,521
Bormla	1,826	1,658	768
Fgura	12,957	13,367	8,736
Floriana	120,195	115,719	68,672
Kalkara	2,961	2,403	789
Ħal Luqa	37,929	47,142	28,076
Paola	41,692	44,430	15,547
Santa Luċġja	16,125	17,627	11,599
Isla	348	622	149
Ħal Tarxien	2,885	3,936	1,745
Valletta	1,440	1,473	264
Birgu	2,481	1,927	1,137
Xgħajra ¹	N/A	580	675
Ħaż-Żabbar	16,138	18,553	13,364
Northern Harbour	255,132	254,877	128,204
Birkirkara	113,061	109,859	53,410
Gżira	9,794	9,831	6,596
Ħamrun	8,275	7,284	4,660
Msida	11,838	11,194	9,910
Pembroke	8,332	8,174	4,293
Ħal Qormi	86,110	92,439	40,502
San Ġwann	8,856	7,531	4,091
Tas-Sliema	8,866	8,565	4,742
South Eastern	176,609	201,882	119,863
Birżebbuġa	5,856	5,642	3,185
Ħal Ghaxaq	10,574	12,389	11,921
Gudja	17,374	27,132	14,119
Ħal Kirkop	7,086	6,693	3,333
Marsaskala	28,752	29,326	14,148
Marsaxlokk	38,746	41,073	26,636
Mqabba	6,413	10,385	13,310
Qrendi	13,260	23,893	11,074
Ħal Safi	7,531	5,637	2,392
Żejtun	27,101	25,925	12,271
Żurrieq	13,916	13,787	7,474

... Table 3. Total book loans by year and locality of library

District and Locality	2018	2019	2020
Western	75,536	83,879	49,644
Rabat	9,922	9,931	5,067
Ħad-Dingli	10,277	11,173	6,257
Mtarfa	8,262	13,410	6,605
Ħ'Attard	21,125	20,596	14,166
Siġġiewi	7,546	9,060	5,299
Ħaż-Żebbuġ	18,404	19,709	12,250
Northern	114,668	93,582	49,736
Ħal Għargħur	3,910	3,117	2,502
Mellieħa	14,387	14,128	6,828
Mġarr	6,585	7,952	5,477
Mosta	58,756	42,573	21,284
Naxxar	14,521	13,389	8,046
San Pawl il-Baħar	16,509	12,423	5,599
Gozo and Comino	135,224	128,211	72,810
Għajnsielem	8,127	8,031	4,752
Għarb	6,111	6,077	2,756
Għasri	3,162	2,749	2,078
Ta' Kerċem	824	999	526
Nadur	49,322	46,539	26,357
Qala	3,681	2,641	2,228
Victoria	29,610	25,469	13,071
San Lawrenz	3,342	3,509	2,208
Ta' Sannat	2,520	2,442	1,871
Xagħra	10,695	10,348	5,271
Xewkija	12,352	14,651	9,211
Żebbuġ	5,478	4,756	2,481

¹ Xgħajra library opened in 2019

N/A - not applicable

eBooks are excluded from this table.

Source: Malta Libraries

Table 4. Books and periodicals received at the National Library of Malta under legal deposit by year

	2018	2019	2020
Total	1,741	1,579	963
Books	506	750	462
Periodicals	1,235	829	501

Source: Malta Libraries

Table 5. Imports and exports of printed book material and periodicals in terms of value by year

	2018	2019	2020 ^P
		(Revised)	
Imports	12,392	11,856	9,797
Printed book material	7,657	7,522	7,402
Printed periodicals	4,735	4,334	2,394
Exports	4,685	3,901	4,885
Printed book material	4,685	3,900	4,884
Printed periodicals	-	-	-

^P Provisional

Source: International Trade Statistics, NSO

Table 6. Private final consumption expenditure in the domestic market by year

	2018	2019	2020 ^P
	(Revised)	(Revised)	
Total private final consumption expenditure	6,860,371	7,311,999	5,877,159
<i>of which:</i>			
Sub-total	34,041	34,477	37,382
Books	21,166	21,653	24,789
Newspapers and periodicals	8,835	8,808	8,715
Miscellaneous printed matter	4,040	4,016	3,878
% spent on printed material	0.50	0.47	0.64

^P Provisional

Note: 2018-2020 figures are in line with News release of 2021 Q1 ESA 2010:

https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Documents/2021/05/News2021_097.pdf

Source: National Accounts, NSO

Methodological notes

1. Malta Libraries is the public entity which took over the functions of the Libraries Department in 2011. It is responsible for the Malta and Gozo National Libraries, the Central Public Library, the Regional Libraries, the Branch Libraries and the Gozo Public Libraries.
2. In Table 2, as from 2019 the new members in the Intermediate 13 – 17 age group are taking into account the enrolment of secondary school students as part of the migration process of school libraries onto the Malta Libraries platform.
3. In Table 5 goods are classified according to the Harmonised System division codes:
 - 4901 - Printed books, brochures, leaflets and similar printed matter, whether or not in single sheets.
 - 4902 - Newspapers, journals and periodicals, whether or not illustrated or containing advertising material.
4. In Table 6 'Miscellaneous printed matter' includes:
 - catalogues and advertising material;
 - posters, plain or picture postcards, calendars;
 - greeting cards and visiting cards, announcement and message cards;
 - maps and globes.and excludes:
 - pre-franked postcards and aerogrammes;
 - stamp albums.
5. References to this news release are to be cited appropriately.
6. A detailed news release calendar is available on:
https://nso.gov.mt/en/News_Releases/Release_Calendar/Pages/News-Release-Calendar.aspx