

# **LIBRARIES AS LIFELONG CHAMPIONS OF LITERACY: A MANIFESTO FROM THE BALTIC STATES**

People need different types of literacy – like reading, digital, media and information, financial, environmental, technological etc. – to succeed in our changing world. These skills help them to think critically, understand their rights, feel connected to their community, and be resilient.

With emerging challenges such as artificial intelligence, the growing digital divide, shifting skill demands, and geopolitical tensions, it is more important than ever to support the development of these literacies.

In response to these challenges and opportunities, our shared vision as librarians in the Baltic States is:

## **1. LIBRARIES ARE LIFELONG ADVOCATES OF LITERACY.**

Libraries not only preserve knowledge and documents. They are spaces where citizens can improve their competence in diverse literacies and engage in lifelong learning.

## **2. LIBRARIES ARE INCLUSIVE AND ACCESSIBLE.**

Libraries work to remove barriers to learning, offering resources and support for people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities, including those facing disabilities or marginalisation.

## **3. LIBRARIES NURTURE CURIOSITY FROM AN EARLY AGE.**

Libraries are places where children discover the joy of reading and where families are supported in raising lifelong learners.

## **4. LIBRARIES TAKE A STANCE ON ISSUES THAT MATTER.**

Librarians commit to taking principled positions on issues that matter — from defending human rights and democracy to confronting disinformation — ensuring libraries remain vital actors in public life.

## **5. LIBRARIES OPERATE AS AN EXTENSIVE NETWORK.**

The library network is maintained and expanded, both locally and nationally, ensuring widespread access regardless of location. Access to libraries is also ensured through school libraries, as they are fundamental to children's learning.

## **6. EVERY LIBRARY HAS A PROFESSIONAL LIBRARIAN.**

Each library, large or small, has trained specialists to guide users, foster critical literacies, and strengthen community ties.

## **7. LIBRARIANS CONTINUE TO GROW PROFESSIONALLY AND INNOVATE.**

Librarians seek continuous education and training, embrace new technologies, and adapt to the changing demands of society to remain relevant and effective.

## **8. FUTURE LIBRARIANS RECEIVE QUALITY EDUCATION AT HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS.**

Higher education institutions offer dedicated and up-to-date programs to prepare new library professionals, as well as programmes for existing professionals to improve their skills.

## **9. LIBRARIES ARE KEY PARTNERS IN MULTIPLYING IMPACT.**

Libraries work with schools, universities, civic organizations, and government level organisations to connect their initiatives with communities, and enhance the impact of their actions.

## **10. LIBRARIANS ACTIVELY COLLABORATE ACROSS THE BALTIC STATES.**

Librarians commit to working together across the Baltic States and beyond, building strong professional networks to exchange ideas, share practices, and experiment with innovative approaches.

This is our vision and commitment: as librarians, we believe libraries are key spaces for promoting literacy. We call on decision-makers and library professionals to endorse the goals of this document and support the role of libraries in improving literacy of citizens across the Baltic States.