Denmark – country profile

1 General background and who's who. Denmark strives to be a pioneer in terms of sustainability, climate and the implementation of UN's 2030 Sustainable Development Goals. SDGs are being implemented in a convincing and active way in almost all libraries, although in a part of them activities are still lagging behind. In Denmark public libraries are organised as part of 98 municipalities. A 2019 survey showed that 90% of municipalities are either already actively implementing / supporting the implementation of SDGs or are planning to do so in the near future.

Legislation and public investment solve only parts of our common SDG-related challenges. The implementation of SDGs requires broad support both at a national and a local level. As the most visited Danish cultural institution (37.4 million visits, DS2019), public libraries are already now a natural focal point for all citizens when it comes to civic engagement, access to knowledge and to the influence in changing habits and patterns of action. Since a public library-system is already in place in each of the 98 Danish municipalities, the libraries form a unique platform contributing to the development of common societal solutions in collaboration with other bodies/agents, and in cooperation with local citizens.

The Danish Library Association works together with Danish libraries to promote a 2030-focus at local level. Currently more than half of the Danish public libraries are involved in 2030 Activities according to official statistics (DS 2019); more are following, developing local SDG strategies and policies.

2 SDG priorities and policies in Danish libraries. Every year, the Danish Library Association publishes a Voluntary National SDG Review — DENMARK, (here is the 2021 PDF version].

The Danish Library Association considers that SDGs implemented in libraries should focus on the following:
— debates on SDGs with citizens,
— library collections and library exhibitions,
— projects in co-creation with partners/citizens (digital inclusion; digital citizenship),
— pursuing green library objectives (such as energy saving infrastructure, waste management, SDG policy with staff).

All SDGs are important for public libraries in the sense that libraries perform a natural task of promoting SDGs and disseminating information about the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development with their publics. Nevertheless, when it comes to practical implementation of SDGs in libraries and the formulation of strategic library goals and policies, some SDGs seem to be of particular importance, such as:

SDG 3. Good Health and Wellbeing: Better, more accessible health systems to increase life-expectancy,

SDG 4. Quality Education: Inclusive education to enable upward social mobility and end poverty,

SDG 5. Gender Equality: Education regardless of gender, advancement of equality laws, fairer representation of women,

SDG 8. Decent Work and Economic Growth: Creating jobs for all to improve living standards, providing sustainable economic growth,

SDG 9. Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure: Generating employment and income through innovation,

SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities: Making cities safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable,

SDG 12. Responsible Consumption and Production: Reversing current consumption trends and promoting a more sustainable future,

SDG 13. Climate Action: Regulating and reducing emissions and promoting renewable energy,

SDG 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Inclusive societies, strong institutions and equal access to justice,

SDG 17. Partnerships for the Goals: Revitalise strong global partnerships for sustainable development.

3 SDG-oriented projects

a. **Project Title: DB2030 Network**[1]. Related to SDGs: 04 Inclusive Quality Education and Life-Long Learning; 11 Sustainable, Strong Communities; 16 Promote peaceful and Inclusive Societies for Sustainable Development; 17 Partnerships.

Content: A National 2030 Network of cross-disciplinary character including libraries, NGOs etc. is working to stimulate 2030 activities in the library environment in Danish municipalities, thus supporting 2030 initiatives at both national and local level.

Methodology: The DLA2030 Network (DB2030 Netværk) has been established since 2019 as an informal network and is now counting more than 210 members on a national scale. A number of meetings/conferences have been organised to create awareness about and/or support SDGs in the last three years; more are in the pipeline.

Outcome (expected): A strong 2030 focus in the work of the public libraries in Denmark wherever relevant also affecting the internal library organisation. Externally libraries extend their role in addressing SDGs in municipalities, local schools and other institutions as well as in local associations and individual citizens.

b. **Project Title: The World's Best Solutions Live! (Verdens Bedste Løsninger Live), Ballerup Public Libraries**[2]. Related to SDG: 4 Education — Education: festival for citizens and public education institutions on UN 17 SDGs presenting a critical, but optimistic approach to solving the SDGs; 11 and 17 — strong local societies and collaborations: Facilitating collaboration between local citizen groups, local, national and global educational institutions and "green" NGOs.

Content: In 2019, the Ballerup Library held a two days festival on the SDG goals. The concept for the festival was inspired by Sunday Papers Live in London. Crucial was the involvement of the local high school and the Technical University of Denmark (DTU) in exploring the potential for collaboration of the two institutions in the "neutral" library setting. The library then collaborated with PLIX — Public Libray Innovation Exchange at MIT — and DTU in building Cube satellite models sessions together with citizens and students from the local high school in the library makerspace. On the first day of the festival 400 students attended. On day two of the festival, 250 citizens, volunteers, staff, keynote speakers and contributors spend a day eating, talking and learning about SDG goals. (This was a fine higher attendance than ordinary library users; the project was partly funded by the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces (in Danish: Slots- og Kulturstyrelsen).

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1 https://www.facebook.com/groups/706609713106254
2 https://bib.ballerup.dk/nyheder/events-udstillinger/worlds-best-solutions-live

Methodology: The festival was held in library premises, between the bookshelves, thus transforming library knowledge embedded in traditional books in a new form of learning where citizens present their different points of view and get a critical but optimistic approach to solving SDGs. The stage and surroundings were decorated with old lamps (second hand), small light balls, plates and pillows, sofas and armchairs, to make the library stage look like a homestyle relaxed environment. At the festival, students from DTU presented many products, from lunch prepared in the local organic farm to children making SDG hats, from music played by students of the local music school to local citizens which would collect rubbish outside the library. On stage, keynote speakers gave lectures inspired by the format of TED TALKs, stand-up and Sunday Papers Live. There were key people from Danish green organisations, celebrities with a green agenda, a chef who presented vegetarian food that tastes like meat and presentations about plastic in the oceans, sustainable clothes and much more. The format was deliberately flexible, so that other libraries/cultural institutions easily could copy the concept.

The satellite sessions: The CubeSat program was developed by PLIX — Public Library Innovation Exchange (MIT). Their idea of working with satellite technology could provide an understanding of how we monitor the globe from space — ice melting, forest death and so on. In collaboration with PLIX, there were two sorts of sessions: one for the public and the other for high school students. Members of the Coding Pirates — the local "programming club" for children and volunteer parents — and volunteers from the library's makerspace were present. In the version for higher school students, DTU made available their special knowledge of satellites.

Outcome (expected): Ballerup Library will hold other versions of the festival — an event with speakers on the theme UN 17 SDGs. This time the audience were keypersons and leaders from the Danish public libraries in Denmark, other professionals working with culture in Denmark, green NGOs and representatives from educational institutions. SDG-related knowledge and working methods will be presented and library contribution will focus on the "why" and "how". The festival showed that SDG-related activities can be organised both locally and nationally. Ballerup Library has now decided to organise the festival every year and is working to involve more citizens as volunteers. The library staff has now become aware of the relevance of SDGs into their activities. And the local community and politicians now know that the library can provide knowledge, inspire people to take action and play a role in the attainment of the 2030 Agenda.

c. **Project Title: 2030 Certification of Svendborg Public Library (Certificering af Svendborg Bibliotek)[3]. Related to SDG Goal(s):**
SDG 17 — Partnerships for action SDG 3 — Good health, SDG 4 — Education
SDG 12 — Responsible consumption

Content: Through the help of the company Green Network, Svendborg Bibliotek has become certified Sustainable Business Partner. This means, that Svendborg Bibliotek has completed a CSR capacity measurement, which confirmed the required knowledge about sustainably and CSR tools.

Methodology: Because of this certification, Svendborg Library has created a strategy for sustainability with the following focus points:
— to be a sustainable workplace,
— to be a house of knowledge and development of sustainability,
— To have healthy, competent and creative employees.

3 https://svendborgbibliotek.dk/fnsverdensmaal

A strategy where librarians commit themselves to undertake specific actions. Working with sustainability is a conversion, for which good timing is crucial. Therefore, all librarians have to take part in working with sustainability to attain the 17 goals. As an example we are currently working on the transformation of the green areas surrounding the library into a giant buffet for insects, and an outdoor space for contemplation, mental health, well-being and much more.

Outcome (expected): Enlighten about, and contribute to, a shared responsibility; success criteria for our actions — i.e. how, and what, measuring the attainment of SDGs; support all employees in the implementation of SDGs.

d. **Verdensrum (Space)**[4]**.** Verdensrum ("Space") addresses SDG 17: "Partnerships for action" and consists of a physical library room in Dokk1 (Aarhus Public Library) whose name is indeed 'Space'. This large room, which also includes the front area, has a view on the Aarhus basin and the harbor. Communication in Verdensrum takes place in many different ways with many partners conveying the UN's 17 world goals to the many different target groups.

Target groups for Verdensrum include:
— citizens of Aarhus Municipality,
— business enterprises,
— Ttourists and international guests,
— school students,
— high-school students.

It is about what happens across science, commerce, culture, history and social sciences.

4. Funding sources and evaluation. Libraries get financial support partly through their ordinary library budget and partly through additional funding. Additional funding is generated from international organisations (European Commission, Structural Funds, etc), ministries, city/provincial/regional councils. There will be a variety of different departments financing library projects and it depends very much on how the public library is organised within the local municipality. Although some public libraries in Denmark do take very active part in projects funded by for example the Erasmus or the Creative Europe programmes, the vast majority of activities in public libraries are financed by national funding. A Erasmus+ — program can be found: Newcomer Connectable. Normally funding is assigned to cultural departments and agencies and it may reach 10% of the total library budget.

Evaluation is performed according to standard library procedures and, due to the nature of the public library network, it is up to local municipalities to evaluate SDG-oriented projects. Alternative forms of evaluation were tested — unsuccessfully.