



Libraries Engaged in VNRs

Part 6: Engage with Partners

Voluntary National Reviews (VNRs) can be a great way for libraries to engage in discussions around the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and to be recognised for their contributions. This series offers ideas for key actions libraries and library associations can take to get involved.

The sixth step towards engagement in a Voluntary National Review (VNR) is to engage with partners. This can be a powerful way of making your messages more powerful and far-reaching, as well as opening up possibilities for other collaborations in the future.

The 2030 Agenda places a strong emphasis on partnerships and working with all stakeholders. At the national level, there are often platforms where different organisations from across civil society come together. At least in some countries, governments may indeed find it simpler to work with a platform, rather than lots of groups individually. Joining can make it easier for you to get access to decision-makers.

Partnerships can also be helpful in order to promote different parts of your message. Think about the most important arguments you want to make, then about who might be good to work with. You can use the membership lists of civil society platforms, searching around on the internet, or simply brainstorming with friends and colleagues to find them. Think also about what you want from them – is it support in influencing, understanding of how to shape the process, or help in strengthening delivery of sustainable development.

For example, if you want to talk about the need to boost literacy and reading, perhaps talk with teachers' unions, or authors' or booksellers' organisations. If you want to talk about how libraries help provide public health information, contact associations working on health issues. If you want to talk about inclusion, there may be groups representing the interests of marginalised groups who will be keen to work with you.

When you reach out to them, focus on areas of common interest. You should be practical and realistic – they are unlikely to be able to support everything that you are asking for, just as it may not be relevant for you to echo everything they say. Think also about how libraries can contribute to the goals of your prospective partner of course – why should they work with you? Where you can, you may need to be ready to support their messages. With time, you can build your collaboration, to the benefit of both of your communities, potentially going far beyond the 2030 Agenda.

A particularly special partnership will be with the local United Nations office. You can find details of these – where they exist – on this page of the [United Nations website](#), or the [directory of UN Information Centres](#). They are likely to be strongly involved in your country's Voluntary National Review process, and happy to work with civil society organisations to promote participation. In the longer term, they can also be important partners in organising events or even helping you get involved in funded projects.

Good luck!