**HOW TO MAKE KNOWLEDGE POWERFUL?**

**Empowering research by connecting libraries and facilitating access to knowledge.**

**The international HERMES project responds with research, training, and brand new software.**

In spite of the pandemic, or rather thanks to it, the *HERMES Strengthening digital resource sharing during COVID and beyond* project was born. The project, funded by the Erasmus Plus Programme, will be delivered by an international partnership made up of the Bologna Research Area Library at Italian National Research Council CNR (Italy), three universities in the Mediterranean area - Balamand University (Lebanon), University of Cantabria (Spain), MEF University (Turkey) - and the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).

Why thanks to the pandemic? In 2020, the COVID-19 forced academic libraries to move their work almost exclusively online. This both created a new challenge for the scholarly community - the sudden unavailability of physical collections - and gave new urgency to the need to address existing ones - the lack of digitization of library holdings, inadequate catalogs, lack of information about e-books and availability of electronic resources, legal problems in delivering digital documents to users, and a general lack of expertise in searching and retrieving digital documents.

In response to the emergency, in a very short time a group of librarians under the auspices of IFLA created "Resource Sharing during COVID-19" (RSCVD https://rscvd.org/): the first experiment in free digital sharing of bibliographic resources worldwide.

RSCVD has been based on the voluntary contributions of a hundred librarians around the world, who worked with the tools available at the time to share documents from their libraries with the global academic community.

After a very successful first reaction to the COVID emergency, the time was ripe to put in place an action capable of creating long-lasting impacts. This is what: a group of library experts have done in conceiving of the HERMES project, which will provide an opportunity to facilitate the work of librarians around the world by addressing the challenges COVID has created or intensified.

The project has just begun and will last 18 months, during which the group will work with the dual objective of refining the document sharing tools that libraries already use in Italy and around the world, making them more stable and efficient, and facilitating their use.

In complement to this, it will educate professionals on issues around wider access to knowledge. In this training, in addition to learning about the technicalities of operation of the software for librarians, crucial topics such as how to find quality scientific documentation, how to orient users with respect to open science, what ethical and legal implications are to be considered when using and sharing scientific documentation.

HERMES will produce open source software, strictly open educational materials and free training courses for librarians, university students and researchers in order to provide high quality, fast and free access to knowledge through the development of specific skills on the topic of digital resource sharing.

If you are interested, you can keep an eye on developments of this ambitious project on the project website https://www.hermes-eplus.eu/ and related social media.