

# Sustainable Development Goals & Libraries

## Inspirational examples



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**Cover image:** Examples of the SDG activities of the libraries. From Middelfart Culture and Library (photo: Chora 2030), Rudersdal Libraries (photo: Karina Janø) and Esbjerg Municipal Libraries.

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# Introduction

Public meetings, swap markets and floral meadows. Ideas and new initiatives are coming thick and fast from the local library. Danish libraries are important local cultural centres and meeting places. For this very reason, they are in a good position to help people and local communities understand and get started with the sustainable transition that is pushing its way up the agenda. Libraries around the country have already thrown themselves into the task – both by making the library itself more sustainable and by entering local partnerships concerning the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

We want to showcase the many great examples to inspire others and help more libraries get started with this work. For this reason, we have compiled a wide range of examples in this inspiration catalogue.

The examples come from pilot libraries across Denmark that have helped develop the SDG certification of libraries and in doing so have adopted the SDGs in their work with the organisation, operations, citizens and local communities.

The inspiration catalogue was developed by Chora 2030 with support from TrygFonden in 2022.

## **Chora 2030**

Chora 2030 is a sustainability organisation that works with educational institutions, preschools, libraries, and associations to create capacity for action so that people of all ages are involved in the sustainable development of our society.

► [www.chora2030.dk](http://www.chora2030.dk)

# How to use the inspiration catalogue

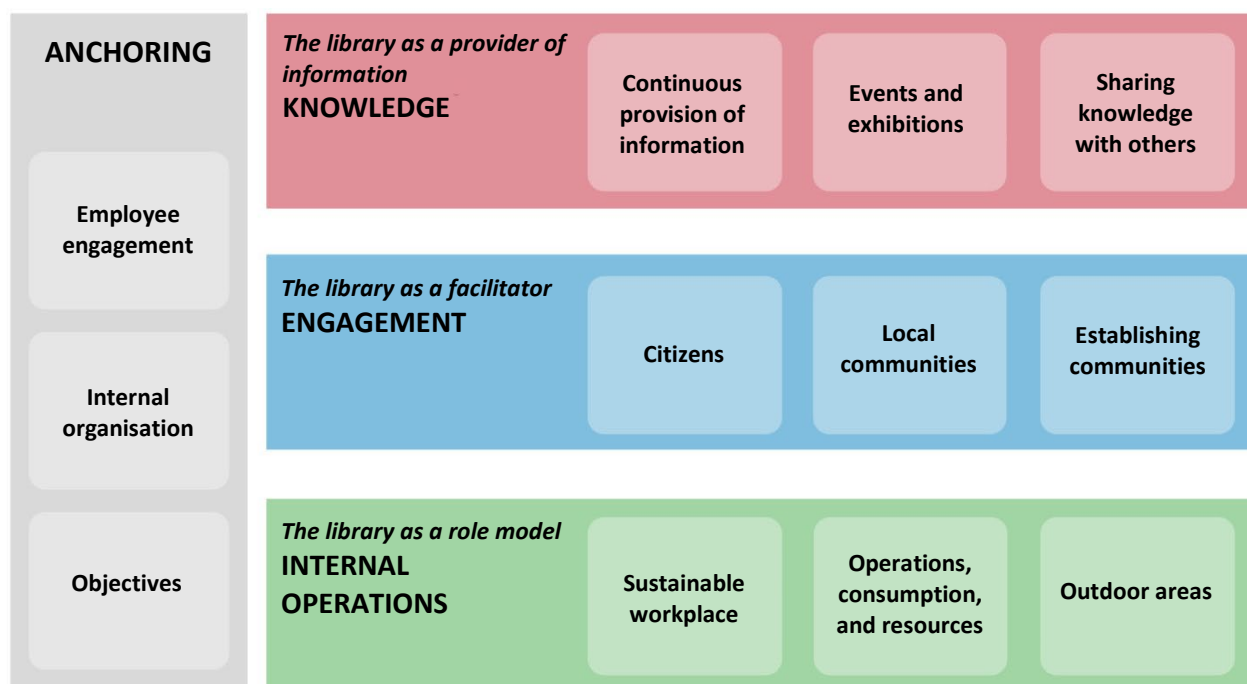
The catalogue is primarily intended to be an aid for libraries that would like to be SDG-certified. But it can be used by all libraries looking for inspiration for sustainable activities in the library and in collaboration with others.

The inspiration catalogue starts with two sections that briefly describe the background of and framework for the SDG work of the libraries. The first section covers why libraries should be interested in SDGs at all, and the second section covers the SDG certification of libraries. After these two introductory sections, the catalogue is structured according to the categories that form the structure of the SDG certification:

1. Anchoring in the organisation
2. Knowledge – the library as a provider of information
3. Engagement – the library as a facilitator
4. Internal operations – the library as a role model

Each category contains three sub-categories, each of which details a number of examples of activities and initiatives in the libraries. In the catalogue, we have prioritised activities and initiatives that are manageable and easy to implement for other libraries, and which do not necessarily depend on external funding. However, we have also included some larger projects and events. Although those initiatives may be difficult to replicate, there may be inspiration to draw from parts of the activity, the method or the collaborators. The larger projects can also provide inspiration for future development projects.

## Model for SDG certification



# Background

## SDGs at the library

All levels of Danish society are discussing how to promote a sustainable transition. This often takes place with the UN SDGs as the overall framework, because these goals constitute a series of benchmarks for what is needed to create a better, greener, and more just world.

This is not a task that the state or municipality can take on alone. Citizens also need to get involved and help start local initiatives that can inspire people to try out new ways of doing things. But it can be difficult for the individual citizen to find out how to get started. The library has an important role to play here.

The Danish public libraries are one of the few local places where people interact across generations and social and educational backgrounds. This gives libraries a unique opportunity to help create local communities and build collaborations with others in the local area and across generations.

As a library employee, you can help translate SDGs to make it clearer to citizens how the goals can be converted into local initiatives. You can do this by giving examples or creating activities that can inspire citizens to start their own initiatives. What would they like to do to contribute to a better, greener, and more just world? And what can be done locally and together with others? This will make the library a meeting place where people can learn from and together with others who share their interest.

When you put on activities relating to SDGs, these initiatives do not necessarily have to refer directly to the goals or to sustainability. On the contrary, it may be a good idea to focus on the actual content of the activities themselves, because this will give a clearer impression of what they are about. It is easier to wrap your head around “forest foraging walk” or “sewing workshop with reusable materials” than the significance of an SDG.

That said, the SDGs provide common terminology and knowledge that can be worked into the activities or provided where appropriate. They also allow local efforts to be linked to the global challenge so that people can consider the activities from a broader perspective.

The pilot libraries in the certification programme have also demonstrated that SDGs have an important function inside the organisation by contributing to a common understanding of the new initiatives and activities that are being developed. Finally, the SDG work of the libraries can give rise to new alliances and collaborators because there is a common agenda.

You can find out more about the 17 SDGs at the UNDP website. This also shows the targets, which can give a better understanding of what elements and challenges the various goals entail.

► [www.undp.org](http://www.undp.org)



## SDG certification of libraries

The SDG certification is a common framework for the SDG work of the libraries and covers the organisational, operational, and citizen-oriented work of the libraries.

The SDG certification was created to strengthen the role of libraries as a driver of citizen engagement and sustainability so that the local library is not just seen as a knowledge centre but can also increase citizen participation and capacity for action. This is done by the libraries themselves contributing to more sustainable solutions and by encouraging local citizens and communities to get involved.

The programme helps libraries work with sustainability in a structured and holistic way. It is based on the model you can see at the start of this catalogue, and which is intended to support the SDG work of the libraries. The model also forms the basis for the action plan that the library must prepare as part of the certification.

The first step in the certification process is to involve employees in making suggestions for the library's SDG and sustainability work. The library must then prepare a three-year plan for the SDG work that relates to the four categories of the model: Anchoring, Knowledge, Engagement, and Internal Operations. Once the library has made a good start in terms of initiatives and activities within all four categories, it can be certified.

The certification is thus an acknowledgement that the library has embraced the SDGs and is committed to working with them at all levels within the organisation and in collaboration with others.

The SDG certification was developed through collaboration between the Danish Library Association, Chora 2030 and 20 Danish libraries. Read more about the certification here (available in Danish only):

► [db2030.dk/certificering](https://db2030.dk/certificering)

### Celebrating the 10 first certified libraries at Dokk1 in Aarhus.

Photo: Aarhus Libraries



# Anchoring

The SDG work of the libraries is largely outward facing, but as a start, it is a good idea to look inwards to ensure that the work is properly anchored within the organisation. Among other things, this involves looking at the organisation of sustainability efforts and how the internal structures best support the overall strategy. It also involves employee engagement and identifying the need for skills development among employees.

As part of the certification process, the library must hold an employee workshop where they jointly prepare principles or guidelines for the library's sustainability efforts. This is to ensure broad engagement and to strengthen ownership of initiatives among library employees. At the same time, the principles form the basis for developing the SDG work of the library.

Anchoring work takes time and may differ a lot from library to library. It depends, among other things, on the size of the library. Here we provide some examples of the approaches that have been taken. In this category, the examples are not divided into three sub-categories but concern employee engagement, internal organisation, and the process of defining the library's objectives in an action plan.

## Examples

### **Kolding Libraries: Employee engagement and development of principles**

At Kolding Libraries, the certification process started with a brainstorming session at a staff meeting where everyone was invited to come up with ideas for the sustainability principles of the library. The sustainability group facilitated the idea development, consisting of three stages: First, reverse brainstorming, where the employees were asked to come up with suggestions on how to make their work tasks less sustainable. Then brainstorming what they can do more sustainably. Finally, brainstorming their dreams for a sustainable library. The sustainability group then worked on the ideas and presented a draft to the management group. Once the principles were ready, they were presented at another staff meeting. Next, all departments were asked to implement a self-selected principle and communicate their action to all employees. Among other things, this resulted in IT & Logistics providing a surplus cart where everyone could leave unneeded office supplies that were cluttering their desks. The cart was completely filled.

### **Kulturium Ishøj Library: Staff and citizen vote on principles**

Kulturium Ishøj Library has involved both employees and citizens in the development of the library's principles. Initially, SDGs were the focus of the library's staff days. Here, the SDG group gave examples of how the library is already working with SDGs, and the employees read about the goals and came up with suggestions for efforts in relation to the various goals. The ideas that were most suitable as principles were picked out, and a vote was held in two parts: One among the staff and one in connection with the event Danmarks Største Vælgermøde [Denmark's Largest Election Meeting], which was held at the library. At this event, citizens were encouraged to vote for the principles that they thought the library should proceed with. To get as many people as possible to vote, the library held a raffle for a sustainable basket for both a citizen and an employee. The principles selected were presented at a staff meeting, where groups of employees discussed the challenges and opportunities associated with working with the principles. To round off the process, the library held an exhibition concerning SDGs where the principles were also presented, and which indicated whether it was staff or citizens who had come up with them. The library is now working to incorporate the principles seamlessly into its everyday activities.



### Tønder Municipal Libraries: Internal organisation

Staff at Tønder Library have been included throughout the process of building a solid foundation for SDGs at the library. Several staff meetings were held where everyone was given information about the goals, including a presentation from Herning Libraries' programme director for the UN SDGs. At the staff meetings, the employees worked together in groups to come up with principles and suggestions for the library's action plan. It has been clearly communicated that the SDGs are a shared concern across all teams. The library has also adopted a new team structure with many teams across the organisation, as opposed to the previous division into the children/adult team. In this connection, an SDG team has been set up with overall responsibility for ensuring that the library achieves the goals in the action plan and that the SDGs are also represented in the other teams.

### Aarhus Libraries: Sustainable book sale at the library

A different approach to the work of creating ownership among employees comes from Aarhus Libraries. Here, the profits from the library's biannual sale of used books go into a micro pool for funding co-created sustainable activities at all the municipality's 19 libraries. This pool is called a seed pool, and these funds can be applied for by all library staff for larger or smaller SDG projects. In this way, the income from the old books will be used for further events and initiatives. This has resulted in insect hotels, compost bins, climate quizzes, places where citizens can share things with each other (share stations), upcycling workshops, climate literature cafés and much more.

### Do-it-yourself kit at Aarhus Libraries.

Photo: Chora 2030





# Knowledge

## *The library as a provider of information*

### Continuous provision of information

Information on SDGs and sustainability can be provided in many ways, including by libraries in their familiar role as providers of knowledge, facts, and literature. But it can also involve communicating opportunities for action or experiences in nature. Many libraries provide information about SDGs on their website. This can take the form of facts and non-fiction as well as fiction relating to topics covered by SDGs or that alludes to potential for change and different ways of perceiving the world. The continuous provision of information also takes place in other formats such as competitions or the lending of rucksacks with equipment and suggestions for activities that people can take with them on trips into the local nature.

#### Examples

##### **Herning Libraries: Providing SDG information online**

Compared to other libraries, Herning Libraries was quick to start communicating the SDGs via its website. The SDGs have since been given their own page with a number of sub-pages. The pages include a description of each of the 17 SDGs, a collection of links with references to other sites providing information about SDGs, descriptions of talks and events at the library that relate to SDGs, and an overview of relevant non-fiction about SDGs and sustainable development. There is also a page with citizen-oriented inspiration on how to make everyday life greener, and a forum with the opportunity to share sustainable ideas – citizen to citizen. Herning Libraries also has a page dedicated to communicating SDGs to children. This is described in the example below.

► <https://www.herningbib.dk/verdensmaalene> (Danish only)

##### **Herning Libraries: SDGs for children**

SDGs should also be accessible to children, which is why Herning Libraries has developed fun challenges for children around SDGs. The challenges are designed to be used at home or at pre-school, and you can find them by clicking on an SDG on the website, after which they can be downloaded and printed. The challenges are all based on children's direct and sensory approach to the world and give them the tools they need to act at their own level. The library also offers a nice world citizen passport free of charge where children can tick off each time they have worked on an SDG.

► <https://www.herningbib.dk/verdensmaalfordesmaa> (Danish only)

##### **Rudersdal Libraries: The sustainable wall**

The sustainable wall is an exhibition wall in the library space comprising wooden boxes and SDG cubes. All the library's current books relating to climate, recycling and sustainability can be found at this wall and on the boxes. The library's SDG certificate and sustainability principles also hang on the wall. The wall provides an opportunity to promote new books focusing on sustainability that guide people to take specific steps in a sustainable direction, for example through wildlife gardens, recycling and saving electricity. These books provide a welcome addition to the more theoretical books on climate and SDGs that the library can otherwise offer. The sustainable wall will eventually become a sustainable corner with even more functions: A citizen-to-citizen notice board with information about local initiatives as well as the library's own activities, a display space for the community (crafts,

seed bags, posters), a book display, a community meeting place, and a small stage to be used for talks and café events.

### Kolding Libraries: Global Hero of the Month

Kolding Libraries has developed the concept of “Månedens Verdenshelt” [Global Hero of the Month] for children. The concept is a monthly challenge that provides children with knowledge of the specific SDG that the library is focusing on that month, while also motivating the children to take sustainable action. The monthly challenges have included everything from litter bingo, taking toys to second-hand shops for Christmas, quizzes, and mystery-solving tasks. The library collaborated with local second-hand shops for the project, and each month a prize was given to one of the participants. Kolding Libraries has three top tips for other libraries that want to do something similar:

1. Make the challenge as simple as possible. If it takes too long to explain the task, the children will lose interest.
2. Remember that there are legal requirements when it comes to a competition.
3. Remember that there are rules on how to market to children, and that if they are to fill out a sheet, only information required for processing should be provided according to GDPR.



### Struer Library: Harbour safari

In Struer, families with children should visit the library on their way to the harbour, as you can borrow fishing gear for a harbour safari at the library. Life jackets can be borrowed for children, a fishing net, and a bucket, and along with the fishing gear, small tasks are handed out for the children to do when they get to the harbour. The library also links the harbour safari to the Royal Danish Navy’s nationwide campaign “Havmiljøvogter” [Marine Environmentalists], which aims to make it easy for anyone to help pick up litter on Danish beaches.

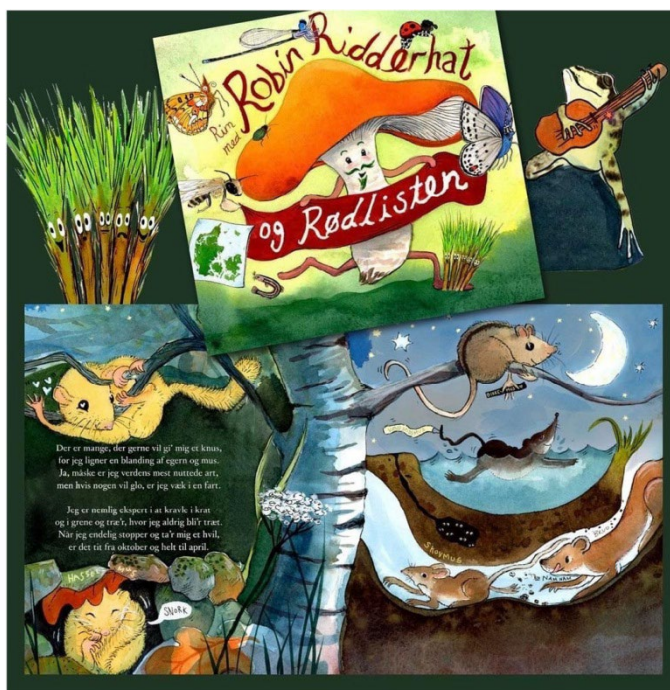
### Silkeborg Libraries: Outdoor Library

With its Outdoor Library, Silkeborg Libraries is making it even easier and more fun to get out into the beautiful nature surrounding the town. The Outdoor Library is a common term for all the library’s offerings and activities concerning nature, being outdoors, science and animals. This means that at the library you will not only find events and books about everything from dinosaurs to diving ducks, but also free nature treasure hunts for your next walk with the children and nature backpacks that can be borrowed from the library, packed and full of equipment, fun and opportunities to read aloud. The nature backpack is a real hiking backpack filled with suggestions for walks, a microscope, a plastic aquarium, an identification canvas, a reference book, a quiz game and much more. The backpacks have three different colours with different themes as well as different gear and contents: The campfire backpack, the lake backpack, and the creepy-crawly backpack.

### Silkeborg Libraries: SDGs and nonsense verse

Silkeborg Libraries has taken the initiative to have a new children's book made about endangered animals and plants in Denmark, so-called red-listed species. The book, entitled "Rim med Robin Ridderhat og Rødlisten" [Rhymes with Robin Ridderhat and the Red List], is written by Lotte Salling and illustrated by Lea Letén and is the first book for children about red-listed species in Denmark. The book makes use of the fantastic names of red-listed species such as the bog beacon or pyramidal orchid and combines language games, reading aloud and facts in a children's book about animals and wildlife. A book you can rhyme along with, and where the beautiful, whimsical illustrations can be explored together.

The idea for the book project came up in dialogue with biologists from Silkeborg Municipality, who wanted to communicate the red list to families with children. The library saw an opportunity to be a link between literature and natural science and in that way play an active role in providing information about vulnerable species. The project was a co-creation process between children, the author and biologists from Silkeborg Municipality and AQUA Aquarium & Wildlife Park. In connection with the rhyming picture book, educational material and nature activities have been developed to help expand children's understanding of nature and how they can best take care of it. The project is part of the Silkeborg Libraries' Outdoor Library, which is intended to support children and their families' knowledge of and access to nature.



## Events and exhibitions

Events are typically standalone events focusing on SDGs and sustainability. These could be exhibitions, talks, festivals, sustainability days and public meetings. Many libraries host sustainability days or are part of annual municipal SDG festivals. In this category, we will first mention a selection of those to indicate the wide variety. There is then a section on other types of events such as talks, communal meals and debates. Many events take place in collaboration with other stakeholders and could therefore also be placed under the Engagement category. We have divided things up so that the standalone events are described here, while more long-term collaborations are described under Engagement.

### Festivals and sustainability days

#### Esbjerg Municipal Libraries: Week 17

The Esbjerg Municipal Libraries put focus on the UN's 17 SDGs with an SDG Celebration Week held in week number 17 of the year (during spring time). The concept was first tested in 2022, with a wide range of SDG-focussed activities being offered all week. On the Saturday in week number 17, an SDG celebration was held at the main library. Here, the library invited several local stakeholders to come up with an SDG-related activity. This resulted in clothes swaps, plant swaps, a wildlife garden café, art made from recyclable materials, a knitting workshop, a repair café, and the opportunity to make insect hotels, campfire bread and pancakes. Various social initiatives such as a homework café also participated. In addition, the library had a swap box in place throughout April to allow visitors to the library to drop off things that they no longer used and perhaps find something else that they did need.



### Herning Libraries: Children's Meeting

Børnefolkemødet [Children's Meeting] is Herning Libraries' annual meeting during which the library focuses on engaging children in SDGs. Each year, one or more SDGs are chosen to become the focus of the annual meeting. Børnefolkemødet takes place for six days in the run-up to the autumn holiday, and special attention is paid to children and young people at local schools. As a result, the first three days of the meeting are dedicated to them with activities tailored to different age groups. The programme consists of presentations, concerts, theatre performances and workshops, which take place both inside and outside the library. The week ends with a big sustainability day for all the town's residents, when the library and the square in front of it are filled with activities, stands, tents and pavilions. On the sustainability day, there is ample opportunity to experience how various local associations, companies, citizens, and the municipality work with sustainability.

### Middelfart Culture and Library: The People's Climate Meeting

In Middelfart, the library is closely involved in the organisation of the annual Klimafolkemøde [People's Climate Meeting]. In 2022, the library helped get the Klimafolkemøde to include the library's role in the sustainable transition. This took place in the Future Libraries tent, where 25 libraries from across the country and a number of citizens presented examples of local sustainable activities. The examples were developed through creative workshops, conversations with citizens and library staff, and through debates with authors and researchers on topics such as the role of libraries, citizens' opportunities for action, the connections between literature and nature, and the potential of fiction in the green transition. Several of the debates took place on Fællesscenen, centre stage of the event, and thus reached a large audience.

Participants from the "Sammen om verdensmål" [Achieving SDGs Together] project speak about their activities at the People's Climate Meeting. Photo: Chora 2030





### **Rudersdal Libraries: Sustainability Day – a trip to the future**

The main library in Birkerød invited participants on a trip to the future when they held Sustainability Day. A future filled with new sustainable solutions, where we have a close connection with both technology and nature, and where we are users rather than consumers. Throughout the day, creative children's activities and climate-related presentations could be experienced, filled with opportunities for action and new paths to a sustainable future. The programme offered author meet-and-greets, presentations and creative workshops with a wide range of people working with sustainability with various approaches: From biodiversity and the town's climate solutions to sustainable neighbourhoods, wildlife gardens and SDGs in everyday life. From creative recycling to a bag workshop and clothes swap. From climate summits at the UN to a climate plan for Rudersdal.

### **Silkeborg Libraries: Waste Festival**

Skraldival [Waste Festival] is a week in which citizens can learn more about their waste and what they can do to reduce the amount of it. The festival was first held in 2022, and the library participated in workshops for school children and for adults. The week ended with a market day to inspire the whole family to live an everyday life with less waste and more recycling. The market day offered presentations, stalls and stands, opportunities to fix things at the Repair Café, a fashion show with clothes made from recycled materials, a swap market and activities for children. For the festival, Silkeborg Forsyning [Silkeborg Utility Company] decorated the library with upcycled objects built from waste handed in at the recycling centre, which the creative employees had saved and given new life. The festival was organised in collaboration with Silkeborg Municipality and Silkeborg Forsyning.

### **Kolding Libraries: KOLD festival**

Kolding Libraries is collaborating with among others MusikKolding, a local association arranging concerts, on Kolding's new music festival KOLD. The festival consists of music, creative experiences, and sustainability information in the form of art installations and talks. The festival is for young people and curated by young people. In 2022, the library set the stage for bands contributing to SDG 5 on gender equality and collaborated with various stakeholders who held talks on sustainability in connection with the festival.

## **Other events**

### **Dragør Libraries: Denmark's Largest Election Meeting**

Dragør Libraries was among many who took part in Danmarks Største Vælgermøde [Denmark's Largest Election Meeting] in the run-up to the 2021 municipal election. The library developed a completely new format for the election meeting, with citizens and politicians participating on an equal footing and with the conversation in focus. The candidates could be "borrowed" from the library for a walk or a cup of coffee and a chat. Children had the opportunity to draw their own election posters and to vote for their own candidate for "Børnevalget" [the Children's Election]. In addition, the library held a presentation for students of ages 10-13 about democracy in connection with the voting process for the children's election. The event thus focused on democratic participation on several levels and contributed to the SDG agenda, where SDG 16 among other things addresses participation and responsible institutions.

### **Hillerød Libraries: Reasoned debate on the climate crisis and nuclear power**

Can nuclear power help solve the climate crisis? Or is it too dangerous, too expensive or too slow? This was discussed in a reasoned debate at Hillerød Library, which was organised in collaboration with youth news outlet Seismo. A reasoned debate is an alternative form of debate between two participants who have different opinions on a matter. Reasoned debates can be a great tool for promoting and strengthening democratic conversations, because they are about finding solutions and compromises rather than coming out on top. The audience is an important participant in the debate because they help find, influence and qualify the solutions. The debate was streamed so that young people could follow it during school hours.

### **Silkeborg Libraries: Green Week and sustainable Christmas**

In response to the infamous Black Friday, Silkeborg Libraries held Green Week. This took place in the last week of November with a number of alternatives to buying new things: a repair café, a swap market and a presentation about minimalism and better use of the clothes we already have. The library also joined the campaign for sustainable advent calendar gifts for the town's children. They arranged a swap market where small items that were still in good condition could be swapped for other nice items that could be used as advent calendar gifts. With these events, Silkeborg Libraries wanted to demonstrate how to have less consumption and more of everything that really counts: Fun, relationships, and good experiences. In the run-up to Christmas, the library continued to challenge Christmas stress and shopping by focusing on recycling and providing opportunities to give home-made gifts and experiences instead of buying new things.

### **Tønder Municipal Libraries: Marsh walk and communal meal**

In collaboration with Tønder Municipality's health department, Tønder Library arranged an event with a marsh walk, foraging and a communal meal at Højergård, an old marshland farm. The event was part of the "Sammen om verdensmål" [Achieving SDGs Together] project, which focuses on involving citizens aged 60+ in sustainability activities. During the marsh walk, participants were guided by the municipality's nature guides, who talked about the many edible plants on the trail and where else they could normally be found. After walking and foraging, everyone helped cook a communal meal consisting of the foraged plants and surplus food items donated by local supermarkets. The menu on that day was decided by interns from the health department who are studying nutrition and health, and who prepared recipes based on the donated food. They also guided the cooking. A total of 29 citizens took part, including both elderly people and families with children.

### **Glostrup Library: Sustainable long-table dinner**

To celebrate the annual Sustainability Day at Glostrup Library, a long table was set up for dinner in the library room. Jonathan Zeuthen Knoll, head chef at vegetarian restaurant Baka d'Busk and maker of Grøntsagsfjernsyn [Vegetable TV] on the Danish public-service TV station DR, came and whipped up a multitude of delicious, green, and sustainable dishes. Along the way, he shared how to make your cooking greener. A total of 40 citizens of all ages sat at the long table and became part of a community where everything from literature to cooking was discussed regardless of gender, ethnicity, and age. During the dinner, the library's literature specialist read from texts about food and nature and the dinner guests fell completely silent during readings from "Ulysses" by James Joyce and "Bøgetid" [Beech Time] by Nanna Storr-Hansen. At the tables, email addresses were exchanged and new acquaintances – and perhaps even friendships – were made.

### **Glostrup Library: From Cast-off to Castle**

Sustainability Day at Glostrup Library consisted of several stations at which citizens could produce sustainable products. One of the stations was set up by the educational institution FGU Vestegnen. They helped the children who visited the station to make castles using materials such as toilet rolls, old books, and bits of cardboard. Naturally, the station was named "Fra skrot til slot" [From Cast-off to Castle]. Together with the children, the FGU students focused on the possibilities of using what we otherwise consider unusable for making new and beautiful creations, thereby reducing consumption and the need to constantly buy new things. FGU Vestegnen provided materials for the workshop. The library provided the venue, publicity, tables, and old books. The collaboration was very positive, and the library found the FGU students to be creative, accommodating, and good at looking after the children who wanted to make beautiful castles.



### **Aalborg Libraries: Recycled fashion show – the weird edition**

Together with representatives and users from the “Don’t Fear the Weird” festival, Grandparents’ Climate Action and DanChurchSocial, Aalborg Libraries held a recycled fashion show where designer clothes were replaced by clothes serving important causes. During the fashion show, it was not only sustainable fashion that hit the catwalk, but also important causes such as the fight against climate change, psychological vulnerability, and homelessness. DanChurchSocial sewed kimonos for the occasion, Grandparents’ Climate Action showcased clothes standing the test of time, and Don’t Fear the Weird presented various pieces with personal stories in focus. The models each represented an important cause, and the host helped expound on these and the models’ own backgrounds during the show. The recycled fashion show was part of the 2030 NOW exhibition in Aalborg and the Don’t Fear the Weird festival.

### **Aalborg Libraries: Diversity Day**

Diversity Day was an event organised across municipal committees, councils, and organisations with the aim of discussing a more inclusive, gender-neutral school and future. The day was also intended to counteract discrimination and spread knowledge about gender, identity, and sexuality. The programme for the day was prepared with input from Aalborg Fælleselevråd [Aalborg Student Council] and consisted of three parts: A) a workshop part for students of ages 13-15 and their teachers; B) a follow-up panel discussion for all interested parties; and C) a presentation part for young people in the municipality’s after school clubs.

For the workshop, questions, materials, and presentations were produced for the students, who were to decide on a set of shared recommendations. The recommendations were discussed in the subsequent panel discussion. As a liaison for the whole day, the library engaged Mizz Privileze, a drag queen known from “Danmark har talent” [Denmark’s Got Talent] and from the podcast “S, P eller K” [Truth or Dare?]. Outside of his drag personality, Mizz Privileze goes by the name Michael, has an educational background as school teacher, and grew up in Aalborg, during which time he chaired the student council.

To set the scene, Aalborg Main Library’s glass corner was decorated with foil in all colours of the rainbow, and coloured streamers were hung in the library room. The decoration has been left in place to become a lasting symbol



and a visual promise of follow-up in this area. Exhibitions of relevant literature were also established in the lead-up to the day. The Diversity Day was organised in collaboration with Aalborg Fælleselevråd [Aalborg Student Council], Aalborg Ungebyråd [Aalborg Youth Council], Børnevenlig kommune [Child-friendly Municipality], LGBT+ Denmark and politicians from the Mangfoldighedsudvalg [Diversity Committee] and the Børne- og Undervisningsudvalg [Children and Education Committee].


### **Svendborg Library: Wonder displays**

In the spring of 2022, children from six daycare centres and artist Luise Midtgaard created six wonderful creations based on literature, nature, and imagination. This took place in collaboration with Svendborg Nature School, Svendborg Children's Library, and the National Convention of the DGI sports association, which took place in Svendborg.

To kick things off, the daycare centres received a box of materials from the library ahead of the programme. The box was inspired by SDG 14 concerning life below water and included, among other things, Jakob Martin Strid's poem "Jeg finder så meget på stranden" [I find so much on the beach] from the children's book "Min mormors gebis" [My Grandmother's False Teeth]. There was also "Opskyl på stranden" [Washed up on the beach] by Charlotte Bie Thørsten and "Oceanarium" as well as fish made of cloth and a fish skeleton.

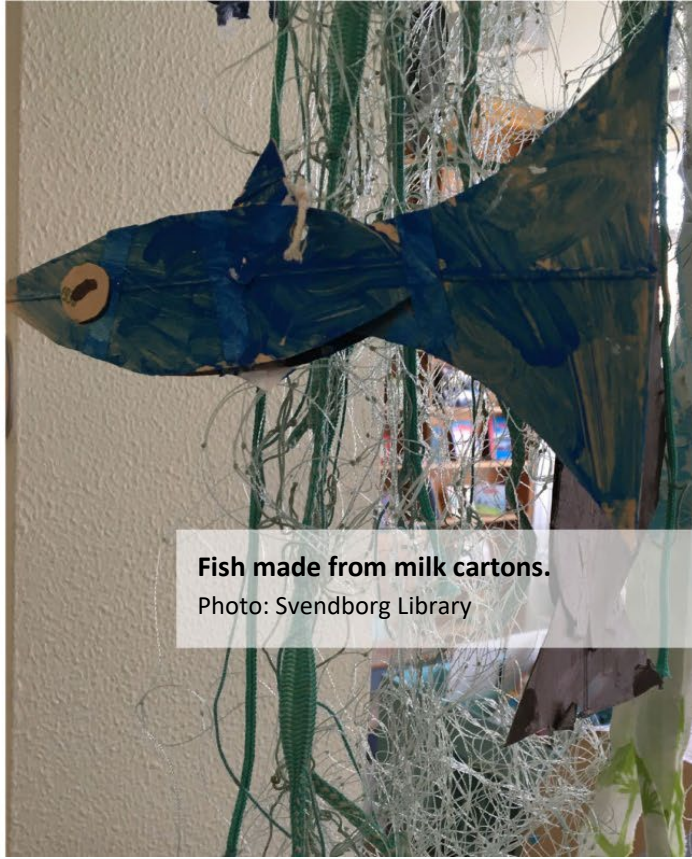
Together with Luise Midtgaard and a nature guide, the children went on a journey of discovery and wonder to the beach, where they sought to find things from nature and things left behind by people. Did the children find real mermaid scales, amphipod nests and whale bones? Or perhaps just a collection of the beach's most beautiful blue mussel shells? The findings from the beach were examined by the children. Light was shone through them, and their colours, structure and pattern examined. The various findings were given names, and stories were told about them. Afterwards, these wonderful findings were catalogued and displayed in display cases, called UndringsSKABe [wonder displays], as real treasures.

The display cases were part of the DGI National Convention opening procession, where participants were able to enjoy looking at them on the way to the national convention venue. They were subsequently displayed at Svendborg Children's Library, where they were included in the children's library's exhibition on fish and sea life. The display cases were then returned to the participating institutions, where they can be used for further findings and experiences.



**UndringsSKABe for the opening procession.**

Photo: Svendborg Library



**Fish made from milk cartons.**

Photo: Svendborg Library



### **Svendborg Library: Mother of the Sea, myth, and SDG**

All Svendborg's pre-school classes were part of a project to create sustainable art based on an old Inuit myth about the Mother of the Sea, and this art was displayed during the 2022 National Convention of the DGI sports association. This took place in collaboration with Svendborg Children's Library, the Greenlandic association Ujaloq Svendborg and the artist Marie Snede.

Initially, teachers and pre-school teachers were taught by Marie Snede to make art out of willow and recycled materials such as paper and old bedsheets. After that, they helped the children create different representations of the Mother of the Sea. Fish were also made from old milk cartons, coffee-filter bags and freezer bags, and collecting the many materials was no easy task. For example, 789 milk cartons were collected, washed and cut up!

The teachers were also presented with a course that they could use together with their classes in connection with the project. Among other things, there was a video with members of the local Greenlandic association, where they talked about the importance of taking care of the sea. All the educators also received a literature list and list of links for inspiration. The finished figures of the Mother of the Sea, complete with fish in her hair, were displayed at Svendborg Children's Library, and during the opening procession of the DGI national convention, they were part of the decorations. The figures were subsequently disassembled and sorted into waste fractions.

## **Sharing knowledge with others**

Of course, libraries primarily aim to provide information to citizens. But the certification also entails an obligation to share experiences of SDG work with other libraries. This provides inspiration across libraries. When certified libraries make their knowledge and experience available, it is also a great way to help new libraries get started with SDG work and the certification process. Knowledge sharing can take place in many ways. It can be in the form of an inspiration catalogue like this one, through conferences and webinars, or by visiting other libraries and sharing experiences at a staff meeting. It also takes place continuously in the Facebook group DB2030, which is open to all interested parties. Below are a few examples of some of the recurring formats where knowledge sharing takes place across the country – and also internationally.

### **Examples**

#### **DB2030: Sustainable Development Goal webinars**

The DB2030 network, in collaboration with the Danish Union of Cultural and Information Academics (FKI), has held several webinars on SDGs. The aim is to create knowledge, engagement, and tools for working with SDGs in the libraries, and to contribute to knowledge sharing and collaboration. Among other things, there have been webinars on SDGs and Citizen Science, Design Thinking with a sustainability component, and on how psychological factors such as well-being, motivation and behaviour interact with SDG work. The webinars were recorded and can be watched or rewatched on the FKI website:

► <https://kulturoginformation.dk/kalender-og-netvaerk/webinarer> (in Danish)

#### **Herning Libraries: Presentation and inspiration day**

A lot has been done at Herning Libraries to share their experiences with others. The library's programme director for the UN SDGs has given presentations to staff groups at a large number of libraries to share good advice and inspiration. At the beginning of 2022, the great demand for inspiration and guidance to get started prompted Herning Libraries to hold a joint inspiration day on providing SDG information. The morning featured several experts who focused on SDGs from different perspectives but all with the overarching question: How do libraries provide information about SDGs? After lunch, Herning Libraries explained how they had done the work of developing and deploying their SDG programme and communicating the important messages in practice.

### **Ballerup Libraries: World's Best Solutions LIVE**

Verdens Bedste Løsninger LIVE [World's Best Solutions LIVE] is an SDG knowledge festival inspired by the London event Sunday Papers LIVE. The festival is held every other year in Ballerup, and in 2023 it will be offered as a satellite event. At the festival, participants share knowledge and inspiration across libraries, NGOs, and other cultural and civil society stakeholders. In 2022, the theme was young people: Who are they? How can we reach out to them? What are they interested in? Verdens Bedste Løsninger LIVE was launched for the first time in 2019 as a citizen-oriented festival with a common inspiration day for students of ages 16-19, opportunities to learn in the library's maker space and a festival day for residents of Ballerup. In 2020, it took place as a hybrid knowledge festival for libraries and civil society organisations on how to ensure public support for SDGs.

### **Aarhus Libraries: Next Library**

Aarhus Libraries is behind Next Library, an international conference exploring the role and opportunities of public libraries in the 21st century. Next Library aims to involve the participants as much as possible in coming up with ideas, topics, and the format of the conference. This is to ensure that the content is relevant and that the conditions are optimal for networking and learning for participants from libraries all over the world.

In 2023, Next Library will be a hybrid festival with both online and in-person events so that it will be possible for participants all over the world to tune into the conversation. Next Library is more than just a conference. It is also a community that has grown to more than 1,700 library managers and innovators from 96 countries around the world.

### **SDG signs in Aarhus Libraries' Global Room.**

Photo: Chora 2030



# Engagement

## *The library as a facilitator*

### Citizens

This category is about measures and methods to promote citizen engagement. When libraries involve citizens in SDG activities, this is done, for example, by offering citizens the opportunity to play a more active role or encouraging them to share good ideas and sustainability tips with each other. Some libraries are also experimenting with share or swap stations where residents can share and swap things other than library books. Citizen engagement is also about helping citizens start their own initiatives and supporting them in developing these activities. It is difficult to reduce this type of activity to a single formula because it largely depends on what the citizens themselves bring to the table in terms of ideas and resources. As a library employee, it is therefore important to have a curious and investigative approach, where you ask questions and listen to the concerns of citizens and collaboration partners. This is an approach that can be aided by using design thinking as a method. That is why we will first provide some references for where you can learn more about design thinking if you want to dive more into it. Further down follows a number of examples of what citizen engagement might look like in the libraries.

### Method

Design thinking is a method that offers a range of tools for developing and testing solutions together with those who will use them. You can read more and download inspiration to get started here:

► [www.designthinkingforlibraries.com](http://www.designthinkingforlibraries.com)

You can also download the latest toolkit, which uses sustainability as a framework:

► <http://designthinkingforlibraries.com/design-quest>

See examples of how libraries have used design thinking in their work to involve citizens in SDGs in the handbook from Tænketanken Fremtidens Biblioteker [Future Libraries Think Tank]:

► “Fællesskaber og verdensmål på biblioteket” [Communities and SDGs at the library]. Available in Danish only.

### Examples

#### **Silkeborg Libraries: Green Stage**

Green Stage is Silkeborg Libraries' new gathering place for citizens who are interested in the green transition, sustainability, minimalism and more. Every month, the library invites a speaker with special knowledge to talk about a practice-based perspective on a greener and more sustainable everyday life. All citizens can come up with ideas for speakers or a topic by contacting the library. Events at Green Stage have, among other things, focused on tiny houses and sustainable ways of living, permaculture, and climate-friendly consumption.



### Nyborg Library: Kickstart Your Green 2022

In January 2022, Nyborg Library ran a 14-day campaign entitled “Kickstart Your Green 2022!”, in which they wanted to inspire citizens to adopt a more sustainable lifestyle with a daily challenge. The campaign also aimed to make the SDGs specific and practical. The challenges were posted on the library’s Facebook page using a recognisable graphic and with background information about each challenge. The challenges included: Avoid food waste today – use what you have / Don’t buy anything today that you can only use once / Bring a reusable bag for the day’s errands / Measure your climate footprint so that you can continue to save CO2.

### Svendborg Library: Borrow a notebook and share your sustainability

At Svendborg Library, they have sent the book “Verdensmål og Notesbog” [SDGs and Notebook] on tour. The book consists of descriptions of each of the 17 SDGs and 169 sub-goals, and there are also pages for taking notes under each goal. Citizens were invited to take the book home, read what others had written and share their own thoughts, drawings, ideas, frustrations, stories, tangible tips and wildlife ideas directly on the book’s pages. In this way, the book is part of a lively and ongoing conversation about sustainability between the town’s citizens. At the People’s Climate Meeting in Middelfart, Svendborg Library brought a stack of the books and a stand with a writing desk so that the participants of the meeting could also contribute and share tips, ideas and thoughts.



### Ballerup Libraries: Communal meals and presentations on plant-based food

A local enthusiast in Ballerup took the initiative for the plant-based eating community “Mad med mening” [Food With Purpose]. She was helped by a library employee to plan and run three events at the library with speakers who were experts in the field. Each event was followed by a communal vegan meal. The purpose of the three events was to gather the citizens of the town with an interest in a plant-based lifestyle and to create a new dining community at the library. The group is now autonomous and meets once a month at the library, where they eat together and share knowledge and experiences about green food. From time to time, they invite a speaker to get inspiration and new knowledge. The initiative helped make the library’s SDG and sustainability work more visible and also served as a starting point for inviting more people to participate in the library’s activities under the “Sammen om verdensmål” [Achieving SDGs Together] project.

### Middelfart Culture and Library: Nature and art at Trækbanen

A married couple had an idea to develop and beautify a network of paths in Middelfart around Trækbanen, which is an old industrial area between the port and the town centre. The couple raised money for the idea via Lokaldvalget [the Local Committee] and approached the library, which helped develop the idea and put it into the framework of the SDGs. The project focused on both planting in the area and creating more biodiversity, and on giving art a place of prominence. Artists Els Cools and Oliver Streich were therefore involved, and they created two large murals on buildings along Trækbanen. The paintings are based on the 17 SDGs. In continuation of the murals, daycare centre Børnehuset Nysgerrium exhibited children’s pictures of endangered animals. The area with murals, new benches and wild plants was inaugurated by the town mayor in connection with the 2022 People’s Climate Meeting.

### Esbjerg Municipal Libraries: User-run garden café

In Esbjerg, the library held a festival for the 17 SDGs in week number 17 (spring), and a volunteer enthusiast, who wanted to support the activities at the local library, took the initiative to run a wildlife garden café. The purpose was to discuss the view of nature that prevails in society, and to showcase the possibilities of giving more space to wildlife for the benefit of biodiversity in the local area. The garden café distributed free wild seeds, and a gardener from the



association Praktisk Økologi [Practical Ecology] took part and offered advice on wildlife gardening and how to cooperate with the nature in your garden. The organiser of the garden café also had a stand at the library market day, which ended the festival week.

### **Ikast-Brande Library: SDG Street Art 17gavle.dk**

The project Verdensmålgavlene 17gavle.dk [SDG Street Art 17gavle.dk] consists of 17 works of street art in 17 different towns in Jutland. Ikast-Brande Library is facilitating the project, which is inspired by the iconic and historical works of street art in Brande, which date back to 1968. The development of the works of art took place locally in each of the towns in dialogue between artist and citizens. In Brande, town residents contributed around 5,000 knitted and crocheted patches collected by the library in Brande to the local work of art. The patches were then used by the artist Nina K. Ekman for the work “Plant Takeover”, which consists of two beautiful trees on the gable of a local hotel – and which may be the world’s first mural made of textiles. All the works in the project are sustainable in their selection of materials and are semi-permanent, which means that they are expected to have a lifetime of at least five years.

### **Struer Library: Seed library**

Struer Library has started collecting seeds so that they can also have a seed library. The seed library will be located in an old filing cabinet in the library, and the seed packets will be made from the pages of old books. The idea is that you should be able to “borrow” seeds in the spring and plant them, and then in the autumn collect seeds from the plants and donate the seeds back to the library. However, it is not a requirement that you have to donate something in order to borrow. During the collection phase, the library was in contact with the local garden association and gave a presentation about the initiative at the association’s annual meeting. The library initially received a lot of seeds from the municipality’s forest and landscape gardener, who is responsible for parks and natural areas in the municipality. The library’s Facebook page also encouraged local residents to donate seeds. The library considered whether they should only have specific seed types such as wild flowers and vegetables in the seed library. But in this first year, they have decided to accept everything they can get – as long as they are seeds that you have collected yourself.



### Aarhus Libraries: Share station at the library

Tranbjerg Library near Aarhus has its own share station located in the library. It opened in December, when the town shared toys for advent calendar gifts. In January, they shared games and puzzles, in February fancy-dress costumes, and the share station continues with leftover yarn, fabric, cardboard, games and litter pickers, among other things. Many of the things are also used at the library's creation table or for events. Outside, at the rear of the library, there is an outdoor share station. Here, you can drop by and borrow outdoor games and magnifying glasses, nets, etc. Residents also share plant and flower pots. The share station was set up in collaboration with a school class from the local school, who spray-painted the cabinet and helped decide what should be in it. Many children pass that way after school, and the library hopes that the share station will encourage schoolchildren to use the library after school.

## Local communities

Local community engagement is all about collaborating with other stakeholders in the local community. Most libraries are used to collaborating locally on events held at the library. But the SDGs may help expand the library's network and cultivate new collaborations. This could be with schools, businesses, churches or associations and civil society organisations. It could also be new municipal collaborations with departments and employees from administrations that deal with, for example, health or technology, environment and climate. We have mentioned a number of collaborative activities under the Events category, but in this category, there is a particular focus on long-term or new types of collaboration – including some that take place outside of library premises.

### Examples

#### Herning Libraries: Book sale in collaboration with local charities

Herning Library collaborated with the local branch of women and children's charity Mødrehjælpen. The organisation was responsible for the sale of the library's old books and in return received the payment as a donation. Mødrehjælpen chose to spend this on their project "Den rullende kagemand" [The Mobile Birthday Cake], where hard-up families can apply to receive a birthday cake for their child's birthday. Subsequently, other organisations have signed up and would like to run the next book sale. In this way, the book sale will move from organisation to organisation in Herning. The money should go to a charity with an interest in either social or environmental sustainability. Kolding Libraries, inspired by Herning, has implemented a similar initiative. The local branch of Mødrehjælpen was responsible for the first book sale here as well, and other organisations have been involved since then. For example, the local branch of the Red Cross, where the money went towards the Red Cross' work to support refugees from Ukraine.

#### Tårnby Municipal Libraries: SDG Champion

As part of the national "Open School" initiative, Tårnby Library has offered local school classes the opportunity to become "SDG Champion" in Tårnby. This means that the students, based on a physical passport and activities for all SDGs, must solve 13 tasks intended to put the SDGs into practice. The library presented the offer at the municipality's Open School Café, and eight classes from three schools signed up. Library staff started by visiting individual classes for an initial lesson, where they talked about SDGs and introduced the programme. The students then had to solve the tasks that had been organised together with the individual teacher. The students worked on the project over two months, and it resulted in collections for Save the Children, presentations to other classes, beautiful posters, a podcast, Book Bento, a visit to the UN City in Copenhagen and much more. At the end of the programme, all the classes met in cultural centre Kastrup Bio for the presentation of diplomas, popcorn, and a world-class rap battle with some of Denmark's best freestyle rappers. The library has offered a similar programme for children and families with children in the library with an SDG passport and different tasks that they can solve on their own. The programme ends with a diploma presentation in the library.





**School students build book swaps.**  
Photo: Silkeborg Libraries



### Silkeborg Libraries: Recycled design and a love of reading

In collaboration with Gjern School and Gjern Residents' Association, Silkeborg Libraries has helped create a project about reading and recycled design. This has resulted in eight book swap houses being built by a school class at Gjern School. These are small bookcases in central locations in the town from which you can take a book home to read and where you can leave books that you no longer want. The students built the swaps from old bookcases and recycled materials that the school got from a local timber merchant. Together with the library, the students worked to foster a love of reading and made small cards for the book swaps where people can write a book recommendation to be put in the books left in the swap. The students are now responsible for maintaining the swaps and keeping them in order.

### Silkeborg Libraries: Citizen-driven biodiversity project

Together with several local stakeholders, the library in Gjern outside Silkeborg has put biodiversity in focus, starting with the site of an old brickworks, Teglværksgrunden, which is to be transformed into an area of wildlife. Together with Lokalrådet (local advisory board), a scouting organisation and a group of active citizens who have organised themselves in a Facebook group, Gjern Library was responsible for holding a Nature Day. It was a day of community and activities for the whole family at Teglværksgrunden, where citizens worked together to create a nature area close to the city with opportunities for experiences, recreation, and learning. Among other things, the day consisted of a communal work morning to clear scrub and collect waste. There was also nature bingo, clothes dyeing, and model raft building and launch. The lunch consisted of food cooked over a fire and was followed by a reading from Inger Christensen's "Sommerfugledalen" [Butterfly Valley] and a presentation about butterflies in Silkeborg.

### Silkeborg Libraries: Young voices – an outdoor space in recyclable materials

Building a shelter together with a group of children and young people is not normally part of the job description for a library employee. But that sort of thing can happen when projects take hold. In Silkeborg, the project started with a workshop in the library's maker space, where a group of young people came up with ideas and built cardboard prototypes of their ideal outdoor spaces. The workshop was part of a collaboration with Helhedsplanen Silkeborg,

which works with initiatives for the town's social housing, and the young people's prototypes ended up being, among other things, a shelter and a covered seating area adjacent to a stage and a multipurpose sport court.

The idea was for the young people, prototypes in hand, to try to sell their ideas to the housing association and see if they wanted to help bring them to life. That part went well, and when funds of DKK 50,000 were subsequently awarded for the project as well, Helhedsplanen contacted the library again to see if it could help build the models on a large scale. This fit well with the strategy of being a significant stakeholder in the local community, so the library agreed to be involved.

First, however, planning permission and sketches were required, and recycled building materials had to be collected from recycling centres and a local demolition company. So the patience of the young people was tested. In the end, however, this was successful, and the carpentry students from the Preparatory Basic Education and Training programme came aboard. The construction took place one weekend in May 2022, and the library employee was in charge of directing the construction of a shelter made of EUR-pallets, while the carpentry students were in charge of the covered seating area. There was good support for the project from young people, local adult residents and, not least, a large group of children. It was clear that many of them had never used tools before and even though this made the building process somewhat slower, the participants were very engaged, and it was a good learning process.

#### **Rudersdal Libraries: Talk climate with the municipality**

Rudersdal Libraries has collaborated with the municipality's climate officer to present the municipality's future climate action plan to citizens. Both the climate officer and the library wanted to give insight into the municipality's work in the climate area and to have a dialogue with citizens about which concerns they might have. It was intended to be an informal meeting where citizens could drop by and talk individually with the municipality's employees. But it turned out that citizens showed up expecting a presentation, so the concept had to be adjusted along the way. A positive side effect was that there were many new faces at the first meeting, and the library was able to talk to citizens who have since become involved in other library activities.

#### **Ballerup Libraries: More diverse nature with the municipality's environmental department**

In Ballerup, the old post office has become part of the library. It now goes by the name Posthuset and has a particular focus on supporting citizens' initiatives. When a group of citizens at Posthuset requested information about what Ballerup Municipality is doing to promote biodiversity, the library's activity developer contacted the municipality's environmental department. It turned out that the environmental department was in need of a place to engage in dialogue with citizens and talk about the department's work and new initiatives. The municipality's website was not ideal for this purpose, as it serves several other purposes as well. At Posthuset, they have access to citizens, but a lack of knowledge and content on the topic. That is why Posthuset and the environmental department decided to collaborate on getting two "vild med vilje" [intentionally wild] events up and running. For the first event, the environmental department booked a biodiversity consultant for Posthuset, and for the next event the municipality's nature guides were invited to talk about all the exciting initiatives that they are working on. The nature guides ended the event by inviting everyone to a "plant a tree" event that takes place every year in September. Posthuset and the environmental department have agreed to hold several regular joint events at Posthuset in the future.

#### **Ballerup Libraries: Better cycling conditions in Ballerup**

Ballerup was once the Danish municipality where the most people travelled to work by bike. Regrettably, the municipality is now the municipality in which the most car journeys under five kilometres take place. At Posthuset, a group of citizens is therefore working to ensure that more people in Ballerup travel by bike instead of car. They asked the library's activity developer for help in getting a meeting with the people in the municipality who are responsible for cycling logistics. Together with citizens and people from the town hall, the library therefore set up an event in



which two representatives from the municipality's mobility department participated to talk to citizens about what might have caused cycling to become much less common in Ballerup. Among other things, citizens pointed out that a lack of maintenance has resulted in large holes in the cycle paths, and that many therefore feel it is unsafe to cycle in Ballerup. As the system of cycle paths is rather extensive and difficult for the employees in the municipality to maintain an overview of, the representatives from the mobility department called on citizens to inform them on the location of holes in the cycle paths and where it would make sense to have bike parking in the municipality – and whether this parking should have a roof or not. The event was a very constructive feedback session from citizens to the town hall, and afterwards the mobility department repaired the damaged cycle path and installed several of the requested bike parking racks.

### **Tønder Municipal Libraries: Working with the municipality**

Tønder Library has used the SDG work to enter into a closer dialogue with various parts of the municipality. The library has given a presentation to the municipality's political working group, which focuses on SDGs, to talk about the library's SDG projects and encourage more collaboration. The library also has an ongoing dialogue with the municipality's department for technology, climate and employment, which endeavours to invite the library to meetings with other municipal employees who work with the SDGs. This gives mutual inspiration and makes it easier to explore opportunities for collaboration. The department also lent materials to the library when an SDG exhibition was to be established in the library.

## **Establishing communities**

How can the library support citizens in finding others who share their interest in sustainability and help them establish communities for promoting sustainability? Here are some examples of this. The category covers both activities that the library itself is behind, and activities that are (or have become) citizen-driven. The libraries are known for offers such as book clubs, guided community reading and homework cafés, which contribute to social sustainability and thus also link to SDGs. To show the range of possibilities, we have selected examples for community building here that also offer a perspective on nature, the environment or consumption. In several places, well-functioning communities have emerged around the library's outdoor areas in the form of lending gardens and garden communities. This type of community is discussed under the Outdoor areas category.

### **Examples**

#### **Rudersdal Libraries: Stop Clothing Waste teaches re-design and recycling**

Three local women in Rudersdal have come together with a mission: To reduce clothing waste by teaching others how to mend, reuse and upcycle textiles and clothing. The three women found each other with the help of the library, which held a series of activities on sustainability and SDGs. The library used the events to get to know the participants better so that they could help match citizens with similar interests. Among other things, this resulted in the three women with an interest in clothes, design and clothing production forming the group Stop Tøjspild [Stop Clothing Waste]. They now meet every week and have found a strong community where they exchange ideas and knowledge and have fun. They have held several workshops at the library where they invite citizens to learn about the re-design and reuse of clothes and textiles to avoid clothing waste.

#### **Kolding Libraries: The Sustainable Book Club**

At the Sustainable Book Club at Kolding Library, citizens meet to discuss non-fiction and fiction that shed light on sustainability, climate change and the green transition. The participants in the book club do not commit to coming every time but show up when they think that the literature is exciting and when they have time to read in advance. In the first season, the library facilitator decided for the book club which books should be read. Now the facilitator instead suggests 8 to 10 book titles, of which the participants choose four for each season. This has resulted in a wide range of books, such as specialist books on sustainable investment and the tiny house lifestyle, but also poetry and prose. Regardless of whether the reading is fiction or non-fiction, the focus is on looking ahead and discussing

solutions and actions for the individual, and the participants dissect SDGs and a sustainable future on both a micro and macro level. In several cases, it has been possible to get the author to participate online in a Q&A session with the participants. Authors have also visited the library in person to give talks about the book immediately after the book club has talked about it. This has given a good dynamic, with the book club becoming a kind of expert panel that can highlight important topics for their fellow citizens.

#### **Aarhus Libraries: Local green guides combat waste**

At Tranbjerg Library near Aarhus, a group of committed citizens meets in an SDG group every Monday. The group was established with help from the library as part of the project “Sammen om verdensmål” [Achieving SDGs Together]. They have come together with a common interest to reduce the amount of waste and instead promote waste sorting and a circular economy. The group has become interested in a composting method called bokashi and plans to spread knowledge of this in the local area so that more people can easily compost their food waste. As a start they have held a workshop on the method. At the same time, they are also working on bigger plans. They are in dialogue with the waste and district heating company Kredsloeb about acting as local guides who can help provide knowledge about how to best sort waste when the new waste sorting is rolled out in the municipality.

#### **Herning Libraries: Movement, literature and nature**

The “LitteraTUR i Landskabet” [LiteraTOUR in the Landscape] programme, which took place at Herning Libraries, focused on movement, nature, and literature. The programme was designed for the 60+ target group and consisted of trips into the heathland, where the participants learned more about the landscape and stories from the area. In addition, training and activities were carried out in nature, which were mixed with literary experiences to keep both body and mind active. The group started by meeting eight times with library staff but were determined to do more and therefore continued to meet regularly on their own.

#### **Middelfart Culture and Library: Literature and SDGs**

At Middelfart Library, two existing groups have joined forces and found a new common framework in SDGs. Through the “Sammen om verdensmål” [Achieving SDGs Together] project, collaboration took place between municipal employees, the Reading Association, which is responsible for “Guidet fælleslæsning” [Guided community reading], and Red Cross, which has the project “Fortæl for livet” [Storytelling for Life]. The groups have now started to meet regularly, and they read SDG literature and go on walks in nature. In addition, they participate in the presentations and workshops with authors and sustainability experts that the library organises. This continuously inspires the group to work with SDGs and nature and include these in their conversations and reading.

#### **Kulturium Ishøj Library: Walk & Talk**

A group of 22 citizens and a library employee have met seven times at Ishøj Library and then gone for a walk together. These meetings start with a presentation or cultural item at the library focusing on SDG topics. Participants have discussed biodiversity, poverty, a greener Ishøj, recycling, upcycling, and health. After the library component, the group go on a walk-and-talk of around five kilometres in the local area. The citizens themselves have helped choose what the topic should be and where they should go.

#### **Hillerød Libraries: Communal meals with sustainable food**

At Hillerød Library, big communal meals have been held for local residents for several years in collaboration with the vocational college’s culinary students, Grundtvigs Højskole [Folk High School], Frivilligcentret [the Volunteer Centre] and other local stakeholders. It is a popular activity that attracts somewhere between 150 and 200 citizens of all ages and is a good example of how the local community can be involved and play a role. Participation is free, as the municipality pays for the ingredients, and the various local stakeholders prepare the food on a voluntary basis. In the same way, the participants are volunteers on the day, because they help set up chairs and tables, serve food and clean up. The communal meals focus on communities that can accommodate everyone, volunteerism, and climate-friendly food.



### Hillerød Libraries: Nordic forest bathing and haiku

Nordic forest bathing and haiku is part of Hillerød Libraries' Hold Hjernen Frisk [Keep Your Brain Healthy] programme. Forest bathing is (like haiku) a Japanese phenomenon. It is about "bathing" in the sensory impressions from the forest and being present in nature in a deliberate and sensitive way. The target group is seniors, just like the Hold Hjernen Frisk project, but the library is also planning a programme aimed at students of ages 16-19. The activities ensure that the brain is stimulated through physical activity, cognitive stimulation, challenging the senses, play and a good community. It has been normal as part of the Hold Hjernen Frisk programme to take people out into nature and away from the paths in the forest when this has suited the activity, but during Nordic forest bathing and haiku, the focus is different. The forest bathing and haiku programme is also special because it is the same type of activity each time: a 2½ hour walk and experiences with nature and literature. This could be like a pop-up literary art exhibition in the forest, where haiku poems hang from branches, and the participants experience literature in interaction with nature and art. The repetition strengthens the community, because the framework is always familiar, and it also strengthens the participants' connection to nature. After a foraging trip with a biologist and foraging expert, several people have started bringing a mushroom basket with them every time. From picking their way haltingly across the forest floor and identifying things as moss, ferns, and something prickly, the participants have started to become more sure-footed and distinguish between moss and lichen, various ferns, and are able to tell the difference between blackberries and raspberries – even when there are no berries on the bush.



**Forest walk with haiku poems on the trees.**

Photo: Hillerød Libraries



# Internal Operations

## *The library as a role model*

### Sustainable workplace

In the sustainable workplace, resources are used with care, including human resources. It is a place where there is a good physical and mental working environment, and where employees experience equality and scope for diversity – all the things we celebrate about SDGs. Well-being in the workplace is of course important for the individual employee, but it is also important at an overall level for the library's SDG efforts. It is difficult to think innovatively and do things differently if you are under pressure and already having trouble completing your tasks, and it is difficult to experiment if you are afraid of making mistakes.

This category does not include examples like the other categories but is a call to be aware of how the workplace also interacts with SDGs and sustainability. It must be clear to both employees and users of the library that the values are not just celebrated on paper but also in practice. This can be done through measures to promote well-being in the workplace, such as appointing health ambassadors or establishing weekly walks or time for reflection. It can also be about showing social responsibility through employment on special terms. Above all, it is important to build a professional community that also includes sustainability, and where there is scope for staff to have both work-related and informal conversations with each other about topics such as food, equality, and climate. When you start developing new measures or types of activities, you need opportunities for knowledge sharing and skills development. This relates to the Anchoring and Knowledge Sharing categories.

### Operations, consumption, and resources

This category focuses on environmental and economic sustainability, i.e. building operations, consumption, procurement, waste sorting and similar. These can be major and complex issues to deal with, and it can take extensive work to uncover the library's CO2 consumption. It is not a requirement of the certification that you take that route, because it risks becoming a stumbling block that prevents you from getting started at all. Instead, we are focusing on some of the smaller measures that are manageable and that the library itself can take, and through this we may also inspire the rest of the municipality to follow suit. A specific example is that many libraries have replaced the plastic bag with the sale or lending of textile bags. The production of new textile bags can also have a high resource consumption, but here we give a few examples where libraries have cooperated with other stakeholders to have bags made from recycled textiles. There are also other examples of the libraries' sustainability initiatives, and the category ends with a number of short suggestions for initiatives that the libraries have implemented.

#### Examples

##### **Kolding Libraries: Recycling shirts for textile bags**

The library no longer supports the purchase of plastic bags for carrying books home. Instead, textile bags sewn from old shirts, skirts and ties can be bought. Hotel Koldingfjord donated its employees' old clothing, which local socioeconomic company Sheworks has made into tote bags. Sheworks employs immigrant and refugee women who need a helping hand to enter the labour market. After the first 100 bags were produced through collaboration with Hotel Koldingfjord, the Kolding Libraries invited other companies with surplus textiles to help create more bags.

### Middelfart Culture and Library: Textile bags

At Middelfart Library, they have also replaced plastic bags with textile bags. Here, the bags are sewn by citizens associated with the local employment, activity, and social interaction centre Perronen in Middelfart. The bags are free to use and can simply be handed back in the next time you visit the library.

### Aarhus Libraries: Culture with Cup

16 billion disposable cups are used in the EU every year, which is why the Aarhus Libraries have gone to battle against disposable cups with the initiative #kulturmedkop. Kultur med kop [Culture with Cup] simply means that citizens are encouraged to bring their own cup to library events. If you bring your own cup, the library can serve you coffee without using a disposable cup. This initiative also starts conversations with citizens about the climate and consumption. In some cases, new relationships and connections are forged when thoughtful citizens fill the bag with mugs that they loan out to those who forget to bring their own with them.



### Kolding Libraries: Waste sorting

Kolding Library has initiated waste sorting in both public and staff areas (approx. 7,500 m<sup>2</sup>). In the process, the library received help from the resource consultant at Redux Kolding, who is tasked with implementing and communicating waste solutions in all Kolding municipal organisations. Eight fractions are now being sorted. To start, half of the library was involved, but then the solution was rolled out to cover all four floors. It has not become more expensive for the library to sort waste, as it has reduced the number of bins. This was done by creating waste stations with several fractions, which means that the cleaners visit fewer places but carry more bags. In the offices, they have gone from 27 bins to eight waste stations. If individual employees feel a bin is needed, they can get one, but they themselves are responsible for taking its contents to the waste station. At the waste stations, signs indicate how waste should be sorted. In addition, Kolding Municipality has implemented an app for scanning packaging barcodes in order to obtain sorting instructions.

### Herning Libraries: More sustainable website

When you visit Herning Libraries' website, you can choose a version of the website that uses less CO<sub>2</sub>. Both images and video are generally very data-intensive, and the more data, the more power is used. Therefore, a lot of electricity, and thus CO<sub>2</sub>, can be saved by not displaying a website's images and videos. Another element that has an impact on CO<sub>2</sub> consumption in connection with a website is the screen. Most monitors use less power if the colours that it displays are darker. On Herning Libraries' website, you can therefore choose to hide images and video and choose between a dark and a light theme for the website. The settings can be combined freely and can always be changed again.

### Svendborg Library: Recycling print cartridges

Svendborg Library has focused on resource management of the library's used print cartridges in order to recycle as much as possible and reuse important raw materials. Collection shelves have been set up where the building's used print cartridges can be stored, and the library has made an agreement with the supplier that they collect the used cartridges four times a year. Print cartridges can easily be filled, so this is an easy way to contribute to the recycling of plastic containers, which are resource-intensive and environmentally harmful when produced from scratch. Recycling, however, requires extra space to store what might be perceived as rubbish, and it requires the library staff to change some of their working procedures. Now that the library has had its first experiences of recycling print cartridges, they have inspired the rest of the municipality to adopt a similar climate-friendly working procedure.

## Other short examples

- *Hillerød Libraries*: Has purchased cups for trips out of the building, which has greatly reduced the use of disposable cups.
- *Aalborg Libraries*: Has discontinued bottled water for meetings and conferences as well as disposable cups in the library room and replaced them with glasses and water in jugs.
- *Aarhus Libraries*: Uses surplus cardboard, old books, and recyclable paper as the basic material for all creative activities at the library.
- *Esbjerg Municipal Libraries*: Has been given two second-hand bikes to be shared among employees to make their way around the city. The bikes were reconditioned by a technical service employee who had them standing in a garage.
- *Silkeborg Libraries*: Has purchased an electric cargo bike for employees to use for providing information outside of the building.
- *Herning Library*: Has had a green roof with plants as roofing (a sedum roof) created on a ventilation building, which ensures both rainwater retention and more green in the urban area.
- *Struer Library*: Has purchased sustainable chairs for the library's events. The chairs are made of recycled fishing nets.

## Outdoor areas

The library is not just a building but often also some outdoor areas outside the building, and those outdoor areas can be used for activities or initiatives with a sustainability perspective. The areas can be used to increase biodiversity or you can lend plots of land or planter boxes for community gardens. Not all libraries have green spaces. But for all libraries, you can re-think the library space and let the library extend outside its walls. If the area outside the library is paved and not green, it may still be possible to use it for SDG activities.

### Examples

#### **Svendborg Library: Insect buffet**

During the summer, Svendborg Library set up a flower mailbox at the main entrance of the library. Via a sign on the mailbox and via the library's Facebook page, citizens are encouraged to contribute flower seeds from their own gardens to make the new "insect buffet" at the library even wilder. Small packets of seeds poured in and the initiative has helped create joint ownership of the green area and a lot of local conversations about wildlife and biodiversity. Svendborg's wild insect buffet is a collaboration between Naturama, Svendborg Music School, the Danish Welfare Museum, Haahrs School, educational institution HF & VUC FYN Svendborg and Svendborg Library to create a green belt in the town. According to Svendborg Library's sustainability strategy, 25% of the library's outdoor areas must be planted with wild flowers, shrubs or trees from 2020 up to 2030.





**Seed collection for insect buffet.**

Photo: Svendborg Library

### Dragør Libraries: Sensory garden and composting

Dragør Library has a small courtyard that has been transformed into a dementia-friendly sensory garden. The library has also set up insect hotels and established compost from biological material from the garden and other organic material.

### Aarhus Libraries: Global Room

Under Dokk1 at Aarhus Libraries, there is a long, narrow space that faces the harbour basin. This is Verdensrummet [the Global Room], which is a space that citizens and associations can use for SDG activities. The large glass window and doors facing the harbour area also invites visitors to use the outdoor area where there is seating on the steps and an outdoor stage. Verdensrummet is creatively furnished with recycled materials and is a meeting place, a studio and a workshop space where you can borrow equipment and materials and help come up with ideas for activities and events yourself.

### Aarhus Libraries: Grow your library

Risskov Library's outdoor areas are lent out in lots and are used by around 30 citizens in a regular garden community. They form a platform for the co-creation of events and workshops on, for example, composting, scything, seed collection, harvest festival, making sauces and jams, building hedgehog hotels and beehives (in collaboration with local social-economic company Bistad).

### Ballerup Libraries: Urban gardens in Skovlunde

Skovlunde Cultural Centre, part of Ballerup Libraries, has opened several urban gardens that give families with children, school classes, pre-school groups or seniors without their own garden the opportunity to grow their own vegetables, berries and herbs and at the same time take part in the community that has formed around the gardens. The gardening community is now run by a very committed group of citizens who also help organise activities that can involve the users of the garden and provide an opportunity for different generations to interact. Around the gardens, there are joint events for the entire local area, such as the library's apple day, where apples brought by citizens were made into apple juice, while the children could read apple stories, watch apple films and draw apples.

# Conclusion

The inspiration catalogue shows that libraries' SDG work can vary extensively and can take the form of both small and large projects. It also shows that SDGs can be incorporated into all parts of the organisation and constitute a unifying and shared narrative – both internally and across the libraries.

We hope that these examples can inspire more libraries to develop initiatives relating to the sustainable transition together with both employees and citizens to help start the conversation about what kind of society we want.

The SDG work is a process and largely a shared learning process. We have to be open to trying different initiatives, methods and approaches to find out what works best. But it is also about building on the engagement that already exists and finding out about the motivation that exists internally in the organisation and what citizens and local collaboration partners are interested in.

This is not a project that will end soon. It is an agenda we should expect to work with for generations. Therefore, SDG certification is also not a conclusion that indicates the library has reached its goal. On the contrary, it is a sign that the library has started the process.

You can find more information about the certification by contacting Chora 2030: [info@chora2030.dk](mailto:info@chora2030.dk)

Join the network via the Facebook group DB2030.





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