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## 10 Beyond the Bookshelf: Green Libraries as Catalysts for Sustainability in Slovenia

**Abstract:** Green libraries from all over the world educate local communities on the subject of sustainable development. Programmes provided by libraries must be carefully planned in accordance with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of the UN Agenda 2030 and UNESCO's Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) directions. The consequences of reckless human intervention in the environment and contributions to global warming are drastic and irreparable. Saving the planet for future generations requires positive action. This chapter describes the development of green libraries, the origin and emergence of the green library concept in Slovenia, and the influence of green literacy programmes on the local environment in Slovenia.

**Keywords:** Sustainable development; Green literacy; Green libraries; Public libraries –Slovenia; Environmental protection – Slovenia

### Introduction

As a consequence of the current prominence of green trends and sustainable environmental policies, [green libraries](#) are growing in importance and increasing in number globally. This chapter presents the concept of green libraries and the ways in which they raise awareness and educate local communities on sustainable development with particular reference to Slovenia. The programme of each green library must be carefully planned in accordance with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development [Transforming our World](#) and its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) (United Nations n.d.a; United Nations n.d.s, Clause 18) the [UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development](#) (ESD) (UNESCO 2018) and subsequent UNESCO documents which explore ways of attaining the SDGs.

This chapter presents an overview on the concept and development of green libraries to the present day based on the available literature. It describes the Slovenian public library context and focuses on one of the first green libraries in Slovenia, with a discussion about the introduction of a green library model into the local Slovenian context, the response of the local community to the new library activities, and the development of the programme in accordance with the SDGs and the UNESCO ESD programme. The chapter concludes with a summary of the

benefits brought by the introduction of the green library model and an analysis of the opportunities for further development of libraries in Slovenia and elsewhere.

## Green Libraries and Green Literacy

### Green Libraries

A literature review consulted sources available in English to find the most relevant definition of the term green library. The concept itself was originally developed in the English-speaking United States of America and referred to two primary aspects:

- The first and most common use relates to the library building as planned, built, or renovated in such a way as to diminish its environmental impact, and
- The second focuses on the library as a social and information centre whose activities, operation and mission are concentrated on the significance of environmental questions and directed towards a sustainable environmental policy and the development of green literacy (Antonelli 2008; Aulisio 2013; Hauke 2015).

The [definition](#) provided by the Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Section (ENSULIB) of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) combines the various elements:

*A green and sustainable library must take into account environmental, economic and social sustainability. Green and sustainable libraries may be of any size, but they should have a clear sustainability agenda which includes ... Commitment to general environmental goals and programmes: Commitment is guided by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, the Paris Climate Agreement and related environmental certificates and programmes (IFLA ENSULIB 2022).*

Although not mentioned directly, the commitment includes the UNESCO ESD programme.

As a worldwide umbrella organisation for libraries, IFLA supports and promotes green libraries with its own activities, and, since 2016, its international ENSULIB Section has made the annual [IFLA Green Library Award](#) to libraries that “best communicate their commitment to sustainability” (IFLA ENSULIB [2024]). IFLA encourages and promotes libraries, including green libraries, in the context of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, which is reflected in the key initiatives of the [IFLA Strategy 2019–2024](#) and its Strategic Direction 1: Strengthen The Global Voice Of Libraries with “1.1 Show the power of libraries in achieving

the Sustainable Development Goals” (IFLA [2019]). The initiative demonstrates the importance of the role played by libraries in achieving the SDGs.

IFLA (n.d.a) regards libraries as key institutions participating in achieving the SDGs as exemplars, educators and enablers. In many communities, libraries are the only locations that allow for access to important information including environmental topics. As local, well-known and trusted institutions, libraries are uniquely positioned to lend their resources, provide their infrastructure and optimise their locally integrated situations to pursuing certain goals of sustainable development, for example, promoting the importance of a clean and healthy environment and its protection (IFLA n.d.b).

Different types or parts of libraries may be designated as green libraries, such as the [library of the United States International University Africa in Kenya](#) (Ogola 2018), a component of the [National Library Board of Singapore](#) (Lin and Wan 2013), the [Seattle Central Library](#) in the United States (Athens 2007), the [Cockburn Health and Community Centre Library](#) in Australia (Cockburn Libraries 2016) and the [Chinese University of Hong Kong Library](#) (Jones 2017).

## Green Literacy

The ENSULIB definition indicates that a green and sustainable library must focus on environmental, economic and social sustainability and have a clear sustainability agenda. Green literacy is a key part of the educational process aimed at directing users towards sustainable development and has been defined as:

Green literacy represents the ability to understand the impact of human decisions and actions on the environment by raising awareness of sustainable development and encouraging critical thinking. Its task is to change the behavior of an individual or the entire institution (Čadovska and Tkalčič 2017, English summary).

Both green literacy and sustainable development seek the same goals: to change the behaviour and actions of individuals and institutions, to reverse negative trends, and to correct damage already inflicted. Kurbanoglu and Boustany describe green information literacy in the following way:

- A set of conventional skills expanded to include sustainable thinking
- Sustainable thinking – considering how our information behavior, choices and actions affect environment – is indispensable and additional component of green information literacy (Kurbanoglu and Boustany 2014).

Green literacy is part of information literacy and imparting skills and knowledge concerning green literacy is tailor-made for libraries, which have always responded to societal trends with new initiatives. The core function of libraries is the provision of convenient and easy access to the most recent information. Improved performance and enhanced quality of services require use of the latest technology (Čadovska and Tkalčič 2017).

## Library Activities Supporting Sustainability

Libraries are places of formal and informal learning; libraries provide information and promote new trends. Libraries are socially responsible institutions integrated into their local communities; they embody an ideal platform for the dissemination of green ideas and the encouragement of sustainable development. Libraries as public spaces have enormous potential to partner with a wide spectrum of individuals and organisations in delivering their programmes and activities, ranging from local experts and non-government organisations (NGOs) to regional economic and political government entities.

UNESCO's *ESD Roadmap* setting the directions for achieving the SDGs by the year 2030 (UNESCO 2020) seeks to strengthen the abilities of countries and governments to provide quality education on climate change. The *Roadmap* emphasises the creation and exchange of knowledge; it provides policy guidelines and technical support to member states of UNESCO; and it carries out projects on the ground. UNESCO encourages innovative approaches and informal learning and stresses the importance of assistance from the media, networking and partnerships. ESD is a lifelong learning process and a key component of quality education at all levels. The *Roadmap* promotes the seventeen SDGs in all educational environments and reinforces that students in all environments along with the wider public must strengthen their understanding of the SDGs and their connection with individual and collective life:

ESD empowers learners with knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to take informed decisions and make responsible actions for environmental integrity, economic viability and a just society empowering people of all genders, for present and future generations, while respecting cultural diversity. ESD is a lifelong learning process and an integral part of quality education that enhances cognitive, social and emotional and behavioural dimensions of learning. It is holistic and transformational and encompasses learning content and outcomes, pedagogy and the learning environment itself. ESD is recognized as a key enabler of all SDGs and achieves its purpose by transforming society (UNESCO 2020, 8).



## Green Libraries in Slovenia

Global trends influence libraries in Slovenia, which are no longer solely places to borrow books and other materials or to socialise at literary events but spaces for education, enlightenment, inspiration and transformation. Slovenia has committed itself to the implementation of Agenda 2030 and its goals (Slovenia 2017). In Slovenia, green libraries tend to be public libraries. Public libraries operate within the legislative framework of the Slovenian library system. The [Nacionalni Svet za Knjižnično Dejavnost/National Council for Library Activity](#) is a professional advisory body within the Ministry of Culture which focuses on the operation and development of libraries and provides expert advice. The Council recommends that Slovenian libraries help fulfil the following societal needs:

The public library as a programme provider of public services with the help of library materials and facilities impacts the quality of life of individuals and local communities. The library contributes to the development of knowledge and culture, the proliferation of democratic decision-making, the promotion of library use, the understanding of diverse forms of literacy, and social tolerance. The library participates in achieving social goals both on the local and national level, prompted by the needs and challenges of the local community (Slovenia. Nacionalni Svet za Knjižnično Dejavnost 2018, 3. Translated from Slovenian by the author).

In short, public libraries in Slovenia cooperate and collaborate. They jointly develop, and deliver responses to, at a local and national level, the same social development goals covered by Agenda 2030. Public libraries are rooted in the local community and in a position to understand and react to local issues. Libraries in Slovenia are actively adapting to social needs and becoming increasingly visible as social hubs that inform, educate and raise awareness amongst their users on various subjects, including healthy lifestyles, environmental care and management, and sustainable development. Green libraries were virtually unknown in Slovenia until recently and significant change has occurred in the last decade.

### Implementation of Green Library Principles in the Šentvid Library

The Šentvid Library, a larger community branch of the [Mestna knjižnica Ljubljana/Ljubljana City Library](#), serves as a good example of the adoption of green library principles. In October 2013, the Mestna knjižnica Ljubljana/Ljubljana City Library (MKL) commenced a six-month renovation of its community branch library in Šentvid, located on the green outskirts of the city. Since nearly half of the area of the [Četrtna skupnost Šentvid/Šentvid District](#) is covered by forests, MKL took

the opportunity presented by this remarkable environmental setting to develop a green library concept that would combine and connect different organisations, groups, and individuals in the locality. MKL seized the prospect of the renovation of the existing building to capitalise on the environment, to assemble an appropriate library collection for the setting, and to develop a suitable programme of events which would harmonise with the location. The [Šentvid Library's mission](#) is “Living in Harmony with Nature” (Zdravje 2019). The library plays a significant role in educating, informing and raising awareness among the local population about the importance of protection and conservation of natural resources, and of a healthy lifestyle. Due to the nearby location of two kindergartens, three primary schools, two high schools, a music school, and a health centre, the library has accordingly planned its activities with their interests and needs in mind.

Since 2015, the Šentvid Library has incorporated and implemented the ESD programme as outlined in the *Roadmap*:

- ESD raises the awareness of the 17 goals in education settings
- ESD promotes critical and contextualized understanding of the SDGs, and
- ESD mobilizes action towards the achievement of the SDGs (UNESCO 2020, 16).

Library activities related to coexistence with, and protection of, nature include a thematically appropriate book collection in an ecological corner (Figure 10.1), and events for both adults and children such as exhibitions, scientific lectures, workshops, lists of recommended books, fairy tales, an ecological reading badge and a literary quiz.



**Figure 10.1:** Ecological corner Šentvid Library. © Ana Zdravje

*Šentvid Library-Green Library: Eco-Week Third Week of the Month*, first conceived as a pilot project for families in 2015, became a regular part of the library's programme in 2017 with the aim of making nature and its protection a living part of the green library (Table 10.1). The library has become a green teacher imparting green literacy to its users (Zdravje 2019).

**Table 10.1:** Šentvid Library-Green Library: Eco-Week Third Week of the Month

Project Elements	Components
Participants	Šentvid Library and outside personnel, guest speakers and performers, organisations, associations, schools and kindergartens
Duration	Tuesday to Friday, third week of February, March, April, October, and November
Goals	Promotion of the library and introduction of its activities to a wide range of potential users in the Šentvid District, the City of Ljubljana, Slovenia, and internationally in Austria and Croatia; enrolment of new members; establishment of contacts with the Šentvid District, schools and kindergartens for potential future cooperation and integration into the local community; establishment of contacts with organisations and associations in the district and its surroundings; cooperation with non-governmental organisations, the Municipality of Ljubljana, economists and businesspeople; exemplar for other libraries
Target groups	Families, inhabitants of Šentvid, Ljubljana and its surroundings
Partners	Šentvid District, primary schools, the two Šentvid high schools, nearby kindergarten units

The [Eco-Week programme](#) continues and runs from Tuesday to Friday in the third week of the months of February, March, April, October, and November, and includes two separate eco-workshops for adults, children and young people, a fairy tale hour focused on the environment, and an eco-event with a scientific lecture, workshop, or round table, organised and delivered alternately by colleagues, students and external facilitators. Preparation for the Eco-Week included a financial plan and an integrated promotional image campaign featuring a poster and a leaflet bearing a tree symbol. In Eco-Week the Šentvid Library demonstrates environmentally friendly practices as recommended by the UNESCO ESD programme and has gained recognition as an important provider of environmental awareness and education in the local community.

The library's regular partner is the Šentvid District, which promotes the activities of the library on its website and lists all events in its newsletter; while local primary schools act as occasional partners. The [Franc Rozman Stane](#) Primary School and the Šentvid Library, for example, have successfully collected food and other material for an abandoned animal shelter called *Gmajnice*, both in the school

and the library. Children and their teachers were able to donate several boxes of animal food to the shelter.

Eco-Week has been an all-round success: from 1 January 2015 to 30 April 2019, there were thirty-five scientific lectures and workshops for adults, twenty-seven fairy tale hours for children which were attended by parents who took the opportunity to participate and learn, and twenty-seven eco-workshops for children and teenagers. Visitors were satisfied with the events and were very complimentary about lecturers such as [Viki Grošelj](#), a well-known mountaineer, teacher, writer, photographer, mountain rescuer, mountain guide and the Slovene who climbed the most 8000-metre peaks and was the first Slovene to climb all the highest peaks of the continents (Grošelj 2023).

Events have been well attended, especially the fairy tale sessions which were skilfully organised and led by the librarian of the City Library of Ljubljana (Figure 10.2). The participants in eco-workshops for adults, organised in cooperation with various institutions and partners, and in eco-workshops for children, organised by the Creation Corner (Figure 10.3), demonstrated their creativity, crafting fine artefacts made of natural and waste materials. While the participants' satisfaction and progress have been noted through observation, the library plans to measure the value and impact for participants through quantitative performance indicators. Eco-Weeks could be arranged in other libraries and coordinated into a national project, especially in libraries already offering similar activities.



**Figure 10.2:** Fairy tale session Šentvid Library. © Ana Zdravje



**Figure 10.3:** Fairy tale children's art work, led by the Creation Corner Šentvid Library. © Ana Zdravje

In 2018, the Šentvid Library successfully participated in the 1<sup>st</sup> International Conference on Green Libraries, *Let's Go Green!*, in Zagreb and the Brioni Islands with a contribution entitled "Šentvid Library-Green Library". Two green libraries from Slovenia, MKL Šentvid Library and the Franc Ksaver Meško Library Ormož, presented their programmes to participants from over twenty countries. The response was very positive, which encouraged further development of the green library concept. Following the conference presentation, the libraries were invited to participate in other related international projects and activities. In 2019 the Šentvid Library was announced as one of the five runners-up among thirty-four worldwide participants in the [2019 IFLA Green Library Award competition](#) (IFLA ENSULIB 2019; Zdravje 2019).

## Addressing the Sustainable Development Goals and Education for Sustainable Development in the Šentvid Library

The SDGs (Figure 10.4; United Nations n.d.a) have been integrated into the sustainability programmes being offered by the Šentvid Library. The following outlines each goal and the activities undertaken by the library in relation to the goal in the hope that they might serve as inspiration for library services in other settings.



**Figure 10.4:** Sustainable Development Goals. Source: <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/news/communications-material/>

## Goal 1: No Poverty

Goal 1: “End poverty in all its forms everywhere” (United Nations n.d.b). The library offers free entry to all activities, including events and educational programmes, to children, adolescents and adults, including the marginalised and the poor. Library members pay an annual membership fee which is €18 for adults and €11 for students. Children and unemployed people do not pay a membership fee.

## Goal 2: Zero Hunger

Goal 2: “End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture” (United Nations n.d.c). The library has hosted lectures and workshops by experts on edible wild plants and their use in cooking. The library has promoted the Šentvid District market and its locally grown foods, using promotional material and leaflets, and articles in the library’s newsletter.

### Goal 3: Good Health and Well-being

Goal 3: “Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages” (United Nations n.d.d). [Violeta Irgl](#), founder and director of the Institute for Trauma Recovery, Psychotherapy and Counseling, *Rahločutnost*, and specialist in marriage and family therapy has delivered lectures at the library in the context of [University of the Third Age \(U3A\)](#) focusing on intergenerational relations, adolescence, alcoholism, suicide and self-care, and contributing to attainment of Goal 3.

### Goal 4: Quality Education

Goal 4: “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all” (United Nations n.d.e). The library strives for equal access to all levels of education, training and activities for children, adolescents, adults, marginalised groups, and children living in difficult circumstances. The entrance to the library was reconstructed in 2014 and equipped with a ramp to allow access for parents with prams, and to children and people with disability. In order to enable a safe, non-violent, accepting and encouraging learning environment, the library is a [UNICEF Safe Spot](#) (Slovenia Times 2013). The library promotes education on sustainable development and living, human rights, gender equality, a culture of peace and non-violence, respect for cultural diversity, and the contributions of culture to sustainable development, through fairy tale sessions, eco-workshops, exhibitions and events.

### Goal 5: Gender Equality

Goal 5: “Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls” (United Nations n.d.f). In lending library material, the library gives priority to mothers with children, raises awareness of gender equality through the fairy tale sessions, lectures, discussions about books for children and adults, and the reading club, and promotes respect. The library has put up posters drawing attention to violence against women and children.

### Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Goal 6: “Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all” (United Nations n.d.g). The drinking water dispenser in the library is con-

nected to the water mains, removing the need for bottled water and promoting the importance of fluid intake for human health. Users are encouraged to bring their own drinking cups.

## **Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy**

Goal 7: “Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all” emphasises the use of renewable energies (United Nations n.d.h). The library uses gas heating and LED lighting. Energy-efficient windows were installed during the renovation.

## **Goal 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth**

Goal 8: “Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all” is a cornerstone of economic success (United Nations n.d.i). The library promotes sustainable tourism that creates jobs and encourages local culture and creative production. The library provides exhibitions featuring local artists including a permanent exhibition about Janez Bitenc, a Slovenian composer, pedagogue, publicist and music editor who is one of the most important Slovenian music creators for children and who once lived in the building housing the Šentvid Library. The library also features displays of local handicrafts, produces promotional material for workshops, and holds joint events with the Šentvid District, schools and kindergartens supporting economic growth and development. The library holds books and other material about work, employment, and education and training for employment. MKL holds workshops on resumé writing and preparing for job applications and interviews.

## **Goal 9: Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure**

Goal 9: “Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and foster innovation” (United Nations n.d.j). The library enables accessibility of information and communication technology through the provision of copying, printing and scanning equipment. It also assists citizens to master the use of the internet and social media in order to increase personal potential, growth and creativity. The library daily connects inhabitants, individuals, and profit and non-profit organisations in the local environment with the aim of increasing opportunities in everyday and professional life and business activity.



## Goal 10: Reduced Inequalities

Goal 10: “Reduce inequality within and among countries” (United Nations n.d.k). The library promotes the integration of all individual users and members, as well as groups of users, including those who might have special needs, into social, economic and political life. The library provides equal opportunities for its users with library policies that ensure equitable and effective relationships with its members and other users. The library collects, processes, stores, maintains, organises, presents, and communicates library materials and information, and facilitates the discovery and use of library material, and ensures all local citizens have access to knowledge, information and services, regardless of age, gender, disability, race, language, nationality, origin, religious affiliation, social and economic status, employment, education level, and political conviction (Slovenia. Nacionalni svet za knjižnično dejavnost 2018).

## Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

Goal 11: “Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable” (United Nations n.d.l). The library has underpinned efforts to protect and conserve world cultural and natural heritage in its local environment. It has done so through events and initiatives such as the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of primary schools and reading associations, the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the [Vižmarje Tabor/Vižmar camp](#) political meeting focused on nationalism (Društvo Blaž Potočnikova čitalnica/Blaž Potočnik Reading Association 2019) the archival collection of Janez Bitenc, the eminent composer previously mentioned, along with exhibitions and posts on the Kamra website recording past historical and cultural events within the community and remembering significant people (Kamra 2016a, 2016b, 2016c), all of which contribute to the life of the city. The library organised an open-air event *Šentvid Library Reads beneath the Treetops* and plans to set up library activities on the green area in front of its building. In its day-to-day operations, the library practises appropriate waste management and waste separation and participates in the spring clean-up exercise in cooperation with the Šentvid District. The library also holds collections on the subject of the proper construction of buildings from locally sourced materials.

## Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

Goal 12: “Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns” (United Nations n.d.m). The library attempts to lower its waste through preventive measures. It seeks to reduce consumption, and recycle or reuse materials such as paper. It informs local inhabitants and users about sustainable development and environmentally-friendly lifestyles and promotes sustainable tourism and local culture and artefacts through the local Wednesday market, and through posters and promotions in the library. De-accessioned books and other materials are given to interested visitors free of charge.

## Goal 13: Climate Action

Goal 13: “Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts” (United Nations n.d.n). While the most important actors on the global level are national and international institutions and conventions, there is much to be done at the grassroots level. The library does its part in educating and informing all users and visitors on climate change, its causes and consequences, and its impact on food production, through exhibitions, lectures and workshops for children and adults. The library’s collections on ecological subjects can be usefully integrated into organised events such as the fairy tale sessions for children and lectures for adults.

## Goal 14: Life Below Water

Goal 14: “Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development” (United Nations n.d.o). The library holds books and other material on the subject and organises scientific lectures on food sustainability and appropriate eco-fairy-tales for children, raising awareness of nature degradation and the need to preserve global and local water sources.

## Goal 15: Life on Land

Goal 15: “Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss” (United Nations n.d.p). Given that half of the Šentvid District is covered by forests, there is plenty of opportunity for both theoretical and practical awareness-raising regarding deforestation, problems of

hunting and poaching, and loss of biodiversity. Sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems has been further promoted by scientific lectures on wild food and food sustainability, the fairy tale sessions, the library collections, talks, workshops, and the endorsement of sustainable handmade artefacts. In cooperation with one of the local schools, the library collected food and other materials for the local shelter for abandoned animals.

## Goal 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

Goal 16: “Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels” (United Nations n.d.q). As a [UNICEF Safe Spot](#), the library promotes the struggle against all kinds of violence. It ensures public access to information on basic rights and freedoms in accordance with domestic legislation and international agreements; endorses trust and transparency through efficient and responsible management; promotes respect for the rule of law on a national and international level, especially regarding immigrants and their integration; and offers its services to everyone, regardless of personal circumstances.

## Goal 17: Partnerships for the Goals

Goal 17: “Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development” (United Nations n.d.r). As already noted, the Šentvid District is a regular partner of the library and a consistent promoter of the library’s activities. The library occasionally partners with the local schools on projects including the previously mentioned successful collection of food for the local shelter for abandoned animals. Productive cooperation at the Eco-Week has led to further development of projects and partnerships with other cultural and literary organisations, such as the [Društvo Blaž Potočnikova čitalnica/Blaž Potočnik Reading Association](#) and other community groups like the local fire-fighting association. In turn, the new partners have provided broadened support and promotion of the library and its projects, including Eco-Week. As already mentioned, in 2016, the library participated in the programme which secured for Ljubljana the [European Green Capital Award](#), promoting responsible use of water and wood.

## Conclusion

Protection of the environment and sustainable development are topics that will influence life now and in the future and are of concern to everyone. It is important that libraries set a positive example of social responsibility through developing their own activities and programmes. In Ljubljana, the Šentvid Library [activities](#) continue to make their mark within the community with Eco Week in March 2024 and include sessions on gardening, plant exchanges, and food preparation from plants (Mestna knjižnici Ljubljana/Ljubljana City Library 2024). [New initiatives](#) are being trialled with a reading green campaign. The Šentvid Library programme is an exemplar and similar activities could be incorporated into any type of library including school, college, special, public, national and university libraries, depending on the target groups, the opportunities and the available resources, such as space, human resources, and financial frameworks, among others. For example, primary school libraries could offer a lecture for parents and teachers on one day during a designated Eco-Week; or if more resources and staff were available, separate workshops could be offered for parents, teachers, and children. For planning and preparation purposes, between three to five Eco-Weeks a year could be achievable for smaller institutions, with more on offer at larger, better-resourced institutions. Potential participants need to be given sufficient lead time, and activities provided must be engaging. Successful activities can be repeated.

Paying attention to green ideas and green policies is not a passing fad of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Apart from ensuring reduced impacts on the environment in which library users live, the construction of modern, ecologically-minded, energy-efficient buildings can substantially lower the consumption of resources and operational expenses, allowing financial savings to be channelled into other priorities, such as purchase of library material, the provision of sufficient and high quality personnel, environmental education initiatives, renewal of infrastructure, innovative information systems, and the full implementation of green libraries.

Public libraries cooperate in the planning and realisation of the goals of social development at the local and national level, based on the needs and challenges of local communities. Slovenia has adopted the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (United Nations n.d.s) through the activities of various Ministries and [SLOGA](#), a Slovenian global action organisation representing NGOs, and has its own Agenda for 2030 (SLOGA 2016; Slovenia 2017). The *IFLA Strategy 2019–2024* (IFLA [2019]) has also adopted the realisation of the SDGs as a priority. The strategic plans of Slovenian libraries must incorporate the SDGs into their operations and organise their services and actions accordingly. Green libraries have a significant role to play in raising awareness, and guiding and educating the population. While there are currently only two green public libraries in Slo-

venia, it is to be expected that, given public interest, current scientific evidence, compelling rapid social change, and the *IFLA Strategy 2019–2024* the number of green libraries will grow and strengthen, not only in Slovenia, but throughout the world.

Librarians must be educated in sustainability and how to communicate its aims. Knowledge and skills will enable libraries to develop activities and programmes in keeping with local environments and to set priorities and objectives according to the opportunities and resources available. Small beginnings with quality offerings can be upgraded to match the desires, demands and needs of the community, and the available opportunities and resources, both financial and human. Perseverance will prevail. Libraries have a powerful opportunity to educate and inform their users about local and global environments and the opportunities for making the world in which they live a better place. Libraries can implement the UNESCO ESD programme, pursue the SDGs, and develop green literacy for sustainable development in every environment. The model has been proven in the Slovenian library context; it is neither difficult nor expensive; it can be extended and implemented elsewhere.

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