



GREY LITERATURE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UN 2030 AGENDA

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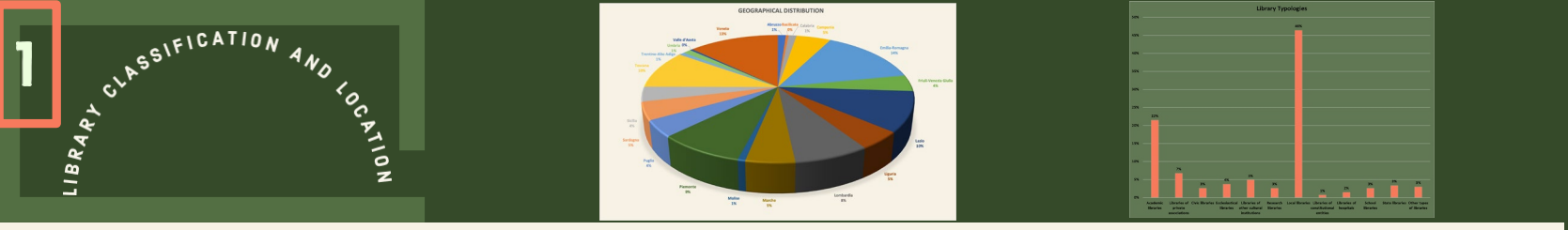
ANALYSIS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE PROPOSED TO ITALIAN LIBRARIES



Conclusions - The limited number of answers received led us to imagine that Italian libraries do not consider GL as a topic of primary interest. However, librarians replying to our survey seem to think of GL as an essential portion of libraries' documentary resources either for the patrons or for the implementation of UN SDGs. Therefore, they would be available for future projects dedicated to GL.

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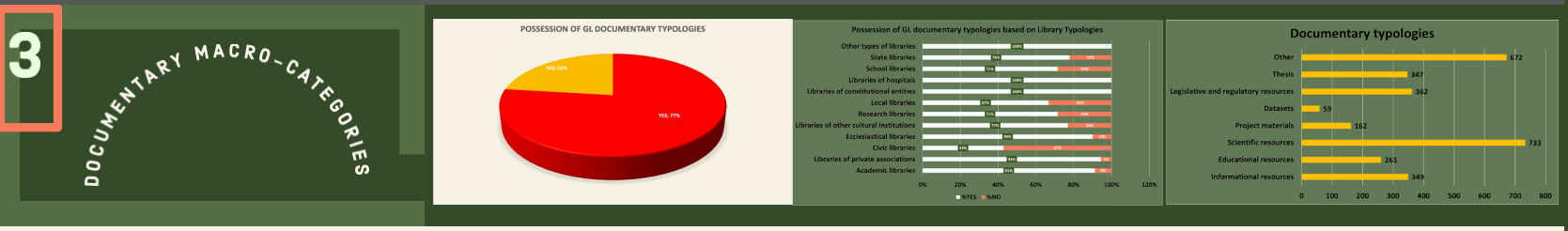
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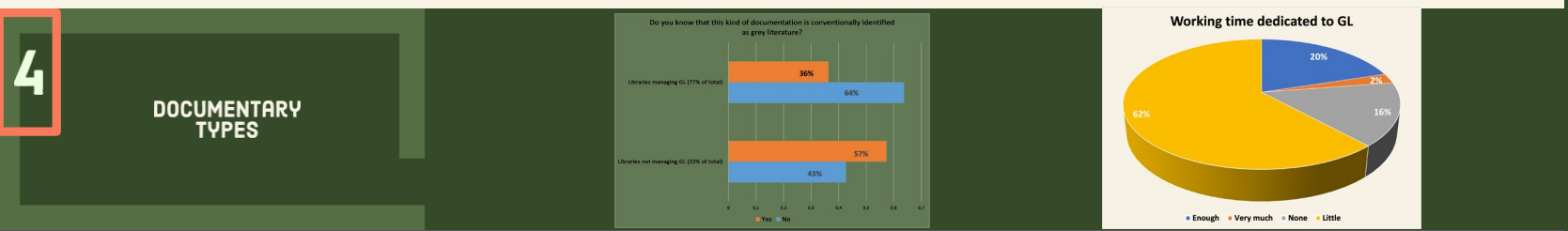
The first step of our analysis was to define our audience. We reached 4096 email addresses taken from a list available through the "Anagrafe Italiana delle Biblioteche" [Italian Libraries' General Registry] and the distribution list "Nilde-fori," connected to the platform used for the document delivery service. We received 265 answers. Therefore, our sample outlines only a tiny part of the libraries as distributed in the Italian territory. Our respondents had to select the kind of library they represented. We received almost half of the answers from local libraries, immediately followed by academic ones. Only small percentages represent the other types of libraries in the list proposed. We received answers from all over the country, even though most of the libraries were in regions of Northern (e.g., Veneto 13%) and Central Italy (e.g., Emilia Romagna 14%, Toscana 10%).



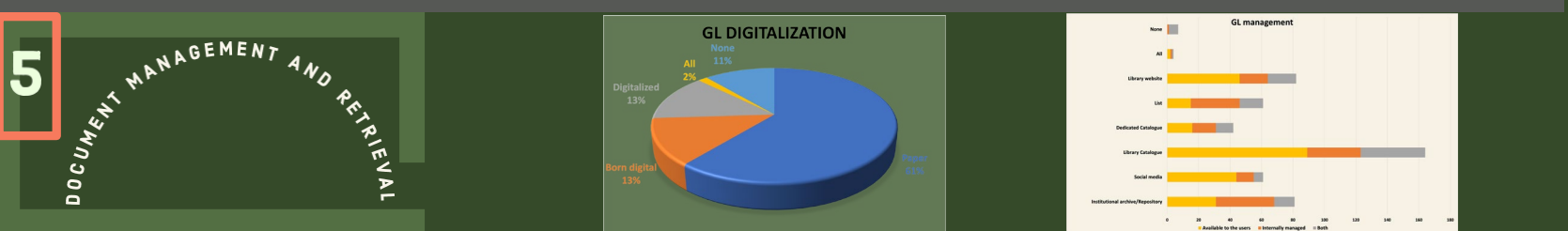
Our investigation moved from the seventeen Sustainable Development Goals of the UN 2030 Agenda. The most significant part of our audience was wholly (50%) or partially (28%) aware of the existence of the SDGs. A smaller percentage (22%) declared that they had not heard about them before. It seems that Italian librarians are pretty involved in the application of the SDGs, with specific reference to "Good health and well-being," "Gender equality," "Peace, justice and strong institutions," and "Reduced inequalities." "Quality education" is not at the top rank for libraries in Italy but comes after "Climate action."



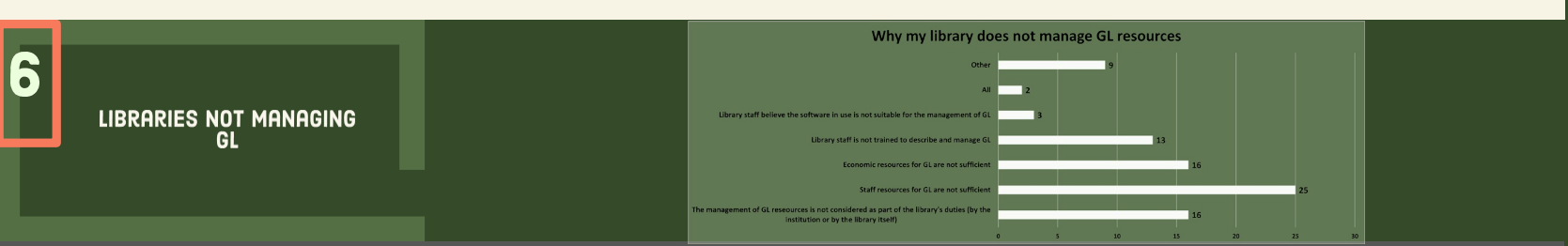
Section 3 of the questionnaire came to a closer analysis of the documentary categories we may identify as Grey Literature. We asked our audience if they managed informational resources, educational resources, scientific resources, project materials, datasets, legislative and regulatory resources, thesis, others. More than half of the Italian libraries (77%) possess them, with specific reference to academic libraries, if we consider them the second most representative group of our sample. Therefore, it is not surprising that the "scientific resources" are the most frequent documentary category in Italian libraries, immediately followed by the generic "Other" (including, e.g., photo, video, and images; catalogs; websites, etc.). We also decided to include the "Datasets" in our analysis, but they resulted in being the least possessed items.



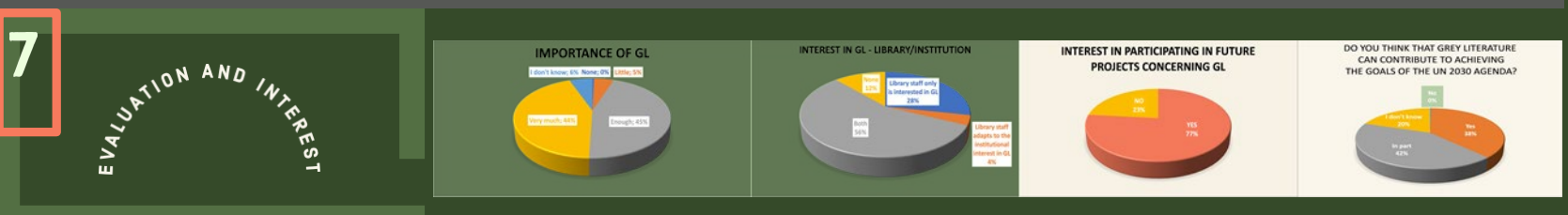
For reasons of space, here we must skip the analysis of the single typologies of materials included in the macro-categories described above, which we performed in section 4 of the questionnaire. Nevertheless, we asked our audience if they knew that such categories are identifiable as "Grey Literature." As shown in the graph above, librarians in Italy are mainly unaware of the meaning of "Grey Literature," especially those who declare to possess and manage grey resources. 64% of them answered "NO" to the dedicated question, where this percentage decreases to 43% in the case of libraries that do not deal with GL. As for the working time dedicated to managing GL in libraries possessing these materials, the most significant part of the sample saves only a few hours (62%), if none (16%), to this activity. Only 2% answered that they spent more hours working with GL.



The section dedicated to managing and retrieving GL also concerned its level of digitization. As can be seen from the graph, most of the grey literature in the libraries is in paper form. The percentage of digital documents, either born-digital or digitized, is 13%, while 11% of the participants did not specify. The primary tool for managing GL is library catalogs, followed by websites and institutional repositories, mainly used by academic and research libraries. Therefore, in most cases, GL is described and made available to users like all other documentation. Libraries use dedicated catalogs, simple directories, or social media to a lesser extent. The number of libraries claiming to use all or none of the tools is minimal.



It seems that libraries cannot manage GL due to a lack of staff and funds. These two problems, which have always afflicted libraries, do not allow the team to dedicate themselves to the grey material. However, several participants stated that the management of GL is not an institutional task to be fulfilled.



We dedicated the final section of the survey to understanding the interest in grey literature: questions were addressed to all libraries, regardless of GL ownership/management. The results show the interest of the libraries towards GL: in most cases, this interest is both librarians and institutions. Respondents consider GL as necessary to fulfill the informational needs of the users and, consequently, there is a willingness to study GL more in-depth (82%). Another interesting fact concerns the involvement in GL projects. 90% of the libraries never had the opportunity to participate in GL projects but are willing to participate in future projects (77%). As far as the connection between GL and the UN 2030 Agenda is concerned, the results divide almost equally between those who recognize a correlation between GL and the Agenda's SDGs and those who perceive it only partially. 20% of the respondents declared that they did not know how to answer the question. Only one participant responded to the question negatively.