



GLOBAL VISION DISCUSSION

Report of the Environment, sustainability
and libraries, SIG meeting

*How a united library field can tackle the
challenges of the future*

Berlin 17th August & Wroclaw 23rd August

Contributors

This report is created by:

ENSULIB members: Harri Sahavirta, Petra Hauke, Madeleine Charney, Saima Qutab, Sandra Dias, Klaus Werner, Andrea Kaufman, Phillipe Colomb, Veerle Minner

And meeting attendees:

Natalice Cardoso, Manon Le Guennec, Kristina Langrock, Christopher Landes, Tobias Jortzick, Marina Stankovic, Jana Zuege, Anja Seifert, Katharina Leyrer, Tim Schumann, Natascha Reip, Konrad Kutt, Markus Münch, Andreas Mittrowann, Nora Maria Lampeter, Nadja Baldszuhn, Stephan Büttner, Rebecca Eichhorn, Rachel Meyer, Christopher Sadzik, Catharina Tschishkow, Louise Jones, Luisa Marquardt, Arnold Mwanzu, Edgardo Civallero, Joakim Lennartsson, Prinyanka Mohan, Beale Hoerning, Leen Lekens, Seham Alostath

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Introduction

*ENSULIB held two Business Meetings in August 2017, at our Satellite Meeting in Berlin and at the World Congress in Wroclaw. More than 39 librarians participated in the conversations about how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future. Our core members and everyone else in attendance at the meetings strongly agreed that **Climate Change/Environment** must be a priority written into IFLA's Global Vision. The discussion went on after that in digital form.*

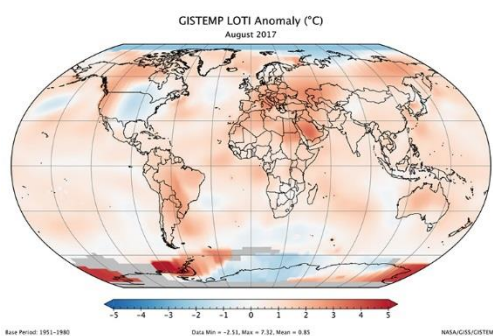
Consequently, it was agreed that a statement is needed:

Climate Change/Environment and IFLA's Global Vision: A Statement from Environment, Sustainability and Libraries (ENSULIB)

IFLA's Global Vision calls on library professionals around the world to collectively form "an inclusive, global response from a united library field." To that end, IFLA organized a series of high-level workshops in different parts of the world that engaged representatives of 140 countries in six regional meetings. The workshops focused on how to strengthen the ties within the library field, helped identify future challenges and opportunities for the library field, and prioritized actions that the library environment could take in response to the fast-pacing changes in societies.

***Climate change/Environment** was listed by four of the six regional meetings (plus at the Kick-off Meeting) in their "Top-5 Challenges to Society." Yet Climate Change/Environment was not explicitly included in the voting for IFLA's Global Vision. The question "What should libraries do more of?" offers a choice, "Supporting the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the current social needs." However, this choice does not allow the voter to specify the regional meetings' noted challenge of Climate Change/Environment.*

And yet, since we gathered in Wroclaw for the 2017 World Congress, there have been massive floods in Bangladesh and Hurricanes Irma and Maria wreaked havoc throughout the Caribbean (all attributed directly to climate change). August 2017 was the second warmest on record in 137 years of modern record keeping (<https://climate.nasa.gov/news/2630/august-2017-was-second-warmest-on-record...>) and CO2 levels have exceeded 410 parts per million (<https://www.co2.earth/daily-co2>). Other environmental challenges are plaguing our planet, such as plastic-filled oceans, air pollution, deforestation, soil degradation, species extinction and overpopulation. The librarians who met in the regional meetings already had a sense that Climate Change/Environment must be explicitly built into IFLA's vision going forward.



[Climate Change: Vital Signs of the Planet: August 2017 was second warmest on record](#)

climate.nasa.gov

August 2017 was the second warmest August in 137 years of modern record-keeping, according to a monthly analysis of global temperatures by NASA scientists.

IFLA spent countless funds and hours gathering the most important issues facing society and libraries. Clearly Climate Change/Environment ranked very high in our concerns. It is our moral duty to directly include Climate Change/Environment in the voting process. Libraries can then create Action Plans with solutions that support all living systems on our planet. The denial of climate change and ignoring of scientific knowledge poses a grave threat to humanity. In this age of "fake news," libraries offer access to reliable knowledge concerning environmental issues. Libraries have already stepped up during natural catastrophes, offering open, free and safe places for our communities. Climate Change/Environment must be emphasized in IFLA's Global Vision for continued validation, encouragement, and funding of these life-giving efforts. Addressing these issues also correlates with libraries' core missions which include preservation and conservation, library management, library buildings, disaster recovery, and collection development.

Currently, the Special Interest Group "Environment, Sustainability and Environment" (ENSULIB) is the only IFLA group which focuses on Climate Change/Environment. IFLA needs to create an Task Force comprised of groups across the organization. This month, the American Library Association officially launched such an effort, the ALA Task Force on Sustainability, which could provide a model for IFLA.*

A vision for libraries

The core values of libraries (Q4):

1. *Truth telling: acknowledging the scientific facts on climate change and environment*
2. *Libraries are open to all*
3. *Sustainability*
4. *Respect (of humanity, environment..)*

Comments:

Libraries are exceptionally good at (Q5):

1. *Serving all people, regardless of socio-economic status, including provided space and community for traumatized people*
- 2.
- 3.

Comments:

Libraries should do more of (Q6):

1. *Educating society about climate change*
2. *Make relevant and reliable information on environmental issues easily accessible*
- 3.

Comments:

Libraries should do less of (Q7):

-
1. *Building libraries dependent on fossil fuel infrastructure (reduce energy use, aim for net zero)*
 - 2.
 - 3.

Comments:

Challenges and solutions

The main challenges to society (Q8):

-
1. *Climate change: surviving on a hotter planet with rising sea levels and melting glaciers*
 2. *Getting ahead of the trauma to come by rethinking our consumption and learning way to stabilize our nervous system*
 - 3.
 - 4.

Comments:

The main challenges to libraries (Q9):

-
1. *Funding for resources and services*
 2. *Finding courage to defend the core values*
 3. *How to make reliable and relevant environmental information easily accessible to all*

Comments:

The main professional challenges (Q10):

1. *Demonstrating the need for libraries to play a critical role in providing resources and services to support people whose lives are disrupted by climate change*

2.

3.

4.

5.

Comments:

How a united library field can make a difference

How should a united library field help meet the challenges identified (Q11)?

1. *Build climate change into IFLA Global Vision*

2.

3.

4.

5.

Comments:

The characteristics of a united library field (Q12):

1. *Recognizing that we are all connected – all breath the same air, drink the same water...*

2. *Together we are strong*

3.

4.

5.

Comments:

The focus of a united library field (Q13):

1. *How to build an information literate society that also values compassion and human-centred connections in this world which has grown so reliant on an overload of electronic communication*

2.

3.

4.

5.

Comments:

A global conversation

This report is created in an interactive process, in Berlin 17th August and Wroclaw 23rd August and after that in Basecamp/email discussion. It is part of a global conversation initiated by IFLA on how a united library field can tackle the challenges of the future.

Over the course of two years (2017-2018), IFLA will involve as many librarians and others as possible in this global conversation. Participants are encouraged to continue the conversation in their own networks and organization and share the results with IFLA. At the end of 2017, the first results of all the workshops and online discussions will be turned into a *Global Vision Report*, which in turn will be adapted into concrete strategies, processes and work programmes in 2018.

To learn more about the global conversation, and download supporting materials to support your own activities, visit globalvision.ifla.org.

Stay tuned for news about the IFLA Global Vision discussion following [#iflaGlobalVision](https://twitter.com/iflaGlobalVision) and make sure to cast your vote in August when the online voting platform is available on <https://globalvision.ifla.org/>.