

THE ESTONIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE CENTRE

DEVELOPMENT PLAN FOR THE YEARS 2018–2022

The Estonian Children's Literature Centre is a public body operating in the field of children's literature as a competence and experience centre and as a specialist and children's library. According to the statutes, the main aim of the Centre is to develop, collect, preserve, research and mediate Estonian children's literature for educational, research, and experiential purposes.

1. MISSION

To support the growth of children and youth with worthwhile literature.

We value literature which is enlightening and guiding for children, professionally written and illustrated, and of high publishing quality.

The fulfilment of the mission rests on three pillars:

- The existence of a rich selection of high-quality children's literature
- The wide availability of children's literature
- The formation of reading habits in children and youth

In accordance with the principles of the activity-based state budget, the Centre's activities are divided into four service areas: the children's literature competence centre, the library, the children's literature experience and education centre, and the internationalisation of children's literature. The Centre defines strategic aims, indicators, the most important activities and the service areas' budget distribution.

2. VISION

The children's and youth literature published in Estonia is excellent, it is literature which has an appeal to young¹ readers and creates reading habits for life.

¹ In accordance with the statutes, the Centre mainly offers reading material for children up to the age of 16, and serves all children's literature enthusiasts.

Books interest children, and they read them. Good literature broadens the horizon, shapes attitudes, gives rise to an interest in culture and creates prerequisites for a comprehensive development. Books are a natural part of a child's development. All Estonian children and youth have easy access to books. All parties - authors, publishers, booksellers, librarians, teachers and parents - cooperate closely to motivate and guide children to read. Information about new books is easily available to all. Literary games, reading programmes, creative competitions, exhibitions and other national events for children and youth take place.

The Children's Literature Centre's building is a place of experience and inspiration, where visitors always wish to return. Here, a meeting takes place between interesting stories and instructive activities which speak to and activate young readers. The Centre introduces and gives recognition to authors and illustrators, cooperates with publishers and mediators of literature, provides advice to parents, teachers and librarians, and introduces and represents Estonian children's literature the world over.

3. VALUES

FRIENDLINESS

We value courtesy and goodwill in everything we do. This begins with our relationship to our work and our colleagues. We believe that a lot can be accomplished with a good word. We are friendly toward our visitors and cooperation partners. We wish for a visit to the Centre to be a positive, useful and direct experience for everyone.

COOPERATION

We cooperate with many partners to fulfil our mission. Because of this, we value openness and willingness to cooperate. With a small team, big things can only be accomplished when everyone is willing to contribute and join in.

RELIABILITY

We do our work with passion and devotion, and we see quality and a base in knowledge as being of utmost importance. The reliability is based on objectivity and professionalism; the Children's Literature Centre is like a quality mark, which gives a sense of security to our partners and in society as a whole.

LEARNING ABILITY

We value curiosity and the wish to constantly develop ourselves and expand our minds. We approach challenges ahead of us in a creative manner. We want to be a beacon and a guide; we are ready to experiment and try for a better result.

4. THE SITUATION AT PRESENT

STRENGTHS AND POSSIBILITIES

- The Centre has become a valued and recognised competence centre in the field of Estonian children's literature. The Centre cooperates with specialists in the field, advises and trains authors, publishers and mediators of children's books. The Centre's expert appraisals and recommendations are authoritative and reliable. The Centre emphasises good children's literature and gives recognition to authors, illustrators and publishers.
- The present situation of Estonian children's literature supports the formation of children's reading habits from an early age. Our children's literature is multifarious in terms of genre and theme, and the books are predominantly beautiful and qualitative. The creative competitions jointly arranged by the Children's Literature Centre and publishers also contribute to this. Up to 800 different children's book titles are published in Estonia each year, of which approximately 40% are original works and 60% translated works. We do not have one leading children's author or illustrator, but many authors of different ages, unique styles and original thoughts. With more creators, the more variegated the general picture becomes, and the greater the possibility that each book enthusiast will find reading material that suits him or her.
- The Centre's building in the Old Town has become one of the most important centres for Estonian children's culture. Here, one finds activities for children and youth of different ages and with different interests. The Centre has more than 40,000 visitors a year. The services and activities offered are varied, but always focused on literature. There is a library, a treasury introducing the history of Estonian children's literature, illustration galleries, and rooms for performances and activities.
- The Centre's collections are representative and offer valuable reading material and information for readers of different ages as well as children's literature researchers and specialists. In 2018, the Centre's collections had over 60,000 books and 3500 original illustrations.
- One of the Centre's most important tasks is the continuous formation of reading habits and the promotion of children's literature through library tours and school sessions, exhibitions, events, lectures and other means, depending on the age and interests of the target group. We enjoy good cooperation with schools and nursery schools, libraries, museums, youth centres and hobby schools. We don't limit ourselves to activities in our building; the Centre often does travelling visits, meaning we arrange several events and meetings at our partners' locations.
- In 2017, the Centre coordinated The Year of Children's and Youth Culture as leading partner. Within the framework of this themed year, the child-focused event series The Children's Republic (*Laste Vabariik*), dedicated to the Republic of Estonia's centenary, was organised. The aim was to introduce and promote Estonian culture in an attractive format. The Children's Republic tied together different areas, offering instructive and creative activities and educational and qualitative entertainment. The initiative

encompassed all Estonian counties, and more than 250 cooperation partners were involved. More than 30,000 persons took part in The Children's Republic.

- Considering the scope of activities, the Centre's team is small but professional. The staff is made up of competent and versatile persons who share their knowledge about children's literature and children's culture.
- In the last few years, the internationalisation of and support for the export of Estonian children's literature has been a priority for the Centre. The Centre has published information material introducing authors and their work, arranged illustration exhibitions and workshops abroad, and participated in international book fairs and literary events. This has all been done with the wish and aim of helping Estonian authors create contacts with partners abroad and increase the amount of works translated into other languages.

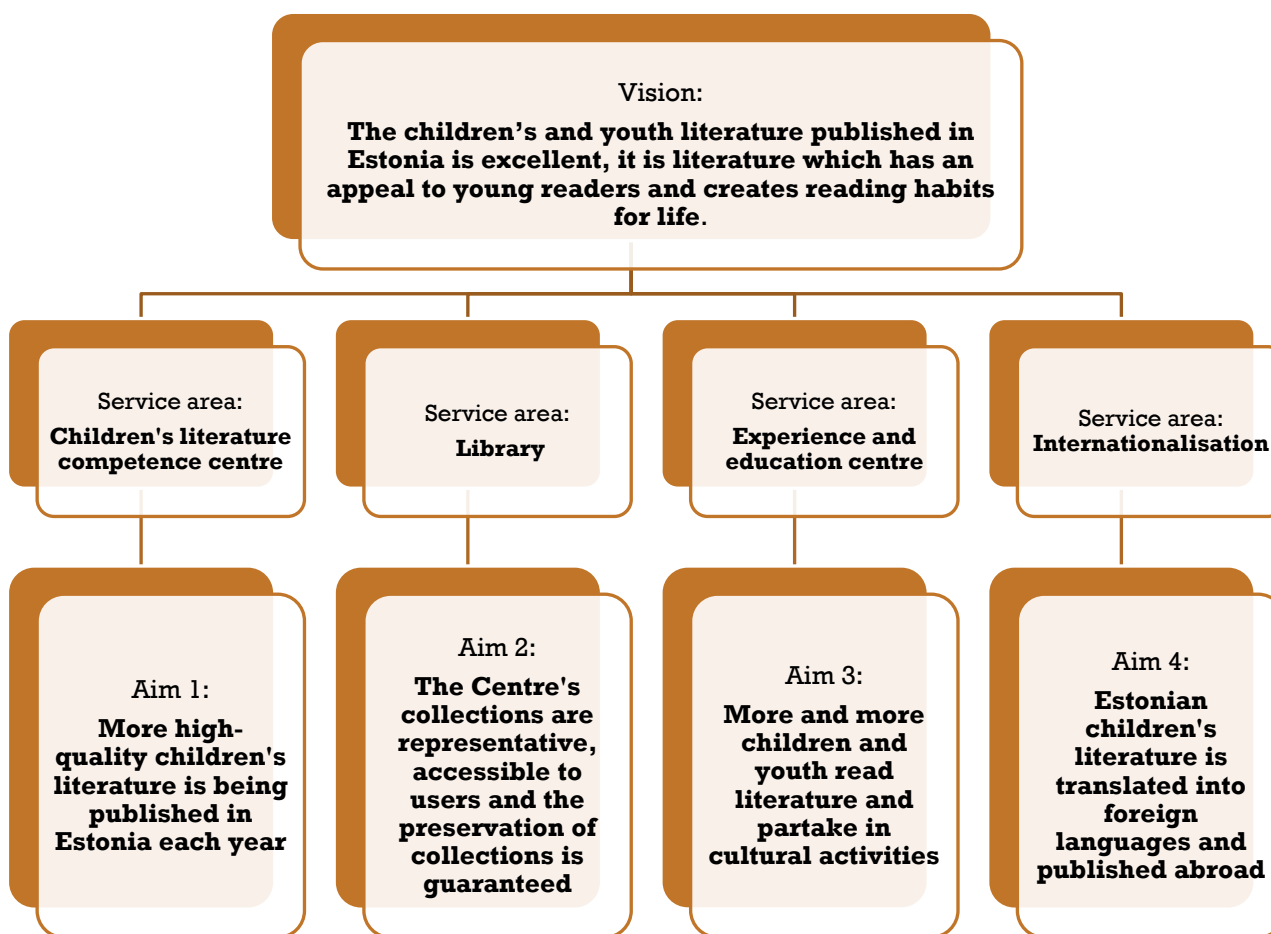
KEY ISSUES AND DANGERS

- The change in children's reading habits and the diminished interest in reading is a problem the world over. Since the ways of obtaining information have changed considerably in the last decade, it is all the more difficult to draw children and youth to books. The ability of children and youth to work through and analyse longer and more complicated texts has also deteriorated. More specific studies concerning the trends in children's reading habits are unfortunately lacking in Estonia.
- The situation for children's literature needs to be viewed as a part of children's culture as a whole, all the more so since children's literature often acts as a gate to other areas of culture, such as film, theatre, art and music. Estonia has several interesting and educative cultural attractions and cultural programmes aimed at children, but up until now there has been no overview of the field as a whole. We don't have a unified system connecting educational, cultural and social perspectives for evolving children's culture, which would bring together different participants and create equal opportunities for all children and youth to partake in cultural life and activities across Estonia.
- Since ample children's literature is being published in Estonia, there are also publications of low quality and amateur level. We are mainly short of original works for youth aged 10+. One can also still come across the attitude that children's literature isn't 'real literature', but rather second-rate compared to literature intended for adults. The role of the illustration in children's books is often underrated. In order to improve the situation, more advice to and education of authors and publishers is needed, and we need to talk more about children's literature and illustration. The art of illustration has unfortunately receded into the background, we lack systematic research, terminology and statistics for this field. In order to carry this out, the Centre needs more resources, in terms of staff as well as money.
- Children's literature isn't readily available in Estonia, and books are not part of a child's everyday life. Since the price per book is high, libraries have no possibility of

completing a sufficiently broad and varied selection of children's and youth literature, and there is a want of copies. For many families, purchasing books is not something that they can afford. There are few new books at nursery schools and school libraries.

- Translation of Estonian authors' works into other languages is modest. Estonia lacks the system of foreign rights agents widely known elsewhere in the world, and the property rights predominantly belong to the authors. It is due to this that publishers do not represent authors on foreign markets. The role of the Children's Literature Centre is to promote books and mediate information to foreign publishers, but sales negotiations are undertaken by the authors themselves, and the success largely depends on their own knowledge and skills.
- The Centre's mission is to make children's literature available and interesting for all target groups, but the Centre's building unfortunately doesn't make special access for visitors with wheelchairs possible. Likewise, more attention will need to be paid to the development of services intended for tourists. The Centre's location in the Old Town and the interest of tourists create the necessary conditions for this, which have not been sufficiently used so far.
- The Children's Literature Centre's team is small, and only staff connected with core functions work in the building. Supporting services are all centralised or purchased in. This makes for a large burden of work on staff, and often forces them to work on several tasks simultaneously. More resources are needed for foreign relations and communication. Compared to the present situation, more attention also needs to be directed to the furthering of skills and for creating opportunities to use new technologies.

5. STRATEGIC AIMS



1. THE STRATEGIC AIM OF THE CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

COMPETENCE CENTRE SERVICE AREA: MORE HIGH-QUALITY CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IS BEING PUBLISHED IN ESTONIA EACH YEAR

The role of the Centre is to help Estonian children's and youth literature toward a comprehensive development. We give recognition to and introduce gifted authors and illustrators in order to see the creation of more original works of high quality; we advise publishers in order for their published books to be of the very best kind; we introduce children's literature in order for the field to be valued and appreciated.

In order to reach the aim, we carry out the following activities:

- we give recognition to and award authors;
- we arrange creative competitions for authors and illustrators;
- we arrange creative competitions for children and teach children creative writing through recreational activities;
- we advise, train and commend publishers and provide publishing recommendations;

- we arrange competitions and cooperate in the compilation of publications;
- we take part in legislative drafting and the compilation of national development plans;
- we suggest authors for national acknowledgements.

Larger undertakings, developments and new initiatives for attaining the aim:

- holding creative competitions together with publishers;
- establishing prizes in the name of authors (for instance E. Valter) for top talents in the field;
- initiating creative courses and camps for adults;
- researching and preserving the history of children's literature and the art of illustration.

We measure the attainment of the aim by the following indicators:

- the number of creative competitions;
- the number of manuscripts acknowledged and published in the competitions;
- the total amount of children's literature published during a year (titles and number of copies printed);
- the proportion of high-quality children's books (the percentage of titles stated on the recommendation list of the total amount of titles published);
- the number of creative courses and their participants;
- the number of research topics, publications and lectures.

2. THE STRATEGIC AIM OF THE LIBRARY SERVICE AREA: THE CENTRE'S COLLECTIONS ARE REPRESENTATIVE, ACCESSIBLE TO USERS AND THE PRESERVATION OF COLLECTIONS IS GUARANTEED.

High-quality children's literature needs to be available to all, regardless of where they live or what their family's financial possibilities are. In order to bring this to fruition, we work in two main directions: at the Centre, we continue to develop Estonia's most representative collection of children's literature and original illustrations, and we provide Estonian libraries with advice on acquisition of collections of children's and youth literature.

In order to reach the aim, we carry out the following activities:

- we add to the collections continually and retrospectively;
- we complete the reference collection with thematic foreign literature and periodicals;
- we purchase original illustrations;
- we regularly analyse the stacks' climate and the condition of the holdings;
- we restore and preserve damaged holdings;
- we offer library services based on the interests and wishes of the reader;
- we compile recommendation lists and advise libraries on the acquisition of children's literature.

Larger undertakings, developments, and new initiatives for attaining the aim:

- renovation of the Centre's stacks and improvement of holding conditions;
- an increase of the number of holdings restored;

- purchasing of rare items from auctions, development of cooperation with antiquarians;
- complementing the reader service collection to a required level;
- the creation of training programmes for library staff.

We measure the attainment of the aim by the following indicators:

- the total amount of holdings;
- the number of holdings purchased in a year;
- the number of desiderates;
- the total amount of original illustrations and the number of artists represented in the collection;
- the humidity % and the temperature in the stacks;
- the annual amount of restored holdings in the archival collection;
- the number of holdings registered in the electronic catalogue;
- the number of courses and counselling sessions arranged for libraries;
- the number of readers at the Centre's library;
- the number of loans and enquiries responded to at the Centre.

3. THE STRATEGIC AIM OF THE SERVICE AREA LITERATURE EXPERIENCE AND EDUCATION CENTRE: MORE AND MORE CHILDREN AND YOUTH READ LITERATURE AND PARTAKE IN CULTURAL ACTIVITIES.

We work with the aim of children and youth growing to love to read good literature. We help library staff, teachers, parents and others active in the field of children's literature orient themselves in the variegated world of books, and stay up to date with more recent children's literature. We believe that children's literature has an important role to fulfil in bringing children and youth to culture and growing into citizens. We aid in the formation of a cooperation network for children's culture between areas of culture; with this aim, we cooperate with theatres, museums, libraries and organisations in the musical field, as well as with other partners. The Centre's building plays an important role in the shaping of reading habits; it is an attractive and educational place full of books and captivating activities for all ages.

In order to reach the aim, we carry out the following activities:

- we arrange literary events and illustration exhibitions;
- we carry out joint projects with organisations in Estonia and abroad;
- we are initiators of large events ourselves, and we cooperate with organisers of large festivals and events;
- we publish book reviews and cooperate with the media;
- we arrange study days for teachers and librarians;
- we arrange nationwide competitions and contests, we carry out library tours and school sessions and leisure activities for children and youth;
- we arrange subject-based conferences and seminars;
- we coordinate the cooperation of the working group for researchers of children's literature, we research and introduce the history of children's literature, we shape the terminology in the field, and compile statistics.

Larger undertakings, developments, and new initiatives for attaining the aim:

- the continuation and development of the Nukits competition, literary games, the Read Aloud Day, children's creative camps, and other traditions;
- the continuation and development of the school holiday and educational programmes jointly created by museums and the Centre;
- the development of communicative and media relations;
- organising international illustration exhibitions, creating a festival of illustrations;
- broadening the publication of book reviews;
- the launch of a nationwide reading programme;

We measure the attainment of the aim by the following indicators:

- the number of visits to the Centre;
- the number of participants in events and programmes;
- the number of events and courses held;
- the number of exhibitions organised;
- the number of printed works published;
- the number of presentations and lectures held by the staff;
- the number of book reviews published;
- the number of visitors and loans at Estonian libraries as pertaining to children and youth.

4. THE STRATEGIC AIM OF THE SERVICE AREA

INTERNATIONALISATION OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE: ESTONIAN CHILDREN'S LITERATURE IS TRANSLATED INTO FOREIGN LANGUAGES.

The best of Estonian children's literature unquestionably has a place on the international literary market. The unique stories of Estonia's children's authors and the characteristic creations of its illustrators are worthy of being discovered the world over. The Centre's task is to aid the translation of children's literature into many foreign languages. In order for this to take place, active promotional work needs to be carried out at international book fairs, and a network of translators from Estonian needs to be developed.

In order to reach the aim, we carry out the following activities:

- we introduce Estonian authors and their work;
- we compile information materials in foreign languages for special platforms;
- we create professional relations with publishers abroad;
- we exhibit at fairs abroad;
- we arrange events introducing Estonian literature abroad;
- we send authors to festivals abroad;
- we train authors, publishers and translators.

Larger undertakings, developments and new initiatives for attaining the aim:

- the creation of an online information portal of Estonian authors and their work;
- analysis of foreign markets and creation of contacts;
- the proactive creation of relations with foreign publishers and arrangement of mutual visits;
- the creation of working relations at representative festivals abroad;

- participation as a main guest at the Bologna Children’s Book Fair.

We measure the attainment of the aim by the following indicators:

- the number of works by Estonian authors translated into foreign languages;
- the number of countries where works by Estonian authors have been published;
- the number of languages in which works by Estonian authors have been published;
- the number of authors who have participated in festivals and at fairs;
- the number of contacts and professional meetings with foreign publishers and representatives of international organisations.

6. VALUE PROPOSITION BY TARGET GROUP

The main target groups	Main services and activities offered
Authors (writers, illustrators)	Arranging creative competitions for authors and illustrators; advising authors and arranging courses; organising conferences, seminars and information days; compiling exhibitions; participating in legislative drafting and national development plans for the improvement of authors’ opportunities; presenting authors for national acknowledgements; introducing authors’ works and representing them in both Estonia and abroad, including at international book fairs.
Publishers (compilers, translators, editors, designers)	Advising, training and acknowledging publishers; sharing recommendations for publications; arranging contests and collaborating in the compilation of publications; introducing children’s literature at fairs abroad; compiling information material; organising specialty events.
Mediators of literature (librarians, book sellers, teachers, journalists, parents)	Arranging study days, courses and seminars; offering a library service; compiling and publishing book recommendations; advising mediators of literature; carrying out collaborative projects for the popularisation of children’s literature.
Specialists in the field, researchers, teachers, university students	Advising and training specialists; holding specialty conferences and events; guaranteeing access to representative collections; coordinating the activities of the working group of researchers of children’s literature; researching the history of children’s literature; shaping specialty terminology; collecting statistic data in the field of children’s literature.
Readers (children up to the age of 16, youth, adults)	Offering a library service; arranging children’s literature exhibitions and events; holding courses and workshops; arranging creative competitions for children; organising varied programmes for children and leisure activities; arranging cultural events for the furthering of children’s culture as a whole in Estonia.

The public with an interest in culture and literature	Offering a library service; arranging exhibitions, cultural events and courses; compiling lists of recommended reading for orientation in the world of children's literature.
Tourists	Arranging thematical exhibitions of children's literature; introducing the Centre's building and its activities; organising cultural events and offering varied activities.

The development plan is compiled in 2018 and verified in June. The Centre compiles a plan of activities and a budget each year as an appendix to the development plan. The fulfilment of the development plan is evaluated annually; when necessary, the current state of the development plan's analysis, aims and important activities is also followed up.