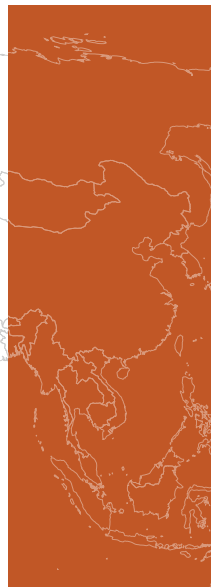
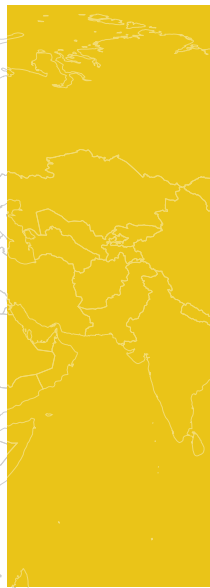
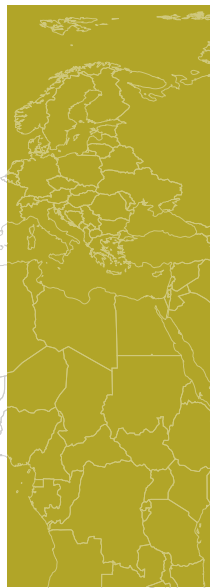
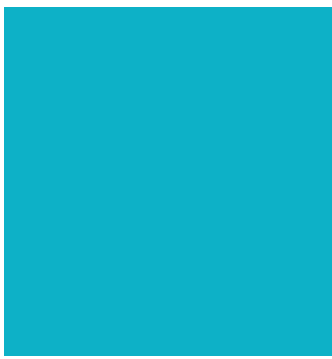


2023



A MIDTERM REPORT ON THE IMPACT OF THE LEGACY GRANT
LEAVING LIBRARIES STRONGER



Glòria Pérez-Salmerón
Chair, SIGL



Barbara Lison
President, IFLA



Sharon Memis
Secretary General, IFLA

ACCESS TO INFORMATION HAS **ALWAYS MATTERED**

We experience the world, capture what we observe and learn, and pass it on to others so that they in turn can learn and go further still. Yet how we do it has evolved dramatically over time.

Humans first began recording information in writing some six thousand years ago. Around the third century before the common era, in ancient Alexandria, we began to get more thoughtful about how to preserve, disseminate, and provide access to information. When the first recognized public library system was established in the mid-19th century, who could have imagined the information age in which we find ourselves today?



2.8 MILLION LIBRARIES GLOBALLY WE ARE STEWARDS OF KNOWLEDGE

Today, based on the data provided in the Library Map of the World, there are at least 2.8 million libraries of all types recorded around the world. They are staffed by more than 1.6 million full-time people and more than a half million volunteers. The true figures are likely to be far higher.

Beyond simple numbers, today's librarians and information specialists are so much more than the curators of resources; they are the stewards of knowledge. The defenders of cultural heritage. The guardians of intellectual freedom.

The modern global library field is vast and diverse. We are a community, connected across geography and political boundaries, united in a shared belief in the importance of access to information and knowledge for all. Crucially, the connections between us are a strength, making it possible to achieve our goals. We certainly face challenges and opportunities – some common no matter where we are in the world, some unique. But we stand together.

For nearly a century, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) has been here to serve the global library field. To lift us all up. To provide a forum for collaborating and sharing resources to galvanize action for the greater good.

Today, with the support of Stichting IFLA Global Libraries (SIGL), IFLA is leveraging an extraordinary \$30 million USD legacy grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to help strengthen the global library field. This work began with a vision for the future, co-designed by you – all of you – through an unprecedented inclusive and participatory process. Now, we are implementing it. We have accomplished much together in the last few years, and much work remains.

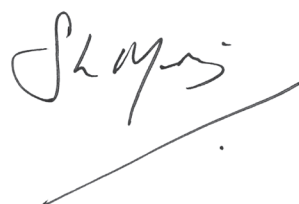
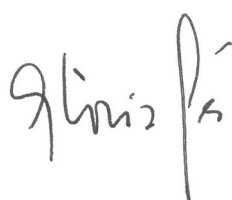
We are proud to share this midterm report of the work that has happened thanks to SIGL funding. In these pages, you will find stories highlighting some of our major initiatives and the impactful work enabled by the funding that is happening all across the global library field. We hope it makes you proud, too, and that it leaves us all feeling inspired and ready for the work ahead.

In solidarity,

Glòria Pérez-Salmerón, Chair, SIGL

Barbara Lison, President, IFLA

Sharon Memis, Secretary General, IFLA



MILESTONES IN A HISTORIC PARTNERSHIP

1927 IFLA Founded

The International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) was founded at the Annual Meeting of the UK Library Association in Edinburgh, Scotland, and launched two years later with 15 members from 15 countries. **Today, IFLA has over 1,500 Members and Affiliates** from 150 countries worldwide.



**International
Federation of
Library
Associations and Institutions**

1997 Gates Library Foundation Founded

Believing that everyone should have access to information, technology entrepreneurs **Bill and Melinda Gates created the Gates Library Foundation** in Seattle, Washington, and made their first grants to provide computers to public libraries in the US and Canada. Three years later, the Gates family merged their philanthropic interests under one roof into what became the world's largest private foundation – the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Over two decades, the Foundation's Global Libraries program **invested a billion U.S. dollars in fostering access to and innovation in public libraries** – including capacity and field-building support to IFLA beginning in 2007.

**BILL & MELINDA
GATES foundation**

2015 IFLA Responds to the UN SDGs

In 2015, the Member States of the United Nations unanimously adopted the historic 2030 Agenda and its **17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)**, which are an urgent call for action by all countries - developed and developing - in a **global partnership**. The SDGs built on decades of work by countries, the UN, and the contributions of many in civil society – including IFLA and its members, who successfully advocated to include the principles of access to information, safeguarding cultural heritage, universal literacy, and access to information and communication technologies (ICT).



2016 A Legacy is Established

IFLA recognized that the 2030 Agenda presented an unparalleled opportunity to bring libraries together to demonstrate their role in addressing the world's most pressing challenges – and The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation recognized that **IFLA's new International Advocacy Programme (IAP)** provided a critical step in uniting the field. The Foundation funded the launch of the IAP, marking an important milestone in the development of the Legacy Grant. As it began to wind down Global Libraries, the Foundation entrusted IFLA, Public Library Association (PLA), and the Technology and Social Change Group at the University of Washington (TASCHA) as the lead recipients of an extraordinary **10-year investment to strengthen the global library field**. SIGL was formed to manage and provide oversight of the Legacy Grant funds, and importantly, to help build IFLA's capacity to catalyze more private philanthropy to advance the work of libraries around the world.



A LOOK BACK ON THE IMPACT OF KEY INITIATIVES THAT HAVE HELPED TO UNITE AND IGNITE THE GLOBAL LIBRARY FIELD



2017 Global Vision and the Library Map of the World

SIGL and the Legacy Grant enabled IFLA to continue to bring people together all over the world to promote the work of libraries.

The field needed a shared vision and common language, so IFLA designed and facilitated a process unlike any that had come before. **More than 30,000 people from 190 countries across all seven continents** and every type of library participated in Global Vision. They contributed ideas, made new connections, and found a deep and shared commitment to the enduring value and role of libraries. **The Global Vision Report**, presented in 2018, outlines one key finding and ten pairs of highlights and opportunities. The Ideas Store lives on as an interactive source of inspiration.

The field also needed a common set of metrics to help show the world the depth and breadth of library impact. **At the 2017 World Library & Information Congress in Wroclaw, Poland, IFLA launched the Library Map of the World**, a powerful interactive online advocacy tool that helps to visualize the power of the united library field.

2018 & Beyond Modernising IFLA for the Future

Serving as a global leader in a fast-changing world is a tall order, one that IFLA leaders knew the organization could meet with the **insights and experiences of its growing membership**. Supported by SIGL and the Legacy Grant, IFLA embarked on back-to-back processes that engaged members and library field colleagues in **IFLA's strategic planning and governance review**. Through surveys, interviews, and round table discussions, once again many people came together to share their ideas and to help build a vision of IFLA for the future. Today, **IFLA's new regional infrastructure – with a Regional Council and regional division committees** – is just one example of the ways IFLA continues to evolve to reflect and respond to the rich diversity of the global library field.



*Global Vision Regional Workshop,
Paris, France*

GLOBAL VISION

WHAT IF WE WERE UNITED IN OUR VISION FOR THE FUTURE OF LIBRARIES AND THEIR ROLE IN SOCIETY?

NATIONAL LIBRARY, MONGOLIA
DAVAASUREN MYAGMAR

“The Global Vision discussions and report deeply informed our 2020-2024 strategy. Our priorities are now aligned with those of our colleagues around the world. But more than that, the global visioning process itself changed the way we do things, particularly with respect to our national conference and the capacity-building training we bring to libraries all across the country. We are far more inclusive. Participatory. We listen. Our librarians’ voices count. They are very engaged. It is so much more impactful. That is a direct result of the experience and inspiration I gained participating in the Global Vision.”

This question was the inspiration for the Global Vision project, launched in 2017. Over a period of two years, IFLA engaged over 30,000 librarians, library professionals, library associations, and other stakeholders worldwide in a process more collaborative and inclusive than anything many in the field said they had ever experienced before.

The goal? To create the energy, drive and connections to make a reality of the potential of our field to make a difference when we work together, across borders, from the global to the local levels.

We began with a kickoff meeting in Athens with 133 people from 33 countries. From there, hundreds of colleagues from nearly 140 countries joined us in two series of six meetings, from Yaoundé to Hanoi, Buenos Aires to Doha, and Washington DC to Madrid. They left with the mission, knowledge and tools to organize and facilitate more workshops in their home nations and across IFLA’s volunteer groups. Thousands of people engaged in these highly interactive discussions with their peers.

Meanwhile, a wide scale digital effort engaged thousands more through online surveys, social media, virtual town halls and webinars, and a virtual “Ideas Store”. All told, the Global Vision Report reflected contributions from tens of thousands of colleagues from 190 countries across 7 continents, from every type of library and representing a rich diversity and depth of professional experiences.

The global visioning process was significant in a number of ways.

- Participation was global, diverse, and unprecedented in the field. This demonstrated how the field can come together around big questions and opportunities.
- The collaboration and networking that took place created enduring connections between librarians around the world who now share information, ideas, best practices. The community is now stronger and more united.
- It created a timely opportunity to look into the future strategically, together, at a time of rapid evolution in the information environment. Libraries now have a framework for thinking through how to maximise their contribution in the face of change - and the work is less daunting because no one is in it alone.
- It provided the impetus and substance for IFLA’s radically different new strategy, which not only offered a structure and reference point for work by IFLA’s units and HQ, but also a reference point for libraries and library associations globally.



FROM INVITATION TO TRANSFORMATION: UNLEASHING THE POWER OF SHARING

When the National Library of Mongolia accepted IFLA's invitation to participate in a regional global visioning session in Singapore, the Director selected librarian and manager Davaasuren Myagmar to attend. The experience was transformative.

"It was an eye-opening experience overall," she said. "It benefited the library field here in Mongolia. But it also was so helpful and inspiring for me in my career. I made many connections with colleagues all over the world, and IFLA leaders went out of their way to offer encouragement and advice. It gave me such confidence. As a result, and with IFLA's support, I was inspired to rebuild our country's professional association. That will make a difference for a long time to come."

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed new challenges that couldn't have been predicted at the time of the first global visioning process. *"But we know how to come together now to find a collective vision for addressing them,"* Davaasuren said. *"Global Vision gave us a map."*

It also created a lasting impact that continues to strengthen the library field to this day.

- Library associations and others who serve to lift up libraries are working toward a shared set of priorities. This puts us in a better position than ever before to meet the evolving needs of libraries, wherever they are.
- Our collective vision strengthens the advocacy power of the entire global library community. We can now speak in a unified voice to promote libraries as essential institutions for every aspect of sustainable development.

- The two-year global visioning process garnered worldwide attention and media coverage. The field came together, and the world took notice. There is greater worldwide awareness of the importance of libraries.
- There is greater worldwide awareness of the importance of libraries.



Scenes from Global Vision workshops around the world



A POWERFUL TOOL DEMONSTRATING THE REACH OF LIBRARIES LIBRARY MAP OF THE WORLD

Libraries are essential, everywhere. Yet they can look different from one part of the world to another. Whether they exist in bricks and mortar, dominating a town square in a busy city, or in a rickshaw that travels to a field at the end of the road, they all share something in common: they change lives.

By supporting people, we also solve global issues. In fact, we won't solve climate change without libraries. Or poverty. Or conflict. Gender equality. For every urgent call to action in the UN 2030 Agenda, libraries are a vital resource in every country and every community.

Until 2017, it was hard for anyone to get their heads around the tremendous scope, diversity, and power of the global library field. Once it launched, every person who cares about libraries had a powerful new tool at their fingertips in The Library Map of the World. This comprehensive and interactive global database houses key information and statistics about libraries worldwide – and so much more. It is a place to share and to discover real, evidence-based stories of the impact libraries are having on the achievement of the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).



A GROUND BREAKING RESOUC EMPOWERING LIBRARIES AS AGENTS OF POSITIVE CHANGE

The Library Map of the World is the most comprehensive database of information about the world's over 2.8 million libraries – it's free and accessible to anyone with internet access. It promotes information sharing, showcases the vital roles that libraries play, fosters evidence-based advocacy, and facilitates analysis of global library trends.

The SDG stories curated on the Library Map of the World have been identified by country leads, and vetted by mediators and professional staff to ensure they meet the high bar for publication. Each story is supported by evidence of the impact on the project's beneficiaries.

From Canada to South Africa, Australia to Kazakhstan, the Library Map of the World helps us discover the inspiring and often life-changing work of libraries.

HELPING TO DISCOVER THE INSPIRING
AND OFTEN LIFE-CHANGING
WORK OF LIBRARIES

ASHOKA UNIVERSITY, INDIA
DR. RANGASHRI KISHORE

“The process of submitting a story for publication was rigorous, but that process was such a rich learning experience. It taught me how to communicate impact, and being able to communicate impact has been a game changer. Being able to point to our story on the Library Map of the World has validated the work. It elevated the credibility of the project. Of us. Our work, and the children whose lives we changed.”

Dr. Rangashri Kishore took great pride in the library services available to students at Ashoka University. Every child, she believed, should have access to the same quality learning resources. But that wasn't the reality for the children of the university's many employees who come from the rural villages that surrounded the campus, many of whom regularly went to work in the fields rather than to school. So, Dr. Kishore and her colleagues created a corner in the library just for the children. When that wasn't enough to bring them in, they loaded books into a van, mounted a video screen to show educational cartoons in Hindi, and brought the library to the children. "This," she said, "changed their lives." They loved learning. And soon, they began returning to the classroom.

Although Dr. Kishore knew the project was making a difference, she didn't have the tools or experience yet to quantify its impact, and to relate it to the urgent priorities governments all over the world have rallied around. When she submitted the story to the Library Map of the World, she learned she needed data to support her claims. She needed evidence of how it changed the children's lives. And she was given a framework for aligning it to the SDGs. The rigorous process paid off. We now know that the Mobile Library Programme led to a **70% increase in attendance at the local primary school**, and supports 5 of the 17 SDGs.

Its publication on the Library Map of the World gave the Mobile Library Programme credibility, and gave Dr. Kishore and her colleagues needed recognition. She says she is humbled to have been awarded a silver, then gold, Karmaveer Chakra Award. More important, she says, is the interest it has generated, the doors it has opened, and the support she has received to replicate the mobile library program to reach many more children in India.

Today she talks about the Library Map of the World to every librarian she meets. "Tell your story," she tells them. "Submit it. Go through the process. You will learn to speak in terms of impact. To show the difference you are making, so you can keep making a difference, and make even more of a difference."

Today she tells every librarian she meets about the Library Map of the World.



Top: Anil Kumar, Senior Library Executive at Ashoka University, captivating young learners in the field.

Left: Dr. Rangashri Kishore



INTERNATIONAL ADVOCACY

THE CRUCIAL ROLE OF LIBRARIES EMPOWERING COMMUNITIES & GOVERNMENTS TOGETHER

INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE
& TECHNOLOGY, AFRICA
DR. AYANDA LEBELE

"IFLA supports, encourages, and builds capacity to engage leadership. Previously, it proved difficult to meaningfully break through to leadership. Then, at the HLPF (UN High Level Political Forum), I was able to meet the national delegation and the President in person. This was a fruitful personal interaction with the head of State. As a follow up, I have received several invitations to meet different leaders in their offices, to explain in depth what libraries are doing, and how we can work with their offices towards attainment of the SDGs. There is strengthened appreciation of the role of libraries, and linking libraries to the SDGs. This is important."

Around the world, governments rely on libraries to help connect people with public information and resources, and to help serve communities in many and varied ways. Libraries, in turn, rely on governments for support. There is no single formula or model relationship, but one thing holds true everywhere: the better that governments understand what libraries do, the stronger the partnerships between them, and the more good they can accomplish together.

Libraries do not typically grab the news headlines. Their work – our work – often happens without fanfare. We have not always been visible, particularly as our roles have evolved.

The adoption of the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development created a framework through which government leaders can see the work of libraries in a new light. By participating in voluntary national reporting, the UN's mechanism for reviewing progress on the SDGs, libraries can demonstrate their role as critical partners in achieving the SDGs.

IFLA built the International Advocacy Programme (IAP) to leverage this opportunity. Through training, support, and facilitation, the IAP helps emerging and experienced library leaders prepare to participate in voluntary national reporting. Along the way, participants learn skills and develop relationships that endure beyond their trip to the UN.



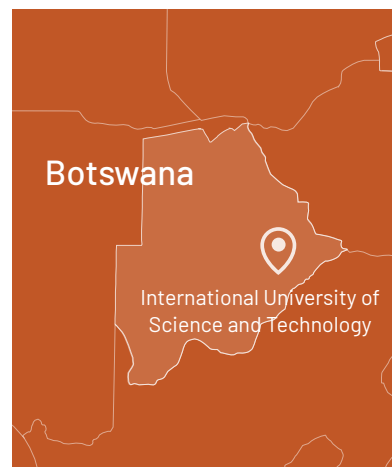
Left: Dr. Ayanda Lebele

“While we went to the UN to report involvement of libraries, we also gained so much from each other in the processes of preparation for the presentation. There was collegial empowerment, and this will greatly help leadership at regional division and national levels,” Dr. Lebele reflected about her participation in 2022, which was made possible by SIGL. Individually they had powerful stories to share; by working together, they were able to present their stories in a complementary way to present a more complete picture of just how important libraries are to nations as they work toward the SDGs.

Coincidentally, while visiting the UN, Dr. Lebele’s group was hosted by the Library of the UN, which is where she met Angelinah Boniface, a UN librarian who is a fellow citizen of Botswana with an inspiring life story. Through their connection, Angelinah has now provided several motivational talks to librarians in Botswana, including at the National Library. She has built a mailing list that is helping librarians in Botswana learn about related UN webinars and updates. It is this network effect that Dr. Lebele says she now understands is fundamental to advocacy.

“Advocacy is stronger with a network, and now our networks are stronger. For example, I have been able to use two of the colleagues I met as resource persons in different library capacity building initiatives for different library cohorts. The exposure [we gained through this network] gave us insight into how political leaders think about the development agenda and this will empower librarians to speak about our work in the language that national leaders understand.”

Since 2016, participants from 75 countries across four regions have participated in the IAP. Even more have since become actively involved in their country’s voluntary reporting, with over half of published Voluntary National Reviews in 2023 referencing libraries. Together, we are building a strong advocacy network that will last beyond the 2030 Agenda.



Visiting the United Nations



FACILITATING REGIONAL COOPERATION AND CONNECTION TO GLOBAL AND NATIONAL EFFORTS

REGIONAL STRENGTH

SOCIETY FOR CULTURE AND DEVELOPMENT
& INTERNATIONAL NETWORK OF EMERGING LIBRARY INNOVATORS
HEBA ISMAIL

"There are many librarians across the Arab region, but we did not know each other before. Now we have a new network. We are connected. We are working together across the region. And I believe we are more visible now in our international library community."

While the 'I' in IFLA stands for 'international', issues of distance, resources, language and culture always risked meaning that IFLA better reflected some parts of the world than others. While the field shares a commitment to the value of providing access to information as a force for progress, how this happens on the ground – and what is needed for success – varies.

Our colleagues from regions that have historically been under-represented have long called for stronger and more effective ways to listen to regional experiences and voices, and to develop solutions. Understandably, an organization that feels remote, inaccessible, and irrelevant for many in our field is unlikely to be able to motivate and mobilize for change.

Already in its first stages, SIGL and the Legacy Grant made it possible for IFLA to engage members and colleagues to hear deep, meaningful input in its development – from a landmark 2017 membership survey, to the 2017-2019 strategic planning process, to the 2019-2021 governance review.

This work highlighted that global diversity is one of the library field's greatest strengths, and so stronger regional representation was one of the best opportunities for IFLA and the field.

Now, a new regional structure exists within IFLA, with six Regional Division Committees and a Regional Council. SIGL enables IFLA to support new regional efforts, including workshops that bring volunteers together in person where they address regional issues and gain exposure to global issues in the field.

GENERAL COORDINATING DIRECTOR OF BIBLIOTECA DEL CONGRESO DE LA NACIÓN, ARGENTINA
ALEJANDRO LORENZO CÉSAR SANTA

"I listen to my regional colleagues and help lift their voices to be heard."



BREAKING BARRIERS, BUILDING STRENGTH: IFLA'S REGIONAL REVOLUTION FOR A STRONGER LIBRARY FIELD



Left: Alejandro Lorenzo César Santa

Right: Representatives from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Mexico, and Uruguay on signing an agreement to cooperate to strengthen the role of parliamentary libraries in achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

Alejandro Lorenzo César Santa, General Coordinating Director of Biblioteca del Congreso de la Nación, Argentina, says the Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) region is rich with potential but has historically been ignored. Now, as the first Chair of IFLA's LAC Regional Division, he says, *"I listen to my regional colleagues and help lift their voices to be heard."*

Under the status quo, it has also been hard to appreciate and help address challenges unique to a region. Heba, who serves as one of the first members of the MENA Regional Division, says the issues she and her colleagues face can be very different than those of her European counterparts, particularly related to public investment in libraries. *"Now when I have a challenge, I have people I can reach out to who understand because they have dealt with something similar. We can learn from each other's experience. We can help each other."*

Alejandro and Heba see IFLA's new regional infrastructure as an important step towards better collaboration and connection across regions, and to global efforts in the library field. We are not there yet, they say, but it is where we are headed. Replacing outdated models is not a luxury, but an imperative, and in turn inspires change in individual and collective behavior, helping us to address challenges and build a stronger field. *"To be sustainable, we must speak the language of the people in the street,"* Alejandro says. *"That means we must get to know the places and the people we serve - truly get to know them. We must get out of the comfort zone. This is true for libraries, and it is true for the library field."*

Thanks to SIGL support, IFLA has been able to give the new regional structures the support they need to have a strong start, while also working closely with library associations to bring new models, resources, and even hope to strengthen the field at national and regional levels. With strong regional cooperation and better connection to global efforts, the library field can only continue to get stronger.



Heba Ismail with international library leaders and regional colleagues at the 27th Conference of the Parties to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), Sharm el-Sheikh, Egypt.

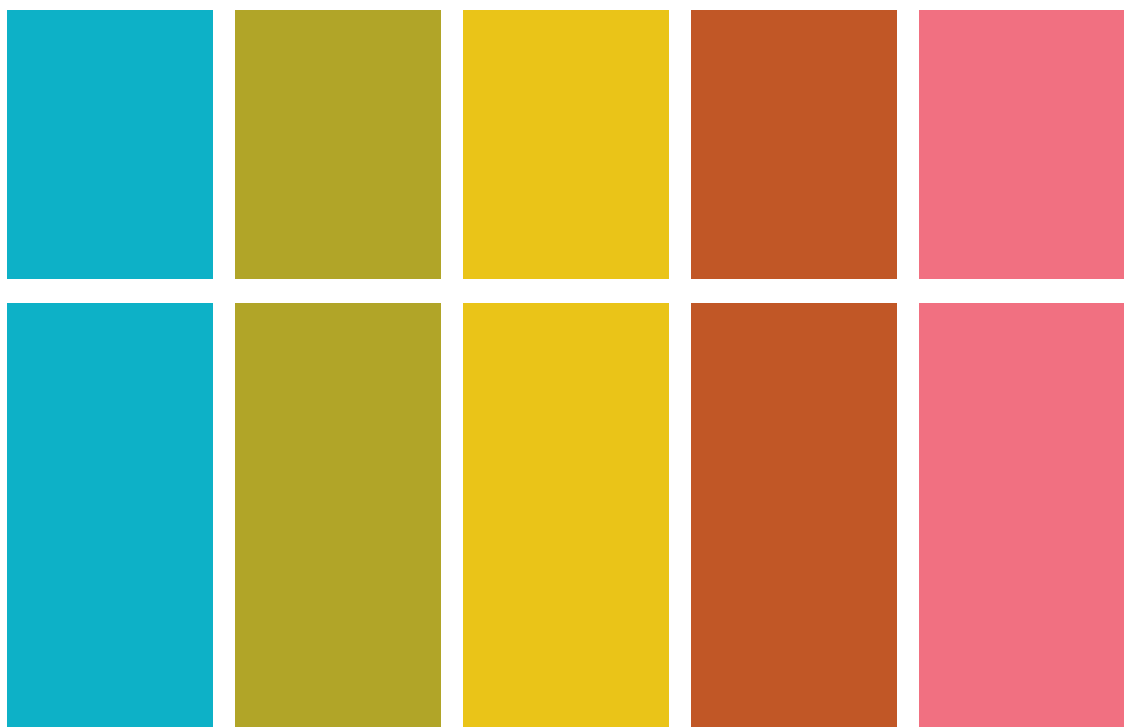


LOOKING TOWARDS A BRIGHT FUTURE

Access to information has always mattered. When the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation entrusted SIGL with a Legacy Grant, they acted on the belief that a strong global library field is key to protecting and expanding access – to information, to resources, to a better world.

With a strong global library field, each individual library and information worker and institution is empowered. With strong libraries and library and information workers, the world has trusted partners in solving our darkest challenges and seizing our brightest opportunities. In the first half of the Legacy Grant implementation, we see strong evidence of a worldwide library community united in a shared vision, with new experience and practice working together across old boundaries, and a more positive and proactive mindset in the face of change, harnessing new tools to help us all see and value their work changing lives every day.

Uplifted by SIGL and the Legacy Grant, IFLA's focus continues to be on building resilience and capacity in the library field. From issuing new updates to the biennial Development and Access to Information (DA2I) Reports and the Trend Reports, to supporting the IFLA Management of Library Associations Section (MLAS) in turning association awareness of the SDGs into measurable action, and from helping catalyze global awareness into greater global philanthropic support, to learning from and strengthening advocacy and regional cooperation and connection to global efforts, the years ahead are full of opportunities for members of the library community to get involved and help build the future, together.



WE HAVE ONLY JUST BEGUN LEARN MORE AND GET INVOLVED

We have only just begun. Reflecting on all we have accomplished together so far, we know the future is going to be very bright. To learn more and to get involved, visit IFLA and SIGL online.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is the global voice of libraries, representing the interests of the profession and working to improve services worldwide. It benefits from a strong membership, a vibrant professional community, and close collaboration with partners. Its vision is of a strong and united global library field powering literate, informed and participatory societies.

IFLA was created in 1927, and is based in The Hague, The Netherlands. It has a membership of over 1500 in around 150 countries globally.

<https://www.ifla.org>

Stichting IFLA Global Libraries (SIGL) is an independent public benefit foundation established in 2016. The objective of the foundation, which is exclusively charitable and educational, is to empower libraries to improve people's lives and support growth of sustainable societies.

SIGL was established as a Stichting (foundation) to manage the legacy funding from Bill and Melinda Gates Global Libraries Programme. The purpose is to build on over 10 years of work in the library field and "leave the library field strong."

<https://siglfoundation.org>



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