

IFLA presents: **ENSULIB - Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Section**

„Some Accurate Trends in Sustainability in the Library Framework“

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**ENSULIB Chair 2021-2025
Chief librarian, Helsinki City Library**



**IFLA Section
Environment,
Sustainability and Libraries**

Contents

- IFLA and ENSULIB – short introduction
- Trends in sustainability
 - Green Library Buildings
 - Carbon footprint
 - Green Library Services
 - Collections, Facilities and Carbon handprint
 - Social Sustainability
 - United Nations' SDGs
 - Finnish Library Act & Resilience

Some sources:

ENSULIB Web pages: [Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Section – IFLA](#)

Sahavirta, H. "A Garden on the Roof Doesn't make a Green Library, in *Going Green: Implementing Sustainable Strategies in Libraries Around the World*, (ed. Hauke, P. & al), De Gruyter Saur, 2018

Sahavirta, H. & Sonkkanen, L. Environmental awareness of public libraries to the 2020s (Sahavirta & Sonkkanen): [Green Library | Libraries.fi](#)

National project funded by the Ministry of Culture and Education 2021-2022

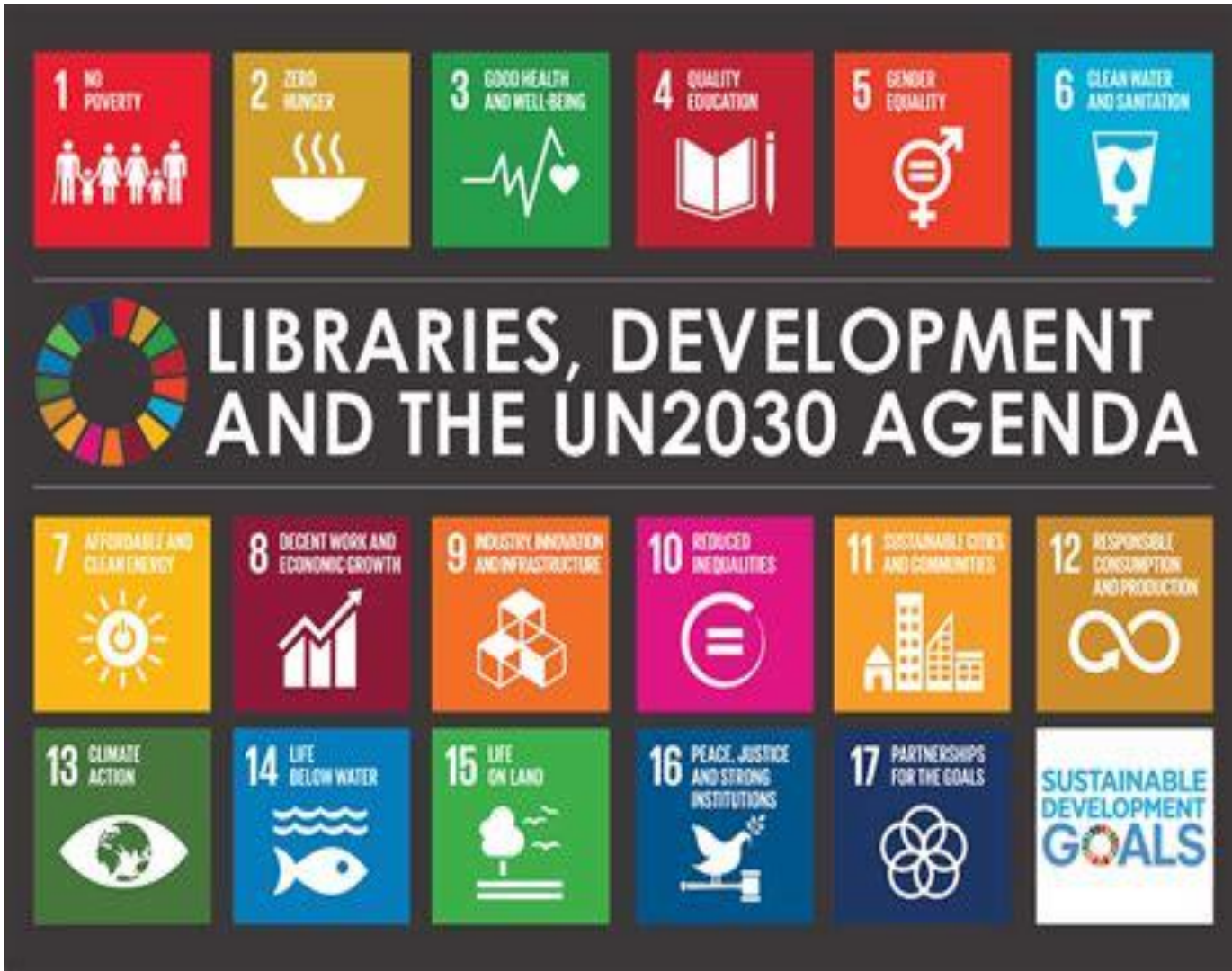
Savolainen, L. et al. Carbon footprint of the National Library of Finland – A report on carbon footprint assessment for 2019

IFLA: “Sustainability is Libraries Business!”

- Libraries as role models, educational partners, enforcers of initiatives to promote sustainability



There is a new clear emphasis on sustainability – after UN Agenda 2030 and the SDGs (2015).



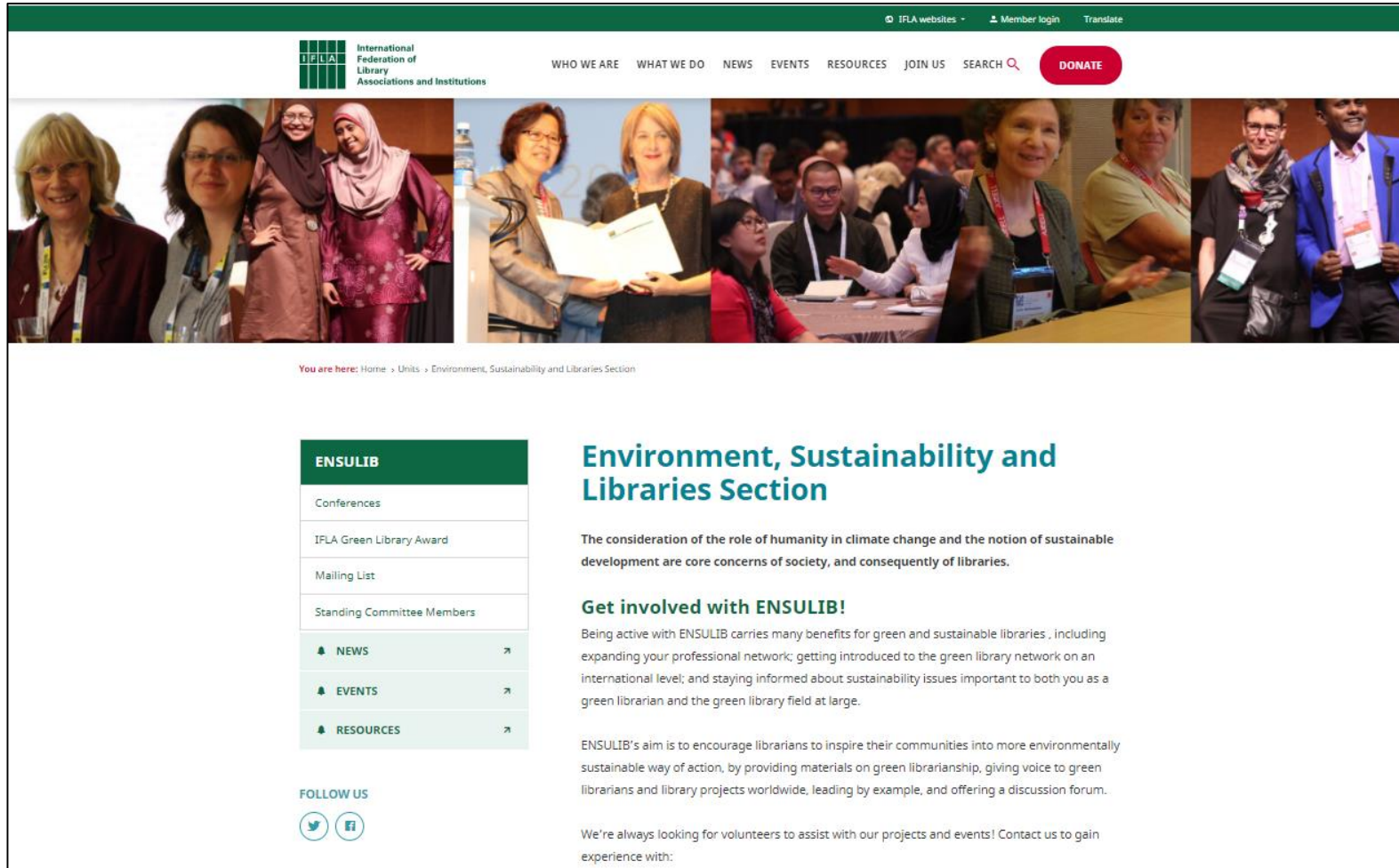
UN 2030 Agenda Advocate

IFLA's commitment to the SDGs:

- Global rethink needed
- Libraries: responsible educational institutions
- Libraries: guarantor for access to reliable information
- Access to information: prerequisite for achieving SDGs
- Impending climate catastrophe

ENSULIB - Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Section

<https://www.ifla.org/units/environment-sustainability-and-libraries/>

The screenshot shows the ENSULIB website. At the top is a green navigation bar with links for 'IFLA websites', 'Member login', and 'Translate'. Below this is a white header with the IFLA logo and the text 'International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions'. A secondary navigation bar contains links for 'WHO WE ARE', 'WHAT WE DO', 'NEWS', 'EVENTS', 'RESOURCES', 'JOIN US', a search icon, and a red 'DONATE' button. A large banner image below the header shows a collage of people at various events. Below the banner, a breadcrumb trail reads 'You are here: Home > Units > Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Section'. On the left is a green sidebar with the 'ENSULIB' logo and a list of links: 'Conferences', 'IFLA Green Library Award', 'Mailing List', 'Standing Committee Members', 'NEWS', 'EVENTS', and 'RESOURCES'. The main content area has the title 'Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Section' in green. Below the title is a paragraph: 'The consideration of the role of humanity in climate change and the notion of sustainable development are core concerns of society, and consequently of libraries.' This is followed by a section titled 'Get involved with ENSULIB!' with a paragraph about the benefits of being active. Below that is a paragraph about ENSULIB's aim to encourage librarians to inspire their communities. At the bottom, a paragraph states: 'We're always looking for volunteers to assist with our projects and events! Contact us to gain experience with:'. A 'FOLLOW US' section with Twitter and Facebook icons is at the bottom left.

- 98 section members – institutions, associations and private persons
- 20 elected Standing Committee members, including 3 officers
- Webpages: projects, resources, activities
- Social Media

ENSULIB



© Stadtbibliothek Bad Oldesloe, Germany: Winner of the IFLA Green Library Award 2017 – Congratulations!

ENSULIB 2017 D-BERLIN/PL-WROCLAW

IFLA Environment, Sustainability and Libraries
Special Interest Group

Please check <https://2017.ifla.org/conference-programme>

ENSULIB's mission is to address:

- Effects of climate change on libraries
- Applications of environment-friendly practices in libraries
- Proposed environmental recommendations for the profession
- Increasing and promoting sustainability-related library resources and services
- Increasing librarians' own awareness of environmental concerns



16–17 Aug Berlin
ENSULIB Satellite
<https://ensulib.thecitycentre.de>

21 Aug Wroclaw
9am Session 094a offsite
Libraries'
Commitment to the
UN 2030 Agenda for
Sustainable



ENSULIB 2018 KUALA LUMPUR, MALAYSIA

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- Please visit: <https://www.ifla.org/environment-sustainability-and-libraries>
- Please contact:
Harri.Sahavirta@helsinki.fi (Convenor)
Petra.Hauke@hu-berlin.de (Secretary)



Sunday 26 Aug
13:00-14:00 Session 106b
Presentation of new IFLA/De
Gruyter Publications, with:
Going Green: Implementing
Sustainable Strategies in
Libraries Around the World

Sunday 26 Aug
13:45-14:45 Session 110



© Daniel Guillard Public Library, Cali, Colombia
Winner of the IFLA Green Library Award 2019

ENSULIB 2019 ATHENS, GREECE

IFLA Environment, Sustainability and Libraries
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Tuesday 27 Aug
08:30-10:30 Session 156
Open Session: Environment,
Sustainability and Libraries
SIG
"Let's Change Now: Libraries
Driving Sustainability"

Tuesday 27 Aug
11:45-12:45 Session 166
Joint Session: IFLA &
Environment, Sustainability
and Libraries - SIG (SI)
"Libraries and Sustainability:
Examples, Supporters,
Educators"

Tuesday 27 Aug
12:45-13:45 Session 172
Awards Presentation:
IFLA Green Library Award
2019

Thursday 29 Aug
11:45-12:45 Session 202a
Lightning Talks – IFLA
Professional Committee
"10 Reasons for
Environmental Commitment
in Public Libraries"

UNOFFICIAL
BUSINESS MEETING
Meet and Greet ENSULIB!
Time and Place TBA
Please contact:
harri.sahavirta@helsinki.fi
petra.hauke@hu-berlin.de

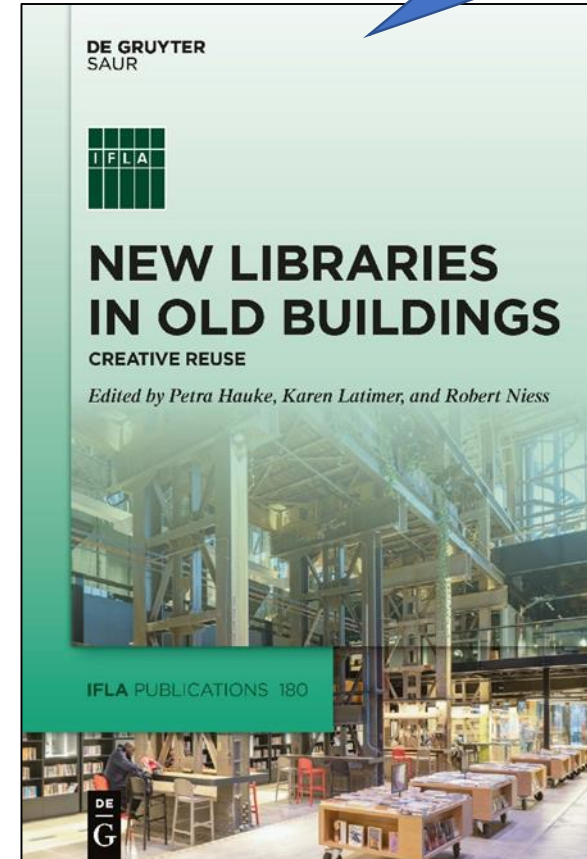
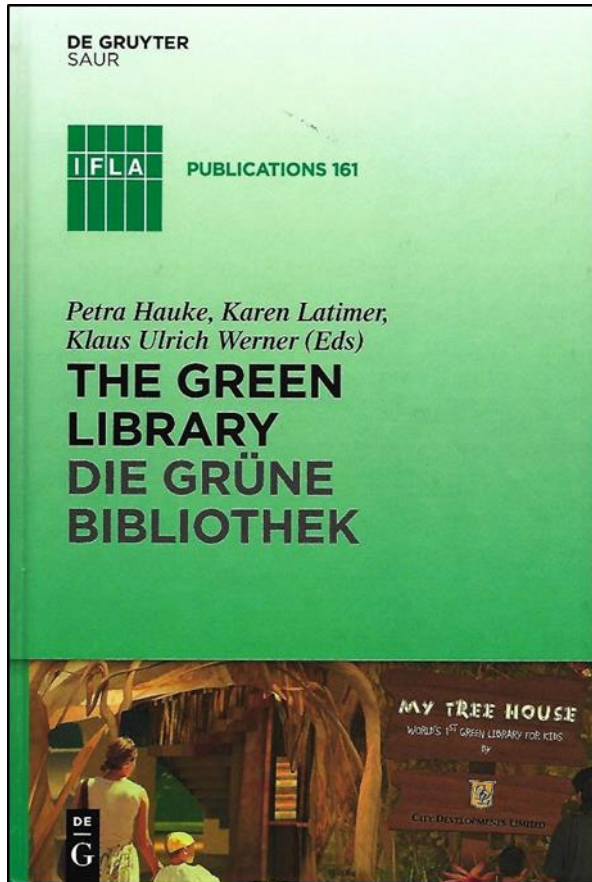
- 2009 launched at WLIC Milano as a Special Interest Group (SIG)

At the time, sustainability was not in the focus in the library field.

- 2016 ff [IFLA Green Library Award](#)
- 2017 Satellite Meeting Berlin
- 2018 (Runner-up) [IFLA Dynamic Unit and Impact Award](#)
- 2021 Transition from SIG to Section
- 2022 Satellite meeting Cork, Ireland
- 2022 Special Mention [IFLA Dynamic Unit and Impact Award](#)
- 2023 Satellite meeting Tilburg, NL
- 2023 IFLA Dynamic Unit and Impact Award

ENSULIB - Resources

All available with
Open access!





IFLA Section Environment, Sustainability and Libraries

Tools for Green Libraries - Draft

Last update: 6 Sept 2021, by ENSULIB (ph)

Additions are welcome! Please send an email to petra.hauke@hu-berlin.de.

Content

- International Sources
- Regional and National Working Groups / Platforms
- Guidelines / Instructions / Handouts
- Useful Websites
- Blogs
- Miscellaneous
- Suppliers of sustainable library materials
- Bibliographies, Publications
- Useful Sources Outside the Library World
- Schedule, Annual Recurring Share Days

International Sources


- [Access and Opportunity for All: How Libraries contribute to the United Nations 2030 Agenda](#), by IFLA, with many translations into other languages


ENSULIB - Projects


Tools for Green Libraries




Free
available!


International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

WHO WE ARE WHAT WE DO NEWS EVENTS RESOURCES JOIN US SEARCH 





You are here: Home > Environment, Sustainability and Libraries Section > IFLA Green Library Award



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IFLA Green Library Award

What is a Green Library?

The consideration of the role of humanity in climate change and the notion of sustainable development are core concerns of society, and consequently of libraries."

According to the [Online Dictionary for Library and Information Science \(ODLIS\)](#), *Green Libraries* are "designed to minimize negative impact on the natural environment and maximize indoor environmental quality by means of careful site selection, use of natural construction materials and biodegradable products, conservation of resources (water, energy, paper), and responsible waste disposal (recycling, etc.)"


They also focus on related services, activities, events, literature and projects, demonstrating the social role and responsibility of [libraries as leaders in environmental sustainability](#).






ENSULIB - Projects


- IFLA Green Library Award 2016-
 - To encourage and inspire green libraries
 - To create criteria for green libraries
 - Award 2024 will be announced soon




International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions

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IFLA Green Library Award



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FOLLOW US

ENSULIB - Projects

- IFLA Green Library Award
 - About 40 submissions annually
 - In two categories: **the best green library** and **the best green library project**
 - Special recognition
 - Long list and short list: 10 - 12 submissions in both categories are evaluated and max. 6 submissions are accepted to the short list
 - Winners are announced at WLIC

Why should we? Is it really our business?



The free rider problem:

Bad boys are responsible for great damages, so good guys don't need to avoid little harms.

How to reach anything without taking the first little step?

Libraries should act as responsible actors do.
Every little deed increases/decreases the outcome

→ All responsible actors should act!

Let us begin with the building



At first, the focus was clearly on the building

+ green office principles

+ environmentally friendly routines, like waste management

= Carbon footprint

The green library movement was founded early 90s – but tipping point only after 2007?

The existential thread of climate change reached critical mass in 2007 ...and the libraries awoke?

Antonelli:

“This innovation is happening by **building green library buildings**, by **greening existing library facilities**, providing green library services, and embracing environmentally supportive and sustainable practices within the library.”

“When librarians talk about green libraries what usually comes to mind are **green library buildings**. [--] **Green buildings** are measured according to a rating system like the LEED [--]”

All the actions concern somehow the building, or caretaking:

“A simple green step that libraries can do for the health of the planet and their employees is to quit using toxic chemical cleaners and switch to environmentally friendly cleaning products.”

But the future includes a social aspect:

Next steps: life after oil, alternative lifestyle, food security, depositories of seeds, community gardens

Monika Antonelli (2008): *The Green Library Movement*

Trends in sustainability – green library buildings

The green library movement was founded by architects and the emphasis was clearly at library buildings and green office principles, although of EEE: environmental, economic and social sustainability (equality)

- Location
- Energy efficiency, heating and cooling
- Lighting
- Sorting waste
- Reuse and circulating

How to save energy (and money) while building environmentally friendly libraries

+++ Neat criteria for ecocertificates - easy to measure

Trends in sustainability – green library buildings

The environmental impacts of the library building are remarkable – the **carbon footprint** of libraries consist mostly emissions from the building.

Sustainable building with sustainable routines, like waste management, form the foundation for all environmental work... but only the basis.

Remark: the differences between countries are great!

- Climate conditions
- Infrastructures

Carbonfootprint - Finnish public libraries

13 libraries of different sizes from different parts of Finland participated in the carbon measurements in 2020 (data 2019).

In 2023, there were 11 libraries.

The work consisted of data collection and workshops, but consultations were also organised to support the work.

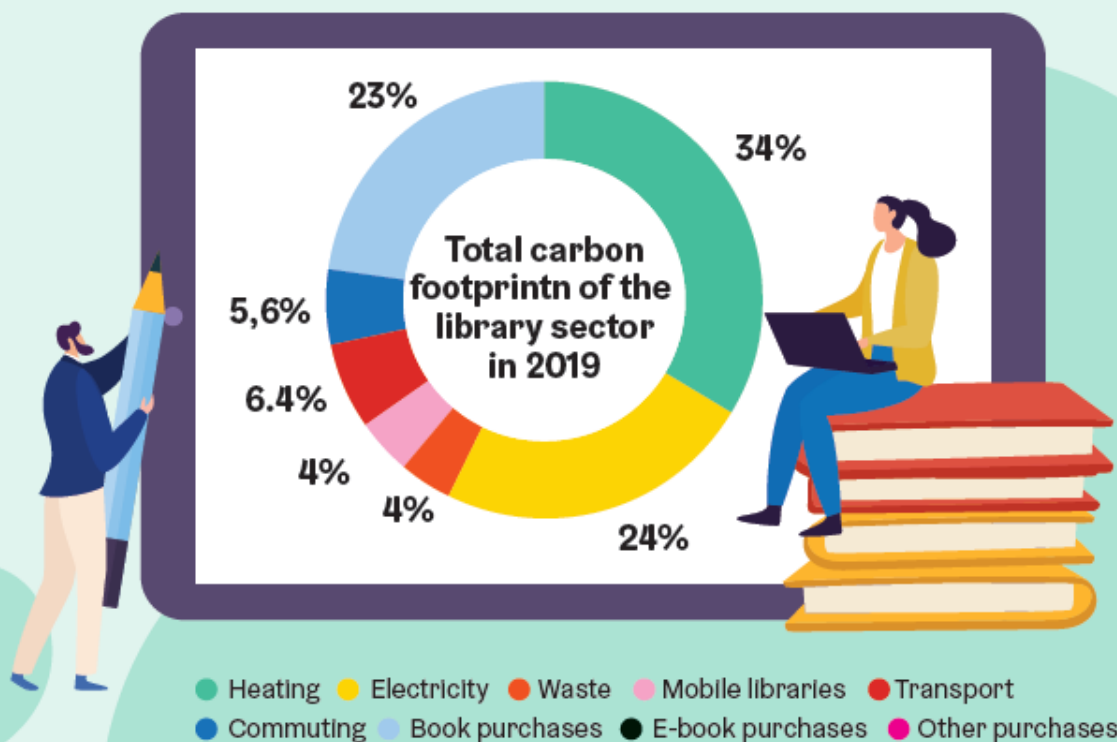
Carbon footprint /public libraries in Finland (2019)

The carbon footprint of your library

The carbon footprint of your library is very moderate, on average 32 tonnes of CO₂e – this corresponds to the annual emissions of 3130 Finns.

The majority of library emissions arise from the building itself and its daily activities: heating, electricity and waste management account for more than 60 per cent of all library emissions.

In other respects, library activities are environmentally friendly: the share of material and other purchases is approximately 25% of the emissions. Material transportation, mobile libraries and commuting account for 16% of the emissions.



'Yleisten kirjastojen ympäristötietoisuus 2020-luvulle'
Bringing environmental awareness of public libraries to the 2020s project

The Carbon Footprint of Finnish Public Libraries 2022

(preliminary)

All library functions together gives the
total carbon footprint of 101 722 tCO₂e.

The total footprint corresponds to the
annual carbon footprint of 9 786 average
Finn.



Carbon footprint – some remarks

Energy consumption (heating & electricity) is the main source for emissions – but facilities are not under libraries' responsibility (property sectors).

→ cutting the emissions are tied to decisions made by the city / university = interrelatedness – acting in a network!

...but what about the great difference?

One must select what is taken into the calculations: *available* and *relevant, measurable* data. What is included and what is excluded?
= sufficiently accurate information – if no exact data attainable.

–
2019: No accurate data available for the emissions of servers or data transfer – or even how these should be calculated.

2022: Scope 3: ICT, cleaning, and office services make a remarkable percentage of emissions

12 % in small library

27 % in big libraries

→ The percentage for scope 2 "heating and electricity" decreases from 60 %
to 58 % in small libraries ja 11 % in big libraries



Digital footprint. It's about storing and transferring data...

2019: no accurate data available for the emissions of servers or data transfer – or even how these should be calculated.

Platform services – databases (etc.) shared by many operators

How much redundant data we store, download and stream? Sustainable Web Design?

ICT devices' life spin

Carbon footprint – some remarks

Carbon footprint is not everything but should be compared to cultural and social sustainability attained.

The limits: how far your footprints lead? Should *libraries* take into account the emissions from printing books (paper & transportations), or is it publishers' business? Libraries acquire contents.

Emissions are created at different points of a larger processes – it is difficult to calculate them.

Processes and/or data are not transparent

From green buildings to green library services

Some definitions:

- “Sustainable library”: “... designed to minimize negative impact on the natural environment and maximize indoor environmental quality by means of careful site selection, use of natural construction materials and biodegradable products, conservation of resources (water, energy, paper), and responsible waste disposal (recycling, etc.)”
(ODLIS)
- “Green and Sustainable libraries are particularly predestined to take on the role as exemplars, educators, and enablers. Green and Sustainable libraries take into account environmental, economic and social sustainability. Green and Sustainable Libraries may be of any size, but they have a clear sustainability agenda.”
(ENSULIB web page)

Trends in sustainability – green library services?

“We cannot rebuild all the libraries but must learn to run existing libraries in a more environmentally friendly way.”

Green buildings are not the whole story:

- Green buildings are extensive and expensive projects, not at all affordable.
- Librarians do not make the decisions on buildings.
- Green building or green office principles are general requirements, not characteristic features of libraries.
- Sorting waste, circulating and reusing is something we all should do.

...so, what about green library services?

Trends in sustainability – green library services?

Open access to reliable and updated information

Should libraries offer all kinds of information, or only reliable, scientific information?

- Libraries should stay neutral and should not try to teach what is right or wrong
- Libraries have always stored and preserved all kinds of information, but offered an open access only to accepted information: Index librorum prohibitorum is kept behind locked doors
- Libraries cannot check all the contents – practical impossibility
- Historical collections/archives – also misinformation may be worth storing

Libraries fight for democracy and freedom of speech... and tolerance

Has the climate change and the Eco crisis changed the situation?

- There is a very strong scientific consensus, and resistance is politically motivated
- It's a question of the future or survival of humankind (and even more: biosphere)

Trends in sustainability – green library services?

Shared spaces and devices:

- Working and learning spaces
- Common living rooms
- Shared computers, printers, scanners etc.
- Things libraries

+ Shared use decreases consumption – one does not need to buy everything

- Is this a real argument? How to measure/confirm it?

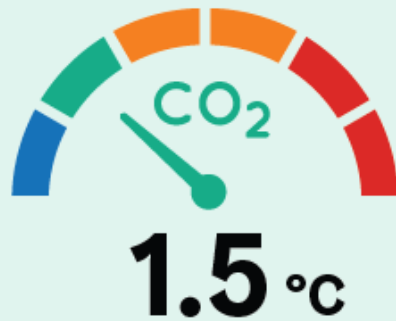
→ **the sharing economy & the carbon handprint:** libraries enable their users to decrease their carbon footprint by adapting sharing.

Carbon handprint / how library use can reduce emissions?

A visit to the library keeps carbon emissions under control

The use of library services promotes a 1.5-degree lifestyle and the objectives of the Paris Agreement on climate change

Your library supports climate action



- The library is located within a short and easy distance.
- The library includes countless books, magazines and other material, such as music.
- The library offers premises, information technology and other devices for sharing.
- The library borrows items that are not used on a daily basis.



You can influence the carbon footprint of your own library use

- How you make your way to the library impacts the carbon footprint of your visit.
- Collect your reservations and return your loans on time to improve material circulation and reduce unnecessary transportation. Also keep in mind e-materials and e-services; they reduce the need for logistics.
- Sharing premises, information technology and other equipment is environmentally friendly.
- Borrowing items reduces the need to own them – in many libraries you can use a sewing machine, borrow sports equipment or a power drill and use digital devices.



CO₂ emissions of different forms of transport per passenger-kilometre.



243.8
g/CO₂/pkm



17.7
g/CO₂/pkm



0
g/CO₂/pkm



"Yleisten kirjastojen ympäristötietoisuus 2020-luvulle"
Bringing environmental awareness of public libraries to the 2020s project

Carbon footprint & handprint / reading

Reading is a low-emission recreational activity with a positive carbon handprint.

The carbon footprint of a book consists of the emissions associated with its materials, manufacturing and transportation. A purchased book is often read by just one person.

The carbon handprint of a borrowed book consists of the positive impact of the borrowing on the book's emissions. A library book is read often, up to 100 times before it is removed from the library collection and recycled.

Using library services is an environmental act



Visit to the library

0.6 kg
CO₂e.



Movie night for two
at the cinema

0.5 kg
CO₂e.



Bag of candies

0.5 kg
CO₂e.



"Yleisten kirjastojen ympäristötietoisuus 2020-luvulle"
Bringing environmental awareness of public libraries to the 2020s project



Emissions related to reading (kg CO₂e)

Paper book from a shop		1.16
Paper book from an online store		1.07
Paper book from a library	0.7	0.46
E-book from an online store, with a separate reading device*		0.87
E-book from an online store, without a separate reading device		0.08
E-book from a library	0.07	0.01
Handprint		Footprint



Trends in sustainability – recent developments

UN Agenda 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (2015)

- Tipping point (only now) for IFLA and the library field?
- Paradigm shift: from library buildings to social sustainability

States are committed to UN 2030 agenda and the SDGs

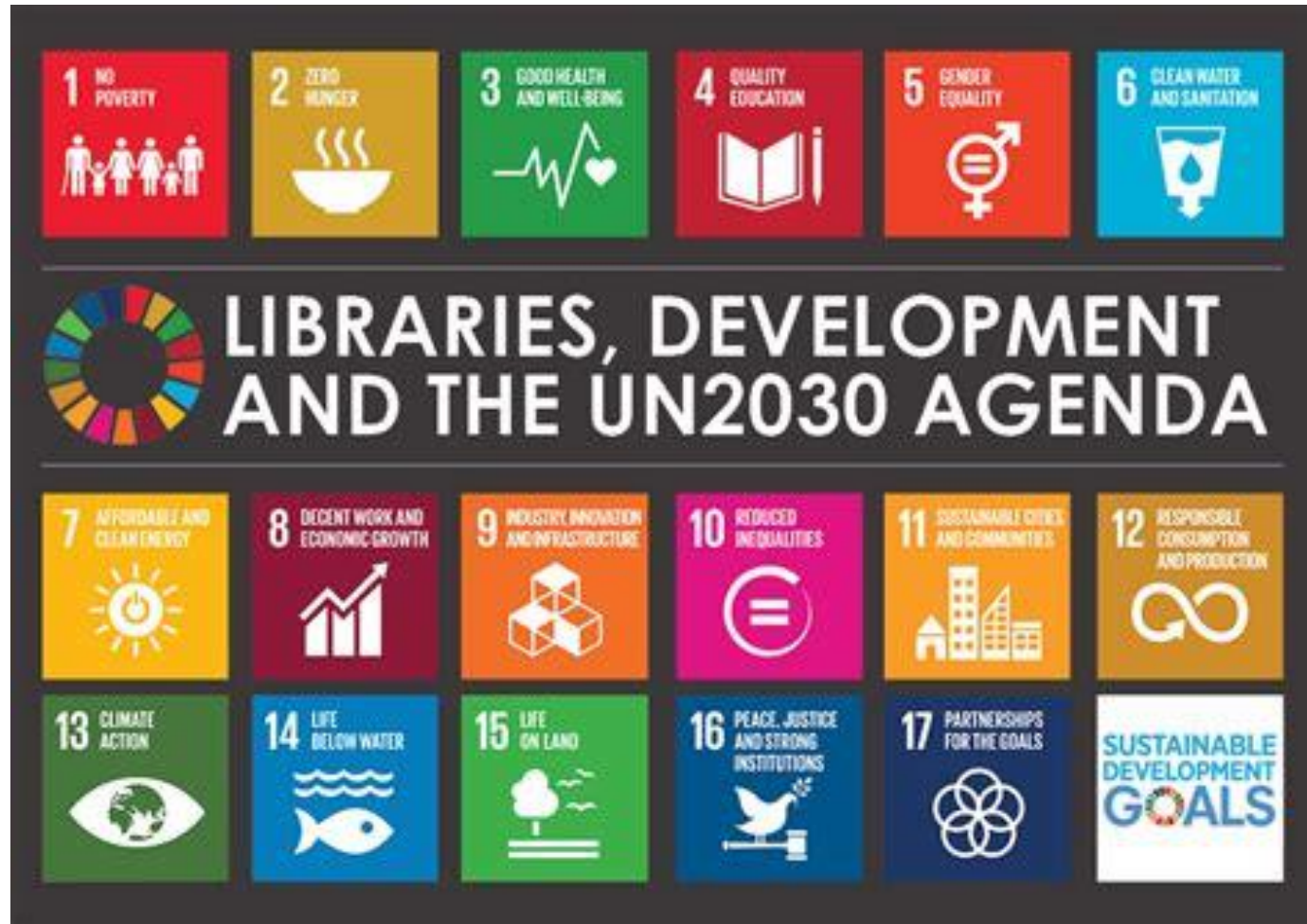
...but so are cities (New York & Helsinki) – voluntarily city reports.

→ Carbon neutrality programs, national and municipal

Suddenly, it is not librarians who try to tell decision makers about sustainability but decision makers who demand sustainable deeds! A shared agenda for all operators?

IFLA advocates for libraries to be recognised as essential partners for sustainable development.

IFLA. Powering Sustainable Development <https://www.ifla.org/libraries-development>



- The goals are very general... what do they mean in the library context?
- Is it enough that libraries have information concerning the different goals... or should they promote them – take action?
- Access to reliable information is missing – this would be an essential objective to libraries!
- Information is (only) a background condition

SDGs and libraries

Is it enough to have books (information) on climate action... or should libraries do climate actions?

Does a library promote environmental sustainability... if it does what it would do anyway?

(like follow the national legislation, municipal regulations)

SDGs for Finnish public libraries

Public libraries are committed to the UN's Sustainable Development Goals

Our key objectives are:

- 3. Health and well-being: Reading promotes well-being and library card holders live longer.
- 4. Good education: Libraries support the reading and lifelong learning of children, young people and adults alike. The environmental aspect is included in all library activities, from storytime to art exhibitions and events.
- 10. Fighting inequality: Public libraries provide free-of-charge basic service that is available to all. Libraries do not tolerate any form of bullying or discrimination. Libraries are responsible employers.
- 11. Sustainable cities and communities: Libraries follow municipal environmental guidelines and many libraries have their own environmental programme, certificate or ecological subsidy system.
- 12. Responsible consumption: Libraries are pioneers in circular economy and act as sharing economy platforms. Libraries offer premises and tools for sharing, reducing the need for consumption.
- 13. Climate actions: Libraries recycle and conserve energy. Libraries provide up-to-date and reliable information on environmental issues and help to find information.



'Yleisten kirjastojen ympäristötietoisuus 2020-luvulle' (Bringing environmental awareness of public libraries to the 2020s) project
<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>



So far, we have been dealing with basics:

Phase 1: the building & green office & routines → carbon footprint

Phase 2: green library services: access to information, shared spaces & devices → circular economy & carbon handprint

Phase 3: SDGs & social sustainability → responsibility

What about the next steps...

- Active citizenship & social and cultural dialogue
- Reading, fiction & resilience

Public Libraries Act (2022), Section 6: Duties of public libraries

Public libraries are tasked with:

- 1) providing access to materials, information and cultural contents **on sustainability**;
- 2) maintaining versatile and up-to-date collections **on sustainability**;
- 3) promoting reading and literature **on sustainability**;
- 4) providing information services, guidance and support in the acquisition and use of information **on sustainability** and in versatile literacy skills;
- 5) Providing premises for learning, recreational activities, working, and civic activities **on sustainable matters**;
- 6) promoting social and cultural dialogue **on sustainable development**.

Sustainable twist fits the spirit of the act.

Public Libraries Act (2022), Section 6: Duties of public libraries

3) promoting reading and literature on sustainability;

- Environmental literacy... resilience by reading fiction: reading opens our minds and increases empathy but can also help us face the future challenges.

How do libraries promote this goal?

6) promoting social and cultural dialogue on sustainable development.

- Libraries as neutral third places where dialogue is possible, meeting places for experts and citizen. Active promoters?

The focus has been in public libraries, hence, some modifications may be needed if we look at academic libraries.

- Academic and University libraries emphasize research and open science - how to support students and researchers and make the access to environmental studies easier.
- National libraries might find preservation and conservation as central... in the (future) era of natural and ecological disasters.

Thank you

Please, visit ENSULIB web page:

<https://www.ifla.org/environment-sustainability-and-libraries>

Green library website:

[Green Library | Libraries.fi](#)

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