1 General background and who’s who. The National Library of Latvia and the Library Association of Latvia are coordinating the work linked with the implementation of SDGs in Latvia. Moreover, the Library Development Centre of the National Library of Latvia Association produces an annual library report. A section of the report is dedicated to SDG-related library work and sets up the policy in this field.\(^1\) For this reason, SDGs are being implemented in Latvian libraries in a convincing and active way, although the level of activity varies in different regions and in some libraries activities are still lagging behind.

Libraries are mentioned in the official SDG document “Latvija 2030” — Latvia’s Sustainable Development Strategy until 2030 (Latvia 2030).

Latvia’s sustainable development strategy is hierarchically the highest long-term development planning document in Latvia. The development of Latvia’s sustainable development strategy is ensured by the Cabinet of Ministers and approved by the Saeima. Latvia’s sustainable development strategy determines the country’s long-term development priorities and spatial development perspective.

With a strategy focused on “the preservation, interaction and enrichment of cultural space” Latvian libraries are invited to “preserve and develop the cultural capital of Latvia and to promote a sense of belonging to the Latvian cultural space by developing a national identity based on social creativity and on a quality cultural environment in Latvia”. The National Development Plan of Latvia for 2021-2027 emphasises the “Contribution of culture and sport to a sustainable society”, and is a declared goal within the national strategy: “Culture and sport promote the economic growth and social development of Latvia and contribute to a creative and sustainable society”.

2 SDG priorities and policies in Latvian libraries. The Library Association of Latvia and the National Library of Latvia consider that SDGs should be implemented through:
— debates on SDGs with citizens,
— library collections,
— projects in co-creation with partners/citizens (digital inclusion; digital citizenship).

They focus their activities on the following SDGs:
SDG 4. Quality Education: Inclusive education to enable upward social mobility and end poverty,
SDG 11. Sustainable Cities and Communities: Making cities safe, inclusive, resilient and sustainable,
SDG 16. Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions: Inclusive societies, strong institutions and equal access to justice,
SDG 17. Partnerships for the Goals: Revitalize strong global partnerships for sustainable development.

---


3 SDG-oriented projects

1. Creation of Network of Family Digital Activity Hubs for Wellbeing and Education Support in Eastern Aukštaitija and Southern Latgale (Network-DigiHubs) (SDG 4, 9, 16, 17).

Technological leaps bring major changes in the society. The lack of digital literacy skills is becoming a capital problem. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has carried out several investigations which show that, even though the general competences of the population in the Baltic region are sufficient, problem-solving skills invoking technologies are less than average.

With a purpose to reduce this problem, 4 libraries from Utena, Zarasai, Daugavpils and Preili joined forces for a project (the project is funded by Interreg V-A Latvia-Lithuania Programme 2014-2020). Its objective is to adapt different library practices and use those as a base to create a new public service — Family Digital Activity Hubs (DigiHubs). DigiHubs would serve as technology cognition centres to people of various age, gender and social status. The project was implemented in the period 2017-2019.

2. Rural and Regional Libraries as Local Family Entrepreneurship centres (SDG 4, 8). The Erasmus+ project Family Business Library is an adult education project funded by the European Commission. It promotes entrepreneurship education in non-urban and rural regions. The main idea of the project is to address people in rural regions through local and regional libraries. A particular focus of the activities is the promotion of family businesses and local entrepreneurship. A key aspect of the approach is to use regional and rural libraries as a platform to reach the local population. The six project partners come from Latvia, Germany, Croatia, Italy and Greece. The project started on the 1st of September 2020.

The objectives of the Family Business Library project:
— the development and implementation of innovative practices of teaching Entrepreneurship to people living in regional and rural areas,
— an increased sense of initiative and entrepreneurship among people living in regional and rural areas,
— the setting up of a system where libraries serve as a centres for rural entrepreneurship development.

Main results of the project:
— e-learning module on Entrepreneurship for use in libraries,
— mentoring methodology and e-learning course module for librarians,
— policy paper to better exploit the results of the project.

3. My Green Identity (SDG 13, 17) The ultimate aim of the “My Green Identity” thematic network project is to fight against climate change and support sustainable development. The aim will be reached by developing a multi-professional transnational network with closely involved partner organisations and participants. This network ensures that partners create, produce and implement collaborative cross border measures encouraging active citizenship in people by sharing information and making it possible to combat climate change.

4 https://family-business-library.eduproject.eu/
5 https://mygreenidentity.net
Besides producing a thematic international network, the project aims to increase the competence and knowledge of the staff in partner organisations on international cooperation, climate change and UN’s Agenda 2030 SDG. In addition, the purpose of the project is to expand and emphasise the role of libraries as active initiators in the field of sustainable development and make that role visible to decision makers and library customers.


Objectives:
— analyse selected phenomena in the history of artistic production (in architecture, film, audiovisual, art, music, performing arts, visual arts and design) and its role in cultural capital creation,
— examine current cultural processes through the mapping and analysis of how cultural ecosystem actor groups interact, as well in of manifestations of cultural participation;
— analyse the roles and transformations of specific kinds of cultural heritage in the cultural ecosystem, and the resources of memory institutions as a driver of diversity and value creation,
— study the diversity of heritage communities and other active societal groups (especially young people) and the range of novel practices and roles in heritage management and communication,
— explore and systematise methodological approaches to artistic and digital research in arts and cultural heritage studies and tertiary education,
— develop methodologies and methods of measuring social and economic impact of cultural and creative sector activities and propose monitoring indicators workable in the Latvian context,
— develop research capacity of thematic researcher groups, increase integration of the work done in the five partner institutions,
— transfer the relevant knowledge to policy-makers, practitioners and other stakeholder groups.

5. Alojas novada uzņēmējdarbības atbalsta centrsbibliotēka/Aloja district business support center-library (SDG 8, 9, 13). With the opening of the Aloja County Business Support Center-Library SALA on October 28, 2016, a business support infrastructure was created in the county, which will be used for the development of existing and new companies, activation of the local community and organisation of public events. The building houses a modern library, seminar rooms, remote workplaces and a spacious conference hall with a great view of the lake. Aloja municipality is one of the first in Latvia to implement the construction of low energy buildings and use wood as a basic construction material in the construction of public buildings.

In 2018, the building won the 1st place in the competition “The most sustainable building in 2018”, in the category “Public buildings”. The project is implemented within the framework of the European Economic Area Financial Instrument 2009-2014 program “National Climate Policy” project application open tender “Development of sustainable buildings, renewable energy technologies and innovative emission reduction technologies”. 
6. **Zenit stāsti** *(SDG 10, 11)*. The project ran from August 2020 to January 2021. The main aim of the project “Zenit stories” was to encourage the sense of belonging of the minorities living in Latvia, especially those, who live in Daugavpils, Jelgava and Liepāja, through encouraging a dialogue and deepening an understanding between generations in minority families and in-between Latvian speaking and Russian speaking people. In practice — students from minority schools asked for photographs of the time between 1960s and 1980s with objects, events or places from their parents, grandparents or other well-known persons and interview the owner about the photography. The photos was digitised, and the students analysed the stories — what has changed and how the story makes them feel? — and share their stories during storytelling evenings in each city and encourage their parents and other elder people to attend the storytelling evenings and participate as well. A more socially cohesive society has been encouraged through the connection between students, their parents or different people that they interviewed and local librarians by working together to analyse and digitise the photos and information.

7. **Debate Your Issue (DYI)** *(SDG 4, 16)*. Every democracy needs citizens who ask critical questions, who are not afraid to express their views, but who also know how to listen to the opinions of others and how to respond to them in a matter-of-fact and fair way.

The aim of the project Debate Your Issue (DYI) is to strengthen the awareness of young Europeans (18-25 years old) on the topics of politics, democracy, tolerance and their threats: disinformation, intolerance, polarisation and hate speech. Debate can teach young people how to stand up for their opinions and views in a well-founded and convincing manner. Furthermore, by dealing with relevant socio-political questions in a critical manner, it contributes to political education in the targeted region.

The project activities include debate training programs and competitions, adaptations of a methodological approach, joint publications, providing open and effective tools for counterbalancing the rising polarisation and disengagement of young people in six European countries (Belgium, Czech Republic, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Serbia). During the project the young people will access knowledge of relevant socio-political issues, and acquire skills of the art of debate. In the second part of the project they will take part in a debate competition, in order to compete with their peers from other countries.

Young people in all six project countries are invited to apply for debate training and active participation in the project activities. The training will take place both in person and online, the project is developing recommendations for debate trainers, webinars for online observation, as well as infographics that will help many other young people to learn aspects of media literacy.

Project partners are Mediawijs (Belgium), Goethe-Institut Czech Republic (Czech Republic), National Library of Latvia (Latvia), International Youth Debate Alumni Association Lithuania (Lithuania), Kolegium Europy Wschodniej (Poland), Novo kulturno naselje (Serbia). Project implementation period will be from 03.02.2020. to 02.08.2021. The project is co-funded by the Erasmus+ programme of the European Union.

---

6 https://www.lnb.lv/lv/projekti/projekts-zenit-stasti
8. Digitisation of the Cultural Heritage content (1st stage); Digitisation of the Cultural Heritage content (2nd stage)\(^8\) (SDG 4, 11). The National Library of Latvia implements a European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) and nationally co-funded projects in the field of Latvia’s digital cultural heritage, together with project partners — the National Archives of Latvia, the State Inspection for Heritage Protection of Latvia, and the Cultural Information System Centre.

The main objective of the projects is to ensure the wide availability of Latvian cultural heritage to society in the digital environment, which serves as a basis for strengthening national identity, developing the cultural, scientific, knowledge society and creative industries, ensuring the long-term preservation of national cultural heritage in digital form, and creating opportunities for its repeated use in new products and services, as well as its integration into a unified European and global cultural digital space.

4 Funding sources and evaluation. A feasibility study was carried out on the reasons why European resources are not well exploited. It produced the following evidences:
— library projects usually have a local scope, at the best national, very seldom European,
— there is still a language barrier, which undermines the circulation of, and access to, resources.

Evaluation is performed according to standard library procedures. However, an assessment of projects in 2014-2020 show the following statistics:
— 28% of all projects were socially responsible events (events for elderly people, social integration of children coming from dysfunctional families, promotion of volunteer work and public health etc.),
— 24% of all projects focused on practical results — improvements to libraries as social infrastructure (construction of new library buildings and/or purchase of equipment),
— the same percentage (24%) involved educational activities in libraries and skill development (informal education programmes, professional development, skills acquisition and in particular digital skills),
— 18% of projects implemented innovative services (interactive formats for events, digital activity centres, etc.),
— 8% of libraries were involved in the improvement of local public space (environmental and natural tourism, creation of public spaces near libraries etc.).\(^9\)

---
