



The
Europe
Challenge

Who's Driving Europe's Transitions?



The European Cultural Foundation is launching The Europe Challenge 2025/26

Across Europe, the social, digital, and green transitions are lived realities. **The Europe Challenge offers a new way of looking at these big changes: a chance to explore how Europe's urgent transitions unfold in communities**, and how libraries – often overlooked – are becoming arenas of civic imagination and resilience.

Launching in September 2025, **The Europe Challenge 2025/26: Libraries, Communities, Democracy** is the fourth edition of this unique year-long programme empowering libraries and communities to address Europe's most urgent transitions – social, digital, and green. **From over 300 applications, 60 initiatives in 26 countries have been selected**, bringing together residents, librarians, artists, activists, and civic groups to co-create local solutions with European relevance.

The Initiatives: The Europe Challenge 2025/26 On the Ground

The initiatives tackle challenges varying from segregation and exclusion of minority groups to environmental risks, democratic disillusionment, the digital divide, domestic violence, lack of accessible green spaces, and the lasting scars of war – trauma, isolation, and economic hardship.

From small villages to major cities, communities are driving change:

- In Alloa, Scotland, residents monitor air pollution and reclaim their right to clean air;
- In rural Romania, Roma children co-create storytelling workshops and reading clubs;
- In Daugavpils, Latvia, survivors of domestic violence use theatre to confront silence;
- In Wageningen, the Netherlands, people of different abilities design inclusive city tours;
- In Perugia, Italy, migrants co-create accessible information on their rights and services;
- In London, England, children and residents are transforming neglected canalsides into community spaces for learning, biodiversity, and connection;
- In Armenia, queer communities turn to zine-making as resistance;
- Across Ukraine, veterans and displaced families share personal histories and find renewed roles in community life.

What ties these stories together? They all start in a library: a place where neighbours work side by side, and where tools for shaping a better future are freely shared.

[Click here](#) for a list of this year's initiatives, explore them [on our interactive map](#), and follow Libraries for Europe [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) pages or the European Cultural Foundation [newsletter](#) for updates about the programme.



The most important outcome of The Europe Challenge programme for us has been personal—realising we're part of a network working toward something bigger for our communities.

The Europe Challenge 2024 participant

More About The Europe Challenge

Since 2020, The Europe Challenge has built a cross-border network where libraries and communities share, adapt, and scale ideas. Libraries and communities apply to the programme through an open call. Over three editions, nearly 100 libraries in over 25 countries have taken part, reaching more than 150,000 people.

The 2025/26 edition (September 2025 - September 2026) offers **workshops, mentoring, peer exchange, and up to €10,000 in funding**, empowering communities to shape their futures with libraries as trusted spaces for change.

The Europe Challenge 2025/26 is initiated by **the European Cultural Foundation** and kindly supported by public funding through **Arts Council England, Fondazione Cariplo, and the Scottish Library and Information Council.**

Publication

[Click here](#) to read our free publication **How Libraries Thrive**, which showcases best practices from past Europe Challenge participants and demonstrates how libraries are transforming Europe, with contributions from climate activist Mikaela Loach, sociologist Eric Klinenberg, #BookTok sensation Jack Edwards, librarians, and more.

About the European Cultural Foundation:

The European Cultural Foundation builds a sense of European belonging by developing and supporting cultural initiatives that bring people together, inspire hope, foster democratic values and imagine a shared future for Europe. We empower communities across Europe through supporting libraries, strengthening digital citizenship, and building a culture of solidarity.

André Wilkens, Director of ECF:

Libraries are essential public infrastructure. They are safe and trusted public spaces in turbulent times full of challenges, uncertainties, and questions. I want people and policymakers in Europe to realise what a great treasure the libraries of Europe are.

Marie Østergård, Facilitator in The Europe Challenge and Director of Aarhus Public Libraries:

We believe that libraries working together across borders will strengthen communities all over Europe and our sense of joint citizenship in Europe and the world.

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