



LIBRARY CHANGING THE WORLD

An E-manual with 12 Practices in European Public Libraries



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LIBCHANGE

GREEN LIBRARIES

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INTRODUCTION

How Do Libraries Change the World?

In recent years, the global climate has changed significantly, and we are increasingly confronted with extreme weather events that affect our daily lives. Although sustainability goals are outlined in numerous strategic documents and policies, the key question remains how to implement them in local environments. The time has come for concrete actions and content that emerge "from the bottom up", arising from the real needs of communities and shaped by everyday life.

Public libraries, as open public spaces for learning, information, and connection—so-called proactive libraries—play a special role in this process. Through their activities in the fields of reading culture, sustainable development, green literacy, environmental issues, biodiversity, social participation, healthy lifestyles, and well-being, they make a significant contribution to raising awareness, informing, and educating adults, while strengthening social responsibility. They motivate adult learners, parents, teachers, educators, and young people to adopt lifestyles that are more environmentally, climate-, and people-friendly, to rethink their perspectives, and to take on an active, socially responsible role within their communities.

The ERASMUS+ project KA210-ADU (Small-scale partnerships in adult education) "Library Changing the World" (LibChange) brought together four libraries that have long been developing the concept of the green and sustainable library. The partners exchanged knowledge and professional

experience, developed staff competencies, tested and upgraded examples of good and innovative practices, evaluated them, and adapted them to different local environments. Special emphasis was placed on improving the quality of adult education and transferring effective working models into the library environment. Adult learners were enabled to participate in educational activities and were encouraged to engage actively in their local communities.

All four participating libraries meet the definitions of green libraries and implement the Sustainable Development Goals defined in the "2030 Agenda". Through their program orientations and educational themes, they follow global development trends. All partner libraries collaborate closely with local institutions, associations, groups, and individuals dedicated to the highlighted topics, and they are strongly integrated into the national library network, where their modern visions of operation attract the attention of the professional community. The quality and innovativeness of their work are also confirmed by international recognition from the global library organization IFLA and the international library network, Association "Public Libraries 2030".

The libraries involved in the project strive for green transformation, which they define in their strategic documents and programs, as well as at the practical level through active engagement—most importantly. They represent open public spaces that offer equal opportunities for participation to all interested individuals, regardless of their

social, economic, or cultural backgrounds. They provide the broadest range of users of all age groups with opportunities for active, creative, and high-quality leisure time. Through their selection of library materials, professional staff, carefully planned content, and high-quality event and project facilitators, they serve as important public spaces for connection, learning, information, meeting, socializing, and creativity within their local environments. They provide pathways to knowledge and act as generators of innovative projects and social capital.

The ERASMUS+ project strengthened the professional competencies of staff, encouraged international networking, and contributed to greater awareness of climate and environmental challenges among librarians, educators, learners, and wider public. It enhanced connections and cooperation between libraries and various stakeholders in local communities and reinforced the role of libraries as one of the most important cultural institutions in local environments. Throughout all phases of implementation, the project was aligned

with the principles of sustainability and environmentally friendly practices.

The result of the cooperation is a publicly accessible e-handbook, prepared in all partner languages and in English. It contains twelve tested examples of innovative practices, descriptions of working methods, organizational procedures, necessary materials, and recommendations for implementation.

The handbook before you is designed as a practical working material for librarians and adult educators. Its purpose is to support the planning, implementation, and further development of high-quality activities that connect lifelong learning, reading culture, green literacy, creativity, social participation and sustainable development. May it contribute to positive changes in libraries, among individuals, and within local communities.

Since libraries, through projects of this kind, can change individual mindsets, we dare to claim that they change the world.

THE FIRST MOBILITY ON THE
"LIBCHANGE"
PROJECT IN CROATIA:



"LIVING HEALTHILY", "THE NEW MACHINES" AND
"GREEN THEMES"

THE "JURAJ ŠIŽGORIĆ" CITY LIBRARY IN ŠIBENIK

The "Juraj Šižgorić" City Library in Šibenik stands as a beacon of culture and education, enriching the lives of the city's residents for over a century.

Situated in a modern facility at the heart of Šibenik, the library bears the name of the esteemed humanist and poet Juraj Šižgorić, whose legacy continues to resonate within the city's cultural heritage. Established in 1922, the library has evolved into a contemporary institution that seamlessly blends tradition with innovation. Offering an extensive collection of books, periodicals, and multimedia resources catering to all age groups and interests, the library also provides a range of digital services. A significant focus is placed on the digitization of valuable local materials, particularly newspapers and magazines, granting users easy online access to historical sources. Concurrently, the library maintains its publishing activities by releasing publications that promote local cultural heritage, including reprints of rare and historically significant editions. The "Sibenicensia" local collection forms a cornerstone of the library's identity, encompassing books, newspapers, periodicals, manuscripts, and documents related to Šibenik and its surroundings. The library's Scientific Department houses the "Rara" collection of rare and valuable books, featuring the Šibenik Statute from 1608 among other notable works, serving as an invaluable resource for scholars, researchers, and cultural heritage enthusiasts.

The library has also established the **Virtual Museum of Faust Vrančić**—a digital project

dedicated to the life and work of this prominent figure from Šibenik. Through interactive content, games, and exhibitions, users can delve into the richness of Vrančić's contributions and legacy. Beyond its core functions, the library undertakes various projects, such as the digitization of local materials, the Green Library project emphasizing sustainability, the "Healthily Living" initiative promoting healthy habits, and significant energy-efficient renovations of the building. In 2020, **the library was awarded second place in the international IFLA Green Library Award competition**, recognizing its commitment to sustainable development.

The library actively participates in the national STEM Revolution project, fostering the development of digital and scientific skills among children and youth. Regularly hosting literary evenings, exhibitions, workshops, educational programs, and professional conferences, the library aims to promote literacy, reading, dialogue, and inclusion. These events often address important social issues, such as the employment of persons with disabilities, underscoring the library's dedication not only to culture but also to fostering social sensitivity and community cohesion. Among its literary programs, the "KušIn" short story competition holds a special place, encouraging creativity inspired by Šibenik and promoting local authors. The library's artistic endeavours are highlighted by distinctive competitions like "Cats" and "Homage to Robert Visiani", which have become emblematic of its role in promoting artistic expression and

cultural heritage. Through its openness, accessibility, and unwavering commitment to the community, the “Juraj Šižgorić” City Library not only preserves the written word but also actively shapes the identity of Šibenik, bridging the past and present in the

service of knowledge, cultural awareness, and humanistic values.



"Living Healthily", "The New Machines" and "Green Themes" —the first mobility on the "LIBCHANGE" project

This manual presents three practices showcased within the ERASMUS+ project, all stemming from the long-standing "Green Library" program, continuously implemented in our library since the autumn of 2012. The first practice focused on promoting a healthy lifestyle through the "Healthily Living" project; the second encompassed art workshops about **Faust Vrančić**; and the third involved gardening

activities as part of the "Green Themes in the Library" project in 2023. All these practices are integral components of the broader "Green Library" concept, recognized as examples of good practice, which led to our library's participation in the ERASMUS+ project. During the ERASMUS+ project, workshops were presented as concrete examples of activities that connect education, ecology, and the community.



"Living Healthily" within the "Green Library" — the first good practice

1. Description of the practice and context

The first practice presented in the "Juraj Šižgorić" City Library in Šibenik is connected with the project "Living Healthily", which was developed within the broader concept of the green library. The library continuously promotes healthy lifestyle habits and wellbeing through educational and participatory programmes for different age groups – from preschool children to adults and older users.

In March 2018, the 17th conference of the [National Program "Healthy Living"](#) was held in Šibenik, organised by the [Croatian Institute of Public Health](#) and the [Public Health Institute of Šibenik-Knin County](#). The aim of the conference was to present examples of good practice in health promotion and to encourage new activities by connecting key stakeholders at local and national levels. On that occasion, librarian Melinda Grubišić Reiter presented the library's experiences in implementing related projects, which resulted in an invitation for the library to participate in the programme.

Recognising the importance of the topics of health, prevention and sustainable lifestyle habits, the library developed a series of lectures, workshops, film screenings, book presentations and programmes for children and young people—with the aim of encouraging positive behavioural changes, awareness, and personal responsibility towards one's own health and the environment.

Planning and implementation of adult education programmes in the library (module)

This practice shows that libraries can successfully function as centres of adult education, health promotion and raising awareness of sustainability. The "Living Healthily" example offers a transferable model that can be adapted to different environments and community needs.

Purpose of the module

The module is intended for librarians and library professionals who want to strengthen their competences for: planning and organising programmes for adults, developing partnerships in the community, implementing and evaluating educational events, and including themes of health, sustainability and wellbeing in library services.

Target groups

Adults and older people, parents and families, young people and students, educational professionals and carers, vulnerable or marginalised groups.

Potential partners in the community (applicable and transferable)

Public health institutes and institutions, associations and clubs (hiking, sport,

recreation, natural medicine), schools, kindergartens, universities, local experts (kinesiologists, nutritionists, educators, authors), cultural and educational institutions.

Examples of partners from realised activities in Šibenik

Public Health Institute of Šibenik-Knin County, **Croatian Mountaineering Society "Kamenar"** and **Croatian Mountaineering Club "Sv. Mihovil"**, experts in kinesiology (e.g. a lecture on physical activity in preschool age), kindergartens (e.g. **DV "Osmijeh"**) and primary schools (workshops for pupils), associations and lecturers in the field of natural medicine, educational organisations (e.g. programmes on communication and parenting), publishers and authors of titles on healthy eating and lifestyle habits.

Advantages of partnerships

Sharing of knowledge, resources and logistics, greater credibility of the programme, wider reach and inclusion of new audiences, strengthening the social role of the library as a place of learning and community support.

Learning outcomes (what module participants will be able to do after completion)

Participants will be able to understand the role of the library in adult education and community education, design programmes according to real local needs, choose appropriate formats and methods of adult learning, establish collaborations with local stakeholders, plan, implement and evaluate educational events, adapt programmes to different target groups and integrate topics of health, sustainability and wellbeing into library activities.

ACTIVITY FORMATS AND EXAMPLES FROM THE "LIVING HEALTHILY" PRACTICE

1. Lectures and expert visits

Invited experts (kinesiologists, lecturers, authors) convey knowledge to an understandable audience, with room for questions and experience exchange.

Examples from Šibenik: a lecture on the importance of physical exercise in preschool age (for parents), lectures on natural medicine and healthy habits, the lecture "What Mountains Mean to Us" (promotion of active time in nature and environmental preservation). Recommendations: ensure time for discussion, connect topics with the library collection, avoid overly technical language.

2. Workshops and learning through experience

Interactive workshops help participants acquire concrete skills and transfer them to everyday life.

Examples from Šibenik: workshops for children in kindergarten-reading picture books about healthy eating + simple stretching exercises; workshop for pupils—light exercises according to the Brain Gym programme + discussion about diet and movement; workshops on making natural soaps, balms and preparations, workshops on skincare and the use of essential oils, workshop "Beauty through Medicinal Herbs"-practical health advice and Autumn care.

3. Film screenings and moderated discussions

Documentary films followed by guided discussions develop critical thinking and raise awareness of the connection between health, food, water and sustainability.

Examples from Šibenik (for secondary school students): screenings of documentaries on water and seeds/food, followed by discussion on food safety, sustainable agriculture and access to drinking water.

4. Book presentations and talks with authors

Thematic promotions strengthen the library's role as a place of dialogue and encourage the use of the collection.

Example from Šibenik: presentation of a number of titles on healthy eating and lifestyle habits with author discussions and moderation by a nutritionist/editor—emphasis on practical lifestyle changes and the importance of nutrition in disease prevention.

5. Programmes for children and families (in person and online)

The library can provide continuous support to parents and children through the development of habits, emotional wellbeing and education.

Examples from Šibenik: online play for children during the pandemic, based on an educational picture book about healthy eating and habits, series of lectures on children's needs, relaxation techniques and communication between adults and children, workshop for young parents on introducing complementary feeding.

ORGANISATION, EVALUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY OF THE PROGRAMME

Before the event

Define the goal and expected learning outcomes, choose speakers and collaborators, plan promotion and communication, prepare the space, equipment and materials.

During the event

Create a pleasant and inclusive atmosphere, encourage interaction and exchange of experiences, manage time effectively.

After the event

Collect participant feedback, document activities (photos, short report, number of participants), evaluate the impact and plan continuation (series, repetition, new partners).



Art workshop "The New Machines" —homage to Faust Vrančić

The workshop consists of three parts. In the first one, we visited the Virtual Museum "Faust Vrančić" on the City Library "Juraj Šižgorić" website, and learned something about how the idea came to be realized in 2017, on the 400th anniversary of Vrančić's death. The virtual museum is a contribution of the Šibenik library to a better knowledge of the works of the great and famous polymath, lexicographer and inventor. In the second part, we learned a little more about Faust Vrančić and his most famous invention, the "flying man" (homo volans), the parachute and made a comparison with Leonardo's parachute. In the third part, the workshop participants took part in the art workshop, "The Latest New Machines", and designed, drew and explained their own machine with a specific function in accordance with modern environmental standards. Activities concerning this practice were being led by Zdenka Bilušić from the Šibenik public library.

This module is intended for **librarians and library educators** who wish to design and deliver **educational workshops based on cultural heritage, digital resources, and creative expression**. The module is grounded in the practical example of the **Virtual Museum of Faust Vrančić** and an accompanying creative workshop developed and implemented by the City Library "Juraj Šižgorić" in Šibenik.

The module demonstrates how libraries can transform cultural heritage into engaging

educational content; use digital tools to enhance learning; combine historical knowledge with creativity, innovation, and sustainability; foster critical thinking and problem-solving skills among participants.

Identify one historical figure relevant to your region who could inspire a similar workshop. Explore how biographies and historical narratives can be adapted for different audiences and connected to modern themes such as innovation, technology, and sustainability.

WORKSHOP WORK PLAN

The Latest New Machines

This workshop engages participants in designing, drawing, and explaining an original machine with a clearly defined function, developed in accordance with modern environmental standards. The focus is on creativity, problem-solving, and sustainable design thinking.

Target Group: students, young designers, general participants (adaptable).

WORKSHOP OBJECTIVES

Encourage creative and critical thinking through machine design; introduce principles of sustainable and environmentally responsible innovation; develop participants'

skills in visual communication and explanation; promote collaboration, presentation, and reflection.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the workshop, participants will be able to identify a real-world problem and propose a machine-based solution; apply basic environmental standards (energy efficiency, recyclability, low emissions); create a visual design (sketch or diagram) of a machine; clearly explain the function and environmental benefits of the design.

Materials and Resources

- paper, pencils, markers,
- rulers and templates,
- flip charts or whiteboard,
- optional: tablets or laptops for digital drawing,
- sustainability guidelines handout.

Roles and Responsibilities

Workshop Facilitator guides activities, presents concepts, supports participants.

Assistant(s) help with materials, timekeeping, and individual support.

Participants actively design, draw, and present their machines.

Environmental Considerations

Use recycled or reusable materials where possible. Minimize printing; provide digital resources. Encourage designs that prioritize low energy consumption, renewable energy sources, recyclable or biodegradable materials.

WORKSHOP STRUCTURE AND TIMELINE

1. Introduction (15 minutes)

- welcome and workshop goals,
- short presentation What makes a machine sustainable today?,
 - renewable energy use,
 - energy efficiency,
 - sustainable materials,
 - minimal environmental impact,
- examples of modern eco-friendly machines.

2. Ideation Phase (15 minutes)

- individual or small-group brainstorming,
- define:
 - the problem the machine solves,
 - the main function of the machine,
 - environmental considerations,
- use guiding questions and worksheets.

3. Design and Drawing Phase

- participants draw their machine (hand-drawn or digital).
- Include:
 - main components,
 - energy source,
 - materials used,
 - environmental features.
- Facilitators provide feedback and guidance.

4. Explanation and Preparation (30 minutes)

- participants prepare a short explanation covering:
 - how the machine works,
 - who benefits from it,
 - why it meets modern environmental standards.

5. Presentations

- each participant or group presents their machine (1-3 minutes each),
- peer questions and constructive feedback.

6. Reflection and Evaluation (15 minutes)

- group discussion:
 - What was challenging?,
 - What ideas were most innovative?,
 - How sustainability influenced design choices.
- Short written or verbal feedback.

Follow-Up (Optional)

- exhibition of designs,
- digital gallery or booklet,
- further development into prototypes or models.



"Green Themes" — gardening in the library

The third initiative within the ERASMUS project pertains to gardening and was part of the "Green Themes in the Library" project in 2023, itself an extension of the broader "Green Library" initiative. Funded by the Ministry of Culture, this project encompassed four workshops and one lecture. The workshops were held by librarian Katarina Jurlin.

Replicable Activity Plan for Libraries

Green Themes in the Library—Gardening Initiative

This replicable activity plan is designed as a transferable model for public libraries across the European Union, wishing to implement gardening and sustainability focused programmes. The plan is based on the principles of the Green Library concept and supports the objectives of ERASMUS+, environmental education, community engagement, and lifelong learning.

The model is adaptable to libraries of different sizes, locations, and capacities and can be implemented with local experts, library staff, and community partners.

Strategic Objectives

Integrate environmental sustainability into regular library programming; promote urban gardening and biodiversity in local communities; strengthen the library's role as a community learning and networking hub; encourage long-term civic engagement through practical activities; support EU priorities on green transition and sustainable development.

Target Groups: adult library users and local residents, beginners and experienced gardening enthusiasts, children and families, educators, NGOs, and environmentally active citizens.

Key Success Factors for Replication

- cooperation with local gardening or permaculture experts,
- active involvement of library staff as facilitators,
- use of low-cost, sustainable, and locally available materials,
- combination of educational, practical, and community-building activities,
- establishment of communication channels for long-term engagement.

Communication and Engagement Tools

- online messaging group for participants,
- regular library meetings and events,
- visual promotion within library spaces.

This activity plan is designed for long-term implementation and easy transfer to other European libraries. By adjusting expert profiles, plant species, and materials to local contexts, libraries can successfully replicate the model and contribute to the EU's green and educational objectives.

MODULE 1: Workshop—Basics of Urban Gardening

Participants gain foundational knowledge to start urban gardens.

Introductory workshop covering principles of urban gardening, sustainable design, and small-scale food production.

Recommended Timing: early Spring.

Core Topics:

- urban gardening concepts and benefits,
- garden planning and design in limited spaces,
- raised bed gardening,
- basic vegetable cultivation.

Implementation of Guidelines

Invite a local sustainability or gardening expert. Use library space for theoretical input. Encourage participant discussion and local adaptation.

MODULE 2: Workshop—Plant Cultivation, Care, and Composting

Improved participant skills in environmentally responsible gardening.

Practical and educational workshop focused on plant maintenance and ecological gardening techniques.

Recommended Timing: late Spring.

Core Topics:

- common garden plants and herbs,
- natural plant protection methods,
- composting and waste reduction,
- sustainable plant care.

Implementation of Guidelines

Combine theory with demonstrations. Adapt content to local climate and plant species.

MODULE 3: Community Gardening Group and Seed Exchange

Sustainable community network with ongoing engagement.

Creation of a community group that meets regularly in the library to exchange seeds, cuttings, and experiences.

Recommended Timing: continuous.

Implementation Guidelines:

- moderate meetings through library staff,
- establish an online communication group (e.g. messaging app),
- encourage peer-to-peer learning.

MODULE 4: Lecture—Gardening: It All Begins with a Seed

Increased awareness of biodiversity and sustainable seed use.

Educational lecture focused on seed quality, soil preparation, and sustainable gardening practices.

Recommended Timing: Autumn.

Core Topics:

- seed cultivation and selection,
- treated vs. untreated seeds,
- soil preparation without ploughing or digging,
- ecological balance.

Implementation Guidelines:

Organise in a multimedia or lecture space. Combine lecture with seed exchange activity.

MODULE 5: Practical Workshop—Raised Bed Construction

Participants gain practical construction and sustainability skills.

Hands-on outdoor workshop focused on building a raised garden bed using sustainable materials.

Recommended Timing: Autumn.

Implementation Guidelines:

- use natural or repurposed local materials,
- select an accessible outdoor location,
- emphasise reuse and circular economy principles.

MODULE 6: Initiative—Establishment of a Public or Community Garden

Contribution to urban greening and improved community wellbeing.

Community-driven initiative to establish a shared urban garden in cooperation with local authorities or partners.

Recommended Timing: after initial modules.

Implementation Guidelines:

- engage municipalities, schools, or NGOs,
- position the library as a coordinating partner.

MODULE 7: Children's Workshop—How Do Plants Grow?

Early development of environmental awareness and care for nature.

Interactive educational workshop for younger children, introducing plant life cycles and basic gardening.

Recommended Timing: throughout the year.

Implementation Guidelines:

- led by trained library staff,
- use creative and hands-on methods.

MODULE 8: Seed Library Establishment

Long-term ecological awareness and active citizen participation.

Creation of a seed exchange point within the library to promote biodiversity and sustainability.

Recommended Timing: Autumn.

Implementation Guidelines:

- focus on indigenous and locally adapted seeds,
- provide basic guidelines on seed saving,
- connect participants via an online group.



THE SECOND MOBILITY ON THE
"LIBCHANGE"
PROJECT IN LATVIA:



IMPROVISE GREEN! LIBRARIES AND ADULT LEARNING
FOR SUSTAINABILITY

STRENČI LIBRARY

Strenči is a small town in northern **Latvia**, located on the banks of the **Gauja River**. It is part of **Valmiera Municipality** and is known for its scenic natural surroundings, including forests and rivers. Despite its modest size, Strenči has a well-developed community infrastructure. The town hosts educational institutions, such as primary and secondary schools, kindergartens, and the **Strenči Library**, a branch of **Valmiera Library** that serves as a cultural and a social hub. It provides residents with access to high-quality information resources, a modern environment, and diverse opportunities for lifelong learning. The library's collection includes fiction, non-fiction, children's and youth books, periodicals, and digital resources that meet various interests and needs. Visitors also have access to computers, the internet, and support for information searches.

The library actively participates in national and international projects, promoting innovation, cultural exchange, and professional development. It is involved as a partnering library in the "Public Library 2030" **Citizen Science initiatives**, with its own **activities**. Strenči Library has been involved in the **European Cultural Foundation** programs **Next Library** and **CrAFt** and the ERASMUS+ "LibChange" project, which aims to strengthen the role of libraries in communities and encourage international exchange of experiences.

A notable Strenči Library initiative is supported by **Latvia State Capital Foundation**—"From Strenči to UNESCO", which highlights local cultural heritage and strengthens the connection between

local identity and the international cultural sphere. The town of Strenči carries the legacy of a centuries-old craft that once shaped the rhythm of life in rural Latvia. This tradition—**timber rafting**—has recently received one of the highest cultural honors: inscription on the **UNESCO Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity**.

The library plays an essential role in safeguarding and promoting the heritage of Strenči. By preserving historical photographs, documents, maps, and personal stories, the library ensures that knowledge of this traditional craft remains accessible to future generations. Through exhibitions, educational programs, public lectures, and cooperation with schools and cultural institutions, the library transforms archived memory into living heritage.

The 500th anniversary of the first Latvian book's printing was marked by a country-wide cultural celebration in 2025, showcasing Latvia's literary heritage through the cultural programmes for multiple audiences with a culminating main event at the National Library, local library events across Latvia and broadcasts from **National Library**. Strenči library was among the chosen to greet the audience and to highlight the activities and the **library's special role in community** and its active citizenship.

Strenči Library actively supports and participates in community-led initiatives, collaborating with local residents, NGOs, and educational institutions. It serves as a platform for idea exchange, cooperation, and civic engagement, allowing people to implement projects, organize events, and

strengthen the local community. Regular activities include creative workshops, educational events, thematic exhibitions, and meetings with opinion leaders, writers, researchers, and professionals from various fields, responding to contemporary issues and community needs.

Strenči Library plays a crucial role as a community center, enhancing a sense of belonging and psychological safety. It is an open and inclusive space where people can

feel accepted, heard, and safe to express their thoughts. The library encourages dialogue, trust, and community cohesion, becoming a place to find both peace and inspiration. As a modern educational and social support hub, the library acts as a promoter of critical thinking and psychological resilience. Through discussions and educational activities, residents are encouraged to analyze information, evaluate different perspectives, and navigate the information space thoughtfully.



"Improvise Green! Libraries and adult learning for sustainability"— The second mobility on the "LIBCHANGE" project

Strenči Library promotes a green lifestyle and environmentally friendly practices. Sustainability topics are integrated into creative workshops and events, fostering responsible attitudes toward nature, environmental awareness, and sustainable habits in daily life supporting the community with mental empowerment through nature resources and boosting creativity. By combining culture, education, civic engagement, and care for well-being and

the environment, Strenči Library serves as a vital support for the growth and sustainable development of the local community.

The ERASMUS+ "LibChange" project aims to strengthen the role of libraries in communities and encourage international exchange of experiences. In summer 2025, Strenči Library hosted the mobility activities for the project.



Improvise Green = Meet > Learn > Create

"Improvise Green" transforms the library into a **community hub where nature, knowledge, and creativity meet**. Expanding beyond books, the library becomes a place for shared experiences, environmental learning, and creative exploration inspired by the local natural environment.

Meet

The library serves as an open, inclusive gathering space where people of all ages come together. Through nature-based workshops and outdoor activities, participants meet as a community, exchange ideas, and build meaningful connections in a calm, welcoming environment.

Create

The library encourages creativity as a natural extension of learning. Through workshops such as open-air acrylic painting, monotype printmaking, and silk batik, participants transform their observations into personal artworks. Each participant creates a unique masterpiece, guided by curiosity and imagination.

Learn

Learning takes place through direct engagement with the local environment. Plants and flowers from the surrounding area become tools for discovery, observation, and discussion. The library supports this learning by connecting practical experience with knowledge resources—books, archives, and shared expertise.

Improvise Green!

LIBRARIES AND ADULT LEARNING FOR SUSTAINABILITY

Strenči Public Library positions sustainability not only as an environmental responsibility but also as a social process that strengthens community resilience, participation, and shared ownership. Within this framework, the library adopts the Green Library concept as a guiding principle for locally driven actions that support long-term environmental, social, and economic well-being through collective community effort.

MEET, learn, create—IMPROVISE!

To reinforce a sense of belonging and encourage active community participation, Strenči Public Library is actively engaged in research and the implementation of innovative tools and methodologies. These initiatives are designed to enhance participation, inclusivity, and collaboration among diverse community groups, ensuring that library services evolve in response to local needs and societal change.

Applied Improvisation as a Core Methodology

One of the key methodologies selected and increasingly applied within this context is "Applied Improvisation".

The integration of "Applied Improvisation" into library activities represents an innovative approach to strengthening user engagement, professional competencies, and institutional adaptability. "Applied Improvisation" is a practice-based methodology, derived from improvisational theatre and adapted for educational, organizational, and community contexts. In libraries, it supports both staff development and user-oriented services, in response to rapidly changing informational, social, and technological conditions.

"Applied Improvisation" contributes to the "Green Library" concept by addressing sustainability not only at an environmental level, but also at social and cultural levels. Improvisation-based programmes require minimal material resources, rely primarily on human interaction, and promote reuse,



creativity, and conscious participation. These principles align closely with green values such as reduced resource consumption, increased awareness of human impact, and responsible community engagement.

Leadership and Expertise

The improvisation activities are designed and led by **Aija Iesalniece**, the pioneer of "Applied Improvisation" in Latvia. She serves as a guest lecturer in higher education institutions, delivering courses in communication and improvisation, and is a member of the international Applied Improvisation Network. Aija Iesalniece has authored two books examining the theoretical and practical applications of "Applied Improvisation" in educational and professional contexts.

Libraries as Living, Adaptive Spaces

Applied Improvisation strengthens the role of the library as a living, adaptive space that responds to community needs. By engaging users in co-creative processes, libraries foster a sense of ownership, responsibility, and long-term commitment to sustainable practices, reinforcing their role as inclusive community hubs.

Goals of Integrating Applied Improvisation in Library Activities

The primary goals of integrating Applied Improvisation into library practice include:

1. Enhancement of Communication Skills

Strengthening verbal, non-verbal, and interpersonal communication among library staff and between staff and users,

with focus on active listening, clarity, and empathy.

2. Development of Adaptive and Flexible Thinking

Fostering the ability to respond co-constructively to uncertainty, unexpected situations, and evolving user needs within library environments.

3. Promotion of User Engagement and Participation

Encouraging active participation, creativity, and collaboration among diverse user groups through interactive and experiential library programmes.

4. Strengthening Team Collaboration

Supporting trust-building, cooperation, and shared responsibility within library teams through experiential learning processes.

5. Support for Lifelong Learning and Creativity

Positioning the library as a space for continuous learning, creativity, and personal development for users of all ages.

BENEFITS OF APPLIED IMPROVISATION IN LIBRARY CONTEXTS

The implementation of "Applied Improvisation" in library activities provides benefits at individual, institutional, and community levels:

- Improved User Experience**

Library services become more responsive, inclusive, and user-centred, increasing satisfaction and accessibility.

- **Psychological Safety and Inclusion**

Improvisation-based activities create supportive environments that encourage experimentation, reduce fear of error, and promote inclusive participation.

- **Professional Skill Development**

Library professionals develop transferable skills, including problem-solving, creativity, emotional regulation, and collaborative decision-making.

- **Increased Resilience and Well-being**

Engagement in improvisational practices supports stress management, presence, and resilience in professional and community contexts.

- **Innovation in Library Programming**

"Applied Improvisation" enables the creation of innovative educational and cultural initiatives, including interactive workshops, information literacy sessions, and community engagement activities.

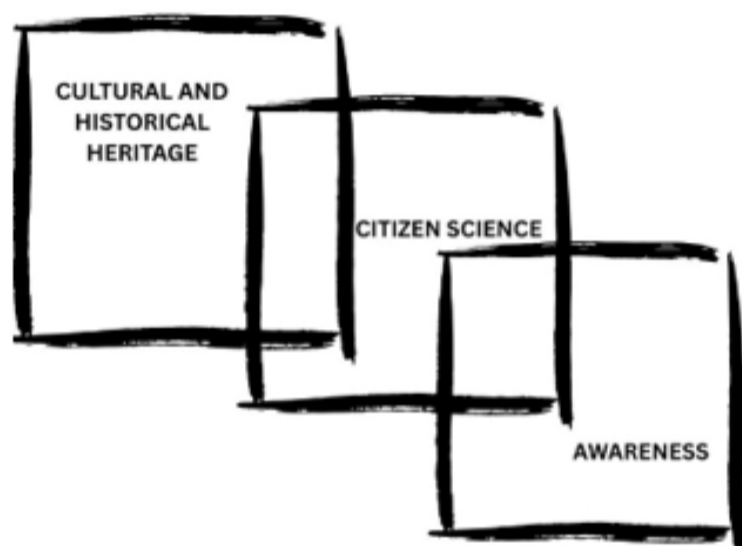
Conclusion

Implemented in partnership with and led by Aija Iesalniece, "Applied Improvisation" supports experiential learning, dialogue, and co-creation within library activities. This methodology enables community members to actively participate in sustainable practices, develop adaptive and collaborative skills, and contribute meaningfully to the library as shared community space.

Through the integration of the "Green Library" concept and "Applied Improvisation", Strenči Public Library strengthens its role as a catalyst for sustainable community development, social cohesion, and lifelong learning.

Improvise Green = Meet > LEARN > Create

Promoting environmental awareness through cultural heritage and citizen science



The experience of Strenči City Library demonstrates how public libraries can successfully integrate environmental sustainability, cultural heritage, and citizen participation into their core activities. This model can be adapted and implemented by other libraries according to their local context, traditions, and community needs.

Strategic Framework

A key strategic priority of Strenči City Library is the promotion of environmentally responsible lifestyles and the strengthening of environmental awareness within the local community. The approach builds upon Latvia's cultural and historical heritage, where **traditional ways of life** have long been rooted in respect for natural processes and sustainable interaction between humans and nature.

This cultural foundation provides a strong value-based framework for library activities, reinforcing sustainability, intergenerational responsibility, and a sense of belonging. Libraries in other regions can similarly draw on their own cultural heritage as a resource for promoting sustainable development and community engagement.

Citizen Science as a Library Tool

Citizen Science serves as an effective methodological tool to connect environmental awareness with local identity. By involving community members in research and knowledge production, libraries can strengthen both civic participation and cultural continuity.

In Strenči, citizen science initiatives were developed within the framework of the Public Libraries 2030 programme, in cooperation with the regional main library—Valmiera Library—and other public libraries in the **Valmiera region**.

One notable initiative was participation in a place-name and toponyms collection project initiated by the University of Latvia—Latvian Language Institute. The project addressed the lack of systematically documented local place names by engaging residents in research and data collection for a public database.

Methodology Applied

The project combined several adaptable methods that can serve as a model for other libraries:

- research of historical and contemporary sources;
- analysis of archival materials and historical maps;
- interviews with community members;
- documentation of oral histories;
- verification and systematic recording of place names.

This collaborative and research-based approach strengthened inter-library cooperation and encouraged active community participation in preserving local knowledge and cultural landscapes.

Thematic Focus: The Oak as Cultural and Environmental Symbol

As a continuation of the toponym research, the oak (ozols) became a thematic focus. In Latvian cultural tradition, the oak carries strong linguistic, sacred, and toponymic significance. It functions not only as a natural landmark but also as a symbol embedded in language, place names, and spiritual worldview.

In cooperation with Jērcēni Public Library, Strenči City Library highlighted Kaņepju Oak as both a cultural and environmental landmark. Activities combined research, educational programming, and community engagement, demonstrating how a single natural object can become a focal point for interdisciplinary learning.

As a result of this work, in 2024 the Kaņepju Oak was nominated for the European Tree of the Year competition, organized by the Environmental Partnership Association with the support of the European Land Owners'

Association and the European Commission, achieving 9th place. This recognition strengthened local pride and visibility at the European level.

Development Through International Cooperation

Environmental research activities were further expanded using citizen science methodology. With support from the Erasmus+ project LibChange, diverse information sources were compiled and systematized, resulting in the creation of an informational display about plant species characteristic of the local area.

This output provided accessible knowledge for residents and visitors, combining environmental education with cultural interpretation.

Transferable Elements for Other Libraries

The Strenči example offers a flexible model that other libraries can adapt:

1. **anchor sustainability initiatives in local cultural heritage;**
2. **use citizen science to involve community members in research and documentation;**
3. **cooperate with regional libraries, universities, and international programmes;**
4. **select a locally meaningful symbol (e.g., a tree, river, landscape feature) as a thematic focus;**
5. **translate research results into visible, educational outputs (exhibitions, databases, displays).**

Conclusion

Strenči City Library demonstrates how public libraries can act as active facilitators of environmental awareness, cultural heritage preservation, and citizen participation. By integrating traditional knowledge with contemporary research methods, libraries can contribute meaningfully to sustainable

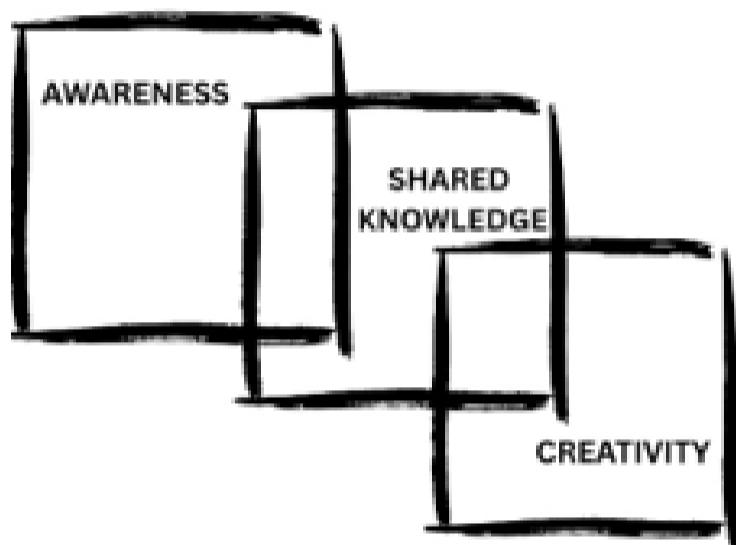
community development at local and regional levels.

This example illustrates a replicable and adaptable model of good practice that can inspire other public libraries to design sustainability-oriented initiatives aligned with their own cultural and environmental contexts.



Improvise Green = Meet > Learn > CREATE

Environmental awareness, creativity, and hands-on learning



Caring for nature begins with understanding. By bringing environmental awareness, creativity, and shared knowledge together in Strenči Public Library as a community center, a space that supports well-being, fosters sustainability, and encourages long, meaningful relationships between people and the natural world was created. Nature and creativity become tools for learning, connection, and long-term resilience.

The "LibChange—Improvise Green" initiative demonstrates how libraries can actively contribute to sustainable thinking, creativity, and community empowerment through thoughtfully designed, people-centered methodologies. Framed by the concept **Improvise Green = MEET—LEARN—CREATE**, the project highlights the evolving role of the library as a dynamic community hub rather than a passive knowledge repository.

Target Audience: adults (18+), young adults, seniors, families with intergenerational participation, local artists and creative enthusiasts, community members interested in sustainability and environmental awareness.

Focus: environmental awareness through creative practice, sustainability and local biodiversity, community building through applied improvisation, personal empowerment through artistic expression, strengthening the role of libraries as active community hubs.

Duration: full program 4–8 weeks; individual workshop duration 2.5 hours.

Learning Format: non-formal adult education, experiential and practice-based learning, outdoor and indoor sessions, facilitated group work, creative workshops, reflective discussion circles.

Module Rationale and Context

Modern communities face increasing environmental challenges and social fragmentation. Libraries, as trusted public institutions, have the potential to address both ecological awareness and social cohesion.

This module responds to the need for sustainable thinking at the local level, the importance of reconnecting people

with nature, the growing demand for participatory, experiential adult learning and the transformation of libraries into community-centered learning spaces.

By combining applied improvisation, sustainability education, and artistic practice, the program creates a holistic learning environment rooted in cultural identity and environmental responsibility.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the program, participants will: develop greater awareness of local plants and biodiversity; understand sustainability as a lived and culturally embedded practice; strengthen creative confidence and artistic skills; improve collaboration, communication, and active listening skills; experience libraries as participatory spaces for learning and community growth; reflect on their personal relationship with nature and environmental responsibility.

Methods and Working Approaches:

applied improvisation techniques for group cohesion, guided observation of local flora, hands-on artistic experimentation, step-by-step demonstrations, reflective group discussions, peer exchange and collaborative learning, learning by doing, process-oriented facilitation rather than product-focused instruction.

The methodology prioritizes: inclusion, psychological safety, creative freedom, environmental sensitivity, cultural connection.

Target Groups to Engage

Special attention is given to inclusivity and accessibility, ensuring participation regardless of prior artistic experience: adults seeking creative self-expression; environmentally conscious citizens; rural community members; seniors interested

in traditional crafts; educators and cultural workers; individuals at risk of social isolation; amateur artists and beginners.

The Role of the Librarian

The librarian supports learning processes, ensures access to materials and knowledge resources, and strengthens the link between creativity, sustainability, and community engagement.

Within the *Improvise Green* model, the librarian acts as facilitator rather than lecturer, community connector, cultural mediator, sustainability advocate, organizer of safe and inclusive spaces, encourager of dialogue and reflection.

TYPES OF ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITIES IN LIBRARIES

This program integrates multiple adult education formats such as Creative workshops (painting, printmaking, batik), experiential sustainability learning, informal lectures and thematic discussions, community dialogues, improvisation-based learning sessions, exhibition and public presentation of artworks, intergenerational learning activities.

Through MEET—LEARN—CREATE, Strenči Public Library demonstrates how adult education in libraries can move beyond information delivery toward transformation, empowerment, and long-term community resilience.

This section serves as a step-by-step teaching guide for librarians and facilitators who wish to replicate the "*Improvise Green*" workshops.

1. Planning Phase (2-4 Weeks Before):

- ✓ define target group and group size (recommended 8-15 participants);
- ✓ confirm indoor/outdoor location;
- ✓ prepare budget and purchase materials;
- ✓ conduct short site observation (identify local plants/flowers);
- ✓ prepare short introduction on sustainability & local biodiversity;
- ✓ plan timing (including breaks);
- ✓ prepare participant reflection questions;
- ✓ ensure safety measures (especially for batik workshop—heat source).

2. Space Preparation (1 Day Before):

- ✓ arrange tables/easels in circle or semi-circle (encourages dialogue);
- ✓ prepare material stations;
- ✓ protect surfaces (table covers, floor protection);
- ✓ test equipment (press, wax heater, etc.);
- ✓ prepare name tags;
- ✓ display example works (optional—avoid limiting creativity).

3. Workshop Structure Template

PHASE	ACTIVITY	DURATION
Welcome & Icebreaker (MEET)	Improvisation game or nature-based warm-up	10 min
Context & Learning (LEARN)	Short input on sustainability & local flora	10 min
Demonstration	Technical explanation of artistic method	10 min
Creative Practice (CREATE)	Individual work with facilitator support	90-180 min
Reflection Circle	Sharing experience & insights	10 min

Open-Air Acrylic Painting Workshop

Participants began with guided observation of selected local plants and flowers, focusing on form, color, light, and texture. Quick sketching exercises helped translate observation into composition. Participants then developed a final painting, working directly from nature.

Preparation:

- ✓ select safe outdoor area;
- ✓ identify 3-5 types of local plants for observation;
- ✓ prepare backup indoor space (in case of bad weather);
- ✓ prepare needed materials:
 - acrylic paints;
 - canvas or acrylic paper;
 - brushes of various sizes;
 - water containers and palettes;
 - pencils and sketch paper;
 - easels or drawing boards.

Step 1—Observation Exercise (15-20 min)

Guide participants to:

- observe shapes and silhouettes;
- notice light and shadow;
- identify 3 dominant colors;
- touch (if allowed) to explore texture.

Reflection Question: *What makes this plant unique?*

Step 2—Quick Sketching (15 min)

Encourage:

- loose lines;
- not focusing on perfection;
- composition experimentation.

Step 3—Painting Phase (90 min)

Facilitator reminds participants:

- use layering;
- experiment with brush strokes;
- interpret, do not copy.

Step 4—Group Reflection (10 min)

Suggested prompts:

- What did you discover about the plant?
- Did your perception change while painting?



Monotype Printmaking Workshop

Participants explored the monotype technique by applying ink or paint to a smooth plate and transferring the image onto paper through pressure. Natural elements such as leaves, stems, and flower shapes were used as inspiration for textures and compositions.

Facilitator Instructions

Preparation:

- prepare clean printing plates (plexiglass, metal, or plastic);
- printing ink or acrylic paint—test ink consistency ;

- collect natural materials (leaves, grasses, flowers):
 - ✓ rollers (brayers);
 - ✓ printing paper;
- press or hand-pressure tools (spoons, barens).

Step-by-Step Implementation

Step 1— Demonstration (20 min)

Show:

- how to roll ink evenly;
- how to place natural elements;
- how to apply pressure.

Explain: each print is unique—unpredictability is part of the process.

Step 2— First Experimental Print (30 min)

Encourage experimentation without expectations.

Step 3—Second Intentional Print (45 min)

Participants refine composition:

- think about positive/negative space;
- layer textures.

Step 4— Reflection (10 min)

Questions:

- What surprised you?
- How did chance influence your artwork?



Silk Batik Workshop

Participants designed nature-inspired motifs and transferred them onto silk. Using wax-resist techniques, they applied layers of color, allowing the patterns to emerge gradually. The process concluded with wax removal to reveal the final design.

Materials:

- silk fabric;
- batik wax;
- tjanting tools or brushes for wax application;
- fabric dyes or silk paints;
- frames or stretchers for silk;
- heat source for wax melting;
- protective materials (gloves, table covers).

Facilitator Instructions

Safety First:

- ✓ ensure stable wax heating device;
- ✓ provide gloves;
- ✓ explain safe handling of hot wax.

Step-by-Step Implementation

Step 1— Design Phase (30 min)

Participants:

- sketch nature-inspired motif;
- consider symbolism;
- plan color layering.

Step 2— Wax Application (45-60 min)

Remind participants:

- slow movements;
- control flow of wax;
- work patiently.

Step 3— Dyeing (30-45 min)

Explain layering logic:

Light colors first → dark colors later.

**Step 4—Wax Removal & Reveal
(Facilitator-led)**

Demonstrate safe wax removal process.

Step 5—Reflection (10 min)

Questions:

- What emotions emerged during the slow process?
- What does your motif represent?



THE THIRD MOBILITY ON THE
"LIBCHANGE"
PROJECT IN SLOVENIA:



"GREEN PATHS OF KNOWLEDGE - LOCAL CULTURAL
HERITAGE, ENVIRONMENT AND THE COMMUNITY AS
AN OUTDOOR CLASSROOM" AND GREEN THEMES

FRANC KSAVER MEŠKO ORMOŽ LIBRARY

The Franc Ksaver Meško Ormož Library is located in the northeastern part of Slovenia, in the Podravje Statistical Region, which includes numerous small and medium-sized settlements and a predominantly rural environment. It serves as the central public library providing public library services for the municipalities of Ormož, Središče ob Dravi, and Sveti Tomaž.

The library operates four branch units: the Središče ob Dravi Local Library, the Sveti Tomaž Local Library, the Ivanjkovci Local Library, and the Miklavž pri Ormožu Local Library, ensuring access to materials and services for residents of smaller communities as well. It is intended for all residents of these municipalities and the wider area, representing an important informational, cultural, social, and educational center of the local community.

The library collects, processes, and preserves library materials and provides its members with lending services. It participates in lifelong learning, organizes special programs for children, youth, and adults, aimed at promoting reading culture, and hosts cultural events related to its activities. It also provides access to online information resources, assists users in finding materials, and offers basic training in the use of information technologies and library services. Through its activities, the library strives to meet the needs and interests of all age and interest groups and collaborates with schools, kindergartens, and other cultural and educational institutions in the area.

The important part of the library's work includes special forms of adult education and learning. At the regional and national levels, it is recognized for its rich program offering, that promotes reading culture, critical thinking, creativity, healthy lifestyle, and lifelong learning. These activities include:

- reading badges and reading clubs for adults, as well as other initiatives encouraging regular reading and discussion of books, ideas, and current topics;
- literary evenings, professional lectures, and local heritage events, where adults can explore topics ranging from literature, culture, and history, to social issues;
- workshops and other skill-building activities, supporting creativity, intergenerational cooperation, and personal growth;
- study circles that foster imagination and creativity, democratic exchange of knowledge, skills, and experience, as well as personal and intellectual development;
- additional events, such as competitions, exhibitions, travel lectures, and programs contributing to cultural life and networking within the local community.

A significant aspect of the modern development of the Franc Ksaver Meško Ormož Library is its transformation into a "green and sustainable library". The

"green library" concept is implemented at several levels: spatial, programmatic, and educational. The library actively participates in local, national, and international initiatives related to sustainable development and follows the guidelines of the International Federation of **Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)**, which recognizes libraries as key actors in achieving **the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**.

With its "green building", "green surroundings", and "green programs", the Franc Ksaver Meško Ormož Library has become one of the first two "green libraries" in Slovenia. In 2021, IFLA named it **one of the four best green libraries in the world**, recognizing its commitment to the Sustainable Development Goals and the "2030 Agenda", as well as its efforts in non-formal education and awareness-raising for all generations in the field of "green literacy", with an emphasis on understanding environmental, climate, and ecological challenges.

The library carries out reading promotion activities, fosters reading culture, and provides non-formal adult education, through study circles, reading clubs, literary discussions, lectures, workshops, and other forms of lifelong learning. Adult learners acquire knowledge and skills necessary to promote sustainable development and active social participation.

Library visitors are granted access to the library's green areas and are invited to take part in their maintenance during organized events, where they learn about sustainable development and environmentally friendly lifestyles through hands-on experience.

Through its diverse offerings, the Franc Ksaver Meško Ormož Library fulfils both traditional library roles and contemporary adult educational needs. It is an important institution in promoting lifelong learning, adult education, community networking, and social inclusion at the local level. Increasingly, it strengthens its role as a proactive library serving as a hub and meeting point for the community.



"Green Paths of Knowledge — local cultural heritage, environment and the community as an outdoor classroom" The third mobility on the "LIBCHANGE" project

The mobility in Ormož was held from September 14 to 18, 2025, as "Green Paths of Knowledge", with purpose of connecting four libraries in the field of the green movement and enabling the exchange of knowledge, experience, and curricula related to adult education that addresses the themes of sustainability, environmental protection, and green practices. During the Ormož mobility, we built a collaborative spirit, and initiated

meaningful cooperation; raised awareness of the importance of local cultural and natural heritage in sustainable adult education; shared good practices and strengthened the role of libraries in promoting sustainability through adult education; connected with nature as a source of learning and inspiration, and engaged in evaluation, reflection, and moments of relaxation.



The adult reading badge project

The Reading Badge is a reading promotion project that has been running in Slovenia since 1960. Initially intended solely to encourage reading among primary school pupils, it is today aimed at all generations and categories of users: from preschool children to adults. The places where it is implemented are equally diverse, ranging from kindergartens, schools, and public libraries to nursing homes and occupational therapy centres. In 2011, the Reading Badge movement received the highest national award, the Golden Order for Merit, and it is part of Slovenia's intangible cultural heritage.

For many years, the library has been organising the Adult Reading Badge, and in recent years it has focused in particular on selecting literature with green, environmental, nature conservation, and sustainability themes. Participants receive a list of recommended literature and a reading folder in which they record the books they have read, evaluate them, and write down their impressions, comments, insights, or interesting quotations. To earn the Reading Badge, participants must read at least five books from the list. The project also includes the final event, featuring a meeting with one of the authors.

The Adult Reading Badge Project demonstrates how a traditional reading promotion initiative can be transformed into a contemporary adult education programme. By combining literature, reflection, sustainability themes, and long-term engagement, libraries reinforce their role as key providers of lifelong, non-formal

learning and as institutions that respond meaningfully to societal challenges.

Target audience: public librarians, adult services librarians, reading promotion coordinators;

Focus: adult education, reading literacy, non-formal and lifelong learning, sustainability education;

Duration: long-term programme (one reading season);

Learning format: case study analysis, programme planning workshop, evaluation exercises.

Module Rationale and Context

Reading promotion projects can function as powerful adult education tools when they go beyond motivation to read and intentionally integrate learning objectives, thematic focus, and reflective practice.

The Adult Reading Badge Project, rooted in Slovenia's long-standing Reading Badge tradition and recognised as intangible cultural heritage, demonstrates how a familiar and trusted format can be expanded into a structured model of lifelong learning, combining reading literacy with green, sustainability, and environmental literacy.

Learning Objectives

After completing this module, librarians will be able to: design and manage long-term adult reading programmes; integrate thematic educational content

(e.g. sustainability) into existing projects; use reading as a form of non-formal and lifelong learning; encourage reflective and critical reading practices; collect and analyse qualitative and quantitative user data; maintain participant motivation in long-running programmes; build partnerships to support reading promotion activities.

The Role of the Librarian

The librarian acts as a reading promoter and educator, programme designer and coordinator, facilitator of reflection and learning, curator of thematic literature, evaluator and data analyst, cultural heritage mediator.

Key competencies: knowledge of literature and readers' interests; understanding of adult learning principles; thematic expertise (e.g. sustainability literacy); organisational and coordination skills; communication and motivational skills.

Concept: Reading as Lifelong Learning

The Adult Reading Badge is based on the understanding that reading fiction is not only leisure, but learning; reflection, evaluation, and discussion deepen comprehension; familiar formats lower barriers to participation; long-term engagement strengthens competencies.

Key elements of the concept: recommended reading list; minimum reading requirement; reading folder with reflective tasks; final communal event; recognition through certificates and symbolic rewards.

Types of Adult Education Activities within the Project

Guided Reading: curated lists of high-quality fiction and selected non-fiction; thematic focus (e.g. nature, sustainability, environment);

Reflective Writing: recording impressions, opinions, ratings; collecting quotations and insights; encouraging critical thinking;

Informal Learning: self-paced reading; personal interpretation; learning integrated into everyday life;

Literary Events: author talks and discussions; presentation of project results; community celebration of reading.

Project Planning Framework

Step 1: Analysis of the Initial Situation

Key questions: What existing reading habits do adult users have? Which topics resonate with them? How can reading promotion be expanded into education?

Identified opportunities: strong tradition of the Reading Badge; established group of regular adult readers; alignment with the library's green and sustainability focus.

Step 2: Defining Purpose and Objectives

Main purpose: to enhance reading promotion with green and sustainability literacy through a familiar project format.

Key objectives: increase reading and green literacy; raise awareness of sustainability issues through literature; promote fiction as a learning tool; support lifelong learning among adults; attract new participants while retaining regular readers.

Step 3: Project Team Formation

Typical team structure:

- 3–4 project coordinators;
- Head of Adult Department as lead coordinator;
- Integration with international or strategic projects .

4. Project Implementation

Location

- Central library and branch libraries;
- Final event held in the central library.

Duration

- One reading season (November–September);
- Final event in Autumn.

Implementers Responsibilities include: theme selection, literature selection and list preparation, design of reading folders and promotional materials, year-round promotion, data collection and analysis, organisation of the final event.

Methods and Educational Approaches

Adult Learning Methods (self-directed learning; reflective learning; narrative learning through fiction; informal and non-formal education);

Reading Promotion Techniques (personal recommendation, thematic storytelling, linking fiction to real-world issues, recognition and symbolic rewards);

Sustainability Education Approach (indirect learning through stories, emotional and ethical engagement, connecting environment, health, and lifestyle).

Target Group: adult readers, especially regular library users, predominantly users over 55 years of age, occasional readers, adults interested in sustainability topics, new users attracted by thematic focus.

Partnerships and Cooperation

Potential partners: authors and literary creators, publishing houses (book donations), local sustainable producers (e.g. beekeeper, herbalist);

Partner roles: enriching content, providing symbolic gifts, enhancing visibility and credibility.

Evaluation and Impact Assessment

Evaluation Tools: reading folders, user ratings and written reflections, statistical analysis (books read, favourites, quotations), user satisfaction feedback;

Indicators: number of participants, number of books read, circulation of thematic materials, quality of reflections, self-reported learning outcomes.

Risks and Challenges

Potential challenges include: saturation with sustainability topics; maintaining long-term motivation; balancing educational content with reading for pleasure; limited availability of certain titles;

Mitigation strategies: flexible reading rules; allowing alternative formats (e-books); offering choice within the theme; strong personal encouragement by librarians.

Expected Outcomes

Through this project, libraries can achieve increased reading and green literacy, greater awareness of sustainability issues,

strengthened lifelong learning competencies, higher circulation of quality fiction, deeper understanding of users' perspectives, preservation and active implementation of intangible cultural heritage.



"Green Afternoons"—Implementing sustainability study circles in public libraries: A model for delivering sustainability-oriented study circles for adults in public libraries

"Green Thursday Afternoons" are implemented as a study circle with the future in mind. They consist of a cycle of meetings based on the study circle methodology, where adults, guided by a professional moderator, explore topics such as environmentally friendly gardening practices, organic nutrition, natural building techniques, energy efficiency, the circular economy, and related themes. The emphasis is on group learning, the exchange of experiences, and practical solutions. The program has been running continuously since 2016.

When designing the program framework, we considered both the natural environment in which the library is situated and ongoing social changes. We identified numerous environmental issues that needed to be addressed through adult education content. At the same time, we recognized the need for social interaction among our adult users, particularly during the summer months, when the library provided an ideal meeting place in a town where such spaces are otherwise scarce.

The Ormož Library is located in a semi-rural environment where agriculture and viticulture predominate, and gardening also plays an important role. Therefore, the first themes and the launch of the project

were primarily dedicated to herbs and their uses. During the planning phase, we also recognized an opportunity for the library to highlight its professional literature and strengthen its visibility as an educational institution offering various forms of non-formal and lifelong learning. The library's summer terrace offered a unique and highly effective opportunity for outdoor learning, which we deliberately integrated into the "green project".

Within the local community, we identified numerous potential partners who could support the implementation of the project. By involving local experts, we anticipated very low financial costs, as we were able to offer them free promotion of their services in return—creating mutual benefit. Within our staff, we also found sufficient expertise and strong green competencies to successfully lead and carry out the project.

The fundamental aim was to introduce green content into the library's program and to develop sustainability literacy among adult users. We sought to increase the visibility of the library as an educational institution, provide users with space and opportunities for social interaction and lifelong learning during the summer, thereby contributing to their well-being and health, increase the circulation of professional literature, and

foster a stronger culture of collaboration and new partnerships within the local community.

Target Group:

Librarians, adult education coordinators, community program managers, study circle moderators.

Format:

Blended approach combining theoretical input, case study presentation, group work, practical planning, and reflection.

1. LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this module, participants will be able to:

- understand the study circle methodology in the context of library-based adult education;
- design and implement a "Green Afternoons" program cycle;
- facilitate participatory and community-based learning processes;
- integrate library collections into sustainability education activities;
- promote sustainability literacy within their local community;
- monitor and evaluate the impact of such programs.

2. BACKGROUND AND RATIONALE

Public libraries are increasingly recognized as community learning hubs and active contributors to sustainable development. The "Green Afternoons" program represents a good practice model of non-formal adult education delivered through study circles. The program focuses on:

- sustainability literacy,

- environmental awareness,
- healthy lifestyles,
- self-sufficiency and biodiversity,
- circular economy,
- therapeutic creativity,
- sustainable gardening and eco-agriculture.

The program is free of charge and open to the general public, not limited to registered library members.

Its added value lies in:

- active participation of learners;
- co-creation of content;
- strengthening community bonds;
- promotion of library collections;
- empowerment for sustainable living.

The Role of Libraries in Sustainability Education

Key Topics

- libraries as lifelong learning centers;
- sustainability literacy and green competencies;
- community engagement and social responsibility;
- libraries and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Learning Outcomes

Participants will:

- recognize the strategic role of libraries in sustainability education;
- identify opportunities for green programming within their institution.

Activity

Group discussion:

Mapping existing sustainability-related initiatives in participants' libraries.

Study Circle Methodology

Theoretical Framework

- principles of adult learning (andragogy);
- experiential and peer learning;
- participatory and community-based education.

Key Characteristics of Study Circles

- small group (8–15 participants);
- shared responsibility for learning;
- predefined thematic framework;
- skilled moderator as facilitator, not lecturer;
- reflection and practical application.

Case Example: "Green Thursday Afternoons"

Topics may include:

- sustainable gardening;
- seed preservation;
- eco-food and nutrition;
- natural building techniques;
- energy efficiency;
- circular economy;
- therapeutic creative practices.

Activity

Simulation: designing the first study circle meeting.

MODULE

Designing a Green Program Cycle

Step 1: Needs Assessment

- surveys among users;
- consultation with community organizations;
- informal conversations with patrons;
- analysis of local sustainability challenges.

Step 2: Program Planning

- defining the number of sessions (6–10 recommended);
- selecting thematic focus;
- inviting experts and guest speakers;
- assigning a trained moderator;
- scheduling and logistics.

Structure of a Typical Session

1. welcome circle and sharing;
2. thematic introduction or guest input;
3. workshop or group work;
4. reflection;
5. presentation of related library materials.

Activity

Participants draft a 6-session program tailored to their local context.

Participant Engagement and Co-Creation

Participatory Approach

- participants as co-creators;
- encouraging members to lead workshops;
- integrating participants' proposals into future programming.

Building Community

- cooperation with local farmers and NGOs;
- using public spaces (community gardens);
- intergenerational learning;
- encouraging "green activism".

Activity

Develop a strategy to ensure long-term participant engagement.

Promotion and Visibility

Communication Channels

- library website;
- social media;
- local media;
- posters and flyers;
- direct invitations.

Promoting Library Collections

- thematic book displays;
- curated reading lists;
- e-resources and databases;
- highlighting new acquisitions.

Expected Institutional Impact

- increased visibility;
- growth in membership;
- increased circulation of sustainability-related materials.

Activity

Create a promotional plan for one program cycle.

Monitoring, Evaluation, and Impact

Success Indicators

- number of participants;
- participant satisfaction;
- increased borrowing statistics;
- new memberships;
- community partnerships.

Evaluation Methods

- feedback questionnaires;
- group reflection;
- observation;
- data analysis.

Long-Term Impact

- improved sustainability competencies;
- stronger community ties;
- increased civic engagement;
- empowerment for sustainable lifestyle choices.

Activity

Design an evaluation tool adapted to participants' institutions.

PRACTICAL TOOLKIT (ANNEXES)

- annual planning template;
- sample invitation;
- evaluation questionnaire template;
- checklist for moderators;
- sample session timeline;
- recommended reading list on sustainability topics.

ASSESSMENT AND REFLECTION

At the end of the training, participants will:

- present their draft program cycle;
- identify potential implementation challenges;
- develop a practical action plan;
- reflect on their role as facilitators of sustainable change.

COMPETENCES DEVELOPED

- adult education program design;
- facilitation and moderation skills;
- community engagement strategies;
- sustainability literacy promotion;
- collection-based programming;
- impact evaluation.



"Green Library"

The "Green Library" Program, encompassing a green building, green content, green office principles, and a holistic contribution to the global Sustainable Development Goals, began to be developed by the Ormož Library in 2014, when plans were made to relocate the central library to the premises of the former kindergarten. As one of the first two green libraries in Slovenia, it officially began operating in 2015, following the relocation to the renovated "green building". The first "green projects" were launched, initially targeting adults and later expanding to include children. Over the years, these "green initiatives" evolved into broader sustainability projects and events covering the entire spectrum of sustainable development.

The library operates according to the principles of a "green building" and a "green institution". In practice, this includes energy-efficient operations, the introduction of LED lighting, waste separation and recycling promotion, the use of environmentally friendly cleaning products, organizing plastic-free (zero-waste) events, promoting e-services and e-book lending, lectures on energy-efficient home renovation and sustainable construction, responsible resource management, and active participation in and promotion of sustainable mobility initiatives. The library encourages walking and cycling among its users, as well as healthy lifestyle in general. Herbal and flower beds, grapevines on the library's summer terrace, and the library beehive are just some examples of its self-sufficiency initiatives. The produce from these activities is used as sustainable promotional gifts or

gifts for participants and project partners. A seed library has also been established.

Within the local community, the library has positioned itself not only as a cultural, learning, and social space, but also as a space for "green transformation". Through its operations, leadership, and management practices, it serves as a role model and contributes to raising awareness among staff and users, encouraging them to become increasingly socially and environmentally responsible and to implement changes and take new steps toward sustainable transformation in their personal lives and households.

Sustainable Event Management

This work plan outlines sustainable practices for organizing and hosting events in libraries. The goal is to reduce environmental impact, promote responsible resource use, and raise awareness of sustainability among visitors, partners, and the wider community.

Objectives

- reduce waste and resource consumption during events;
- lower the carbon footprint of library activities;
- promote environmentally responsible behavior;
- support local and sustainable suppliers;
- raise awareness of sustainability within the community.

1. Key Areas of Action

1.1 Sustainable Communication and Promotion

Goal: minimize paper use and unnecessary printing.

Actions:

- prioritize digital promotion (website, social media, e-newsletters);
- use digital invitations and online registration forms;
- reduce printed posters and flyers;
- print only when necessary, using:
 - recycled paper,
 - double-sided printing,
 - black-and-white printing when possible;
- reuse banners and signage with neutral, reusable designs.

1.2 Sustainable Catering and Hospitality

Goal: reduce environmental impact related to food and beverages.

Actions:

- prioritize local and seasonal food suppliers;
- offer plant-based or vegetarian options as the default choice;
- avoid single-use plastics (plastic cups, plates, cutlery);
- use reusable or compostable tableware;
- provide tap water instead of bottled water;
- accurately estimate the number of participants to reduce food waste;
- donate surplus food when possible.

1.3 Waste Reduction and Recycling

Goal: minimize waste generation and increase recycling.

Actions:

- set up clearly marked recycling stations at events;
- avoid disposable decorations;
- use reusable event materials and supplies;
- encourage speakers and participants to use digital presentations instead of printed handouts;
- monitor waste generated at events and track improvements over time.

1.4 Sustainable Materials and Equipment

Goal: reduce consumption of non-sustainable materials.

Actions:

- avoid plastic decorations and promotional materials;
- use durable, reusable materials for event signage;
- borrow or rent equipment instead of purchasing new items;
- choose suppliers with environmentally friendly certifications;
- select energy-efficient lighting and audiovisual equipment.

1.5 Energy Efficiency

Goal: reduce energy consumption during events.

Actions:

- schedule events during daylight hours when possible;
- turn off lights and equipment when not in use;
- use LED lighting;
- optimize heating and cooling systems during events.

1.6 Sustainable Mobility

Goal: reduce transport-related emissions.

Actions:

- promote walking, cycling, and public transport for event participants;
- provide bicycle parking where possible;
- invite local speakers to reduce travel distances;
- offer hybrid or online participation options.

1.7 Education and Awareness

Goal: promote sustainability values through events.

Actions:

- organize events focused on sustainability topics;
- highlight sustainable practices during events;
- inform participants about the library's sustainability efforts;
- collaborate with local environmental organizations;
- encourage staff training on sustainable event management.

Staff Responsibilities

- assign a sustainability coordinator for events;
- include sustainability criteria in event planning checklists;
- provide staff training on sustainable practices;
- review sustainability measures after each major event.

Monitoring and Evaluation

- track paper usage reduction;
- monitor waste production and recycling rates;
- evaluate supplier sustainability;
- collect feedback from participants;
- prepare an annual sustainability report for event activities.

Continuous Improvement

Sustainability is an ongoing process. The library will:

- regularly update this work plan;
- set measurable sustainability targets;
- share best practices with other libraries;
- encourage innovation and community involvement.



THE LAST MOBILITY ON THE
"LIBCHANGE"
ONLINE IN SERBIA:



CULTURE OF LIVING WITHIN THE LIBRARY

NOVI SAD CITY LIBRARY

"Read. Learn. Create."

Novi Sad City Library is a public library of the lending type, founded by the City of Novi Sad. It is situated in the old core of the centre. Its work and mission are based on the tradition of the Novi Sad Serbian Reading Room, founded in 1845.

Beside the central object in Dunavska Street, which includes the Lending Department for Adults "Đura Daničić", the Children's Department, the Information and Reference Centre with the Reading Room, library offices, the management and the Common Affairs Office, Novi Sad City Library represents the network of 25 branches in the city and the suburbs, as well as the Local History Collection and the newly formed Digital Youth Centre. Novi Sad City Library is the parent library for South Bačka District, which means that it monitors library activities, projects development and provides all public, school and special libraries on this territory with expert assistance.

The basic function of the library is to collect, process, classify and make use of library materials. The library has over 520,000 books and magazines, including 312 old and rare books. There are over 25,000 users enrolled in the library annually. Numerous program activities, such as literary meetings, forums, creative workshops, courses, seminars, etc. represent ways of informing and educating users and employees, as well as popularizing the book and the library, which, in addition, has extensive publishing and developed cooperation with institutions and associations of its environment.

Projects are important part of the library's work, through which the level and scope of

its services are raised. In addition to inclusive projects and the opening of the library to the community, various non-formal educational programs are being implemented: free English courses, computer skills support programs, various events, as well as a large number of programs held at "The Danube Library"—the library on the Danube beach called Štrand, which works under the motto: "The Library is where you are".

Several awards were designated to the library in the last decades.

Mission: Novi Sad City Library is the institution of integrity, liable to lasting values while facing contemporary trends. Working with partners from home and abroad, we strive to provide all members of our community with open and equal access to educational content, information and opportunities for creative expression. We inherit and promote cultural heritage and contemporary literature and actively support the acquisition of knowledge, the development of reading culture and the active involvement of the local community, creating innovative, engaging and useful content.

Vision: We create free and intimate social space with open access to overall human knowledge and information and encourage individual growth of all our users through education, creativity and fun.



Culture of living within the library— The last mobility on the "LIBCHANGE" project

Improving quality of our citizens lives through fighting against the climate change, fostering democratic values and introducing the category of citizenship through adult education, represent priorities on the three Novi Sad City Library practices, presented in this manual. As libraries are, more and more, turning into the social hubs and integral spaces of "culture of living", their activities are more society-oriented and present in both modern view to cultural heritage and contemporary trends. As the mobility in Serbia, planned on the

ERASMUS+ programme "LibChange", due to the social factors and crisis, couldn't have been implemented in live form, our three practices were presented online, through the "Zoom" platform. The goal was to transfer expert knowledge, share examples of good practice, develop employee competencies, improve the quality of adult education in libraries, spread positive impacts in the local, regional and national environment, and encourage participants to make positive changes in sustainable development, healthy lifestyles and well-being.



Public libraries as civic participation hubs

By maintaining the close contact with their patrons, public libraries are in far better position than any other cultural institution, as the most democratic ones ("access to all" principle). By involving community members and inspiring them to take an active role in library's work, the message would reach even the less-favoured and disadvantaged collectives.

During 2022 and 2023, the project "Accept the Challenge" was implemented in Novi Sad City Library, whose main activities were three gatherings of the community members—three civic participation laboratories—on topics of mental health dialogue, environmental awareness for youth and empathy and social solidarity. Different social groups participated, expressing their views and experiences, thereby enabling social dialogue and raising the individual democratic potential. Together, they all participated in the creation of solutions on burning community issues, showing that they see the library as a space of freedom and a place of active contribution to the wellbeing of the whole community.

Module Rationale and Context

Public libraries are increasingly evolving from collection-oriented institutions into **user-centred, community-driven spaces**. In societies with low civic participation, libraries can function as **safe, trusted hubs for dialogue, learning, and democratic engagement**.

This module is based on the **Civic Participation Laboratory (CPLab)** model developed by Ivana Jovanović Arsić from the "Kulturis" Association and Bojana Grujić from the Novi Sad City Library. Three labs with citizens were held in one year time: the first CPLab, "The Culture of Dialogue on Mental Health", was held on October 15th, 2022; the second lab, "Accept the Challenge! Green Response", was held on February 21st, 2023, and the third laboratory, "Work in progress—empathy is being built", was held on October 18th, 2023. This model demonstrates how libraries can support adult education, social dialogue, and community problem-solving through structured participatory activities. Due to the adaptability of the model, it has the possibility of wide application. That is why the Novi Sad City Library and the "Kulturis" Association have accredited the professional development program for librarians—a model of work with the local community—at the National Library of Serbia for 2024 and 2025. In this period, 180 librarians from seven libraries (Kragujevac, Jagodina, Belgrade, Novi Sad, Novi Bečej, Šabac and Sremska Mitrovica) have completed the training and rated the seminar with an average score of 4.78/5.

Target audience: librarians in public, school and special libraries.

Focus: adult education, civic engagement, community-based learning.

Duration: three hours (adaptable to longer or multi-session formats).

Learning format: blended (theoretical input + workshops + case studies).

Learning Objectives

After completing this module, librarians will be able to understand the role of libraries as civic and educational hubs; design and implement adult education activities focused on social issues; build partnerships with local stakeholders and interest groups; apply participatory and dialogical work methods; identify and engage diverse target groups; facilitate safe, inclusive, and productive community dialogue; evaluate the impact of civic and educational library programmes.

Methods and Work Approaches

Participatory methods: small group discussions, World Café, brainstorming and co-creation, prototype development, role-based discussions.

Educational approaches: adult learning principles, experiential learning, peer learning, dialogue-based learning.

Facilitation techniques: creating safe spaces, encouraging equal participation, managing sensitive topics, conflict-sensitive moderation.

Target Groups to Engage

Libraries should actively invite adult citizens interested in social issues, marginalised and disadvantaged groups, youth and young adults, librarians (public and school), teachers and educators, students (e.g. psychology, social sciences), activists and volunteers, experts and professionals, local decision-makers (as listeners or respondents).

The Role of the Librarian

In this model, the librarian acts as **facilitator of dialogue, media and information literacy professional, cultural mediator and animator, connector between citizens, civil society, and institutions.**

Key competencies include communication and moderation skills, sensitivity to social issues, neutrality and ethical awareness, ability to work with diverse groups.

Types of Adult Education Activities in Libraries

Libraries can organise the following formats:

1. Civic Participation Laboratories (CPLabs)

Structured participatory workshops where citizens discuss pressing local issues, learn from experts, co-create solutions ("prototypes").

2. Panel Discussions with Dialogue

Expert inputs combined with moderated audience participation.

3. Community Workshops

Hands-on group work focused on practical solutions.

4. Educational Campaigns

Linked to national or international events (e.g. Mental Health Day, Environmental Awareness Days).

5. Training Programmes for Librarians and Citizens

Peer learning, professional development, and community education.

Planning and Organising a CPLab or Similar Event

Step 1: Identifying Community Needs

Methods: surveys among library users and citizens, online questionnaires, consultations with local organisations, media and social media campaigns.

Key question: Which socially relevant topics require dialogue and learning in the library?

Step 2: Selecting Topics

Examples of successful topics: mental health and wellbeing, environmental awareness, empathy and social cohesion, inclusion of vulnerable groups.

Step 3: Mapping Stakeholders

Potential partners: NGOs and civil society organisations, educational institutions, health and social services, environmental groups, local authorities, experts and practitioners, informal citizen groups.

Good Practice Examples (from CPLabs)

Example 1: Mental Health Dialogue (cooperation with public health institutions, expert input + community solution design, outcomes shared with local authorities).

Example 2: Environmental Awareness for Youth (panel with environmental NGOs, group work with young participants and educators, focus on habit-building and practical action).

Example 3: Empathy and Social Solidarity (storytelling and lived experience sharing, cross-sector and intergenerational participation, collective proposal development).

Key Considerations for Librarians

When organising such activities, librarians should pay attention to inclusivity and accessibility, ethical handling of sensitive topics, clear communication of goals, neutrality and trust-building, balanced representation of voices, follow-up and visibility of outcomes.

Evaluation and Impact Measurement

Evaluation tools: participant feedback forms, reflection sessions, attendance and diversity analysis, partner feedback, media and community response.

Key impact indicators: increased civic participation, stronger community networks, improved visibility of the library, enhanced librarian competencies, increased empathy and mutual understanding.

Expected Outcomes

By implementing this module, libraries can achieve stronger role as social and educational hubs, more engaged and empowered citizens, increased democratic dialogue, improved cooperation between institutions and civil society, greater trust in libraries as public spaces.



"A tourist in their own city" — Famous women of Novi Sad

The **Local Collection** of the **Novi Sad City Library** inherits local history, with the task of collecting, preserving, lending and promoting it, popularizing its funds, the library itself and the cultural history of the city. Doing this, it is trying to find innovative ways to present various curiosities, which are abundant in the history of Novi Sad, to children and young people, in order to encourage them to explore, learn and popularize their heritage.

As part of the digitization project, which began in 2008, the head of the Local Collection, Blaženka Marković, launched a series of activities for various ages—from elementary school children, through high school students, to university students and adult fellow citizens. This multi-year project, which realistically has no end, included a variety of educational content, ranging from workshops, exhibitions, TV programs and lectures, to walks around the city and learning on the go.

Module Rationale and Educational Context

Local heritage collections in public libraries are not only repositories of memory, but also **active educational tools**. By interpreting local history through innovative and participatory methods, libraries can strengthen **civic identity, cultural awareness, and lifelong learning**.

The programme "A Tourist in Their Own City" demonstrates how libraries can connect **local history, gender perspectives, and**

experiential learning through guided city walks, workshops, exhibitions, and interdisciplinary collaboration.

History is not only written in books—it lives in streets, buildings, names, and memories.

By enabling citizens to become "tourists in their own city", libraries create powerful opportunities for adult education, identity building, and cultural empowerment, while reaffirming their role as guardians and interpreters of shared heritage.

Target audience: librarians in public, school and academic libraries.

Focus: adult education, cultural heritage education, gender equality, experiential learning.

Duration: 1 day (adaptable to shorter or multi-session formats).

Learning format: lectures, guided walks, workshops, partnerships with cultural institutions.

Target audience: librarians in public, school and academic libraries.

Focus: adult education, cultural heritage education, gender equality, experiential learning.

Duration: 1 day (adaptable to shorter or multi-session formats).

Learning format: lectures, guided walks, workshops, partnerships with cultural institutions.

Target Groups

The programme can be adapted for adult citizens, university students, educators and librarians, cultural professionals, tour guides, women's groups, seniors and lifelong learners, youth and intergenerational groups.

Learning Objectives

After completing this module, librarians will be able to design adult education programmes based on **local heritage, use experiential and place-based learning method**, interpret history from a **gender-sensitive perspective**, connect library collections with **urban space**, develop partnerships with cultural and educational institutions, encourage participants to become **active collaborators** of the library, promote cultural heritage through storytelling and dialogue.

Methods and Educational Approaches

Adult education methods: experiential learning, place-based learning, narrative and biographical approach, visual learning, inquiry-based learning.

Participatory techniques: question-based guiding, observation and comparison (past–present), group discussion, reflective dialogue, gender-sensitive approach, highlighting women's visibility in history, critical reflection on social roles, connecting heritage with contemporary values.

The Role of the Librarian

Within this model, the librarian acts as **local history educator, cultural guide and storyteller, research mentor, mediator between collections and the public, networker among cultural institutions.**

Core competencies: knowledge of local history and collections, presentation and interpretation skills, ability to work with diverse age groups, gender-sensitive and inclusive approach, skills in experiential learning design.

Learning Outcomes: historical awareness, critical thinking, gender equality education, cultural pride and identity.

Types of Adult Education Activities

Libraries can develop the following formats:

- **Thematic Educational Walks:** "Tourist in Their Own City" guided tours, focus on streets, buildings, forgotten sites, integration of women's history and social roles;
- **Lectures and Illustrated Talks:** based on local collections (books, maps, photos, postcards), use of digital presentations and archival materials;
- **Workshops and Learning-on-the-Go:** interactive discussions during walks, group reflections and mini research tasks;
- **Exhibitions and Media Content:** exhibitions based on local heritage themes, TV, online, and social media educational content;
- **Interinstitutional Visits:** museums, galleries, archives, library-to-library cooperation.

Programme Design and Planning

Step 1: Defining the Educational Theme

Possible themes: famous women of the city, gender and urban space, cultural benefactors and endowments, education and civil society development, reading rooms and early libraries.

Step 2: Preparing Educational Content

Sources: Local Collection materials, archival documents and maps, photographs and postcards, biographical texts, scholarly and popular publications.

Step 3: Structuring the Learning Path

Typical structure: introduction to local history and key concepts, presentation of historical context, guided walk and spatial interpretation, discussion and reflection, visit to partner institutions.

Cooperation and Networking

Key partners may include: city archives and historians, museums and galleries, cultural institutions, schools and universities, tourist organization, women's associations, media partners.

Benefits of networking: shared expertise, increased visibility, stronger cultural ecosystem, sustainable educational programmes.

Good Practice Focus: Famous Women of Novi Sad

Educational Value: visibility of women in public space, understanding gender roles in history, recognition of women's intellectual, artistic and civic contributions.

Key Issues to Consider

Librarians should pay attention to accuracy and sensitivity in historical interpretation, avoiding simplification or mythologization, inclusive language and perspectives, physical accessibility of walks, adaptation to different audiences, ethical storytelling.

Evaluation and Impact

Evaluation tools: participant feedback, attendance and engagement, qualitative reflections, media coverage, partner feedback.

Indicators of success: increased interest in local history, stronger connection between citizens and the city, greater visibility of women's heritage, increased use of Local Collection materials, new collaborations and programmes.

Expected Outcomes

Through this module, libraries can strengthen their educational role, promote local and gender-sensitive heritage, encourage lifelong learning, build cultural networks, transform citizens into active heritage interpreters, position the library as a living cultural classroom.



"The Danube Library" — Library on the Štrand

In the heart of Novi Sad, on the banks of the **Danube**, one of the most beautiful and famous city beaches in the region—the **Štrand**—is located. The Štrand is not only a favourite place to relax during the summer months; it is also a symbol of the historical heritage of Novi Sad, along with the developed cultural life of the city. Its rich history dates back to the 19th century, and its longevity testifies to different eras. The Štrand has retained the role of a public space open to everyone, a place where the spirit of community and city identity are nurtured. On seven hectares of green and the same number of sandy areas, inclusive and open, a place of sports, entertainment, relaxation and culture, at the beginning of July, for 17 years, the doors of the **Danube Library** open. The library has joined its members on the beach. Visitors to the Štrand are allowed to borrow books for free, read daily and illustrated newspapers, and attend cultural programs. This practice is being presented by librarian Galja Žilnik.

Rationale and Educational Context

Module is designed as a good-practice learning module for librarians, focusing on outreach library services, adult education, cultural programming in public spaces, and inclusion, based on the example "The Danube Library—Library on the Štrand".

Modern public libraries are no longer confined to their buildings. By moving into **public, informal, and leisure spaces**, libraries can reach new audiences and

promote **lifelong learning, reading culture, and civic inclusion**.

"The Danube Library" is a long-standing example of how a library can successfully function in a **non-traditional setting**—a public beach—while maintaining its educational, cultural, and social mission.

"The Danube Library" shows that a library can thrive outside its walls, blending culture, education, leisure, and community life. By entering public spaces such as beaches, parks, or squares, libraries reaffirm their role as inclusive, democratic, and living institutions, where learning happens naturally—wherever people are.

Target audience: public librarians, outreach librarians, cultural programme coordinators.

Focus: adult education, outreach services, informal learning, culture in public space.

Duration: modular sessions across a season.

Learning format: case study analysis, planning workshops, programme design exercises.

Learning Objectives

After completing this module, librarians will be able to design and implement **outreach library services**, develop adult education and cultural programmes in **open public spaces**, adapt library services to **informal and seasonal environments**, attract non-

traditional library users, promote reading and learning beyond library walls, manage partnerships, logistics, and programming in outdoor settings, foster inclusion and multicultural dialogue.

Methods and Educational Approaches

Adult Learning Methods: informal learning, learning through leisure, experiential and spontaneous learning, dialogue-based education.

Engagement Techniques: personal book recommendations, short-format talks, interactive discussions, visual and performative elements.

Inclusive Practices: multilingual content, family-friendly programmes, low-threshold participation, intergenerational activities.

Target Groups

"The Danube Library" model successfully reaches adult citizens, occasional and non-library users, families and children, seniors, tourists, youth and students, multicultural communities, persons with disabilities, leisure visitors not seeking formal education.

Partnerships and Networking

Potential partners include cultural institutions, artists and writers, sports clubs and athletes, environmental organisations, media professionals, minority cultural associations, local authorities.

Benefits of cooperation: programme diversity, shared audiences, stronger visibility, community trust.

The Role of the Librarian in Outreach Settings

In this model, the librarian acts as **outreach educator, cultural programme curator, community animator, mediator between culture and leisure, inclusive service provider.**

Key competencies: flexibility and adaptability, communication skills, event coordination, audience engagement, cultural sensitivity, programme moderation.

Concept: "The Library Is Where You Are"

"The Danube Library" is based on the principle that **access to books, knowledge, and culture should follow people into their everyday spaces.**

Key features: seasonal library service, free access in a leisure environment, combination of reading, learning, and cultural events, informal, welcoming atmosphere.

Types of Adult Education and Cultural Activities

Libraries operating in public spaces can offer:

- **Reading and Lending Services:** book loans with library card or ID, daily and illustrated newspapers, multilingual materials;
- **Educational Lectures:** popular science (medicine, biology, ecology), history and literature, media and information literacy;
- **Cultural Programmes:** book promotions, poetry evenings, literary festivals, conversations with writers, artists, and journalists;

- **Workshops:** media literacy workshops, ecological and environmental workshops, sign language workshops, language learning workshops, creative workshops for children and adults;
- **Community and Sports Programmes:** talks with athletes and Olympic champions, promotion of healthy lifestyles, interactive presentations.

Programme Planning and Organisation

Step 1: Choosing the Location

Key criteria: high foot traffic, symbolic and cultural value, open and inclusive character, seasonal suitability.

Step 2: Designing the Service Model

Consider: lending rules, opening hours, collection size and structure, language diversity, user flow and safety.

Step 3: Infrastructure and Logistics

Important elements: weather-resistant furniture, secure storage, accessibility, clear signage, flexible space for events.

Good Practice Highlights

Key Success Factors: strong symbolic location, long-term continuity (17+ years), free and open access, rich and diverse programming, adaptation to users' habits, multicultural sensitivity.

Key Issues to Consider

When implementing similar initiatives, librarians should consider weather condi-

tions and seasonality, security of materials, noise and environmental factors, staffing needs, sustainability and funding, clear communication of rules, balance between leisure and learning.

Evaluation and Impact Assessment

Evaluation methods: usage statistics, programme attendance, user feedback, media coverage, partner feedback.

Impact indicators: increased access to reading, reaching new audiences, strengthened library visibility, enhanced community engagement, promotion of lifelong learning, strengthening multicultural dialogue.

Expected Outcomes

Through outreach libraries in public spaces, libraries can extend their social mission, normalize reading in everyday life, reduce barriers to access, strengthen community identity, promote education in informal contexts, and position themselves as **active cultural actors**.



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An E-manual with 12 Practices in
European Public Libraries

Colophon

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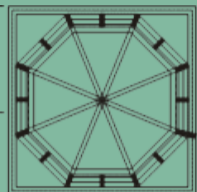
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НОВИ САД
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