Finland - country profile

1 General background and who’s who. Finnish libraries are well aware of the importance of SDGs and library operations have been, or are being adapted to the Agenda 2030 on sustainable development; in many libraries sustainable development is a core library concept and SDGs are implemented in a convincing and active way; nevertheless, activities are still lagging behind in some of them. This successful policy started when libraries were incorporated in the National Voluntary Review 2020.¹

In the Helsinki own voluntary report libraries were mentioned first, as institutions supporting literacy within the country. The second time was in the Secure Box, in the list of activities in education and training that should be continued, since they function well (p. 146). Research and development expenditure has picked up after a hiatus, while sustainable development is being taken more and more effectively into account at schools and nursery schools. However, while reading literacy has traditionally been strong among young Finns, it is now declining. Learning differences between girls and boys are among the largest of all OECD countries. Men also acquire less education than women” (p. 145).²

2 SDG priorities and policies in Finnish libraries. Since libraries promote literacy and ensure equal access to information, the Finnish Library Association considers that the following SDGs are central to their policy:

SDG 4.6: Quality Education: Inclusive education to enable upward social mobility and end poverty,
SDG 16.10: Access to public information within SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Inclusive societies, strong institutions and equal access to justice.

3 SDG-oriented projects

1. Sustainable Library 2030 road map (SDG 1, 3, 4, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 16, 17). During the spring of 2020, the Oulu City Library prepared an action plan for sustainable development, the Sustainable Library 2030 roadmap. The plan is based on the objectives of the UN Agenda 2030 and the eco-promises prepared by the City Library in 2015. When preparing the roadmap, it was also ensured that it was in line with the objectives of the City of Oulu’s environmental program, Towards a Carbon-Neutral Oulu 2026, which entered into force in autumn 2019.

The Sustainable Library 2030 roadmap recorded the most important areas for development in the near future (2020-22) and prepared a detailed implementation plan for them, as follows.

a) Promoting environmental awareness. The aim is to increase the environmental awareness of both customers and staff through the various means of environmental communication available. The aim is also to increase library’s visibility as an ecological actor by communicating externally about the library’s own responsible activities.

b) Reducing the environmental impact. The aim is to review the library’s energy use, logistics, recycling and collection practices and to reduce the environmental impact of their activities, as well as to reduce the use of unnecessary plastic.

¹ Valtioneuvoston selonteko kestävän kehityksen globaalista toimintaohjelmasta Agenda2030:sta Kestävän kehityksen Suomi - pitkäjänteisesti, johdonmukaisesti ja osallistavasti.
c) Responsible construction. In order to reduce the ecological footprint of library properties, the aim is to take ecology into account in connection with renovations and new construction, in the entire construction process — from design to the building. The aim is to design and implement the most energy-efficient facilities possible and to pay attention to environmental friendliness in all solutions related to practical equipment and interior design. Responsibility in construction is also reflected in e.g. involving customers and staff in the planning of future facilities.3

2. **Vihreä kirjasto (SDG 3, 4, 10, 11, 12, 13).** The Public Libraries’ Environmental Awareness for the 2020s is a platform intending to share environmental information from the entire library field and to promote environmental work in libraries project, as well as environmental tools and training materials.

SDG 3: Reading promotes well-being and library card holders live longer.
SDG 4: Libraries support the reading and lifelong learning of children, young people, and adults alike. The environmental aspects are included in all library activities, from story time to art exhibition and events.
SDG 10: Public libraries provide free of charge basic services that are available to all. Libraries do not tolerate any form of bullying or discrimination. Libraries are responsible employers.
SDG 11: Libraries follow municipal environmental guidelines and many libraries have their own environmental programme, certificate or ecological subside system.
SDG 12: Libraries are pioneers in the circular economy and act as sharing economic platforms. Libraries offer premises and tools for sharing, reducing the need for consumption.
SDG 13: Libraries recycle and save energy. Libraries provide up-to-date and reliable information on environmental issues and help find information.

**4 Funding sources and evaluation.** Budget for SDG-related projects is generated from ordinary finances as well as additional sources of funding, including Ministries and other cultural departments or agencies. Evaluation is carried out only in the case of projects which receive additional funding in relation to the criteria set up by the funding agency/institution.

---
3 https://www.ouka.fi/documents/78400/596635/Kest%C3%A4v%C3%A4+kirjasto+2030+-tiekartan-tiivistelm%C3%A4.pdf/542f1a4b-737e-4147-b3ad-3865a96dd074