

# Global Vision Report





## GLOBAL VISION REPORT

August 2018

The **International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA)** is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession.



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## Foreword from IFLA President, Glòria Pérez-Salmerón

“I truly believe that universal access to information has to be the key goal for humanity today. If we achieve this, we will see benefits across the board, around the world. We will reach the UN Sustainable Development Goals.”

Libraries, as gateways to information, can deliver freedom and empowerment for all. We, librarians, have the utmost responsibility to use all our skills and efforts to open these gateways ever wider for the benefit of our societies. We do not need to follow change, we can drive it: we can be the motors of change.

But to do this, we must change ourselves. The way we think, the way we work together, the way we engage with our communities and decision-makers. The status quo is not sustainable.

To this end, two years ago, IFLA got two very positive pieces of news.

One was the decision of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to make IFLA one of the main three partners of its Global Libraries Legacy. This meant a ten-year grant to strengthen the Library Field. It has made this report and its findings possible.

Thanks to this, IFLA is able to follow a new and more inclusive path. We can engage the library field as never before, and build a new, more sustainable organisation. IFLA is lucky to be the recipient of this generosity, and is determined to use this opportunity to make a lasting difference.

The second piece of good news was the recruitment of Gerald Leitner as IFLA Secretary General. The IFLA Governing Board was looking for a prominent CEO to lead IFLA's transformation. In his interview, Gerald set out his vision regarding the future of libraries, and how we can, united, face the challenges of globalisation. And we were unanimous.

It was clear from the start that the vision offered a unique opportunity to unify libraries worldwide. But to do this, it needed to be designed not only for the global library field, but by the global library field.

This in turn required a new approach, an ambitious approach. But it is essential, because IFLA is only as strong as its members



are strong. And its voice is only as loud as its members' voices are loud.

IFLA therefore started a unique and special conversation, led by our Secretary General – the Global Vision discussion. We wanted it to empower and engage the global library field, just as libraries themselves empower and engage their communities.

I believe, on the basis of this report, that we are succeeding. Through the data, through the analysis, through the key findings, I see a library field which is growing closer together. And in growing closer, it is growing stronger.

We have many strengths and many talents at our disposal. The experience of those who have come before us gives us an excellent starting point. But we are entering into new territory.



**Glòria Pérez-Salmerón**  
**IFLA President**

One of my favourite quotes comes from the Spanish poet, Antonio Machado<sup>1</sup>:

“Caminante no hay camino.

Se hace camino al andar”

“Traveller, there is no path.

The path is made by walking”

This report in hand, the path lies open before us.

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<sup>1</sup> Machado, Antonio & Trueblood, Alan S. (1982), 142. *Selected poems*. Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press



## Foreword from IFLA Secretary General, Gerald Leitner

“The challenges facing us from ever-increasing globalisation can only be met and overcome by an inclusive, global response from a united library field.”

IFLA is built on the understanding that no library is an island. Across borders, across library types, we share missions and goals. Similarly, the library field as a whole is not isolated from the world around it, but deeply affected by the trends and developments that are redesigning our world.

The social changes which are shaping the way people and organisations work together. The economic changes which are challenging traditional notions of public service. And the technological changes which are redefining what it means to be an information professional.

Our institutions have a mission to deliver services that power literate, informed and participatory societies. To do this, to ensure that we do not just survive, but thrive in this changing environment, we need to be united in our action, and strong in our voice.

This is why, in 2017, IFLA launched an unprecedented consultation process – the IFLA Global Vision discussion.

By bringing together the biggest brains trust in the library field and gathering ideas and experience from outside, the Global Vision Report is the result of a unique process.

The contribution from more than 30.000 colleagues from 190 countries and all 7 continents shows that across all regions, all library types, and lengths of library experience, we share a deep commitment to the enduring value and role of libraries. But acknowledging regional characteristics and requirements will be essential in our future efforts to unite the library field in addressing common challenges.

Never before has there been such an initiative, which gives every single librarian in the world the chance to contribute – and never before have so many librarians from so many parts of the world contributed to one global conversation.

The process has inspired and motivated people around the world to think strategically about the profession, now and in the future. It has also made people feel connected to IFLA and libraries globally – often for the first time – and provided us with the wealth of information you will find in this report.



It has both given us a clear idea of the challenges and opportunities facing libraries worldwide, and allowed for a first major step towards a united global library field.

Crucially, it has underlined that we are globally united in our goals and values. And it has also identified ten highlights and opportunities, which are providing a framework for thinking about the way ahead.

With this information, this energy, and this unity of purpose, we are well placed to build the connected library field that can not only meet the challenges of the future, but also make an ever-growing contribution to the world around us.

And as IFLA Secretary General I can say it loudly and proudly: no other organisation in the field of culture, education and science in the world has been able to launch such an inclusive and democratic process worldwide. The IFLA Global Vision Report is the manifestation of the power and opportunities of a united library field.

But we are just at the beginning. For the realisation of all the great opportunities that the Global Vision Report identifies we need the teamwork of all librarians from around the globe.

After the launch of the full version of the Report we will create the biggest ideas store for actions to make the Global Vision a reality –a source of inspiration for the strategic and daily work of librarians. But all depends on you, on your experience, on your creativity. Bring your ideas to the Global Vision, inspire colleagues with your ideas and be inspired by your colleagues.

IFLA and the Global Vision, that's you.



**Gerald Leitner**  
**IFLA Secretary General**

# Our Vision, Our Future!

**A strong and united library field  
powering literate, informed and participative societies**



**#iflaGlobalVision**



**CREATE A GLOBAL VISION**



**GLOBAL VISION ACTION PLANS DEVELOPMENT**

*The Global Vision roadmap*

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## HOW TO NAVIGATE IN THIS REPORT

The Global Vision discussion started a truly global conversation with voices from **all over the world** and **all parts of the profession**. This Global Vision Report is intended to bring to the surface the results of all the discussions and all opinions that have been gathered and analysed by IFLA.

**The Global Vision Report Summary** –includes the 10 highlights and opportunities, translated in 17 different languages. This is the gist of all the Global Vision discussions and their analysis.

**Chapter 1: The Visioning Process** –in this chapter, you will find out what are the data sources that IFLA has used to gather the opinions of more than 30.000 people. We have organized Regional Workshops with library leaders around the world, we have trained the trainers to facilitate workshops in their own countries and their own Professional Units, we also created a global poll to reach every single librarian's opinion globally.

**Chapter 2: The approach to data analysis** –in this chapter, you may read about what has been the focus of the Global Vision discussions. What kind of questions the global community has been asked to give answers to. How IFLA has collected the data, how much data it has been and what was the data analysis process.

**Chapter 3: We are united globally in our goals and values** –in this chapter you see the findings of the Global Vision discussions. The findings are organized per each of the six

questions that the global community has been giving answers to. You may see what is the global result of each of the questions. At the same time, all findings can be compared across all data sources, looking data from different dimension: from library type, from years of library experience, per Global Vision region, per Professional Unit.

**Chapter 4: Connecting global and local actions effectively** – this chapter follows a regional structure, showcasing and comparing results per region and across all different groups or different data sources. It's an in-depth look on an analysis of the online voting results per region and of the results from the regional workshops organized by IFLA and the Global Vision meetings organized by organizations all over the world -all classified per region.

**Chapter 5: Making the Vision a reality** –what's next? After all this amazing consultative process and the incredible discussions taking place around the globe, the wheels are now in motion and it is time for action. All these findings will shape the next steps of the Global Vision process. This chapter is a chance to learn more about the future steps of the Global Vision process.

**Appendix** –in the Appendix you will find useful details, that may help you during your read, such as a glossary of terms and abbreviations, a list of countries per IFLA Global Vision Region and lots of translated pictures and charts in other languages.