

From libraries for libraries

Three pillars

Development concept

of Czech Republic
libraries

For the period 2021–2027
with an outlook to the year 2030

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6,000 libraries and their branches

Libraries are, by their very nature, places of learning

**democracy and respect for the views of others
community action, meeting, debate,
lifelong informal learning and mutual discovery**

**an educated society is a prosperous society promoting reading and literacy,
working with information and digital technologies**

**The role of libraries is essential for science and research.
a community that is naturally close to each other, people can help each other, get
along, work together and are not just reliant on external support**

Libraries are undoubtedly one of the pillars of our culture and identity.

cultural heritage and wealth of knowledge

of digital data

**The goal is that by 2030 libraries will become natural centres of civic and
community life
through lifelong learning**

**purposefully navigating virtual space and finding value in it to process and store
The vision for the next decade sees libraries in 2030 as institutions where
people go if they want to pursue lifelong learning and deepen their knowledge and
competences.**

Libraries can also inspire and help to create entirely new works of authorship.

Foreword

The booklet *From Libraries for Libraries* briefly presents the content and themes of the newly approved **Library Development Concept for period 2021-2027 with an outlet to 2030**. Where will libraries be heading in the next ten years?

The Concept's content consists of three thematic pillars. According to them, libraries should profile themselves as pillars of civil society and natural centres of local communities, as educational and learning institutions, and as guardians of cultural and knowledge wealth.

The first pillar describes the development of libraries' potential as community centres with adequate space, technology, materials and staff.

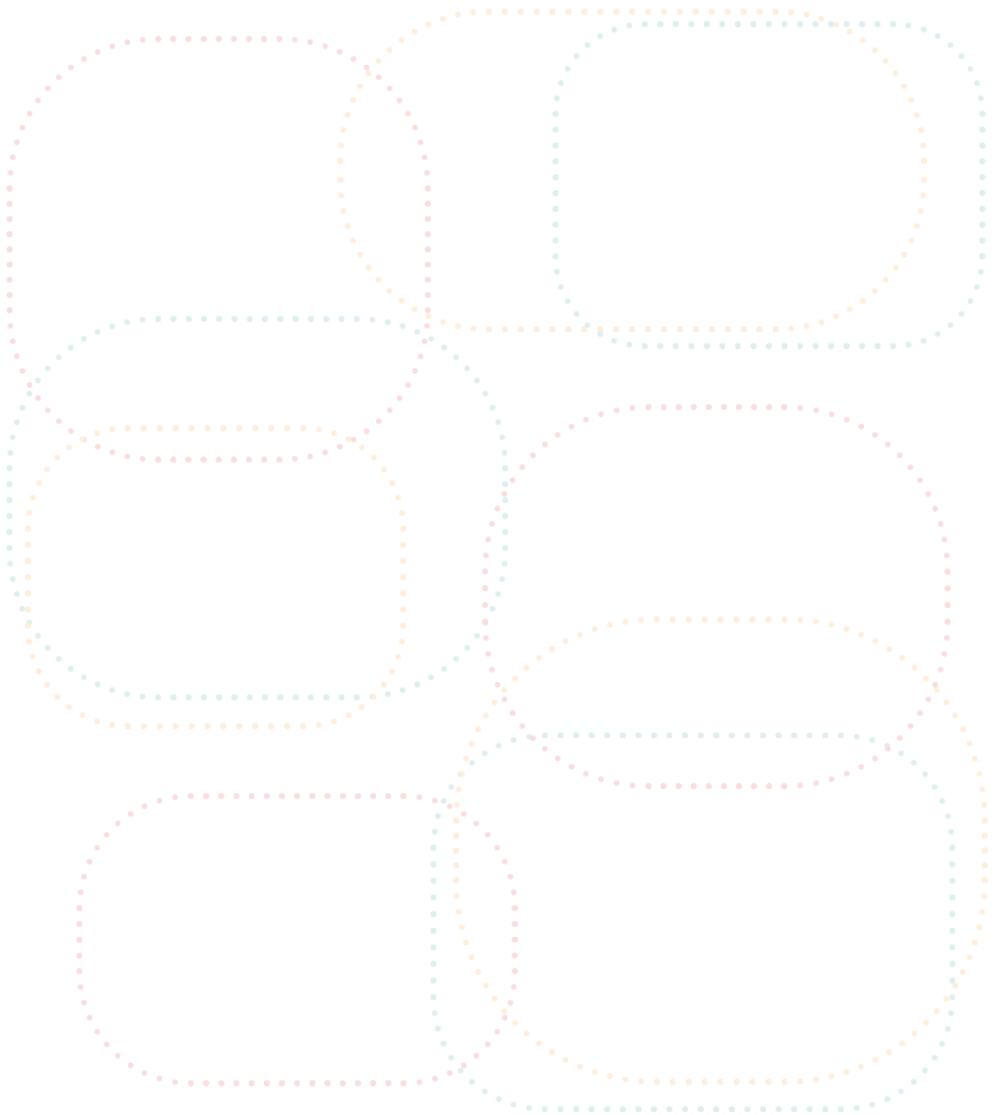
The second pillar emphasises strengthening the educational function of libraries in formal and non-formal education and deepening institutional cooperation with the education sector.

The third pillar promotes barrier-free access to cultural and scientific wealth in physical and digital form.

The concept, whereby the main themes that you hold in your hands right now, builds on the previous strategic document, which was in force from 2017 to 2020. This document highlighted the transformation of the perception of the library in the eyes of citizens into a modern institution that is not just a collection of books but offers a range of other useful services.

Unlike the previous document, the concept for the next period is structured differently and emphasises three major areas – **community, education and culture**. Can you find in yours? We believe you can.

Space for your comments, thoughts and sketches:





Dear Colleagues,

Information and communication technologies are transforming our work, economy, education and leisure, and are increasingly penetrating our daily lives. Even an institution as traditional as the library cannot escape these changes. The new Library Development Concept for the period 2021 to 2027 with an outlook to 2030 sets out the main directions for the development and functions of libraries, their staff and library operators in the digital age.

The Concept inspires us to develop a strategy for transforming our own libraries into a place so that libraries are responsive to the needs of the communities they serve. It also defines a space for our mutual collaboration. It is crucial that we are all aware of the opportunities we have, what we should be concerned about, and what is important for the transformation of libraries. Libraries in a connected world should guarantee that anyone, at any time in their lives, can learn, meet, read and develop through them.

Kind regards,

PhDr. Vít Richter

Chairman of the Central Library Council

1.

Libraries as pillars of civil society development and natural centres of communities

The Public Library Act of 1919 mandated that every municipality establish a library. As a result, we still have a dense network of over **6,000 libraries and their branches**. This represents considerable potential - librarians are local, so they know their community, their readers and other visitors, and the issues and problems that occur in the area.

At the same time, libraries have been built on the principles of **democracy and respect for the views of others** since the aforementioned 100-year-old law of the First Republic. This makes them an ideal place for **community activity, meeting, debating, lifelong informal education and mutual discovery**.

They provide an easily accessible forum for much-needed inter-generational dialogue, connecting people across social classes, minorities with the majority, and inclusion of the disabled. International experience demonstrates the indispensable place of libraries in integration and therefore, in the development of a cohesive society. In a place where a library operates, there is **a community that is naturally close to each other, people are able to help each other, get along, cooperate and are not dependent on external support**.

Indeed, an increasing number of libraries are expanding their activities and acting as educational, cultural and community centres. This is evidenced by the data from the analyses conducted in 2019. However, the same data shows that many libraries are not yet developing such activities, mainly those in small municipalities. This may be due to the lack of targeted support, training systems and methodological staff support.

The aim is that by 2030 libraries become natural centres of civic and community life. Their role as a place for intensive gathering of people should be anchored in strategic documents at government and local government level, and citizens should have the opportunity to engage in community activities and stimulate the creation of new local activities.

What needs to be done to achieve the Concept's aim?

Libraries have the opportunity to create a vibrant community life around them. Encourage people to visit often, discuss community-wide and local issues, naturally connect residents with local government, and foster cohesion between people and mutual trust.

7 They can also contribute significantly to building local patriotism, so that the community around the library deepens its relationship with the place where they live. Then, this will stimulate a genuine interest among citizens in their neighbourhood, what is happening in their place of residence and the possibilities of making a positive contribution to it. For this to happen, it is essential to be able to **respond flexibly to people's needs and to cooperate intensively with other local organisations and institutions**. It is important to **share good practice** between libraries that are successful in community work. For example, in the Facebook group Komunitní knihovna (Community Library) ([bit.ly/komunitni knihovna](https://bit.ly/komunitni_knihovna)) or on the website Co dokáže knihovna (What a library can do) (codokaze.knihovna.cz).

In order for libraries to fulfil their community role, adequate space and technical equipment must be provided. Nor can they do without people (librarians and volunteers) who pursue lifelong education, are excellent communicators and have a general sense of awareness. They can seek support not only from their founders, but also from other sources of funding, for example, they can take advantage of grant calls from foundations and funds, and the Ministry of Culture's VISK2 grant programme is open for new topics of librarian education.

The community role of libraries will be included in the state administration's strategic materials as part of the advocacy activities of associations and societies in the field. At the same time, each library is striving to be part of its community's strategic documents.



Where can you find inspiration for successful community work?



Volunteering in Karlovy Vary



Living library in Liberec



Community garden in Třinec

WANT TO LEARN MORE? Visit codokaze.knihovna.cz

Volunteering in Karlovy Vary

The Regional Library in Karlovy Vary is excellent at **using the potential of local people to develop its own service offers**. Since 2018, it has been running a volunteer programme focused on reading to patients in hospitals. They have also started a project whereby people in the library knit and crochet socks, slippers and scarves for grandmothers and grandfathers from homes for the elderly or toys for children from children's homes. And there is also a guitar club, where Renata has volunteered to teach guitar to beginners and advanced players. Volunteers help with the maintenance of the library's collection, and in 2020, the Book Home Delivery project was launched with the help of volunteers. **Volunteers are a wonderful community of people who want to get involved in the society and help others.**

Living library in Liberec

In the Living Library of the Regional Scientific Library in Liberec you can **“borrow” a person with an interesting life story**. Someone you might never meet and talk to in your everyday life. You can ask them everything that interests you. It is an educational method to remove prejudices and change people's attitudes. There can be no more than two or three readers with the “book” at a time, so that the conversation is truly intimate and there is room for more profound questions.

The Liberec Library regularly collaborates with the LOS (Liberec Civic Society) on Living Libraries and involves other people from the community. For example, foreigners, refugees, Muslims, Roma, wheelchair users, blind people, homosexuals, vegans, animal rights activists and homeless people have visited the library as **“living books”**.

Community garden in Třinec

On Earth Day, volunteers from the Třinec Library Youth Club decided to recycle plastic boxes, old banners and pallets and make a community garden. Anyone who was interested could join in and plant plants in the created pots. The library acquired the soil free of charge thanks to the cooperation of Třinec City Council and the participants themselves brought the seeds or plants. Within a month, the area in front of the library was already green and inviting to stop and explore. After a few months, the harvest was ready to be picked and users and readers could taste cucumbers and strawberries. **The garden in front of the Mklub Library served as a nice place to host a party and meet the volunteers.**

2.

Libraries as educational and education-supporting institutions

Libraries are, by their very nature, places of education. Libraries as educational institutions are referred to in the aforementioned Library Act of 1919. *“To supplement and deepen the education of all classes of the population,”* it says.

Today, the role of libraries in educating the population is even more important. We are far from being able to make it throughout our lives with what we have learned during our schooling. People are lifelong learners, and the library network helps them to do so. It is true that **an educated society is a prosperous society**. In addition to the traditional **support for reading and literacy**, libraries now naturally include an emphasis on **information and digital technologies**.

The role of libraries is essential for science and research. However, pupils, students and their teachers or professors can also benefit from working with them. Unfortunately, it is often the librarian-teacher link that is problematic. Sometimes it is the lack of interest on the part of school authorities, sometimes it is the range and quality of the library's offer. What about trying to find out what needs teachers have and how the library can help them? The librarian and the teacher can work together to create the offer for pupils and students.

Another weakness is the relatively low awareness of the wider public with regard to the range of resources that libraries offer. People often turn to freely available sources on the internet rather than relying on the library, which can help develop their knowledge and skills in a number of ways. Increasing awareness of what libraries and librarians can do, for example, **through lifelong learning**. It is being pursued in many places, although there is no statutory definition of it.

The vision for the next decade sees libraries in 2030 as the institutions where people go if they want to pursue lifelong learning and deepen their knowledge and competences. To do this, librarians can offer them educational courses that are meaningful and stimulating for citizens in their communities.

It is enriching if the dramaturgy of the programmes is based on the real needs of the people who live within the library's catchment area. Libraries can **collaborate with local institutions and partners** to provide appropriate courses.

The Concept also highlights **cooperation between librarians and teachers**. This is so that pupils and students can be educated in libraries not only in the literature field but also in the cross-discipline topic and key competences as defined in the Framework Education Programme.

Where does the Concept see development opportunities?

Libraries will strengthen their educational role. Monitoring people's interest in topics and fields and then adapting the lifelong learning curriculum will help them to develop their offer. It is also good to maintain contacts with all relevant schools and other interested institutions in the area where the library is located. **Quality** educational events for target groups, including users with special needs, will be developed.

Libraries should adapt the selection of their staff, as well as their professional development, to their growing educational role. Libraries will open positions for education specialists. **Staff will develop their ability to teach others**. Methodological and other support in this direction is provided by the **Czech Republic National Library, regional libraries and libraries entrusted with regional functions**. Keeping abreast of current developments in the field and the changing demands on library staff with regard to the transformation of services will be facilitated if the library is a member of one of the branch associations. For example, **the Association of Librarians and Information Workers of the Czech Republic, the Library Association, the Association of University Libraries and others**.

Libraries will support schools and other educational institutions, for example by providing access to technical/specialised resources. They can also offer them facilities for teaching. In other words, **pupils and students will come to the library to experience a different learning style, in a different environment and with different sources available**.

Libraries will continue to strive to bridge formal and informal learning. The conditions for improving cooperation between libraries and schools at all levels and other educational institutions should be supported by the inclusion of libraries in inter-ministerial strategies, particularly in documents from the Ministries of Education and Culture.



Where can you draw ideas and experience from?



deFacto workshop at the
Municipal Library in Prague



Educational programmes for
students of the Czech
University of Life Sciences



Suitcase full of books in Svitavy

deFacto workshop at the Municipal Library in Prague

The deFacto workshop helps second level students elementary and secondary school students to find their way through the patchwork of information easily available today on the Internet and social networks. **Knowing to read is no longer sufficient. Media and information literacy** has become a key skill, which libraries are increasingly developing. The **publicly available methodology deFacto** (bit.ly/deFacto1), developed by the Municipal Library in Prague, helps them in this regard.

Thanks to it, even a librarian without in-depth knowledge of the subject can give a good media education lesson. A free guide on how to present a 90-minute workshop for students and pupils is available. This workshop is entertaining and develops their ability to distinguish between truth, untruth and deliberate manipulation.

The Czech University of Life Sciences teaches students correct handling of information

The CULS Library has launched a successful programme emphasising critical work with technical/specialised information. Students learn how to search print and online sources, critically evaluate scientific information, author ethics, citation and the basics of academic writing. Initially, the library held short seminars and lectures, but later began to promote more widely the range of online databases and to teach students and academics how to work with them effectively. And then it added the topic of the quality of final papers and plagiarism.

Today, **the library cooperates with all faculties and one CULS institute**. It is considering further expansion of its capacity. In addition to using alternative forms of teaching and building an e-learning portal, it hopes to expand its lecturing team. It also seeks to **anchor information education in the university's strategic plan**.

Children in Svitavy are building the foundation of their own library

The Svitavy Municipal Library is implementing a project called **Suitcase full of books** as part of the Local Action Plan in Education. Its aim is to bring current quality book production as close as possible to local schoolchildren and pre-schoolers. The intention is for children to be able to choose, read and keep a book that appeals to them, giving them the opportunity to build the foundation of their own home library. Each child involved in the activity receives a "suitcase" (canvas backpack) in which they receive three new books each month. The set contains different genres and types of books, including comics, poetry and scientific literature. Of these books, two are returned the following month, one is kept at home and then a new set of three books is given again. The scenario is repeated throughout the school year, at the end of which each child is left with 10 books at home. The titles are selected in collaboration between teachers and librarians, with the condition of working with the selected book in the library and at school. The participants in the project (pupils and parents) are most pleased with **the discovery of new books and the increased interest in reading**.

3.

Libraries as guardians of cultural and knowledge-based wealth

Libraries are undoubtedly one of the pillars of our culture and identity. Their traditional mission is to preserve and make accessible their collections, which contain a significant part of **cultural heritage and knowledge-based wealth**.

Today, it is not just about physical documents: books, newspapers, magazines, maps, postcards or sound recordings. Increasingly, the volume of stored **digital data** is also growing, both those created by digitising existing physical objects and those that have already been directly created in an environment of ones and zeros (*e-born documents*).

It is the changing world of digital media that offers new opportunities for long-term preservation and access. Libraries are turning into curators who **purposefully search through the virtual space for values to process and store** for future use, regardless of the effects of time and changes caused by technological developments.

Libraries not only preserve, but also are an active part of Czech literary and literary-scientific life, purposefully supporting the book scene and its authors by running literary centres, reading clubs, as well as promoting mutual meetings between writers and readers.

Libraries can also inspire and help the creation of entirely new written works. All they need to do is to offer creative people the conditions to create and develop their talents. By creating a literary workshop, a corner for making videos or composing music. Sharing knowledge and creative energy by bringing together like-minded people is also an important moment.

And where does the new Concept take libraries?

Vision 2030 presents libraries as inspiring and stimulating places. They provide creative people with **facilities, equipment, sufficient information, as well as space for meeting and collaboration.** Equally, they **connect authors with the reading public.**

Libraries are building multifunctional spaces with the necessary equipment for the public to spend their free time creatively. They are also equipped with the latest technologies to give users fast, safe and enjoyable access to information and works of contemporary culture. Financial support is available to libraries under the **VISK3 grant programme**, and methodological support is provided by the **Methodology Centre for the Construction and Reconstruction of Libraries** (mcvrk.mzk.cz).

In addition to material facilities, competent staff develop the cultural and creative role of libraries. Their staff are people who educate themselves, are creative and not afraid to put their ideas into practice.

However, at the same time, libraries should not forget their traditional role: **to collect, process, preserve for the long term and make cultural and scientific heritage accessible in a friendly way.** Both physically and digitally. In 2030, they are seen by the public as guarantors of the long-term preservation of cultural heritage and the authenticity of information, regardless of the transience of its source. They collect traditional, digitised and computer-generated documents. A dense network of libraries, but also of other memory institutions, should help users access the content they want **easily, quickly and in a user-friendly way, regardless of the size or type of library.**

The capacity of our major libraries is linked to the long-term preservation of documents. That is why the plans for the coming years traditionally include the construction of a new building for the National Library, a new depository for the Moravian Library and new buildings for the Moravian-Silesian Research Library and the Scientific Library in Olomouc.



Where do they already carry out inspiring cultural projects?



Portal 1989.knihovny.cz from Moravian Library



Supporting reading for Roma children in Ostrava



Creative Writing Clubs in Litoměřice

WANT TO LEARN MORE? Visit codokaze.knihovna.cz

Modern History at the Moravian Library

For young people who do not remember the revolutionary events of the Velvet Revolution, the Moravian Library has prepared the 1989.knihovny.cz internet portal. It was created to **commemorate the 30th anniversary of the fall of communism** and has linked basic information about that era directly with relevant printed and electronic sources of information. The website not only educates, but also promotes the sources available to the ML. The personal dimension of the project is added by pre-recorded **interviews with contemporaries** of the turning point era directly from the library staff. The website includes **the then photographs and digitised daily newspapers**.

Supporting reading for Roma children in Ostrava

The branches of the Ostrava Library in Přívoz and Vítkovice use the services of a Roma assistant. An experienced teacher opens the way to books and reading for children from socially disadvantaged backgrounds. In connection with the **Romaňi Kereka – Roma Circle** project, local librarians organise educational events, information education lessons and history lessons. This strengthens **the cultural identity of Roma children and their knowledge of the history or personalities of their own ethnic group**. The lectures are combined with interactive elements, projections, reading and searching for information in books, which draw the children into the story and involve them in the course of the lesson.

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The Litoměřice Library guides students and seniors to create their own compositions

The Karel Hynek Mácha Library in Litoměřice has **two creative writing clubs** – for seniors and high school students. The first one was created when a group of seniors started to meet regularly in the library and became interested in creative writing and started to create their own work. Together they formed a club and founded the LiPen Society. They publish their work in magazines, anthologies and the library newspaper Karel Hynek Mácha. In 2015, they published their first book, *Dneska jsem viděl psa* (I Saw a Dog Today). In the same year, a second club focused on creative writing called **Ψ sádlo [psí sádlo/dog fat]** was created as part of the library's project for young **people KRE-KNI (creative library)**. In this creative club, secondary school students learn how to master writing texts of different literary genres, and participants gain experience in presenting their texts through author nights or publishing their texts in the library newspaper. In addition, the library also organises an annual **literary competition called Máchovou Stopou** (In Mácha's footsteps), whose jury includes local literary experts and well-known writers. The winning works are published in the Karel Hynek Mácha newspaper, which is published by the library and distributed in electronic and paper form.

Pillar I.

Libraries as pillars of civil society development and natural centres of communities

Strategic goals

- Equal access to information resources and availability of services for all
- Develop the potential of community centres
- Respond proactively to the diverse needs of users
- Support the development of regional identity
- Include libraries as community centres in strategic materials
- Provide community functions through multi-source funding
- Spatial, technological and material facilities for the development of community activities, including support for the development of competent staff
- Connect to high-speed internet
- Integrate courses and methods to develop competences for community functions into librarian training

Pillar II.

Libraries as educational and education-supporting institutions

Strategic goals

- Quality educational events for target groups, including users with specific needs
- Conditions for effective cooperation between libraries and schools at all levels, other educational institutions and public state authorities
- Systematic cooperation with schools in catchment area
- Job positions for education specialists
- Promote the role of libraries as educational institutions
- Multi-source funding for the educational function of libraries
- Anchor the use of the educational offer and information resources of libraries as part of the curriculum in schools
- Develop critical work with scientific information in the study programmes, through accessible information on the results of global science
- Promote open solutions, technology transfer and innovation
- Effective system of librarians' training, including management

Pillar III.

Libraries as guardians of cultural and knowledge-based wealth

Strategic goals

- Equal access to information and resources and availability of services to all
- collect, preserve and make accessible cultural and scientific heritage in analogue and digital form
- Share and link library data in open data systems in a digital environment
- Cost-effective services through cooperation and sharing of activities
- Cooperative depository system
- Stabilise and/or digitise documents at risk of physical degradation
- Multifunctional spaces with the necessary equipment for libraries in municipalities
- Equip libraries with the latest technologies for fast, safe and easy access to information and contemporary cultural forms
- New building of the Czech Republic National Library, a new depository of the Moravian Library and new buildings of the Moravian-Silesian Scientific Library and the Scientific Library in Olomouc
- Prepare libraries for crisis situations

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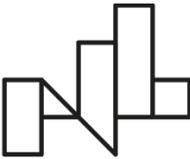
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**Libraries as pillars of civil society
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Libraries as educational and education-

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